

New electoral arrangements for Swindon Borough Council Final Recommendations

February 2025

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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.

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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 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)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- Ailsa Irvine (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 further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Swindon?

7 We are conducting a review of Swindon Borough Council ('the Council') as 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 Swindon 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 borough.

Our proposals for Swindon

9 Swindon should be represented by 57 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Swindon should have 25 wards, five more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of 24 wards should change; one will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Swindon.

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 borough 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 Swindon. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
12 December 2023	Number of councillors decided
9 January 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
18 March 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
9 July 2024	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
16 September 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 February 2025	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

18 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.

19 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	2030
Electorate of Swindon	166,553	177,228
Number of councillors	57	57
Average number of electors per councillor	2,922	3,109

20 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'. Twenty-four of our 25 proposed wards for Swindon are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2030.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

22 The Council originally submitted electorate forecasts for 2029, a period five years on from the original 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 6% by 2029.

23 We considered the information provided by the Council and were satisfied that the projected figures were the best available at that time. Due to the impact of the general election on the Commission's work programme, the review will now conclude

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.

in February 2025. However, we are content that these figures remain a reasonable forecast of local electors in 2030 and have therefore used them as the basis of our final recommendations.

24 Our mapping tool uses geocoded electoral registers supplied by the Council to locate electors, by associating addresses with specific geographic coordinates. It considers each elector's location to produce precise elector counts for each ward. There can be very slight differences between the electorate figures published on our website at the beginning of the review and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations.

Number of councillors

25 Swindon Borough Council currently has 57 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.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 57 councillors – for example, 57 one-councillor wards, 19 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

27 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. These submissions did not provide evidence to support a change and so we have retained 57 councillors in our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

28 We received 65 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals: a joint submission from the Swindon Conservative Federation, the Swindon Conservative Council Group, the East Wiltshire Conservative Association, Robert Buckland MP, Danny Kruger MP, and Justin Tomlinson MP ('the Conservatives'); and one from the Swindon Borough Council Labour Group ('the Labour Group'). The Labour submission was broadly supported by a local resident who submitted a similar scheme which varied in only a few areas. We additionally received two partial schemes from parish councillors, Councillor John Firmin and Councillor Patrick Herring, who were both responding in an individual capacity separately from South Swindon parish.

29 The three borough-wide schemes and two partial borough schemes all provided a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Swindon. 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.

30 Our draft recommendations in Central Swindon North were principally based on the local resident's scheme, whereas elsewhere in the north and in the south of the borough our recommendations were based on the Conservative Group's scheme.

31 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Swindon helped us to decide between the different proposals.

32 Our draft recommendations were for 12 three-councillor wards, nine two-councillor wards and three one-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations provided for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received evidence during the initial consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

33 We received 95 submissions in response to our draft recommendations. These included responses from the Swindon Conservative Federation ('the Conservatives') and the Swindon Labour Group ('the Labour Group'), as well as several parish councils in the borough. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, including proposals in South Swindon at Old Town and the Railway Village.

Final recommendations

34 Our final recommendations are for 10 three-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and three one-councillor wards. 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.

35 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications to the wards in South Swindon, based on the submissions received. We also make changes to the names of some wards in northern Swindon.

36 The tables and maps on pages 8–27 detail our final recommendations across Swindon. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ 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 37 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Central Swindon North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Gorse Hill	1	5%
Penhill & Pinehurst	2	10%
Rodbourne Cheney	2	-4%
Rodbourne Ferndale & Western	3	-2%

Gorse Hill and Penhill & Pinehurst

38 The Conservatives supported the draft recommendations for these wards. They reiterated their preference to generally avoid single-member wards where possible, but noted that both Gorse Hill and Penhill & Pinehurst work from ‘a numbers and community perspective’ and are therefore acceptable.

39 The Labour Group disagreed with the draft proposals for these wards, and again argued in favour of a two-member Gorse Hill & Pinehurst ward and a single-member Penhill ward (as it proposed during the initial consultation). It noted that the area around Headlands Grove and Wheeler Avenue, east of the A3411, is an outlier in the Penhill & Pinehurst ward but acknowledged that including it in Gorse Hill, where it has greater ties, would take Gorse Hill above a 10% variance by 2030. It also noted the support amongst local residents for a single-member Penhill ward. It proposed a single-member ward covering almost all of the Penhill council estate, but excluding some roads at its southern extent to lower its electorate and achieve a better level of electoral equality in the area. It suggested that this Penhill ward, along with a two-member ward of Gorse Hill & Pinehurst, would allow for a better overall pattern in this area.

40 The Penhill Forum, a local organisation covering the Penhill estate, made a submission in opposition to the draft recommendations. It noted that the Penhill and Pinehurst areas are 'similar in status', but was concerned about a potentially uneven distribution of resources if both communities were included in the same ward. It did not make any specific warding recommendation in its submission.

41 We note the comments of the Penhill Forum; however, a single-member ward covering the entirety of the Penhill estate would have an electorate 19% greater than the average for Swindon by 2025 and we are not persuaded to adopt a ward with such a poor level of electoral equality.

42 We consider that the Labour Group's proposed single-member Penhill ward is unsatisfactory for different reasons; although its arrangement does achieve good electoral equality, it does so at the expense of not covering the entire estate, instead transferring roads at the southern end of the area to a Gorse Hill & Pinehurst ward. We consider that such a pattern would be less reflective of the local community, as dividing the estate in order to achieve a smaller forecast electorate is not an appropriate balance of our statutory criteria. The Labour Group suggests that its plan would result in 'one Councillor representing 98% of the Penhill council estate' but in order for a Penhill borough ward to have good electoral equality, it would need to transfer closer to 10% of the electorate of the Penhill parish ward area (which comprises all roads north of Penhill Park and along Penhill Drive); we do not consider such a solution appropriate.

43 We therefore propose retaining a two-member Penhill & Pinehurst ward and single-member Gorse Hill ward as part of our final recommendations.

Rodbourne Cheney and Rodbourne Ferndale & Western

44 The Conservatives supported the draft recommendations for these wards. They noted that the existing Rodbourne Cheney ward works well, but additionally noted that retaining it unchanged would have too great an impact on neighbouring wards.

45 The Labour Group disagreed with the draft proposals for Rodbourne Cheney and reiterated its preference for a Rodbourne Cheney ward which includes some areas north of Whitworth Road. This arrangement would transfer a small area of Haydon Wick parish (including Haydon View Road, Mendip Close and Sunningdale Road) as well as the southern elements of Penhill into Rodbourne Cheney.

46 The Labour Group supported the draft Rodbourne Ferndale configuration, which was similar to what it proposed during the initial consultation, but expressed support for including the name used for the ward covering part of this area proposed by the Conservatives during the initial consultation: Western. It noted that 'There has been a long tradition to have a ward name linked to our historical connection with the Great Western Railway and that name has been used for a ward that includes the Even Swindon (Rodbourne) area.'

