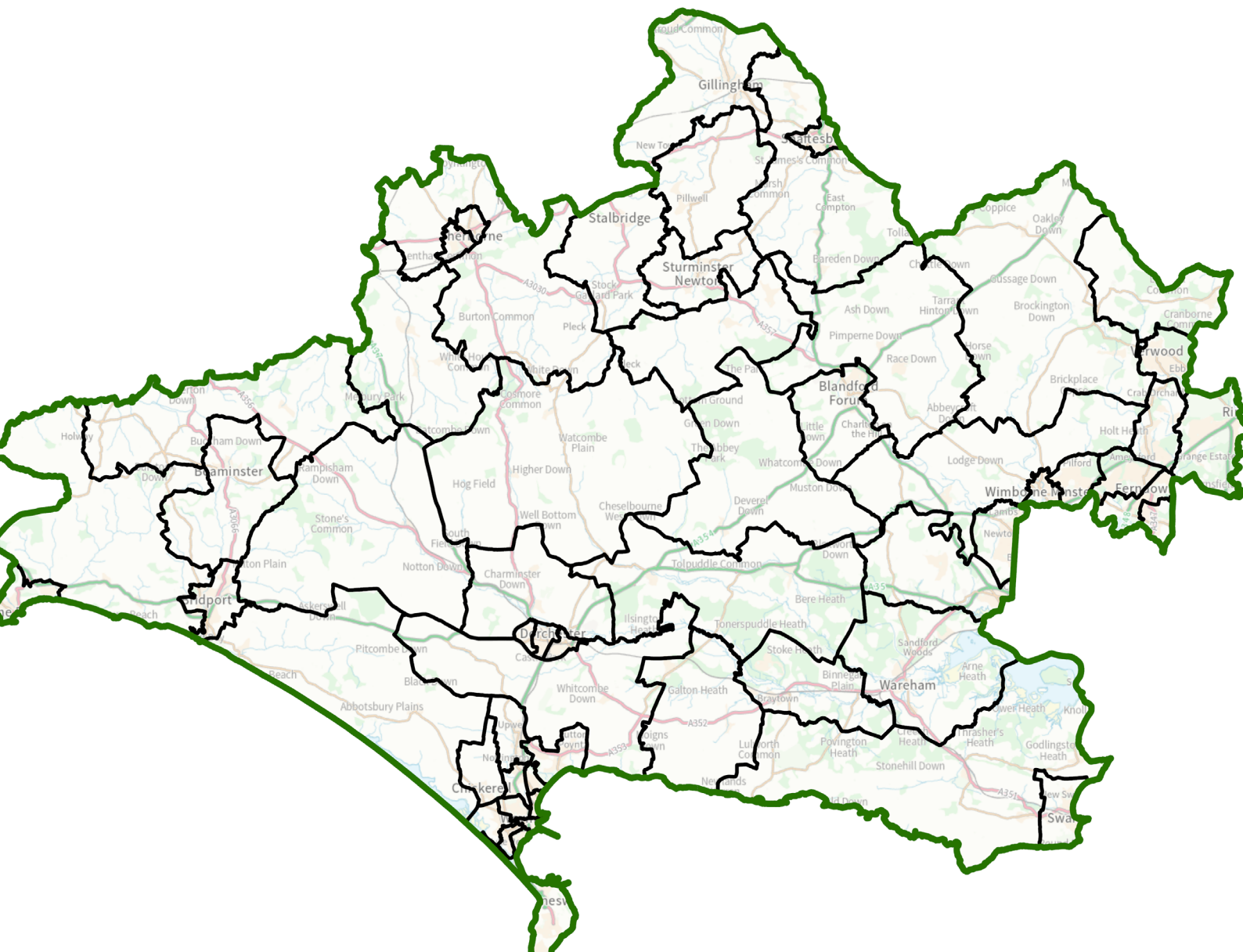




New electoral arrangements for Dorset Council

Draft Recommendations

September 2026

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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:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • Beverley Smith (Chair) | • Liz Treacy |
| • Andrew Scallan CBE
(Deputy Chair) | • Janet Waggott |
| • Dame Gillian Guy | • Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive) |
| • Wallace Sampson OBE | |

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

6 More details regarding the powers that we have, as well as further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be

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

found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Dorset?

7 We are conducting a review of Dorset Council ('the Council') as the Council requested an electoral review in July 2025 to address electoral inequality across the council area. Accordingly, this review aims 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 Dorset 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 Dorset.

Our proposals for Dorset

9 Dorset should be represented by 84 councillors, two more than there are now.

10 Dorset should have 58 wards, six more than there are now.

11 The boundaries of most wards should change.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the Council or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices or car and house insurance premiums, and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 1 September 2026 to 9 November 2026. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

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

16 You have until 9 November 2026 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 51 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

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

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
17 March 2026	Number of councillors decided
24 March 2026	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
1 June 2026	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
1 September 2026	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
9 November 2026	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
2 March 2027	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 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.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2026	2032
Electorate of Dorset	296,356	322,261
Number of councillors	84	84
Average number of electors per councillor	3,528	3,836

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having ‘electoral equality’. All but two of our proposed wards for Dorset are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2032.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2032, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2027. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 9%.

25 We received a submission from Colehill Town Council regarding the electorate forecasts for the Colehill area. It argued that the projected electorate may be understated given the number of housing option sites being considered through the

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.

Dorset Local Plan. However, the electorate forecasts used in this review are based on Dorset Council's projections of development likely to be occupied by 2032, whereas the Local Plan considers growth over a longer time period. In light of this, we remain satisfied that the Council's forecasts for the area represent a reasonable assessment of the level of development expected by 2032 and are therefore sufficiently robust for the purposes of this review.

26 More generally, we are satisfied that the electorate forecasts provided by the Council represent the best available estimates of future electorate growth across the authority. We have therefore used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

27 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

28 Dorset Council currently has 82 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council which supported the retention of this number. It stated that its leader and cabinet governance model operates effectively with the current number of councillors and that workloads are already significant due to Dorset's geography and demographics, in addition to the Council's statutory duties. It therefore argued that reducing councillor numbers would increase pressure on members, risk weakening the representation of communities and affect committee capacity. It also concluded that an increase was not needed due to ongoing transformation and potential changes such as area committees that could bring efficiencies. Based on this information, we concluded that retaining this number of members would ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

29 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 82 councillors; for example, 82 one-councillor wards, 41 two-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

30 We received two authority-wide schemes during the consultation on ward boundaries. One was received from the Council for 84 councillors, while another was received from Councillor Legg (Dorset Council – Sherborne Rural ward) for 81 councillors.

31 In developing our draft recommendations for Dorset, we concluded that an 84-councillor warding pattern would allow us to create wards which better reflected

community identity and interests than either 81 or 82 councillors. As stated in our guidance, we are prepared to make an alteration to our original recommendation for the number of councillors if it facilitates a warding pattern that provides a better balance of our statutory criteria. Therefore, our draft recommendations are based on an 84-member council.

32 We received one further submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The submission supported maintaining or reducing the current number of councillors and opposed any increase. The respondent also emphasised the importance of wards reflecting distinct rural and urban communities and expressed concern that rural interests could be overshadowed by larger towns. In developing our recommendations, we have sought to reflect urban and rural community identities in line with the evidence received, while balancing this with the need to secure electoral equality and promote effective and convenient local government.

Ward boundaries consultation

33 We received 54 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. As previously noted, these included two Dorset-wide proposals – one from the Council for 84 councillors and another from Councillor Legg for 81 councillors. We also received a partial scheme for Weymouth and Chickerell from Councillor Northam (Dorset Council – Upwey & Broadway ward) which shared similarities with the Council's proposals. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of Dorset.

34 The two Dorset-wide schemes each provided for mixed patterns of one-, two- and three-councillor wards. 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.

35 Councillor Northam questioned the use of three-councillor wards and argued that single-councillor wards can provide clearer accountability and stronger links between councillors and residents. He also suggested that several of Dorset's three-councillor wards should be reviewed to determine whether they could be divided into smaller wards. However, in formulating our draft recommendations, we do not have a preference for single-, two- or three-councillor wards. Rather, we have considered each area of Dorset on its individual merits when deciding on an appropriate warding arrangement.

36 Our draft recommendations are predominantly based on the Council's proposals. We consider that these provide for the best balance of our statutory criteria across Dorset. In particular, a pattern of wards based on 84 councillors

allows for a more coherent warding pattern for a number of established urban communities including Portland, Weymouth and Ferndown by avoiding the extensive subdivision of these areas and their inclusion in wards with other communities that have distinct identities.

37 We note that Councillor Legg's proposals sought to reduce the allocation of councillors in the Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell areas, as well as the Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood areas. This would have facilitated both their proposed 81-councillor warding scheme and our initial decision to support 82 councillors. However, we were not persuaded that the proposed warding pattern in these areas would provide for the best balance of our statutory criteria. In particular, we consider that these proposals would divide established communities between wards and thus create a less coherent set of electoral arrangements. Our detailed reasoning for reaching these conclusions is set out in the relevant sections of this report.

38 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

39 We conducted a virtual tour of Dorset in order to examine the various proposals. This helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed. We intend to visit Dorset in person once the current consultation has ended and before we finalise our recommendations. This will allow us to focus in detail on those areas where we receive strong evidence and feedback.

40 We have also had regard to our duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023), which requires public bodies to seek to further the purposes of National Landscapes. In relation to the designated landscapes within Dorset, including the Dorset National Landscape and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, we are satisfied that our recommended wards provide councillors with a coherent geographic framework through which they can understand and discharge their responsibilities in respect of these protected landscapes.

Draft recommendations

41 Our draft recommendations are for 38 single-councillor wards, 14 two-councillor wards and six three-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

42 The tables and maps on pages 10–45 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Dorset. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

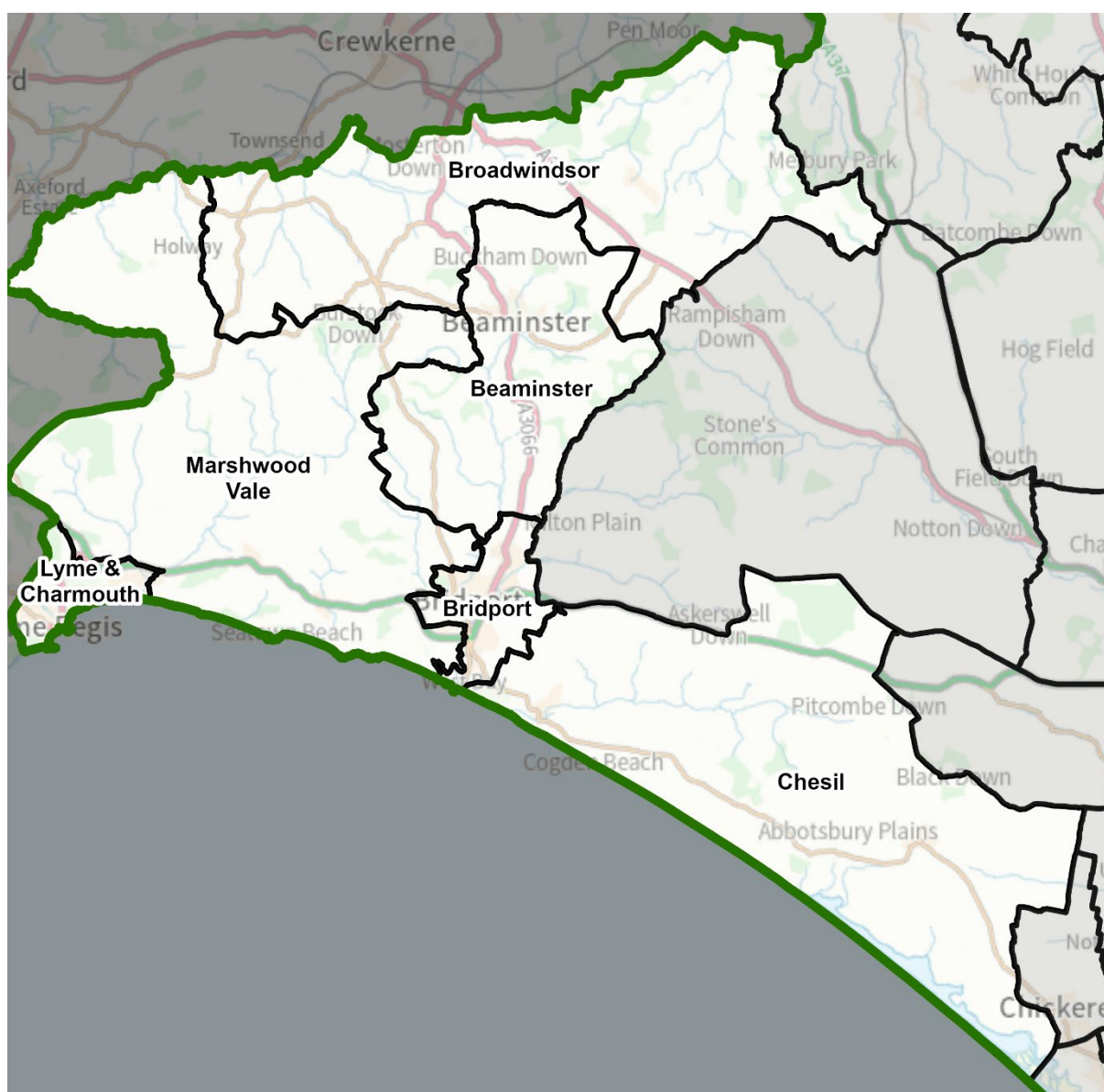
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

43 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 57 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Lyme Regis, Bridport and Beaminster



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Beaminster	1	3%
Bridport	3	10%
Broadwindsor	1	-9%
Chesil	1	-9%
Lyme & Charmouth	1	11%
Marshwood Vale	1	-6%

Beaminster and Broadwindsor

45 We have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposed Beaminster and Broadwindsor wards. We consider that a Beaminster ward comprising the adjacent parishes of Beaminster and Netherbury provides a good

balance of our statutory criteria, reflecting community identities and interests while securing good electoral equality. However, we have adopted Councillor Legg's proposal to retain Mapperton parish in a Beaminster ward rather than place it in Upper Frome & Asker ward, as proposed by the Council. This is because its principal access route is via Beaminster and we consider that this arrangement better reflects community ties and transport links.

