

New electoral arrangements for Worcester City Council Draft Recommendations

November 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 further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Worcester?

7 We are conducting a review of Worcester City Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2002, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.² Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

- The wards in Worcester 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 city.

Our proposals for Worcester

9 Worcester should be represented by 35 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Worcester should have 15 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of 12 wards should change; three 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 city 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 1 November 2022 to 9 January 2023. 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 January 2023 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 27 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 Worcester. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the city. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 March 2022	Number of councillors decided
17 May 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
25 July 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
1 November 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
9 January 2023	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
28 March 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 Worcester	76,425	82,992
Number of councillors	35	35
Average number of electors per councillor	2,184	2,371

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'. All of our proposed wards for Worcester are forecast to 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 9% 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 Worcester City Council currently has 35 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that keeping this number the same 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 35 councillors. In February 2022, the Council voted to move to all-out elections meaning there is no presumption in legislation⁵ that the Council should have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. Therefore, proposals could be for 35 one-councillor wards or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

28 We did not receive any submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns and we have based our draft recommendations on a 35-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 33 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a city-wide proposal from the Council plus four alternative patterns from the Council each giving a modification to its primary proposal. The remainder of the submissions, from the Worcester Constituency Labour Party ('Labour Party'), councillors and residents provided localised comments for ward arrangements and/or names in particular areas of the city.

30 The Council's primary city-wide scheme was based on 36 councillors and provided a mixed pattern of two- and three-councillor wards for Worcester. We note that this pattern is broadly similar to the current arrangements and that the additional councillor would be in the area where a significant amount of growth has taken place around the existing Cathedral ward

31 The Labour Party proposed merging the existing Gorse Hill and Warndon wards and a minor modification to the Council's proposed Arboretum and City Centre wards.

32 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the Council's proposed pattern of wards outlined in its primary proposal would generally provide for a good reflection of the statutory criteria. However, we note that it was based on a council size of 36 members – one more than we had considered appropriate for Worcester.

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

33 In addition to its primary 36-councillor scheme, the Council put forward several options to modify its scheme in order to improve the electoral variance of one of the wards and/or to make it a 35-councillor scheme:

Option 1 – merge the existing Warndon and Gorse Hill wards into a three-councillor ward and move a number of properties ‘to the south of Gorse Hill ward’ into Nunnery ward to achieve good electoral equality. This pattern is based on a council size of 35.

Option 2 – redistribute the existing Rainbow Hill ward between Arboretum, Gorse Hill and Warndon wards. Arboretum and Gorse Hill wards both gain a councillor. This pattern is based on a council size of 36.

Option 3 – redistribute the existing Rainbow Hill ward between Arboretum, Gorse Hill, Warndon and Nunnery wards. Arboretum gains one councillor. This pattern is based on a council size of 35.

Option 4 – modify the primary 36-councillor scheme by ‘moving a total of 400–600 electors from two or three of the neighbouring wards of Warndon, Nunnery and Rainbow Hill into Gorse Hill’ to achieve good electoral equality. This pattern is based on a council size of 36.

34 Options 2 and 3 involved splitting up the existing Rainbow ward across either three or four neighbouring wards. However, we did not receive any community evidence in support of dividing Rainbow ward, nor did we receive a specific steer or proposals indicating where the new boundaries should be in this area. Option 4 proposed moving electors from a number of wards for which we did not receive any indication of where the boundaries should be.

35 We note that Option 1 was similar to the Labour Party proposal in that it merges the existing Gorse Hill and Warndon wards, but with a modification that improves the electoral variances. We considered that the Council’s proposal, incorporating Option 1, provides the best balance of our statutory criteria: we note that it is based on a council size of 35 that we considered was appropriate for Worcester and it provides a better level of electoral equality than the Council’s primary scheme, in particular in the Fort Royal ward. Option 1 also provides a stronger boundary in the Tolladine area than the Council’s primary proposal.

36 Accordingly, our draft recommendations are based on the Council’s scheme with Option 1. The draft recommendations move away from this scheme in some areas where we have taken into account other 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.

37 We visited the area in order to look at the various proposals on the ground. This tour of Worcester helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

38 Our draft recommendations are for five three-councillor wards and 10 two-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.

39 The tables and maps on pages 9–23 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Worcester. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

