

Solihull

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Comment text:

Please see attached the Council's formal response to the Boundary Commission's proposed new ward boundaries and names for Solihull Borough.

The Council considered the principal differences between the Commission's Draft Recommendations (January 2024) and the Council's own submission (October 2023). These are set out in the tables at paragraphs 26 and 28, with the Council's final response in relation to each area of difference.

In summary, the Council accepts all of the Commission's proposals with the exception of:

- Lanchester Way - the 'Cars' area - The Commission's draft recommendation is not accepted, and the Council's preference would be (a) to leave the Cars area within Smith's Wood and (b) move the Buckingham Road and land south of Birmingham Road from Smith's Wood to Castle Bromwich and Fordbridge respectively. (see pages 11 to 16 of the attached document.)
- The Commission's proposed ward name Smith's Wood is not accepted and the Council's preference would be to name the ward Kingshurst and Smith's Wood (see pages 10 and 37 of the attached document.)
- The Commission's proposed ward name Kingshurst and Fordbridge is not accepted and the Council's preference would be to name the ward Fordbridge (see pages 10 and 39 of the attached document.)

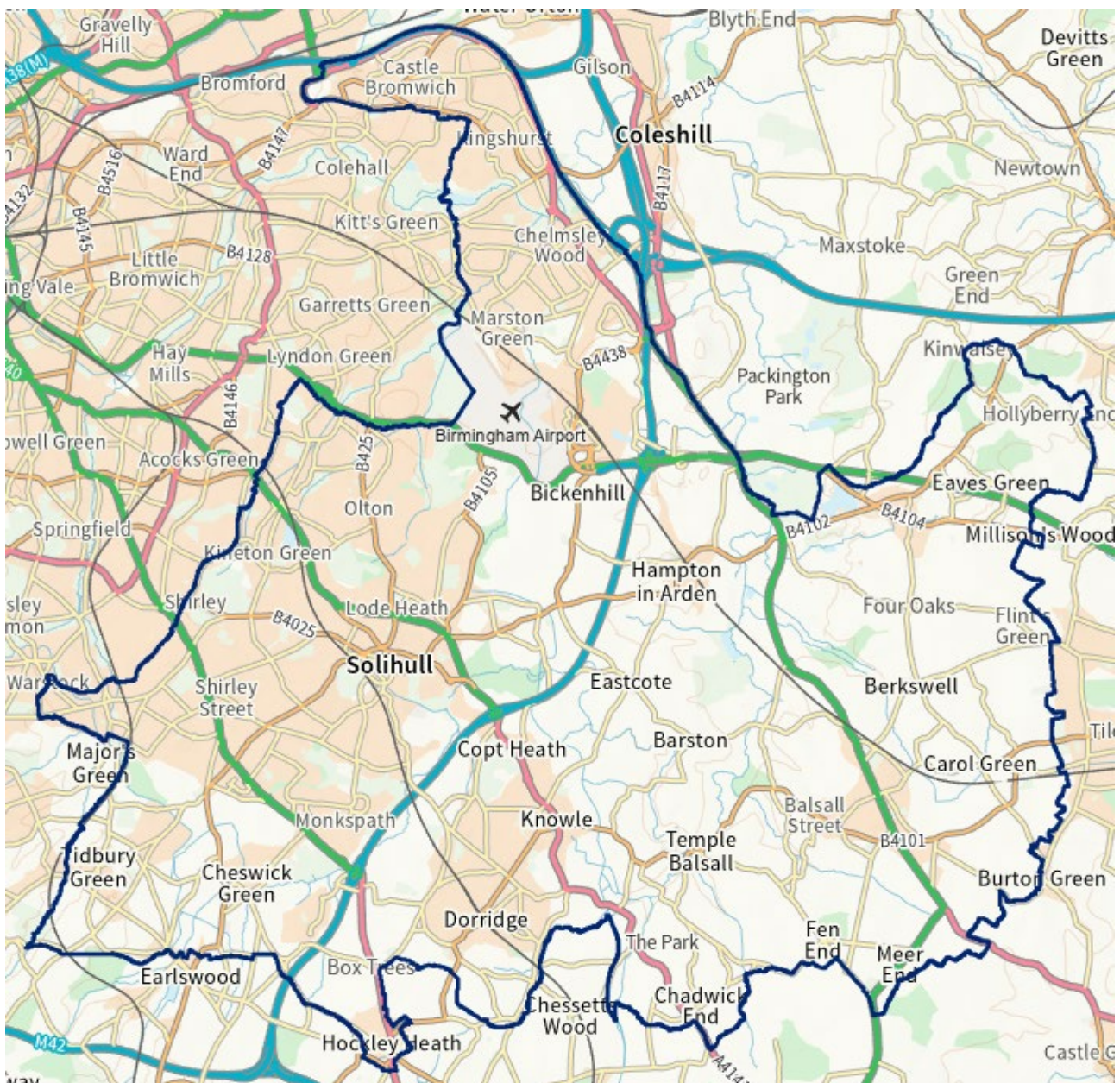
Regards
Andrew

Attached Documents:

- smbc-response-to-lgbce-draft-recommendations-v3.pdf

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S
ELECTORAL REVIEW OF SOLIHULL COUNCIL**

SOLIHULL MBC'S RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS



AUGUST 2024 (V3) – RECOMMENDATION FROM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Contents

Introduction	3
Rationale for New Warding Pattern	3
Electorate Data	3
Electorate Parity	4
The Commission's Draft Recommendations	4
Size of Council	4
Proposed Ward Boundaries	4
Urban North	5
Suburban West	5
Rural East and South	6
Ward Names	7
Schedule of Principal Differences and Proposed Response	8
Ward Boundaries	8
Ward Names	10
Commentary for the Council's Response – Ward Boundaries	11
Commentary for the Council's Response – Ward Names	37
Appendix A – Electorate Numbers for the Three Northern Wards	42
Appendix B – Schedule of Changes to Existing Wards	43

Introduction

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) have commenced a periodic [electoral review](#)¹ of Solihull which includes the size of the Council and its pattern of wards.
2. The first consultation on a potential new warding pattern took place from August to October 2023. During this consultation the Commission didn't set out a preferred option, but instead invited representations on what respondents believed would be an appropriate warding pattern.
3. The Council's proposed warding pattern submission was reported to Governance Committee on [26th September 2023](#) and its recommendation was reported to Full Council on [10th October 2023](#), which endorsed the submission.
4. On 30th January 2024 the Commission launched its second consultation on a potential new warding pattern for the Borough. This is in the form of its [Draft Recommendations](#) that includes a new warding pattern for the Borough. The Commission have invited representations on its draft recommendations and this submission sets out the Council's response to the consultation, which closes on 14th October 2024.
5. The Commission are then expected to publish their recommendations, in March 2025, before being put to Parliament for final approval. The new boundaries will then be used for the local elections due to take place in May 2026.

Rationale for New Warding Pattern

6. In developing its original proposed pattern of wards, and in commenting on the Commission's Draft Recommendations, the Council has considered the three statutory criteria that the LGBCE are required to take into account, namely:
 - There should be equality of electorate across all wards (meaning Councillors in each ward should represent approximately the same number of voters).
 - Ward patterns should, as far as possible, reflect community interests and identities and boundaries should be identifiable.
 - Electoral arrangements should promote effective and convenient local government.
7. It is noted that **there may be circumstances when such criteria may be in conflict with each other, and therefore a balance will need to be struck**. Another point worth noting is that in some parts of the urban area any difference between community interests and identities can be clinal. That is to say that any differences are not always marked by a step change in the character of an area and the next. Differences can be more subtle as they occur more gradually over a greater area, for example as distance from one centre and proximity to another increases and decreases accordingly.

Electorate Data

8. Accurate information (down to property level) is available on the scale and distribution of the Borough's electorate as at 2023. However, the Commission base their reviews on the scale and distribution of the electorate that is forecast to exist 5 years on from when the Commission publish their final recommendations. This means that it is the electorate as at 2029 that will shape the pattern of wards.
9. The Commission have published the [2029 electorate forecasts](#) to [polling district level](#). This was used to create the new warding pattern in the Council's October 2023 submission. The 2029 forecasts take into the scale and distribution of new housing developments² that are expected to result in completions between 2023 and 2029.

¹ The previous reviews for the Borough were completed in 2003 and 1977.

² This is based on monitoring data from planning applications, sites under construction and evidence on the housing trajectory presented to the on-going Local Plan examination.

Electorate Parity

10. The Borough wide electorate forecast for 2029 is 179,197 which equates to an average of 10,541 per ward. Ten percent³ either way from this average gives a range of 9,487 to 11,595 (ie +/- 1,054). The aim is to have wards as close as possible to the average to achieve electorate parity.
11. When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, the Council will consider the ward as having '**good electoral equality**'.
12. As Solihull elects its Council by thirds, all of its wards are represented by three members each. This submission compares the electorate number per ward as this allows a consistent basis for comparison, and more convenient when considering what changes ought to be pursued. As wards have a consistent number of Members, the target would result in Members representing an electorate average of 3,514 each.

The Commission's Draft Recommendations

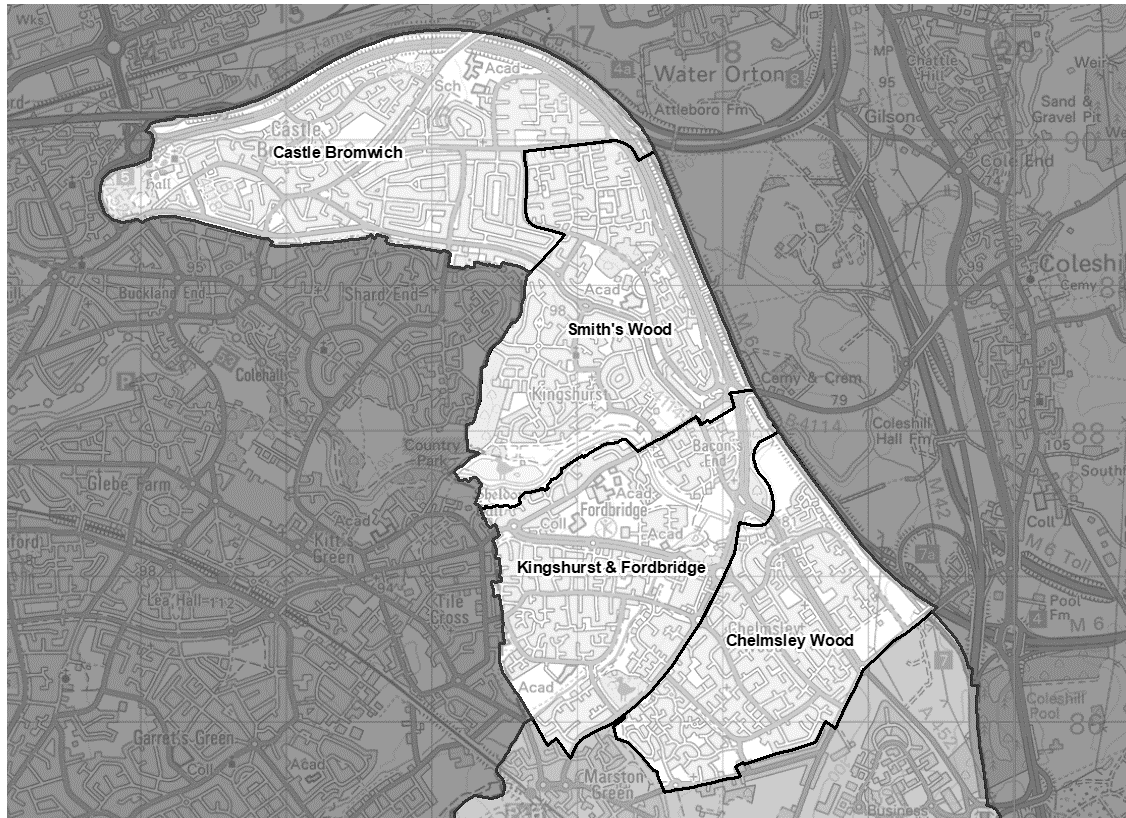
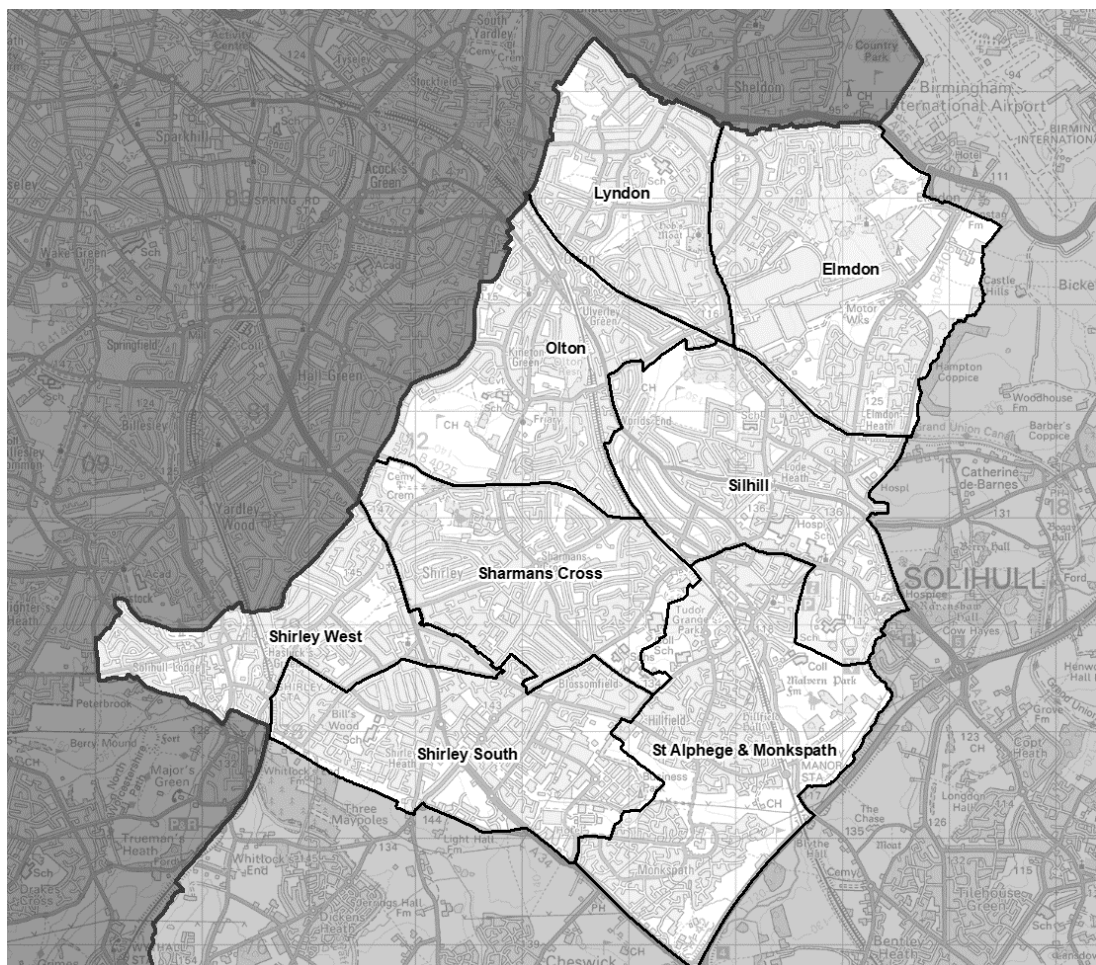
Size of Council