47 We do not consider that including part of the Penhill estate in Rodbourne Cheney is an effective representation of local community ties, particularly if such a warding arrangement results in the division of Haydon Wick parish. We are persuaded that including Western in the name of our Rodbourne Ferndale ward is an appropriate way of reflecting the different communities which comprise the ward while also acknowledging the area's historical ties to the Great Western Railway.

48 We therefore propose an unchanged Rodbourne Cheney ward and a Rodbourne Ferndale & Western ward matching the previously proposed Rodbourne Ferndale ward as part of our final recommendations.

South Swindon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Broadgreen	2	-2%
Kingshill	2	-8%
Old Town & Lawn	3	5%
Parks	2	10%
Queen's Park	3	-8%
Walcot	2	-5%

Broadgreen, Kingshill, Old Town & Lawn, Queen's Park and Walcot

49 The Conservatives supported our draft recommendations for these wards, noting upon reflection that the railway line which was crossed in their proposed Railway Village ward is a dividing feature and that our proposed wards are 'more sensible from both a community and numbers perspective'.

50 The Labour Group identified three concerns with the Commission's draft recommendations in this area and put forward a revised warding pattern for South Swindon to address these. It identified these issues as the splitting of the Railway Village around Emlyn Square, the splitting of the Walcot community into separate wards, and the geographical size of the proposed Croft & Lawn ward.

51 We received 14 submissions as part of a campaign organised by the Old Town Residents' Association, which included many responses from members of the public in Old Town. These comments noted that residents of Old Town identify it as an 'urban village' featuring many amenities within walking distance of Old Town Hill. They noted that the area is distinct from other nearby communities and would ideally sit entirely within one ward, but acknowledged that this could prove difficult to achieve alongside good electoral equality. Residents were dissatisfied with the draft proposals, which split the Old Town area into three separate wards; they also noted that existing boundaries split the area between two wards. They proposed including as much as possible of Old Town Hill and surrounding roads (including Cricklade Street, Croft Road, Eastcott Road, Marlborough Road, Pipers Way, Prospect Hill, Victoria Road and Westlecot Road) within one Old Town ward.

52 We received eight submissions regarding the division of Swindon's Railway Village between two wards in the draft recommendations. These included comments from seven residents as well as a joint submission on behalf of the Royal Agricultural University and Swindon Heritage Preservation. These respondents noted that the proposed boundary between Kingshill & Okus and Queen's Park, through Emlyn Square, split the Railway Village – a historical neighbourhood that Swindon Borough Council has identified for revitalisation and promotion as part of its Swindon Heritage Action Zone (HAZ). They suggested that all of the Railway Village should fall within one ward, ideally Queen's Park, such that the community's essential elements (including the GWR Park, the Health Hydro and the Parish Church of St Mark's) are not divided between two separate borough wards.

53 The Swindon Civic Voice made a submission advocating for a more compact Central ward rather than the larger proposed Queen's Park ward. It suggested Princes Street and Rodbourne Road as boundaries for this ward, which it argued would be more representative of the modern character of central Swindon.

54 The Eastcott Community Organisation proposed including the name Eastcott in a Swindon Borough ward. It suggested that the name of Eastcott has historical and cultural significance as a place within Swindon.

55 A resident objected to the inclusion of Walcot West in the proposed Croft & Lawn ward, stating that this area has more in common with Queen's Park. A Kingshill resident suggested including this area in the same ward as Queen's Park.

56 South Swindon Parish Council made a submission principally concerned with the proposed parish warding arrangements for the parish as set out in the draft recommendations. It suggested that all parish wards for South Swindon should be precisely matched with borough wards, rather than having multiple parish wards falling within one borough ward. It also suggested tweaks to proposed borough wards so that Broadgreen and the Railway Village can be included wholly within wards rather than split between wards.

57 Councillor Herring of South Swindon Parish Council suggested that Bilborough Drive (and surrounding residential roads) should be included in the proposed Parks ward, as access and connections for the area are via Whitbourne Avenue rather than via routes through Walcot. He also identified two communities which were divided between wards in the draft proposals. These were the Railway Village, as mentioned above, and Broadgreen. For the latter, he noted that streets north of Manchester Road, as far as Wellington Street, are considered to fall within the Broadgreen area. He proposed extending the Broadgreen boundary west to Beales Close and north of Fleming Way and extending the Queen's Park boundary west to Park Lane.

58 Councillor Firmin of South Swindon Parish Council made a submission providing further observations in relation to his comments during the initial consultation. He noted that our evidence for dividing Walcot East and Walcot West rested largely on the strength of the boundary at the A4259 (Queen's Drive), but that this road was no more significant than the road north of Walcot: the A4312 (Drake's Way). He additionally noted that 'there is a very longstanding pairing of Walcot East and Walcot West in the same ward' and that access to Walcot West is more typical at Drove Road due to a bus gate at the Upham Road end of the neighbourhood. He noted, as in submissions relating to Old Town, that the area is split between three proposed wards; he also noted while 'there are different views as to what constitutes the full extent of Old Town, some of which exceed the maximum number of voters for a three-member ward, there are better options' to keep as much of the community as possible across no more than two wards. He additionally noted a split of Broadgreen and the Railway Village, both as described above. He echoed the comments of South Swindon Parish Council regarding the alignment of parish wards to borough wards.

59 A member of the public made proposed alternative wards here in place of Croft & Lawn and Wroughton & Wichelstowe wards. The submission suggested three two-member wards: Lawn & Old Walcot, Wroughton and Wichelstowe & Croft.

60 In light of the significant level of response received regarding the division of Old Town and the Railway Village in this area, we are proposing an amended warding arrangement which we consider better reflects local community ties. It is partially based on the revised pattern put forward by the Labour Group, with adjustments to reflect comments on local communities made by Councillors Firmin and Herring.

61 We propose a three-member Old Town & Lawn ward comprising a significant element of Old Town, as well as the areas of Lawn, Croft, East Wichel and Okus. We consider that this ward will better serve residents of Old Town who expressed their dissatisfaction with ward boundaries that split the community between three wards. We consider that the largest extent of Old Town, as described in some submissions, is too large for a three-member ward. We consider that our final recommendations here include more of Old Town in one ward than the existing wards or draft recommendations, which include boundaries at or near Devizes Road, Newport Street and Wood Street, and that they better facilitate representative adjacent wards.

62 We propose a three-member Queen's Park ward similar to the draft proposals but with adjustments along three of its boundaries to reflect community evidence received in those areas. At the northeast of the ward, we propose transferring residential roads east of Wellington Street to Broadgreen such that the Broadgreen community is undivided within one ward. At the northwest of the ward, we propose transferring roads east of Park Lane into Queen's Park such that the entirety of the Railway Village neighbourhood falls within Queen's Park ward. At the south of the ward, we propose running the boundary behind houses along Bath Road. We note that our proposed boundary here includes only small sections of Eastcott Road and Victoria Road in Old Town & Lawn, even though these areas were identified as parts of the Old Town community; however, we consider that with a forecast electorate variance of -8%, it is not appropriate to transfer any additional areas of Queen's Park into Old Town & Lawn without resulting in a ward with poor electoral equality here.

