

New electoral arrangements for Sunderland City Council Draft Recommendations

October 2023

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The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

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

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Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Sunderland City Council

Electoral review

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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 Parliament¹. 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
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Liz Treacy
- 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.

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.

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

Why Sunderland?

7 We are conducting a review of Sunderland City Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2003, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² Additionally some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

- The wards in Sunderland are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the city.

Our proposals for Sunderland

9 Sunderland should be represented by 75 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Sunderland should have 25 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 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.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the city 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 consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a ten-week period, from 3 October 2023 to 11 December 2023. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

to comment on these proposed wards as, the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 11 December 2023 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 29 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for area. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the city. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
11 April 2023	Number of councillors decided
9 May 2023	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
31 July 2023	End of consultation following a two-week extension; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
3 October 2023	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
11 December 2023	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
27 February 2024	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ 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.

20 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.

21 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.

	2023	2029
Electorate of Sunderland	206,971	221,204
Number of councillors	75	75
Average number of electors per councillor	2,760	2,949

22 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 of our proposed wards for Sunderland are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2029.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2029, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2024. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7% by 2029.

25 During our initial warding consultation, the Council informed us that the projected electorates of three polling districts had been misassigned due to a clerical error, and later requested a two-week extension to the consultation. We accepted

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

this request and extended the consultation deadline from 17 July 2023 to 31 July 2023.

26 We considered the revised information provided by the Council and were satisfied that the projected figures were the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 Sunderland City Council currently has 75 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 75 councillors.

29 As Sunderland City Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ that the Council have 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.

30 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns, one of which was made by Councillor Michael Butler. Two of these submissions appeared to be made on the assumption that the number of councillors would be decreased. A third argued there were too many councillors but did not provide evidence to support this claim. We are content that a 75-member council remains the right number of councillors and have based our draft recommendations on this number.

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 40 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two city-wide proposals from Sunderland Conservatives ('the Conservatives'), as well as Wearside Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Democrat Group on Sunderland City Council ('the Liberal Democrats'). We also received two partial schemes from Houghton & Sunderland South Constituency Labour Party and Washington & Sunderland West Constituency Labour Party. For the purposes of this report we will refer to these submissions jointly as the Labour submission. There was no Labour submission for the area of Sunderland Central constituency. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for ward arrangements in particular areas of the city. Four of these submissions were made by Councillor Paul Edgeworth and included a number of letters from residents.

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

Although these letters were individually signed by residents, the letters in each submission were identical to one another, so we have listed these as four petitions.

32 The two city-wide schemes provided uniform patterns of three-councillor wards for Sunderland. 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. Both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats made detailed, well-evidenced submissions in support of their warding arrangements, though our calculations found both to contain several wards with variances outside of $\pm 10\%$. However, as the Liberal Democrat scheme had better electoral equality overall, we chose this as the basis of our draft recommendations, incorporating elements of the Conservative scheme where we felt this offered a better balance of our statutory criteria.

33 Our draft recommendations also take 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 undertook a virtual tour the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Sunderland helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

35 Our draft recommendations are for 25 three-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 The tables and maps on pages 9–25 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Sunderland. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

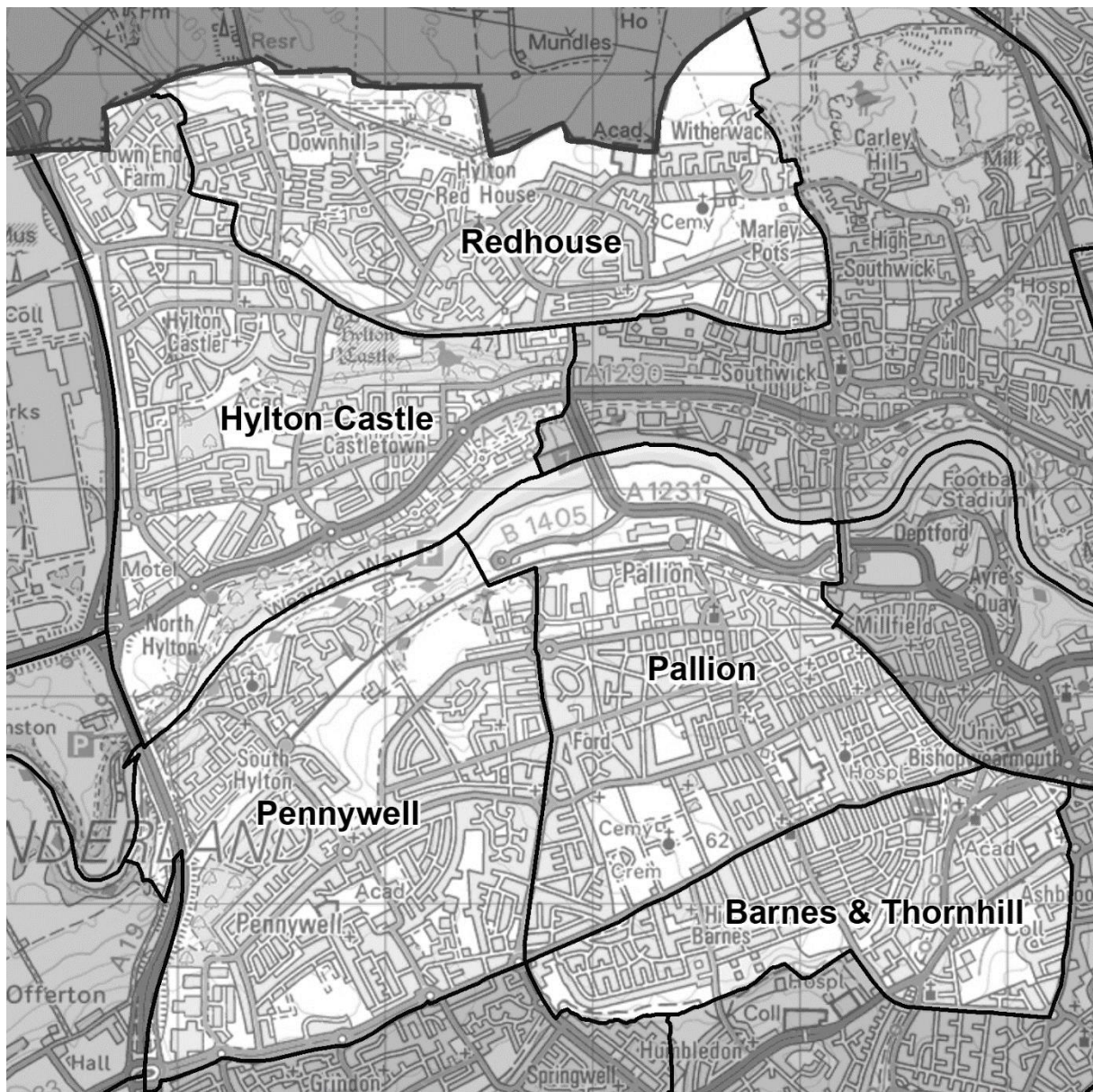
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

