

New electoral arrangements for St Albans City & District Council Final Recommendations

December 2020

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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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Who we are and what we do	1
What is an electoral review?	1
Why St Albans?	5
Our proposals for St Albans	5
How will the recommendations affect you?	5
Review timetable	6
Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	7
Draft recommendations consultation	7
Final recommendations	8
Southern St Albans	9
Western St Albans	15
North West St Albans	18
North Eastern St Albans	19
South Eastern St Albans	22
South East St Albans City	25
North West St Albans City	27
Conclusions	30
Summary of electoral arrangements	30
Parish electoral arrangements	30
What happens next?	34
Equalities	36
Appendices	38
Appendix A	38
Final recommendations for St Albans City & District Council	38
Appendix B	40
Outline map	40
Appendix C	42

Submissions received	42
Appendix D	40
Glossary and abbreviations	40

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 St Albans?

7 We are conducting a review of St Albans City & District Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in district council elections varies depending on where you live in St Albans. 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 St Albans 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.

Our proposals for St Albans

9 St Albans should be represented by 56 councillors, two fewer than there are now.

10 St Albans should have 20 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of most wards should change; two will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for St Albans.

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 St Albans. 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
20 August 2019	Number of councillors decided
27 August 2019	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
4 November 2019	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
4 February 2020	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
16 June 2020	Re-confirmation of draft recommendations (see below)
30 September 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
1 December 2020	Publication of final recommendations

17 Owing to an administrative error, a small number of submissions were not considered by the Commission at the time the original Draft Recommendations were considered. These submissions were subsequently considered, and the Commission decided in June to confirm the original Draft Recommendations without amendment. The consultation on draft recommendations originally closed on 13 April 2020 and re-opened between 18 June 2020 and 30 September 2020 to allow those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic to make submissions.

Analysis and final recommendations

18 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.

19 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.

20 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	2025
Electorate of St Albans	109,640	113,582
Number of councillors	58	56
Average number of electors per councillor	1,890	2,028

21 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 St Albans are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2025.

Submissions received

22 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

23 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 3.5% by 2025.

24 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.

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.

25 Some submissions to the consultation argued that we should consider longer term electorate projections, particularly as the Council's Local Plan calls for significant development after 2025. As detailed above, we are constrained by legislation to consider the forecast electorate five years on from the publication of our final recommendations and we are satisfied by the projections being used.

Number of councillors

26 St Albans City & District Council currently has 58 councillors. At the beginning of the review we looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that reducing the number of members by one would ensure that the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 57 councillors, reflecting the presumption of a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

28 As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council has a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

29 We took the decision when publishing our draft recommendations that the statutory criteria would be better reflected if we moved away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards, and we proposed a pattern of 16 three-member wards and four two-councillor wards. This reduced the total number of councillors for St Albans to 56. We were satisfied that despite the change in the total number of councillors, the Council would be able to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively with one fewer councillor.

30 We received no submissions specifically about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. The submissions received generally welcomed our decision to move away from a strict adherence to a pattern of uniform three-member wards and accepted that such a pattern across the district would have unacceptable implications for either electoral equality or community identity. We have therefore maintained 56 councillors for our final recommendations.

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 21 submissions in response to our first consultation on ward boundaries. These included two district-wide proposals, from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups on the Council. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

32 The two district-wide schemes provided uniform patterns of three-councillor wards for St Albans. 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 but did not reflect community identity well.

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

34 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of St Albans helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

35 Our draft recommendations were for 16 three-councillor wards and four two-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality in most areas while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

36 We received 110 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included four submissions providing detailed comments on all or most aspects of our draft recommendations. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in the Lea Valley area to the east of Harpenden, and the proposed boundary between Batchwood and St Peters wards in St Albans city.

37 In general, the submissions supported our decision at draft recommendations to move away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards. Comments were received on whether particular wards should be expanded to retain three councillors, but there was broad support for the principle of departing from a uniform pattern in order to better reflect community identity.

Final recommendations

38 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with changes to wards in the rural areas to the east and west of St Albans city based on the submissions received. We also make some minor modifications to the boundaries between Clarence and Cunningham wards, and Batchwood, Bernards Heath and St Peters wards in St Albans city.

39 As our draft recommendations, while informed by submissions received, were not based on either of the full schemes submitted to us, we have moved away from our proposals in several areas. The evidence received during the consultation on our draft recommendations was particularly helpful in identifying links between communities, and offering alternative wards to better reflect the statutory criteria.

40 Our final recommendations are for 17 three-councillor wards, two two-councillor wards and one single-councillor ward. 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.

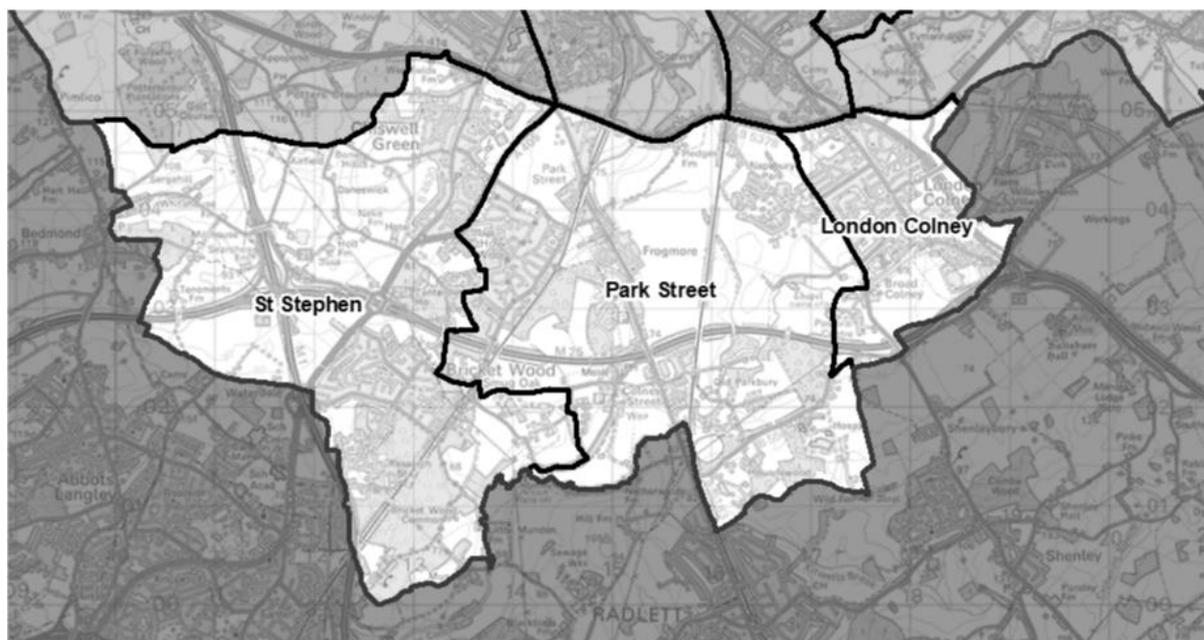
41 The tables and maps on pages 9–25 detail our final recommendations for each area of St Albans. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

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

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

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Southern St Albans



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
London Colney	3	1%
Park Street	3	7%
St Stephen	3	11%

London Colney

43 We received several representations from residents and community groups in the Napsbury Park area, suggesting that they felt that their natural community was with London Colney, and not with Park Street. The Liberal Democrat Group proposed two two-member wards in this area: a London Colney North ward, including Napsbury Park; and a London Colney South ward. The Labour and Conservative groups supported our proposed London Colney ward, with the Labour submission in particular noting that there is a clear separation between Napsbury Park and the remainder of London Colney.