63 We propose a two-member Kingshill ward which transfers the southern elements of the Okus neighbourhood and parts of Old Town to Old Town & Lawn, and which transfers the Railway Village area east of Park Lane to Queen's Park.

64 We propose a two-member Broadgreen ward including roads east of Wellington Street, as described above, and with a southern boundary of Drake's Way at its east end. We were persuaded by the comments of Councillor Firmin, who noted that this road was as significant a boundary as Queen's Drive which we previously proposed to divide Walcot East and Walcot West. We were not persuaded by the suggestions of Councillor Herring to move the boundary to Beales Close, as we considered that area to be more similar to central Queen's Park. We do not think the Labour Group's proposed name of County Ground is as reflective of the ward area as Broadgreen.

65 We propose a two-member Walcot ward including both Walcot East and Walcot West neighbourhoods. As noted above, we were persuaded by Councillor Firmin's comments on the links between these areas, as well as the strength of Drake's Way as a northern boundary. We were additionally persuaded by the Labour Group's comment regarding the large geographical size of the proposed Croft & Lawn ward, and consider that aligning Walcot West to Walcot East allows for more effective and convenient local government for both the Old Town & Lawn and Walcot wards.

66 We were not persuaded by the suggestions of the Swindon Civic Voice, as we consider that the Central ward it proposed would not reflect the alternative evidence we received from other respondents. We additionally consider that Queen's Park is a more representative name for the larger ward in our final recommendations.

67 We note the comments of the Eastcott Community Organisation regarding the inclusion of Eastcott in a ward name. The area of Eastcott is proposed to be included across three wards, and we are not persuaded to include the name in only one of those wards.

68 We do not consider the two suggestions in Walcot West and Kingshill, which both requested being included in Queen's Park ward, are persuasive. There is no reasonably sized ward which could accommodate these areas together. We are also not persuaded by the arrangement proposed here featuring a Wichelstowe & Croft ward; we consider that such a ward divides the Old Town community in a way that would not reflect the community identity of the area that we have been told about.

69 We consider that Queen's Park ward as included in the Labour Group's revised pattern divides Old Town in an unsatisfactory way. We consider that our proposed northern boundary of Old Town & Lawn, which runs along Church Road and Union Row, and above The Lawn, allows for more of Old Town to be included in one ward.

70 We note the comments from South Swindon Parish Council, and have put forward parish warding arrangements aligned to our final recommendation wards as it requested. We are grateful for the detailed comments of Councillors Herring and Firmin, which acknowledged the concerns of respondents in the first consultation and proposed alternatives that we have adopted in our final proposals.

Parks

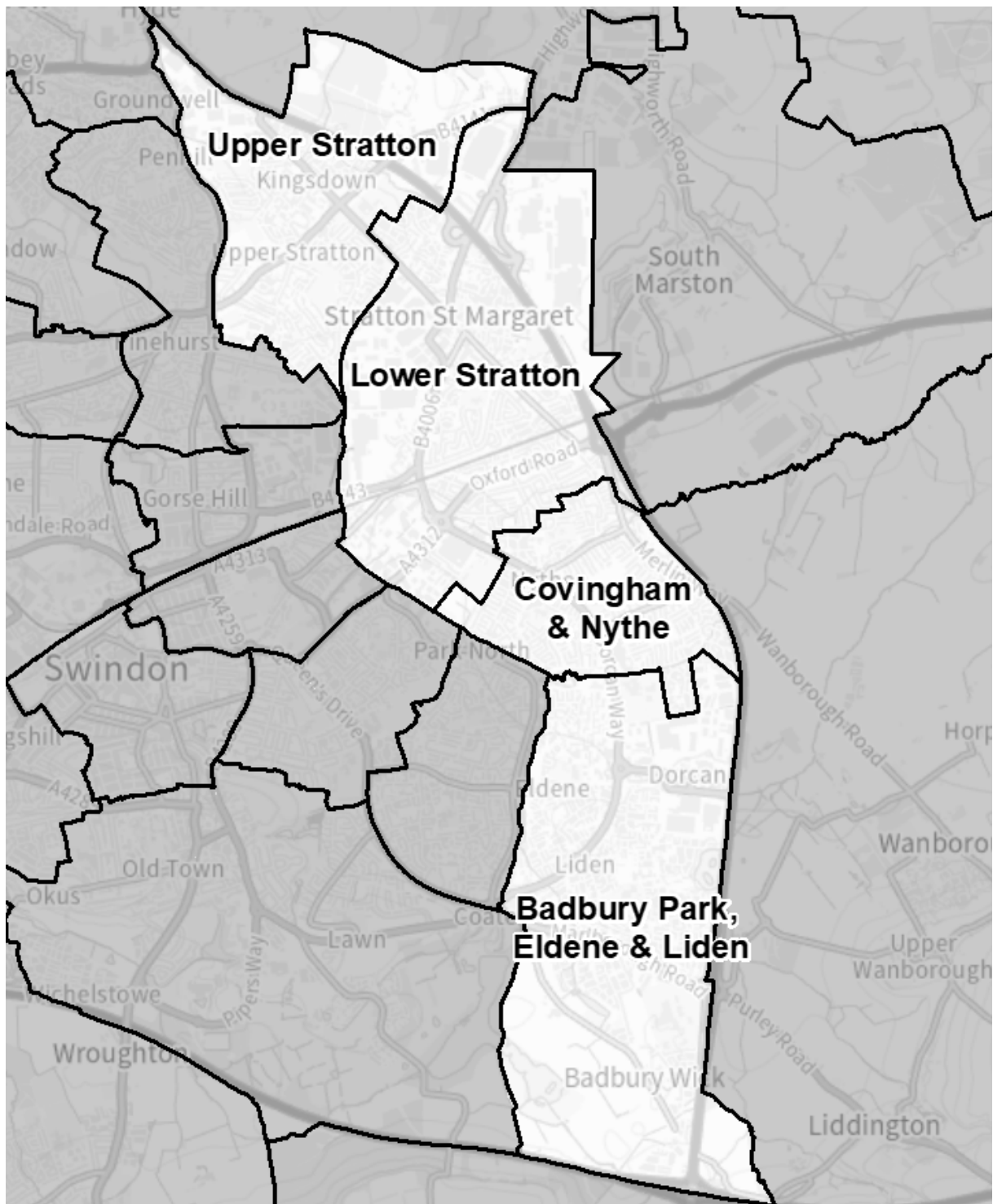
71 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported our proposals here and we received no other comments.

72 As noted above, Councillor Herring of South Swindon Parish Council suggested including the Bilborough Drive area in Parks ward rather than in a Walcot ward.

73 We consider that Bilborough Drive (and surrounding roads) is better accessed from Parks ward; however, including this area in that ward would result in Parks ward having a forecast electorate 17% greater than the average for Swindon by 2030. We consider this too great of an imbalance to include in our proposals.

