



New electoral arrangements for Redditch Borough Council Final Recommendations

January 2023

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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 Redditch?

7 We are conducting a review of Redditch Borough 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 Additionally, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality.' Our aim is to create 'electoral equality,' where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

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

Our proposals for Redditch

9 Redditch should be represented by 27 councillors, two fewer than there are now.

10 Redditch should have nine wards, three fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change.

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

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local

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

taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Redditch. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 February 2022	Number of councillors decided
22 February 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
31 May 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
2 August 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 October 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
10 January 2023	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

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

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

	2021	2028
Electorate of Redditch	63,545	64,848
Number of councillors	27	27
Average number of electors per councillor	2,354	2,402

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Redditch will have good electoral equality by 2028.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

22 The Council 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 2% by 2028.

23 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 final 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

24 Redditch Council currently has 29 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing by two to 27 will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

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

26 As Redditch Borough Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years), there is a presumption in legislation⁵ that the Council has 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 an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

27 We received five submissions that made reference to the number of councillors in response to our consultation on warding patterns. Three local residents suggested the number of councillors should not be reduced whilst the population is growing but provided no further evidence or an alternative council size suggestion. One local resident suggested that Redditch should have 10 three-councillor wards but did not suggest how that be achieved. Another local resident suggested that Redditch should have 12 two-councillor wards but provided no evidence as to why a uniform two-councillor pattern better reflects the Commission's statutory criteria. The resident also did not suggest a warding pattern. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a 27-councillor council.

28 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. This submission suggested the number of councillors should be reduced but provided no further evidence or an alternative council size suggestion. We have therefore maintained 27 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 25 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals from Redditch Borough Council Conservative Group and Redditch Labour Party. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

30 The two borough-wide schemes provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Redditch. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the

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

view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

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

32 There was a detailed virtual tour of Redditch. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

33 Our draft recommendations were for nine three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

34 We received 38 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included two submissions from Redditch Borough Council councillors with the remainder from local residents. Three submissions were in full support of the draft recommendations. Five submissions objected to any changes to the existing wards and two submissions made arguments based on the political consequences of changes to the ward boundaries. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Matchborough and Ipsley.

Final recommendations

35 Our final recommendations are for nine three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications made to the boundaries between Batchley & Brockhill and Central wards to reflect the evidence received during our consultation on the draft recommendations. We have not been persuaded to make any other changes to our draft recommendations.

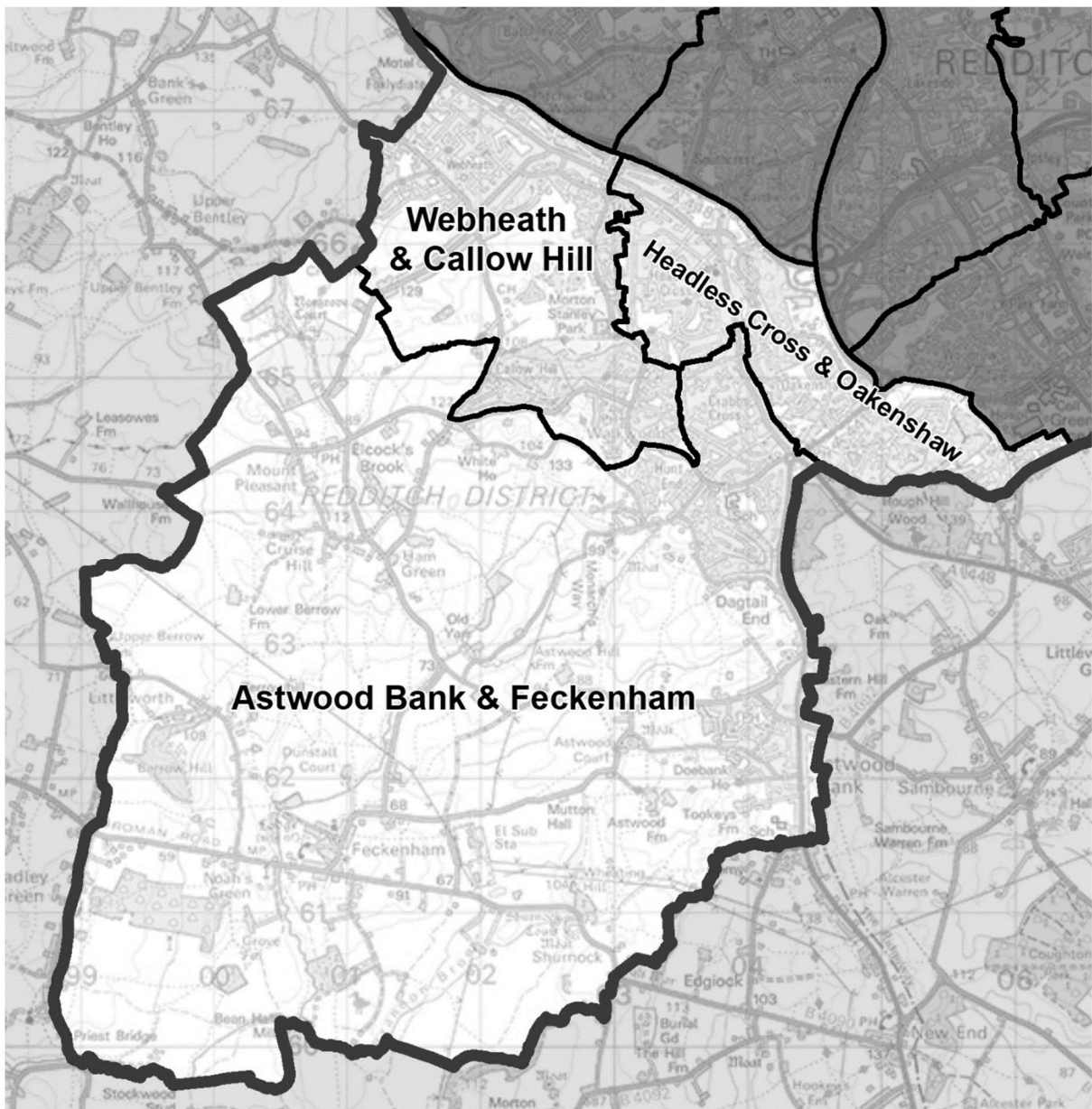
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–15 detail our final recommendations for each area of Redditch. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

