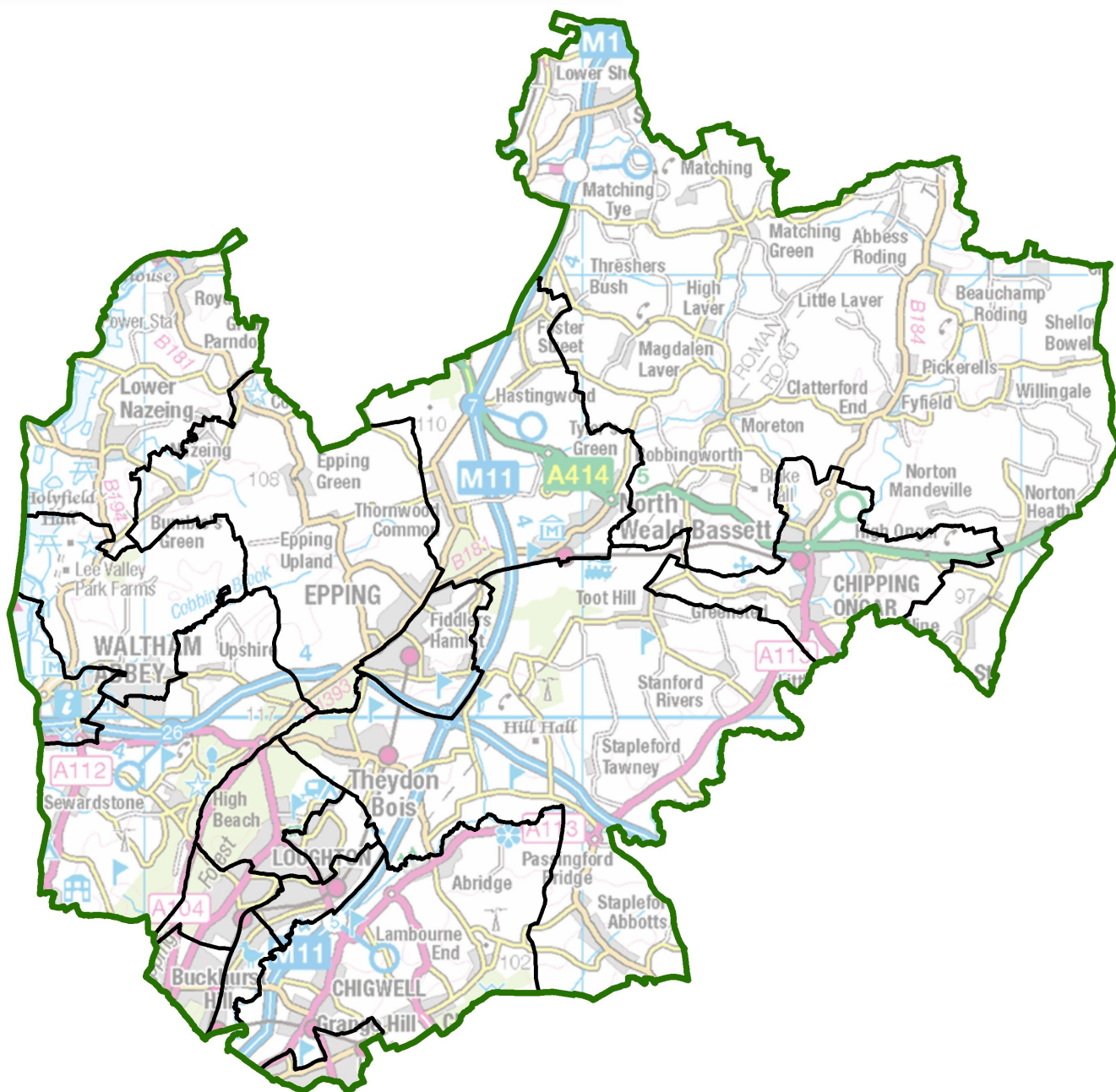


The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for Epping Forest District Council Draft Recommendations

October 2022

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Epping Forest?

7 We are conducting a review of Epping Forest District Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2000, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.²

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Epping Forest are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

Our proposals for Epping Forest

9 Epping Forest should be represented by 54 councillors, four fewer than there are now.

10 Epping Forest should have 18 wards, 14 fewer than there are now.

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

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 district 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.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 4 October to 12 December 2022. 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 12 December 2022 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 31 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 Epping Forest. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
25 April 2022	Number of councillors decided
10 May 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
18 July 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
4 October 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
12 December 2022	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
28 February 2023	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ 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.

	2022	2028
Electorate of Epping Forest	100,222	114,524
Number of councillors	54	54
Average number of electors per councillor	1,856	2,121

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 'good electoral equality'. Seventeen of our proposed wards for Epping Forest will have good electoral equality by 2028.

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 2028, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2023. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 14% by 2028.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

26 Epping Forest District Council currently has 58 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded decreasing by four will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 54 councillors.

28 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. Both submissions argued that the number of councillors in Epping Forest should be reduced further. Neither of these comments provided compelling evidence that outlined how further reductions would be achieved in terms of the decision-making responsibilities of the Council or made reference to our key criteria. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 54-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 44 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two district-wide proposals from the Epping Forest District Council Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') and a local resident. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

30 The two district-wide schemes provided a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Epping Forest. We carefully considered the proposals received and noted that neither of these schemes provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ that it have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that a uniform pattern would undermine our statutory criteria.

31 Having carefully considered the submissions provided, we are of the view that we have not received compelling evidence to move away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

32 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

⁵ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

Draft recommendations

33 Our draft recommendations are for 18 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.

34 The tables and maps on pages 8–25 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Epping Forest. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