74 We therefore recommend a two-member Parks ward as previously proposed as part of our final recommendations.

Stratton, Covingham and Liden



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden	3	-9%
Covingham & Nythe	2	5%
Lower Stratton	3	-3%
Upper Stratton	2	4%

Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden and Covingham & Nythe

75 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft recommendations for these wards. One local resident supported the proposed Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden ward, noting that 'these areas share school and health provisions and would suit forming one community'. Another resident agreed with the pairing of Eldene & Liden but opposed the inclusion of Badbury Park.

76 A resident of Covingham & Nythe supported the draft proposals for the ward, noting that the existing warding arrangement in this part of Swindon is confusing to residents and that the suggested draft pattern is an improvement.

77 Councillor Firmin, of South Swindon Parish Council and whose submission has been addressed in the preceding section of this report, additionally raised concerns regarding the Meadow Way area of Badbury Park which lies on the eastern side of the A419. Although the area is currently in both Ridgeway ward and South Swindon parish, this is an anomaly due to the creation of South Swindon as a parish (2017) postdating the most recent ward boundary review of Swindon Borough Council (2015). As such, we are confirming our draft recommendations to include Meadow Way in Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden ward to avoid the creation of an unviable parish ward here. Unviable parish wards are those which we consider would have too few electors (typically fewer than 100) to be effectively represented at parish level.

78 We propose to retain the Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden and Covingham & Nythe wards as outlined in our draft recommendations, in light of the support for this pattern. We do not consider that Badbury Park can be better represented in an alternative warding pattern with good electoral equality.

Lower Stratton and Upper Stratton

79 The Conservatives supported the draft recommendation Stratton wards. The Labour Group reiterated its preference for Barnes Road and Fitzwarren Court to be included in Upper Stratton rather than Lower Stratton, citing greater connectivity to the new housing in that area via Kingsdown Road to Upper Stratton rather than the A419 to Lower Stratton. Councillor Vallender, of the existing St Margaret & South Marston ward, made a submission in support of the draft recommendations which made a division between the urban Lower Stratton area and the rural community of South Marston.

80 Three residents living in the Merton Avenue area of Stratton St Margaret parish supported the draft recommendations, which transferred the area from the existing Gorse Hill & Pinehurst ward into the proposed Upper Stratton ward, in line with local parish boundaries.

81 Two residents suggested that Constable Road should be included in Upper Stratton ward, with another suggesting that all of Headlands Grove should also be included. Although we acknowledge that this allows for greater internal access within the ward, due to a parish ward boundary, any small adjustments here would result in unviable parish wards and therefore we cannot amend ward boundaries accordingly. As noted above, we consider that a parish ward would be unviable if it contains too few electors, as is the case for Constable Road.

82 One resident proposed using the railway line as a boundary between the Covingham and Stratton areas but did not provide evidence for this suggestion. This submission also suggested names of Stratton St Margaret and Stratton St Philip.

83 A member of the public proposed transferring roads between these two wards for access reasons. Specifically, they suggested including Coronel Close, Oak Garden, Sanders Close and Windbrook Meadow in Lower Stratton, where they have greater links. They also proposed transferring most of the area south of the railway line (identified as Greenbridge) from Lower Stratton to Covingham & Nythe with the rest of that area transferred to Broadgreen.

84 We consider that the minor amendments between Lower Stratton and Upper Stratton around Coronel Close are appropriate, as they allow for more effective and convenient local government and good electoral equality. We are not persuaded that the proposals at Greenbridge reflect community ties, as they require a ward which crosses the Stratton parish boundary at Broadgreen.

85 Although we have not received any submissions specifically regarding Barnes Road and Fitzwarren Court, upon further reflection we consider that the Labour Group's proposals from the initial warding pattern here do allow for more effective and convenient local government. The Kingsdown Road (B4141) appears to provide more direct access to the nearest communities within Stratton St Margaret parish, including the similar new development at Woodland Close. In contrast, we consider that the Highworth Road (A361) does not provide as strong a link to the further Lower Stratton area.

86 As part of our final recommendations, we therefore recommend Lower Stratton and Upper Stratton wards largely in line with our draft proposals but with two small amendments: the transfer of roads around Coronel Close (as described above) from Upper Stratton to Lower Stratton, and the transfer of Barnes Road and Fitzwarren Court from Lower Stratton into Upper Stratton. We consider that these ward names are the most appropriate descriptors for these respective areas.

West Swindon



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill	3	5%
Shaw & Westlea	3	2%

Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill and Shaw & Westlea

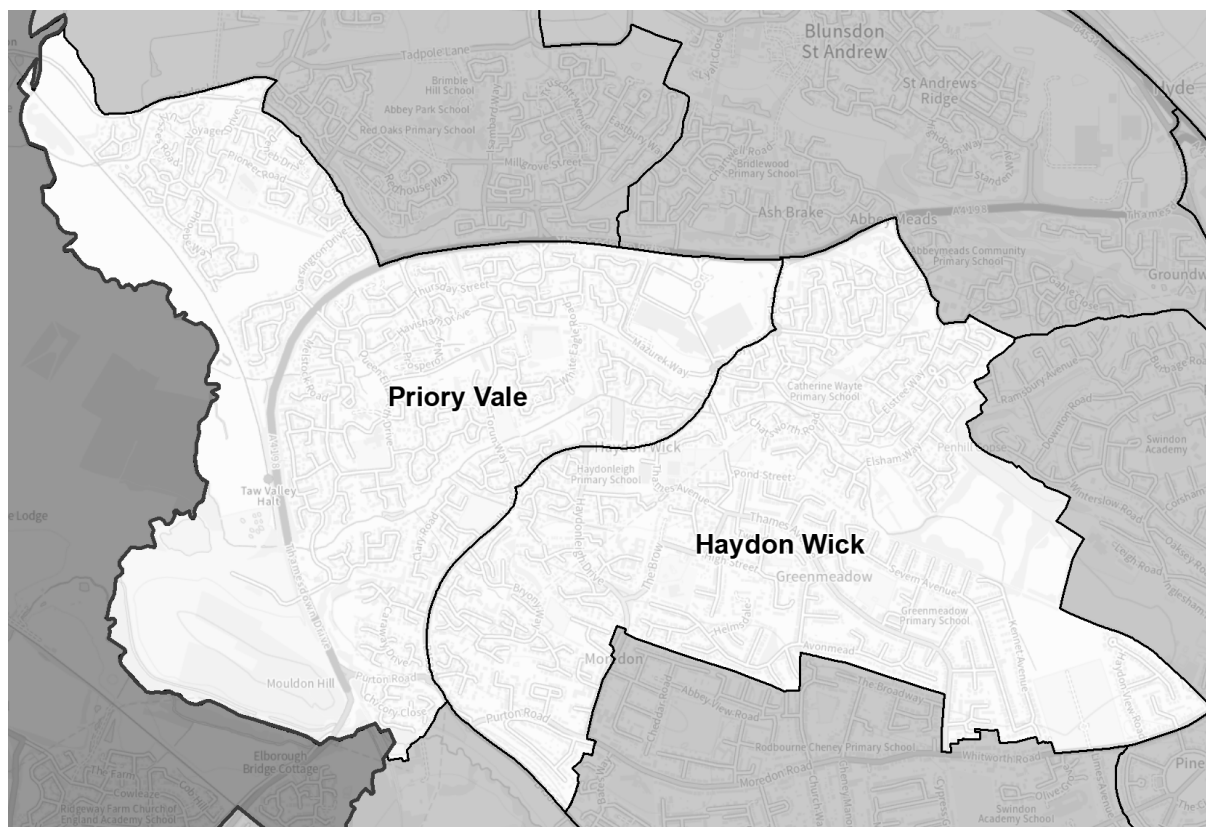
87 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft recommendation wards in West Swindon, as the proposals there aligned with their respective original submissions. The Labour Group did suggest that Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill should be renamed to the more succinct Lydiard Park, as the ward area covers the whole of Lydiard Park, ‘a major Swindon landmark and facility’.