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

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 23 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Astwood Bank & Feckenham, Headless Cross & Oakenshaw and Webheath & Callow Hill



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Astwood Bank & Feckenham	3	-3%
Headless Cross & Oakenshaw	3	1%
Webheath & Callow Hill	3	1%

Astwood Bank & Feckenham, Headless Cross & Oakenshaw and Webheath & Callow Hill

39 We received seven submissions that mentioned this area. Four submissions from local residents and one from Councillor Ashley were concerned with the loss of a Crabbs Cross ward and stated opposition to the inclusion of the area in Astwood

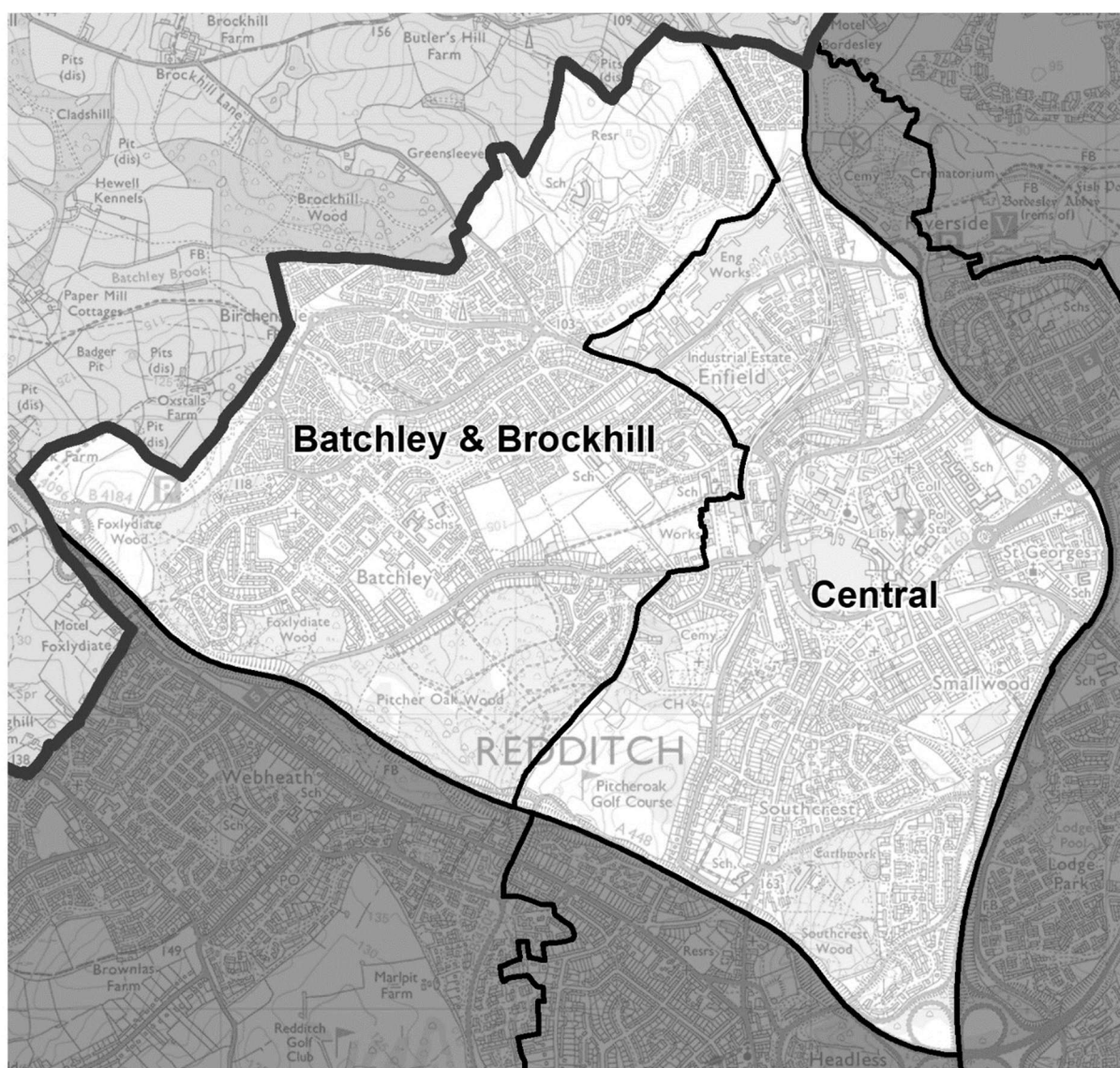
Bank & Feckenham ward. One submission stated that Oakenshaw had no connection to either Headless Cross or Crabbs Cross and should instead be included in a ward with Greenlands on the other side of the A441 Alcester Highway. One submission supported the proposed Headless Cross & Oakenshaw ward, stating that Oakenshaw residents use shopping facilities in Headless Cross as well as having shared schooling. They also stated that it was sensible to link electors on either side of Wirehill Woods as these electors share common recreational facilities.