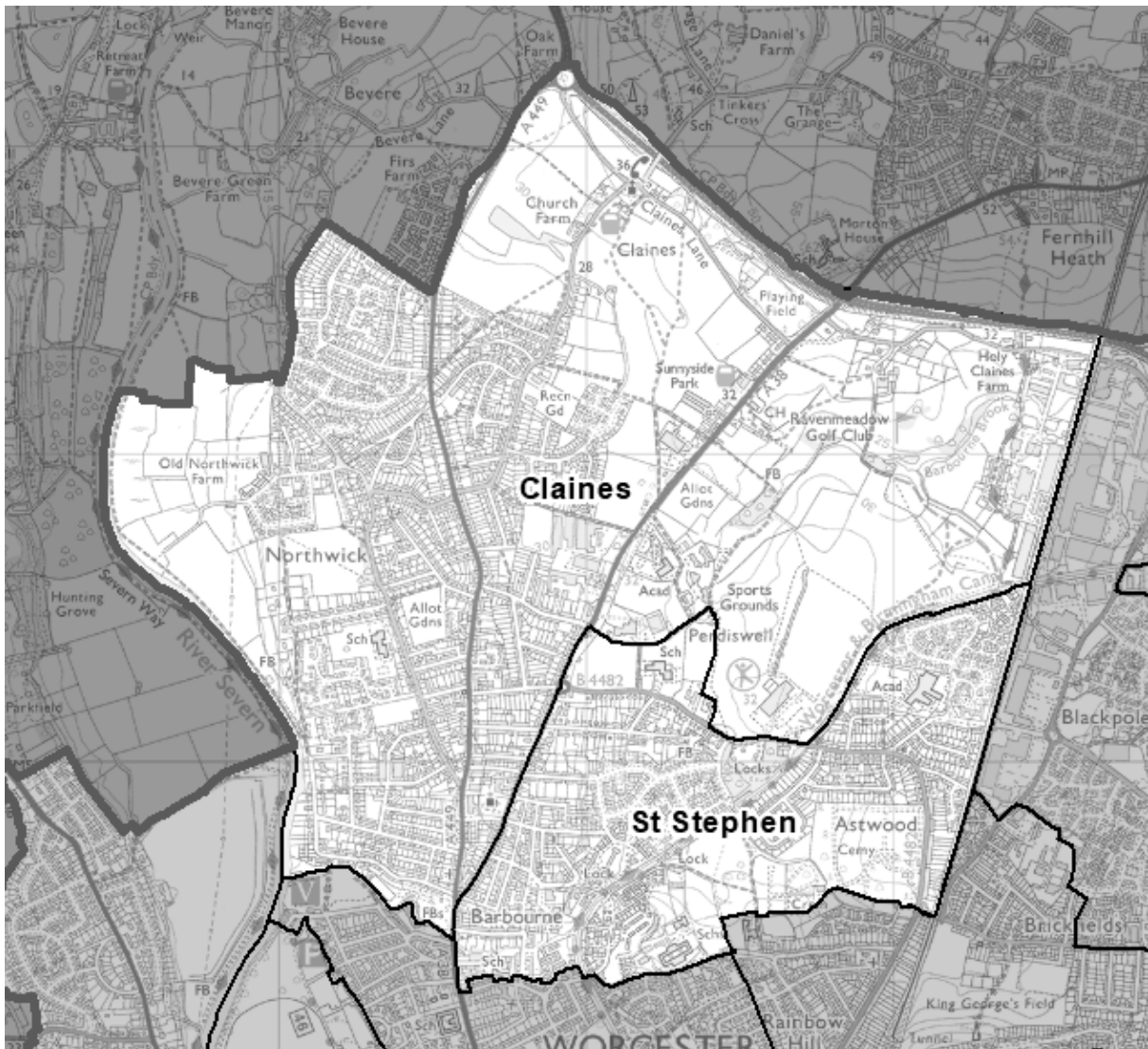
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

40 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 33 and on the large map accompanying this report.

41 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.

North-west



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Claines	3	-3%
St Stephen	2	-9%

Claines

42 We received three submissions about this ward, in addition to the Council's scheme. These were from Councillor Allcott and two residents.

43 The Council was of the view that the existing ward has identifiable boundaries and proposed retaining them. Councillor Allcott expressed a similar view, supporting the retention of the existing ward.

44 A resident advocated for the ward to be split, arguing that it was too big, and that the Northwick area should have its own separate councillor. The resident did not

provide any community evidence, nor did they propose any specific boundaries, and we did not explore this option any further.

45 Another resident wanted an estate on Perrins Way included in the ward. They explained that these residents used Worcester City resources. However, we note that Perrins Way is outside the Worcester City Council area and falls under Wychavon District Council. An electoral review such as this one examines the electoral arrangements within a local authority area and cannot change or move district or city boundaries. Moving Perrins Way into Claines ward in Worcester City is therefore out of the scope of this review.

46 Based on the evidence submitted to us, we are content to adopt the Council's proposals for Claines ward as part of our draft recommendations. It has identifiable boundaries which include the city boundary, the canal, railway line and green space. It is a three-councillor ward forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

St Stephen

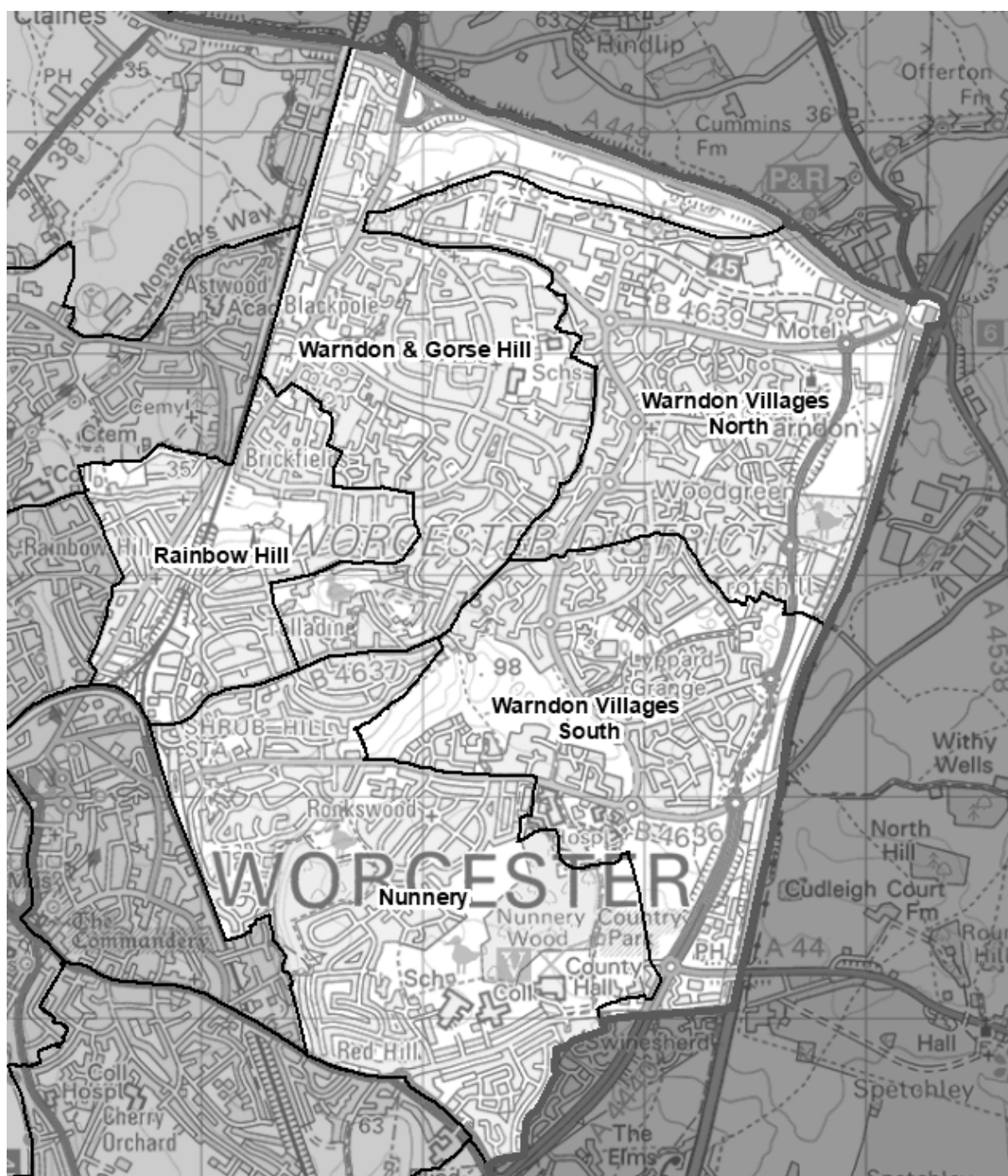
47 The Council's submission was the only one we received with regards to ward boundaries for this area. It proposed moving residents of Tintern Avenue and those on the northern side of Green Lane into Rainbow Hill ward to the south. It argued that these electors were cut off from most of St Stephen ward by the 68-acre Astwood Cemetery and that they were more closely linked with the neighbouring community in Rainbow Hill.