88 We additionally received five submissions from local residents concerning these wards. Three of these were in support of the draft recommendations, noting that Westlea will now fall entirely within one ward. One submission noted that the proposed wards cover large areas that are not always geographically well-linked, but accepted that in most cases there is not a better alternative. One submission proposed names of West Swindon North and West Swindon South for these two wards, to make them more inclusive and less cumbersome.

89 We consider that, in light of the degree of support expressed for boundaries here, the draft recommendation boundaries for these wards should be retained in our final recommendations. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to alter the names of the wards; we consider that Lydiard Park is not representative of the various neighbourhoods that comprise Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill ward. We also consider that West Swindon North and West Swindon South do not provide any more accurate a description of the ward areas than the proposed names.

90 We therefore recommend retaining Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill and Shaw & Westlea wards as proposed.

Haydon Wick



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Haydon Wick	3	-2%
Priory Vale	3	-8%

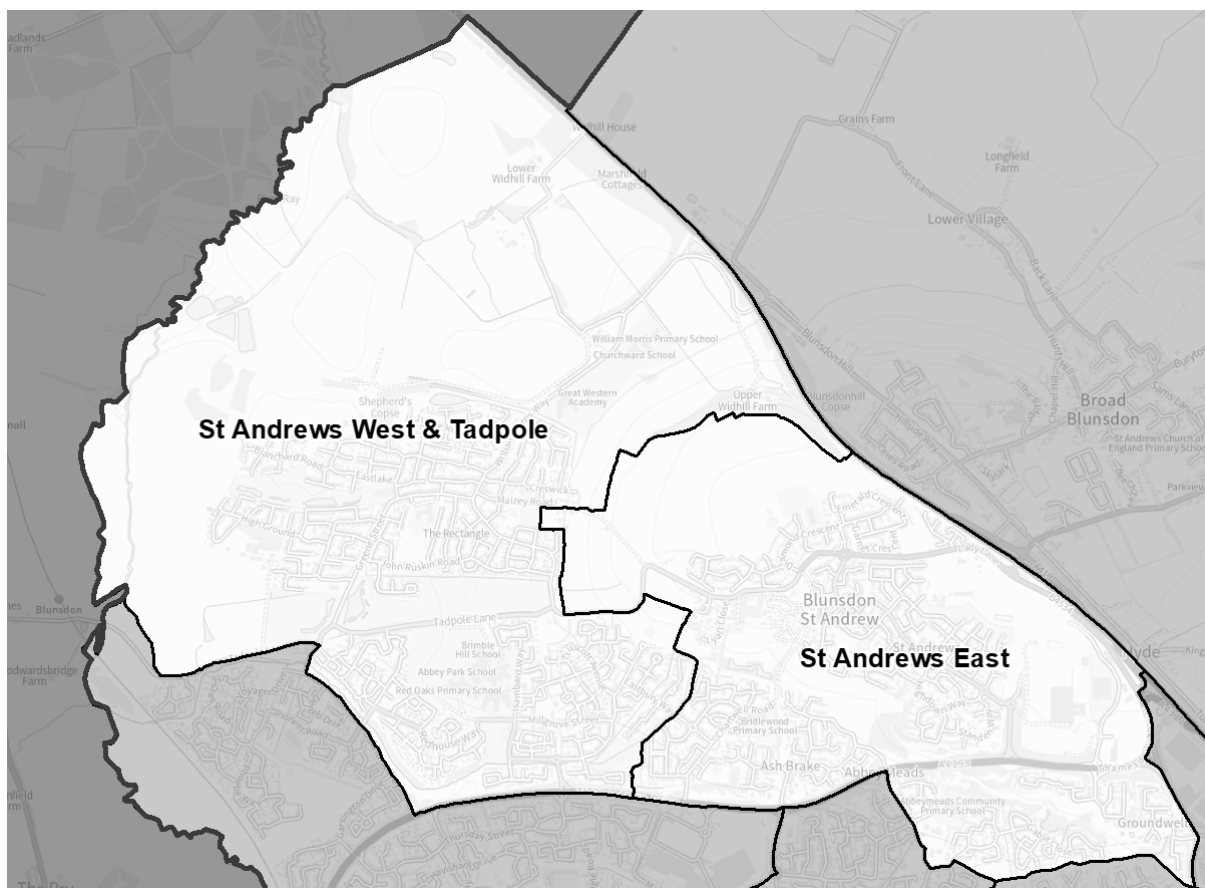
Haydon Wick and Priory Vale

91 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft proposal wards for Haydon Wick parish. Haydon Wick Parish Council also made a submission in support of the draft recommendations and reiterating its position in the initial consultation to favour a pattern with two three-member wards for the parish.

92 A member of the public made a submission advocating for including parts of Haydon Wick parish in St Andrews wards to the north; specifically they suggested including Oakhurst in St Andrews West and Abbeymeads in St Andrews East.

93 We do not consider that the proposal described above reflects Haydon Wick Parish Council's comments in both consultations, which identified the parish area as a strong community best represented by two three-member wards coterminous with the parish boundaries. We therefore propose confirming the Haydon Wick and Priory Vale wards as outlined in our draft recommendations, as final.

St Andrews



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
St Andrews East	2	-2%
St Andrews West & Tadpole	2	9%

St Andrews East and St Andrews West & Tadpole

94 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft proposal wards for St Andrews parish. St Andrews Parish Council also made a submission in support of the draft recommendations, noting that those recommendations followed the original submission it made during the initial consultation.