37 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 35 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

38 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

North-West Sunderland



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Barnes & Thornhill	3	2%
Hylton Castle	3	-7%
Pallion	3	8%
Pennywell	3	7%
Redhouse	3	6%

Barnes & Thornhill

39 The Conservative and Liberal Democrat schemes proposed broadly similar boundaries in this area though, as with the rest of our draft recommendations, we have based our proposals on the Liberal Democrat scheme. The Conservatives' proposed Barnes & Humbledon ward would have an electoral variance of -1%. This

ward would include the area between Springwell Road, The Broadway, Grindon Lane and Barnes Burn, the area between Barnes Burn in Barnes Park, Springwell Road/Premier Road and Silksworth Lane. However, the Conservatives excluded everything east of Durham Lane from the proposed ward. We noted that two of the community markers mentioned in the Conservative submission – the Barnes and the Broadway pubs – are also included in the Liberal Democrats' proposed ward and considered, on balance, that Barnes Burn and Barnes Park provided a clearer separation between communities than Springwell Road and Premier Road.

Pallion and Pennywell

40 The Conservative scheme in this area comprised three wards. They proposed a Grindon & South Hilton ward containing the area between the River Wear, the A19, the southern boundary of Grindon, and Grindon Lane/Pennywell Road/Portsmouth Road/St. Luke's Road/Keelman's Lane. The Conservatives also proposed a Pallion & Ford Estate ward bordered by the proposed Grindon & South Hylton ward, the River Wear, St. Luke's Terrace/Pallion Road/Hylton Road/Bishopwearmouth Cemetery and The Broadway. The third ward they proposed was Millfield & Thornhill which would be bounded by the proposed Pallion & Ford Estate ward, The Broadway/Western Hill, Durham Road, Thornhill Road/Belvedere Road, Stockton Road/St. Michael's Road/Trimdon Street, the B1539 and the River Wear. The electoral variances for these wards would be 1%, 9% and 0%, respectively, by 2029.

41 The Liberal Democrat scheme includes a Pennywell ward bounded by the A19, Chester Road/The Broadway, Holborn Road/Front Road/European Way, the railway line and the River Wear. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a Pallion ward bounded by Holborn Road/Front Road/European Way, the railway line and the River Wear, the B1539, Lisburn Terrace and Chester Road. The forecast variances for these wards would be 7% and 8%, respectively. After carefully considering both submissions, we concluded that the Liberal Democrat scheme offered the clearest and most effective boundaries. For example, we observed that St. Luke's Terrace appeared to be a community hub, with retail shops, cafés, barbers, and takeaways, yet formed the boundary between Pallion & Ford Estate and Millfield & Thornhill in the Conservative scheme. On the other hand, Front Road/Holborn Road, which divides the Liberal Democrats' Pallion and Pennywell wards, is a wide residential road with set-back houses which appears to us to be a more appropriate feature on which to base a ward boundary. We have therefore adopted this scheme in our draft recommendations.

Hylton Castle & Redhouse

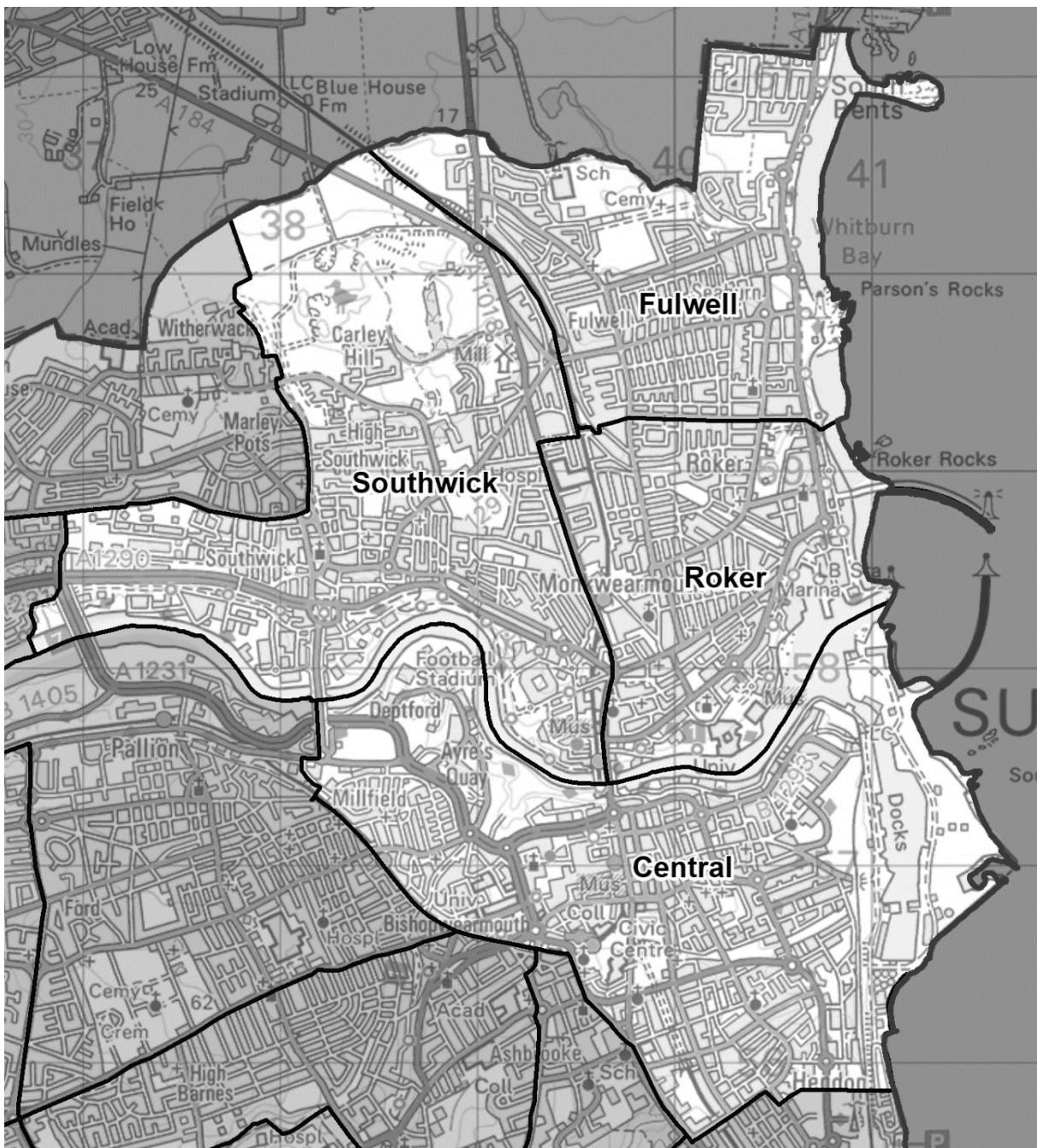
42 The Conservative and Liberal Democrat proposals in this area were very similar, both closely resembling the existing wards, albeit with different names. The wards resembling the existing Castle ward were renamed Castletown in the Conservative scheme and Hylton Castle in the Liberal Democrat scheme, while the wards resembling the existing Redhill ward were renamed Redhill & Marley Pots in

the Conservative scheme and Redhouse in the Liberal Democrat scheme.

