

## TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW 2022-23

#### PROPOSAL ON PATTERN OF WARDS BY THE INDEPENDENTS & OLRG ALLIANCE

##### SOUTH TANDRIDGE DISTRICT

### SUMMARY

Please note that these proposals relate to those eight wards which members of our group – the Independents & OLRG Alliance - represent on Tandridge District Council, along with Felbridge, a 1-councillor ward where the councillor is not a member of our group. These wards are intrinsically located to the south of the M25 motorway which crosses Tandridge District. We believe that we should leave any proposals for other wards – generally situated in the north/north west of the District - to those parties that better understand the issues in these localities.

**We don't believe that there is need to significantly change the existing pattern of wards in the south of Tandridge District and our proposals for future electoral arrangements point to only one material change since the last Boundary Review in 1997/8.** This is the proposed merger of Lingfield & Crowhurst with Felbridge to create a 3 -councillor ward to improve overall the level of councillor service and electoral quality. Meanwhile, in only one ward - Oxted North & Tandridge- is there a (minor) ward boundary change requested. The remaining 6 wards would retain their existing boundaries. Also included are proposals for Dormansland & Felcourt and Limpsfield to remain as 2-councillor wards which were also endorsed at the last Boundary Review. Otherwise, all other wards have 3 councillors.

#### Summary of proposals

Ward name	Polling districts
Bletchingley & Nutfield	Bletchingley, Nutfield & South Nutfield
Burstow, Horne & Outwood	Burstow, Horne & Outwood
Dormansland & Felcourt	Dormansland & Felcourt, Dormans Park
Godstone	Godstone, Godstone South & Blindley Heath
Limpsfield	Limpsfield
Lingfield, Crowhurst & Felbridge	Lingfield, Crowhurst, Felbridge
Oxted North & Tandridge	Oxted North, Tandridge
Oxted South	Oxted South

*Please see Appendix A for further details.*

## CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

The table below summarises electoral arrangements for the District as a whole. This shows the number of councillors in each ward and also electoral indicators (current and 2028 estimates using data provided) for: electorate sizes; electors per councillor and variances from average number of electors per councillor in each ward. These statistics were used in our review of proposed electoral arrangements.

### Existing electoral arrangements with 2028 estimates – Tandridge District

Ward	No. of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Electors per cllr.	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Electors per cllr.	Variance from average %
Bletchingley & Nutfield	3	4496	1499	-4	4859	1620	-4
Burstow, Horne & Outwood	3	4855	1618	+3	5236	1745	+3
Chaldon	1	1421	1421	-9	1549	1549	-8
Dormansland & Felcourt	2	3073	1537	-2	3367	1684	0
Felbridge	1	1809	1809	+15	1957	1957	+16
Godstone	3	4536	1512	-4	4924	1641	-3
Harestone	2	3229	1615	+3	3482	1741	+3
Limpsfield	2	2878	1439	-8	3123	1562	-8
Lingfield & Crowhurst	2	3328	1664	+6	3610	1805	+7
Oxted N. & Tandridge	3	4534	1511	-4	4906	1635	-3
Oxted South	3	4739	1580	+1	5200	1733	+2
Portley	2	3381	1691	+8	3638	1819	+8
Queens Park	2	2933	1467	-6	3183	1592	-6
Tatsfield & Titsey	1	1566	1566	0	1695	1694	0
Valley	2	3222	1611	+3	3508	1754	+4
Warlingham E, Chelsham & Farleigh	3	4356	1452	-7	4732	1578	-7
Warlingham West	2	2825	1413	-9	3077	1539	-9
Westway	2	3438	1719	+10	3759	1880	+11
Whyteleafe	2	3252	1626	+4	3515	1758	+4
Woldingham	1	1590	1590	+1	1710	1710	+1
Average			1567			1692	

Electorate

65461

71074

## Existing electoral arrangements compared with 1997 - south Tandridge District

Ward	No of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Electors per cllr	Variance from average %	Electorate (2022)	Electors per cllr	Variance from average %
Bletchingley & Nutfield	3	4383	1461	+4	4496	1499	-4
Burstow, Horne & Outwood	3	4399	1466	+5	4855	1618	+3
Dormansland & Felcourt	2	2857	1429	+2	3073	1537	-2
Felbridge	1	1593	1593	+14	1809	1809	+15
Godstone	3	4333	1444	+3	4536	1512	-4
Limpsfield	2	2763	1382	-1	2878	1439	-8
Lingfield & Crowhurst	2	2960	1480	+6	3328	1664	+6
Oxted N. & Tandridge	3	4182	1394	0	4534	1511	-4
Oxted South	3	4249	1416	+1	4739	1580	+1
Average			1399			1567	

The table above shows that variances from average number of electors per councillor have remained within reasonable limits over the course of the last 25 years or so in the south of Tandridge District. However, the table highlights that Felbridge has recorded a higher variance than others. This was a factor in seeking to improve overall councillor service and electoral quality by proposing that Felbridge merges with Lingfield & Crowhurst.