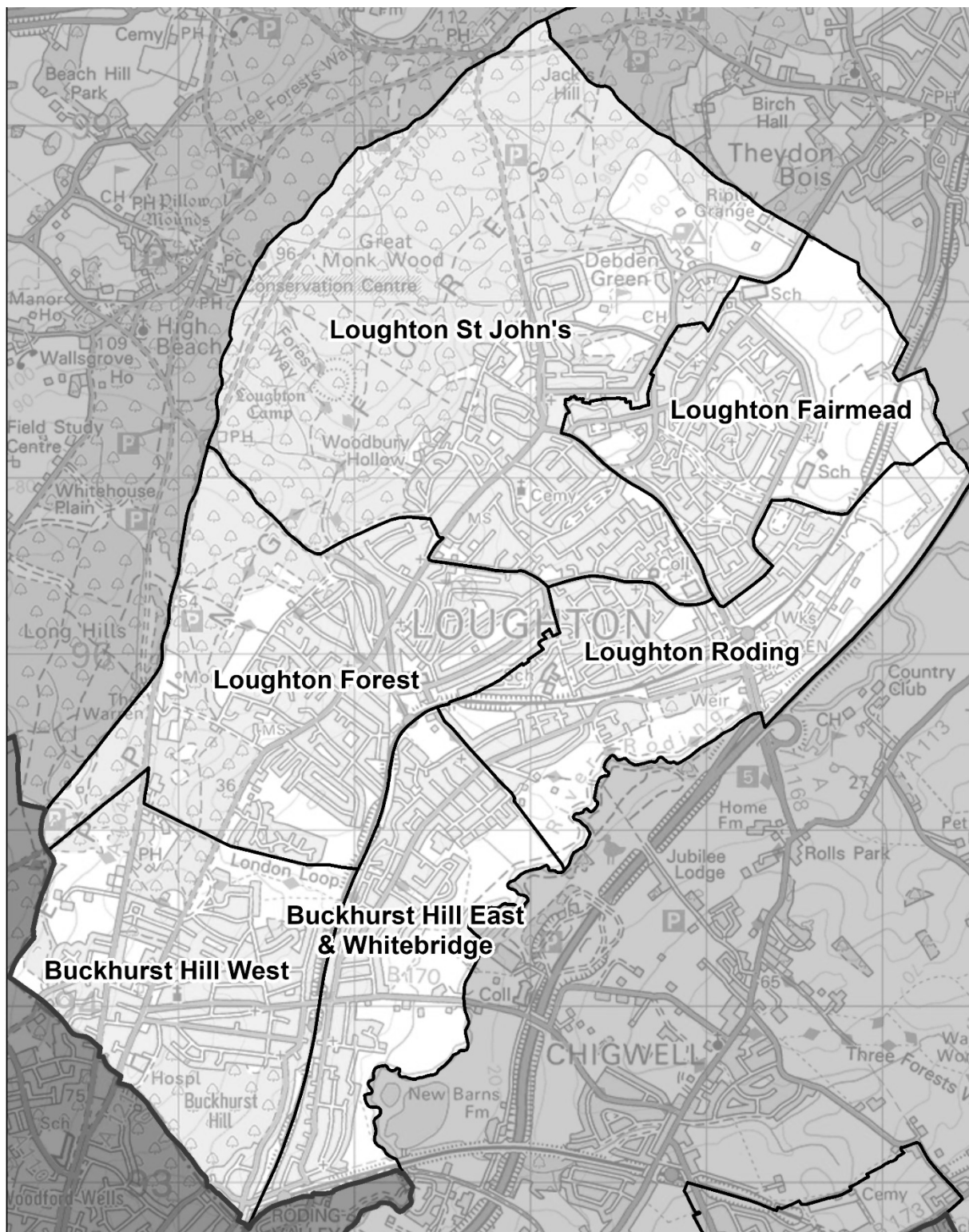
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

35 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 37 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Buckhurst Hill and Loughton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge	3	5%
Buckhurst Hill West	3	-7%
Loughton Fairmead	3	1%

Loughton Forest	3	-8%
Loughton Roding	3	-4%
Loughton St John's	3	-6%

Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge and Buckhurst Hill West

37 We received six submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats, Loughton Town Council, Councillor Chambers and two residents.

38 The Liberal Democrats and a resident proposed retaining the current three-councillor ward of Buckhurst Hill West. In our view, this ward would have strong boundaries and would deliver a good level of electoral equality. We are therefore adopting this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

39 The Liberal Democrats proposed to extend the current Buckhurst Hill East ward across the parish boundary into Loughton parish to take in the area of Whitebridge. They did not define a north-eastern boundary for this ward, but we consider that Roding Road would be a clear boundary in this area. The Liberal Democrats argued that Buckhurst Hill East and Whitebridge residents share local facilities, such as shops on Loughton Way and Roding Valley recreation ground. They further stated that the parish boundary between Buckhurst Hill parish and Loughton parish is unclear, with continuous housing across the boundary, and it would therefore be appropriate to cross the parish boundary in this area.

40 The Council did not propose a scheme but stated that Buckhurst Hill and Loughton have stronger community links with each other than with Chigwell, with Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve providing a strong boundary in this area.

41 Loughton Town Council, Councillor Chambers and two residents argued against any ward crossing the parish boundary between Buckhurst Hill East ward and Loughton Roding ward. A resident proposed retaining these two-councillor wards. Loughton Town Council argued that the parish boundary between Buckhurst Hill and Loughton parishes should not be crossed to achieve a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards, and that each parish has a different identity. They further stated that Buckhurst Hill and Loughton parishes are physically separated by the 'hundred foot' green gap, providing a recognisable boundary for residents.

42 Following consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' scheme for Buckhurst Hill West and Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge. We consider that the parish boundary between Buckhurst Hill parish and Loughton parish is unclear and that residents in this area will regularly cross the boundary to access facilities and amenities. We were also not convinced that the evidence provided justifies moving away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards in this area.

43 Our proposed Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge and Buckhurst Hill West wards will be represented by three councillors each and are forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with electoral variances 5% and -7%, respectively.

Loughton

44 We received three submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats and a local resident.

45 The resident proposed a mixed pattern of wards for Loughton, suggesting that the two-councillor Loughton Roding and Loughton Alderton wards be retained. They further proposed to split the current Loughton St Mary's ward along Traps Hill, placing the western area in a three-councillor Loughton Forest ward and the eastern area in a three-councillor Loughton St John's ward. Finally, the resident proposed to join the current wards of Loughton Broadway and Loughton Fairmead to create a three-councillor Debden ward.

46 As discussed in the Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge section above, we have been persuaded to cross the parish boundary between Buckhurst Hill and Loughton parish to create the three-councillor ward of Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge, which would take in part of the current Loughton Roding ward. We are therefore not adopting the resident's suggestion to retain Loughton Roding and Loughton Alderton wards.