43 The Conservative scheme adds the area of the existing Redhill ward west of Hylton Lane to the proposed Castletown ward, while also running the eastern boundary of Castletown across the Wessington Way bridge. Both schemes add Marley Pots – between North Hylton Road and Old Mill Road – and Wentbridge to Redhill & Marley Pots/Redhouse ward. The Liberal Democrat scheme also adds the area of Castle ward between Canterbury Road, Cranleigh Road and Washington Road into Redhouse ward. The forecast variances for the Conservatives' Castletown and Redhill & Marley Pots wards are 9% and -10%, respectively, while those of the Liberal Democrats' Hylton Castle and Redhouse wards are 5% and -6%, respectively.

44 We have adopted the Liberal Democrat scheme as the basis for our draft recommendations in this area. However, we did not consider the inclusion of Canterbury Road and Cranleigh Road and their associated streets in Redhouse ward to be conducive to community identity or effective and convenient local government, being significantly removed from the nearest residential properties in the proposed ward and appearing more closely connected to the surrounding Hylton Castle area. We have therefore included this area in our proposed Hylton Castle ward. However, as this creates a -10% variance in Redhouse ward, we have decided to extend the western boundary of Redhouse along Bedale Crescent, Bayswater Avenue, Blackwood Road, and the rear of properties on Baxter Road. This changes the forecast electoral variances of Redhouse to 6% and Hylton Castle to -7%.

North-East Sunderland



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Central	3	5%
Fulwell	3	-1%
Roker	3	-10%
Southwick	3	-6%

Central

45 Both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat schemes made similar proposals for a city centre ward, both of which were presented as uniting the entire city centre, rather than focusing on Hendon as now. The Conservative proposals expand on the existing Hendon ward by pushing the western boundary as far as the B1539, Trimdon Street, St. Michaels Way and Stockton Road. This would result in a Hendon & City Centre ward with a forecast variance of 13%. The Liberal Democrat proposal also includes the existing Hendon ward, minus the Grangetown area south of Vilette Road, and extending as far as the B1539, the railway line, Tunstall Road and Belvedere Road. This would creating a Central ward with an electoral variance of 11% by 2029.

46 We again based our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrat scheme. As well as having better electoral equality, we considered the exclusion of the area south of Vilette Road and its incorporation into Grangetown ward (see paragraph 54) to better reflect local communities, containing as it does Grangetown Primary School. However, in order to improve electoral equality, we excluded from the proposed ward Alice Street, Argyll Street, Argyll Square, Azalea Terrace North, Creswell Terrace, Princess Terrace, Tunstall Road, Tunstall Terrace, and Worcester Street. We have placed these streets in our recommended Tunstall & Humbledon ward (see paragraph 56), using the railway line as the boundary between the wards. This brings the variance of Central ward down to 5%.

Fulwell, Roker and Southwick

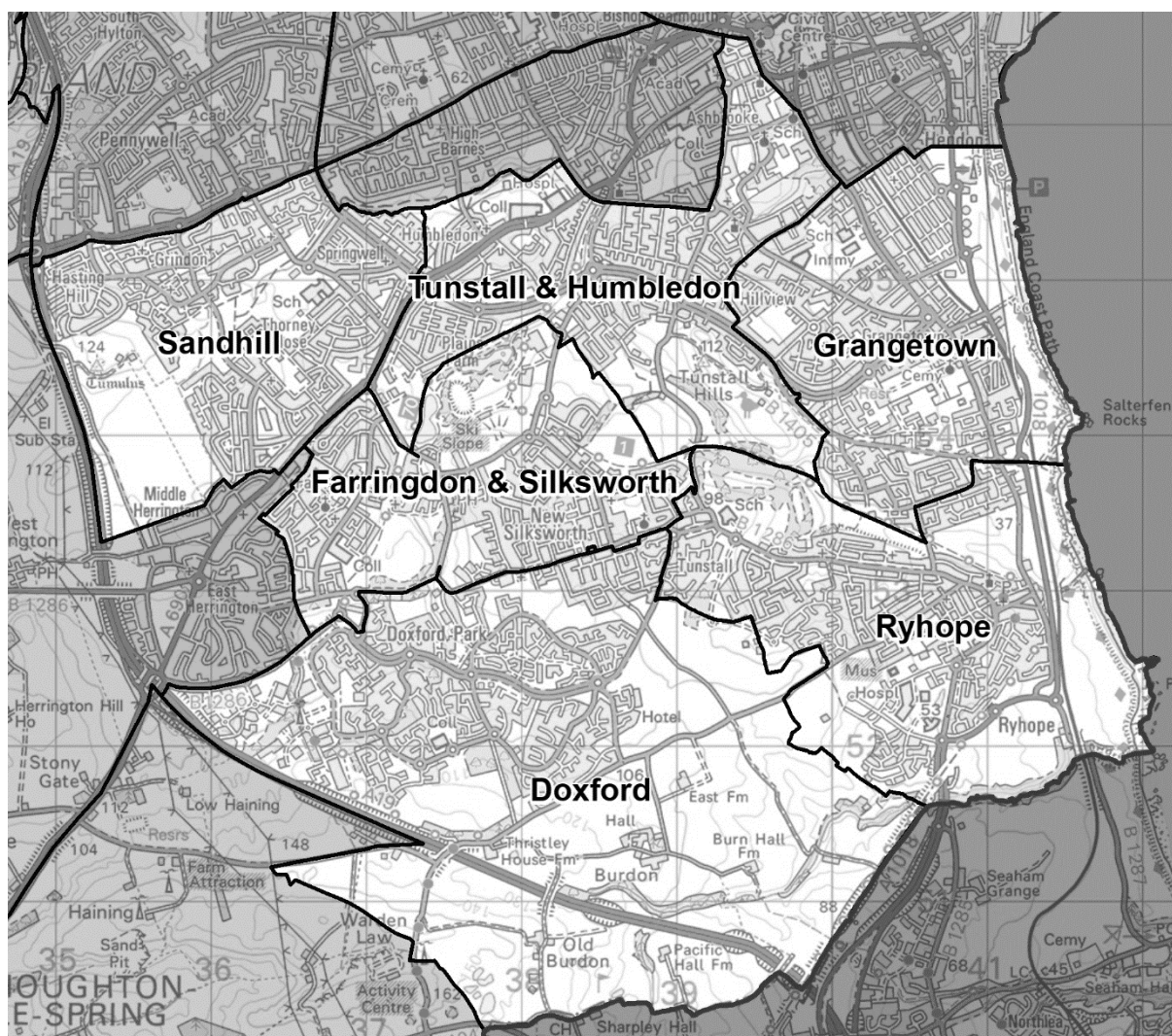
47 The Conservative and Liberal Democrat schemes again made similar proposals in this area, both of which resemble the existing wards, with notable differences. Both schemes renamed St. Peter's ward 'Roker'. The Conservatives' proposed ward uses the railway line as the western boundary of the ward as far as Station Road, which forms the northern boundary before running down Fulwell Road as far as Neale Street. The boundary then runs up Winifred Street, Claremont Road, Park Avenue and Peareth Road to the sea. This ward would have a forecast electoral variance of 0%. The Liberal Democrat proposal is similar but uses the Newcastle Road as the western boundary and Bartram Street, Rushcliffe and Side Cliff Road as its northern boundary. This ward would have a variance of -10%.