## PROPOSED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

We believe that the following arrangements would produce acceptable electoral quality in the wards in the south of the District. They also reflect & would help protect community identities and interests:

### Merged ward

Lingfield & Crowhurst (**'Lingfield'**) – proposed merger with Felbridge to become Lingfield, Crowhurst and Felbridge

### Modified ward

Oxted North & Tandridge – proposed minor boundary change

### Unchanged wards

Bletchingley & Nutfield

Burstow, Horne & Outwood

Godstone

Dormansland & Felcourt (**'Dormans'**) – proposed to remain a 2-councillor ward

Limpsfield – proposed to remain a 2 – councillor ward

Oxted South

These arrangements are considered below:

### **Lingfield, Crowhurst & Felbridge**

Lingfield ward encompasses Lingfield Parish and Crowhurst Parish Councils, whilst Felbridge ward has Felbridge Parish Council which is coterminous with the ward. Lingfield is represented by two councillors whilst Felbridge has one. Electoral quality is mixed. Lingfield currently has the number of electors per councillor varying from the District average at + 6% whilst the variance in Felbridge is +15%. These variances are not estimated to improve over the next 5 years.

When modelling possible outcomes to support our proposals, it was apparent that Lingfield ward - directly bordering six other wards - could be reconfigured in various ways to achieve 3- councillor status (whilst achieving acceptable electoral quality) by using different combinations of boundary changes. However, this process has consequential impacts on other wards leading to even more possible reconfigurations elsewhere, increasing the possibility of diminishing electoral quality in other locations. Merging Lingfield and Felbridge scored highest in terms of overall electoral quality and practicability during our deliberations, and it became our preferred proposal in this part of the District.

Compared to the average rates of growth of the electorate in the south of Tandridge District, both Lingfield and Felbridge have seen relatively high levels of growth since the last Boundary Review. We estimate that the average growth of the electorate in these two wards is about 90% higher than the average growth rate achieved by all other wards examined in this review. Our proposal to merge the two wards to form Lingfield, Crowhurst and Felbridge would bring more councillor resources to support the electorate. Connections between the two wards are very good with the B2028 Newchapel Road/Westpark Road and also the A22 being the main links. There should be an acceptable level of overall electoral quality from this proposal, which is estimated to provide an overall variance of +10% when comparing the number of electors per councillor with the District average estimated for 2028. *Appendix B illustrates this proposal.*

### **Oxted North & Tandridge**

We propose a minor change to the ward boundary to correct an anomaly in the north of the ward and improve community identity in this ward and the adjacent ward of Woldingham. Here, twelve dwellings which are serviced by local road The Ridge (and including those in Whistlers Court/Whistlers Wood), are located in both Oxted North and Woldingham. This area is just to the north of the North Downs escarpment. We propose that the ward boundary be adjusted so that all the dwellings at this particular location (*see Appendix C for boundary adjustment*) are taken out of Oxted North and become part of Woldingham, which is where the residents who are part of this proposal identify with. Otherwise, we see no reasons to make other boundary changes to Oxted North and Tandridge ward which had its electoral arrangements endorsed by the last Boundary Review.

### **Bletchingley & Nutfield**

Bletchingley & Nutfield emerged as a single entity 3-councillor ward in the last Boundary Review after the proposal to bring together a 2 – councillor Bletchingley (average elector variance -17%) and a 1 – councillor Nutfield (variance +48%) attracted a fair degree of local debate and some controversy. The new arrangements seem to work well and electoral equality is now good. We see no reason to change the status quo.

### **Burstow, Horne & Outwood**

Burstow and Horne ward (as it was then) came out of the last Boundary Review with unchanged electoral arrangements. Outwood was part of the area at that time but became a parish in 2000, being made up of parts of Burstow & Horne, so the ward was named Burstow, Horne & Outwood. Electoral quality is good and we support existing electoral arrangements.