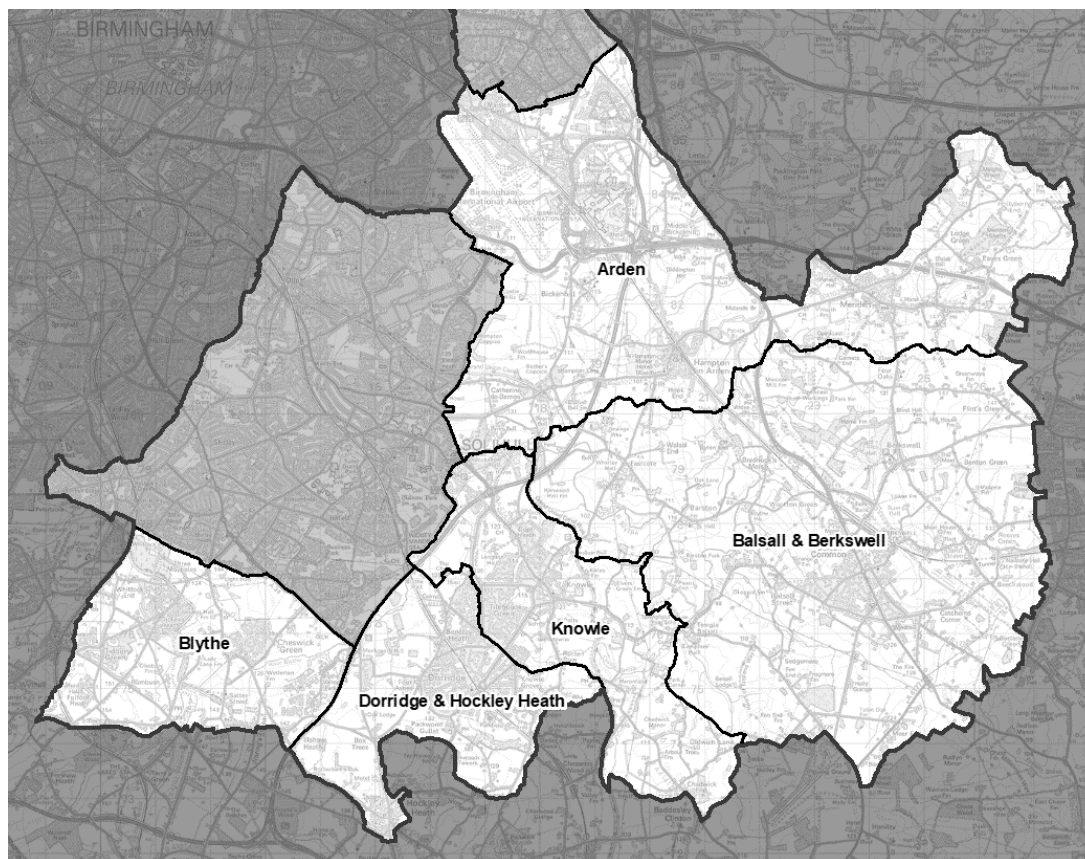
13. In the first consultation, the Commission indicated they were minded to retain the size of the Council at 51 councillors. As the Council undertakes elections 'by-thirds' this means there would need to be a pattern of 17 wards.
14. The Commission have retained the size of the Council at 51 councillors as part of their Draft Recommendations. This is the Council's preferred option.

Proposed Ward Boundaries

15. The Commission's draft recommendations propose changes that will affect all of the Borough's current 17 wards. They are set out in three parts:
 - Urban North
 - Suburban West
 - Rural East and South
16. The Commission's Draft Recommendations (January 2024) document provides detailed commentary for each of the areas/wards and this should be referred to for a detailed explanation of the changes. Appendix B contains a ward-by-ward summary of the changes from the existing pattern of wards. The Commission's document includes the following key diagrams setting out the proposed warding pattern for the 3 areas noted above.

³ If any wards show a significant departure from the average, then it will be expected that these are justified by an evidenced argument. The greater the departure, the stronger the argument will need to be.

Urban North**Suburban West**

Rural East and South

17. Paragraphs 30 – 34 of the Draft Recommendations set out the Commissions summary of representations received to the first consultation, and this includes the following:

“We received 33 submissions⁴ in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals, one from the Council and one from the Green Group. The Liberal Democrat Group made a submission in support of the Green Group’s pattern. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments on warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough⁵.

Our draft recommendations are mostly based on the Council’s proposals, except in the north of the borough where they are based on the Green Group’s proposals.⁶”

18. The Commission’s Draft Recommendations would result in a warding pattern whereby all 17 wards would be within 10% of the average and would therefore be considered to achieve electoral parity. The Council’s October 2023 submission achieved the electoral parity for 16 wards, the exception being Castle Bromwich which was only marginally (by 0.6%) outside of the generally accepted tolerance.
19. As noted above, most of the Council’s suggestions have been incorporated into the Commission’s Draft Recommendations, but there are some differences. **This document focuses on the differences between the Commission’s Draft Recommendations and the Council’s submission.** It sets out a schedule of the 11 principal differences⁷ and whether the Council believes they are consistent with the relevant criteria or not.

⁴ All submissions made to the Commission are available to view on their [web site](#).

⁵ Paragraph 30.

⁶ Paragraph 32.

⁷ That relate to differences over where the boundaries of wards should be drawn. In addition, there are 3 differences over the names of the wards.

20. Of the 11 principal differences between the Commission's and the Council's proposals, most refer to small areas where the Commission has decided to sub-divide a polling district, whereas the Council's submission was based on retaining existing polling districts wherever possible.
21. The Commission's draft recommendations do not propose to make any amendments to the ward boundary proposals suggested by the Council in relation to the following wards:
- Blythe
 - Dorridge & Hockley Heath
 - Elmdon
 - Silhill
 - St Alphege & Monkspath
22. The Council has created a dedicated [web page](#) that enables users to interactively explore the ward boundaries as follows:
- Existing pattern of wards (as created in 2003).
 - The Council's proposed warding pattern (October 2023).
 - The Commission draft recommended warding pattern (January 2024).

Ward Names

23. The Council's submission included new names for 4 wards, as follows:
- Arden – a ward largely based on the former Bickenhill ward.
 - Balsall and Berkswell – a ward largely based on the former Meriden ward.
 - Sharmans Cross – a ward based on the former Shirley East ward.
 - St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield – a ward largely based on the former St Alphege ward.
24. The Commission uses 3 of these for its Draft Recommendations but has suggested an alternative for the fourth.

Schedule of Principal Differences and Proposed Response

25. The Council's proposed response is based on whether it believes the changes are consistent with the relevant criteria set out in paragraph 6 of this submission.

Ward Boundaries

26. The following table sets out the principal⁸ differences between the Commission's Draft Recommendations (January 2024) and the Council's submission (October 2023). Each of the differences is then analysed in more detail in subsequent sections of this submission.

Ref	Area	Summary of Difference ⁹	Consistency with criteria	Council's Response
01	Lanchester Way - the 'Cars' area.	The areas south of Lanchester Way (often known as the Cars area) are located in Castle Bromwich rather than Smith's Wood .	Partial	Not accept Commission's draft recommendation.
02	Fordbridge Way and Kingshurst Way.	All of central Kingshurst, i.e. Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them) are located in Smith's Wood rather than Kingshurst and Fordbridge .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
03	Chester Road south, Forth Drive and Clopton Crescent.	Chester Road south, Forth Drive and Clopton Crescent are located in Kingshurst and Fordbridge rather than Smith's Wood .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
04	Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way.	Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way (and the roads off them) are located in Kingshurst and Fordbridge rather than Chelmsley Wood .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
05	Scott Road and Fernhill Road.	Scott Road and Fernhill Road (and the roads off them) are located in Lyndon rather than Olton .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
06	Stonor Park Road and the adjacent area north of Streetsbrook Road.	Stonor Park Road and the adjacent area north of Streetsbrook Road (including Beaumont Grove and Oaken Drive) are located in Olton rather than Sharmans Cross .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
07	Northeast of Stratford Road and northwest of Olton Road.	Northeast of Stratford Road and northwest of Olton Road (including Greenhill Way and Pailton Road) are located in Sharmans Cross rather than Olton .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
08	Dove Tree Court & Peel Court.	Dove Tree Court, Peel Court and the former Morrisons store are located in Shirley West rather than Sharmans Cross .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

⁸ Only those differences which result in dwellings being located in a different ward are included.

⁹ Describing the Commission's Draft Recommendation first.

Ref	Area	Summary of Difference ⁹	Consistency with criteria	Council's Response
09	Featherstone Crescent	Featherstone Crescent is located in Shirley South rather than Shirley West .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
10	Weavers Marston and Old Farm Drive (east)	Weavers Marston and Old Farm Drive (east) (and roads off them) are located in Arden rather than Chelmsley Wood .	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.
11	Barston	The parish of Barston is located in Balsall and Berkswell rather than Knowle	Full	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

27. As noted above, the above table details the differences between the Commission's draft recommendations (January 2024) and the Council's submission (October 2023). For a comparison to the **current warding pattern**, please see Appendix B to this statement.

Ward Names

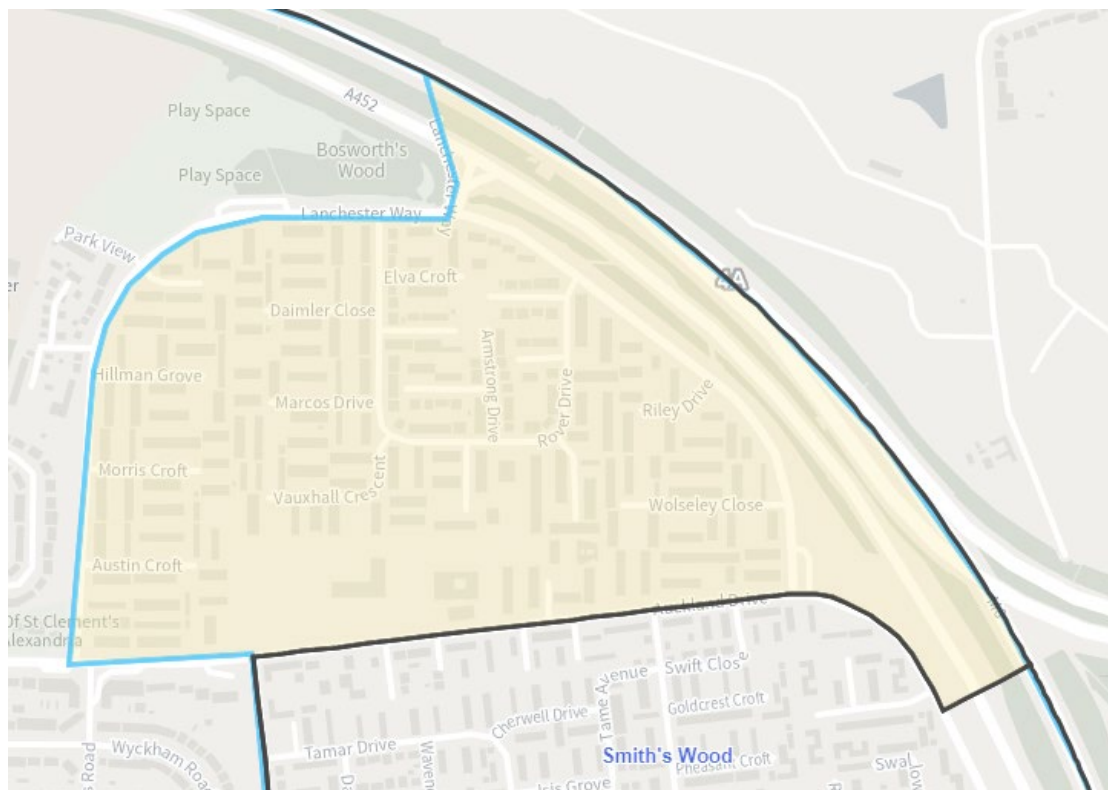
28. The table below indicates differences between the Commission's Draft Recommendations and the Council's submission, or where the Commission's proposals ought to be amended.

