

Cheshire East

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Comment text:

Related subject: Knutsford

I am writing following a consultation with people living in the north and eastern side of Knutsford. The area that covers Longridge, Shaw Heath, Parkgate and Manor Park. (Maps in the attachments).

Currently Knutsford is a three member ward for Cheshire East Council elections. This means that there is less ward accountability than single member, or two member wards between local representatives and the communities they represent. Three member wards reduce .between local representatives and the communities they represent. Single Councillor wards promote accountability since constituents know exactly who their representative is and can hold them responsible for their actions. The area identified as a single member ward is the most diverse area of Knutsford in terms of racial backgrounds. Single council wards also allow for a more focused representation of neighbourhoods with unique needs and concerns. The North and East of Knutsford is significantly different from the rest of Knutsford. Knutsford is not a homogeneous community. It is important to avoid generalisations, but in broad terms people in the Longridge, Shaw Heath, Parkgate and Manor Park area of Knutsford are less financially well off than the other parts of the town. They are also to some extent separated geographically. There is very little public transport into the town centre and from the far end of Longridge it is a two mile walk. The area has its own primary school provision, doctors surgery, two sets of local shops and two industrial estates where many local people work.

Other reasons for the proposal:

1. There is a strong community identity within Longridge , Shaw Heath, Parkgate and Manor Park
2. The numbers for the proposed wards are close to the Cheshire East borough average, but with the more deprived area having fewer residents per councillor than the proposed two person ward.

Figures for 2030: The proposed single person ward to have 3,742 electors (-9% of suggested 4,000 electors per ward) and the rest of Knutsford

having 7,897 electors (- 4%)

(See attachment for details of numbers)

3)The Cheshire East policy sub-committee has said that it wants to avoid 3 member wards where possible.

Knutsford Labour party undertook a direct consultation with 30 residents living in the proposed one person ward earlier in March. Residents were 100% supportive of the proposal of a single member ward.

Several people said that they have never seen a Cheshire East Councillor and there was a strong feeling that the proposals should lead to better communication between residents and a Councillor, which would be of mutual benefit. Regular surgeries could be arranged in the area.

In summary there is a strong argument based on improved democratic accountability for an area of Knutsford that is geographical and economically different from the west and south of Knutsford. There is support locally for the proposals.

Attached Documents:

- boundaryproposals26.3.24.docx
- knutsford_kne02_knw02_closeup_3bb1_3bbr_splits_v1.png
- knutsford_kne02_knw02_v1.png

Proposal to change Knutsford into a two and a one person area for Cheshire East Council, from the current three person ward.

The proposed new names for the wards could be: 'Knutsford North East' and 'Knutsford South & West',

The separation into a two and a one person ward would need careful consideration regarding the exact boundary, however work has been done that identifies the two separate wards. The proposals would have an effect on polling districts, with some districts needing to be changed. Consideration would need to be given to a reconfiguration of those polling districts so that the properties to sit in North East are in a distinct polling district from those in South & West?

By 2030, the North East ward would have an estimated 3,742 electors, giving it an electors per seat ratio 9% below the Borough average. The South & West ward would have 7,897 electors as of 2030, which equates to a ratio of 3,949, or 4% below the Borough average. So both wards would have ratios within the range that the Commission usually seeks (plus/minus 10%) and the North East ward would have a significantly lower ratio than the South & West ward, reflecting and adjusting for its more deprived/ disengaged status and the higher workload for the elected Member arising from that.

The table below details the statistics. Below that are details of which streets/ properties would be in which ward, but the street lists are indicative rather than completely comprehensive and the close-up map is a more precise guide to the areas each ward would cover:

Proposed Borough ward name	Council seats	Electors, Jul 2023	Electors per seat ratio, 2023	Variance of ratio from Borough average, 2023	Electors, Jan 2030	Electors per seat ratio, 2030	Variance of ratio from Borough average, 2030
Knutsford North East	1	3,189	3,189	-17%	3,742	3,742	-9%
Knutsford South & West	2	7,224	3,612	-6%	7,897	3,949	-4%

Details of electoral wards and how the boundaries could be drawn:

KNUTSFORD NORTH EAST

3BB1 (part only), 3BBR (part only), 3BC1, 3CMT.

The parts if 3BB1 and 3BBR to be included would be the parts not in Knutsford South & West (see details below).

KNUTSFORD SOUTH & WEST

Polling districts 3BA1, 3BAR, 3BART, 3BAT, 3BB1 (part only), 3BBR (part only), 3BD1, 3BDT, 3BE1, 3BF1, 3BF2, 3CVT.