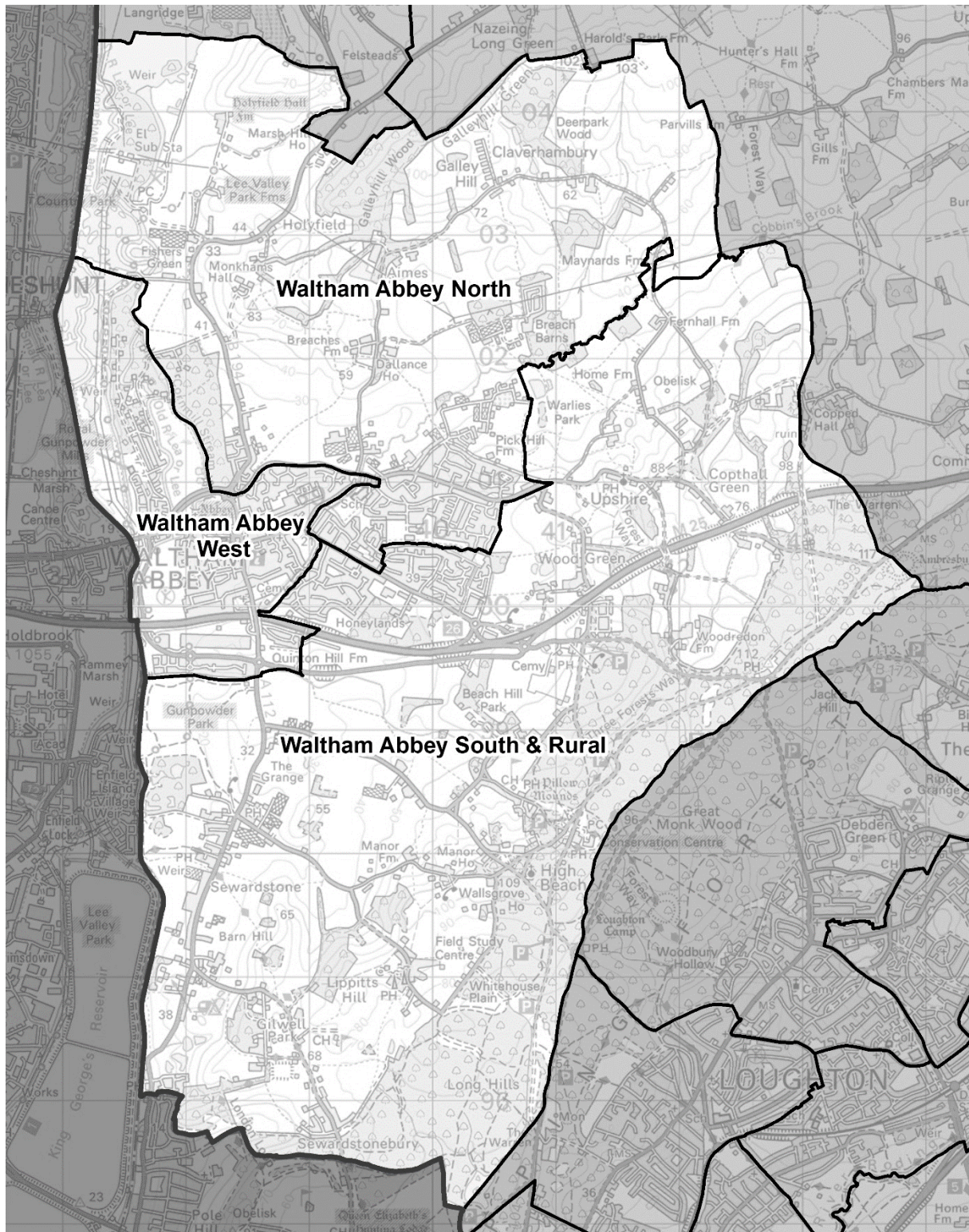
47 The Liberal Democrats proposed four three-councillor wards for Loughton. They also suggested an arrangement which split the current Loughton St Mary's ward between Loughton Forest and Loughton St John's wards. They proposed to retain the ward name of Loughton Forest but proposed the name of Loughton North for the expanded Loughton St John's ward. In the east, the Liberal Democrats proposed a Loughton Roding ward that would stretch from Roding Road in the south-west to the edge of the parish in the north-east. The north-western boundary of this ward would be Borders Lane and The Broadway. Finally, they proposed grouping together the current Loughton Fairmead ward with the area west of The Broadway, currently in Loughton Broadway ward. They proposed to name this ward Loughton West. The Liberal Democrats stated that Loughton is a self-contained community, with residents accessing amenities and facilities across the town.

48 Following consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' scheme of wards for Loughton. We note that their proposed Loughton Forest and Loughton North wards are the same as those proposed by a local resident. We consider that the four proposed wards use clearly identifiable boundaries and reflect local communities.

49 We are, however, not adopting the names of Loughton North and Loughton West, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. We consider that having some wards named after their geographical location in the ward but not others would be confusing for residents. We are therefore retaining the current ward name for Loughton St John's, which was proposed by the local resident. We note the Council stated that the name Loughton St John's should be changed to be more representative of the local community. However, they did not propose any alternatives. We are also retaining the current ward name for Loughton Fairmead at this stage. While we note that a resident proposed naming this ward Debden, our proposed Loughton Fairmead ward would not encompass the same area as the resident's proposed ward. We were therefore not convinced that this name would best reflect the community present within this ward. We would be interested to hear from residents which ward names would better reflect their community.

50 Our proposed Loughton Fairmead, Loughton Forest, Loughton Roding and Loughton St John's wards will be represented by three councillors each and are forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with electoral variances of 1%, -8%, -4% and -6%, respectively.

Waltham Abbey



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Waltham Abbey North	3	8%
Waltham Abbey South & Rural	3	-6%
Waltham Abbey West	3	-7%

Waltham Abbey North, Waltham Abbey South & Rural and Waltham Abbey West

51 We received eight submissions regarding this area from the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Kane, Councillor Lucas, Councillor Spinks, Waltham Abbey Town Council, Ninefields Residents' Association and two residents.

52 Councillor Lucas, Councillor Spinks, Waltham Abbey Town Council and one resident argued that the current single-councillor ward of Waltham Abbey High Beach should be retained. They argued that this ward is separate from the urban areas of Waltham Abbey and Loughton, and as such should be retained as a rural ward. Councillor Kane, Councillor Lucas and Waltham Abbey Town Council also argued that High Beach should not be linked with Loughton. However, we have not been convinced to adopt a single-councillor Waltham Abbey High Beach ward as part of our draft recommendations. We do not consider that the evidence provided justifies moving away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards and note that the parish of Waltham Abbey can be split into three three-councillor district wards with good levels of electoral equality.

53 The Liberal Democrats proposed to split Waltham Abbey between three three-councillor wards. They stated that Waltham Abbey shares a common identity and that there is a strong community across Waltham Abbey parish. They proposed to combine the current wards of Waltham Abbey High Beach and Waltham Abbey Honey Lane, excluding the area to the north-west of Shernbroke Road and north-east of Honey Lane. This ward would be named Waltham Abbey South & Rural. The area north-west of Shernbroke Road and north of Parklands would be added into a ward with the current Waltham Abbey Paternoster ward, and this ward would be named Waltham Abbey East. Finally, the area south of Parklands would be included in a ward with the current Waltham Abbey South West ward, with this ward being named Waltham Abbey West. All of these wards would provide a good level of electoral equality. They argued that this scheme reflects the differences between the more urban areas in the centre of the parish and the scattered settlements around the edges of the parish, such as Sewardstone, High Beach, Upshire and Woodbine Close.