44 The Liberal Democrat proposal, while offering acceptable electoral equality, would require the continued division of Bricket Wood village, would divide the community of London Colney itself on a relatively arbitrary basis, and would result in two additional wards with fewer than three councillors. While we decided to move away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards at draft recommendations, we continue to be guided by the overall desirability of as many three-member wards as are compatible with the rest of our statutory criteria. We therefore have not adopted this proposal.

45 London Colney Parish Council stated that they would prefer Napsbury Park to remain within London Colney ward, but did not offer any suggestions on how this could be accomplished within the bounds of acceptable electoral equality. They also suggested that if parish warding arrangements for London Colney parish needed to be altered because of the district wards dividing the parish, they would prefer that in addition to a Napsbury Park parish ward, separate parish wards were created for the eastern and western halves of the village, with the High Street as a boundary. While we accept the logic of this suggestion, without explicit consultation regarding parish warding arrangements, we are limiting changes to those which are necessary as a direct result of our warding arrangements. Parish wards can be changed as a result of a Community Governance Review undertaken by the Council.

46 We have carefully considered all submissions regarding this area. While we accept that community identity would be better reflected with Napsbury Park included within a London Colney ward, we note that the inclusion of this area within a single London Colney ward would result in a variance of 22% by 2025 – well beyond what we consider acceptable electoral equality.

47 We have considered various proposals for the division of London Colney which would allow Napsbury Park to remain within a London Colney ward. However, we consider that the division of the village of London Colney itself, whether along the High Street or along polling district lines, would divide an existing community. We therefore have not been persuaded to change our draft recommendations regarding Napsbury Park.

48 A resident, and the Labour Group, suggested a minor amendment to the northern boundary of both London Colney and Park Street wards, moving the boundary to the A414 road rather than the northern boundary of London Colney parish. This allows a small number of dwellings on Suffolk Close and The Drive, south of the A414 but within the unparished area of St Albans, to be united with neighbouring dwellings. We were persuaded by these submissions and have amended our draft recommendations accordingly.

49 Subject to this minor change, we confirm our draft recommendations for London Colney ward as final.

Park Street and St Stephen

50 The Labour and Conservative groups supported our proposed Park Street and St Stephen wards. The Liberal Democrat Group suggested reverting to the existing boundary between Park Street and St Stephen, in order to maintain acceptable electoral equality in Park Street after the loss of Napsbury Park (discussed at paragraphs 43–47). We have carefully considered all submissions regarding these areas. As we have decided to retain Napsbury Park within Park Street ward, we

were not persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrat proposal, which would also divide Bricket Wood village between two separate wards.

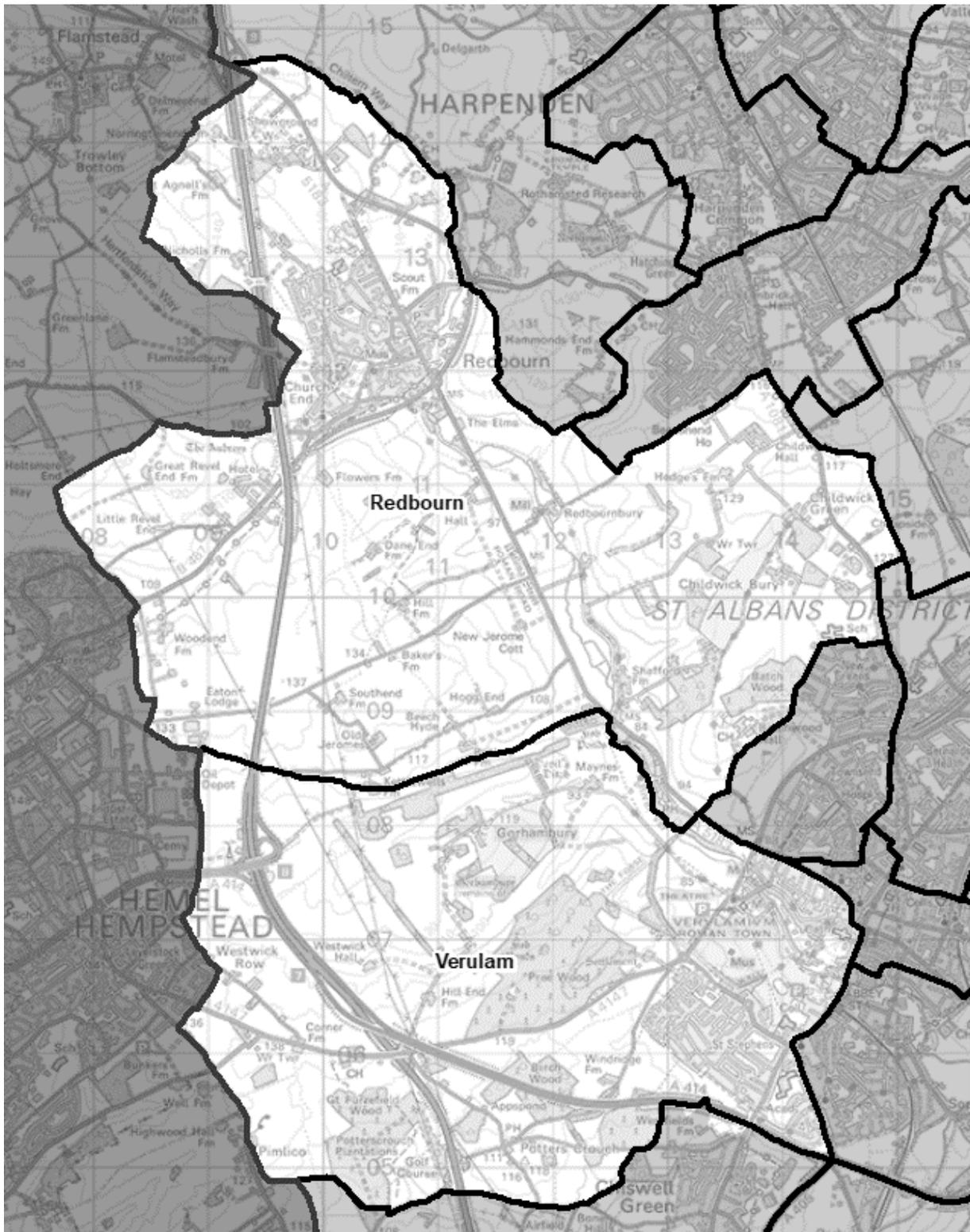
51 Residents of the affected area requested a modest change to the boundary in the area of Lye Lane, in order to allow dwellings on the edge of Bricket Wood to be in the same ward as the rest of the village. We have accepted this submission and reflected this in our final recommendations.

52 A resident suggested amending our draft boundary in the north of St Stephen, in order that dwellings on both sides of Ragged Hall Lane could be in a single ward. We have accepted that the houses to the north of Ragged Hall Lane form part of the Chiswell Green community and have amended our draft recommendations accordingly, using the A404 and A415 as clear and recognisable boundaries. The existing parish ward of St Michael South East remains unaltered.