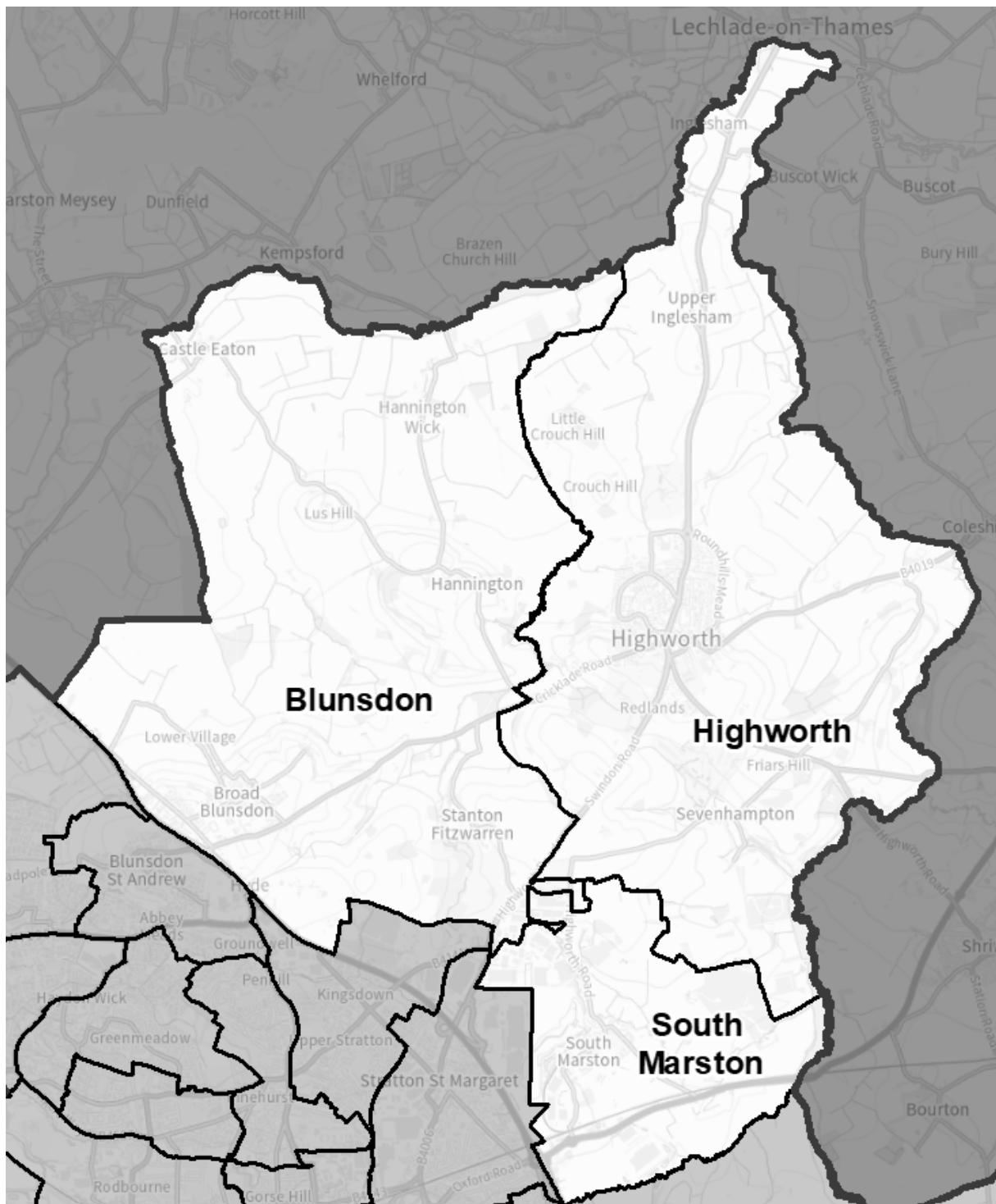
95 Two residents of Abbeymeads noted that the area south of Thamesdown Drive (A4198) had stronger links to Haydon Wick than to St Andrews.

96 We received several submissions from residents of St Andrews West. Two of these respondents suggested using Tadpole Lane as the boundary between the two St Andrews wards, as originally proposed by the Labour Group during the initial consultation, noting that the area felt distinct from the rest of the parish. Six respondents commented in support of the draft recommendation boundaries but all of these suggested that the Tadpole area (also referred to as Tadpole Farm and

Tadpole Garden Village) represents a significant community within the ward, one which is well understood by local residents. They noted that changing the name would 'follow the naming and language conventions of the locals'. One resident supported the draft boundaries with no comments on the names of the wards.

97 We propose retaining the boundaries between the two St Andrews wards as outlined in our draft recommendations. As noted above, we are not persuaded by the proposals of the member of the public who argued for wards crossing the parish boundary between Haydon Wick and St Andrews. We consider that there is strong local evidence to include Tadpole in the name of the western ward, and we are therefore recommending names of St Andrews East and St Andrews West & Tadpole for these two wards.

Rural North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Blunsdon	1	4%
Highworth	2	12%
South Marston	1	-9%

Blunsdon, Highworth and South Marston

98 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft proposed wards for the rural north of Swindon.

99 Highworth Town Council proposed that all of Highworth parish be included within the two-member ward for the town, including Hampton Turn and Sevenhampton. One resident also suggested including both Hampton Turn and Sevenhampton in Highworth ward, noting that they shared more common interests with the town than with either of the more distant settlements at South Marston and Stanton Fitzwarren. Councillor Apps of Highworth Town Council made a submission in support of the draft recommendations.

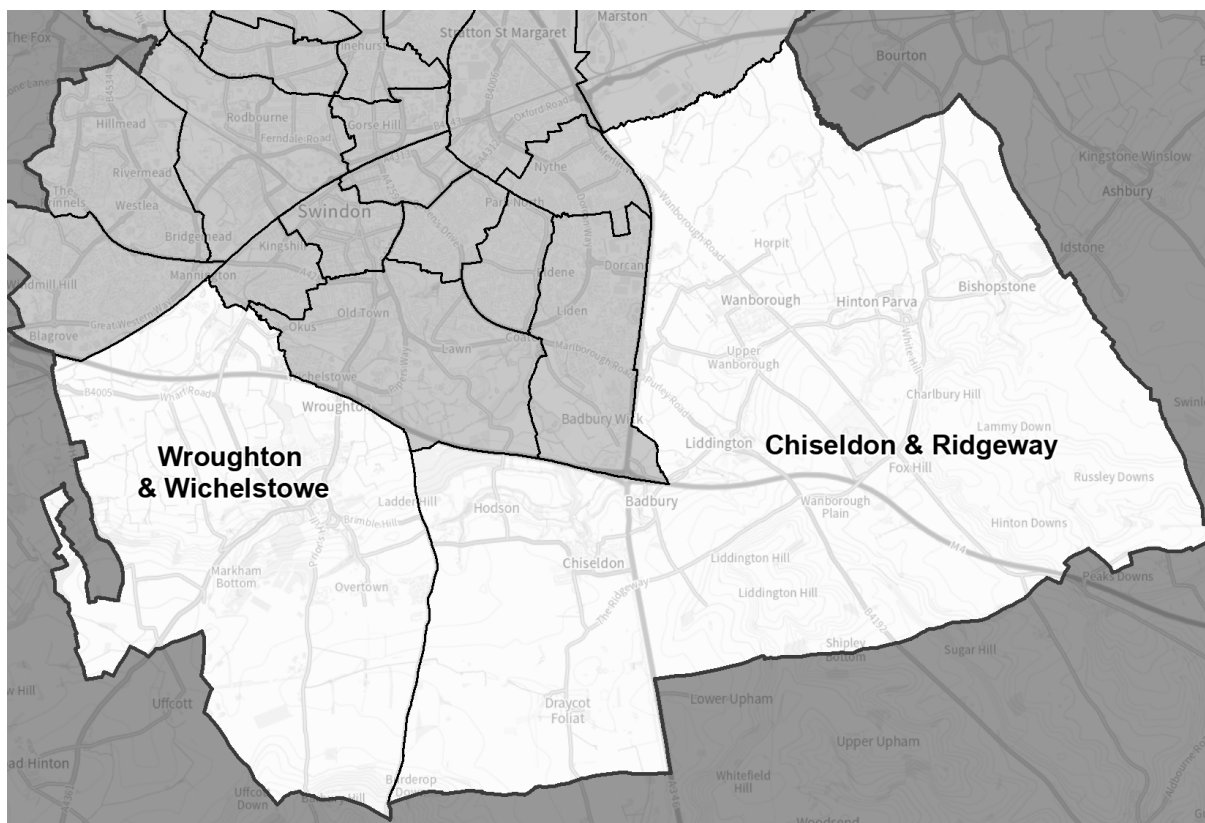
100 South Marston Parish Council supported the draft recommendations, noting that a single-member ward allows for a clear link between the councillor and the community. It also noted that this arrangement would better suit the management of the New Eastern Villages, a large incoming housing development which fall within the ward's boundaries.