54 A resident also proposed to split Waltham Abbey into three three-councillor wards. They argued that the Waltham Abbey district wards should be contained solely within Waltham Abbey parish. The resident proposed to place the area of the current Waltham Abbey High Beach ward south of Woodbine Close into a ward with the current Waltham Abbey South West ward, along with the Crooked Mile area to the north and the properties at the western end of Parklands. This proposed ward would be named Abbey. The northern area of Waltham Abbey High Beach ward would then be linked with the current Waltham Abbey Honey Lane ward, along with the properties north-west of Honey Lane up to Waltham Holy Cross Primary Academy. This would create an east-west orientated ward called Honey Lane & Monkswood, which the resident argued would be a good fit. Finally, the current ward

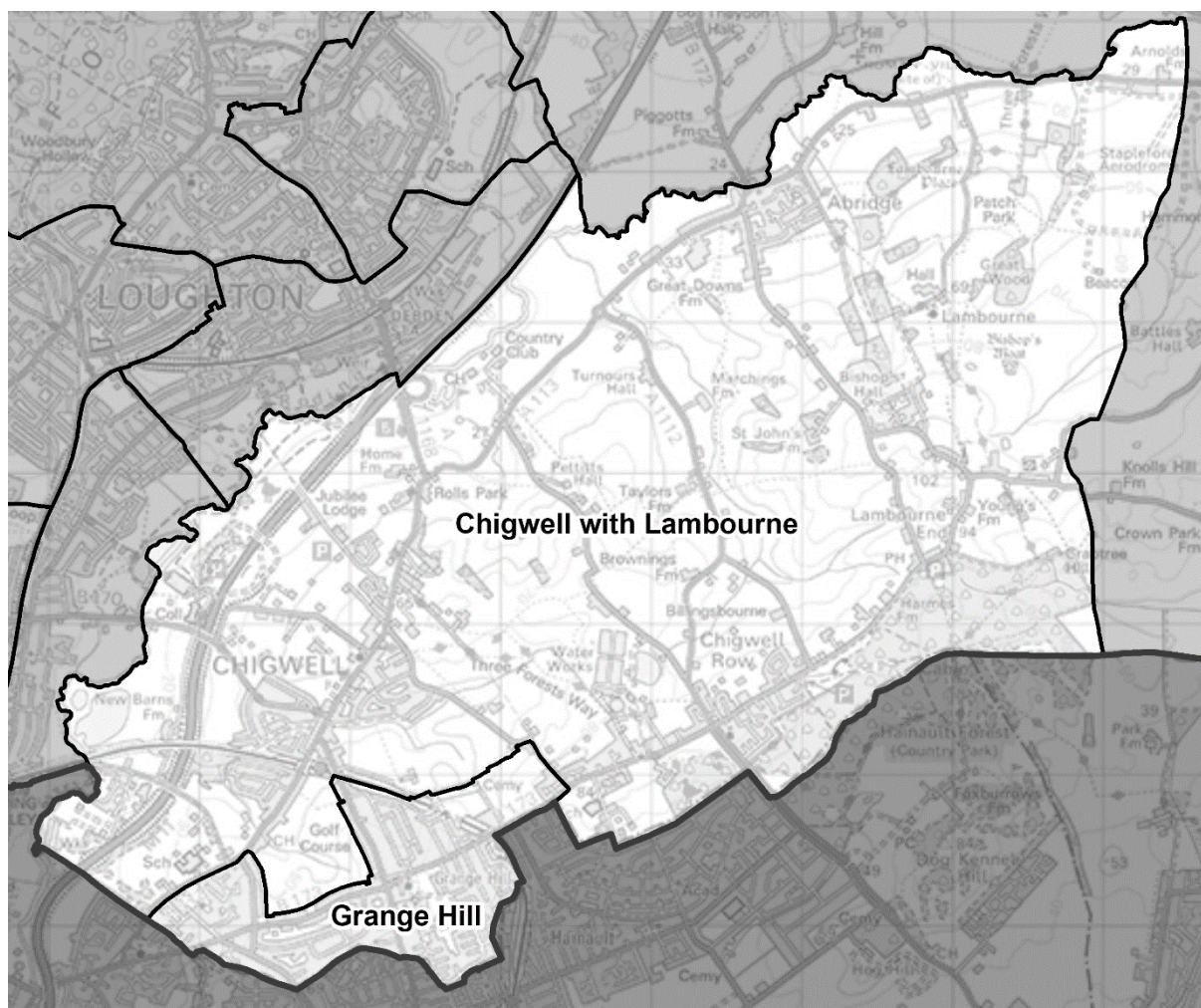
of Waltham Abbey Paternoster and the majority of the current Waltham Abbey North East ward would be placed together in Paternoster ward. While Abbey and Honey Lane & Monkswood wards would both have good levels of electoral equality, the proposed Paternoster ward would have an electoral variance of -15%.

55 Following consideration of the evidence, we are proposing to adopt the Liberal Democrats' scheme of wards for Waltham Abbey. We consider that the proposed boundaries are clear and that all three wards offer a good level of electoral equality. We would, however, like to hear from local residents about whether an alternative orientation of wards in Waltham Abbey, such as the one proposed by the resident above, would better reflect local communities.

56 While we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposed ward names for Waltham Abbey West and Waltham Abbey South & Rural wards, we are adopting the name Waltham Abbey North, rather than their proposed Waltham Abbey East, as we consider it better reflects the geographic location of this ward.

57 Our proposed Waltham Abbey North, Waltham Abbey South & Rural and Waltham Abbey West wards will be represented by three councillors each and are forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with electoral variances of 8%, -6% and -7%, respectively.

Chigwell and Grange Hill



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Chigwell with Lambourne	3	-1%
Grange Hill	3	10%

Chigwell with Lambourne and Grange Hill

58 We received three submissions regarding this area from the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Lion and one resident.

59 The Liberal Democrats proposed to link together Grange Hill with South Chigwell, with the rest of Chigwell Village being placed in a ward together with Chigwell Row and Lambourne parish. They stated that Chigwell and Lambourne share similar characteristics, with concentrated village centres surrounded by dispersed rural developments. As part of their proposal, they did not suggest where the boundary between these two wards should be. However, using the railway line as the boundary would result in an electoral variance of 18% for Grange Hill ward.