53 Consequently, St Stephen ward is projected to have a variance of 11% more electors than average by 2025. We consider that this departure from good electoral equality is justified in order to reflect the communities within this ward. We carefully considered options for reducing this variance but concluded that any possible change would result in compromising community identity.

54 Under these recommendations, London Colney and Park Street wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2025. St Stephen ward is forecast to have a variance of 11% and we confirm these recommendations as final.

Western St Albans



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Redbourn	2	7%
Verulam	3	-4%

Redbourn and Verulam

55 Our draft recommendations for Redbourn ward resulted in a variance of 13% as a two-councillor ward. The decision to move small areas of Chiswell Green into St Stephen ward (discussed at paragraph 52) would have the effect of reducing this variance to 11% – still outside the margin of what we consider to be good electoral equality.

56 We received several submissions regarding this area. Redbourn Parish Council suggested that, in light of planned development outlined in the Council's Local Plan for beyond 2025, we should retain the existing, three-member ward. However, on 2025 electoral figures, this would have a variance of -19%. As discussed at paragraph 25, legislation states that we must consider the five-year electorate forecast.

57 The Labour Group suggested moving a small number of electors from Batchwood Hall and the attached sports complex into Batchwood ward. While this proposal has considerable advantages, on current parish boundaries it would necessitate the creation of a very small parish ward. We are therefore not persuaded to adopt it.

58 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a ward comprised entirely of Redbourn parish, with St Michael parish being added to a St Stephen ward. As this was based upon changes to Park Street and London Colney that we have not adopted, and would increase the variance of our St Stephen ward to 14%, we are not persuaded to adopt this proposal.

59 The Conservative Group also proposed a narrowly drawn Redbourn ward comprising only Redbourn parish, with St Michael parish split between Verulam and another ward with a boundary on the River Ver. This submission suggested the Childwick Green area moving into a ward based on Wheathampstead, with links to Redbourn listed as a secondary option. We consider that this area has better access to Redbourn and propose to retain this area within Redbourn ward.

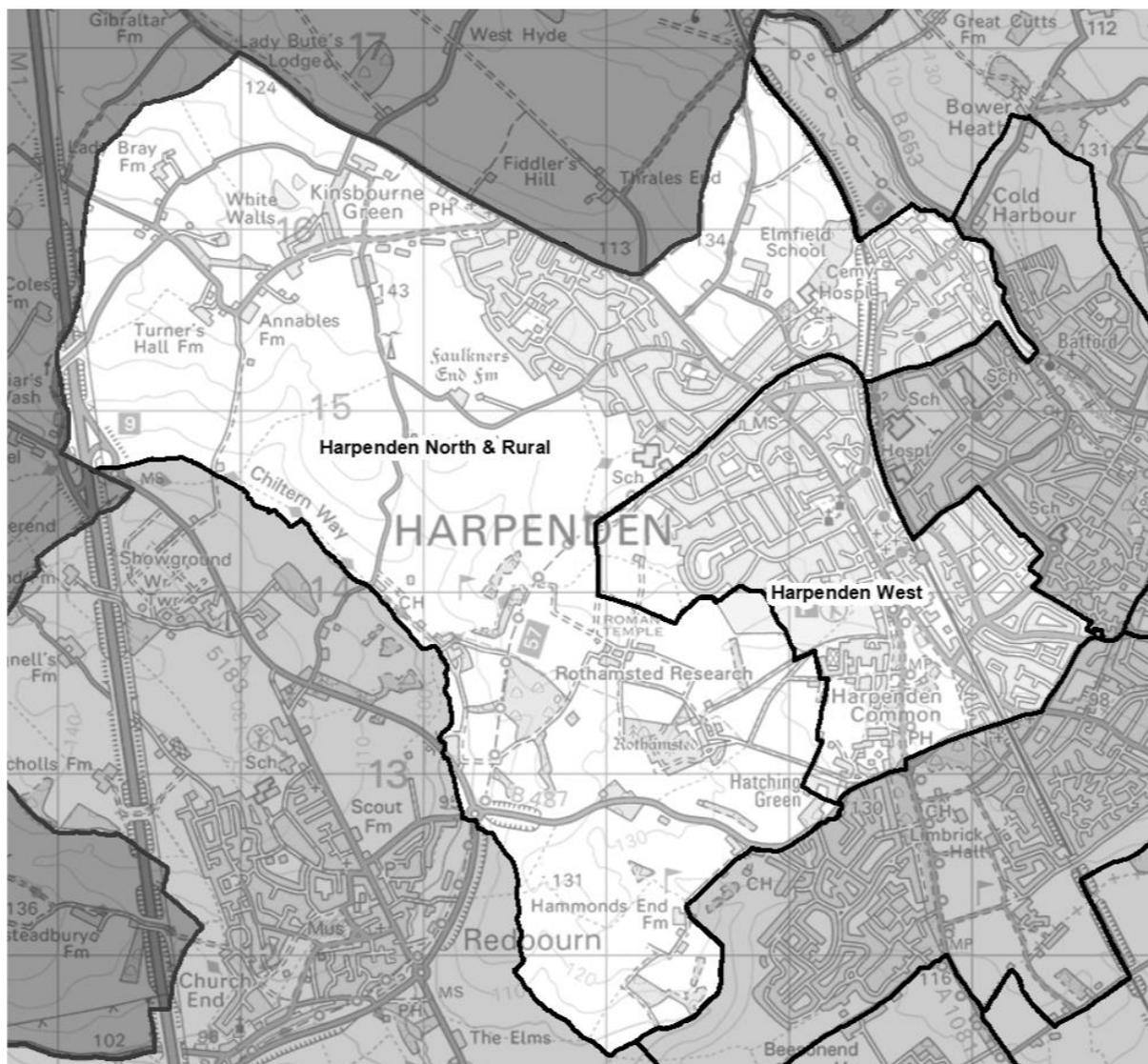
60 A resident suggested that Potters Crouch village be moved into a St Albans-based ward, as they considered themselves to be part of the St Albans community, and felt few links to other areas within potential wards.

61 We have carefully considered all submissions for this area. In our experience, combining rural and more urban areas does not always reflect community identities and in other areas of St Albans we have not been persuaded that we should do this. However, we consider that this locally generated proposal that includes the southern section of St Michael parish in a Verulam ward would adequately reflect our statutory criteria. As well as offering good electoral equality for all wards, access between the rural to urban areas of our proposed Verulam ward is relatively easy, along either

Potterscrouch Lane or Hemel Hempstead Road. We have therefore adopted the Conservative Group proposal to move the southern section of St Michael parish into Verulam ward, with the northern section remaining in Redbourn, whose variance reduces to 7% from 13% in our draft recommendations. We consider that the River Ver provides an effective and recognisable boundary between these two areas.

62 These recommendations offer good forecast electoral equality for both Redbourn and Verulam wards, and we confirm them as final.