48 The Conservatives proposed a Seaburn ward to the north of Roker which, by our calculations, would have a forecast electoral variance of -15%. This ward is bounded by the sea to the east, the city boundary to the north, the railway line to the west and Roker ward to the south. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Fulwell ward is similar except to the south and would have an electoral variance of -1%. Both schemes included a similar ward to the west of these – a Southwick & Fulwell Mill in the Conservative scheme with a variance of -2% and a Southwick ward in the Liberal Democrat scheme with a variance of -6%.

49 After considering both schemes for this area carefully, we concluded that the Liberal Democrat proposal provided clearer ward boundaries and would result in

greater levels of electoral equality. We have therefore decided to base our draft recommendations on these proposals.

South Sunderland



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Doxford	3	5%
Farrington & Silksworth	3	-4%
Grangetown	3	1%
Ryhope	3	-2%
Sandhill	3	-1%
Tunstall & Humbleton	3	0%

Doxford and Ryhope

50 Labour made minor alterations to the existing wards in the south of the city. The area of Doxford ward west of Tunstall Village Green and Burdon Road were transferred to Silksworth ward, reducing the variance in Doxford from 12% to 8%. The area of Silksworth ward between North Moor Lane, Durham Road and Premier Road was transferred to St. Chad's ward, which would result in an electoral variance of -15%. Labour also proposed transferring Careen Crescent, Crow Lane, Fox Cover

Lane, St Chad's Crescent, St Chad's Road, Beckwith Road, Bridle Path, Cairnside, Cairnside South, Steep Hill and Summerhill from St Chad's ward to Sandhill, improving electoral equality in Sandhill from -11% to 8%. However, this would result in high electoral inequality in St. Chad's ward, which would have a forecast variance of -19%. We have therefore decided not to adopt these proposals in our draft recommendations.

51 The Conservative and Liberal Democrat proposals varied considerably in the south of the city. At the southern tip, the Conservatives proposed an Old Burdon ward with a variance of -9% which included Burdon parish, expanding west as far as City Way, Doxford Park Way, Rotary Road, Stockton Road. The northern boundary of the proposed ward would be formed by The Village, and the sea to the east. To the north of this they proposed a Hollycarside & Ryhope ward with a forecast electoral variance of -9%. This ward would be bounded by Old Burdon ward to the south, Burdon Road, Tunstall Village Green and Tunstall Hope Road to the west, Leechmere Road and Toll Bar Road to the north, and the sea to the east.

52 The Liberal Democrats' proposals were similar to the existing Doxford and Ryhope wards. However, they extended the northern boundary of Doxford ward to Silksworth Terrace, while moving the eastern boundary to Burdon Road, Nettles Lane and Sharpley Burn, giving the ward a 1% electoral variance. Their expanded Ryhope ward shared a western boundary with this ward with a variance of 2%. We considered that this scheme provided better electoral equality and followed clearer boundaries overall, so we used these proposals as the basis of our draft recommendations.

53 We made changes to the Liberal Democrat proposals, however, as the Nettles Lane boundary between Doxford and Ryhope wards would leave no electors on the Ryhope side by the time of the next Burdon parish elections, thus creating an empty parish ward. The boundary also cut through the middle of the large planned development north of Burdon Road, which is expected to house more than 550 electors by 2029, potentially dividing a future community. We therefore adjusted the boundary, predominantly along the existing one, extending slightly east as far as Garesfield, Rockliffe and Headlam to take in the extent of the new development. Our proposed boundary would also follow Rotary Road to the north-east. This results in forecast electoral variances of 5% for Doxford and -2% for Ryhope.

Grangetown and Tunstall & Humbledon

54 The Conservatives proposed an Ashbrooke & Grangetown ward with a variance of 5%, bounded by Essen Way/Leechmere Road/Toll Bar Road to the south, and Silksworth Lane/Durham Road/Thornholme Road/Belvedere Road to the west. Its boundary would run along Stockton Road/Ryhope Road, and to the rear of Seaview Street. This is similar to the existing St. Michael's ward but expanded to include Grangetown though, as noted above, it does not include Grangetown Primary School. As noted in paragraph 39, the Conservatives included Humbledon in

a Barnes & Humbledon ward.

55 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Grangetown ward with a variance of 1%, bounded to the north by Greystoke Avenue, The Cedars and Villette Road, Leechmere Road/Toll Bar Road to the west, Hollycarrside Road/Leechmere Road and their associated streets to the south before running along Rye View Road, Lynden Road, Fenside Road and Salterfen Road to the sea. Their Tunstall & Humbledon ward, with a variance of -6%, is bounded by Barnes Burn, Barnes Park Road, Queen Alexandra Road, Tunstall Road, Belvedere Road, Stockton Road/Ryhope Road to the north, and The Cedars/Ashbrooke Grange/Linden Gardens/Greystoke Avenue, Leechmere Road/Toll Bar Road to the east. It is bounded by Tunstall Hills to the south, and to the west by Durham Road and the west side of the allotments.

56 We have adopted the Liberal Democrat scheme for this area in our draft recommendations for a number of reasons. We consider that the Grangetown ward includes all of that community, including Grangetown Primary School, and this warding pattern also avoids the 13% variance in the Conservatives' Hendon & City Centre ward, which includes parts of Grangetown. The Conservatives also noted in their submission that their proposals continue to divide Plains Farm, whereas this area is united in the Liberal Democrats' Tunstall & Humbledon ward. Furthermore, we consider the proposed ward is well served by the 'spine roads' of Premier Road/Essen Way and Durham Road/Queen Alexandra Road running east to west, and connected via Tunstall Road, Silksworth Lane, Hipsburn Drive and Tudor Grove.

57 Our one amendment to this warding pattern is to extend Tunstall & Humbledon north slightly from Belvedere Road to the railway line. This improves electoral equality in both Tunstall & Humbledon and Central ward (see paragraph 46) while, in our view, improving community representation by better uniting this historical district, including Azalea Terrace North and Azalea Terrace South.