48 We have considered the Council's views and note that access to these roads is to the east and south in Rainbow Hill. We are therefore content to include them in Rainbow Hill ward as proposed by the Council. We have adopted the Council's proposed boundary north of St Barnabas C of E Primary School and the Allotment Gardens, but we welcome further comments on where the boundary in this area should be.

49 A resident pointed out that St Stephen's Church was not within this ward and wondered if the ward should be renamed to reflect the area it covered. They did not suggest any alternative name and we have therefore retained the name of the existing ward. However, we welcome comments on whether a different name would better reflect the identity of residents of the ward.

50 St Stephen ward is a two-councillor ward forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

North-east and East



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Nunnery	3	9%
Rainbow Hill	2	-4%
Warndon & Gorse Hill	3	3%
Warndon Villages North	2	-10%
Warndon Villages South	2	4%

Rainbow Hill and Warndon & Gorse Hill

51 In addition to the Council's submission, we received submissions about this area from Councillor Desayrah, Councillor Stanley, the Labour Party and some residents.

52 Under the Council's main 36-councillor scheme, Gorse Hill and Warndon wards would be forecast to have 13% and 10% fewer electors than the average for Worcester, respectively, by 2028. As mentioned in paragraph 33, the Council had considered four options to modify their scheme. Option 1 was to merge the existing Gorse Hill and Warndon wards and move residents in the south of Gorse Hill to Nunnery ward for electoral equality reasons. Options 2 and 3 involved dividing up the existing Rainbow Hill ward area among neighbouring wards.

53 Option 4 suggested the transfer of 400–600 electors from 'two or three of the neighbouring wards of Warndon, Nunnery and Rainbow Hill into Gorse Hill' to improve the electoral equality of its proposed Gorse Hill ward. The Council did not specify which electors should be transferred.

54 The Labour Party was of the view that the existing Gorse Hill and Warndon wards should be merged into a single three-councillor ward. Councillor Desayrah supported this. In her view, these wards were 'often linked' in the minds of local residents and a single ward would address the under-population of both wards.

55 Councillor Stanley was of the view that under the existing arrangements the Warndon community is split across the existing Gorse Hill, Rainbow Hill and Warndon wards. He advocated for the southern boundary of Warndon ward to run along Ambleside Drive and that the ward should include a number of side roads including Furness Close and Rydal Close. Under his proposals the area around Rose Avenue would be included in Gorse Hill ward.

56 We carefully considered all the representations. We note that the Council's Options 2 and 3 did not provide any community identity evidence to split up Rainbow Hill ward. It also did not provide any indication of which areas of Rainbow Hill to move into which neighbouring ward together with community evidence to support the moves. We note that Option 2 was based on a council size of 36 that we have not proposed.

57 We also note that under Option 4, the Council did not specify which area the electors should come from and that it is based on a council size of 36.

58 We considered Councillor Stanley's proposals. His proposed Warndon ward would be forecast to have good electoral equality if represented by three councillors. However, the resulting Gorse Hill and Rainbow Hill wards are forecast to have very poor electoral equality.

59 Under this proposal, Gorse Hill ward is forecast to have 18% more (one councillor) or 41% fewer electors (two councillors) than the average for Worcester by 2028. Rainbow Hill ward is forecast to have 45% more (one councillor) or 28% fewer electors (two councillors) than the average for Worcester. Accordingly, given the poor levels of electoral equality his proposal would provide, we were not persuaded to adopt these proposals.

60 The Labour Party's proposed merger of Gorse Hill and Warndon wards produced a three-councillor ward forecast to have 15% more electors than the average for the local authority area by 2028 under a council size of 35. We were not persuaded to create a ward with such poor electoral equality. However, we noted Councillor Desayrah's comments about links between the two wards and recognise that this is similar to the Council's Option 1 in this area.

61 On our tour of Worcester, we noted that the eastern and western ends of Windermere Drive currently in different wards (Gorse Hill and Warndon) appear to be a single community with no indication of where one community ends and another one starts. Therefore, we consider that this area could be included in a single ward.

62 The Council's Option 1 is similar to the Labour Party's proposal; however, to address the 15% variance it proposed moving 'a number of properties to the south of Gorse Hill ward' into Nunnery ward. In that area we considered Tolladine Road as a potential boundary. Most of the road east of the railway line is already a city ward and/or parish boundary, the stretch between Holly Mount Road and Elbury Park Road being the only exception. On our tour we concluded that while Tolladine Road is not necessarily a barrier between communities, it is identifiable, and that the use of the entire road as a boundary will promote effective and convenient local government. Its use also improves the variance of the proposed ward.