North West St Albans



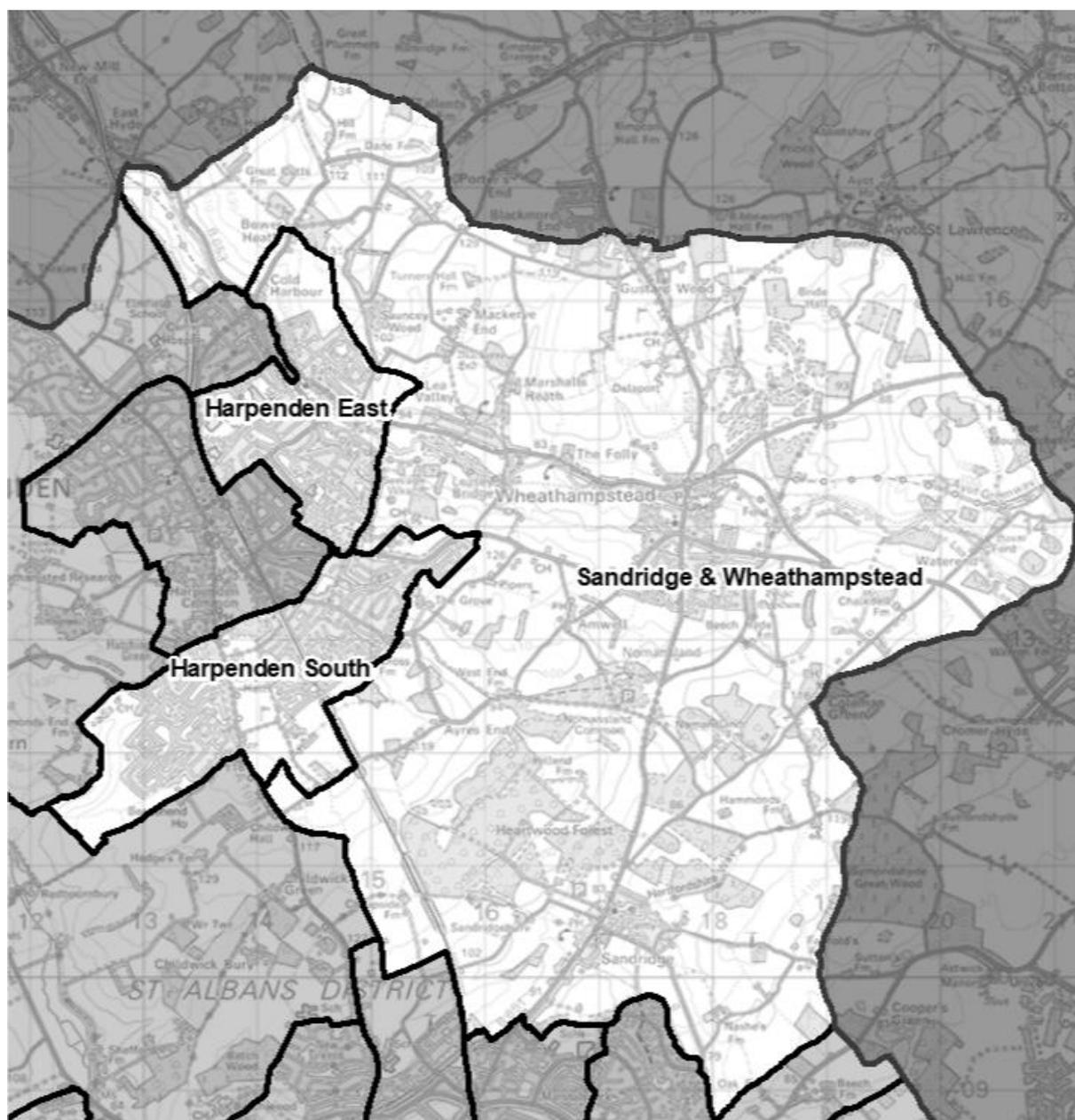
Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Harpenden North & Rural	3	-1%
Harpenden West	3	1%

Harpenden North & Rural and Harpenden West

63 Other than the request from Redbourn Parish Council for the existing Redbourn ward to remain unchanged, we received broad support for our draft recommendations for these two wards. The Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups all supported the draft recommendations for these wards.

64 Harpenden North & Rural and Harpenden West wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2025, and we confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final.

North Eastern St Albans



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Harpenden East	3	-5%
Harpenden South	3	-5%
Sandridge & Wheathampstead	3	2%

Harpenden East

65 Our draft recommendations placed the Lea Valley area of Wheathampstead parish into a Harpenden East ward. We proposed this in order to improve the electoral equality of our proposed two-councillor Wheathampstead ward.

66 This attracted a range of comments, with the Labour Group supporting this proposal, and the Liberal Democrats suggesting a wider extension of Harpenden East, with the north-west of Wheathampstead parish moving into a Harpenden-based ward.

67 In contrast, the Conservative Group, Wheathampstead Parish Council and a significant number of residents opposed our draft recommendations, on the grounds that Lea Valley's natural community lay towards Wheathampstead village, rather than Harpenden. Several residents noted that there had been local campaigns to maintain the Green Belt between Lea Valley and Harpenden and cited numerous community links between the Lea Valley and Wheathampstead.

68 We are persuaded by these submissions and propose to alter our draft recommendations in this area. We are retaining the existing boundary between Harpenden East and Wheathampstead wards, following the boundary of Wheathampstead parish. We received no comments on the remainder of the boundaries for Harpenden East.

Harpenden South

69 This ward raised similar issues to Harpenden East. Our draft recommendations proposed adding a relatively small area of Wheathampstead parish, comprising Long Butflers, Croftwell, Poynings Close and the area surrounding Aldwickbury School, to a Harpenden-based ward. We proposed this as part of our draft recommendations as we considered that this best reflected the nature of the community in this area, with a contiguous built-up area within a single ward.

70 The Labour Group submission supported our proposal, while the Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups suggested retaining the area within a Wheathampstead-based ward. Wheathampstead Parish Council specifically argued against the creation of any parish wards, arguing that the current, unwarded arrangements for Wheathampstead parish had served electors well.

71 In contrast to Lea Valley, residents of the affected area made several persuasive submissions arguing that their community identity lay with Harpenden rather than Wheathampstead, and that some residents only visited Wheathampstead village for electoral purposes. We have been persuaded by these views and confirm our draft recommendations for Harpenden South ward as final.

72 While we accept that the creation of a single parish ward for a relatively small section of Wheathampstead parish is not an ideal situation, we consider that including this area in Harpenden South ward best reflects the statutory criteria. Having made this decision, we have no option under the legislation but to create a parish ward for each area of the parish included in different district wards. Future

electoral arrangements for parishes can be altered as a result of a Community Governance Review, which is conducted by the Council.

Sandridge & Wheathampstead

73 There was limited support for our draft recommendation of a ward covering Colney Heath and Sandridge. We proposed this ward as part of our draft recommendations after receiving evidence that residents of areas on the edge of St Albans felt that their community identity lay with the city rather than the outlying villages.

74 The Labour Group supported our draft recommendation on the basis that there appeared to be no readily available alternative, while the Conservative and Liberal Democrat submissions suggested significant alterations. Neither Sandridge nor Colney Heath parish councils supported our draft recommendations, with Sandridge noting that access between the two villages along House Lane was not straightforward, as this is a narrow road not suited for large amounts of traffic.