Farrington & Silksworth and Sandhill

58 We received considerable community interest in this area – totalling 18 of the 32 submissions received – and almost entirely regarding Sandhill ward and the communities of Grindon, Hastings Hill, Springwell and Thorney Close. Four of these were the aforementioned petitions submitted by Councillor Paul Edgeworth. Most of the submissions appeared to be responding to the Conservatives' proposals, which divide these areas between their proposed wards of Grindon & South Hylton and Lakeside & Sandhill. Some referenced the negative effect they felt the proposed changes would have on the Liberal Democrats' representation in the area. This is a party-political matter, a factor we do not consider when developing our recommendations. However, others provided good community evidence based on our three statutory criteria.

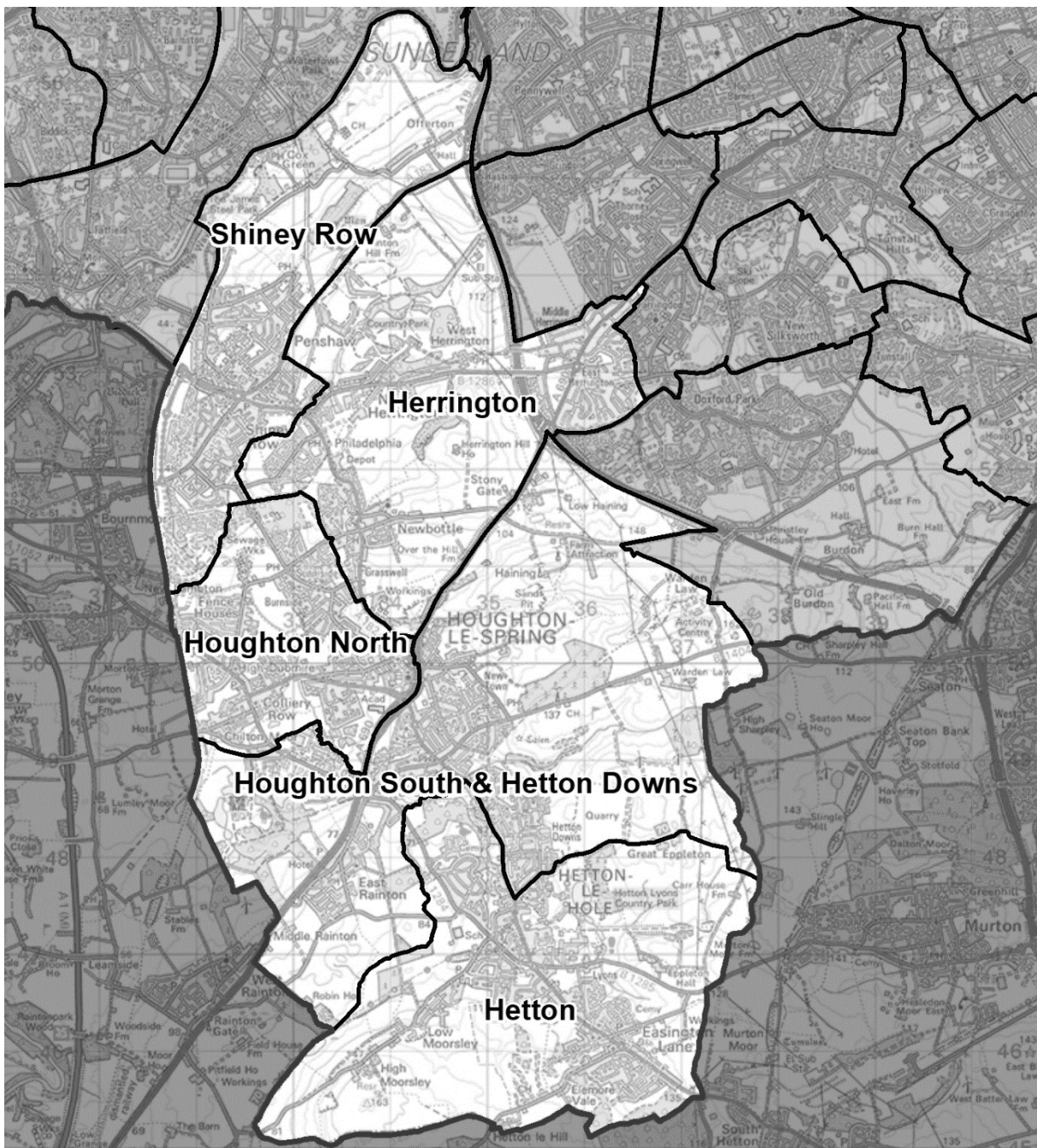
59 The Conservatives' proposed Grindon & South Hylton ward would have a variance of 1% and is bounded by the A19 to the west, the southern boundary of Grindon to the south, Grindon Lane, Pennywell Road/Portsmouth Road, Hylton Road, St. Luke's Road, Keelman's Lane and the footpath off Riverside Park to the east, and the River Wear to the north. Their proposed Lakeside & Sandhill ward would have a variance of -8% and is bounded by Springwell Road/Premier Road to the north, Silksworth Lane to the east, Amsterdam Road, Emblehope House, Allendale Road, Ashdale Road, Munslow Road and the rear of Beckwith Road to the south, and the outer edge of Thorney Close to the west.

60 As mentioned above, the proposals divide the Plains Farm area but also Farrington, leaving Farrington Community Sports College in a separate ward. A number of the residents who objected to the proposals mentioned that Barnes Park Extension, which runs between Hastings Hill and Grindon to the north and Thorney Close and Springwell to the south, was used by a number of adjoining communities. The area enjoyed good cycling and public transport links as well as using shared amenities such as the Grindon Young People's Centre, Thorney Close Action & Enterprise Centre, Sandhill View Academy and several primary schools. A number of residents also voiced concerns about poor public transport links between Hastings Hill and Grindon to the south of the proposed Grindon & South Hylton ward and Pennywell and South Hylton to the north. Others considered the A183 Chester Road to be a strong barrier between the communities, although we did observe many shops, eateries and pubs along this road, which could also suggest a community hub.

61 The Conservatives also proposed a Silksworth & Doxford Park ward, with a variance of 4%, which is bounded on the south by Doxford Park Way, to the east by Burdon Road, Tunstall Village Green and Tunstall Hope Road, to the north by Essen Way, and to the west by Silksworth Lane. Although we considered this proposed ward to have strong external boundaries and good internal links, we considered the housing south of Essen Road to be somewhat remote from the rest of the ward and, despite Essen Road being a dual carriageway, was better connected with housing to the north.

62 We therefore chose to base our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrat proposals. The Liberal Democrats' Farrington & Silksworth ward is broadly bounded to the south by City Way, Doxford Park Way, Silksworth Road, Silksworth Lane and Tunstall Village Road, to the east by the rear of Maple Avenue, Tunstall Hope Road, Nursery Road and the edge of Sainsbury's car park, to the north by the footpath along Perth Road, North Moor Lane and Durham Way, and to the west by Avalon Road, Atlantis Road, Antwerp Road, Avonmouth Road, Aldwych Road and Aldwych Square. Their proposed Sandhill ward is bounded to the west by the A19, to the north by the River Wear, to the east by the railway line, European Way/Front Road/Holborn Road/Springwell Road, and the rear of Saltburn Road, and to the south by Durham Road, the rear of Beckwith Road and the rear of Hillcrest.