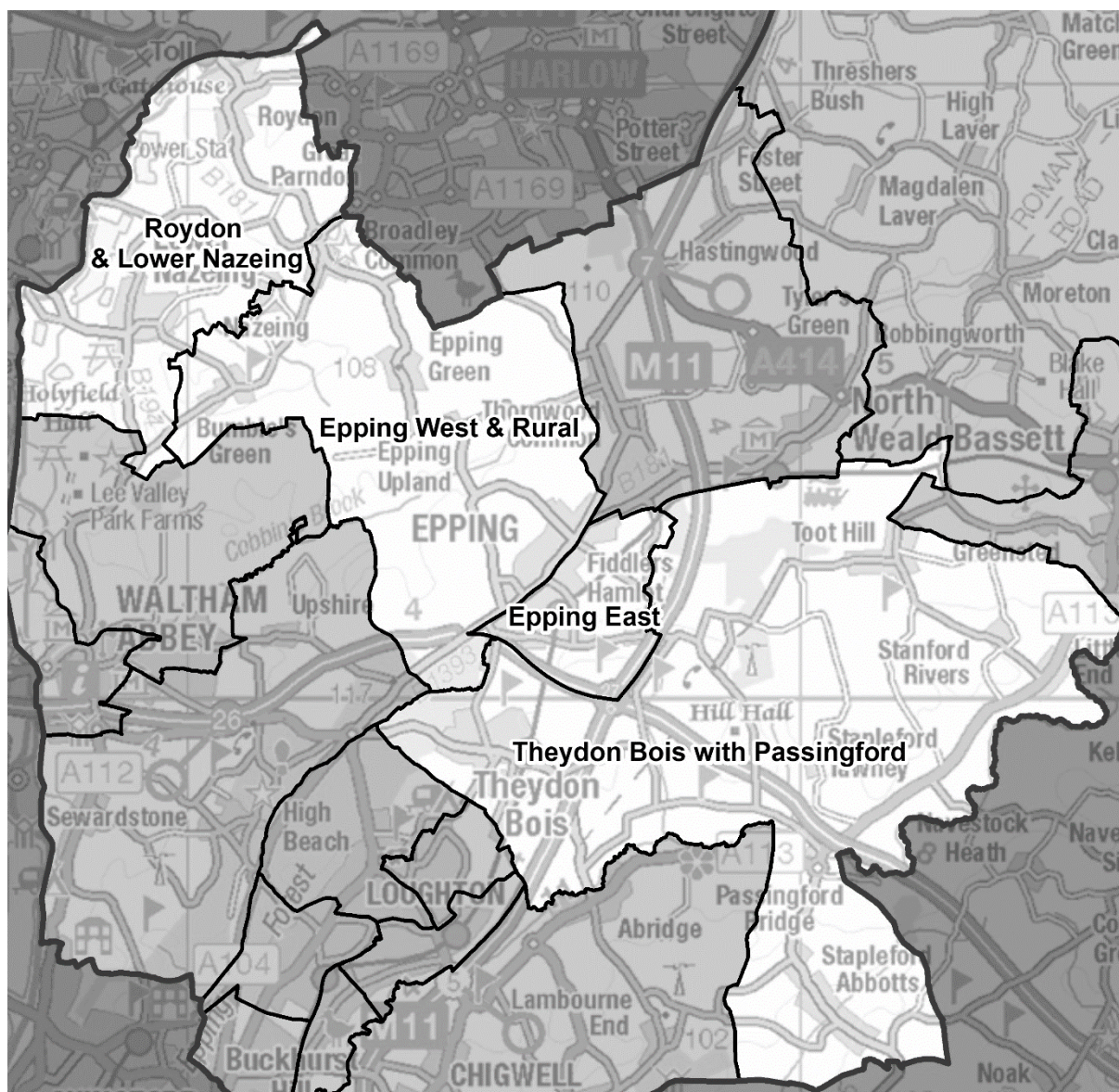
60 A resident proposed to retain the current three-councillor Grange Hill ward, and to combine the current wards of Chigwell Village and Chigwell Row into a three-councillor Chigwell ward. However, Councillor Lion argued that Chigwell Row is best linked to rural Abridge, in Lambourne parish. They stated that Grange Hill and Chigwell Village are more urban in nature, with both having Underground stations, whereas Chigwell Row is more rural facing.

61 Following consideration of the evidence, we are proposing two three-councillor wards similar to those proposed by the Liberal Democrats. The current Grange Hill ward would extend north-west to High Road, to take in residents currently in Chigwell Village ward. We consider that this better reflects the continuous housing stretching up to High Road, and this arrangement further allows for Lambourne parish to be placed in a ward with Chigwell Row. This ward would be named Grange Hill.

62 The rest of the current Chigwell Village ward will then be linked with the current Chigwell Row ward and Lambourne parish. We consider that our proposal reflects the community links between Chigwell Row and Lambourne parish, as argued by Councillor Lion, while also providing for a good level of electoral equality. This ward would be named Chigwell with Lambourne.

63 Our proposed Chigwell with Lambourne and Grange Hill wards will be represented by three councillors each and are forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with electoral variances -1% and 10%, respectively.

Epping, Theydon Bois and north-western parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Epping East	3	-4%
Epping West & Rural	3	1%
Roydon & Lower Nazeing	3	4%
Theydon Bois with Passingford	3	-10%

Epping East and Epping West & Rural

64 We received three submissions regarding this area from the Liberal Democrats and two residents.

65 The Liberal Democrats and one resident proposed to include the southern area of Epping in a ward with Theydon Bois, with the rest of Epping forming a three-

councillor Epping North ward. As discussed in the Theydon Bois with Passingford section, we have not been convinced to adopt this suggestion. Neither of these schemes would provide wards with good levels of electoral equality and would rely on moving away from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Passingford.

66 One resident argued that the current ward of Epping Lindsey & Thornwood Common should be split to allow for Thornwood to be included in a ward with the rest of North Weald Bassett parish. As discussed in paragraph 95, we have been convinced to adopt this suggestion as it allows for the entirety of North Weald Bassett parish to be represented in a single ward.

67 The resident further proposed joining together the existing Epping Hemnall ward with the part of Epping parish that forms part of the existing Epping Lindsay & Thornwood Common ward. This arrangement would create a ward coterminous with Epping parish. They stated that this would best reflect the town. However, this would result in poor electoral equality, with an electoral variance of 65%. We have therefore not been convinced to adopt this suggestion.

68 In order to provide for good levels of electoral equality for Epping, we are proposing to create a three-councillor Epping East ward, consisting of the area of Epping parish east of the High Street. We consider this to be a recognisable boundary within Epping, and this ward will centre on Epping Underground station.

69 We are further proposing a three-councillor Epping West & Rural ward. This ward would group together the part of Epping parish west of the High Street, the parish of Epping Upland, the eastern area of Nazeing parish and Broadley Common. While we acknowledge that this ward groups together both urban and rural areas, we consider that this is a natural extension of Epping ward, with communities linked to Epping along the B181. We further note that this proposed ward allows for a good level of electoral equality for Epping and the surrounding area, while also fulfilling the presumption for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

70 Our proposed Epping East and Epping West & Rural wards will be represented by three councillors each and are forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with electoral variances -4% and 1%, respectively.

Roydon & Lower Nazeing

71 We received six submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats, Nazeing Parish Council, The Roydon Society and two residents.

72 The Liberal Democrats and a resident both proposed to retain the current single-councillor Roydon ward. They further proposed to group together the rural parishes of Nazeing and Epping Upland with Broadley Common to create a three-councillor Nazeing & Epping Upland ward. The Liberal Democrats argued that these

areas share rural characteristics, with common issues such as new developments and a shared road network.