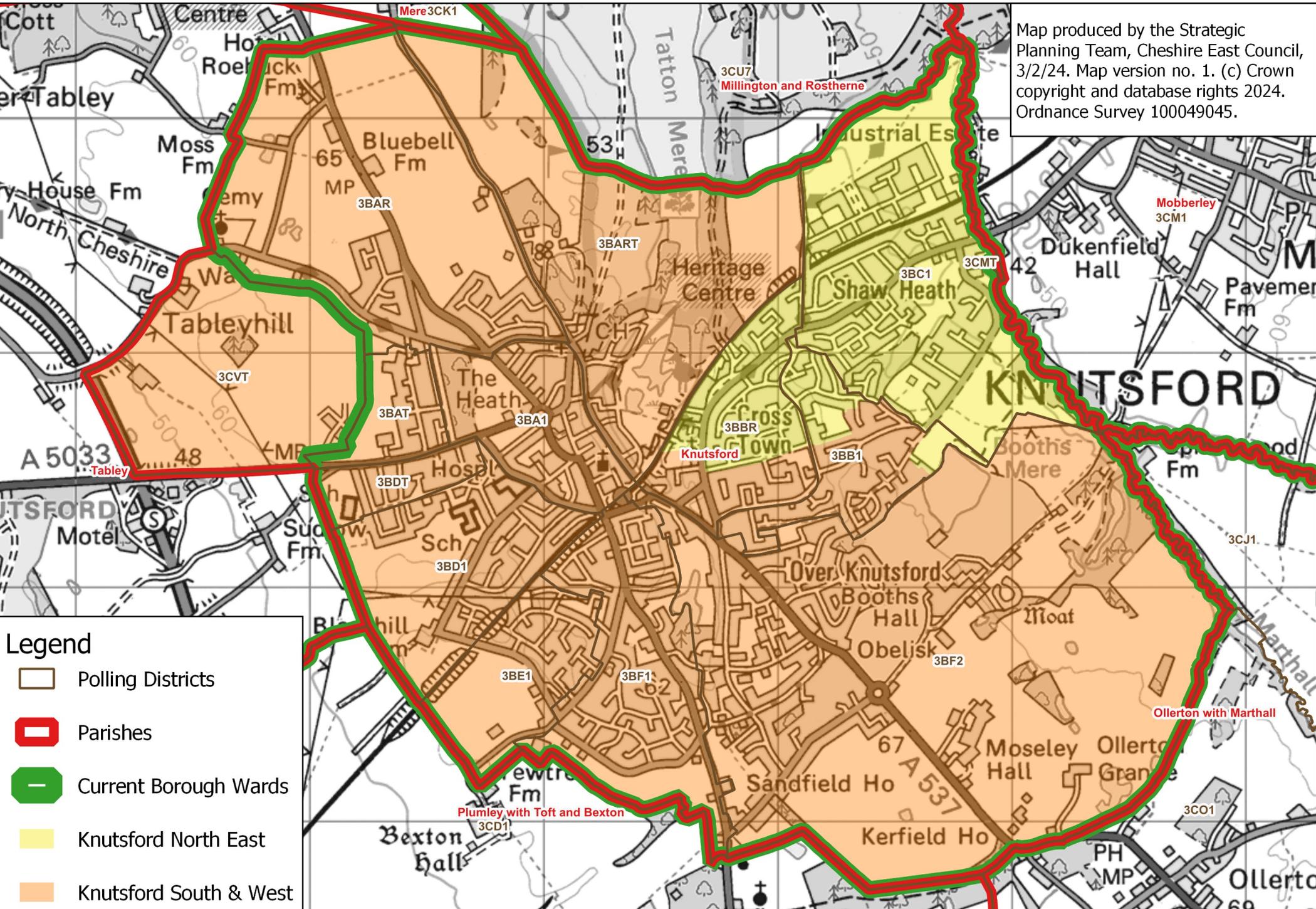
The part of 3BB1 to be included in Knutsford South & West would be the properties on Mobberley Road, Sparrow Lane, Aylesby Close, Rockford Lodge, Delmar Road, Downs End, Moulton Close, Lynton Close, Fox Grove, Ash Grove, Oak View, Birch Grove, Lindop Close, North Downs, Lichfield Close, Higher Downs, Beechwood, Yewlands Drive, Brookdale Avenue, Kenilworth Avenue and nos 53-77 and nos 58-78 Boothfields.

The part of 3BBR to be included in Knutsford South & West would be Branden Drive, Hollow Lane and the part south of Thorneyholme Drive (nos 2-34 on the south (even) side of Thorneyholme Drive, The Shambles, nos 25-101 on the east (odd) side of Mobberley Road, Sharston Crescent, Woodside and the properties on north (odd) side of Manor Park South).