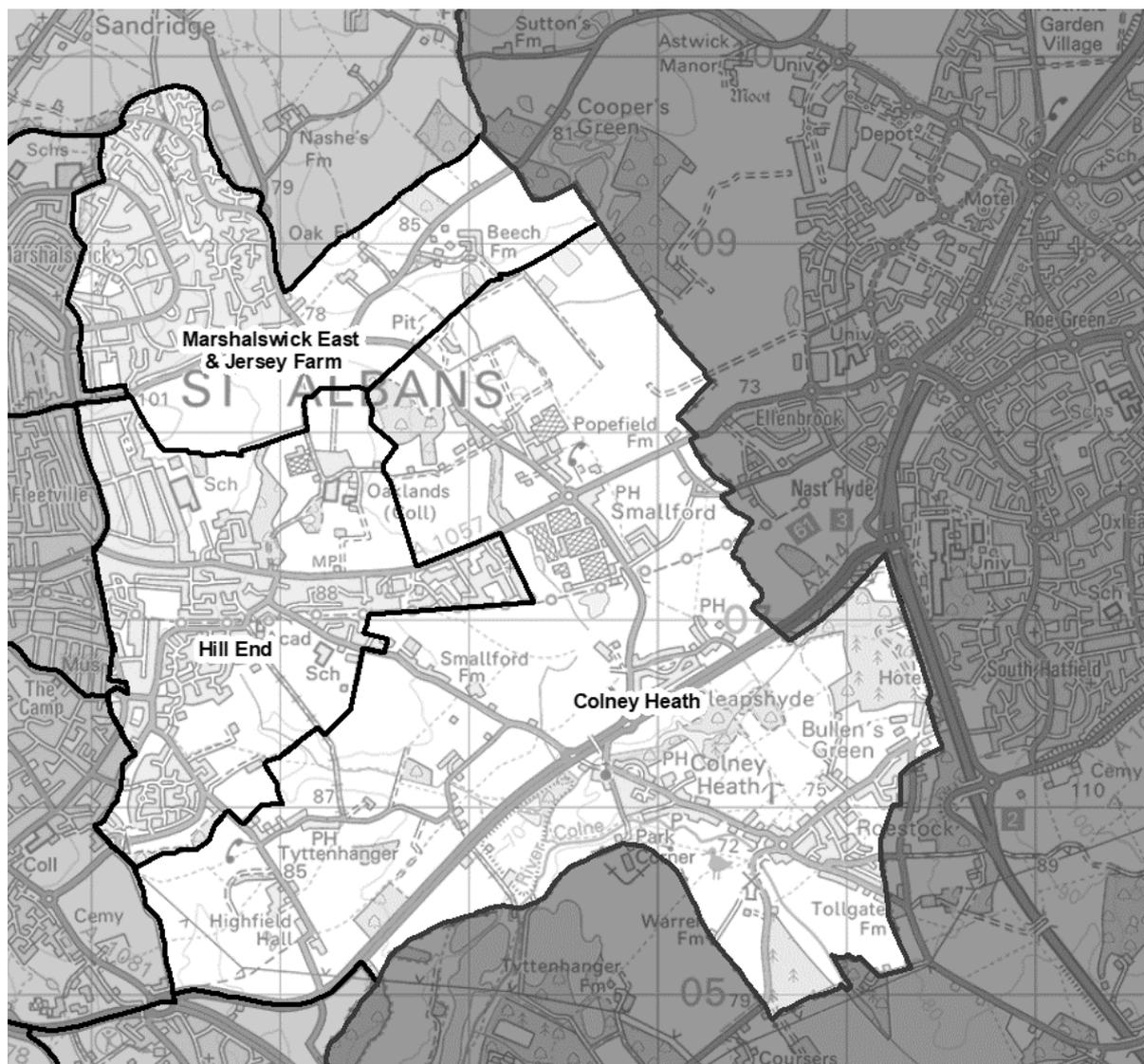
75 Sandridge Parish Council, and some local residents from Sandridge village, argued for Jersey Farm to remain linked to Sandridge, citing links to St Leonard's Church, and the historical links around cattle rearing in the Jersey Farm area. However, we have adopted submissions from residents in Jersey Farm, stating that they consider their community identity to be more closely linked to St Albans city.

76 The Conservative Group suggested that the links between Sandridge and Wheathampstead were stronger than those between Sandridge and London Colney, and that a ward based on these two villages would offer convenient internal access. A resident also suggested combining the northern section of Sandridge parish with Wheathampstead in order to produce a ward with good electoral equality.

77 We are therefore content to move away from our draft recommendations as we consider that we have received locally generated proposals that will better reflect communities. Accordingly, we have broadly adopted the Conservative Group submission in this area, as we are persuaded that this proposal allows the separate, but neighbouring, villages of Sandridge and Wheathampstead to form a coherent ward. We recognise that it is not ideal but the distribution of electors in the towns and villages of the district requires linking villages that may not be strongly connected and we consider this is a better alternative than that identified in our draft recommendations. This also allows an additional three-member ward compared with our draft recommendations.

78 Harpenden East, Harpenden South and Sandridge & Wheathampstead wards are forecast to have good electoral equality under these proposals, and we confirm these recommendations as final.

South Eastern St Albans



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Colney Heath	1	7%
Hill End	3	-7%
Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm	3	2%

Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm

79 Our draft recommendation for this ward was supported by the Labour Group. The Liberal Democrats argued for the retention of the existing Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards, as did the Marshalswick North Residents' Association. However, as discussed above (paragraph 75), we consider that the balance of evidence suggests that Jersey Farm's community identity is better reflected within an urban-based ward.

80 The Conservative Group proposal in this area was for our proposed ward to be expanded, to take in the Oaklands Grange development to the south of Sandpit Lane. The Conservatives proposed a boundary running along Oaklands Lane, but this would result in the creation of an unviable parish ward around Beech Farm. The Labour Group supported our draft recommendation proposal for a Colney Heath & Sandridge ward but accepted that this proposal was imperfect.

81 While the nature of any community identity within a new development such as that at Oaklands Grange is speculative, we consider that the Conservative Group's proposal has advantages in terms of electoral equality and allowing Colney Heath ward to entirely comprise villages and rural areas. We have therefore adopted the Conservative proposal in a modified form, bringing the dwellings on either side of Coopers Green Lane into the Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm ward, in order to allow Oaklands Grange to be included in this ward and ensure that all parish wards have a viable number of electors.

Hill End

82 This ward is the successor to the Ashley ward proposed in our draft recommendations. Two separate residents suggested that, considering the significant difference from the existing Ashley ward, a change of name would be appropriate, and both suggested Hill End. We have adopted these suggestions.

83 The Labour Group supported our draft recommendations for Ashley ward, while the Conservative Group suggested expanding the ward to the west, to take in Oaklands College and the Alban Park Industrial Estate. The Liberal Democrats suggested reverting to the existing boundaries for Ashley ward, which would result in several built-up areas moving back into a rural-based Colney Heath ward.

84 We have carefully considered all the submissions in this area and have adopted the Conservative Group's proposal. The expansion to include Oaklands College and the Alban Park Industrial Estate has few implications for electoral equality but allows a contiguous built-up area to come within a single ward. It also allows the creation of larger parish wards for the areas of Hill End ward within Colney Heath parish, rather than multiple small parish wards.