40 We do not propose to make any changes to our draft recommendations for these three wards. Whilst we acknowledge the loss of the Crabbs Cross ward, we note that this ward currently elects two councillors. As Redditch elects by thirds (i.e., one third of councillors up for election every year, with a fourth year having no elections), the Commission must have a presumption towards a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

41 We do not consider we have received sufficiently compelling evidence to move away from a three-councillor warding pattern in this area. We note that we have also received support for our proposed Headless Cross & Oakenshaw ward.

42 Our final recommendations for this area are as per our draft recommendations of three three-councillors wards of Astwood Bank & Feckenham, Headless Cross & Oakenshaw and Webheath & Callow Hill. These wards will have electoral variances of -3%, 1% and 1%, respectively, from the average for Redditch by 2028.

Batchley & Brockhill and Central



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Batchley & Brockhill	3	7%
Central	3	-7%

Batchley & Brockhill and Central

43 We received four submissions with specific comments on these wards. Two local residents objected to the streets off Bromsgrove Road that are currently in Central ward being moved to Batchley & Brockhill.

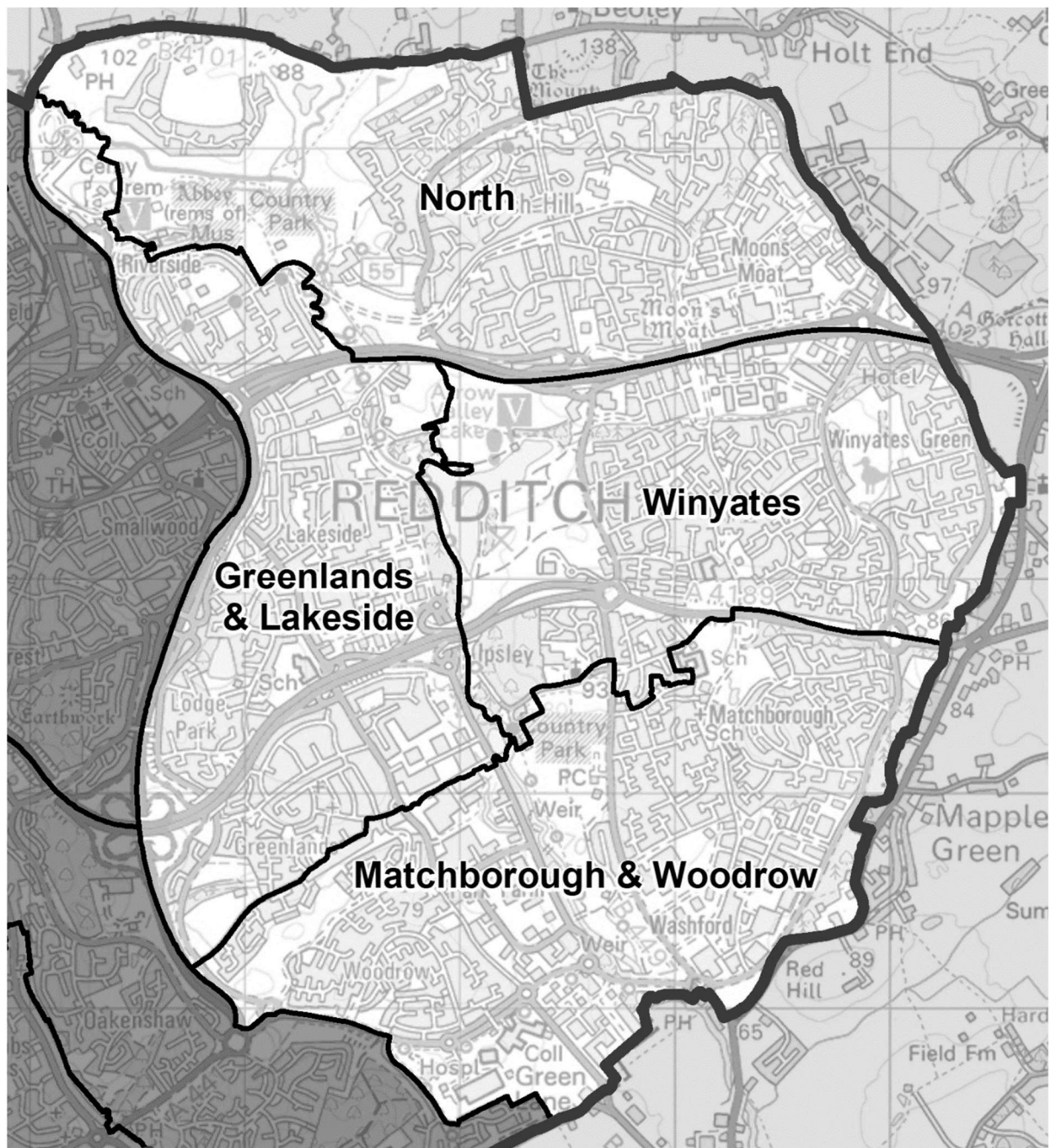
44 One local resident suggested a revised boundary between the two wards. This boundary would follow the Musketts Way footpath and Holmwood Drive before meeting our proposed boundary on Bromsgrove Road. Electors to the east of this boundary on Holmwood Drive (eastern side), Prophets Close, Purshall Close, Vicarage Crescent and Vicarage View would be included in Central ward. The

remaining electors we had proposed to be included in Batchley & Brockhill would remain in that ward. This submission went on to propose that Bridley Moor Road and Cedar Road and the streets leading off them be included in Batchley & Brockhill ward.

45 We propose to make the amendments suggested by the local resident. Having considered the submission we received and having carried out a detailed virtual tour of the suggested revised boundary, we are of the view that this arrangement better reflects the extent of the Batchley community.