Ref	Commissions Draft Recommendation	Council's Alternative	Consistency with criteria	Council's Response
12	Smith's Wood	Kingshurst and Smith's Wood	Limited	Not accept Commission's draft recommendation.
13	Kingshurst and Fordbridge	Fordbridge	Limited	Not accept Commission's draft recommendation.
14	St Alphege & Monkspath	St Alphege with Monkspath and Hillfield	Partial	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

29. In the sections that follow, the Council's preferred names for the wards noted above have been used.

Commentary for the Council's Response – Ward Boundaries

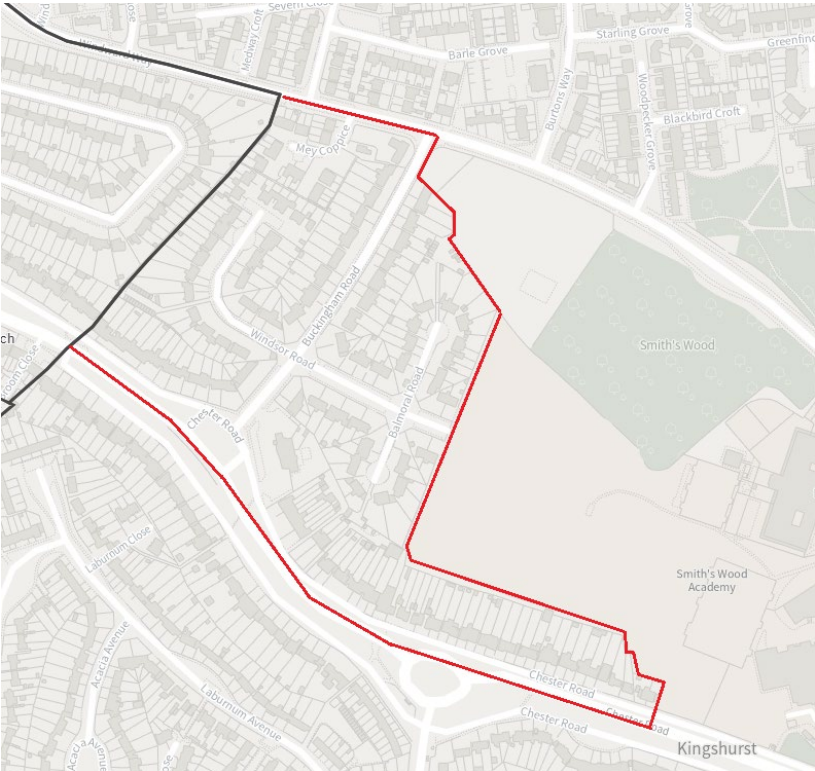
01 – Lanchester Way and the 'Cars Area'



Area affected	The area between Lanchester Way and Auckland Drive known as the 'Cars area' – the roads named after makes of cars, that are principally accessed off Lanchester Road.
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area falls within Castle Bromwich ward or Smith's Wood ward.
Current Ward	Smith's Wood
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Castle Bromwich
Proposed Ward (Council)	Kingshurst & Smith's Wood
Parish implications	<p>Smith's Wood parish is currently wholly located within Smith's Wood ward. Under the Commission's recommendations it would be split between Castle Bromwich ward (which would accommodate the Cars area) and Smith's Wood which would accommodate the remainder of the parish.</p> <p>Castle Bromwich parish would remain wholly within the Castle Bromwich ward, as it does now.</p>

<p>Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations¹⁰</p>	<p>41 The two borough-wide submissions we received proposed different arrangements in this area. The Council argued that preserving Castle Bromwich ward unchanged, and maintaining its coterminosity with Castle Bromwich parish, was the most effective reflection of community identity and that this warranted accepting a variance of -11%. The Green Group proposed an alternative arrangement, including the Lanchester Park area (sometimes referred to as the Cars Area, due to local roads named after car makers and models) from Smith's Wood into Castle Bromwich instead. This pattern results in a Castle Bromwich ward with a forecast variance of 9% and a Smith's Wood ward with a forecast variance of -3%.</p> <p>42 We received additional submissions from the Meriden and Solihull Conservative Associations which supported the Council's scheme elsewhere in the borough but proposed transferring a smaller residential area of Smith's Wood (comprising Balmoral Road, Buckingham Road, part of Chester Road, Kings Croft, Mey Coppice, and Windsor Road) in order to bring Castle Bromwich ward within a more acceptable variance. This results in a variance of -8% for Castle Bromwich and -6% for Smith's Wood.</p> <p>44 We visited this area on our tour of Solihull, and agree with the suggestion put forward by the Green Group for Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood. We believe this arrangement achieves a more equal electorate, and reflects more clear boundaries. Although we note the logic of the submissions by the Meriden and Solihull Conservatives, we believe that Auckland Drive represents a stronger boundary between the Cars Area and the rest of Smith's Wood; we also believe that including a larger, more well-defined neighbourhood in the Cars Area better reflects community identity.</p> <p>45 We therefore propose a Castle Bromwich ward consisting of Castle Bromwich parish and the Cars Area (specifically, the area aligning to the existing Smith's Wood parish ward of Bosworth) as part of our draft recommendations.</p> <p>46 Although there were a number of submissions from borough-wide groups in this northern area of the borough, we would particularly welcome additional submissions from local residents who could present further insight into the suitability of the Cars Area versus the Buckingham Road area to be included in Castle Bromwich, or whether the boundary of Castle Bromwich parish is reflective of the community such that it warrants a ward with a forecast variance of -11%. We consider this a finely balanced decision and would appreciate further local information.</p>
<p>SMBC Commentary on recommendation</p>	<p>The Commission's draft recommendations do result in electoral parity between Castle Bromwich (9%) and Smith's Wood (-3%); and indeed across all 4 of the northern wards (Kingshurst and Fordbridge (-7%) and Chelmsley Wood (9%).</p>

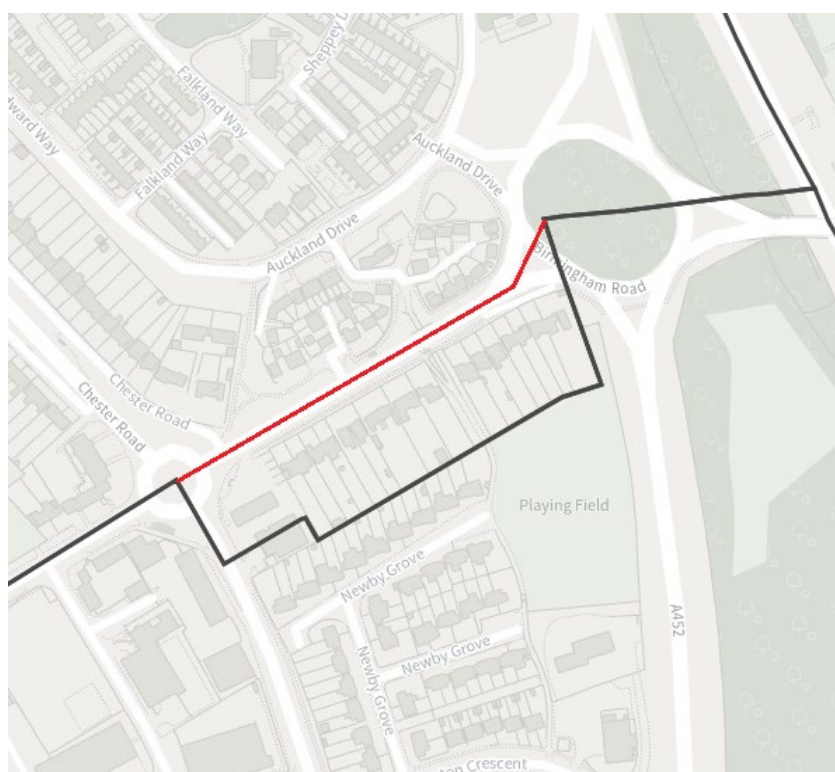
¹⁰ This includes the relevant commentary from the Commissions Draft Recommendations (January 2024) for the area concerned.

	<p>However, this is at the expense of breaking existing strong ties between the Cars area and the rest of Smith's Wood. In moving the Cars area to Castle Bromwich, it creates a ward (Castle Bromwich) with contrasting community identities and interests. Whereas retaining the Cars area within Smith's Wood would see neighbourhoods with similar community interest and identities that focus on the social facilities at the centre of Smith's Wood.</p> <p>It is for these reasons that it is considered that the Commission's draft recommendations are only partially consistent with the statutory criteria.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Partial
Alternative (if applicable)	<p>In order to respect community interest and identities, an alternative would be to leave the Cars area within Smith's Wood. This would result in Castle Bromwich being -10.7% away from the average and Smith's Wood being 16.9% away from the average.</p> <p>Therefore, options that could balance this disparity have been explored below.</p> <p>If the area around Buckingham Road (as shown in the map extract below) were to be transferred from Smith's Wood to Castle Bromwich, the differences would reduce to -5.9% and 12.2% respectively.</p>  <p>There are grounds for this move based on the area's community identity and interest as its character is more akin to Castle Bromwich than Smith's Wood.</p> <p>Although this potential move enables Castle Bromwich ward to achieve electoral parity, this is not the case for Smith's Wood. Therefore,</p>

consideration has been given to what other areas of Smith's Wood could be transferred out of the ward.

There are no other suitable neighbourhoods that could be moved from Smith's Wood to Castle Bromwich that would respect the community identity and interests of both wards.

The whole southern boundary of Smith's Wood is shared with Kingshurst and Fordbridge ward, and this has been investigated to see if any of the neighbourhoods in this area could be moved into Kingshurst & Fordbridge. The boundary between neighbourhoods in Smith's Wood and Kingshurst & Fordbridge chosen by the Commission uses strong identifiable features (i.e. Babbs Mill NR and Cooks Lane) for the most part. However, towards the eastern end of the boundary between the wards, there is a stretch of Birmingham Road that could be used as a stronger, more identifiable boundary, rather than the rear of the properties. This is the area shown in the extract below.

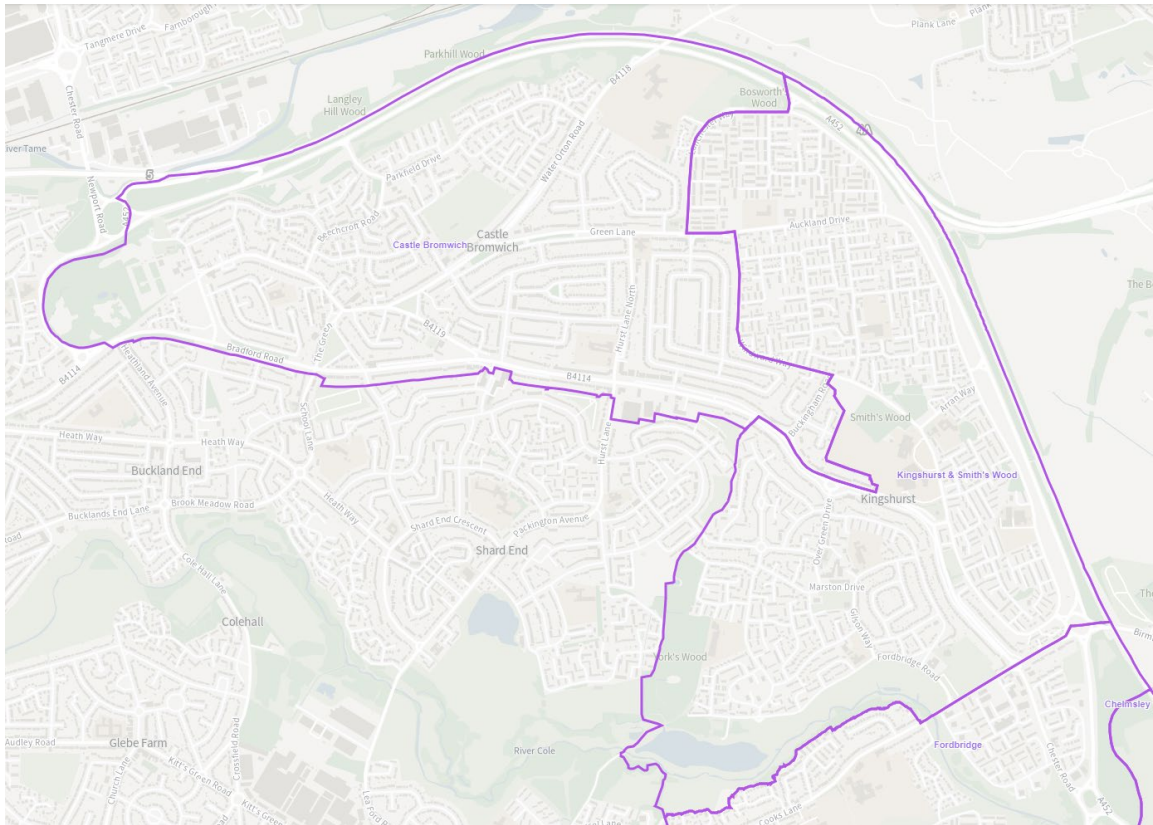


This only contains a small number of dwellings, and if it were to be transferred from Smith's Wood to Kingshurst & Fordbridge, it would only reduce the electorate number in Smith's Wood to be 11.7% away from the average. The figure for Kingshurst and Fordbridge would shift from -6.9% to -6.4%.