73 The Roydon Society argued that Roydon is an established community, with strong community links across Broadley Common, Dobbs Weir and Roydon Village. They stated that residents in these areas access facilities across Roydon parish. They further stated that Nazeing and Epping Upland residents also support activities in Roydon parishes, and that these three parishes meet to discuss shared issues of importance. They supported Roydon being included in a three-councillor ward.

74 The Council also described how Nazeing and Roydon parishes are linked by a conservation area, and further stated that these parishes are similar in nature and have some community links.

75 Nazeing Parish Council did not submit a warding suggestion but stated that Nazeing parish should continue to be represented by three district councillors.

76 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we have not been convinced by the proposal put forward by the Liberal Democrats and a resident for a single-councillor Roydon ward. We note the evidence from The Roydon Society, which describes the close community links between Roydon, Nazeing and Epping Upland, and therefore consider that it would be a better reflection of community identity to join the current wards of Roydon and Lower Nazeing to create a three-councillor Roydon & Lower Nazeing ward.

77 Grouping together these two areas would result in a ward with an electoral variance of -13%. We investigated the possibility of including the entirety of Roydon parish within this ward, but this would provide an electoral variance of 16%. We are therefore including the area north of Tylers Cross in Roydon & Lower Nazeing ward. This addition would provide good electoral equality, with a variance of 4%, and further reflects community links within this area by allowing more of Roydon parish to be represented within the same ward.

78 Our proposed Roydon & Lower Nazeing ward will be represented by three councillors and is forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with an electoral variance of 4%.

Theydon Bois with Passingford

79 We received five submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats, Councillor Burn, Theydon Bois Parish Council and a resident.

80 The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the current single-councillor ward of Passingford. They stated that this area shares a common interest and identity of

relatively sparsely populated villages connected by the A113. The Council also supported retaining Passingford as a single-councillor ward.

81 A resident proposed a two-councillor ward joining together the current wards of Passingford & Lambourne. However, as discussed in paragraph 62, we have been persuaded to include Lambourne parish in a ward with Chigwell to reflect the community links between Chigwell Row and Lambourne. We are therefore not adopting this suggestion.

82 Both the Liberal Democrats and resident proposed linking Theydon Bois with the southern area of Epping. They stated that there are community links between these two areas, with residents sharing facilities, and that they are joined by road and the Central line. However, we note that the combined number of forecast electors within Epping and Theydon Bois parishes would necessitate seven councillors across the area in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality. Therefore, proposing two three-councillor wards for this area results in poor levels of electoral equality.

83 The resident proposed splitting Epping South & Theydon Bois ward and Epping North ward along High Road, Station Road, the railway line and Stonards Hill. This would result in electoral variances of 9% for Epping North and 12% for Epping South & Theydon Bois. The Liberal Democrats did not define boundaries for their split of this area, but approximating their proposal using the railway line, Station Road and High Street would result in an electoral variance of 25% for their proposed Epping ward.

84 Councillor Burn proposed retaining the current two-councillor ward of Theydon Bois, stating that this arrangement best reflects the town.

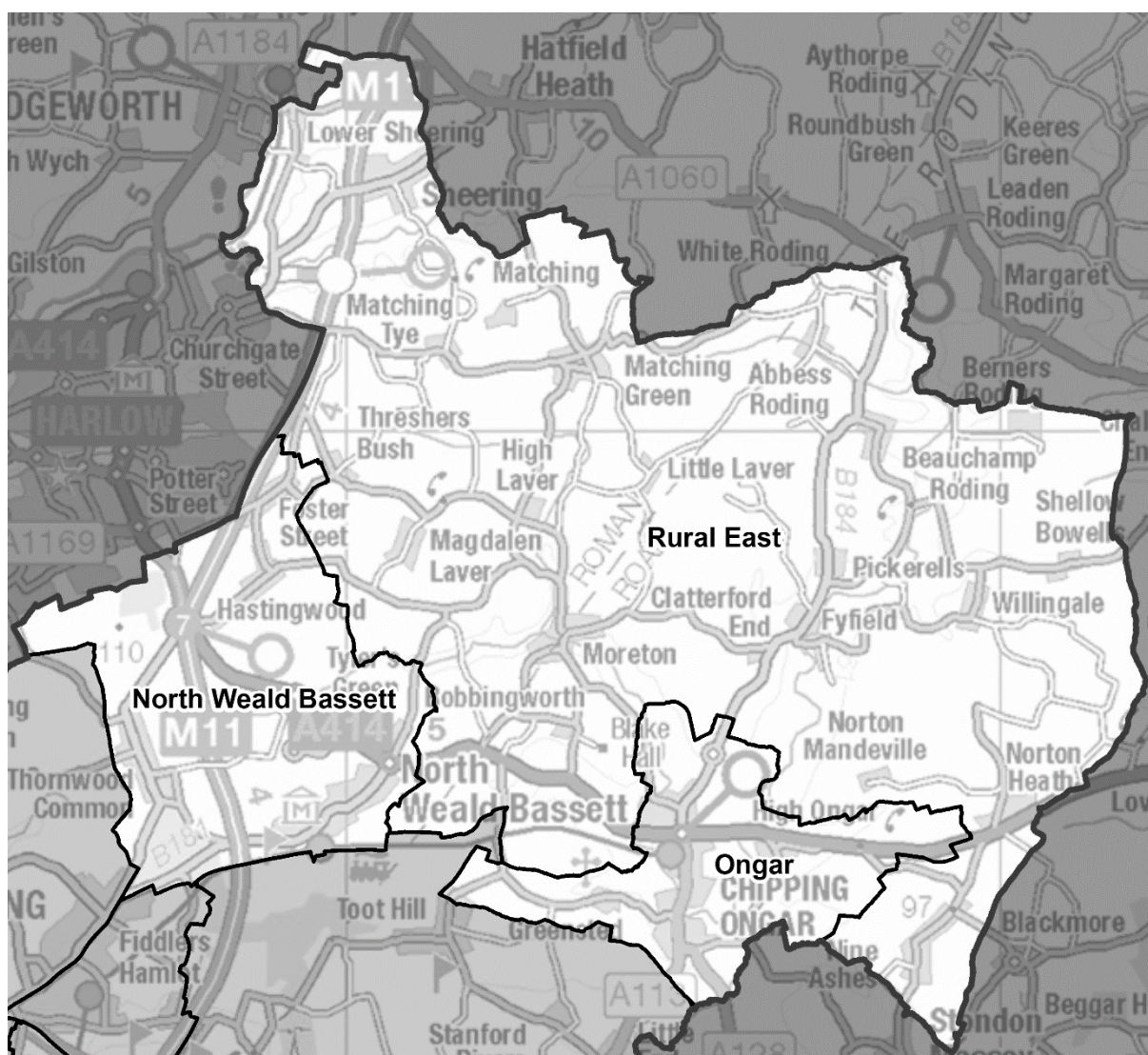
85 Theydon Bois Parish Council did not propose boundaries for this area, but more generally stated that urban and rural areas should be kept separate.