101 Councillors Tomlin and Tucker of Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council both made submissions suggesting that Stanton Fitzwarren is better aligned with villages to its north, including Blunsdon and Hannington, rather than with South Marston. A resident of Stanton Fitzwarren echoed these views and felt that the A361 functioned as a logical boundary between the village and the South Marston area.

102 We note the comments of Highworth Town Council and the Stanton Fitzwarren parish councillors, and consider that these suggestions would allow for wards with greater community ties for both Blunsdon and Highworth wards. Although a Highworth ward coterminous with Highworth Town Council would have a forecast variance of 12%, we consider that the links of Hampton Turn and Sevenhampton are much stronger with Highworth than with villages to the south. Including Stanton Fitzwarren in Blunsdon rather than in South Marston would leave both wards at an acceptable forecast variance, and although the boundary between these parishes, which would become the ward boundary, does divide the South Marston industrial estate we note that it does not impact electors.

103 We therefore propose amendments to these three wards. We propose a Blunsdon ward comprising the parishes of Blunsdon, Castle Eaton, Hannington and Stanton Fitzwarren, a Highworth ward comprising Highworth and Inglesham parishes and a South Marston ward coterminous with South Marston parish.

Rural South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Chiseldon & Ridgeway	2	10%
Wroughton & Wichelstowe	3	-6%

Chiseldon & Ridgeway and Wroughton & Wichelstowe

104 The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft recommendations in the rural south of Swindon. A member of the public supported the pairing of Lawn with Croft in a new ward north of the motorway, rather than joined with Chiseldon as in the existing arrangement.

105 Bishopstone Parish Council and Chiseldon Parish Council both made submissions in support of the draft recommendations for Chiseldon & Ridgeway.

106 We received six submissions from residents of Wichelstowe which suggested that all of Wichelstowe should be united within one ward, separate from Wroughton. These submissions followed a similar sentiment expressed during the initial consultation. Most of the submissions proposed including West Wichelstowe and East Wichel together in a single-member ward, while leaving the remainder of Wroughton in a two-member ward entirely south of the M4.

107 We understand the comments in favour of a united Wichelstowe ward, but have not been able to identify a warding pattern that unites East Wichel and West Wichelstowe whilst providing for an acceptable level of electoral equality. A combined ward of East Wichel and West Wichelstowe would have a forecast electoral variance around 20% above the borough average as a single-member ward and around 40% below the average as a two-member ward. We do not consider that these poor levels of electoral equality are justified in this area and have not been able to identify an alternative warding pattern capable of facilitating a united Wichelstowe which achieves a balance of our statutory criteria across all Swindon Borough wards.

108 As part of our final recommendations, we therefore propose retaining the Chiseldon & Ridgeway and Wroughton & Wichelstowe wards as originally proposed.

Conclusions

109 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Swindon, referencing the 2023 and 2030 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found in Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided in Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2023	2030
Number of councillors	57	57
Number of electoral wards	25	25
Average number of electors per councillor	2,922	3,109
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	12	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0

Final recommendations

Swindon Borough Council should be made up of 57 councillors serving 25 wards: three single-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and 10 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 Swindon Borough Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Swindon Borough Council on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

110 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.

111 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, Swindon Borough 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.

112 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 Central Swindon North, Haydon Wick, Liddington, St Andrews, South Swindon and Stratton St Margaret.

113 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Central Swindon North parish.

Final recommendations

Central Swindon North Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Even Swindon	3
Gorse Hill	2
Penhill	2
Pinehurst	2
Rodbourne Cheney	4
Rodbourne Ferndale	3

114 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Haydon Wick parish.

Final recommendations

Haydon Wick Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Haydon Wick	9
Priory Vale	9

115 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Liddington parish.

Final recommendations

Liddington Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
-------------	------------------------------

Badbury Wick	3
Liddington	4

116 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for St Andrews parish.

Final recommendations

St Andrews Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
St Andrews East	5
St Andrews West & Tadpole	6

117 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for South Swindon parish.

Final recommendations

South Swindon Parish Council should comprise 23 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Badbury Park	1
Broadgreen	3
Kingshill	3
Old Town & Lawn	5
Parks	4
Queen's Park	4
Walcot	3

118 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Stratton St Margaret parish.

Final recommendations

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Coleview	3
Lower Coleview	2
Lower Stratton	7
Upper Stratton	7

What happens next?