46 We have also modified the Council's proposed Broadwindsor ward. The Council included Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Sampford and Stockwood parishes in this ward. However, as discussed in the Yetminster & Yeo Valley section of this report, we consider that these parishes share stronger links with Yetminster and neighbouring communities. We have therefore not included them in our recommended Broadwindsor ward. Instead, we have included Evershot parish in this ward, which we consider has reasonable links with the adjacent Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council area. This change will also ensure this ward has good electoral equality.

47 We are satisfied that our proposed Broadwindsor ward provides an effective balance of our statutory criteria. It retains both Broadwindsor Grouped Parish Council and Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council within a single ward. We also note the evidence from Councillor Legg which indicates that communities across the proposed ward look towards a similar range of service centres in and outside of Dorset, including Yeovil, Dorchester, Crewkerne and Chard. We are therefore content that the ward reflects community identities and interests while also promoting effective and convenient local government.

48 We were not persuaded to adopt a majority of Councillor Legg's proposals for this area. In particular, this scheme retained the Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council area within a Yetminster ward. As discussed later in this report, we do not consider that these communities share sufficiently strong links with Yetminster and its surrounding parishes.

Bridport

49 The two Dorset-wide schemes proposed different warding arrangements for the Bridport area. The Council proposed a three-member ward that was coterminous with the town council boundary. By contrast, Councillor Legg proposed dividing the existing ward into three separate wards, linking parts of the town with the parishes of Burton Bradstock, Netherbury and Symondsburry. They argued that this would better reflect local community identities while also improving electoral equality.

50 After careful consideration, we have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposal for a three-member Bridport ward that is largely coterminous with the town council boundary. We consider that retaining the town within a single ward better reflects community identities and interests and avoids unnecessarily dividing

established communities within the urban area between wards. However, we propose an amendment to include the new residential development to the west of the town in our Bridport ward. Although the development extends across into Symondsburry parish, we consider that future electors are likely to look towards Bridport for services and facilities given its proximity to the town.

Chesil

51 We have decided to retain the boundaries of the existing Chesil Bank ward as part of our draft recommendations. This reflects the views of Chesil Bank Parish Council, which stated that the ward comprises a coherent rural area with a strong sense of local identity, shared interests and longstanding links between its constituent communities.

52 The Council proposed largely retaining the existing ward but with the inclusion of the parishes of Askerswell and Loders. However, for the reasons set out in the Upper Frome & Asker section of this report, we have not adopted this modification as part of our draft recommendations.

53 Councillor Legg also proposed a Chesil Bank ward largely based on the existing arrangements, but with the inclusion of Winterbourne Abbas and Winterbourne Steepleton parishes. We have decided not to adopt this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that these parishes share stronger links with the other Winterborne communities along the South Winterborne River and are therefore more appropriately included within our proposed Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale ward.

54 Councillor Legg also proposed transferring Burton Bradstock parish from Chesil Bank ward to a West Bay & Burton Bradstock ward. This reflected a submission from a local resident who argued that Burton Bradstock looks towards Bridport rather than the rural communities elsewhere in the ward. However, as discussed in the Bridport section of this report, we consider it preferable to retain the rural communities surrounding Bridport in separate wards from the town itself, with Bridport forming a larger three-member ward. We have therefore not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

55 We propose naming this ward Chesil, as proposed by the Council. However, we welcome views during consultation on whether the 'Bank' element of the existing ward name should be retained.

Lyme & Charmouth

56 Both the Council's scheme and Councillor Legg's scheme proposed retaining a ward comprising the parishes of Charmouth and Lyme Regis. We have adopted this ward as part of our draft recommendations, as we are satisfied that it reflects the identities and interests of these communities. While the ward is forecast to have an

electoral variance of 11% by 2032 under our proposed 84-councillor scheme, we consider this acceptable given the limited alternatives available at the edge of the authority that would provide a better balance of our statutory criteria. We were not persuaded that dividing the ward or linking it with surrounding rural communities solely to improve electoral equality would reflect local communities or promote effective and convenient local government.

Marshwood Vale

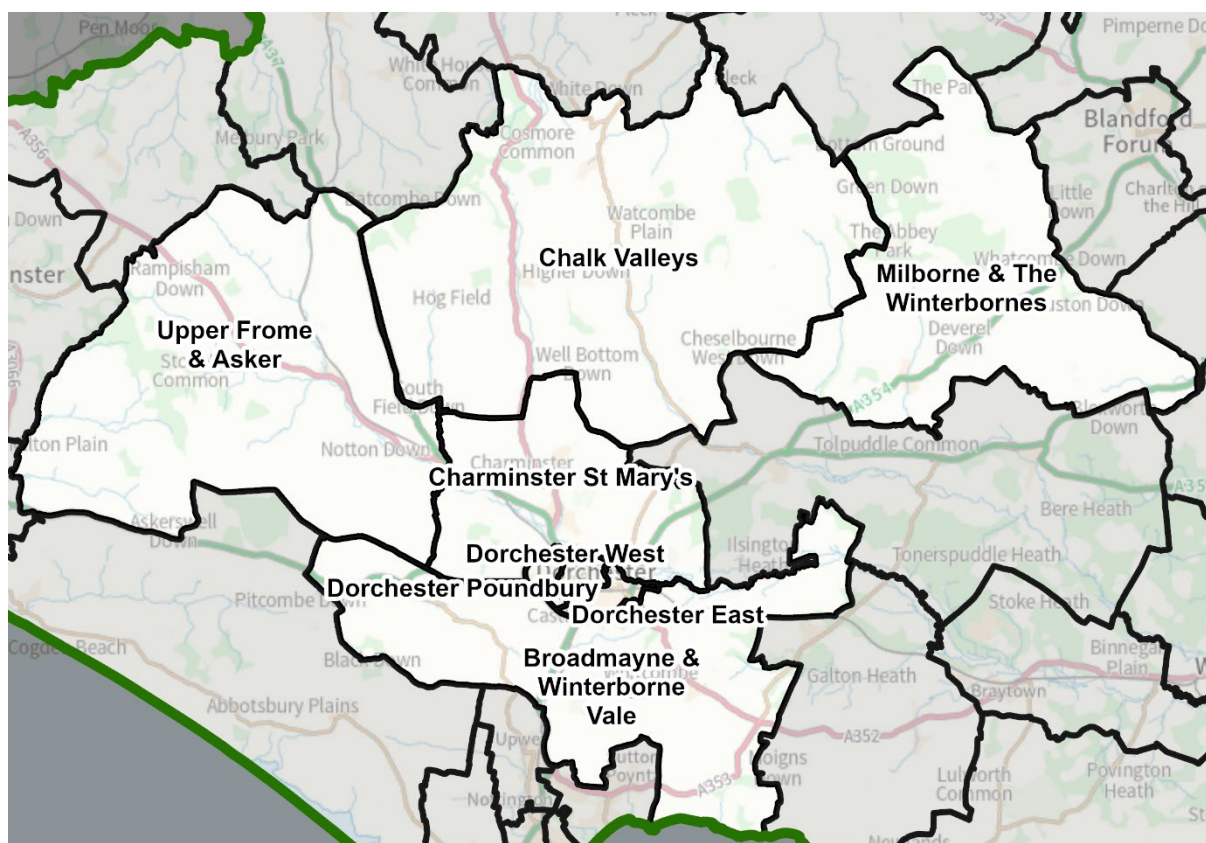
57 Councillor Legg proposed largely retaining the existing Marshwood Vale ward, subject to the transfer of Stoke Abbott parish to a Beaminster ward. However, they acknowledged that if placing Stoke Abbott and the remainder of the Upper Marshwood Vale Grouped Parish Council in separate wards was considered undesirable, the existing ward could remain unchanged.

58 The Council proposed a revised Marshwood Vale ward, including Symondsbury parish and transferring Broadwindsor Grouped Parish Council to a new Broadwindsor ward.

59 After careful consideration, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals. We consider that including Broadwindsor Grouped Parish Council in a ward centred on Broadwindsor and neighbouring parishes along the Dorset–Somerset border better reflects community identities and interests. We also consider that retaining Stoke Abbott parish in a Marshwood Vale ward can provide for effective and convenient local government, as it keeps the Upper Marshwood Vale Grouped Parish Council within a single ward.

60 However, unlike the Council's proposal, our proposed Marshwood Vale ward includes only the village of Symondsbury and the other rural parts of the parish. As outlined in the Bridport section of this report, we consider it appropriate that the Foundry Lea development forms part of a Bridport ward.

Dorchester and central Dorset



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale	1	9%
Chalk Valleys	1	6%
Charminster St Mary's	1	1%
Dorchester East	2	-8%
Dorchester Poundbury	1	5%
Dorchester West	2	-9%
Milborne & The Winterbornes	1	2%
Upper Frome & Asker	1	-5%

Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale

61 We have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposed Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale ward. We note that this ward brings together a number of parishes situated between Dorchester and Weymouth. We preferred this arrangement to that proposed by Councillor Legg because it retains Winterbourne Abbas and Winterbourne Steepleton within the ward. As discussed in the Chesil section of this report, we consider that these parishes share stronger links with the other South Winterborne communities.

62 Our recommended ward differs from the Council's proposal by including Bincombe parish. The Council had proposed transferring Bincombe to a Weymouth North ward. However, Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council argued that Bincombe should remain within the current Winterborne & Broadmayne ward, or an equivalent ward, in order that it continue to be represented alongside the other parishes within the grouped parish council. Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council also highlighted recent changes to the parish boundary with Weymouth and argued that the ward boundary should recognise the distinction between the urban fringe of Weymouth and the rural character of Bincombe and neighbouring parishes.

63 We were persuaded by this evidence and have therefore included Bincombe within our proposed Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale ward, alongside the remainder of Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council. This avoids dividing the grouped parish council across wards. We have also had regard to the recent parish boundary changes in the area, and our proposed ward boundary follows the revised parish boundary between Bincombe and Weymouth.

Chalk Valleys

64 While both the Council and Councillor Legg proposed altered versions of the current Chalk Valleys ward, we have decided to recommend a ward that more closely resembles the existing arrangements. Our proposed ward includes the parishes of Mappowder and Stoke Wake from the existing Blackmore Vale ward. This amendment ensures good electoral equality for our proposed Blackmore Vale ward. We also propose transferring Dewlish parish to our recommended Milborne & The Winterbornes ward.

65 We were not persuaded by the Council's proposal to include Hazelbury Bryan and Woolland parishes in Chalk Valleys ward. We consider that these parishes share stronger links with the communities of the Blackmore Vale area than with those located south of the chalk escarpment. Furthermore, we also consider that Buckland Newton and Minterne Magna parishes should remain within Chalk Valleys ward rather than form part of a Sherborne Rural ward. Having considered evidence submitted by Councillor Legg, we are satisfied that these parishes have stronger links with neighbouring communities to the south rather than with the rural parishes nearer Sherborne to the north.

66 Overall, we were also not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's proposed ward. It would divide Piddle Valley Grouped Parish Council between wards and split Charminster parish between different wards. We consider that dividing the grouped parish council and Charminster parish in this way would not reflect community identities and interests, nor promote effective and convenient local government.

Charminster St Mary's, Dorchester East, Dorchester Poundbury and Dorchester West

67 We received differing warding proposals for Charminster and Dorchester parishes. The Council proposed to largely retain the existing warding pattern for Dorchester, making only a minor amendment to the boundary between Dorchester East and Dorchester West wards to improve electoral equality. Councillor Legg also proposed retaining the existing Dorchester Poundbury ward but replaced the current east–west arrangement with north–south wards, which included Charminster village and Stinsford parish in a Dorchester North & Charminster ward.

68 After careful consideration of these proposals, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's approach. We consider that Charminster and Stinsford are somewhat distinct from the town of Dorchester and should continue to be represented separately. We also note the support from Stinsford Parish Council for retaining its inclusion in a Charminster St Mary's ward, citing its close links with Charminster parish. We were also concerned that Councillor Legg's proposal would divide Charminster parish between wards, as the Charlton Down area would be included in a separate Chalk Valleys ward. We consider that dividing the parish in this way would not reflect community identities and interests or provide for effective and convenient local government for electors in Charminster parish.

69 We note that Councillor Legg's proposal omitted 'St Mary's' from the name for the ward containing Charminster village. We have decided to retain the existing ward name for continuity but welcome evidence during this consultation as to whether the inclusion of 'St Mary's' in the ward name remains appropriate.