86 Following careful consideration of the evidence, we have not been persuaded to retain a single-councillor Passingford ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. We further note the poor level of electoral equality for Theydon Bois and Epping Forest in both the Liberal Democrats' and residents' schemes, and do not consider that the evidence received justifies this high level of electoral inequality.

87 We are therefore proposing to group together the current wards of Theydon Bois and Passingford into a three-councillor Theydon Bois with Passingford ward. While we acknowledge that this ward would group together urban and rural areas, we consider that it allows for a better level of electoral equality and further facilitates a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

88 Our proposed Theydon Bois with Passingford ward will be represented by three councillors and is forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with an electoral variance of -10%.

Eastern parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
North Weald Bassett	3	6%
Ongar	3	8%
Rural East	3	11%

Ongar

89 We received three submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats and a resident.

90 The Liberal Democrats proposed a three-councillor Ongar ward that would be coterminous with the parish of Ongar, combining the current wards of Chipping Ongar, Greensted & Marden Ash and Shelley. The Council stated that these areas have a geographic commonality. The Liberal Democrats argued that Ongar has strong community links.

91 A resident also proposed to unite the current wards of Chipping Ongar, Greensted & Marden Ash and Shelley, but further suggested including High Ongar village within Ongar ward. They stated that High Ongar Village has links with Ongar town, and that residents regularly cross the River Roding to access facilities and amenities.

92 Following careful consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to adopt the resident's proposal for Ongar ward. The ward will encompass the entire parish of Ongar as well as the village of High Ongar. The remainder of High Ongar parish will be placed in Rural East ward. We consider that this ward would best reflect community identity within this area and further reduces electoral inequality for Rural East ward.

93 Our proposed Ongar ward will be represented by three councillors and is forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with an electoral variance of 8%.

North Weald Bassett

94 We received four submissions regarding this area from the Liberal Democrats and three residents.

95 The Liberal Democrats and one resident proposed a three-councillor North Weald Bassett ward coterminous with North Weald Bassett parish. The Liberal Democrats argued that uniting this parish in a single ward would better reflect community identity.

96 Additionally, two residents argued that Hastingwood and Thornwood should be in a ward with the rest of North Weald Bassett parish. A resident stated that Hastingwood shares medical facilities, community assets and schools with North Weald, with no ties to Sheering or Matching parishes. Another resident stated that using the parish boundary as the ward boundary would provide clearer boundaries for residents.

97 We have been persuaded to adopt a three-councillor North Weald Bassett ward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that this ward will better reflect community links within this area and provide clear boundaries for residents.

98 Our proposed North Weald Bassett ward will be represented by three councillors and is forecast to have good levels of electoral equality by 2028, with an electoral variance of 6%.

Rural East

99 We received four submissions regarding this area from the Council, Liberal Democrats, Councillor Stratton and a resident.

100 The Council generally stated that rural wards such as Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers should continue to be single-councillor wards. Councillor Stratton also argued that High Ongar, Willingdale & The Rodings should continue to be a single-councillor ward. They stated that a three-councillor ward would be too large to govern effectively. We did not consider that this evidence justifies retaining a single-councillor ward in this area and note our presumption for three-councillor wards for Epping Forest. We are therefore not adopting these suggestions.

101 The Liberal Democrats proposed a three-councillor Epping Forest Rural East ward, which would combine the parishes of High Ongar, Matching, Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers, Abbess Beauchamp & Berners Roding, Fyfield, Willingale and the eastern part of Sheering. They further proposed retaining the single-councillor ward of Lower Sheering. The Liberal Democrats stated the suggested Epping Forest Rural East ward would consist of scattered villages and hamlets linked by local roads, and that Lower Sheering ward would contain a distinct community that looks outside of the district for services. However, Epping Forest Rural East ward would have an electoral variance of -12%. Including Lower Sheering in this ward would not provide a good level of electoral equality, with an electoral variance of 19%.

102 A resident proposed a similar rural ward, named Rural North, which would contain the parishes of Sheering, Matching, Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers, Abbess Beauchamp & Berners Roding, Fyfield, Willingale and part of High Ongar. They proposed placing High Ongar Village in Ongar ward, with the rest of High Ongar parish in Rural North. This ward would have an electoral variance of 11%.

103 We carefully considered these options and did not consider that the evidence provided by the Liberal Democrats was strong enough to justify retaining Lower Sheering as a single-councillor ward. Furthermore, as discussed above in the Ongar section, we were convinced to include High Ongar village in Ongar ward to better reflect community links in this area. Removing High Ongar Village from the Liberal Democrats' proposed Epping Forest Rural East ward would result in an electoral variance of -21%.

104 We are therefore adopting the resident's proposed Rural North ward as part of our draft recommendations. While this ward would have an electoral variance of 11%, we did not consider that artificially splitting parishes to bring this variance down would be justified. We consider that this ward will best reflect the rural parishes of eastern Epping Forest.

105 We are proposing to name this ward Rural East, rather than Rural North, to better reflect its geographic location within the district.

106 Our proposed Rural East ward will be represented by three councillors and is forecast to have an electoral variance of 11% by 2028.

Conclusions

107 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Epping Forest, referencing the 2022 and 2028 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2022	2028
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of electoral wards	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1,856	2,121
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Epping Forest District Council should be made up of 54 councillors serving 18 wards representing 18 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 Epping Forest.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Epping Forest on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

108 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.

109 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, Epping Forest District 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.

110 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 Chigwell, Epping, Loughton, Roydon and Waltham Abbey.

111 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chigwell parish.

Draft recommendations

Chigwell Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Chigwell Row	2
Chigwell Village	2
Grange Hill	7

112 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Epping parish.

Draft recommendations

Epping Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Hemnall	6
St John's	6

113 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Loughton parish.

Draft recommendations

Loughton Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Loughton Alderton	3
Loughton Broadway	2
Loughton Debden	1
Loughton Fairmead	3
Loughton Forest	3

Loughton Roding	1
Loughton St John's	5
Loughton St Mary's	2
Loughton Whitebridge	2

114 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Roydon parish.

Draft recommendations

Roydon Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Broadley Common	2
Dobbs Weir	2
Halls Green	3
Roydon Village	4

115 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Waltham Abbey parish.

Draft recommendations

Waltham Abbey Town Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
High Beach	1
Honey Lane	2
North East	2
Paternoster	3
South West	3

Have your say

116 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 district or just a part of it.

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

118 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

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

**Review Officer (Epping Forest)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE**

120 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Epping Forest 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.

121 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.

122 Electoral equality:

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

123 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?

124 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?

125 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.

126 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.

127 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.

128 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 Epping Forest in 2024.