Hetton, Houghton and the Herringtons



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Herrington	3	1%
Hetton	3	-3%
Houghton North	3	3%
Houghton South & Hetton Downs	3	-1%
Shiny Row	3	7%

Hetton, Houghton North and Houghton South & Hetton Downs

63 We received schemes from the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats in this area, all of which contained high electoral variances. The Labour submission made no changes to wards, leaving the existing wards of Copt Hill, Hetton and Houghton with forecast variances of 10%, 14% and 26%, respectively. We have therefore not adopted this scheme in our draft recommendations.

64 The Conservatives' scheme included a Hetton Downs ward with a variance of 20%. Their Houghton & Moorsley ward to the west of Hetton Downs has a variance of -7% and was bounded on the west and south by the city boundary, and by an area north of Mallard Lane and Phoenix Way, Rainton Burn, Dairy Lane, Wallace Street, the north side of the Houghton Sports Complex, Sunrise Lane and Houghtonside. Their Burnside & Fence Houses ward, with a variance of 17%, is bounded by Houghton & Moorsley to the south, Hetton Downs to the east, the city boundary to the west, and High Lane/Sunderland Road, North Street, Front Street, Coaley Lane, Staddon Way, the footpath south of West View, Blind Lane, Golf Course Road, and Chester Road to the north.

65 The Liberal Democrats' scheme truncates the existing Hetton ward by removing from the ward the area of East Rainton & Moorsley parish ward north of Hetton. This would improve electoral equality from 14% to -3%. The scheme also includes a Hetton South & Hetton Downs ward with a variance of -1% which is mostly based on the existing Copt Hill ward, minus the area west of Houghton Cut/Durham Road. The ward would include the area of East Rainton removed from Hetton ward. Their Houghton North ward is based on the existing Houghton ward. However, it would not include Whitworth Park Drive and its associated streets, the planned development at Lambden Lane, Fencehouses, as well as Okehampton Drive, Hillview Road, Westleigh Road and their associated streets, Melrose Gardens, Newbottle Primary School, Greeve Mews, Railway Street, Gertrude Street, Grasswell Terrace, Chester Street, Lumley Street, Ruby Street, Hylton Street, Houghton Road and Cellar Hill Close. This improves electoral equality from 26% to 3%. Given the much greater levels of electoral equality, we have adopted the Liberal Democrat scheme in our draft recommendations.

Herrington and Shiney Row

66 The Conservatives' scheme proposed a Penshaw & Shiney Row ward with a variance of -7% and a ward named The Herringtons with a variance of 1%. The former is similar to the existing Shiney Row ward but with an eastern boundary running down Chester Road and Philadelphia Lane, including Success Road and its associated streets, before turning up Golf Course Road and Chester Road to the city boundary. The proposed Herringtons ward is bounded to the west by Penshaw & Shiney Row ward, with the boundary running around Okehampton Drive and its associated streets. The proposed ward is broadly bounded to the south by Front Street, North Street, Sunderland Road, City Way, and the edge of Farrington Community Sports College and Aberdare Road. To the north it is bounded by Allendale Road, Ashdown Road, the north side of Beckwith Road, the western edge

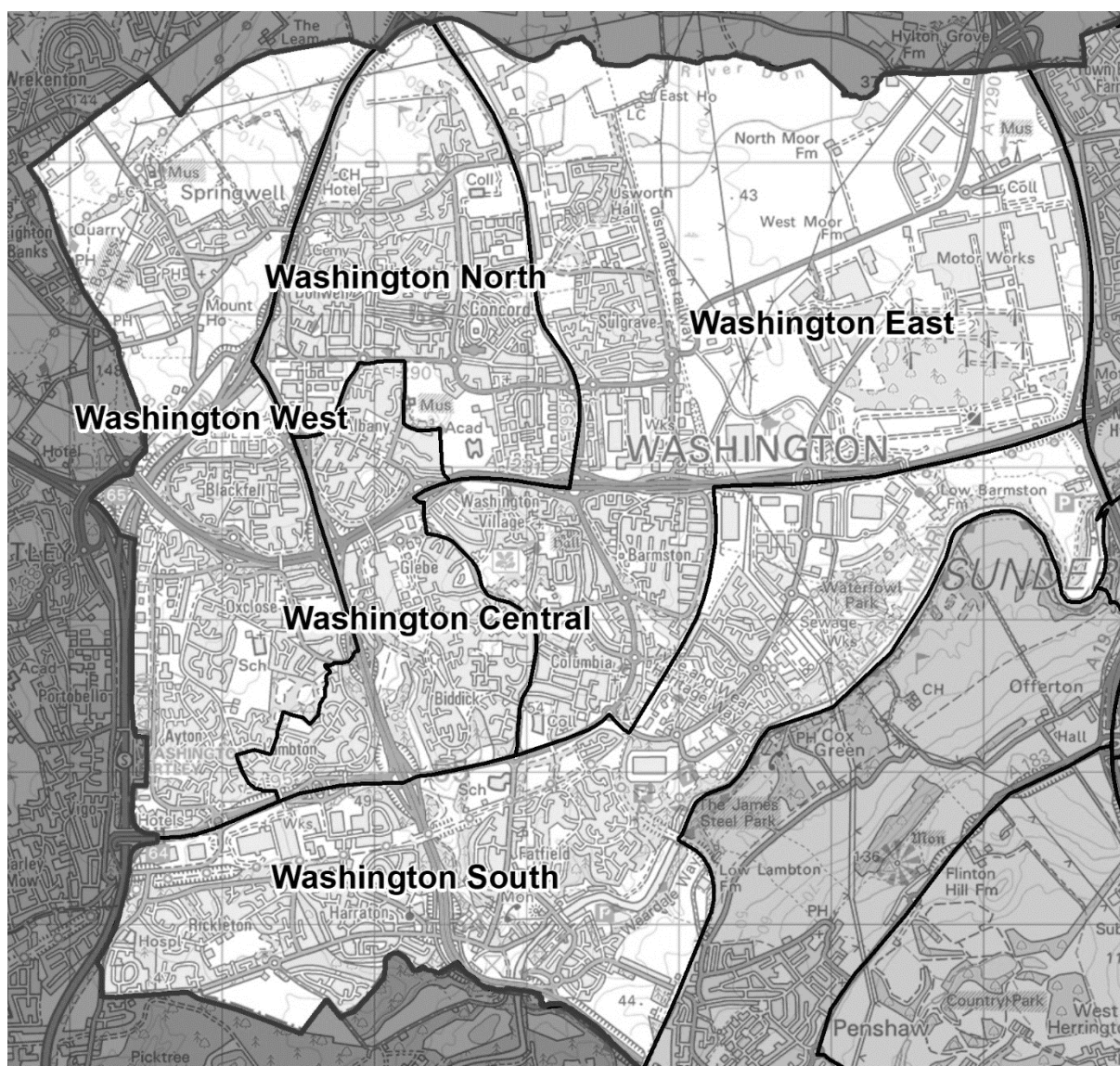
of Thorney Close, Foxcover Road and the A19.