Milborne & The Winterbornes

70 We have decided to recommend a Milborne & The Winterbornes ward which is based on the Council's proposal. We consider there is a rationale for bringing the Winterborne villages together within a single ward, given their shared location along the River Winterborne and the close geographic links between these communities. We also note the road connections that exist between these villages and the nearby communities of Milborne St Andrew and Milton Abbas. Our proposed ward also includes Turnworth parish. We consider that, as a community located south of the chalk escarpment, Turnworth shares closer links with the other parishes in this ward than with the communities of the Blackmore Vale to the north. We are therefore satisfied that its inclusion in this ward will provide a better reflection of community identities and interests.

71 We also note that this arrangement reflects the views of Councillor Macnair of Milborne St Andrew Parish Council. In particular, they supported the inclusion of Dewlish and Milborne St Andrew parishes in this ward and the transfer of Puddletown parish to a different ward.

72 We were not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's alternative proposal, which would place communities along the River Winterborne in separate wards. We do not consider that such an arrangement would reflect the community identities and interests that exist across the Winterborne valley area as effectively as our proposed ward.

Upper Frome & Asker

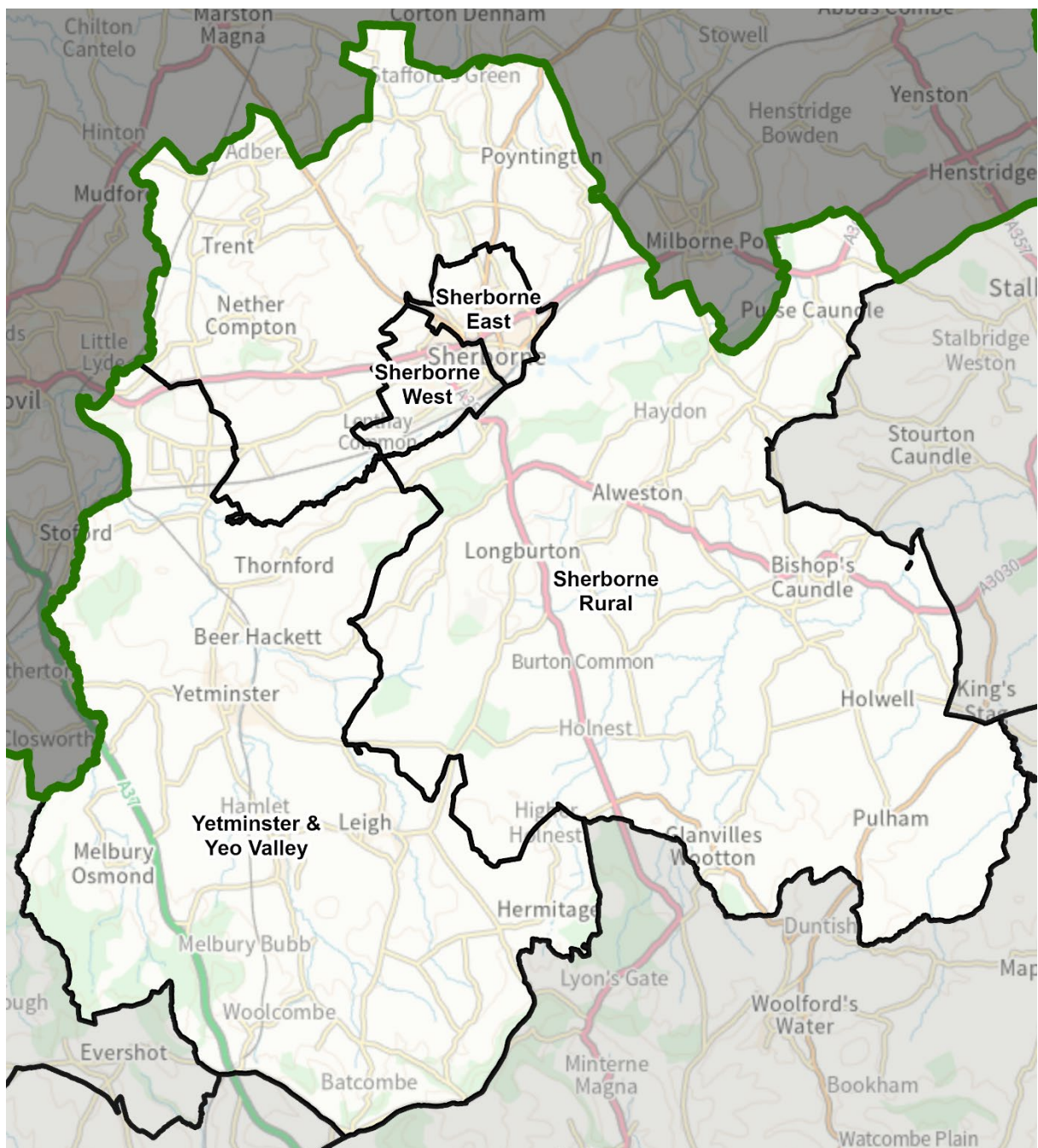
73 We have decided to recommend an Upper Frome & Asker ward which is based on the Council's proposal. This ward is based on the existing Eggardon ward and brings together rural parishes with established links along the A356 corridor and the River Frome valley.

74 However, we propose including Askerswell and Loders parishes in this ward. Loders Parish Council opposed Dorset Council's proposal to transfer Loders from the current Eggardon ward to a coastal Chesil ward, arguing that the parish has a predominantly rural and inland character, with stronger ties to neighbouring communities north of the A35. It requested the inclusion of Loders parish in the proposed Upper Frome & Asker ward, noting that Askerswell parish may also prefer to be part of the ward that bears its name. Having considered this evidence, we have decided to include Askerswell and Loders parish in our Upper Frome & Asker ward in order to better reflect local community identities and interests.

75 We also received comments regarding the challenges associated with representing large rural wards. Councillor King of Maiden Newton & Frome Vauchurch Parish Council argued that the existing Eggardon ward covers a wide geographical area and includes communities with differing identities and service connections. Toller Porcorum Parish Council similarly contended that councillors representing rural wards are required to engage with a large number of parish councils across a wider area than is typically the case in urban parts of Dorset.

76 While we acknowledge these concerns, we consider that our proposed Upper Frome & Asker ward comprises predominantly rural communities that share similar characteristics and interests. We also note that the ward secures an electorate comparable to that of other single-councillor wards elsewhere in Dorset. We therefore consider that the proposed ward provides an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

Sherborne and Yetminster



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Sherborne East	1	3%
Sherborne Rural	1	-9%
Sherborne West	1	3%
Yetminster & Yeo Valley	1	7%

Sherborne East and Sherborne West

77 Both the Council and the Councillor Legg proposed the retention of the current wards for Sherborne town. Councillor Crabb also expressed support for the current Sherborne West ward. We are content that the current arrangements reflect our statutory criteria and have therefore decided to retain these single-councillor wards as part of our draft recommendations.

Sherborne Rural

78 We received differing proposals for a Sherborne Rural ward from the Council and Councillor Legg. Councillor Legg proposed to largely retain the existing ward, subject to the transfer of Purse Caundle parish. By contrast, the Council proposed a substantially revised ward extending further south to include Buckland Newton, Minterne Magna and Mappowder parishes, while also incorporating the Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council. Additionally, the Council proposed transferring Bradford Abbas parish, Clifton Maybank parish and Thornhackett Grouped Parish Council to its proposed Yetminster & Yeo Valley ward.

79 Our draft recommendations more closely resemble the Council's proposals, although we have made a number of amendments to reflect all the evidence received during consultation. We do not propose extending the ward as far south as the Council suggested, having been persuaded by evidence from Councillor Legg that Buckland Newton and its neighbouring parishes do not have strong links with Sherborne. We have also included Bishop's Caundle parish in this ward, reflecting the evidence from Councillor Legg that it shares closer links with Sherborne and the surrounding rural area than with Stalbridge.

80 We also recommend the inclusion of Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council in this ward. This reflects a submission from a local resident who argued that Longburton parish, which forms part of the grouped parish council, shares community links, services and day-to-day relationships centred on Sherborne and the surrounding area, rather than with Yetminster. We consider that the inclusion of the grouped parish council in a Sherborne Rural ward better reflects local community identities and interests.

81 While both the Council and Councillor Legg proposed transferring Purse Caundle parish to a Stalbridge ward, we recommend that it be retained in Sherborne Rural ward. This is to secure good electoral equality for the ward.

Yetminster & Yeo Valley

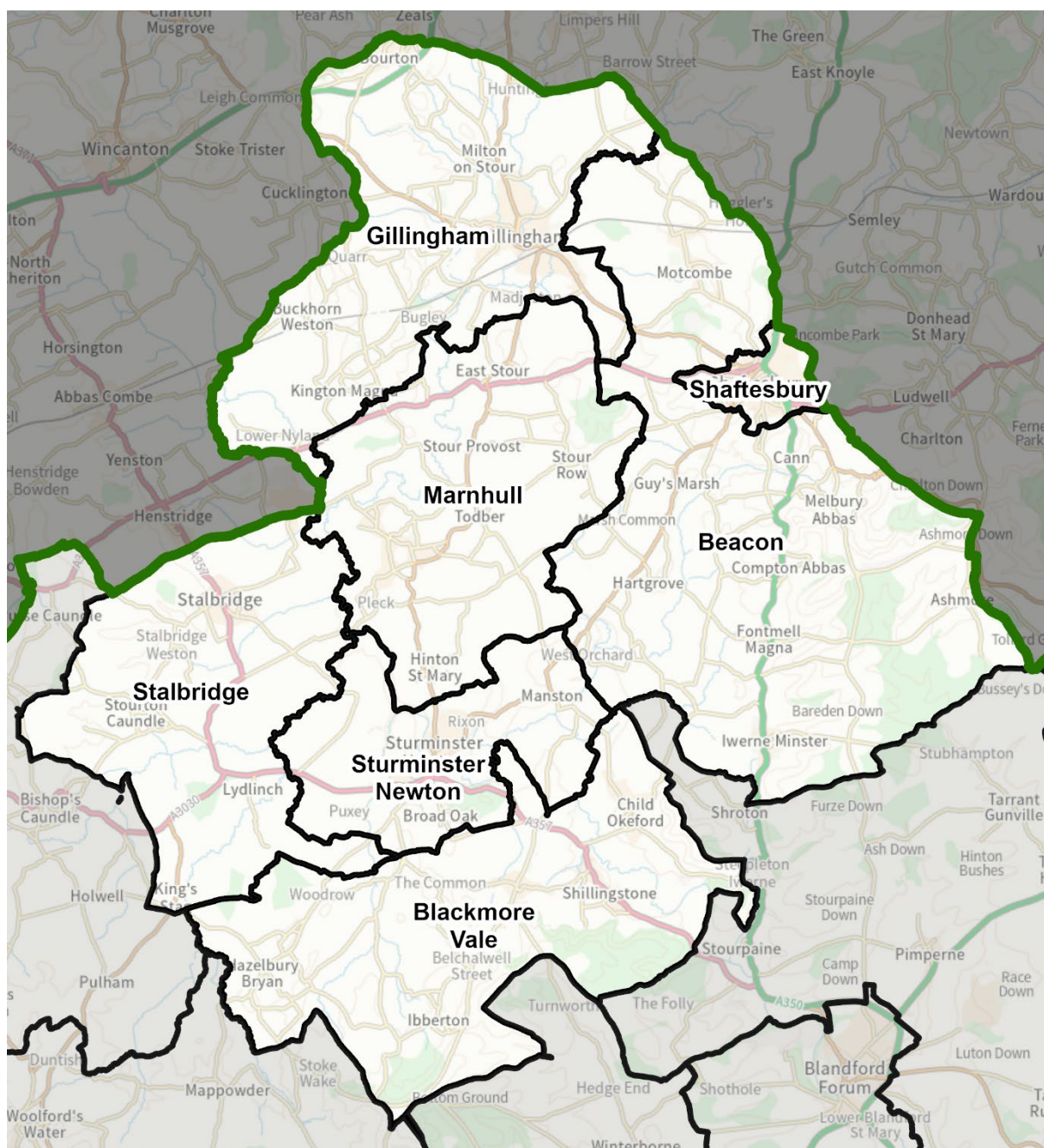
82 We have based our Yetminster & Yeo Valley ward on the Council's proposal. This reconfigures the existing ward by including Bradford Abbas, Clifton Maybank & Thornhackett Grouped Parish Council, and transferring Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council to Sherborne Rural ward and Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council to a new Broadwindsor ward. We were persuaded to adopt this

proposal because we consider it better reflects the transport links between communities linked along the A37 corridor and the Heart of Wessex railway line.

83 However, we propose including Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Sampford and Stockwood parishes in this ward. The Council had instead included these parishes in its proposed Broadwindsor ward. We consider that these parishes share stronger links with Yetminster than with communities to the west, where road connections are more limited. We also note the evidence from Councillor Legg that suggested that the Council's proposal would divide Chetnole & Stockwood Grouped Parish Council between wards.

84 We were not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's proposed ward, which largely retained the existing arrangements. As outlined above, we consider that Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council is more appropriately included in our proposed Sherborne Rural ward. In addition, we do not consider that Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council shares particularly strong links with Yetminster.

Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Beacon	1	6%
Blackmore Vale	1	10%
Gillingham	3	7%
Marnhull	1	-2%
Shaftesbury	2	-3%
Stalbridge	1	-5%
Sturminster Newton	1	9%

Beacon

85 The two Dorset-wide schemes both proposed a Beacon ward that extended northwards to include Motcombe parish and transferred the parishes of Iwerne Courtney and Iwerne Stepleton to a different ward. Our proposed Beacon ward is based on the Council's proposal. This is because it does not include Stour Provost parish, as proposed by Councillor Legg. Including Stour Provost in the ward would divide The Stours Grouped Parish Council between wards. We consider that keeping the grouped parish council within a single ward can help provide a more coherent pattern of representation and promote effective and convenient local government.

Blackmore Vale

86 Our proposed Blackmore Vale ward is based on the Council's proposal, but with some amendments. We consider that a ward centred on a number of similar rural communities in the Blackmore Vale area will reflect community identities and interests. Our recommended ward differs from the Council's proposal by excluding Lydlinch parish, which we propose be included in Stalbridge ward. We consider that Lydlinch shares closer geographic and road links with Stalbridge than with the communities in our proposed Blackmore Vale ward. For similar reasons, we also propose including Hammoon and Manston parishes in our recommended Sturminster Newton ward. We further propose excluding Turnworth parish from Blackmore Vale ward and including it in our Milborne & The Winterbornes ward. We consider that Turnworth shares stronger links with the communities situated south of the chalk escarpment and is therefore more appropriately included in that ward.

87 We also propose including Hazelbury Bryan and Woolland parishes in Blackmore Vale ward. The Council had instead included these parishes in a Chalk Valleys ward. However, we consider that Hazelbury Bryan and Woolland share stronger links with the communities of the Blackmore Vale than with those located south of the chalk escarpment. We are therefore satisfied that their inclusion in Blackmore Vale ward will better reflect community identities and interests.

88 Councillor Legg's proposals for the area involved abolishing the existing Blackmore Vale ward and creating new Hazelbury Bryan & Milton Abbas and Hill Forts wards. We were not persuaded to adopt this proposal, as the former ward would include the parishes of Winterborne Clenston, Winterborne Houghton and Winterborne Stickland. As outlined in the Milborne & The Winterbornes section of this report, we consider it preferable to bring the Winterborne villages together in a single ward, given their shared location along the River Winterborne. We therefore consider that these parishes are more appropriately included in our proposed Milborne & The Winterbornes ward.

Gillingham

89 We have based our draft recommendations for the Gillingham area on the Council's proposal, which comprises a three-member Gillingham ward containing the

parishes of Bourton, Buckhorn Weston, Gillingham, Kington Magna and Silton. The existing ward, which also includes East Stour, Motcombe and West Stour parishes, is forecast to become significantly under-represented by 2032. The transfer of East Stour, Motcombe and West Stour to neighbouring wards will ensure good electoral equality. We are also satisfied that the proposed ward reflects Gillingham's role as the principal town and service centre for the surrounding parishes.

90 We were not persuaded by Councillor Legg's alternative proposal, which would divide Gillingham between two wards. While this arrangement would secure good electoral equality, we do not consider that it would reflect community identities and interests as effectively as a ward focused on the town and its surrounding communities. We also consider that retaining Gillingham within a single ward provides a clearer and more coherent pattern of representation and avoids unnecessarily dividing the town between wards.

Marnhull and Stalbridge

91 The existing Stalbridge & Marnhull ward is forecast to become increasingly under-represented over the next six years. It is therefore necessary for an alternative warding arrangement in this area in order to secure electoral equality.

92 This need for change was recognised by both the Council and Councillor Legg, whose schemes each proposed placing Marnhull and Stalbridge in separate wards. Both proposals included the parishes of East Stour, Fifehead Magdalen, Hinton St Mary, Marnhull, Todber and West Stour in a Marnhull-based ward. However, the Council proposed including Stour Provost parish, while Councillor Legg proposed including the parishes of Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna instead. We have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposal, as it ensures that The Stours Grouped Parish Council (East Stour, Stour Provost, Todber and West Stour parishes) is in a single ward, which will aid effective and convenient local government.

93 We propose naming the ward Marnhull, as proposed by the Council. However, we welcome evidence during this consultation on whether the ward name should instead include a reference to 'the Stours', as proposed by Councillor Legg.

94 In relation to Stalbridge, our recommended ward comprises the parishes of Lydlinch, Stalbridge and Stourton Caundle. We consider that these parishes are in close proximity to one another and together form a geographically coherent single-member ward. Our proposed Stalbridge ward will also have good electoral equality by 2032.

Shaftesbury

95 We have decided to retain the boundaries of the existing Shaftesbury Town ward in our draft recommendations. The Council largely maintained the existing ward

in its proposal but transferred a small area south of the A30 Salisbury Road into a Beacon ward. However, no justification was made for this and, as a result, we consider following the town council boundary for the purposes of warding arrangements to be more appropriate.

96 Councillor Legg proposed that Shaftesbury town be divided across two wards, with the eastern part joined in a ward with Cann parish. We decided not to adopt this proposal as we were concerned that it would separate Cann and Melbury Abbas parishes across different wards. These two parishes form a grouped parish council and we consider that dividing it across wards may be uncondusive to effective and convenient local government.

97 Shaftesbury Town Council supported the retention of two councillors for the town. It also requested that the ward boundary be extended to include the Saxon Grange development, Orchid View travellers' site and properties along Higher Blandford Road. We recognise that these areas appear to form part of the Shaftesbury urban area. However, they straddle the boundary between Shaftesbury and Cann parishes and including them in Shaftesbury ward would therefore divide Cann parish between wards. As outlined above, we do not consider that such an arrangement would support effective and convenient local government, and we have not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. Any future change to the parish boundary in this area would need to be considered through a community governance review, as parish boundary changes cannot be made through this electoral review.

98 Shaftesbury Town Council also sought greater clarity on the alignment of town council wards. However, we cannot make any changes to parish warding arrangements unless they are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for Dorset Council, and we have recommended no changes to the existing warding arrangements for Shaftesbury. Again, a community governance review would be the appropriate mechanism to effect change to town council ward boundaries.

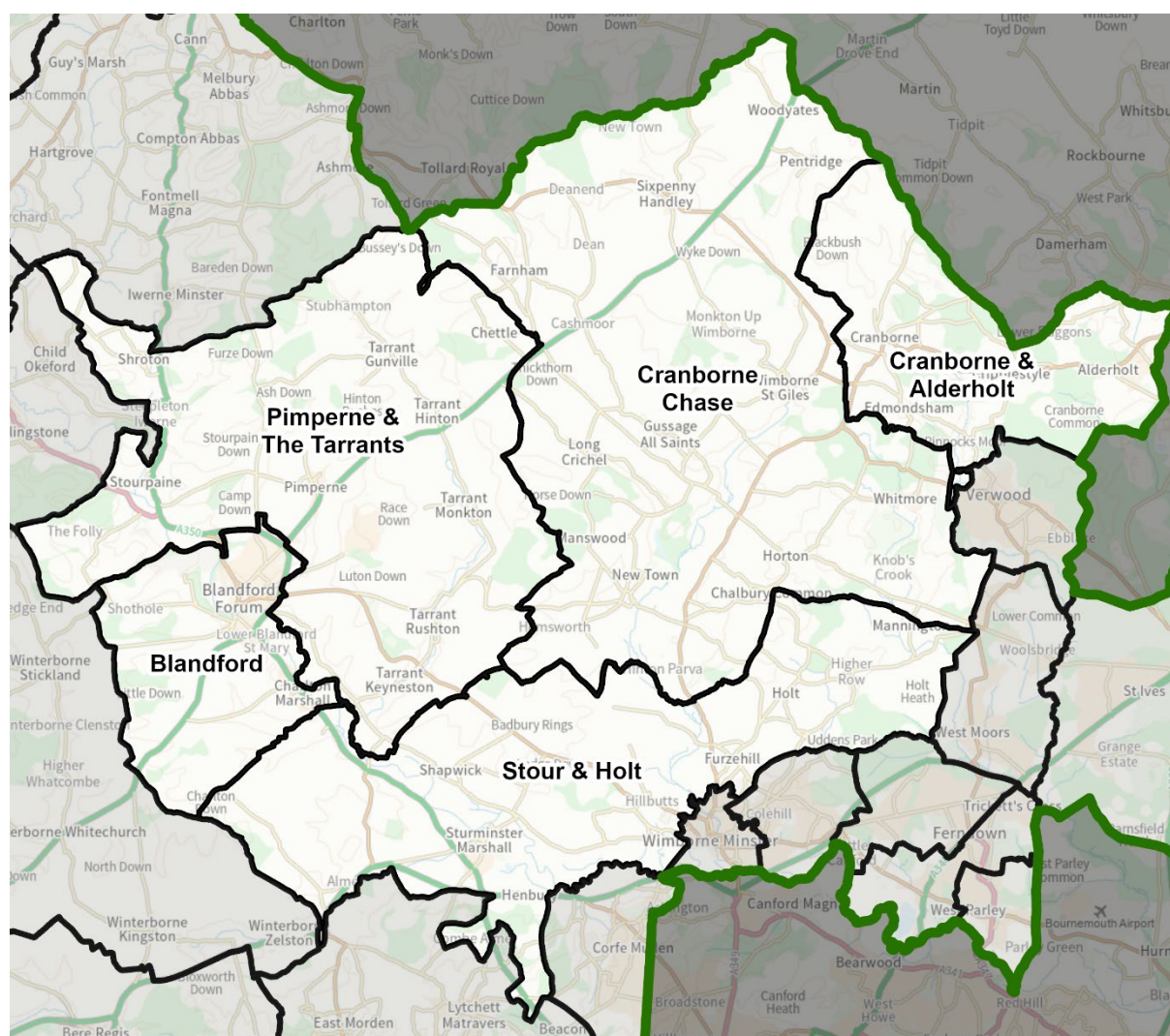
99 We also propose that the ward name be changed from Shaftesbury Town to Shaftesbury. This means it is consistent with other towns across Dorset that do not have the 'town' suffix in their ward name.

Sturminster Newton

100 Both the Council and Councillor Legg proposed an identical single-member Sturminster Newton ward aligned with the Sturminster Newton parish boundary. We are satisfied that a ward focused on the town reflects the community identity and interests of its residents. However, we have also included Hammoon and Manston parishes in the ward, as we consider that they share close geographic and road links with Sturminster Newton and look towards the town as the principal settlement in the

area. We are satisfied that this arrangement secures good electoral equality while providing an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

Blandford and Cranborne Chase



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Blandford	3	6%
Cranborne & Alderholt	1	-7%
Cranborne Chase	1	3%
Pimperne & The Tarrants	1	8%
Stour & Holt	1	2%

Blandford

101 The Council and Councillor Legg proposed differing warding arrangements for the Blandford area. The Council proposed a two-member Blandford ward coterminous with the Blandford Forum parish boundary, with the parishes of Blandford St Mary, Bryanston, Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury forming a separate single-member Blandford St Mary ward. By contrast, Councillor Legg proposed dividing Blandford Forum between two wards, creating a single-member Blandford

North ward and a two-member ward comprising the southern part of Blandford Forum together with Blandford St Mary, Bryanston and Charlton Marshall parishes.

102 After careful consideration, we have decided not to adopt either proposal. Instead, we propose a three-member Blandford ward comprising Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary, Bryanston and Charlton Marshall parishes. We were not persuaded by the Council's proposal because it would result in a Blandford ward with a forecast electoral variance of 12% by 2032. We did not consider that sufficient evidence had been received for this area to justify this variance. We consider that our proposed three-member ward reflects the close relationship between Blandford Forum and the adjoining communities immediately south and west of the town, while also securing improved electoral equality with a forecast variance of 6% by 2032.

103 We were also not persuaded by Councillor Legg's proposal, as it would divide Blandford Forum between wards and did not follow a particularly clear or identifiable boundary through the town. We do not consider that such an arrangement would provide as coherent a pattern of representation as our proposed ward.

104 We also examined whether our proposed Blandford ward could be extended into Pimperne parish so that the entirety of the Blandford Urban Extension development could be included in a single ward. We consider that future residents of the development are likely to identify with and look towards Blandford Forum for services and facilities. However, adopting such an arrangement would require the creation of a parish ward for Pimperne parish, as the parish would be divided between Dorset Council wards. Given the uncertainty over whether electors will be resident in the development by the time of the next parish elections in 2029, we are not persuaded that it would be appropriate to create a parish ward for an area which may have very few electors. We have therefore decided to follow the existing Blandford Forum and Pimperne parish boundary, notwithstanding that it cuts across the development footprint. We nonetheless welcome views and evidence on this matter as part of the consultation on our draft recommendations.

Cranborne & Alderholt

105 Both the Council and Councillor Legg proposed to largely retain the existing Cranborne & Alderholt ward in their respective schemes, subject to the transfer of Woodlands parish. The retention of the existing ward comprising the parishes of Alderholt, Cranborne, Edmondsham, Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands was supported by Alderholt Parish Council, which stated that the ward would reflect established community identities and local connections across the area.

106 While we note this support, we have decided to transfer both Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes into our proposed Cranborne Chase ward. This ensures that both are included in the same ward as Chalbury and Horton parishes, with which it forms Knowlton Grouped Parish Council. We consider that placing the

grouped parish council wholly in a single ward avoids dividing closely linked parishes between wards and can provide for a clearer and more coherent pattern of representation. We are therefore satisfied that this arrangement can support effective and convenient local government.