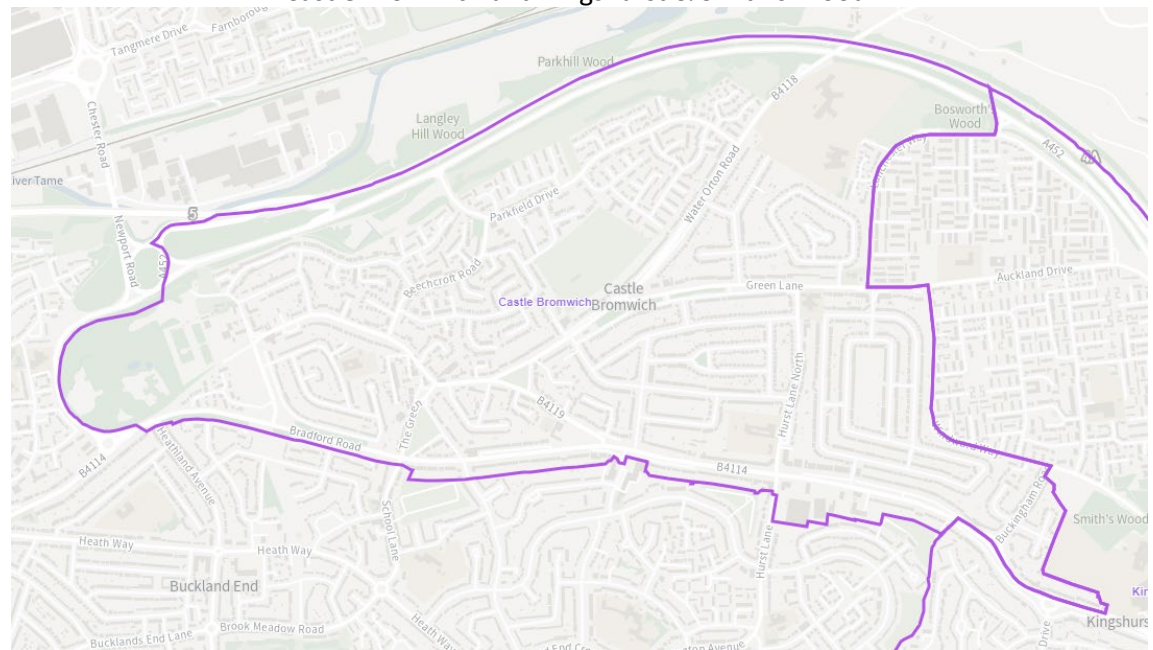
There are no other neighbourhoods that could be moved from Smith's Wood to reduce its average, without more fundamental changes that would create subsequent knock-on effects that would then destabilise the warding pattern in this area of the Borough.

An appendix to this submission sets out the electorate numbers for the wards noted above, indicating how the percentages used in this analysis have been calculated.

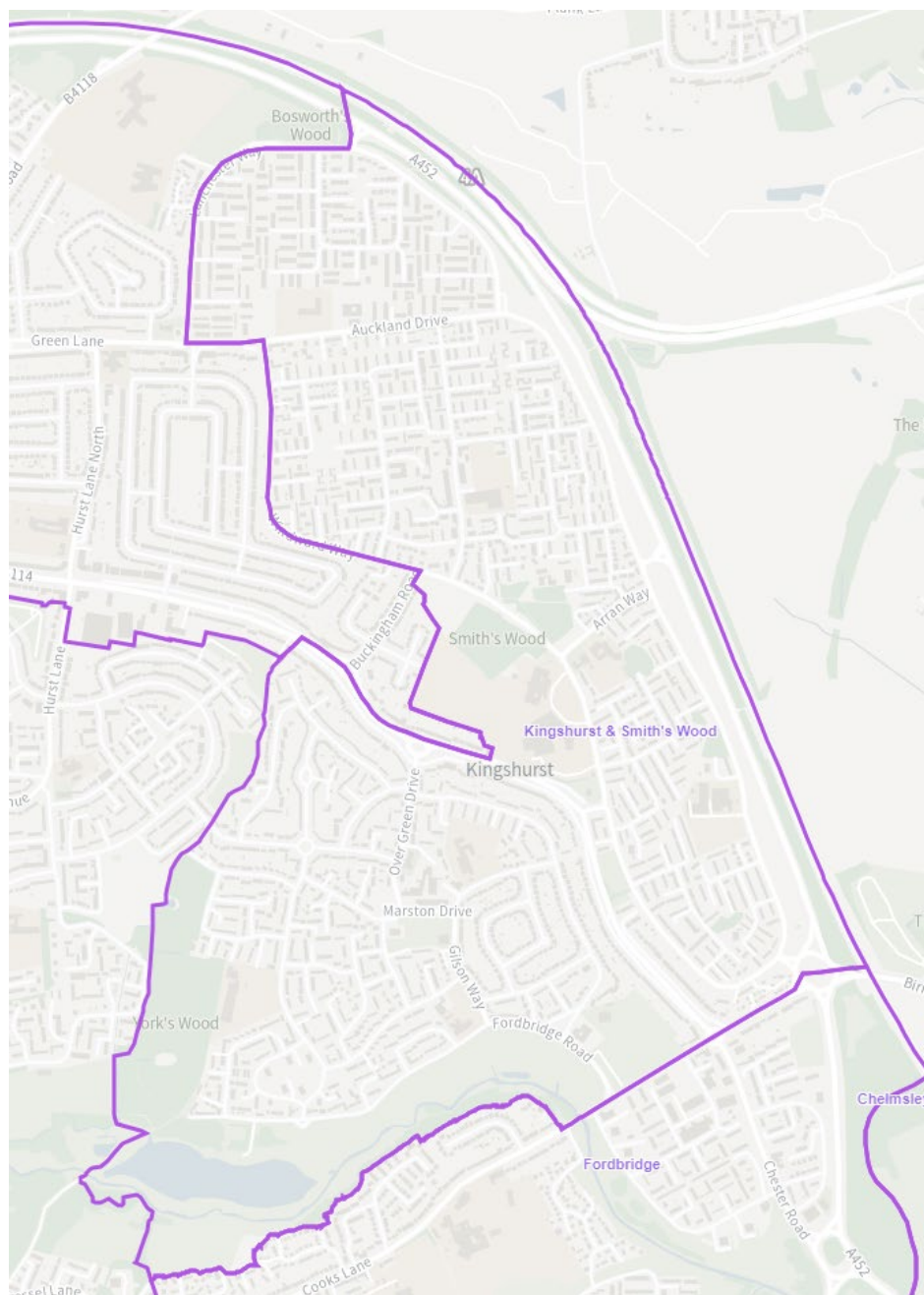
The resulting warding pattern for this area of the Borough is indicted in the plans below.



Castle Bromwich and Kingshurst & Smith's Wood.



Castle Bromwich.



Kingshurst and Smith's Wood.

Conclusion

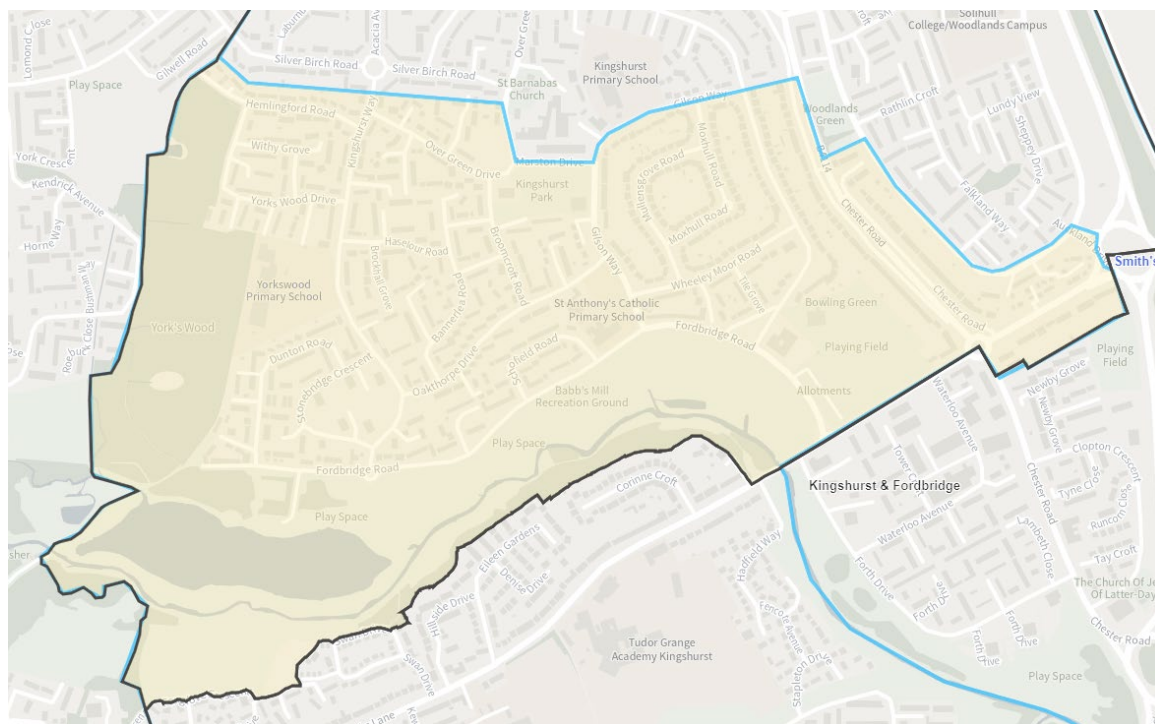
As noted earlier in this submission, there may be circumstances when the statutory criteria may be in conflict with each other, and this appears to be the case with choosing an appropriate boundary between Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood. It is considered that whilst the Commission's proposals achieve electoral parity, they do not fully respect the areas community identities and interests. On the other hand, whilst the alternative set out above better reflects community interest and identities, it does not fully achieve electoral parity.

In carrying out this balance, a view needs to be taken as to which of the criteria ought to carry more weight. It is the Council's view that the balance lies in favour of the alternative set out above.

Council's Response

That the Commission's draft recommendation is not accepted, and the alternative option set out above is favoured.

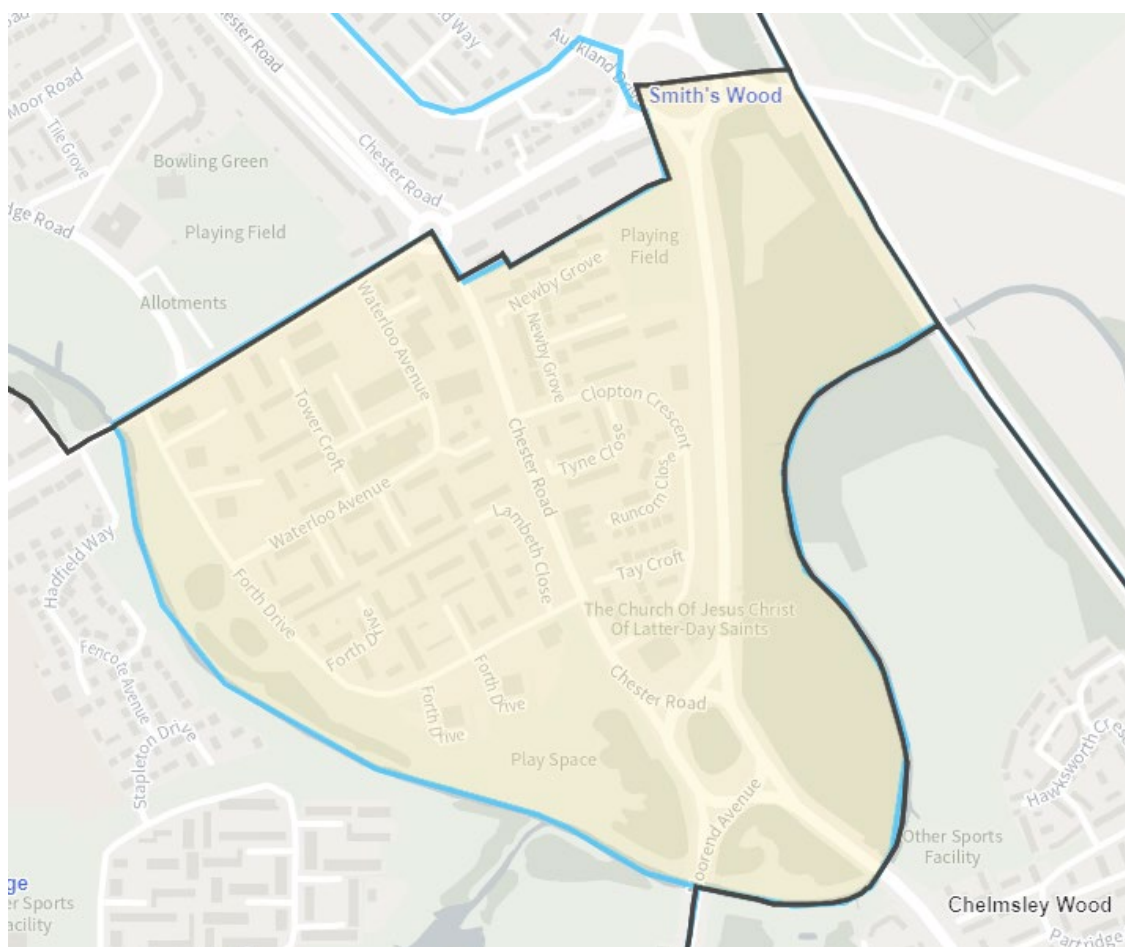
02 – Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way