67 The Liberal Democrat scheme proposed a Herrington ward with a variance of -4% and a Shiney Row ward with a variance of 12% according to our calculations. The Herrington ward is bounded to the east by Durham Road, City Way, and Farrington & Silksworth ward, to the north by Sandhill ward and Herrington Burn, and to the west by Herrington Burn and Houghton North ward. The Shiney Row ward is similar to the Conservatives' Penshaw & Shiney Row ward but does not include Success Road and its associated streets. However, it would include the area south of Chester Road and Golf Course Road and west of Herrington Burn, taking in the proposed development at Lambton Lane and the former Lambton Cokeworks site.

68 We considered the merits of both these schemes and concluded that the Liberal Democrat scheme fit in better with the overall warding pattern. We propose that part of the boundary run along Chislehurst Road and Herrington Burn thus resulting in electoral variances of variance of 1% in Herrington ward and 7% for Shiney Row ward. We would be particularly interested to hear from residents of this area about which community they feel more a part of and whether we have recommended ward boundaries that reflect the extent of communities in this area.

69 One resident wrote to say that Penshaw was moving away from Shiney Row in its use of amenities and was forming closer community relations with Mount Pleasant, which is currently included in a Washington ward. While we do not consider we have received enough evidence at this time, we would particularly welcome further evidence from the area before we finalise our recommendations.

Washington



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Washington Central	3	-5%
Washington East	3	-2%
Washington North	3	-6%
Washington South	3	2%
Washington West	3	0%

Washington Central, Washington East, Washington North, Washington South and Washington West

70 The Labour scheme made minimal changes to the existing wards in Washington, adding Swan Road, Station Road, Barmston Close, Lakeside Gardens and Eddison Road to Washington Central. The party proposed that Cambrian Way, Cotswold Close, Chiltern Close and Caradoc Close be added to Washington South ward, and that Kellett Close and the west side of Well Bank Road to the south of

Kellett Close move to Washington North. This changed the electoral variances of the wards from -3% to -5% in Washington Central, 3% to 1% in Washington East, -2% to -1% in Washington North, -11% to -8% in Washington South, and 4% to 3% in Washington West.

71 The Conservatives' scheme proposed a different warding pattern, using the names of localities rather than compass points, which they said their research suggested residents preferred. However, electoral equality was not good in most of the wards, by our calculations. This included an Ayton & Fatfield ward with a variance of 15%, a Biddick & Oxclose ward with a variance of -21%, a Blackfell and Usworth ward with a variance of 13%, and a Teal Farm & Washington Village ward with a variance of -6%.

72 The Ayton & Fatfield ward is bounded to the east by Penshaw & Shiney Row ward, Pattinson Road, Northumberland Way, Western Highway and Ayton Road, to the north by Sunderland Highway, and to the east and south by the city boundary. The Biddick & Oxclose ward is bounded to the south and west by Ayton & Fatfield ward, to the north by Sunderland Highway, and to the east by Parkway, Newstead Court, Dryburgh and Fatfield Road. The Blackwell & Usworth ward is bounded to the south by Sunderland Highway, to the west and north by the city boundary and to the east by Northumberland Way, Stone Cellar Road, Heworth Road, Black House Lane, Havannah Road and Washington Highway. The Concord & Sulgrave ward is bounded to the south by Sunderland Highway, to the west by Blackfell & Usworth ward, to the north by the city boundary and to the east by the A19. The Teal Farm & Washington Village ward is bounded to the north by Sunderland Highway, to the west by Biddick & Oxclose ward, to the south-west by Ayton & Fatfield ward, to the south-east by the River Wear and to the west by the A19.

73 The Liberal Democrats' scheme maintained the compass point naming of the wards in Washington, albeit in a different configuration. It proposed a Washington Central ward with a variance of 4%, a Washington East ward with a variance of -2%, a Washington North ward with a variance of -6%, a Washington South ward with a variance of 2% and a Washington West ward with a variance of -9%.

74 The Washington Central ward is bounded to the south by Western Highway/Northumberland Way, to the east by Fatfield Road/Parkway, Sunderland Highway, Washington Academy and Albany Way, to the north by Blue House Lane and Havannah Road, to the west by the A1290, Castle Road, Holley Park, Oxclose Community School, Holley Park Academy and Ayton Road. The Washington East ward is bounded to the north by the city boundary, to the east by the A19, to the south by Sunderland Highway, Horsley Road to Pattinson Road and Northumberland Way, and to the west by Northumberland Way, Sunderland Highway and Parkway/Fatfield Road. The Washington North ward is bounded to the north by the city boundary, to the west by the A194(M) and the A1290, to the south by Washington Central ward, and to the east by Northumberland Way. The Washington

South ward is bounded to the south and west by the city boundary, to the north by Northumberland Way and Washington East ward, and to the east by the A19, the River Wear, and Shiney Row ward.

75 We carefully considered the proposals received and concluded that the Liberal Democrat scheme provided clear boundaries which respected local communities while generally offering good electoral equality. Consequently, we have adopted this scheme in our draft recommendations, with some modification to improve electoral equality in Washington West. Our boundary instead places Holley Park in Washington West, with the playing fields of Lambton Primary School in Washington Central, with the boundary continuing along the rear of Gairloch Drive and Glenorrin Close to Ayton Road, resulting in a 0% variance for Washington West and -5% for Washington Central.

Conclusions

76 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Sunderland, referencing the 2023 and 2029 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. 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

	Draft recommendations	
	2023	2029
Number of councillors	75	75
Number of electoral wards	25	25
Average number of electors per councillor	2,760	2,949
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Sunderland City Council should be made up of 75 councillors serving 25 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 the Sunderland City Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Sunderland City Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

77 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.

78 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, Sunderland City 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.

79 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 Hetton.

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

Draft recommendations

Hetton Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Easington Lane	6
East Rainton	2
Hetton Downs	4
Hetton-le-Hole	8
Moorsley	1

Have your say

81 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole city or just a part of it.

82 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Sunderland, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

83 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say www.lgbce.org.uk

84 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

85 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Sunderland)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth NE24 9FE

86 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Sunderland which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

87 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

88 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Sunderland?

89 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

90 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

91 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

92 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

93 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

94 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Sunderland in 2026.