336 residential properties in the part of 3BB1 for inclusion in the South & West ward and 211 properties in the part of 3BBR go in that ward. No new housing construction is expected in 3BBR or 3BB1 between 2023 (the base year for our electorate forecasts) and 2030, so that means an overall total of 547 properties both now and forecast for 2030. Applying our electorate forecasting model's estimates of the average number of electors per property in the current (Knutsford) Borough ward for 2023 (1.664) and 2030 (1.656), it is estimated a total of 910 electors as of 2023 and 905 as of 2030

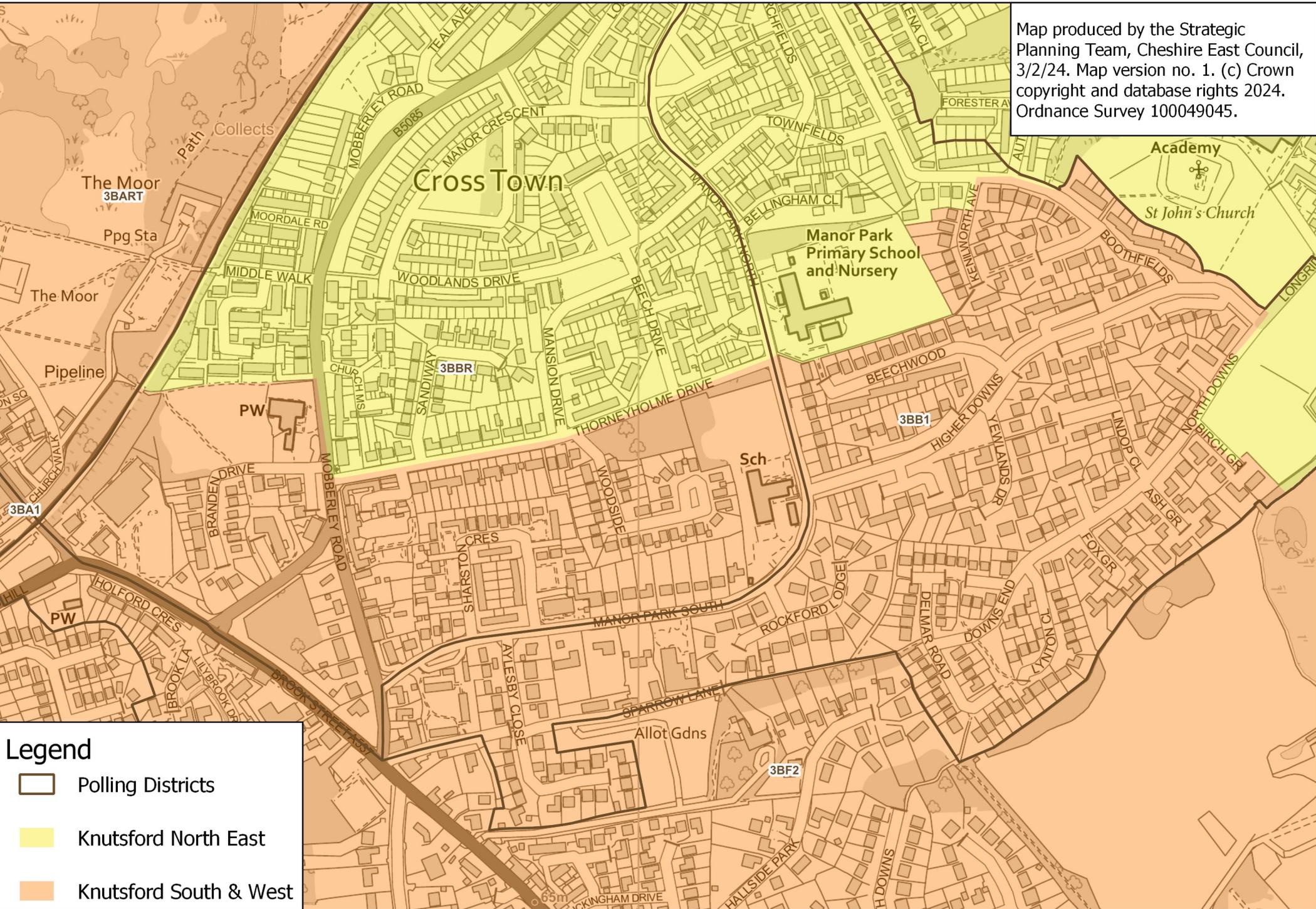
Proposed Borough wards: Knutsford North East (1 Member) and Knutsford South & West (2 Members)

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Knutsford: division of polling districts 3BBR & 3BB1 between the 2 proposed Borough wards

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Legend

-  Polling Districts
-  Knutsford North East
-  Knutsford South & West