Area affected	All of central Kingshurst, i.e. Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them).
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area falls within Smith's Wood or Kingshurst & Fordbridge
Current Ward	Kingshurst & Fordbridge
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Smith's Wood
Proposed Ward (Council)	Fordbridge
Parish implications	<p>Most of the area of Kingshurst parish would be in the new ward of Smith's Wood, the exception being the residential area south of the River Cole between Babbs Mill LNR and Cooks Lane.</p> <p>The northern part of Kingshurst parish is already located in the Smith's Wood ward.</p>
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>43 ... The Green Group proposed an alternative boundary at Babb's Mill Local Nature Reserve (Babb's Mill LNR), in part to account for the shift in forecast electorate due to proposed changes at the north of the ward. This proposed boundary mostly follows Fordbridge Road, which is also the northern extent of Babb's Mill LNR; however, we consider that including all of Babb's Mill LNR in one ward better reflects its access points to the north.</p> <p>45 ... We additionally propose a Smith's Wood ward consisting of Smith's Wood parish (other than Bosworth) as well as the northern area</p>

	<p><i>of Kingshurst parish up to the southern extent of Babb's Mill LNR, which includes the reserve itself.</i></p> <p><i>51 We visited this area on our tour of Solihull. Although we agree with the principle of including electors from the greater Marston Green area in wards to the north and east, we believe that a stronger pattern of wards can be achieved than what was put forward by either the Council or the Green Group. We propose a Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward consisting of part of the southernmost area of Kingshurst parish, the entirety of an undivided Fordbridge parish ...</i></p>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>The Council's submission was based on retaining the majority of Kingshurst and Fordbridge together in one ward. The existing pattern of wards already meant that the parish councils were split between wards.</p> <p>The Commission's approach has been to move most of Kingshurst into a ward would then be shared with Smith's Wood.</p> <p>It would effectively use the River Cole and Babbs Mill LNR as the boundary feature that separates the two wards. Although this is a readily recognisable boundary, it does mean that a small part of Kingshurst would remain out of the new ward. However, this is the case with the present arrangements as the northern part of Kingshurst (including the village centre) is located in Smith's Wood.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

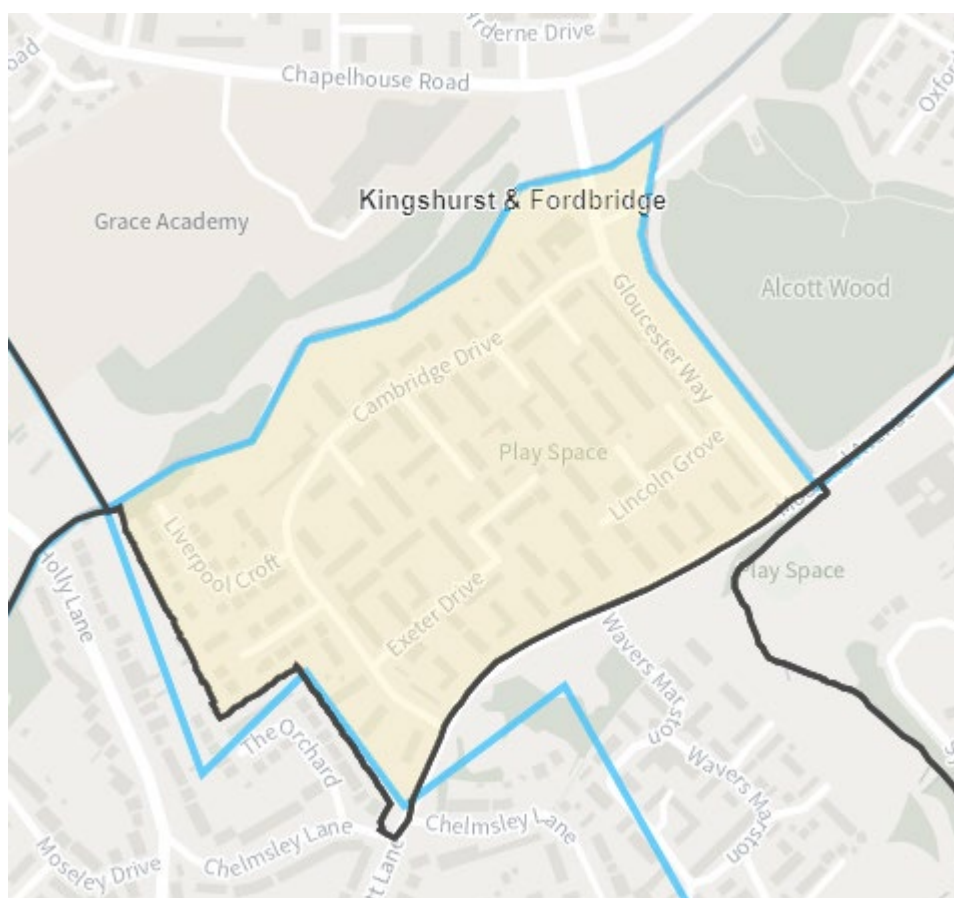
03 – Chester Road south, Forth Drive and Clopton Crescent



Area affected	Chester Road south, Forth Drive and Clopton Crescent.
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area falls within Kingshurst and Fordbridge ward or Smith's Wood ward.
Current Ward	Chelmsley Wood
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Kingshurst & Fordbridge
Proposed Ward (Council)	Kingshurst & Smith's Wood
Parish implications	The area lies within Fordbridge Town Council and the Commission's draft recommendation would result in the whole of this parish being located in a single ward.
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<i>43 In the south of Smith's Wood, the Council proposed including part of Fordbridge parish (around Chester Road) in the Smith's Wood ward, creating a narrow access point for the ward at the A252/Birmingham Road roundabout.</i>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The driver behind the Council's proposals to include this area in Smith's Wood (and moving it from Chelmsley Wood) was to enable capacity to be provided in Chelmsley Wood so that it could accommodate electorate being moved from Bickenhill.

	<p>The Commission's proposals include the same areas being moved from Chelmsley Wood as the Council's submission, the difference being that this area the Commission believe is better located in Kingshurst and Fordbridge, rather than the Council's suggestion that it be located in Smith's Wood. Either option would enable additional capacity to be released in Chelmsley Wood so that it could accommodate electorate from Bickenhill.</p> <p>The Council's submission acknowledged that this area shares a similar sense of identity and interests such that it could be argued that it could be placed in either Smith's Wood or Kingshurst and Fordbridge.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

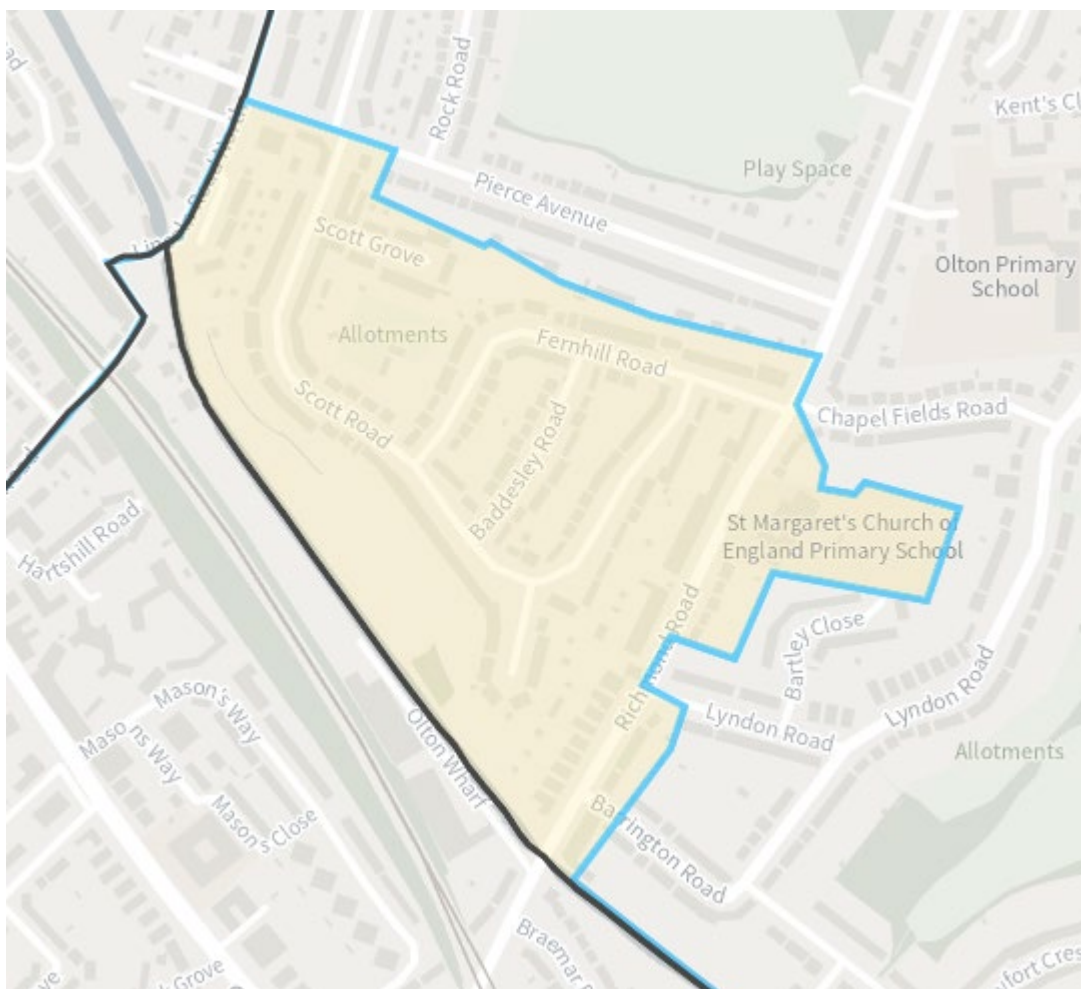
04 – Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way



Area affected	Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way (and the roads off them).
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located within Kingshurst and Fordbridge ward or Chelmsley Wood.
Current Ward	Bickenhill
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Kingshurst and Fordbridge
Proposed Ward (Council)	Chelmsley Wood
Parish implications	This area falls within Bickenhill and Marston Green Parish. The result of the Commission's Draft Recommendations would be that this parish would straddle 3 wards – Arden, (Kingshurst &) Fordbridge and Chelmsley Wood.
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>51 We visited this area on our tour of Solihull. Although we agree with the principle of including electors from the greater Marston Green area in wards to the north and east, we believe that a stronger pattern of wards can be achieved than what was put forward by either the Council or the Green Group. We propose a Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward [including] part of the Bickenhill and Marston Green parish ward of Merstone; specifically the residential neighbourhood south of Hatchford Brook and west of Alcott Wood and Low Brook, along Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way.</p>

SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>The Council's submission was based on the whole of the wider polling district (BH02) that was in Bickenhill being moved into Chelmsley Wood. It acknowledged that it is a mixed character PD which has differing identifies that could be argued are more closely aligned with Marston Green, Kingshurst & Fordbridge <u>and</u> Chelmsley Wood.</p> <p>The Commission's recommendations effectively recognise this as the PD would be split between 3 wards in a manner that does reflect community identity and interests. The area around Weavers Marston would remain in the same ward as the rest of Marston Green and the area north of Moorland Avenue would be moved into Kingshurst and Fordbridge.</p> <p>This would mean that Moorland Avenue would provide a stronger and more identifiable boundary to distinguish between the two wards.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

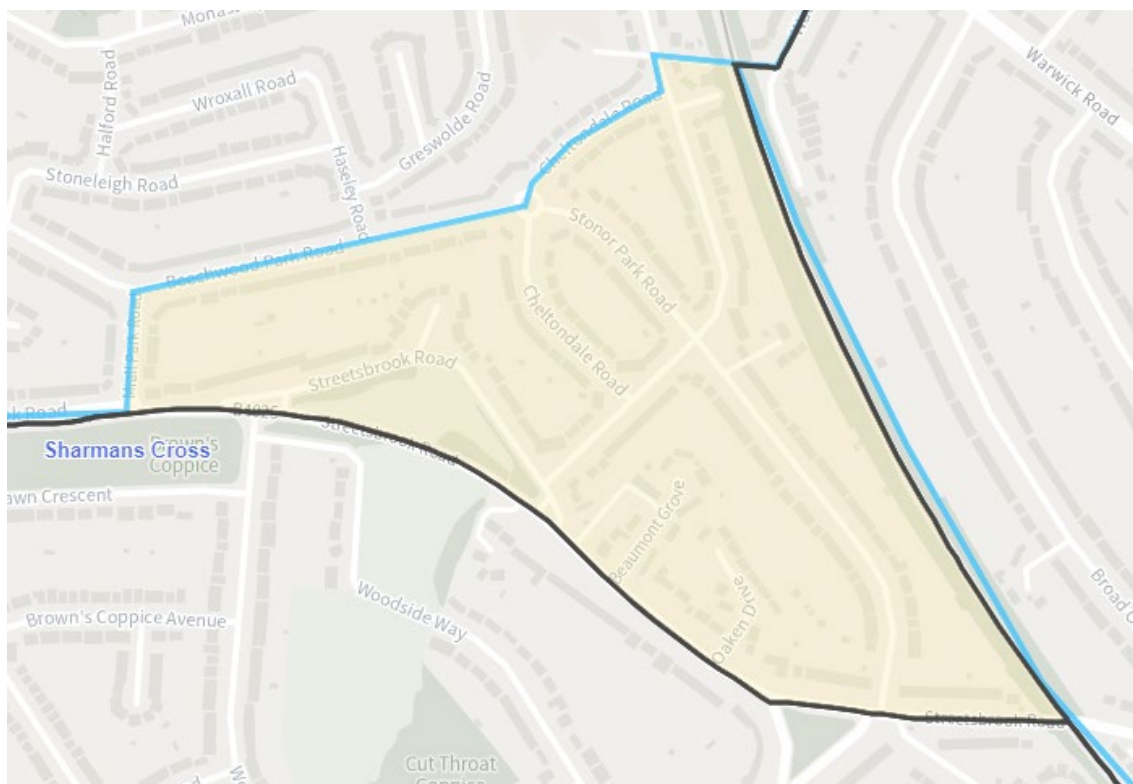
05 – Scott Road and Fernhill Road



Area affected	Scott Road and Fernhill Road (and the roads off them).
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area falls within Lyndon ward or Olton ward.
Current Ward	Olton
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Lyndon
Proposed Ward (Council)	Olton
Parish implications	None
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>57 Both the Council and the Green Group proposed keeping Lyndon ward unchanged from its existing arrangement; this would result in a forecast electoral variance of 0% in 2029.</p> <p>58 We received a submission from a local resident who suggested that the boundary between Lyndon and Olton wards should follow the Grand Union Canal north of Richmond Road; the boundary between the two wards already follows the canal south of Richmond Road and continues to serve as the boundary between Elmdon and Silhill further east.</p>