Colney Heath

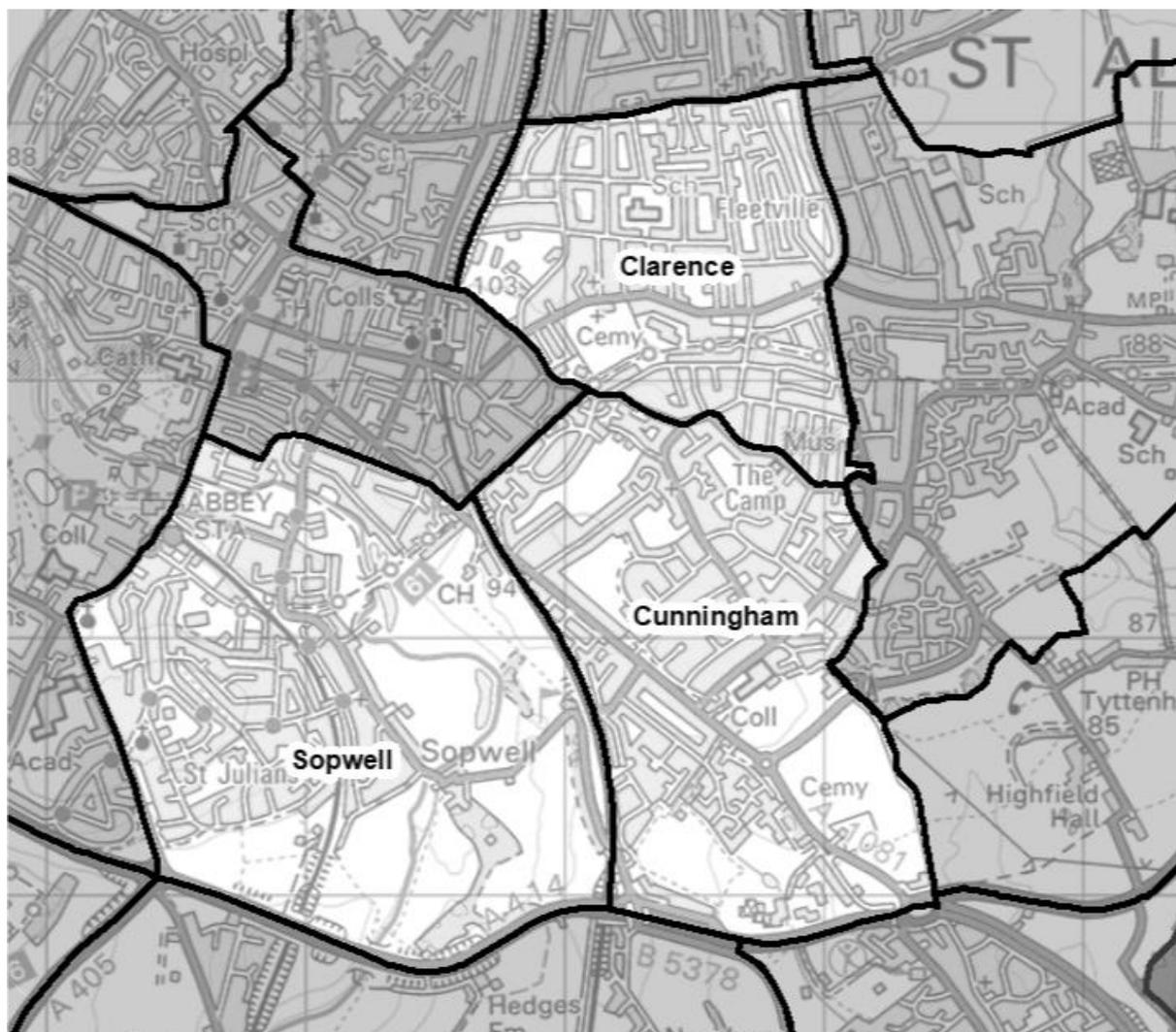
85 Colney Heath Parish Council repeated their submission from the initial warding pattern consultation that this area could be best represented by a single-member ward, focused on the rural areas of Colney Heath parish. This was supported by the Conservative Group. Limited support was received for our proposed Colney Heath & Sandridge ward, discussed at paragraph 73, with those supporting it doing so for want of a better alternative, rather than on the ward's own merits.

86 Several submissions noted that the A414 forms a barrier between Colney Heath village and the remainder of the district. While we accept the force of this argument, without the villages of Smallford, Sleafshyde and Tyttenhanger, Colney Heath would not have enough electors to allow even a single-member ward with acceptable electoral equality.

87 We have accepted the submissions of Colney Heath Parish Council, and the Conservative Group, and propose a single-member Colney Heath ward. We are persuaded that the geography of this area of the district, and the lack of community links to neighbouring villages, justifies this departure from the principle of three-member wards.

88 Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm, Hill End and Colney Heath wards are all forecast to have good electoral equality by 2025, and we confirm these recommendations as final.

South East St Albans City



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Clarence	3	5%
Cunningham	3	-5%
Sopwell	3	-6%

Clarence and Cunningham

89 Varying suggestions were received for the northern boundary of Cunningham ward with Clarence ward, in addition to the minor change to the southern boundary discussed at paragraph 48. The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing Ashley, Clarence and Cunningham wards, which we did not adopt, as discussed at paragraph 83.

90 The Conservative Group supported our draft recommendations for Clarence and Cunningham wards, while the Labour Group and a resident suggested different

amendments to the boundary between these wards, to both better reflect community identity and provide a more identifiable boundary.

91 The Labour Group suggested using Campfield Road and Hedley Road as the boundary between these wards, in order to unite the community of The Camp within Cunningham ward. We carefully considered this suggestion but concluded that this would result in high electoral variance for both Cunningham and Clarence wards (12% and -12% respectively) and we were therefore not persuaded to adopt it.