### **Godstone**

The ward, which lies on both sides of the A22 and is coterminous with the eponymous Parish, had its electoral arrangements endorsed at the last Boundary Review. Electoral equality is good, these arrangements have stood the test of time and no changes are proposed.

### **Dormansland & Felcourt**

Dormans appeared in its present guise following the last Boundary Review. The existing Dormans ward was combined with those areas of Felcourt and Haxted that were in Lingfield in an attempt to improve electoral inequality, and this change has worked. It is a 2 – councillor ward (which was confirmed at the time of the last Boundary Review) and we propose that Dormans maintains this status, primarily to protect community identity and interests, after examining the following issues:

- a) We examined the possible ways of Dormans becoming a 3 - councillor ward, either by merger with another ward or including it in a local reconfiguration with surrounding wards. With a merger between Lingfield and Felbridge our preferred outcome, Felbridge was not available as a potential merger candidate for Dormans. In addition, reconfiguration of Dormans via boundary changes with other adjacent wards would not present a workable proposition.
- b) If Felbridge was rejected as a merger candidate with Lingfield, informal soundings in Dormans lead us to believe that a proposal to merge the ward with Felbridge would be greeted with widespread local opposition. The issue of community identity and a sense of belonging & connection, with solid social and cultural ties, looms large amongst residents of Dormans. It is a predominantly rural area with significant tranches of farmland and contains two main residential areas – Dormansland village and Dormans Park. About a third of the ward is within the High Weald AONB.  
This contrasts to the local perception that it has no affinity with Felbridge which is predominantly an urban area (its population density is more than twice that in Dormans) and forms a northern suburb of East Grinstead, a town which is located adjacent to Felbridge and is just across the Tandridge District border in West Sussex. Leaving Dormans as a 2-councillor ward will also preserve its electoral quality which, when it comes to the average number of electors per councillor, has a variance of -2% when measured against the District average. This variance is estimated to disappear by 2028.

## Limpsfield

Limpsfield, with boundaries coterminous with Limpsfield Parish Council, is quite distinct from the adjacent built - up areas of Oxted and Hurst Green (Oxted South), and is represented by two councillors. We propose it should remain as a 2- councillor ward. In order to become a 3 – councillor ward, attempts at merger with and/or reconfiguration involving any of the four wards adjacent to Limpsfield (Oxted North & Tandridge, Oxted South, Lingfield and Dormans) would fail electoral quality requirements, and thus be unacceptable. Limpsfield was identified as having no requirement to change its electoral arrangements in the Boundary Review of 1997/8 and we continue to support that decision.

NB: Tatsfield & Titsey ward shares Limpsfield's northern boundary. It is comparatively self-contained, with no meaningful connection or interaction with Limpsfield. Relatively poor transport connections may have some bearing on this. Tatsfield village has local facilities, ranging from a shop and a pub through to primary school, church and village hall. However, to access a wider range of services it generally tends to look away from Tandridge towards, for instance, the London Borough of Bromley with Biggin Hill being the nearest reasonably sized settlement. All in all, the proximity of Tatsfield & Titsey is not a factor which eliminates our support for maintaining the long – standing electoral arrangements in Limpsfield.

## Oxted South

This ward consists of the Oxted South ward of Oxted parish and is dominated by the (mainly) residential area of Hurst Green. It has excellent electoral equality with the best 2022 'variance' score in the south of Tandridge district. This was recognized during the last Boundary Review when existing electoral arrangements were affirmed. We believe that the 'no change' status is still valid.

## Proposed electoral arrangements – 2028 estimates

This table demonstrates that by 2028 the number of electors per councillor varies in all wards in the south of Tandridge District within the range of -10% to + 10% of the District average.

Ward	Councillors	Electorate (2028)	Electors per cllr	Variance from average %
Bletchingley & Nutfield	3	4859	1620	-4
Burstow, Horne & Outwood	3	5236	1745	+3
Dormans & Felcourt	2	3367	1684	0
Godstone	3	4924	1641	-3
Limpsfield	2	3123	1562	-8
Lingfield, Crowhurst and Felbridge	3	5567	1856	+10
Oxted North & Tandridge	3	4906	1635	-3
Oxted South	3	5200	1733	+2
Average number of electors/ cllr			1692	

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The pattern of wards established at the last Boundary Review has predominantly served our electorate well. Electoral quality generally improved and, for the most part, been maintained at a good level. We see no reason to change existing arrangements significantly. However, we can do better. We believe that the opportunity should be taken to improve electoral arrangements further by bringing together Lingfield & Crowhurst and Felbridge wards. This would form a new 3 – councillor ward, to provide the electorate with the benefit of increased councillor resources to give a more responsive service. The merged wards would also experience improved overall electoral quality.