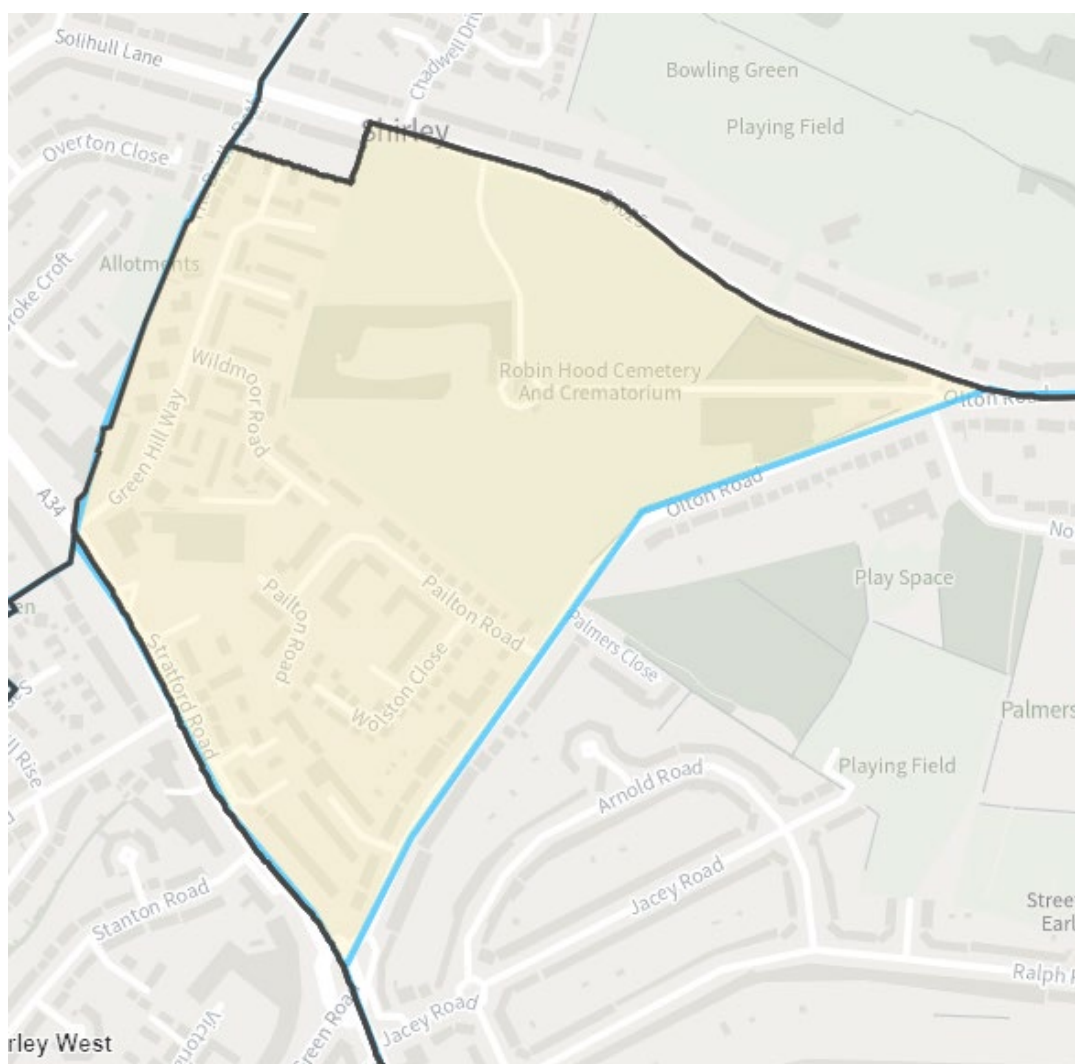
	<p>59 We visited this area on our tour of Solihull and were persuaded by the resident's comments. We therefore propose a Lyndon ward where the Grand Union Canal serves as the entire southern boundary of the ward. Although this results in a ward with a forecast variance of 7%, we feel that it better reflects local communities and provides a stronger boundary.</p>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>The Council's warding pattern didn't include any changes to Lyndon on the basis that there was no need to make changes to achieve electoral parity and that existing established boundaries would reflect community interests and identities.</p> <p>Although this area is located in close proximity to the commercial centre of Olton, this is true for other areas already located in Lyndon. As the Commission note, the Grand Union Canal is already used as the boundary between the wards further south and to use the same feature north-west of Richmond Road would make this a consistent approach and would use a stronger more identifiable boundary feature to distinguish between the wards.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

06 – Stonor Park Road and Adjacent Area North of Streetsbrook Road



Area affected	Stoner Park Road and the adjacent area north of Streetsbrook Road (including Beaumont Grove and Oaken Drive).
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located within Olton ward or Sharmans Cross ward.
Current Ward	St Alphege
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Olton
Proposed Ward (Council)	Sharmans Cross
Parish implications	None
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<i>60 Elsewhere in Olton, both the Council and the Green Group proposed including the residential area around Stonor Park Road with a ward to the south. However, on our visit to this area, we were persuaded that the B4025 (Streetsbrook Road) functions as a stronger boundary than Beechwood Park Road and we have therefore included this PD area in Olton ward to allow for more convenient and effective local government.</i>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>This area is currently within St Alphege ward, which as a whole is shifting its focus further south/east to incorporate Monkspath. This meant that this area could be located in either the new Sharmans Cross ward or in Olton.</p> <p>The Council's warding pattern proposed that this area would be within the new Sharmans Cross ward. In part this was to avoid Olton being</p>

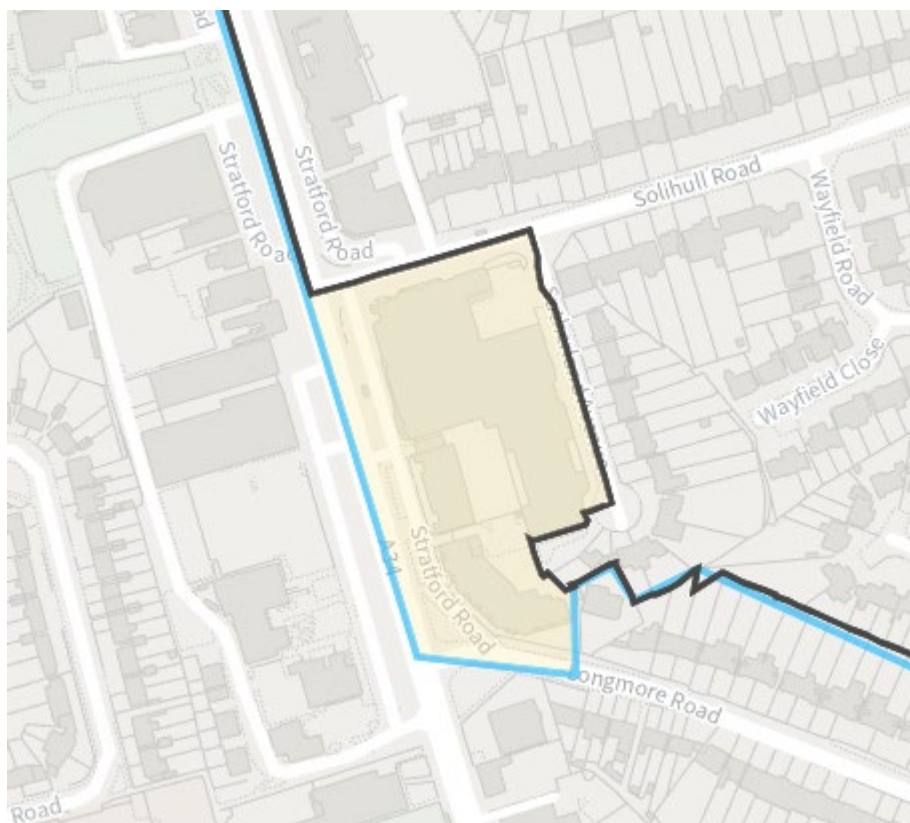
	<p>over 10% above the ward average given other changes proposed to Olton in the Council's submission. As the Commission have proposed alternative arrangements for Olton this allows this area to be accommodated within Olton and still achieve electoral parity.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that Streetsbrook Road does provide a stronger more identifiable boundary feature to distinguish between the wards.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

07 – Northeast of Stratford Road and Northwest of Olton Road

Area affected	Northeast of Stratford Road and northwest of Olton Road (including Greenhill Way and Pailton Road)
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located in Sharmans Cross ward or Olton ward.
Current Ward	Olton
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Sharmans Cross
Proposed Ward (Council)	Olton
Parish implications	None
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	61 We received a submission from Solihull Councillor Michael Carthew which opposed the Council's suggestion to include the residential area south of the B4025 (Streetsbrook Road) around Robin Hood Cemetery in Olton ward; he argued that this area has no commonality or connection with the rest of Olton.

	62 We agree with the submission from Cllr Carthew, noting that Robin Hood Cemetery acts as a significant geographical boundary to areas north of the B4025 (Streetsbrook Road), with limited internal access within the Council's proposed Olton ward. Therefore, as part of our draft recommendations, we propose an Olton ward bounded to the north by the Grand Union Canal and to the south by the B4025 (Streetsbrook Road).
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>It was acknowledged in the Council's submission that moving this area into Olton was to assist achieving electoral parity in the new ward of Sharmans Cross and that the area to be moved (into Olton) would be located at a greater distance from the facilities in Olton and there would not be a strong case for doing so purely on grounds that reflect a sense of identity or shared interests.</p> <p>As the Commission's other recommended changes to Sharmans Cross help address electoral parity, that driver for moving this area into Olton falls away. The resulting boundaries will reflect existing sense of identity and shared interests, and using Streetsbrook Road provides a strong identifiable boundary to distinguish between the wards.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

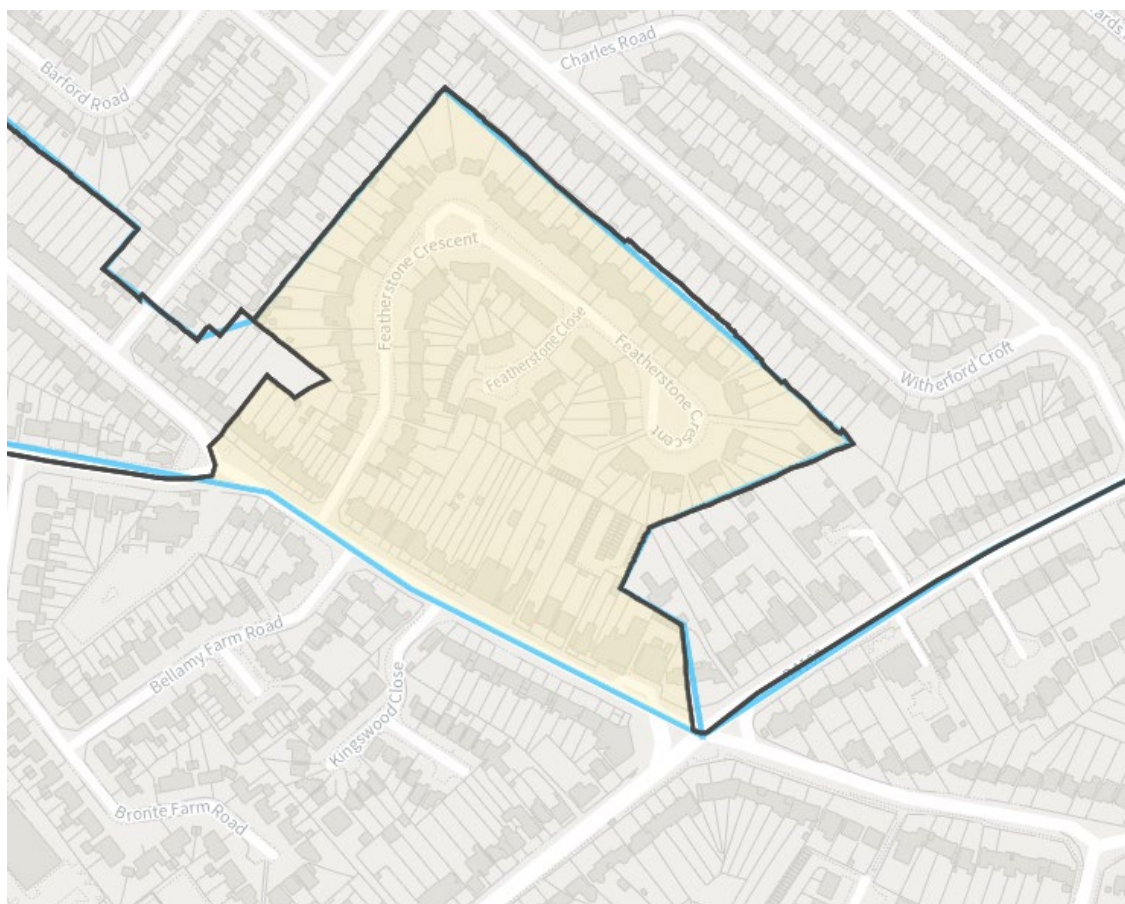
08 – Dove Tree Court & Peel Court



Area affected	Dove Tree Court, Peel Court and the former Morrisons store.
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located within Shirley West ward or Sharmans Cross ward.
Current Ward	Shirley East
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Shirley West
Proposed Ward (Council)	Sharmans Cross
Parish implications	None
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>69 On our visit to this area on our tour of Solihull, we noted a number of small adjustments that could be made to the Council's proposed pattern for these wards. ...</p> <p>70 ... We did agree with the Council that the rest of the neighbourhood along Longmore Road shares some links with Shirley West, although we additionally felt that the Dove Tree Court retirement home should be included in Shirley West as its only access is to Longmore Road as opposed to the rest of the Sharmans Cross ward.</p>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The Council's submission included the area between Longmore Road and north of Union Road being moved to Shirley West. This has been accepted by the Commission. In doing so they have suggested an additional small area of Sharmans Cross that is connected to Longmore