Equalities

129 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Epping Forest District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge	3	5,925	1,975	6%	6,655	2,218	5%
2	Buckhurst Hill West	3	5,343	1,781	-4%	5,906	1,969	-7%
3	Chigwell with Lambourne	3	5,721	1,907	3%	6,322	2,107	-1%
4	Epping East	3	5,533	1,844	-1%	6,105	2,035	-4%
5	Epping West & Rural	3	5,202	1,734	-7%	6,453	2,151	1%
6	Grange Hill	3	6,329	2,110	14%	6,998	2,333	10%
7	Loughton Fairmead	3	5,606	1,869	1%	6,414	2,138	1%
8	Loughton Forest	3	5,284	1,761	-5%	5,841	1,947	-8%
9	Loughton Roding	3	5,542	1,847	0%	6,076	2,025	-4%
10	Loughton St John's	3	5,396	1,799	-3%	5,980	1,993	-6%

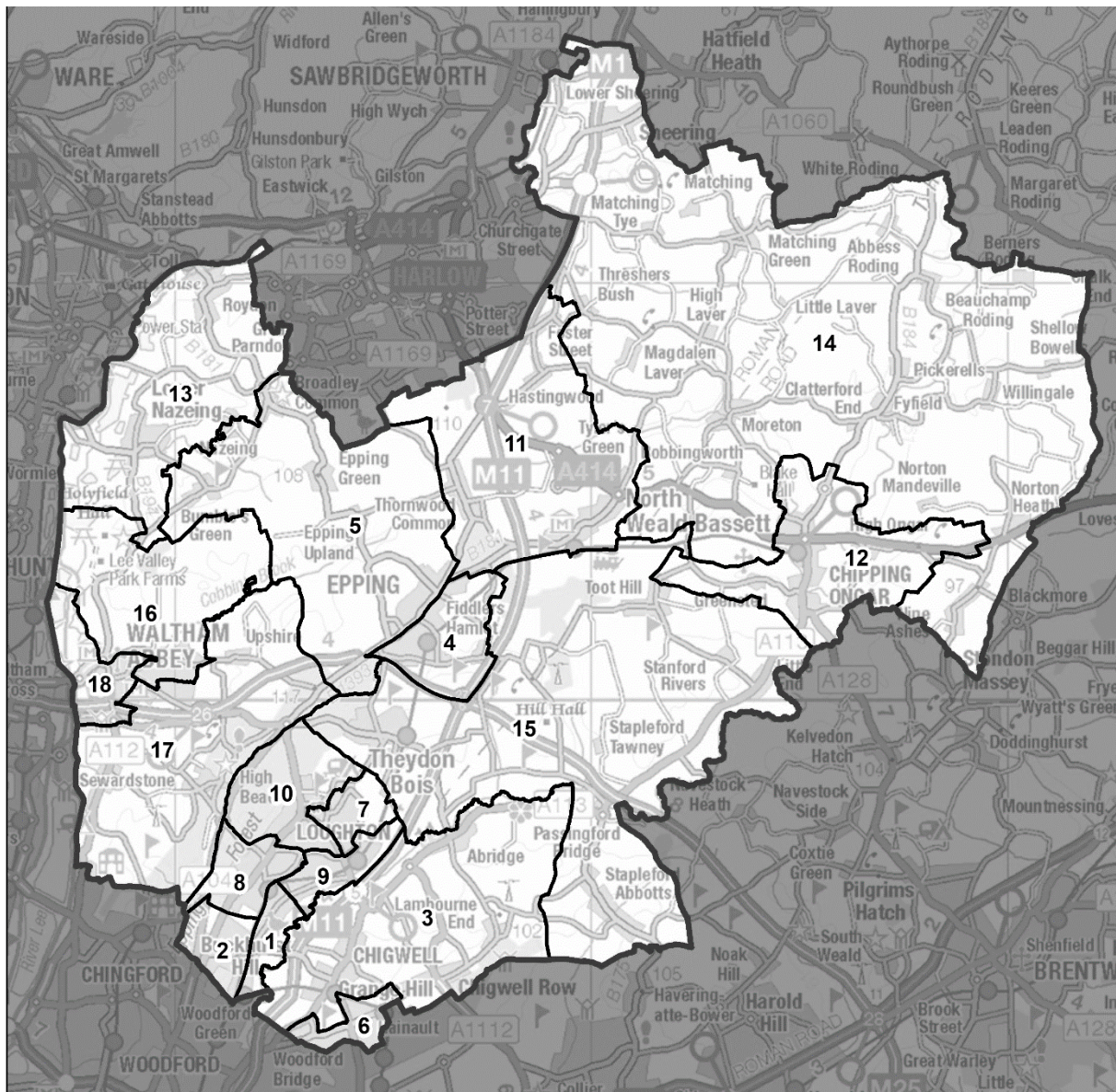
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	North Weald Bassett	3	5,030	1,677	-10%	6,760	2,253	6%
12	Ongar	3	5,787	1,929	4%	6,865	2,288	8%
13	Roydon & Lower Nazeing	3	5,562	1,854	0%	6,591	2,197	4%
14	Rural East	3	6,356	2,119	14%	7,037	2,346	11%
15	Theydon Bois with Passingford	3	5,178	1,726	-7%	5,711	1,904	-10%
16	Waltham Abbey North	3	5,459	1,820	-2%	6,880	2,293	8%
17	Waltham Abbey South & Rural	3	5,418	1,806	-3%	6,002	2,001	-6%
18	Waltham Abbey West	3	5,551	1,850	0%	5,928	1,976	-7%
	Totals	54	100,222	–	–	114,524	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,856	–	–	2,121	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Epping Forest District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. 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	Buckhurst Hill East & Whitebridge
2	Buckhurst Hill West
3	Chigwell with Lambourne
4	Epping East
5	Epping West & Rural
6	Grange Hill
7	Loughton Fairmead
8	Loughton Forest
9	Loughton Roding
10	Loughton St John's

11	North Weald Bassett
12	Ongar
13	Roydon & Lower Nazeing
14	Rural East
15	Theydon Bois with Passingford
16	Waltham Abbey North
17	Waltham Abbey South & Rural
18	Waltham Abbey West

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/eastern/essex/epping-forest

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/essex/epping-forest

Local Authority

- Epping Forest District Council

Political Groups

- Epping Forest District Council Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor C. Amos (Epping Forest District Council and Theydon Bois Parish Council)
- Councillor E. Burn (Theydon Bois Parish Council)
- Councillor G. Chambers (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council)
- Councillor H. Kane (Epping Forest District Council)
- Councillor A. Lion (Epping Forest District Council)
- Councillor J. Lucas (Epping Forest District Council)
- Councillor E. Spinks (Waltham Abbey Town Council)
- Councillor B. Stratton (Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding Parish Council)

Local Organisations

- Ninefields Residents' Association
- The Roydon Society

Parish and Town Councils

- Loughton Town Council
- Nazeing Parish Council
- Theydon Bois Parish Council
- Waltham Abbey Town Council

Local Residents

- 28 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

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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