We believe that by accepting them, our proposals would emulate what we generally consider was a positive Boundary Review some 25 years ago. We look forward to their implementation.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Map of proposed wards

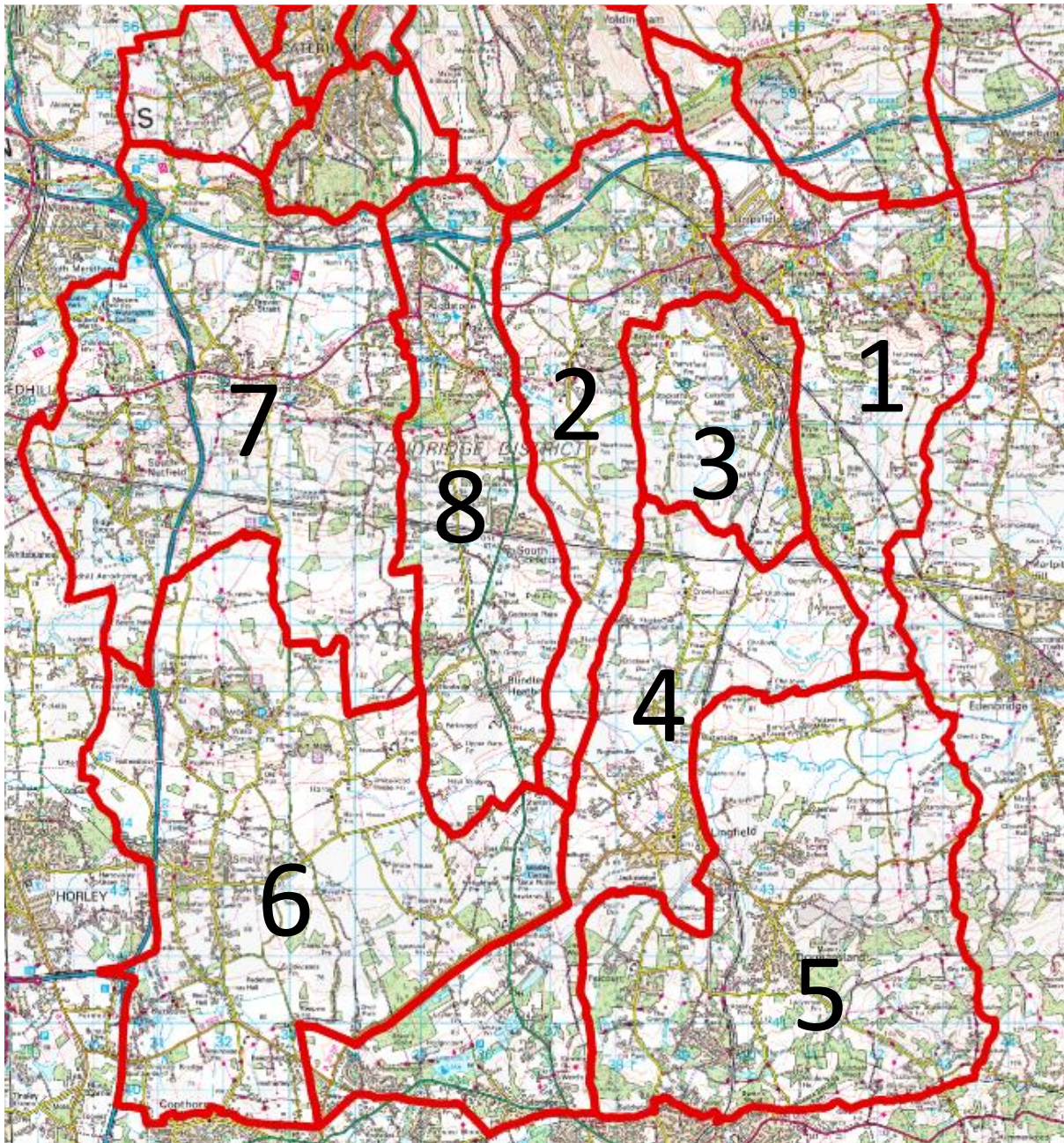
Appendix B – Proposed Lingfield, Crowhurst & Felbridge ward