	<p>Road (through its access onto that road) should also be moved with Longmore Road into Shirley West.</p> <p>This reflects community interests and identities, which as the Council's submission noted there was little that <u>separates</u> the three Shirley wards from each other, rather that they collectively have a strong community identity and interests in Shirley town centre and the Stratford Road.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

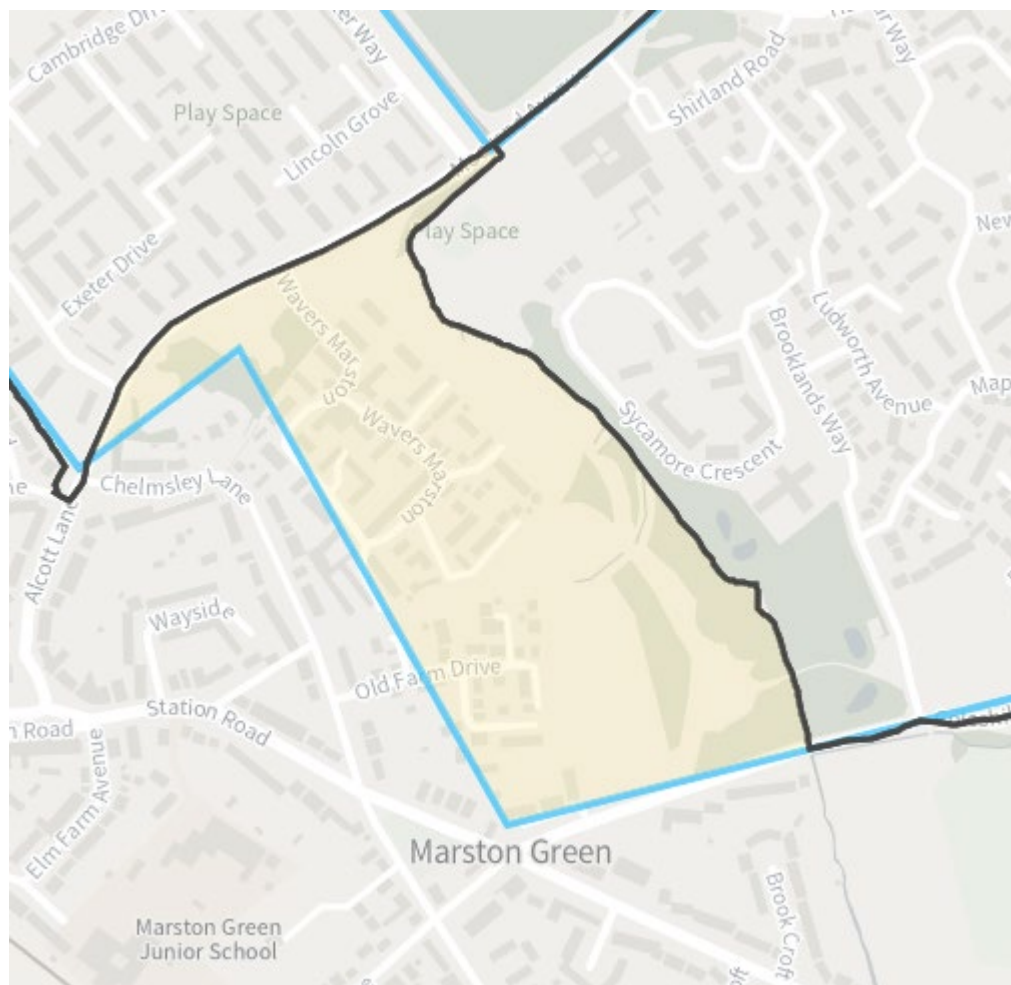
09 – Featherstone Crescent



Area affected	Featherstone Crescent
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located in Shirley South ward or Shirley West ward.
Current Ward	Shirley East
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Shirley South
Proposed Ward (Council)	Shirley West
Parish implications	None
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>69 On our visit to this area on our tour of Solihull, we noted a number of small adjustments that could be made to the Council's proposed pattern for these wards.</p> <p>70 We were not convinced by the strength of Longmore Road as a boundary and have therefore included the Featherstone Crescent residential road in Shirley South, a ward we consider it is better connected to than the more distant Shirley West.</p>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The Council's submission was based on the whole polling district (that includes this area and that located between Longmore Road and north of Union Road) being moved into Shirley West.

	It is acknowledged that the Featherstone Crescent area is located at the eastern end of the polling district and appears to have a greater community identity and interest with the eastern end of Longmore Road and the area opposite (which is located in Shirley South) rather than Shirley West.
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

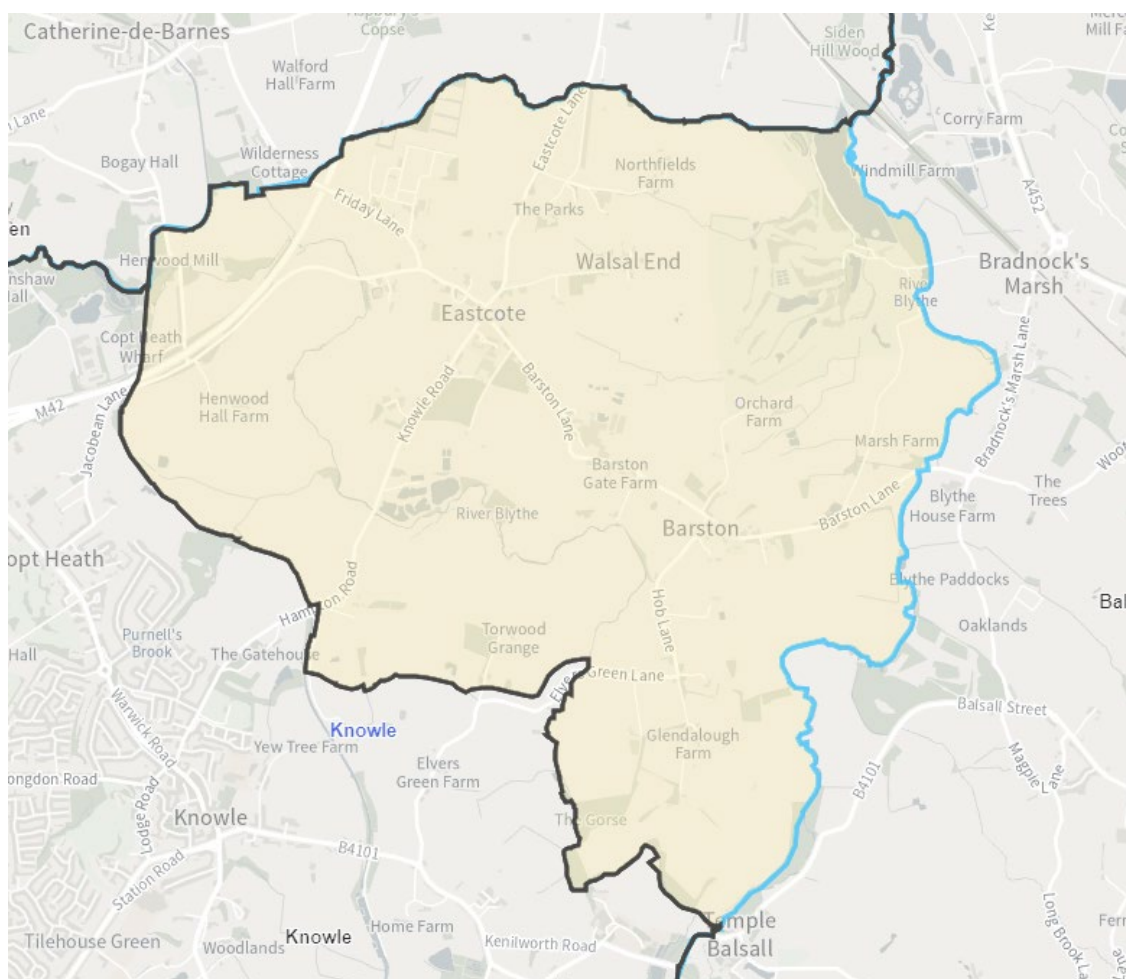
10 – Weavers Marston and Old Farm Drive (East)



Area affected	Weavers Marston and Old Farm Drive (east) (and the roads off them).
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area is located within Arden ward or Chelmsley Wood ward.
Current Ward	Bickenhill
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Arden
Proposed Ward (Council)	Chelmsley Wood
Parish implications	This area falls within Bickenhill and Marston Green Parish. The result of the Commission's Draft Recommendations would be that this parish would straddle 3 wards – Arden, (Kingshurst &) Fordbridge and Chelmsley Wood.
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	51 ... We think that Low Brook is a stronger boundary at the west of Chelmsley Wood than the Council's proposed boundary through Old Farm Drive, ...
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The Council's submission was based on the whole of the wider polling district (BH02) that was in Bickenhill being moved into Chelmsley Wood. It acknowledged that it is a mixed character PD which has

	<p>differing identifies that could be argued are more closely aligned with Marston Green, Kingshurst & Fordbridge <u>and</u> Chelmsley Wood.</p> <p>The Commission's recommendations effectively recognise this as the PD would be split between 3 wards in a manner that does reflect community identify and interests. The area around Weavers Marston would remain in the same ward as the rest of Marston Green and the area east of Low Brook would be moved into Chelmsley Wood as per the Council's recommended warding pattern.</p> <p>This would mean that Low Brook would provide a stronger and more identifiable boundary to distinguish between the two wards.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	None
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

11 - Barston



Area affected	The whole parish of Barston.
Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the area falls within Balsall and Berkswell ward or Knowle ward.
Current Ward	Bickenhill
Proposed Ward (Commission)	Balsall and Berkswell
Proposed Ward (Council)	Knowle
Parish implications	<p>Under both the Council's submission and the Commission's the whole parish of Barston would be located in a single ward.</p> <p>The difference is that under the Commission's proposals the Balsall and Berkswell ward would have 3 parishes, but under the Council's it would only have two; and Knowle would also have had two (Balsall and Chadwick End)</p>
Rationale for the Commission's Draft Recommendations	<p>83 We do feel that the parish of Barston is fairly remote and agree with the Council's assessment in its submission that 'the settlements in this [parish] are midway between the higher order settlements of Knowle, Hampton in Arden, Catherine-de-Barnes and Balsall Common</p>

	<i>and an argument could be made that the [parish] could be associated with any of these.' Therefore, to allow for the best balance of electorate between wards, and to account for the hamlet of Bradnock's Marsh being situated at the intersection of Balsall, Barston, and Berkswell parishes, we propose including Barston parish in a ward with Balsall and Berkswell parishes.</i>
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The Council's submission acknowledged that Barston parish could be associated with a number of settlements, and there was an absence of a strong connection with any single option. The closer proximity to the services in Knowle was the deciding factor in the Council's submission. However, this is not a particularly strong factor and the Commission's alternative is valid too.
Consistency with criteria	Full
Alternative (if applicable)	NA
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