Cranborne Chase and Pimperne & The Tarrants

107 We were not persuaded that either the Council's proposed Cranborne Chase ward or Councillor Legg's Sixpenny Handley & Holt ward would provide an effective balance of our statutory criteria. We were concerned that both proposals would divide Knowlton and Vale of Allen grouped parish councils between wards.

108 Our recommended ward seeks to address these issues by bringing the constituent parishes of both grouped parish councils together in our Cranborne Chase ward. To achieve this, we have included Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes, alongside Chalbury and Horton parishes, ensuring that Knowlton Grouped Parish Council is wholly contained within the ward. We have also included Hinton parish alongside Crichel, Gussage All Saints, Gussage St Michael and Witchampton parishes, ensuring that Vale of Allen Grouped Parish Council is similarly contained in the ward.

109 We consider that keeping these grouped parish councils in one ward can help provide for effective and convenient local government while reflecting the identities and interests of this predominantly rural area, and securing good electoral equality.

110 The current Cranborne Chase ward also contains several of the 'Tarrant' parishes, but Tarrant Gunville and Tarrant Hinton are located in a Hill Forts & Upper Tarrants ward. Neither the Council's nor Councillor Legg's proposals would bring all the Tarrant parishes together within a single ward. We consider that these parishes share strong geographic and community links given they are all situated along the River Tarrant. We therefore consider that they should be represented in the same ward. To this end, we have based our recommended Pimperne & The Tarrants ward on the Council's proposal, but amended it to include all the Tarrant parishes. We consider that this arrangement better reflects community identities and interests while also securing good electoral equality.

111 South Tarrant Valley Grouped Parish Council expressed concern that the Council's proposed ward name, Pimperne & The Tarrants, could be misleading because several of the Tarrant parishes would remain outside the ward under the Council's proposals. However, as noted above, our draft recommendations place all the Tarrant parishes in the proposed ward and we therefore consider that the recommended ward name accurately reflects its geographic extent.

Stour & Holt

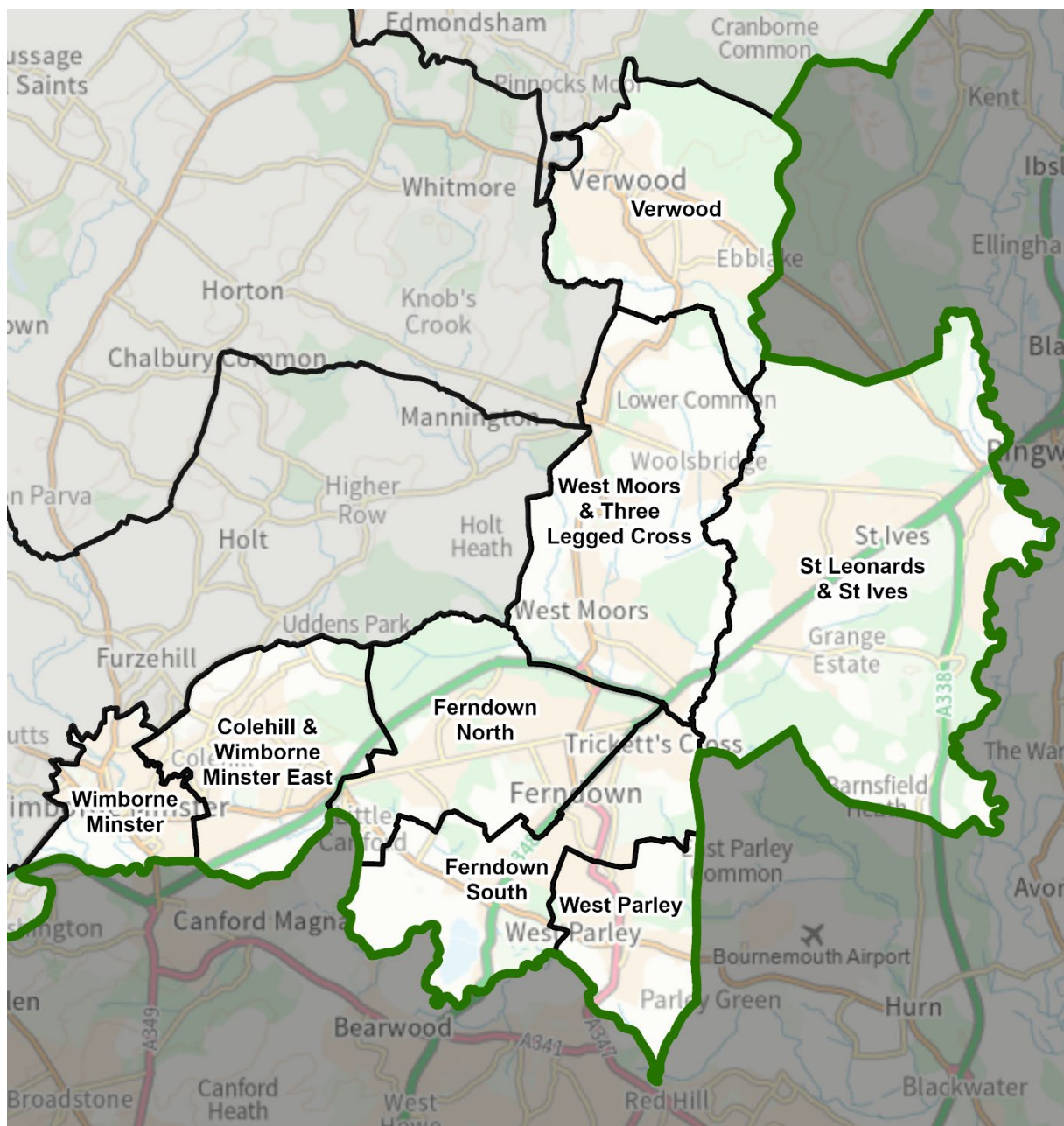
112 We have decided to recommend a Stour & Holt ward based on the Council's proposed Stour & Allen Vale ward. The ward brings together parishes situated along the River Stour, including Pamphill, Shapwick and Sturminster Marshall, together with Holt parish. Our proposed ward differs from the Council's scheme by including Spetisbury parish in order to secure good electoral equality for our proposed Blandford ward. We are nevertheless satisfied that Spetisbury shares strong geographic links with other communities in our proposed Stour & Holt ward, given its location on the River Stour. Our proposed ward also excludes Hinton parish, which is included in our proposed Cranborne Chase ward so that it can be united with the remainder of Vale of Allen Grouped Parish Council. We consider that this arrangement provides for an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

113 While the Council proposed the ward name of Stour & Allen Vale, we consider Stour & Holt to be more appropriate, given that Vale of Allen Grouped Parish Council is included in our proposed Cranborne Chase ward. We therefore propose naming the ward Stour & Holt as part of our draft recommendations.

114 Councillor Legg's proposals for the area involved including Sturminster Marshall parish in a Lytchett Matravers & Upton ward, while Pamphill, Shapwick and Spetisbury parishes would form part of a ward centred on the Tarrant villages. However, as outlined above, we consider that these parishes share stronger links with other communities along the River Stour. We are not persuaded that placing these communities in different wards would reflect community identities and interests as effectively as our proposed Stour & Holt ward. We have therefore not adopted Councillor Legg's proposals for this area.

115 We also received eight submissions concerning the Furzehill area of Holt parish. This area was recently transferred from Colehill parish to Holt parish following a recent Community Governance Review but remains within the Colehill & Wimborne Minster East ward. The submissions, which included representations from Colehill Town Council, Holt Parish Council and the Furzehill Residents' Association, argued that Furzehill should be included in the same ward as the remainder of Holt parish to reflect its rural identity and interests. We agree that the entirety of Holt parish should be contained in a single ward and that Furzehill shares stronger links with Holt and the surrounding rural communities than with the more urban areas of Colehill and Wimborne. We have therefore included Furzehill, and consequently the entirety of Holt parish, in our proposed Stour & Holt ward. We consider that this arrangement will better reflect community identities and interests while also promoting effective and convenient local government.

Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Colehill & Wimborne Minster East	2	-6%
Ferndown North	2	1%
Ferndown South	2	-8%
St Leonards & St Ives	2	-10%
Verwood	3	0%
West Moors & Three Legged Cross	2	0%
West Parley	1	-4%
Wimborne Minster	2	-5%

Colehill & Wimborne Minster East and Wimborne Minster

116 A two-councillor ward coterminous with the Colehill Town Council boundary would have an electoral variance of -21% by 2032 and therefore be significantly over-represented. Accordingly, we consider that Colehill's current linkage with the eastern part of Wimborne Minster should be retained in order to secure good electoral equality. The existing Wimborne Minster ward is also forecast to be over-represented by 2032, indicating that it should expand if it is to achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality.

117 We have therefore adopted the Council's proposal for this area. This addresses the electoral equality concerns by extending Wimborne Minster ward eastwards to follow the parish boundary with Colehill. However, the area of Wimborne Minster parish south of Leigh Road and east of Brook Road would remain in a Colehill & Wimborne Minster East ward to ensure that ward also has good electoral equality.

118 We were not persuaded by Councillor Legg's proposal for the area. His proposed Wimborne Minster & Canford Bottom division would require the inclusion of part of Ferndown parish. As discussed in the following section, we do not consider such a division of Ferndown to be necessary in order to secure a pattern of wards that provides for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

Ferndown North, Ferndown South and West Parley

119 We have decided to retain the existing Ferndown North, Ferndown South and West Parley wards as part of our draft recommendations, in line with the Council's proposal. We are satisfied that these wards reflect the identities and interests of the Ferndown and West Parley communities. We note in particular the support expressed by Ferndown Town Council for the retention of the existing Ferndown North and Ferndown South wards. All three wards are also forecast to have good electoral equality by 2032. We are therefore satisfied that these wards provide an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

120 We were not persuaded that Councillor Legg's proposals would reflect community identities and interests or provide for effective and convenient local government. In particular, they would divide the urban area of Ferndown across four separate wards, three of which would be combined with surrounding parishes. We consider that this would create a more fragmented pattern of wards for the town. By contrast, we consider that the Council's proposals, which retain the division of Ferndown across two wards and do not combine parts of the town with surrounding parishes, provide a clearer and more coherent pattern of representation while better reflecting the town's community identities and interests.

St Leonards & St Ives

121 We have decided to retain the existing St Leonards & St Ives ward as part of our draft recommendations, as proposed by the Council. The ward achieves electoral equality under our proposed 84-councillor pattern, and we are satisfied that it reflects the identities and interests of the St Leonards & St Ives community, being coterminous with the parish boundary.

122 We were not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's proposal to combine St Leonards & St Ives with Three Legged Cross. We consider that including Three Legged Cross within our proposed West Moors & Three Legged Cross ward is necessary to secure good electoral equality in that area. We are also not persuaded that linking Three Legged Cross with St Leonards & St Ives would provide a better reflection of community identities and interests than the existing arrangements. We are therefore satisfied that retaining the existing St Leonards & St Ives ward provides a better overall balance of our statutory criteria.

Verwood

123 We have based our recommended Verwood ward on the current ward, as proposed by the Council and Councillor Legg in their respective schemes. We are satisfied that the ward reflects the identity and interests of the urban area of Verwood. The ward is also forecast to have good electoral equality by 2032.

124 A local resident argued that Three Legged Cross, which sits within Verwood parish but is in a different council ward to the remainder of the parish, should continue to be represented separately at the parish ward level but should form part of a Verwood ward, to reflect its close relationship with the town. We examined this proposal but noted that it would result in our adjacent West Moors & Three Legged Cross ward having a forecast electoral variance of -15%, which was not justified by the evidence received. We have therefore retained Three Legged Cross in a West Moors & Three Legged Cross ward as part of our draft recommendations.