63 We have therefore adopted the Labour Party proposal with the Council's Option 1 to modify it. Our draft recommendations include a Warndon & Gorse Hill ward with a southern boundary which runs along Tolladine Road. Accordingly, this ward does not include Avon Close, Avon Road, Cherwell Close, Conway, Dee Way and Teme Road, south of Tolladine Road, which are included in Nunnery ward to the south. We have also adopted the Council's Rainbow Hill ward which is the same as the existing ward with one modification, as explained in paragraph 48, as we consider it reflects community identity and has a good level of electoral equality.

64 We note that the Labour Party suggested naming the Warndon & Gorse Hill ward as Warndon & Tolladine. Because of the modification we made to the boundaries of the proposed ward, we were not sure if it was still appropriate to include Tolladine in the name. We welcome comments and evidence on this.

65 Warndon & Gorse Hill ward has three councillors. Rainbow Hill ward is a two-councillor ward. Both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South

66 In addition to the Council's submission, we received submissions from Councillor Roberts, Councillor Taylor and some residents.

67 The Council's proposed wards were based on the existing wards, with a modification to the boundary between the two existing Warndon Parish wards to improve electoral equality. It suggested that the boundary run along Trotshill Lane West and then south of Quisters and Turbary Avenue before continuing along Trotshill Lane East moving electors from these roads to the northern Warndon ward.

68 Councillor Roberts opposed the Council's proposed change to the boundary between the two Warndon Parish wards. In his opinion Trotshill Lane East and Trotshill Lane West form a natural and easily recognisable boundary. He was of the view that it was not appropriate to move away from a significant boundary for the sake of balancing the elector numbers.

69 Councillor Taylor also opposed moving Quisters and Turbary Avenue into Warndon Parish North ward arguing that it would split both Lyppard Hanford and Lyppard Kettleby 'hamlets' across different wards. Instead, he suggested making the southern boundary of Warndon Parish South ward coterminous with the boundary of Warndon civil parish in that area. This would place residents south of the parish boundary in Nunnery ward. A resident of Chalmers Close in the south expressed a view stating that they did not feel part of Warndon parish and would therefore be better placed in Nunnery ward.

70 A resident suggested merging the 'Warndon Villages' area into a single ward. They suggested that the rest of Warndon parish should be merged with neighbouring wards. They did not provide details of which areas to leave out of the unified ward nor did they suggest any specific boundaries for what encompasses the 'Warndon Villages' area. Accordingly, we did not take this any further. Another resident expressed the view that there was little sense of identity or distinction between Warndon, Warndon Parish North and Warndon Parish South wards and that this should be addressed. They too did not propose any specific boundaries or name changes.

71 We carefully considered the submissions we received. The Council's proposed Warndon Parish North and Warndon Parish South wards would have good electoral equality while Councillor Roberts proposed Warndon Parish North ward would be forecast to have 11% fewer electors than the city average by 2028.

72 We considered Councillor Taylor's proposal to make the southern boundary of a Warndon Parish South ward coterminous with the parish boundary. Typically, we consider that parishes are a good reflection of community identities. However, we consider that the Warndon parish boundary does not reflect communities in the area: we note that it runs through Aconbury Close, Leopard Rise and Oakmont Drive splitting the community on those roads and the surrounding ones between the parish and the unparished area. If we were to use the parish boundary as a ward boundary in this area, residents north of 12 Aconbury Close and 22 Oakmont Drive will be cut off from the rest of their ward to the north. Accordingly, while we understand the argument in support of using parish boundaries as city ward boundaries, in this instance we were not persuaded that the parish represents communities in this area of Worcester, and we have not been persuaded to use it as a ward boundary.

73 After careful consideration, we have adopted Councillor Roberts' proposed boundary along the entirety of Trotshill Lane East and Trotshill Lane West for these wards. The Council also uses most of these roads as its boundary with the exception of the area north of Quisters and Turbary Avenue where it does not. On our tour of Worcester, we noted the strength of Trotshill Lane West as a boundary, including the small stretch which the Council does not propose to use as a boundary. The properties on either side are set back from the road with substantial hedges. In addition, all but one of the properties on the southern side do not look on to Trotshill Lane West. Furthermore, Quisters and Turbary Avenue are separated from the area to the north by some woodland. They face on to Mill Wood Drive to the south-east and south-west and not the north where the Council has included them. Trotshill Lane East is also similarly strong and identifiable as a boundary.

74 We have made one modification and used all of Middle Hollow Drive as a boundary, bringing the properties on this road and Middle Hollow Court into the ward to the south. We considered that not only does this strengthen the boundary in this area, but it also improves the electoral equality of the ward to the north.

75 To the south, we have retained most of the existing boundary along the western half of Newtown Road. However, we have modified the boundary to run south of Worcestershire Royal Hospital to unite the hospital in a single ward. We considered creating a boundary north and east of the hospital, but this would necessitate us creating an unviable parish ward in Warndon parish, with fewer than 10 electors.

76 Councillors Roberts and Taylor proposed alternative names for the two Warndon Parish wards, which in their view would avoid the confusion arising from the existing ward names.

77 Councillor Roberts suggested the name St Nicholas' for the Warndon Parish North ward and Aconbury Orchard (or Farm) for Warndon Parish South, after notable landmarks in the wards. Councillor Taylor proposed changing the names of these

wards to Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South wards because most of the area covered in the area is known as 'Warndon Villages'.

78 We note Councillor Roberts' suggestion but are unable to determine if residents will identify as living in St Nicholas' or Aconbury wards. Councillor Taylor's suggestion appears to be borne out by comments made by some other respondents, and we have adopted his proposals and named the wards Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South. Nevertheless, we note that Councillor Roberts was of the view that residents south of Aconbury Orchard and Leopard Hill do not identify as living in Warndon Villages. This is reflected by the comment from the resident of Chalmers Close. Therefore, we are inviting suggestions on how to include this area in the name of the southern ward.