Appendix C – Proposed boundary change – Woldingham and Oxted North & Tandridge



# Appendix A

## Map of Proposed Wards



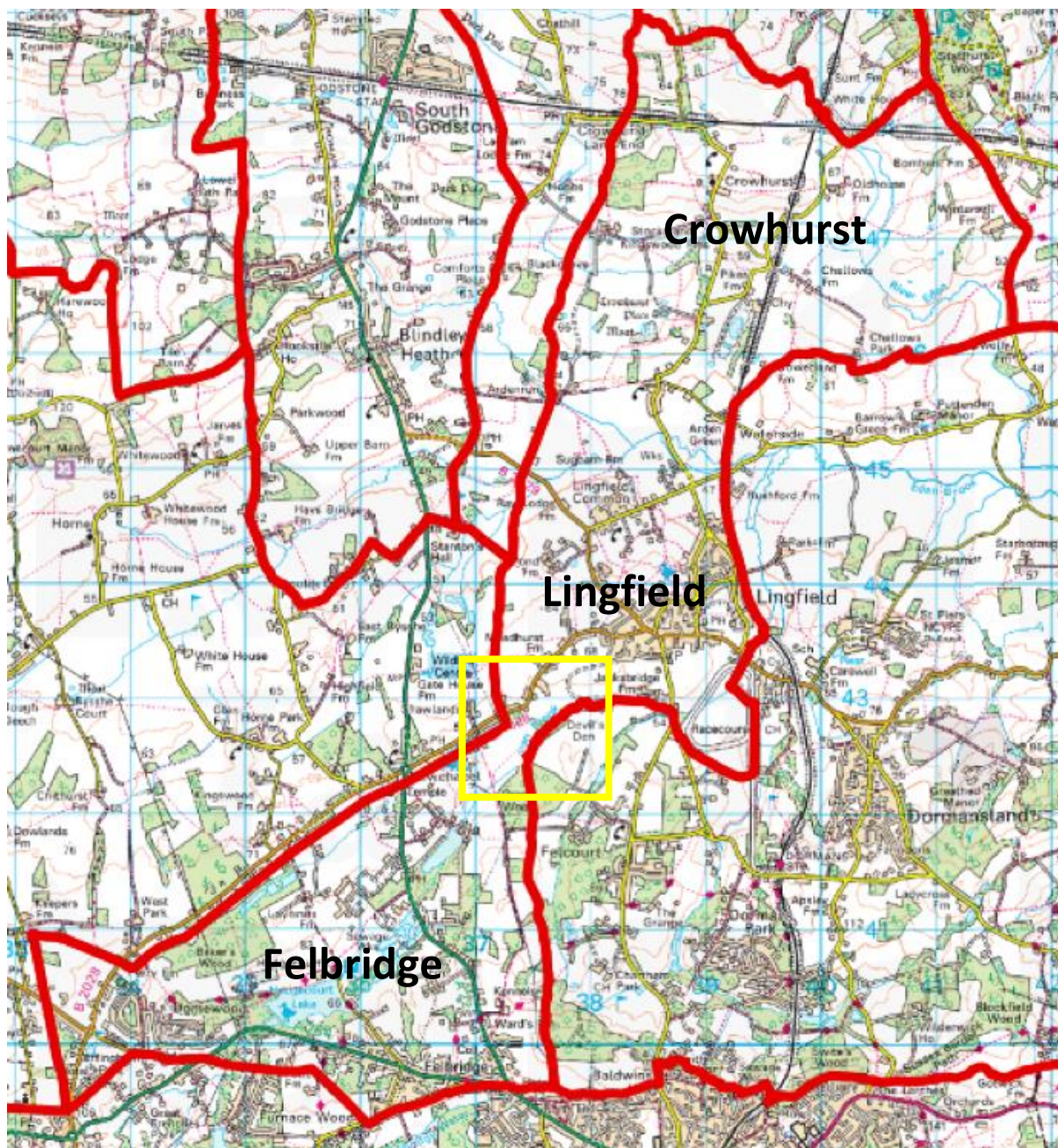
### Proposed Wards

- |   |                                  |   |                          |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Limpsfield                       | 5 | Dormansland & Felcourt   |
| 2 | Oxted North & Tandridge          | 6 | Burstow, Horne & Outwood |
| 3 | Oxted South                      | 7 | Bletchingley & Nutfield  |
| 4 | Lingfield, Crowhurst & Felbridge | 8 | Godstone                 |