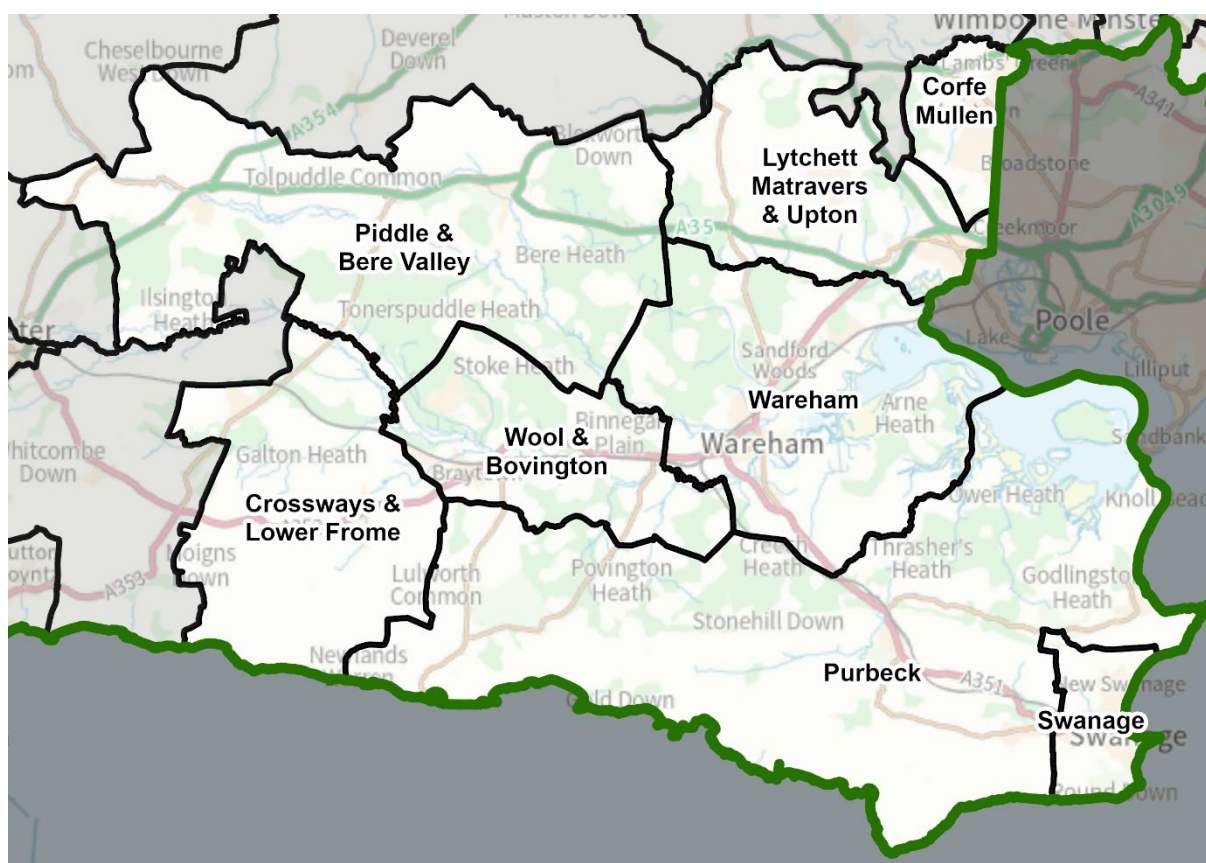
125 As a consequence of the above, Three Legged Cross will continue to form a separate parish ward from the remainder of Verwood parish. The local resident also stated that the existing parish warding arrangements within Verwood do not reflect local patterns of representation and can result in an uneven distribution of candidates between wards and should therefore be abolished. However, we cannot make any changes to parish warding arrangements unless they are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for Dorset Council, and we have not recommended any changes to the existing warding arrangements for Verwood. Such a comprehensive change to parish warding arrangements would need to be considered and consulted upon via a Community Governance Review conducted by Dorset Council.

West Moors & Three Legged Cross

126 West Moors parish is too small to form a two-member ward with good electoral equality and therefore needs to be combined in a ward with a neighbouring area. To this end, the Council proposed retaining the existing ward linking West Moors with Three Legged Cross, while Councillor Legg proposed linking West Moors with part of Ferndown.

127 After careful consideration, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposal. While both schemes link West Moors with a neighbouring community, we consider that Three Legged Cross shares reasonable connections with West Moors. By contrast, the northern part of Ferndown is separated from West Moors by the A31. Furthermore, as discussed in the Ferndown section of this report, we consider that Councillor Legg's proposal to divide Ferndown across four wards would contribute to a more fragmented pattern of representation for the Ferndown area.

Wareham, Swanage and Purbeck



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Corfe Mullen	2	10%
Crossways & Lower Frome	1	6%
Lytchett Matravers & Upton	3	-8%
Piddle & Bere Valley	1	0%
Purbeck	1	3%
Swanage	2	8%
Wareham	2	8%
Wool & Bovington	1	9%

Corfe Mullen

128 Both the Council and Councillor Legg proposed an identical two-member Corfe Mullen ward that is coterminous with the parish of the same name. We are satisfied that a ward focused solely on Corfe Mullen will reflect the community identity and interests of the town. The proposed ward is also forecast to achieve good electoral equality by 2032. We therefore consider that it provides the best balance of our statutory criteria and have adopted it as part of our draft recommendations.

129 We received a submission from Councillor Florek regarding the location details of polling stations in Corfe Mullen. However, we have no role in the administration of

polling districts and polling stations. The responsibility for these arrangements rests with Dorset Council.

Crossways & Lower Frome

130 We have decided to adopt the Council's proposed Crossways & Lower Frome ward as part of our draft recommendations. We note that this proposal received support from Owermoigne Parish Council and consider that it provides a good balance of our statutory criteria. We were not persuaded that Councillor Legg's proposal to transfer Owermoigne parish into a Martinstown & Broadmayne ward would reflect community identities and interests as effectively, as it would separate Owermoigne parish from Crossways parish.

131 Nonetheless, we note that both the Council's proposal and Councillor Legg's alternative scheme placed Crossways parish and Moreton parish in the same ward. Councillor Legg argued that Moreton village is naturally linked with Crossways, and we agree that these parishes share close geographical and community connections. We therefore consider that they should be placed in the same ward.

132 We also received a submission from a local resident regarding the proposed ward name. The resident argued that Mid Frome would be more appropriate than Lower Frome, as the latter could be interpreted as referring to communities further downstream towards Wool. While we have adopted the Council's proposed name of Crossways & Lower Frome as part of our draft recommendations, we welcome local evidence during this consultation as to whether the name of Mid Frome would better reflect the geography of the area.

Lytchett Matravers & Upton

133 The Council and Councillor Legg both proposed a two-member Lytchett Matravers & Upton ward, although with different boundaries. The Council proposed largely retaining the existing ward, while Councillor Legg proposed including Sturminster Marshall parish in place of Morden parish.

134 Our recommended ward is based on the Council's proposals. We consider that the existing arrangements provide an effective balance of our statutory criteria, bringing together communities with established links while securing good electoral equality. We did not adopt Councillor Legg's proposal because it would remove Sturminster Marshall parish from a ward with the other communities situated along the River Stour. We consider that placing communities along the River Stour in the same ward will better reflect community identities and interests.

135 The Council proposed aligning the ward boundary with the A350 Poole Road. While we recognise the logic of following a clearly identifiable physical feature, doing so would require moving the ward boundary from the existing parish boundary between Lytchett Matravers and Sturminster Marshall. This would result in both

parishes being divided between wards and would require the creation of additional parish wards with relatively small electorates. We do not consider that such an arrangement would promote effective and convenient local government and we have therefore decided that the ward boundary should follow the parish boundary in this area. We also note that Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council were against any division of the parish across wards.

Piddle & Bere Valley

136 We have decided to recommend a Piddle & Bere Valley ward which is based on the Council's proposals. This ward would comprise Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle, Bere Regis and Bloxworth parishes, together with the Puddletown Area Grouped Parish Council. We consider that a ward comprising these parishes reflects established links along the A35 corridor and the River Piddle valley, bringing together communities with shared connections and interests. However, unlike the Council, we do not propose including East Stoke and East Holme parishes in this ward. We consider that both parishes share stronger links with Wool and are more appropriately included within our proposed Wool & Bovington ward.

137 We were not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's alternative proposals for this area, which comprised separate single-member Puddletown and Bere Regis wards. In particular, we were concerned that the proposed Puddletown ward included Piddlehinton parish but not the neighbouring parishes of Alton Pancras and Piddletrenthide, with which it forms the Piddle Valley Grouped Parish Council. We consider that keeping closely linked parishes within the same grouped parish council together in a single ward would better support effective and convenient local government.

Purbeck

138 A single-member Purbeck ward was proposed by both the Council and Councillor Legg, with each scheme using the existing South East Purbeck ward as its basis. Both proposals extended the ward eastwards to include the coastal parishes of East and West Lulworth, while excluding the more inland parish of East Stoke.

139 The proposals differed only in their treatment of the parishes of Coombe Keynes and East Holme. The Council proposed excluding both parishes from the ward, while Councillor Legg proposed including them. Having considered these alternatives, we have decided to include Coombe Keynes within our recommended Purbeck ward while placing East Holme in our Wool & Bovington ward. We consider that this arrangement secures good electoral equality across both wards and better reflects the geographic relationships and community links that East Holme shares with other communities in our proposed Wool & Bovington ward.

Swanage

140 The Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Swanage ward, an approach that was also supported by Swanage Town Council. Councillor Legg proposed dividing the ward into two single-member wards, although they acknowledged that the existing arrangement could be retained. Having considered the evidence received, we are satisfied that the existing ward reflects the identity and interests of the Swanage community and secures good electoral equality. We have therefore decided to retain the existing two-member ward as part of our draft recommendations.

141 Councillor Lejeune of Swanage Town Council argued that Swanage could be represented by a single councillor rather than two. We are not persuaded that such an arrangement would provide a good balance of our statutory criteria. This is because a two-member Swanage ward secures good electoral equality and ensures that electors receive representation broadly equivalent to that provided elsewhere in Dorset. A single-councillor ward would result in Swanage being notably under-represented. We have therefore allocated two councillors to Swanage ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Wareham

142 The Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Wareham ward, comprising the parishes of Arne, Wareham and Wareham St Martin. The retention of the existing ward was also supported by a local resident. Councillor Legg proposed a similar ward but suggested transferring the Trigon area of Wareham St Martin parish to an adjacent Bere Regis ward, arguing that it is distinct from the remainder of the parish. We considered this proposal but were not persuaded that dividing Wareham St Martin parish in this way would reflect community identities and interests or provide for effective and convenient local government. We consider that including the entirety of Wareham St Martin parish in a Wareham ward provides a more coherent pattern of representation and thus a better balance of our statutory criteria. We have therefore adopted the Council's proposed Wareham ward as part of our draft recommendations.

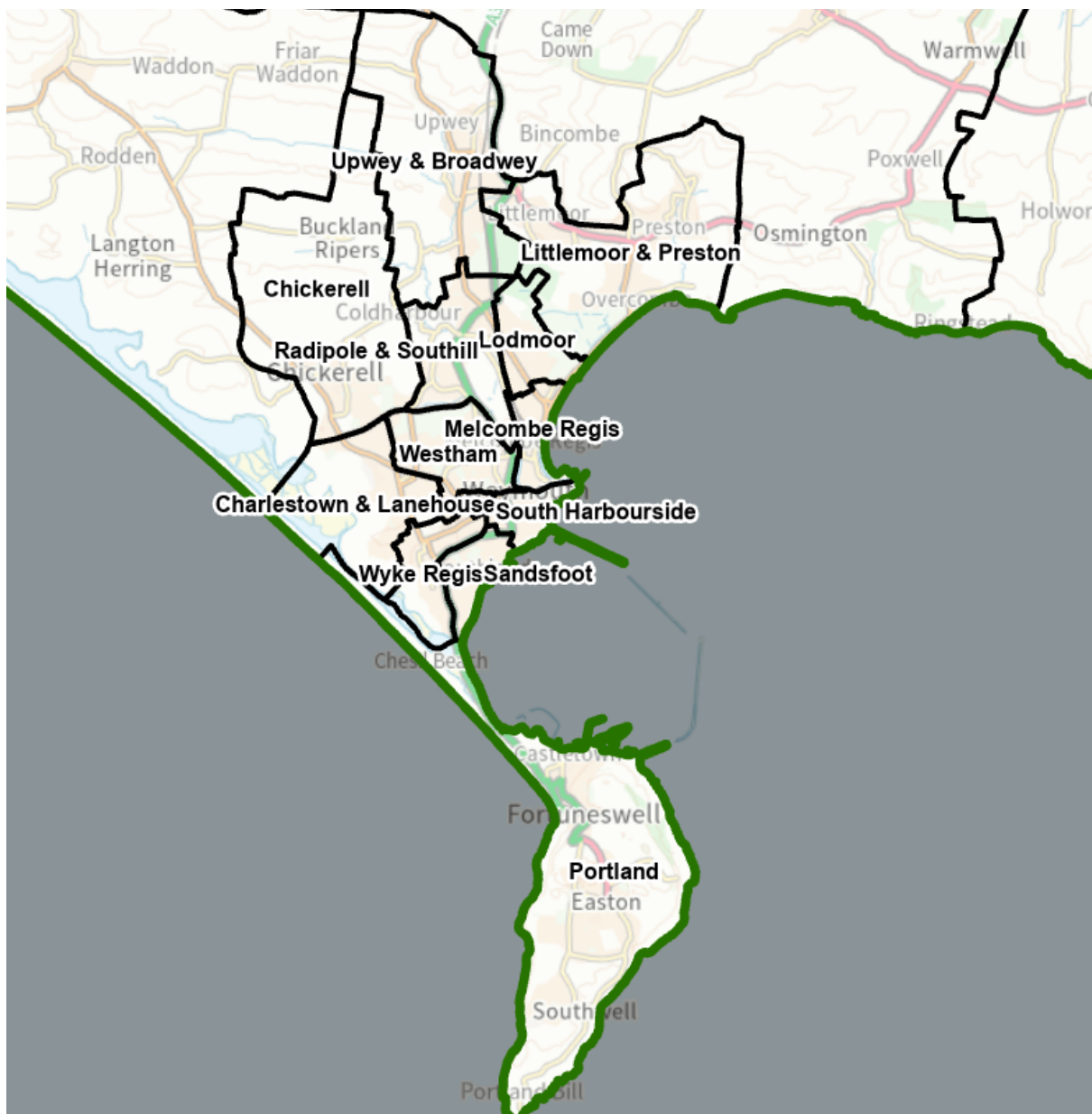
143 In addition, Wareham Town Council argued that ward boundaries should reflect the town's wider functional role as the principal service, economic and community centre for the surrounding area, rather than being confined to the town's administrative boundary. It supported the retention of a distinct Wareham ward that would preserve effective local representation, accommodate future growth and governance changes, and retain the name 'Wareham'. We consider that our proposed Wareham ward gives effect to these views by bringing together communities with strong social, economic and service links to the town, while retaining Wareham as the principal settlement and focus of the ward.