79 Our proposed two-member Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South wards are forecast to have 10% fewer and 4% more electors, respectively, than the average for Worcester by 2028.

80 Councillor Roberts also proposed changing the name of the County Division. However, that is a matter for an electoral review of the County Council and outside the scope of this electoral review of Worcester City Council. An electoral review of Worcestershire is due to take place in 2023 and comments on county divisions are welcomed as part of that review.

Nunnery

81 In addition to the Council's submission, we received submissions from Councillor Taylor and a resident.

82 The Council proposed a Nunnery ward based on the existing one. It did, however, exclude Cranbourne Grove and Lilburne Close from it on the grounds that these roads can only be accessed by road from the neighbouring ward to the south.

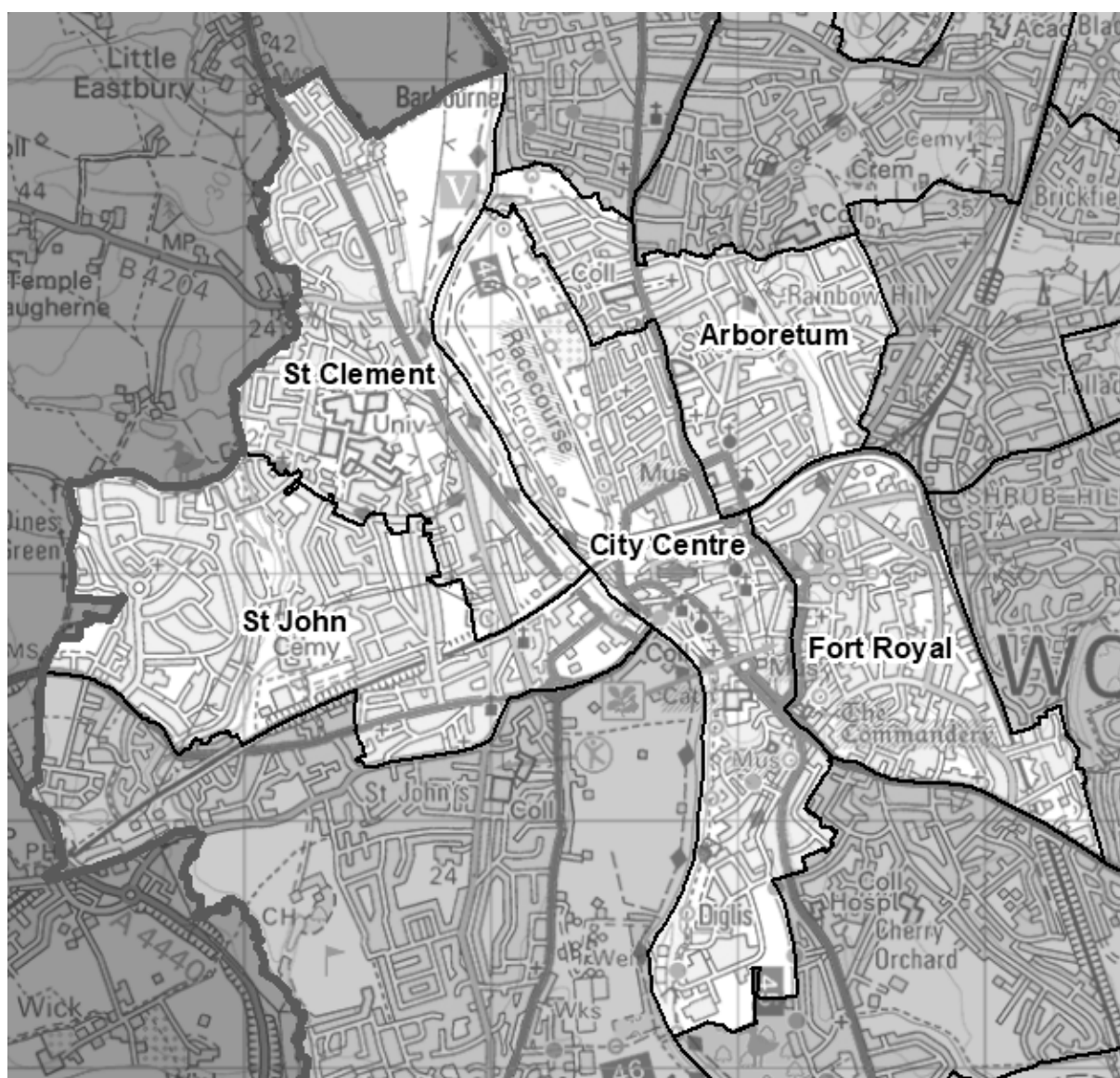
83 As mentioned in paragraph 69, Councillor Taylor proposed using the parish boundary and moving the area south of Warndon parish and north of Newtown Road into Nunnery ward. We received a representation from a resident who agreed with this. As explained in paragraph 72, this would split roads across wards and cut residents off from the rest of their ward and we were not persuaded to adopt this proposal.

84 On our tour of the area, we noted that Cranbourne Grove and Lilburne Close can only be accessed from Perry Wood Walk to the south and that residents appear to share a community of interest with residents of that road and of Perry Wood Close. We have therefore included them in this ward as suggested by the Council.

This ward also includes the area around Teme Road, south of Tolladine Road (paragraph 63).

85 Our proposed Nunnery ward is a three-councillor ward forecast to have 9% more electors than the average for Worcester by 2028.