Equalities

95 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

Draft recommendations for Sunderland City Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barnes & Thornhill	3	8,824	2,941	7%	9,008	3,003	2%
2	Central	3	8,140	2,713	-2%	9,330	3,110	5%
3	Doxford	3	7,364	2,455	-11%	9,254	3,085	5%
4	Farrington & Silksworth	3	7,927	2,642	-4%	8,470	2,823	-4%
5	Fulwell	3	8,432	2,811	2%	8,761	2,920	-1%
6	Grangetown	3	8,789	2,930	6%	8,951	2,984	1%
7	Herrington	3	7,752	2,584	-6%	8,936	2,979	1%
8	Hetton	3	7,872	2,624	-5%	8,619	2,873	-3%
9	Houghton North	3	8,612	2,871	4%	9,151	3,050	3%
10	Houghton South & Hetton Downs	3	8,281	2,760	0%	8,716	2,905	-1%
11	Hylton Castle	3	8,049	2,683	-3%	8,261	2,754	-7%
12	Pallion	3	9,130	3,043	10%	9,517	3,172	8%

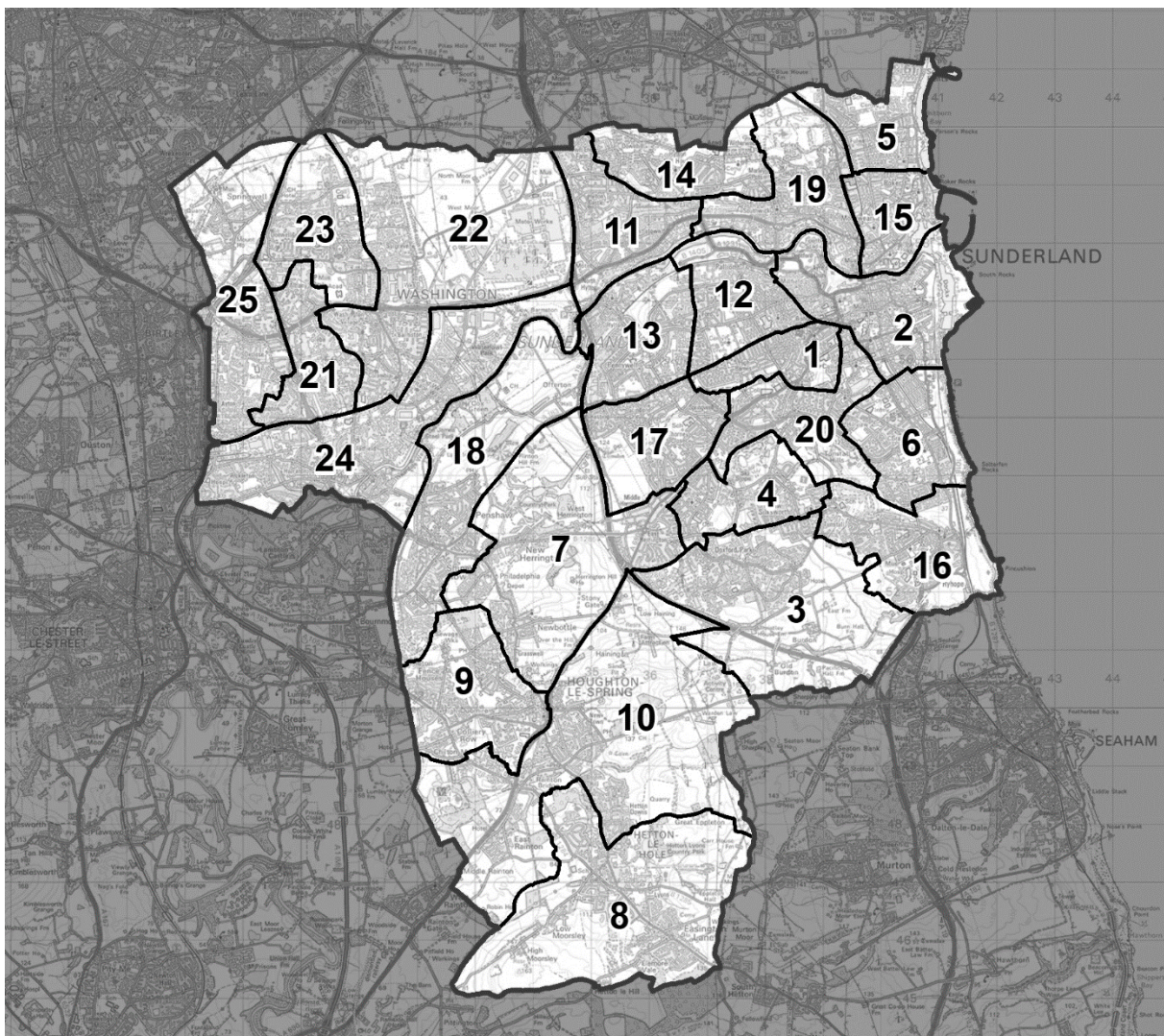
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Pennywell	3	8,929	2,976	8%	9,496	3,165	7%
14 Redhouse	3	8,849	2,950	7%	9,359	3,120	6%
15 Roker	3	7,823	2,608	-6%	7,995	2,665	-10%
16 Ryhope	3	7,589	2,530	-8%	8,693	2,898	-2%
17 Sandhill	3	8,541	2,847	3%	8,766	2,922	-1%
18 Shiney Row	3	8,833	2,944	7%	9,457	3,152	7%
19 Southwick	3	7,430	2,477	-10%	8,277	2,759	-6%
20 Tunstall & Humbledon	3	8,479	2,826	2%	8,805	2,935	0%
21 Washington Central	3	8,161	2,720	-1%	8,434	2,811	-5%
22 Washington East	3	8,236	2,745	-1%	8,712	2,904	-2%
23 Washington North	3	7,569	2,523	-9%	8,289	2,763	-6%
24 Washington South	3	8,818	2,939	7%	9,062	3,021	2%
25 Washington West	3	8,542	2,847	3%	8,885	2,962	0%
Totals	75	206,971	-	-	221,204	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,760	-	-	2,949	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Sunderland City 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 city. 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	Barnes & Thornhill
2	Central
3	Doxford
4	Farringdon & Silksworth
5	Fulwell
6	Grangetown
7	Herrington
8	Hetton
9	Houghton North
10	Houghton South & Hetton Downs
11	Hylton Castle
12	Pallion
13	Pennywell

14	Redhouse
15	Roker
16	Ryhope
17	Sandhill
18	Shiney Row
19	Southwick
20	Tunstall & Humbledon
21	Washington Central
22	Washington East
23	Washington North
24	Washington South
25	Washington West

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/sunderland>

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/sunderland>

Political Groups

- Houghton & Sunderland South Constituency Labour Party
- Sunderland Conservatives
- Sunderland Green Party
- Washington & Sunderland West Constituency Labour Party
- Wearside Liberal Democrats & the Liberal Democrats Group

Councillors

- Councillor M. Butler (Sunderland City Council)
- Councillor P. Edgeworth (Sunderland City Council)

Local Organisations

- Pallion Action Group

Parish and Town Councils

- Hetton Town Council

Local Residents

- 27 local residents

Petitions

- Four petitions

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 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. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
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 can 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