Wool & Bovington

144 A single-member Wool & Bovington ward was proposed by both the Council and Councillor Legg, although the two schemes proposed different ward boundaries. The Council proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Wool and Coombe Keynes, while Councillor Legg proposed linking Wool parish with East Stoke parish.

145 We have decided to base our draft recommendations on Councillor Legg's proposal to combine Wool and East Stoke parishes in a ward. We consider that these parishes share strong geographic links, including their connection via the A352 corridor. Our proposed ward also includes the parish of East Holme. We are satisfied that this arrangement reflects the local ties and connections that exist in this part of Dorset. We were not persuaded that the alternative options, which would place East Stoke and East Holme in different wards, would reflect those relationships and links as effectively.

Weymouth and Portland



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2032
Charlestown & Lanehouse	1	-9%
Chickerell	1	6%
Littlemoor & Preston	2	7%
Lodmoor	1	-10%
Melcombe Regis	1	2%
Portland	3	-14%
Radipole & Southill	1	3%
South Harbourside	1	6%
Sandsfoot	1	-5%

Upwey & Broadwey	1	2%
Westham	2	-7%
Wyke Regis	1	-5%

Charlestown & Lanehouse and Chickerell

146 We received a submission from Chickerell Town Council expressing a strong preference for the retention of the existing two-councillor ward, arguing that it already provides a good balance of our statutory criteria. The Town Council also requested that Chickerell should not be divided or combined with other areas and that any proposed ward should align with the parish boundary. We also received a submission from a local resident which provided evidence of community facilities in Chickerell and stated that it has a distinct identity separate from Weymouth.

147 The current Chickerell ward comprises the entirety of Chickerell parish together with parts of Weymouth, including Nottingham and part of the Lanehouse area. Consequently, the current ward does not align with the Chickerell parish boundary and includes areas outside of Chickerell parish.

148 We nonetheless considered whether Chickerell parish could form a two-councillor ward in its own right. However, such a ward would have a forecast electoral variance of -25%, which we do not have the evidence to justify. We were therefore unable to adopt this aspect of the Town Council's proposal and consider it necessary for Chickerell parish to be linked in a ward with neighbouring communities.

149 Our proposals are therefore based on submissions from the Council, Councillor Legg and Councillor Northam, all of whom proposed a single-councillor Chickerell ward focused on the town itself. We are satisfied a ward centred on Chickerell town will reflect the town's community identity and interests. However, we have not adopted the Council's proposed boundary which would follow the edge of the Chickerell Urban Extension. This would require the creation of a parish ward to the east of the development with no forecast electors. While this land may be developed through the Dorset Local Plan, it is not included in the electorate forecast. We are therefore not persuaded that it would be appropriate to create a parish ward – which we are required to do if we divide a parish between wards – based on development which may not be delivered by 2032.

150 We have also decided to recommend a single-councillor Charlestown & Lanehouse ward, broadly based on the proposals from the Council and Councillor Northam. This ward includes the Charlestown, Littlesea and Lanehouse areas, the latter of which straddles the Chickerell and Weymouth parish boundary. We consider the part of Lanehouse situated in Weymouth parish is the most appropriate area to link in a ward with Chickerell parish in order to secure electoral equality, as it has

established links with both the Charlestown area and other parts of Chickerell parish. This arrangement also avoids splitting the Lanehouse area across two wards.

151 However, unlike the Council and Councillor Northam, we have included the Camp Road area in this ward rather than transferring it to a Wyke Regis ward. We consider that this better reflects community identities and interests and provides for effective and convenient local government, as it avoids placing an area wholly within Chickerell parish in a ward otherwise centred on Weymouth. This approach also better reflects Chickerell Town Council's preference for warding arrangements that respect the parish boundary where possible.

152 We also received a submission from a local resident who argued that the Buckland Rippers area has limited connections to Chickerell and would be more appropriately included in a Chesil Bank ward. However, we were not persuaded by this proposal. We note that Buckland Rippers forms part of Chickerell parish, and we consider that it is therefore appropriate for it to be included in a ward centred on the Chickerell area. We nonetheless welcome further views on this during the current consultation.

Littlemoor & Preston

153 We received several submissions regarding the area covered by the current Littlemoor & Preston ward. Councillor Northam and two local residents argued that Littlemoor and Preston are distinct communities and should be represented by separate single-councillor wards. They highlighted differences in the character and demographics of the two areas, describing Littlemoor as a more urban community centred on local services and facilities, and Preston as a separate community with its own identity and amenities. The submissions also referred to socio-economic and demographic differences between the areas and argued that a clear boundary exists between the two communities.

154 In support of this approach, Councillor Legg and Councillor Northam each proposed a warding pattern that would create separate single-councillor Littlemoor and Preston wards, broadly following the existing Weymouth Town Council ward boundary between the two areas.

155 Conversely, we received submissions supporting the retention of a combined Littlemoor and Preston ward. These respondents included Councillor Hayter and Councillor O'Leary. Both argued that the two areas share a range of facilities, community organisations and services, including churches, schools, community groups, libraries and shopping facilities. They also highlighted increasing connections between the communities under the existing arrangements which they considered to have worked well. It was also stated that a two-councillor ward would provide for electoral equality.

156 While we acknowledge the evidence that Littlemoor and Preston have distinct identities, we are not persuaded that these differences outweigh the level of electoral inequality that would result from creating separate wards under our proposed council of 84 members. We note that Councillor Legg's proposed warding pattern achieved good electoral equality under an 81-councillor scheme. However, when modelled against our proposed pattern of 84 councillors, a separate Preston ward would have a forecast electoral variance of 14% by 2032, which is higher than we would normally seek to achieve.

157 We also note the evidence of shared services, facilities and community organisations across Littlemoor and Preston. Furthermore, because two areas may have a different demographic profile it does not automatically mean they should be in separate wards. We have concluded that a two-councillor Littlemoor & Preston ward provides the best balance between reflecting community identities and securing good electoral equality. We are therefore recommending a two-councillor Littlemoor & Preston ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Lodmoor and Radipole & Southill

158 Councillor Legg largely proposed retaining the existing two-councillor Radipole ward, subject to the inclusion of Nottingham from the current Chickerell ward. In contrast, the Council proposed replacing the existing ward with separate single-councillor Lodmoor and Radipole & Southill wards.

159 After careful consideration, we have decided to broadly adopt the Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations, subject to some modifications to better reflect ground detail and ensure ward boundaries follow clearer and more identifiable features. We consider that the Lodmoor area has a sufficiently distinct identity to warrant a ward in its own right. In reaching this view, we have had regard to the presence of landmarks and community assets including Lodmoor Nature Reserve and the Lodmoor Country Park, as well as the fact that the area already forms a recognised community reflected in the existing town council warding arrangements.

60 We also consider that the Council's proposed Radipole & Southill ward provides a good reflection of community identities, keeping the closely connected communities of Radipole and Southill within a single ward. The inclusion of Southill in the ward name also appropriately recognises it as a distinct community. The proposed Radipole & Southill and Lodmoor wards are both forecast to achieve good electoral equality by 2032, so we are satisfied that they provide a good balance of our statutory criteria.

161 We also received evidence from Councillor Northam which highlights the role of the railway line and Radipole Lake as clear and identifiable features which help define communities in this area. We have had regard to this evidence when

formulating our draft recommendations, by ensuring the lake is within Radipole & Southill ward and that the railway line forms the boundary between the two wards.

Melcombe Regis

162 We have decided to adopt the Council's proposed single-councillor Melcombe Regis ward as part of our draft recommendations. While Councillor Legg proposed to retain the existing ward boundaries, the Council proposed expanding the ward to include the area bounded by Carlton Road North and Carlton Road South which is currently in Radipole ward. We have adopted this proposal as it improves the level of electoral equality for Melcombe Regis ward while maintaining clear and identifiable boundaries. We have also adopted the Council's proposal to transfer electors north of Cranford Avenue from the current Melcombe Regis ward to a Lodmoor ward. We are satisfied that these amendments enable both Melcombe Regis and Lodmoor wards to achieve good electoral equality while providing an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

Portland

163 We have decided to recommend the retention of a three-councillor Portland ward, as proposed by the Council. While this ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of -14% by 2032, we consider that this level of variance is acceptable given the Isle of Portland's distinct identity and the limited options available to improve electoral equality.

164 The only realistic option for improving electoral equality on Portland would be to link part of the island with an area of Weymouth. However, we were not persuaded to adopt such an arrangement. While we note Councillor Legg's proposal to link Fortuneswell in a ward with Wyke Regis, we do not consider that a Wyke Regis & Fortuneswell ward would reflect community identities and interests, given the distinct character of the two communities and the distance between them. We also received a submission from a local resident who argued that Portland's communities have distinct identities and priorities from those of Weymouth and that the existing Portland ward should therefore be retained.

165 It was suggested that Portland could be divided into smaller wards by Councillor Northam. However, we were not persuaded that doing so would provide a better balance of our statutory criteria than retaining a single three-councillor Portland ward. However, we would welcome further evidence on this during the current consultation.

South Harbourside, Sandsfoot and Wyke Regis

166 For the area covered by the existing Rodwell & Wyke ward, we have based our draft recommendations on proposals submitted by the Council. These divide the current three-councillor ward into three single-councillor wards: Rodwell & Wyke, South Harbourside and Wyke Regis. All three wards are forecast to have good

electoral equality by 2032, and we are satisfied that they reflect the distinct communities in the south of Weymouth. We therefore consider that they provide a good balance of our statutory criteria.

167 The proposal for three single-councillor wards in this area was also supported by a local resident, who argued that the existing ward comprises a number of distinct communities. We were also persuaded by their suggestion that the area covered by the Council's proposed Rodwell & Wyke ward should instead be named Sandsfoot. We consider that this name better reflects the character of the area, given that it contains landmarks and community facilities including Sandsfoot Castle, Sandsfoot Beach and Sandsfoot Gardens. We therefore recommend naming the ward Sandsfoot. We also note Councillor Northam's suggestion that the ward could instead be named New Wyke, and we welcome views on this alternative during this consultation.

168 We also welcome views on the proposed South Harbourside ward name as we consider it could alternatively be named Rodwell, or just Harbourside, as suggested by Councillor Legg.

169 Councillor Legg's proposals for this area also divided it between three separate wards. However, we were not persuaded to adopt these proposals. In particular, we were concerned that they split the Westham area between wards by including part of it within a Harbourside ward. Furthermore, as outlined previously, we were not persuaded that linking Wyke Regis with the Fortuneswell area on Portland would reflect community identities and interests, given the distinct character of each community and the distance between them.

Upwey & Broadwey

170 We have decided to base our recommended Upwey & Broadwey ward on the Council's and Councillor Northam's proposals. While Councillor Legg proposed retaining the existing ward, the Council and Councillor Northam proposed a number of modifications. These included transferring Nottingham from the existing Chickerell ward, and including the area around Radipole Primary School in Radipole & Southill ward.

171 We consider that these amendments provide a better balance of our statutory criteria. It places Nottingham, which forms part of Weymouth Town Council, in a Weymouth-focused ward, and places community facilities serving Radipole in a ward that reflects that community.

172 We were not persuaded to include Bincombe parish in this ward, as proposed by the Council and Councillor Northam. As outlined in the Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale section of this report, we consider it preferable to keep it in the

same ward as Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council, of which it forms part.

173 However, we were persuaded by Councillor Legg's proposal to retain the name Upwey & Broadway, rather than adopt the Council's proposed name of Weymouth North. We consider that the name Upwey & Broadway better reflects the principal communities contained in the ward, but would welcome views as to whether Nottingham should be included in the ward name, as proposed by Councillor Northam.

Westham

174 We have based our recommended Westham ward on the Council's and Councillor Northam's proposals, which includes the Cobham Drive and Cumberland Drive area from the existing Chickerell ward, in addition to Goldcroft Avenue and Goldcroft Road from the existing Radipole ward.

175 We agree that the Cobham Drive and Cumberland Drive area should form part of Westham ward. Although the area is bisected by the Chickerell and Weymouth parish boundary, access to these roads is via the Westham area of Weymouth. We also agree that Goldcroft Avenue and Goldcroft Road form part of the Westham area and should be transferred from the current Radipole ward.

176 The Council also proposed transferring the Curtis Fields development into its proposed Charlestown & Lanehouse ward. We have adopted this proposal as it helps ensure good electoral equality in both wards and reflects the reasonable links that this development shares with the adjacent Lanehouse community.

177 We were not persuaded to adopt Councillor Legg's proposal for a two-councillor Westham, Charlestown & Lanehouse ward. In particular, we were concerned that it divided the Westham community along Abbotsbury Road, which we do not consider would provide a good reflection of community identities and interests.

Conclusions

178 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Dorset, referencing the 2026 and 2032 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

	Draft recommendations	
	2026	2032
Number of councillors	84	84
Number of electoral wards	58	58
Average number of electors per councillor	3,528	3,836
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	8	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Dorset Council should be made up of 84 councillors serving 58 wards: 38 single-councillor wards, 14 two-councillor wards and six 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 Dorset Council
You can also view our draft recommendations for Dorset Council on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

179 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.