Central and West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Arboretum	2	6%
City Centre	2	1%
Fort Royal	2	-6%
St Clement	2	-3%
St John	3	-7%

Arboretum, City Centre and Fort Royal

86 We received submissions about these wards in addition to the Council's proposals from the Labour Party and residents.

87 The Council proposed retaining the existing Arboretum ward. It also proposed two two-councillor wards, City Centre and Fort Royal, to replace the existing three-

councillor Cathedral ward which has grown significantly. Cathedral ward has significantly more electors than average and therefore cannot be retained. Most of the boundaries between the Council's proposed new wards run along City Walls Road and the canal. The Council stated that its proposed City Centre ward includes three communities 'centred around Diglis, the city centre and Britannia Square' and that Fort Royal ward would include established communities centred around 'Wylds Lane & Stanley Road, Lowesmoor & Shrub Hill, and the Woolhope & Bolston area'.

88 The Labour Party supported the Council's proposal to create two wards in place of the existing Cathedral ward. It suggested a minor modification to the Council's proposed boundaries moving two properties on Pitchcroft Lane into Arboretum ward, thereby uniting that road in a single ward.

89 Most respondents agreed that Cathedral ward should be split in two. One resident suggested that Lion Court, Sansome Place and possibly Lowesmoor should be moved from Cathedral ward and included in a three-councillor Arboretum ward. The resident was of the view that the existing boundary along the railway line divided the housing built on the site of the old Worcester Pleasure Park, and that including these roads in Arboretum would reflect the fact that many of those who live in this ward shop and socialise in Lowesmoor.

90 Another resident suggested including The Tything and Lansdowne Road area in Cathedral ward to the south because in their view this area was also affected by similar issues as those affecting the city centre.

91 Other residents proposed moving Cavendish, Orchard and Waverley streets in the south of Cathedral ward into Battenhall ward on community identity grounds. Others simply suggested moving the Diglis area from Cathedral ward.

92 We considered all the comments we received very carefully. On our tour of Worcester, we noted that the railway line to the north of Lion Court, Sansome Place and Lowesmoor is a strong and identifiable boundary. Furthermore, including Lion Court, Sansome Place and Lowesmoor in Arboretum ward produces a ward forecast to have 21% fewer electors than the average for the local authority area by 2028. The resultant Cathedral ward would be oversized with at least 21% more electors. We also noted that Lowesmoor is centrally located and, therefore, it is likely that residents from all over Worcester will shop and socialise there and not just residents in its immediate vicinity. For those reasons, we were not persuaded to include the roads south of the railway line in Arboretum ward.

93 We were also not persuaded to include The Tything and Lansdowne Road area in Cathedral ward or a ward to the south. Aside from crossing the railway line, doing this would create an Arboretum ward forecast to have either 39% more electors (one councillor) or 30% fewer electors (two councillors) than the average for Worcester

City by 2028. We are not persuaded to create a ward with such poor electoral variances.

94 We have therefore based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposed wards for this area, with modifications as described below. We have moved one of the boundaries between City Centre and Fort Royal wards from The Foregate to Sansome Place to unite The Foregate in a single ward.

95 We have considered the Labour Party's proposed modification and are content that this will facilitate effective and convenient local government. We are therefore content to include 21 and 23 Pitchcroft Lane in Arboretum ward.

96 To the south of the existing Cathedral ward, we have been persuaded to move Cavendish, Orchard and Waverley streets into Battenhall ward. We have also included 106–264 (even numbers) Bath Road in this ward, uniting both sides of this section of the road in a single ward. On our tour of the area, we noted that Bath Road did not constitute a barrier and consider that the community crosses both sides of the road. We have included Diglis Road, Woolhope Road and the north part of Bath Road in City Centre ward and not Fort Royal. We consider that the stretch of road from Sidbury and London Road is a strong boundary and while the canal is identifiable as a boundary, it can be crossed at Mill Street. Furthermore, adopting the Council's boundaries in this area will isolate the residents around Diglis Dock Road who will have to cross into a neighbouring ward to access the rest of the ward to the north.

97 Arboretum, City Centre and Fort Royal wards are two-councillor wards, all forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

St Clement and St John

98 In addition to the Council's city-wide proposal, three residents wrote in about this area.

99 The Council proposed the retention of the boundaries of the existing wards. It was of the view that both wards were well-established, and that River Severn and Oldbury Road were identifiable boundaries on three sides of St Clements ward. With regards to St John ward, it explained that the ward was centred on a recognised retail area and included the Dines Green Estate community.

100 A resident suggested merging these two wards to allow residents of St Clement to vote. We are not aware that merging wards has any impact on the ability of electors to vote. Furthermore, these wards have five councillors between them. A three-councillor ward covering the same area is forecast to have 58% more electors than the average for Worcester by 2028. While a five-councillor ward would provide for good electoral equality, we take the view that a ward returning more than three

councillors could potentially dilute the accountability of members to the local electorate. We are not persuaded to move away from that position in this area.