Commentary for the Council's Response – Ward Names

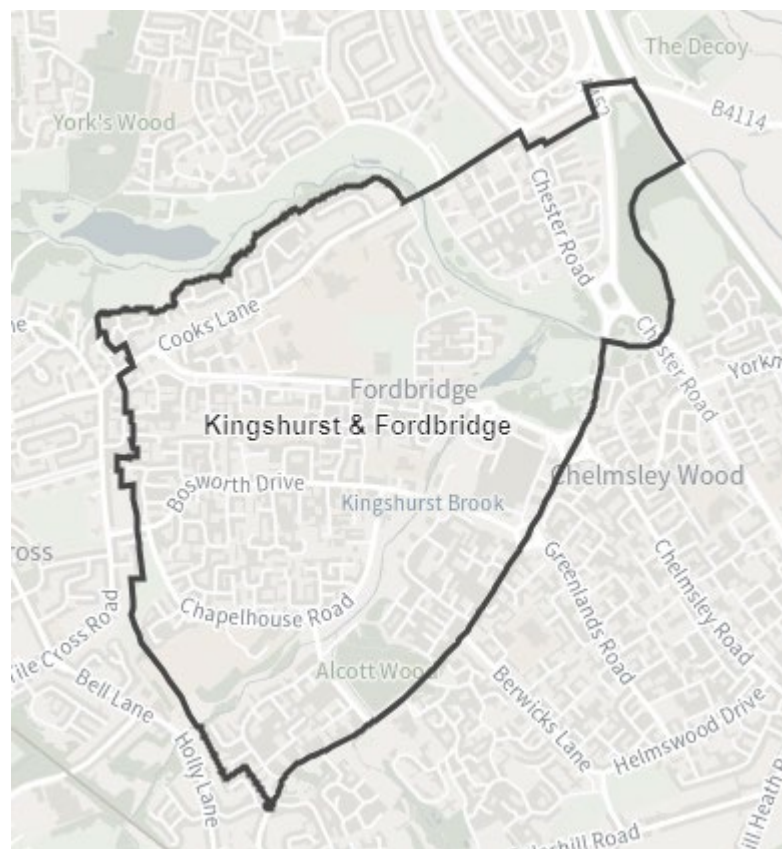
12 – Smith's Wood



Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the ward should be called Smith's Wood or Kingshurst and Smith's Wood
Proposed Name (Commission)	Smith's Wood
Proposed Name (Council)	Kingshurst and Smith's Wood
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>The overall effect of the Commission's draft recommendations on ward boundaries is that the majority of Kingshurst will be moved from a ward it previously shared with Fordbridge into a ward that is shared with Smith's Wood.</p> <p>Kingshurst is a discrete community that has its own sense of community identity and interests. It is also administered by a separate parish council. Its existence should be recognised in the ward name where</p>

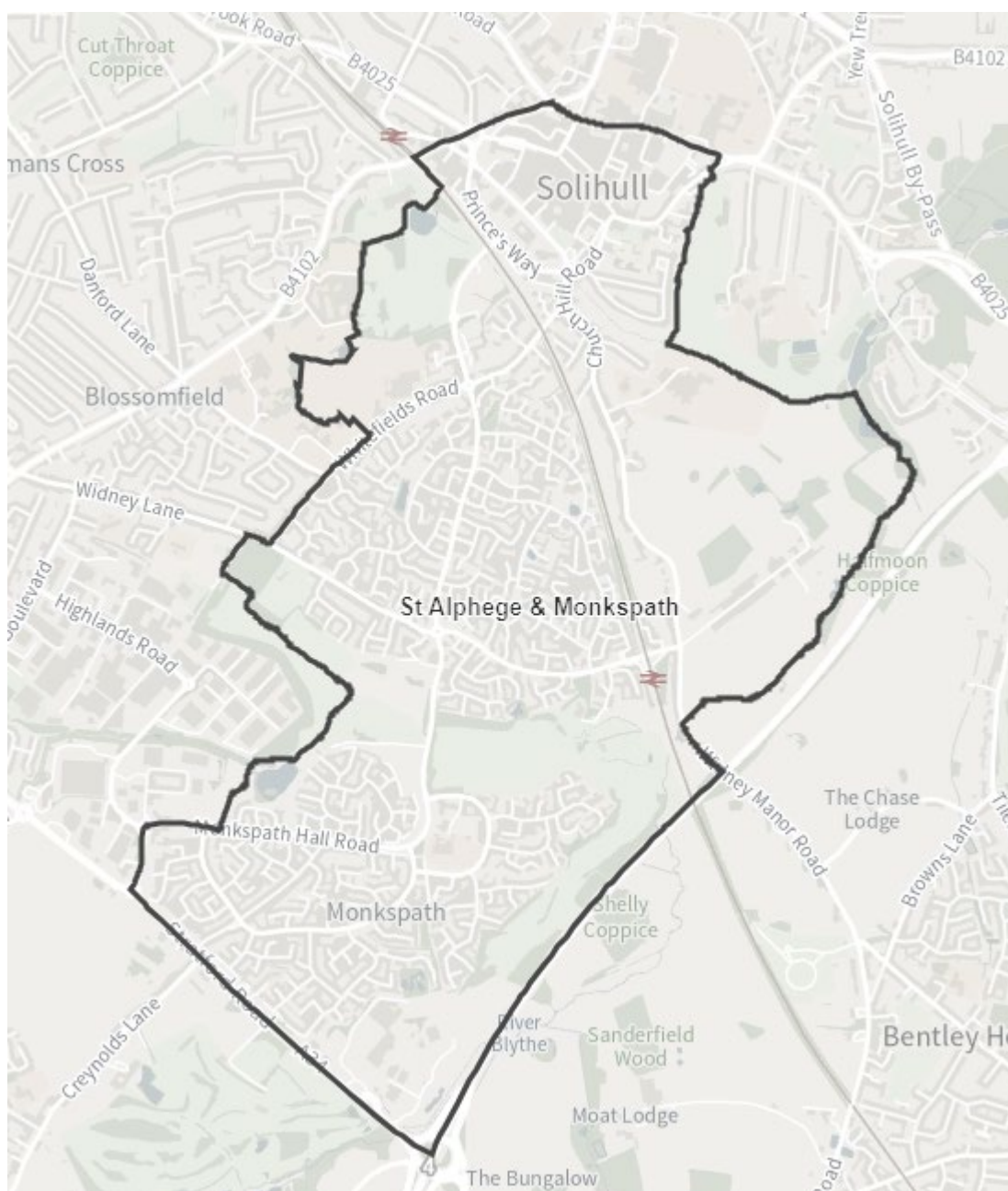
	<p>most of it is located, i.e. Smith's Wood which should now be known as Kingshurst and Smith's Wood.</p> <p>The only area of Kingshurst parish that is not in the new ward are the residential roads north of Cooks Lane between the road and the River Cole.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Limited
Alternative (if applicable)	Kingshurst & Smith's Wood
Council's response	That the Commission's draft recommendation is not accepted, and the alternative option set out above is favoured.

13 – Kingshurst and Fordbridge



Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the ward should be called Kingshurst and Fordbridge or Fordbridge
Proposed Name (Commission)	Kingshurst and Fordbridge
Proposed Name (Council)	Fordbridge
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	<p>This name change is associated with reference 12 above. On the basis that most of Kingshurst is being moved from the Kingshurst and Fordbridge ward it makes little sense that the former ward retains the name of Kingshurst in its title.</p> <p>Recognition of Kingshurst as a separate and identifiable community would be maintained with the name change included in the previous recommendation.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Limited
Alternative (if applicable)	Fordbridge
Council's response	That the Commission's draft recommendation is not accepted, and the alternative option set out above is favoured.

14 – St Alphege & Monkspath



Difference between the Commission's Draft Recommendation and the Council's submission.	Whether the ward should be called St Alphege and Monkspath or St Alphege, Monkspath and Hillfield
Proposed Name (Commission)	St Alphege and Monkspath
Proposed Name (Council)	St Alphege, Monkspath and Hillfield
SMBC Commentary on recommendation	The ward boundary changes proposed by the Council and incorporated into the Commission's draft recommendations result in the addition of Monkspath into the St Alphege ward (balanced with areas in the west

	<p>of the existing ward being incorporated into a new Sharmans Cross ward).</p> <p>The Council's submission on the name for the new ward was based on identifying the three distinct parts of the new ward – the town centre (where St Alphege church is located), Monkspath and Hillfield.</p> <p>The Commission's guidance on names for wards includes the following:</p> <p><i>"Our preference is for names that are short rather than those which attempt to describe an area exhaustively, e.g. by reference to all or a number of parishes it encompasses. Excessively long electoral area names have the potential to cause confusion both to local residents and elected members, and not accurately reflect community identities."</i></p> <p>Whilst the Commission's preference is a shorter name, it is considered that having the ward name containing the 3 composite areas (as per the Council's submission) would not be excessively long or lead to confusion, but it would accurately reflect community identities.</p>
Consistency with criteria	Partial
Alternative (if applicable)	St Alphege, Monkspath and Hillfield
Council's response	Accept Commission's draft recommendation.

Appendix A – Electorate Numbers for the Three Northern Wards

CASTLE BROMWICH, SMITH'S WOOD and KINGSHURST & FORDBRIDGE WARDS

3,514 = Average number of electorate per councillor +10%= 3,865 -10%= 3,163

STEP 1 - The Commission's Draft Recommendation	CB	SM	KF
LGBCE Draft Recommendation total electorate	11,500	10,244	9,813
LGBCE Draft Recommendation no. of electors per councillor	3,833	3,415	3,271
Difference from target average	319	-99	-243
Percentage difference	9.1	-2.8	-6.9

STEP 2 - Move Cars Area from CB to SM

LGBCE Draft Recommendation total electorate	11,500	10,244	9,813
Move PD SM01 (Cars Area) from CB to SM	-2,084	2,084	
Revised Ward Total	9,416	12,328	9,813
No. of electors per councillor	3,139	4,109	3,271
Difference from target average	-375	595	-243
Percentage difference	-10.7	16.9	-6.9

STEP 3 - As option 2 plus move Buckingham Road from SW to CB

LGBCE Draft Recommendation total electorate	11,500	10,244	9,813
Move PD SM01 (Cars Area) from CB to SM	-2,084	2,084	
Move Buckingham Road from SM to CB	505	-505	
Revised Ward Total	9,921	11,823	9,813
No. of electors per councillor	3,307	3,941	3,271
Difference from target average	-207	427	-243
Percentage difference	-5.9	12.2	-6.9

STEP 4 - As option 3 plus move Birmingham Road from SW to KF

LGBCE Draft Recommendation total electorate	11,500	10,244	9,813
Move PD SM01 (Cars Area) from CB to SM	-2,084	2,084	
Move Buckingham Road from SM to CB	505	-505	
Move Birmingham Road (east) from SW to KF		-50	50
Revised Ward Total	9,921	11,773	9,863
No. of electors per councillor	3,307	3,924	3,288
Difference from target average	-207	410	-226
Percentage difference	-5.9	11.7	-6.4

Appendix B – Schedule of Changes to Existing Wards

Although this document focuses on the differences between the Commission's draft recommendations and the Council's proposed warding pattern (October 2023), it is useful to include a summary schedule (for information) that **indicates the changes from the current warding pattern to the Commission's draft recommendations**.

Key:

- Text in *black italics* indicates changes proposed by the Council in its October 2023 submission and included in the Commissions draft recommendations.
- Text in **red** indicates changes proposed by the Commission but not prompted by the Council.

Current Ward	Areas to be added to the ward	Areas to be removed from the ward
Bickenhill (to be renamed as Arden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The whole parish of Meriden.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The whole parish of Barston.</i> • <i>The areas east and west of Berwicks Lane.</i> • <i>The area northeast of Damson Parkway and east of Damson Lane (inc. Gables Close).</i> • <i>Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way.</i>
Blythe		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monkspath.</i>
Castle Bromwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Cars' estate. 	
Chelmsley Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The areas east and west of Berwicks Lane.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clopton Crescent, Waterloo Avenue and Forth Drive.</i> • <i>Chelmsley Wood town centre and the area east of Alcott Wood (Winchester Drive).</i>
Dorridge and Hockley Heath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Norton Green Lane.</i> 	
Elmdon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The area northeast of Damson Parkway and east of Damson Lane (inc. Gables Close).</i> 	
Kingshurst and Fordbridge (to be renamed as Fordbridge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clopton Crescent, Waterloo Avenue and Forth Drive. • <i>Chelmsley Wood town centre and the area east of Alcott Wood (Winchester Drive).</i> • Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them).
Knowle		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Norton Green Lane.</i>
Lyndon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Road and Fernhill Road. 	
Meriden (to be renamed Balsall and Berkswell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole parish of Barston. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The whole parish of Meriden.</i>
Olton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area north of Streetsbrook Road inc Bryanston Road and Stoner Park Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Road and Fernhill Road.
Shirley East (to be renamed Sharmans Cross)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sharmans Cross Road and the area to the north inc Woodlea Drive.</i> • <i>Blossomfield Road (east) and Alderbrook Road.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featherstone Crescent. • Longmore Road and the area north of Union Road.
Shirley South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featherstone Crescent. 	

Current Ward	Areas to be added to the ward	Areas to be removed from the ward
Shirley West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longmore Road and the area north of Union Road. 	
Silhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads south of Warwick Road (Park Avenue, Brueton Avenue and Blythway). 	
Smith's Wood (to be renamed Kingshurst and Smith's Wood)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Cars' estate.
St Alphege (to be renamed St Alphege and Monkspath)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monkspath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area north of Streetsbrook Road inc Bryanston Road and Stoner Park Road. Sharmans Cross Road and the area to the north inc Woodlea Drive. Blossomfield Road (east) and Alderbrook Road. Roads south of Warwick Road (Park Avenue, Brueton Avenue and Blythway).

The following table indicates the changes from the current warding pattern to the Commission's draft recommendations **as amended by the Council's preferred option for Castle Bromwich, Fordbridge and Smith's Wood**.

Current Ward	Areas to be added to the ward	Areas to be removed from the ward
Castle Bromwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buckingham Road (and the roads off it). 	
Kingshurst and Fordbridge (to be renamed as Fordbridge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clopton Crescent, Waterloo Avenue and Forth Drive. Chelmsley Wood town centre and the area east of Alcott Wood (Winchester Drive). Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way. Area south of Birmingham Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them).
Smith's Wood (to be renamed Kingshurst and Smith's Wood)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fordbridge Road and Kingshurst Way (and the roads off them). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buckingham Road (and the roads off it). Area south of Birmingham Road.