## Appendix B

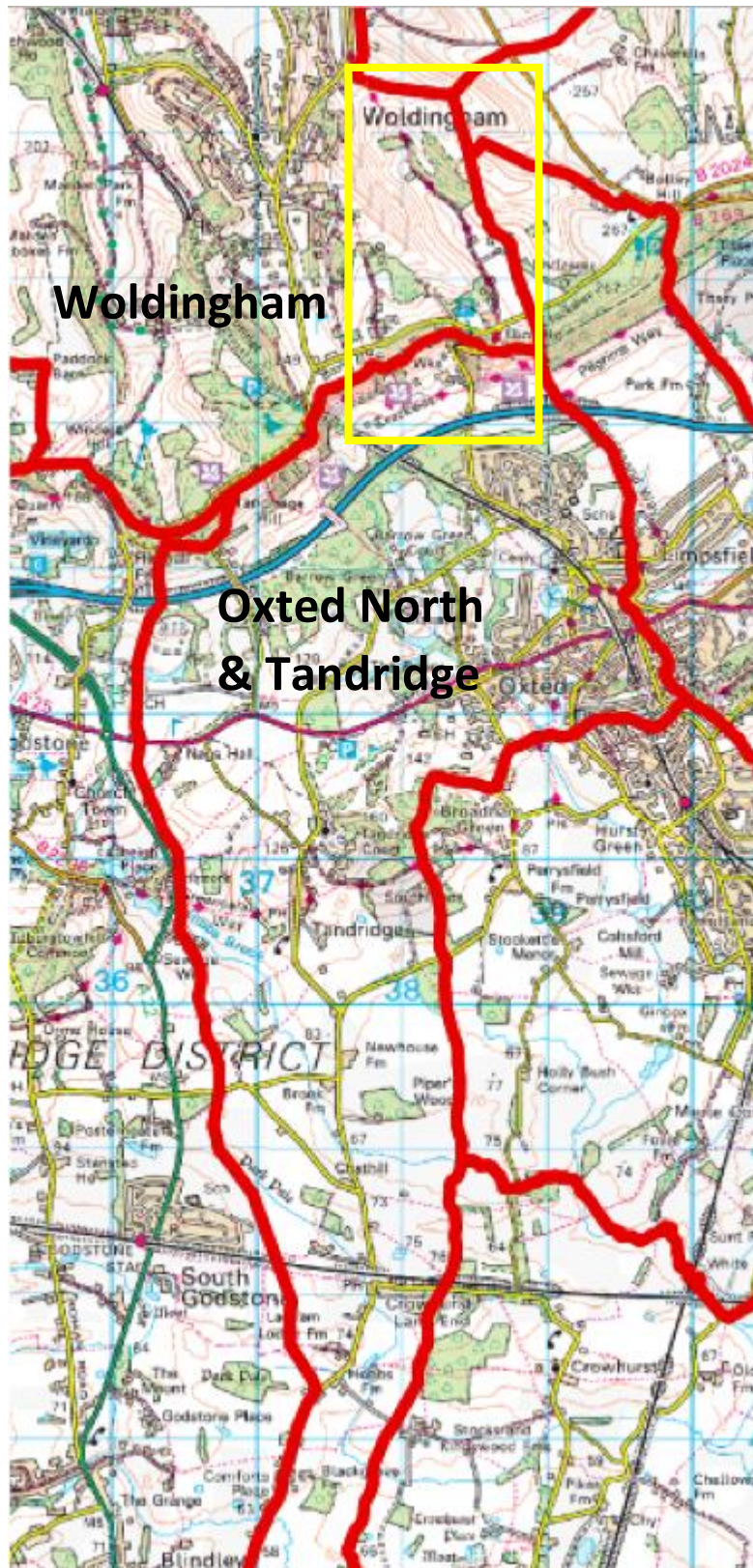
### Proposed Lingfield, Crowhurst & Felbridge





# Appendix C

## Proposed Boundary Change - Woldingham and Oxted North & Tandridge



## Tandridge District Council

### Personal Details:

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**Organisation Name:** Independents and OLRG Alliance

### Comment text:

The Independents and OLRG Alliance currently forms the administration at Tandridge District Council. We thank you for the opportunity of presenting our proposals for the Tandridge Boundary Review. The Group's submission is attached.

### Uploaded Documents:

**[https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download\\_document?file=draft%2F1678871948\\_WARD+PATTERN+SUBMISSION.pdf](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/download_document?file=draft%2F1678871948_WARD+PATTERN+SUBMISSION.pdf)**