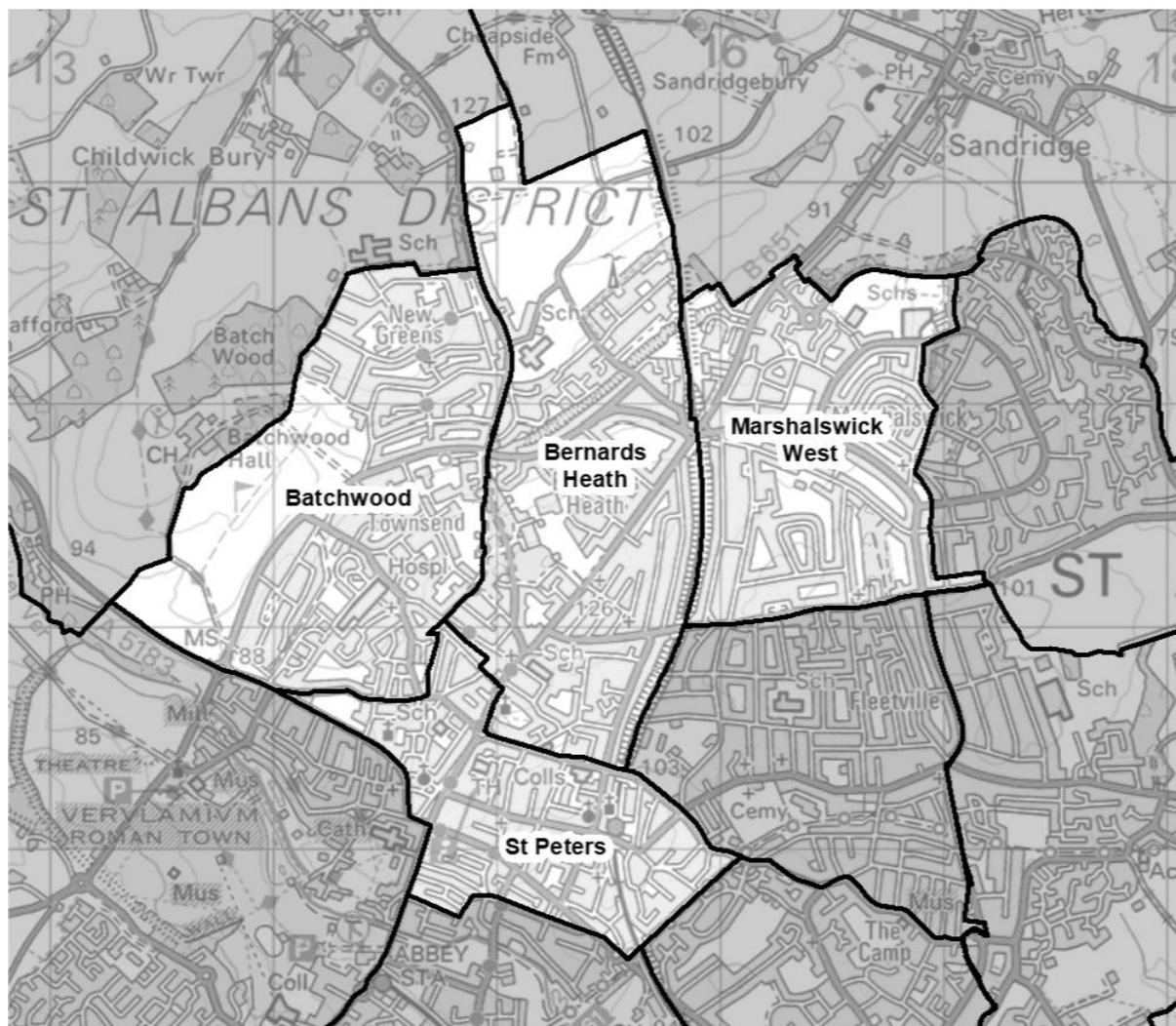
92 A resident suggested that adjusting the boundary to run along the length of Camp Road would offer benefits to the community identity of both Dellfield and the surrounding streets, and to a relatively cohesive community on either side of our draft recommendation boundary of Cambridge Road. We have carefully considered this proposal, and are persuaded that the evidence of community identity, and the clearer nature of Camp Road as a boundary, justifies amending our draft recommendations in this area.

Sopwell

93 All three political groups supported our draft recommendations for Sopwell ward, and we received no proposals for change from any residents or other consultation respondents. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

94 Clarence, Cunningham and Sopwell wards will all have good electoral equality under our proposals, and we confirm these recommendations as final.

North West St Albans City



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Batchwood	3	-6%
Bernards Heath	3	-3%
Marshalswick West	2	-3%
St Peters	3	8%

Batchwood, Bernards Heath and St Peters

95 We received several representations from both residents and political groups regarding these three wards, and the boundaries between them. The Conservative Group supported our proposed Batchwood, Bernards Heath and St Peters wards while the Labour Group proposed an amendment to the boundary between Batchwood and Bernards Heath wards in order to improve electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats proposed eliminating Bernards Heath ward and returning to the existing Marshalswick South and North wards in the north of the city.

96 Several residents of Dalton Street and Grange Street made submissions stating that these streets formed a single community, with unifying issues surrounding parking and conservation areas. They expressed a desire for this area to be retained within a single ward.

97 We have carefully considered these submissions and are persuaded to retain Grange Street and Dalton Street within a single ward, by moving the boundary between St Peters and Batchwood wards to run behind the houses on these streets. This increases the variance of St Peters ward to 8% more electors than the average across the district. We consider this relatively high variance to be justified by the increased representation of communities within the revised St Peters ward.

98 The Labour Group, and local residents, suggested that the area around and to the north of Carlisle Avenue could move into Bernards Heath ward, rather than Batchwood ward. The Labour Group argued on the grounds of electoral equality, given that our draft recommendations for Bernards Heath had a variance of -10%, while residents argued that these streets, currently in St Peters ward, shared little community identity with the Batchwood area.

99 We have carefully considered these submissions and are persuaded to change our draft recommendations in this area. Moving Carlisle Avenue and the streets to the north into Bernards Heath ward improves electoral equality and allows us to unite Bernards Heath park within the ward of the same name.

Marshalswick West

100 The Labour and Conservative groups supported our draft recommendations for this ward. The Liberal Democrats suggested wholesale reversion to the existing wards, while a resident suggested minor adjustments to the boundaries between Marshalswick West and Marshalswick East.

101 Some residents of Sandridge, and Sandridge Parish Council, expressed concern regarding the parish warding implications of this ward, and the requirement for a small parish ward in the Beech Bottom area. We have considered this carefully but consider that electors on both sides of the B651 St Albans Road are clearly part of the St Albans city community. With this in mind, we have no alternative to create a relatively small parish ward for this area of Sandridge parish, in order to ensure that all parish wards are within a single district ward and county division.

102 We have carefully considered all submissions regarding this area but are not persuaded to alter our draft recommendations for this ward. We consider that a two-councillor ward in this area is necessary to provide a warding pattern across St Albans that reflects our statutory criteria, and we confirm our draft recommendation in this area as final. Batchwood, Bernards Heath, St Peters and Marshalswick West are all forecast to have good electoral equality by 2025.

Conclusions

103 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in St Albans, referencing the 2019 and 2025 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	2025
Number of councillors	58	56
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,890	2,028
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

St Albans City & District Council should be made up of 56 councillors serving 20 wards representing one single-councillor ward, two two-councillor wards and 17 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 St Albans.

You can also view our final recommendations for St Albans on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

104 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.

105 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, St Albans 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.

106 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 Colney Heath, Harpenden Town, London Colney, Sandridge, St Michael, St Stephen and Wheathampstead parishes.

107 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Colney Heath parish.

Final recommendations

Colney Heath Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Alban Park	2
Colney Heath	3
Hill End	3
Tyttenhanger	1

108 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Harpenden Town parish.

Final recommendations

Harpenden Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Harpenden East	4
Harpenden North	4
Harpenden South	4
Harpenden West	4

109 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for London Colney parish.

Final recommendations

London Colney Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
London Colney	7
Napsbury Park	2

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

Final recommendations

Sandridge Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Beech Bottom	1
Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm	8
Marshalswick West	3
Sandridge Village	2

111 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for St Michael parish.

Final recommendations

St Michael Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
St Michael North	3
St Michael South	3
St Michael South East	1

112 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for St Stephen parish.

Final recommendations

St Stephen Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Park Street	5
Bricket Wood & Chiswell Green	7

113 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wheathampstead parish.

Final recommendations

Wheathampstead Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Aldwickbury	1
Wheathampstead Village	11

What happens next?

114 We have now completed our review of St Albans City & District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2022.