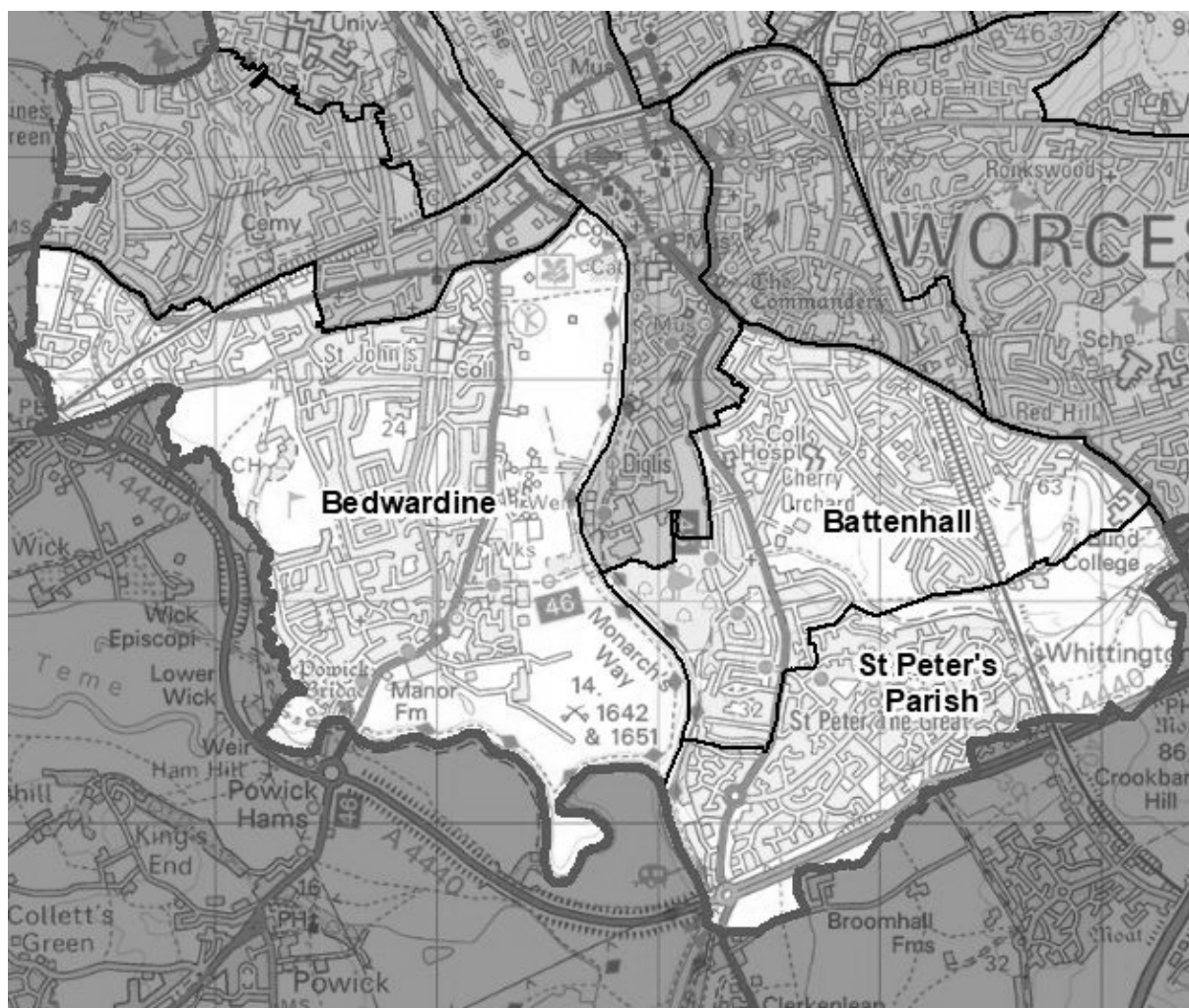
101 Another resident wanted the boundary of Worcester City Council extended to include the new houses to the west of St John ward currently in Malvern Hills District Council. However, modifying the external boundaries of Worcester City Council is outside the scope of this electoral review.

102 Another resident proposed increasing the size of St Clement but did not support it with any evidence nor did they propose any boundaries. Therefore, we did not adopt this proposal.

103 We have considered the Council's proposal. We note that both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality and are comprised of established communities. We have therefore adopted the Council's proposals for St Clement and St John wards, subject to the modifications to the latter, mentioned in paragraph 113.

104 St Clement is a two-councillor ward while St John will have three councillors. Both are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Battenhall	2	9%
Bedwardine	3	6%
St Peter's Parish	2	0%

Battenhall and St Peter's Parish

105 We received four submissions for this area in addition to the Council's city-wide proposals. These were from residents.

106 The Council proposed retaining the existing wards stating that St Peter's Parish ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name and that both wards are well-established.

107 Most of the residents advocated for the area around Cherry Orchard to be included in Battenhall rather than the existing Cathedral ward, on community identity grounds. As mentioned in paragraph 96, we were persuaded to do this.

108 One resident suggested that part of Battenhall ward should be moved into St Peter's Parish ward. We considered the possibility of doing this without splitting communities, using Duck Brook as a strong boundary. However, this produced a St Peter's Parish ward forecast to have 22% more electors and a Battenhall ward with 14% fewer electors than the city average by 2028. Therefore, we did not adopt this proposal.

109 After careful consideration, we have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals with modifications to Battenhall ward as explained in paragraph 96.

110 Battenhall and St Peter's Parish are both two-councillor wards, forecast to have good electoral equality, by 2028.

Bedwardine

111 We received one submission from a resident about Bedwardine ward in addition to the Council's proposals. The resident was concerned with parking issues in the Bedwardine, St Clement and St John area, which was outside the scope of this electoral review.

112 The Council proposed retaining the boundaries of the existing ward. It stated that the ward was well-established and had strong boundaries. We agree that the proposed ward has mostly strong and identifiable boundaries which include the River Severn and the city boundary. We also note that it is forecast to have good electoral equality.

113 We have therefore adopted the Council's proposed Bedwardine ward as part of our draft recommendations, with some minor modifications to its boundary with St John ward in the north to better reflect our statutory criteria. We have modified the boundary to run along the A44 Bromyard Road from the City boundary to Tudor Way, thereby including Earl's Court Cottage and Grove Cottages in the ward to the north and not Bedwardine ward. We consider that this strengthens the boundary and places these residents in St John ward with their nearest neighbours. We have also modified the boundary east of Broadway Grove to run further east along the railway line. This unites the industrial estate on Bromyard Road, south of the railway line in Bedwardine ward.

114 Bedwardine ward is a three-councillor ward, forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

Conclusions

115 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Worcester, 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	35	35
Number of electoral wards	15	15
Average number of electors per councillor	2,184	2,371
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Worcester City Council should be made up of 35 councillors serving 15 wards representing 10 two-councillor wards and five 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 Worcester City Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Worcester City Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

116 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.

117 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, Worcester City 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.

118 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 Warndon parish.

119 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Warndon parish.

Draft recommendations

Warndon Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Warndon Villages North	4
Warndon Villages South	4

Have your say

120 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 city or just a part of it.

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

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

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

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

124 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Worcester City Council 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.

125 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.

126 Electoral equality:

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

127 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?

128 Effective local government:

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

129 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.