119 We have now completed our review of Swindon Borough 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 2026.

Equalities

120 The Commission is satisfied that it complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act and that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Swindon Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden	3	8,246	2,749	-6%	8,457	2,819	-9%
2	Blunsdon	1	2,513	2,513	-14%	3,227	3,227	4%
3	Broadgreen	2	5,965	2,983	2%	6,115	3,058	-2%
4	Chiseldon & Ridgeway	2	4,298	2,149	-26%	6,817	3,409	10%
5	Covingham & Nythe	2	6,510	3,255	11%	6,542	3,271	5%
6	Gorse Hill	1	3,139	3,139	7%	3,251	3,251	5%
7	Haydon Wick	3	9,094	3,031	4%	9,118	3,039	-2%
8	Highworth	2	6,540	3,270	12%	6,962	3,481	12%
9	Kingshill	2	5,661	2,831	-3%	5,700	2,850	-8%
10	Lower Stratton	3	8,833	2,944	1%	9,016	3,005	-3%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill	3	9,826	3,275	12%	9,827	3,276	5%
12 Old Town & Lawn	3	9,706	3,235	11%	9,821	3,274	5%
13 Parks	2	6,699	3,350	15%	6,823	3,412	10%
14 Penhill & Pinehurst	2	6,732	3,366	15%	6,837	3,419	10%
15 Priory Vale	3	8,605	2,868	-2%	8,611	2,870	-8%
16 Queen's Park	3	7,648	2,549	-13%	8,615	2,872	-8%
17 Rodbourne Cheney	2	5,987	2,994	2%	5,999	3,000	-4%
18 Rodbourne Ferndale & Western	3	9,091	3,030	4%	9,145	3,048	-2%
19 Shaw & Westlea	3	9,488	3,163	8%	9,529	3,176	2%
20 South Marston	1	785	7,85	-73%	2,831	2,831	-9%
21 St Andrews East	2	5,909	2,955	1%	6,090	3,045	-2%
22 St Andrews West & Tadpole	2	6,793	3,397	16%	6,794	3,397	9%

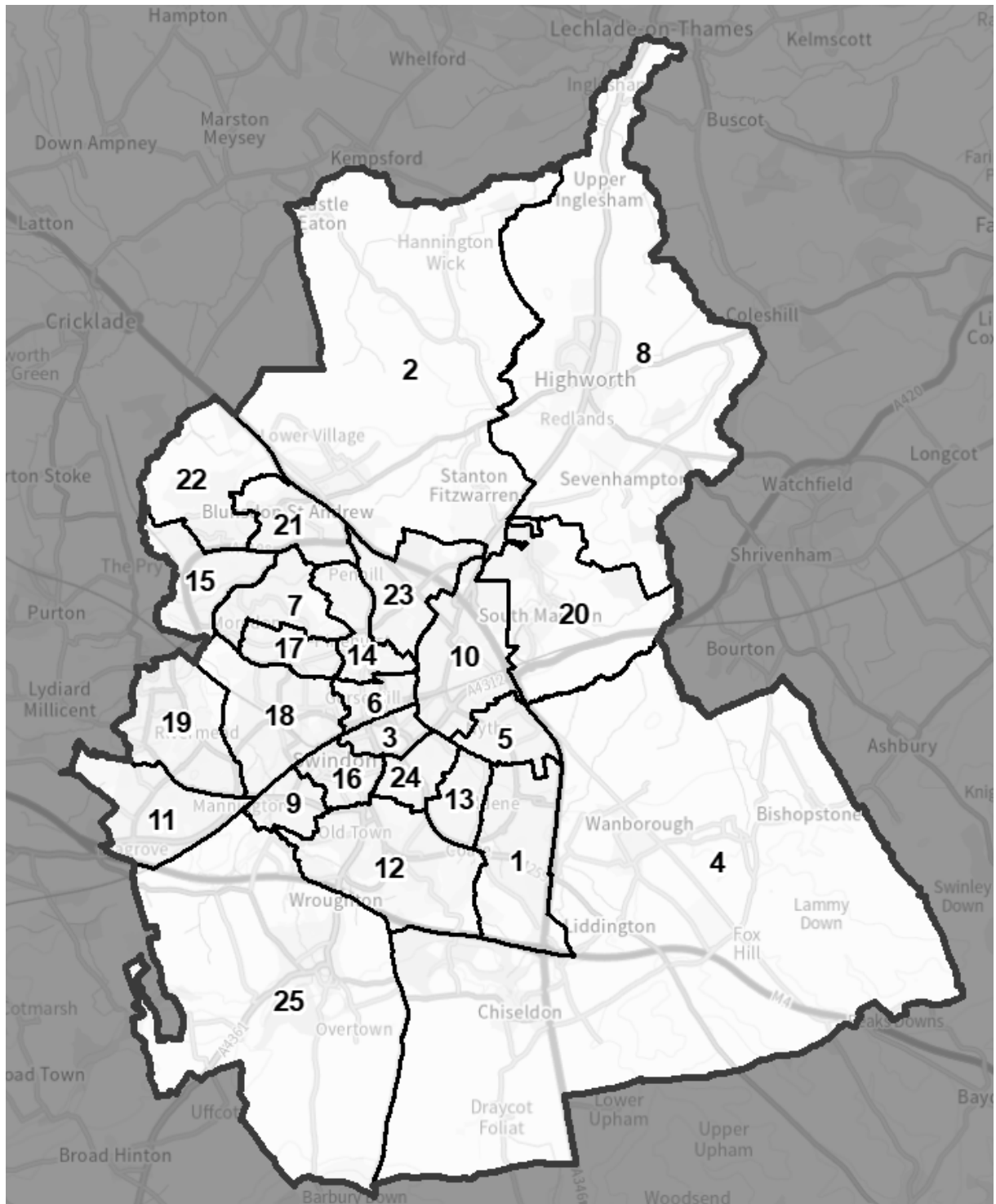
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Upper Stratton	2	6,240	3,120	7%	6,437	3,219	4%
24 Walcot	2	5,562	2,781	-5%	5,923	2,962	-5%
25 Wroughton & Wichelstowe	3	6,683	2,228	-24%	8,741	2,914	-6%
Totals	57	166,553	–	–	177,228	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,922	–	–	3,109	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Swindon Borough 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 borough. 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	Badbury Park, Eldene & Liden
2	Blunsdon
3	Broadgreen
4	Chiseldon & Ridgeway
5	Covingham & Nythe
6	Gorse Hill
7	Haydon Wick
8	Highworth
9	Kingshill
10	Lower Stratton
11	Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill
12	Old Town & Lawn
13	Parks
14	Penhill & Pinehurst
15	Priory Vale
16	Queen's Park
17	Rodbourne Cheney
18	Rodbourne Ferndale & Western
19	Shaw & Westlea
20	South Marston
21	St Andrews East
22	St Andrews West & Tadpole
23	Upper Stratton
24	Walcot
25	Wroughton & Wichelstowe

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/swindon

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/swindon

Political Groups

- Swindon Conservative Federation (comprising North and South Swindon and the East Wiltshire Conservative Association and MP)
- Swindon Borough Council Labour Group (x2)

Councillors

- Councillor S. Apps (Highworth Town Council)
- Councillor J. Firmin (South Swindon Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Herring (South Swindon Parish Council) (x2)
- Councillor S. Tomlin (Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council)
- Councillor D. Tucker (Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council)
- Councillor M. Vallender (Swindon Borough Council)

Local organisations

- Eastcott Community Organisation Committee
- Old Town Residents' Association
- Penhill Forum
- Swindon Civic Voice
- Swindon Heritage Preservation & Royal Agricultural University

Parish and Town Councils

- Bishopstone Parish Council
- Chiseldon Parish Council
- Haydon Wick Parish Council
- Highworth Town Council
- South Marston Parish Council
- South Swindon Parish Council
- St Andrews Parish Council

Local residents

- 73 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 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

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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