

Vale of White Horse

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Related subject: Harwell Parish

Please see the attached file for my submission

Attached Documents:

- m-ricketts-submission-for-lgbce.pdf

Submission to Vale WHDC for the LGBCE review – M Ricketts, Harwell.

Summary: This proposal eliminates the large anomaly predicted to occur in the 'Blewbury & Harwell' ward by 2029 by transferring a seat from Abingdon town, which would otherwise be over-represented by a whole seat.

It proposes that the parishes of Harwell and Western Valley become a Vale ward with 2 seats and Blewbury, Chilton and Upton form a ward with 1 seat.

Proposal in detail:

This submission is based on the data in the Vale document with predicted electorates for 2029 -

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-01/c_-_electoral_forecasting_proforma_-_vale_of_white_horse_v2_updated_19jan_0.xlsx.

Note: The word Variance is used below under sufferance as it has a technical meaning for statisticians and all that is meant in this spread-sheet is simply differences between a predicted electorate for a ward and the average over the Vale as a percentage. It is only used for clarity.

It is noted that Blewbury and Harwell ward (B&H) is highlighted in red as it is predicted to have one of the 2 extreme 'variances', the other being Kingston Bagpuize, a single-seat ward so less extreme in under-representation:

Name of ward	Number of cllrs / ward	Electorate 2023	Variance 2023	Electorate 2029	Variance 2029
Abingdon Abbey Northcourt	2	4,752	-15%	5,168	-19%
Abingdon Caldecott	2	5,542	-1%	6,054	-5%
Abingdon Dunmore	2	4,744	-15%	6,029	-6%
Abingdon Fitzharris	2	4,771	-14%	5,167	-19%
Abingdon Peachcroft	2	5,185	-7%	6,230	-2%
Blewbury & Harwell	2	6,733	21%	9,188	44%
Botley & Sunningwell	2	5,136	-8%	5,683	-11%
Cumnor	2	5,063	-9%	5,507	-14%
Drayton	1	2,825	1%	3,140	-2%
Faringdon	2	6,577	18%	7,123	12%
Grove North	2	5,175	-7%	6,329	-1%
Hendreds	1	2,693	-3%	3,292	3%

Under-representation by 44% of 2 seats obviously means nearly a whole seat (seat being used as a shorter word than Councillor). So the aim of this proposal is to reduce this anomaly by adjusting the allocation of parishes and parish wards to B&H and as few other seats as possible.

Note that if the 'variance' had been given in terms of %age of a single seat then the 2 most extreme Abingdon wards would show a greater anomaly than Kingston Bagpuize as the former have 2 seats and the latter only one.

The section of the table shown above has negative 'variances' for all the Abingdon wards, totalling about 50% of 2 seats (all wards have 2 seats) so the town is over-represented by 1 Councillor. More precisely, the total predicted electorate for the 5 Abingdon wards is 28,648. The average electorate per seat is predicted to be 3,194 and dividing the Abingdon electorate total by this gives 8.97. Thus a much better number of seats for Abingdon would be 9. Since these wards are contiguous it should be possible to re-arrange their boundaries so that there are 9 seats for the town, but without data on the Town Council wards (presumably) an arrangement for this cannot be suggested.

Looking at the numbers for Blewbury & Harwell:

Parish etc	Ward		2023	2029 Pred.
Blewbury		Blewbury & Harwell	1362	1473
Chilton		Blewbury & Harwell	546	581
Chilton		Blewbury & Harwell	661	724
Western Valley		Blewbury & Harwell	1445	3530
Harwell	Harwell	Blewbury & Harwell	2349	2494
Upton		Blewbury & Harwell	370	386

The total predicted for Blewbury, the Chiltons (presumably east and west of the A34) and Upton is 3164, very close to the predicted average of 3194 so it would make sense to combine these to a single-seat Vale ward, on the basis of making the democracy as local as possible.

This leaves Harwell and Western Valley with a total of 6024; for 2 seats this has a 'variance' of -6% (rounded to whole %s).

The Hendred seat has a small excess of electors compared to the average. As the Harwell Campus ward was moved into Hendreds a few years ago on the basis that there was going to be a large number of additional houses on the Campus, a prospect that has disappeared, it makes sense to recombine the Campus ward with Harwell village and Western Valley. The predicted electorate for Harwell and WV becomes 6157 and the 'variance' -4% while the Hendred electorate becomes closer to the average at 3159, and the absolute value of its 'variance' is reduced from 3% to 1%.

So the revised wards for the Vale seats would look like:

Parish etc	Parish ward	Vale ward	2023	2029 Pred.	Diff %age
Harwell & Western Valley					
Western Valley		Harwell & WV	1445	3530	
Harwell	Harwell	Harwell & WV	2349	2494	
Harwell	Campus	Harwell & WV	125	133	
total pred. 2 seats				6157	-4%
Blewbury & Chilton					
Blewbury		Blewbury & Chilton	1362	1473	
Chilton		Blewbury & Chilton	546	581	
Chilton		Blewbury & Chilton	661	724	
Upton		Blewbury & Chilton	370	386	
total pred. 1 seat				3164	-1%
Hendreds					
East Hendred		Hendreds	1110	1240	
Lockinge	Ard	Hendreds	156	176	
Milton	Heights	Hendreds	760	1163	
West Hendred		Hendreds	284	311	
Ardington	Loc'nge	Hendreds	258	269	
total pred for 1 seat				3159	-1%