130 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.

131 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.

132 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 Worcester City Council in 2024.

Equalities

133 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 Worcester City 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	Arboretum	2	4,718	2,359	8%	5,023	2,512	6%
2	Battenhall	2	4,672	2,365	7%	5,150	2,575	9%
3	Bedwardine	3	6,763	2,254	3%	7,522	2,507	6%
4	City Centre	2	4,318	2,159	-1%	4,790	2,395	1%
5	Claines	3	6,438	2,146	-2%	6,908	2,303	-3%
6	Fort Royal	2	3,572	1,786	-18%	4,452	2,226	-6%
7	Nunnery	3	7,107	2,369	8%	7,749	2,583	9%
8	Rainbow Hill	2	4,276	2,138	-2%	4,553	2,277	-4%
9	St Clement	2	4,156	2,078	-5%	4,613	2,307	-3%
10	St John	3	6,334	2,111	-3%	6,644	2,215	-7%
11	St Peter's Parish	2	4,478	2,239	3%	4,722	2,361	0%
12	St Stephen	2	4,098	2,049	-6%	4,325	2,163	-9%

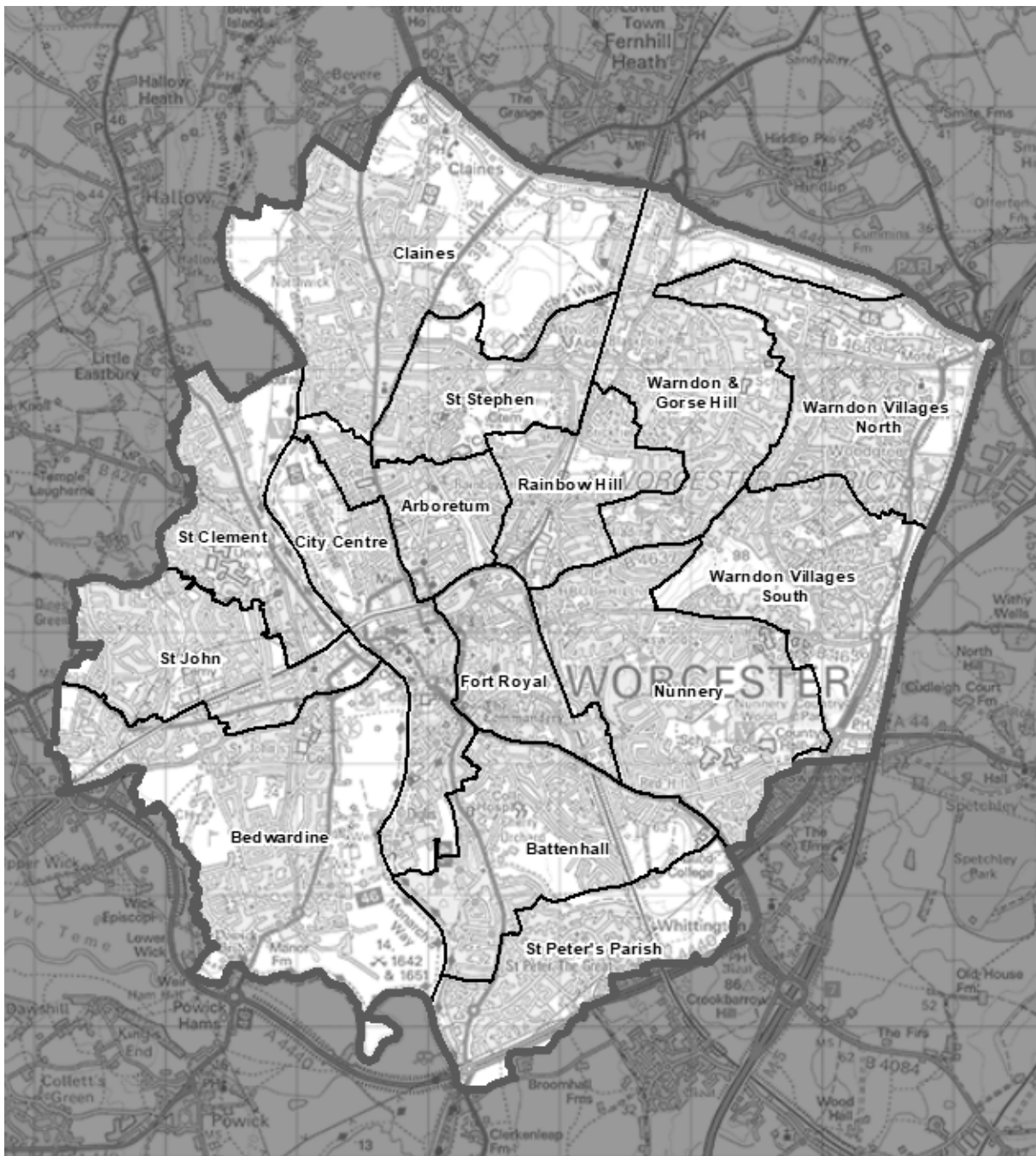
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13	Warndon & Gorse Hill	3	6,913	2,304	6%	7,355	2,452	3%
14	Warndon Villages North	2	4,031	2,016	-8%	4,248	2,124	-10%
15	Warndon Villages South	2	4,551	2,276	4%	4,938	2,469	4%
Totals		35	76,425	-	-	82,992	-	-
Averages		-	-	2,184	-	-	2,371	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Worcester City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower-than-average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



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/west-midlands/worcestershire/worcester

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/worcestershire/worcester

Local Authority

- Worcester City Council

Political Groups

- Worcester Constituency Labour Party

Councillors

- Councillor M. Allcott (Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council)
- Councillor J. Desayrah (Worcester City Council)
- Councillor A. Roberts (Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council)
- Councillor J. Stanley (Worcester City Council)
- Councillor A. Taylor (Warndon Parish Council)

Local Residents

- 26 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.

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

Telephone: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Online: www.lgbce.org.uk

www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Twitter: @LGBCE