180 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, Dorset 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.

181 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 Chickerell, Dorchester, Symondsburry, Weymouth and Wimborne Minster.

182 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chickerell parish.

Draft recommendations

Chickerell Town Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Charlestown East	1
Charlestown West & Littlesea	2
Chickerell Village	7

183 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Dorchester parish.

Draft recommendations

Dorchester Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Dorchester East	5
Dorchester North	4
Dorchester Poundbury	4
Dorchester South	3
Dorchester West	4

184 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Symondsbury parish.

Draft recommendations

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

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Symondsbury	4
Foundry Lea	3

185 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Weymouth parish.

Draft recommendations

Weymouth Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, as at present, representing 13 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Lanehouse	1
Littlemoor	2
Lodmoor	2
Melcombe Regis	3
Preston	2
Radipole & Southill	2
Rodwell	2
Sandsfoot	2
Upwey & Broadwey	2
Westham East	1
Westham West	2
Wyke North	2
Wyke South	1

186 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wimborne Minster parish.

Draft recommendations

Wimborne Minster Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Wimborne Minster Town	14
Wimborne Minster East	2

Have your say

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

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

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

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

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

Review Officer (Dorset)
LGBCE
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

192 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Dorset which delivers:

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

193 A good pattern of wards should:

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

194 Electoral equality:

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

195 Community identity:

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

196 Effective local government:

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

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

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

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

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

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Dorset Council in 2029.

Equalities

201 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

Draft recommendations for Dorset Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2032)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Beacon	1	3,706	3,706	5%	4,073	4,073	6%
2	Beaminster	1	3,578	3,578	1%	3,963	3,963	3%
3	Blackmore Vale	1	3,825	3,825	8%	4,202	4,202	10%
4	Blandford	3	10,967	3,656	4%	12,231	4,077	6%
5	Bridport	3	10,987	3,662	4%	12,616	4,205	10%
6	Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale	1	3,697	3,697	5%	4,171	4,171	9%
7	Broadwindsor	1	3,249	3,249	-8%	3,481	3,481	-9%
8	Chalk Valleys	1	3,817	3,817	8%	4,053	4,053	6%
9	Charlestown & Lanehouse	1	2,939	2,939	-17%	3,507	3,507	-9%
10	Charminster St Mary's	1	3,666	3,666	4%	3,869	3,869	1%
11	Chesil	1	3,269	3,269	-7%	3,503	3,503	-9%
12	Chickerell	1	3,578	3,578	1%	4,064	4,064	6%
13	Colehill & Wimborne Minster East	2	6,621	3,311	-6%	7,221	3,611	-6%
14	Corfe Mullen	2	7,982	3,991	13%	8,453	4,227	10%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2032)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
15	Cranborne & Alderholt	1	3,238	3,238	-8%	3,559	3,559	-7%
16	Cranborne Chase	1	3,725	3,725	6%	3,964	3,964	3%
17	Crossways & Lower Frome	1	3,341	3,341	-5%	4,070	4,070	6%
18	Dorchester East	2	6,518	3,259	-8%	7,046	3,523	-8%
19	Dorchester Poundbury	1	3,619	3,619	3%	4,026	4,026	5%
20	Dorchester West	2	6,730	3,365	-5%	7,014	3,507	-9%
21	Ferndown North	2	7,300	3,650	3%	7,770	3,885	1%
22	Ferndown South	2	6,664	3,332	-6%	7,096	3,548	-8%
23	Gillingham	3	10,573	3,524	0%	12,327	4,109	7%
24	Littlemoor & Preston	2	7,498	3,749	6%	8,204	4,102	7%
25	Lodmoor	1	3,454	3,454	-2%	3,460	3,460	-10%
26	Lyme & Charmouth	1	3,980	3,980	13%	4,256	4,256	11%
27	Lytchett Matravers & Upton	3	9,603	3,201	-9%	10,601	3,534	-8%
28	Marnhull	1	3,250	3,250	-8%	3,765	3,765	-2%
29	Marshwood Vale	1	3,351	3,351	-5%	3,587	3,587	-6%
30	Melcombe Regis	1	3,653	3,653	4%	3,910	3,910	2%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2032)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
31	Milborne & The Winterbornes	1	3,562	3,562	1%	3,897	3,897	2%
32	Piddle & Bere Valley	1	3,570	3,570	1%	3,843	3,843	0%
33	Pimperne & The Tarrantes	1	3,636	3,636	3%	4,124	4,124	8%
34	Portland	3	9,292	3,097	-12%	9,898	3,299	-14%
35	Purbeck	1	3,690	3,690	5%	3,957	3,957	3%
36	Radipole & Southill	1	3,937	3,937	12%	3,963	3,963	3%
37	Sandsfoot	1	3,528	3,528	0%	3,661	3,661	-5%
38	Shaftesbury	2	6,954	3,477	-1%	7,454	3,727	-3%
39	Sherborne East	1	3,675	3,675	4%	3,960	3,960	3%
40	Sherborne Rural	1	3,290	3,290	-7%	3,489	3,489	-9%
41	Sherborne West	1	3,727	3,727	6%	3,932	3,932	3%
42	South Harbourside	1	3,543	3,543	0%	4,059	4,059	6%
43	St Leonards & St Ives	2	6,490	3,245	-8%	6,889	3,445	-10%
44	Stalbridge	1	3,086	3,086	-13%	3,661	3,661	-5%
45	Stour & Holt	1	3,695	3,695	5%	3,922	3,922	2%
46	Sturminster Newton	1	3,543	3,543	0%	4,181	4,181	9%

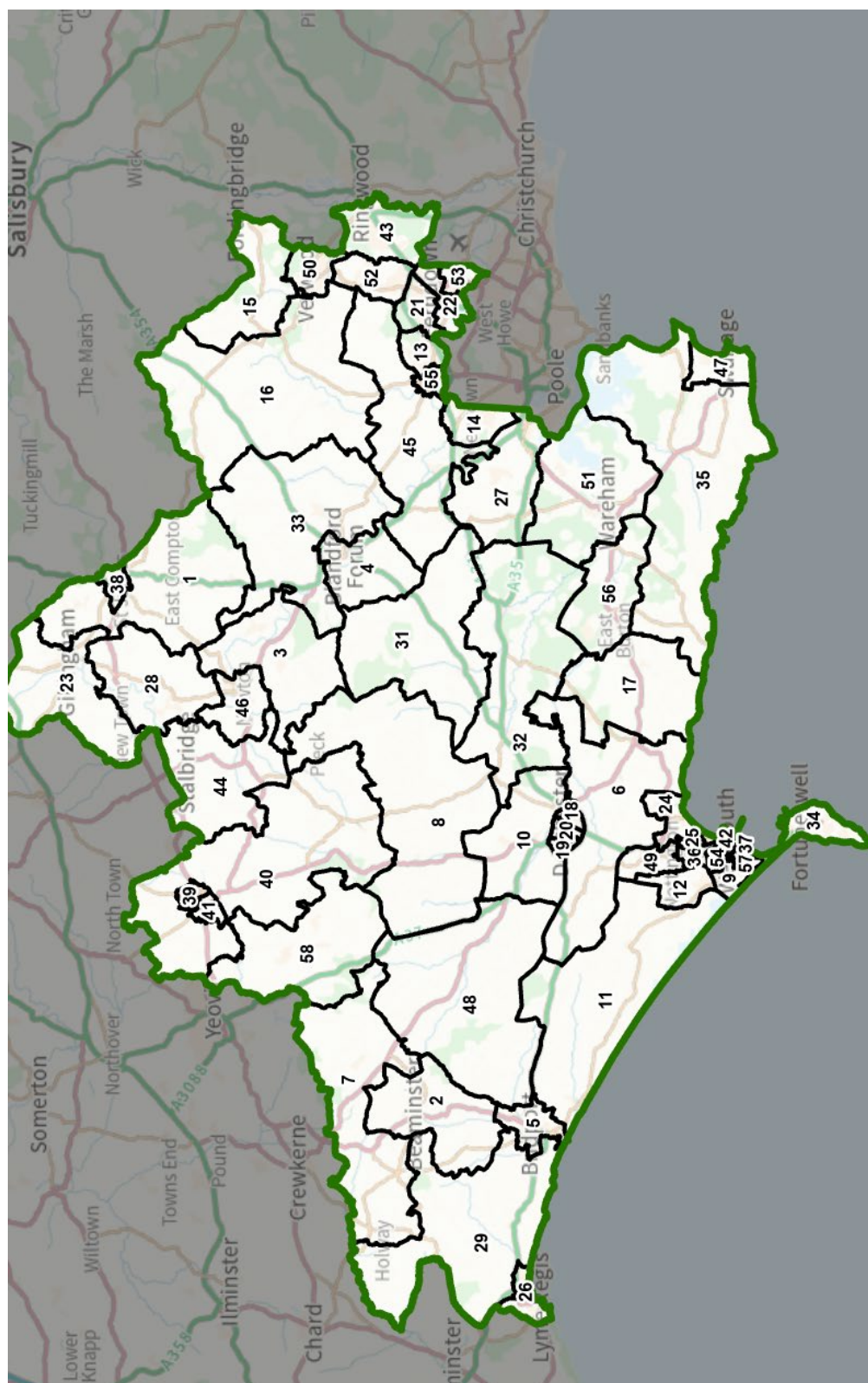
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2032)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
47	Swanage	2	7,838	3,919	11%	8,296	4,148	8%
48	Upper Frome & Asker	1	3,433	3,433	-3%	3,654	3,654	-5%
49	Upwey & Broadwey	1	3,461	3,461	-2%	3,896	3,896	2%
50	Verwood	3	10,816	3,605	2%	11,479	3,826	0%
51	Wareham	2	7,753	3,877	10%	8,250	4,125	8%
52	West Moors & Three Legged Cross	2	7,202	3,601	2%	7,687	3,844	0%
53	West Parley	1	3,068	3,068	-13%	3,690	3,690	-4%
54	Westham	2	6,862	3,431	-3%	7,128	3,564	-7%
55	Wimborne Minster	2	7,094	3,547	1%	7,286	3,643	-5%
56	Wool & Bovington	1	3,876	3,876	10%	4,171	4,171	9%
57	Wyke Regis	1	3,476	3,476	-1%	3,653	3,653	-5%
58	Yetminster & Yeo Valley	1	3,881	3,881	10%	4,119	4,119	7%
Totals		84	296,356	–	–	322,261	–	–
Averages		–	–	3,528	–	–	3,836	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Dorset 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 Dorset. 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	Beacon
2	Beaminster
3	Blackmore Vale
4	Blandford
5	Bridport
6	Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale
7	Broadwindsor
8	Chalk Valleys
9	Charlestown & Lanehouse
10	Charminster St Mary's
11	Chesil
12	Chickerell
13	Colehill & Wimborne Minster East
14	Corfe Mullen
15	Cranborne & Alderholt
16	Cranborne Chase
17	Crossways & Lower Frome
18	Dorchester East
19	Dorchester Poundbury
20	Dorchester West
21	Ferndown North
22	Ferndown South
23	Gillingham
24	Littlemoor & Preston
25	Lodmoor
26	Lyme & Charmouth
27	Lytchett Matravers & Upton
28	Marnhull
29	Marshwood Vale
30	Melcombe Regis
31	Milborne & The Winterbornes
32	Piddle & Bere Valley
33	Pimperne & The Tarrants
34	Portland
35	Purbeck
36	Radipole & Southill
37	Sandsfoot
38	Shaftesbury
39	Sherborne East
40	Sherborne Rural
41	Sherborne West

42	South Harbourside
43	St Leonards & St Ives
44	Stalbridge
45	Stour & Holt
46	Sturminster Newton
47	Swanage
48	Upper Frome & Asker
49	Upwey & Broadwey
50	Verwood
51	Wareham
52	West Moors & Three Legged Cross
53	West Parley
54	Westham
55	Wimborne Minster
56	Wool & Bovington
57	Wyke Regis
58	Yetminster & Yeo Valley

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/dorset

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

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

Local Authority

- Dorset Council

Councillors

- Councillor C. King (Maiden Newton & Frome Vauchurch Parish Council)
- Councillor B. Hayter (Weymouth Town Council)
- Councillor C. Monks (Dorset Council)
- Councillor L. O’Leary (Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council)
- Councillor R. Crabb (Dorset Council)
- Councillor S. Florek (Dorset Council)
- Councillor R. Macnair (Milborne St Andrew Parish Council)
- Councillor R. Legg (Dorset Council, Sherborne Town Council and Bradford Abbas Parish Council)
- Councillor G. Chopping (Holt Parish Council)
- Councillor K. D. Johnson (Colehill Town Council)
- Councillor J. Lejeune (Swanage Town Council)
- Councillor D. Northam (Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council)

Local organisations

- Furzehill Residents’ Association

Parish and Town Councils

- Alderholt Parish Council
- Chesil Bank Parish Council
- Chickerell Town Council
- Colehill Town Council
- Ferndown Town Council
- Holt Parish Council
- Loders Parish Council
- Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council
- Owermoigne Parish Council
- Shaftesbury Town Council

- South Tarrant Valley Grouped Parish Council
- Stinsford Parish Council
- Swanage Town Council
- Toller Porcorum Parish Council
- Wareham Town Council
- Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council

Local residents

- 24 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Changes 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

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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