115 Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the 2022 St Albans City & District Council election will be an ‘all out’ election, where the entire council is elected based on the new warding pattern. After this, the council will revert to a pattern of election by thirds. Details of the arrangements for future elections will be laid out in the draft Order.

Equalities

116 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 St Albans City & District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Batchwood	3	5,578	1,859	-5%	5,739	1,913	-6%
2	Bernards Heath	3	5,742	1,914	-2%	5,887	1,962	-3%
3	Clarence	3	6,027	2,009	3%	6,363	2,121	5%
4	Colney Heath	1	2,113	2,113	8%	2,170	2,170	7%
5	Cunningham	3	5,705	1,902	-3%	5,781	1,927	-5%
6	Harpenden East	3	5,707	1,902	-3%	5,765	1,922	-5%
7	Harpenden North & Rural	3	5,911	1,970	1%	6,033	2,011	-1%
8	Harpenden South	3	5,648	1,883	-4%	5,775	1,925	-5%
9	Harpenden West	3	5,981	1,994	2%	6,163	2,054	1%
10	Hill End	3	5,516	1,839	-6%	5,681	1,894	-7%
11	London Colney	3	6,044	2,015	3%	6,127	2,042	1%
12	Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm	3	5,504	1,835	-6%	6,192	2,064	2%

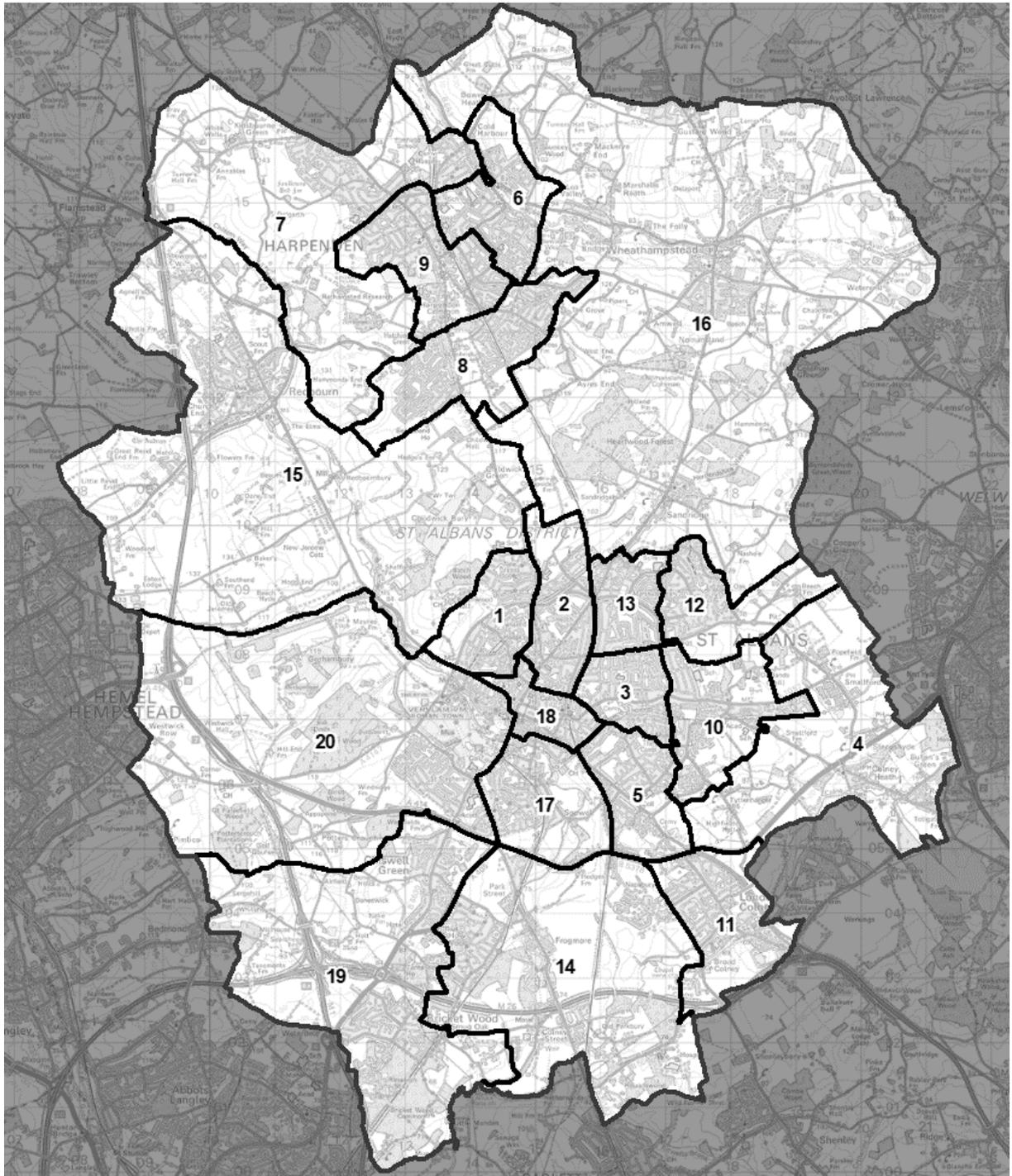
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Marshalswick West	2	3,902	1,951	0%	3,936	1,968	-3%
14 Park Street	3	6,224	2,075	6%	6,540	2,180	7%
15 Redbourn	2	4,303	2,152	10%	4,339	2,170	7%
16 Sandridge & Wheathampstead	3	6,122	2,041	4%	6,216	2,072	2%
17 Sopwell	3	5,412	1,804	-8%	5,717	1,906	-6%
18 St Peters	3	5,970	1,990	2%	6,555	2,185	8%
19 St Stephen	3	6,417	2,139	9%	6,738	2,246	11%
20 Verulam	3	5,814	1,938	-1%	5,865	1,955	-4%
Totals	56	109,640	-	-	113,582	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,958	-	-	2,028	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by St Albans 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	Batchwood
2	Bernards Heath
3	Clarence
4	Colney Heath
5	Cunningham
6	Harpenden East
7	Harpenden North & Rural
8	Harpenden South
9	Harpenden West
10	Hill End
11	London Colney
12	Marshalswick East & Jersey Farm
13	Marshalswick West
14	Park Street
15	Redbourn
16	Sandridge & Wheathampstead
17	Sopwell
18	St Peters
19	St Stephen
20	Verulam

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/hertfordshire/st-albans

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/hertfordshire/st-albans

Political Groups

- St Albans Council Conservative Group
- St Albans Council Labour Group
- St Albans Council Liberal Democrat Group

Councillors

- Councillor G. Churchard (Sandridge Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Cook (Colney Heath Parish Council)
- Councillor R. Curthoys (St Albans City & District Council)
- Councillor M. Maynard (St Albans City & District Council)
- Councillor D. Mitchell (St Albans City & District Council & Redbourn Parish Council)
- Councillor B. Pawle (St Albans City & District Council)
- Councillor P. Woodhams (Wheathampstead Parish Council)

Local Organisations

- Charrington Place Residents' Association
- Marshalswick North Residents' Association
- Napsbury Park Residents' Association

Parish and Town Councils

- Colney Heath Parish Council
- London Colney Parish Council
- Redbourn Parish Council
- Sandridge Parish Council
- Wheathampstead Parish Council

Local Residents

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

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