46 Our final recommendations for this area are for two three-councillor wards of Batchley & Brockhill and Central with variances of 7% and -7% by 2028, respectively.

Greenlands & Lakeside, Matchborough & Woodrow, North and Winyates



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Greenlands & Lakeside	3	5%
Matchborough & Woodrow	3	6%
North	3	-2%
Winyates	3	-7%

Greenlands & Lakeside and Matchborough & Woodrow

47 Of the 38 submissions we received, 12 specifically mentioned our proposed Greenlands & Lakeside and Matchborough & Woodrow wards, and all 12 were

opposed to the inclusion of the Matchborough and Woodrow areas in the same ward. The respondents stated that the two areas had no ties or common community interests. In addition to that general view, some submissions opposed the inclusion of Ipsley in Winyates ward. Another issue raised was the proposed boundary between Greenlands & Lakeside and Matchborough & Woodrow wards was proposed to run along Throckmorton Road. Submissions stated that this divided electors on the south side of that road from their community to the north. Another local resident suggested the Greenlands & Lakeside ward be renamed West Arrow Valley to reflect its entire composition.

48 Councillor Marshall, in their submission, suggested that the boundary between Greenlands & Lakeside and Matchborough & Woodrow should be moved to run behind the houses on the south side of Throckmorton Road so that all these electors are included in Greenlands & Lakeside. They also proposed to include electors on Forge Mill Road, Meadowhill Crescent, Meadowhill Road and Millrace Road in North ward to provide for electoral equality in both wards. Apart from those two changes they supported our proposed Greenlands & Lakeside ward.

49 Having considered the submissions, we do not propose to make any changes to our draft recommendations. We gave strong consideration to the proposal to move the boundary to the rear of Throckmorton Road, but we noted that if we were to amend this boundary and retain the Abbeydale/Riverside area in Greenlands & Lakeside ward it would result in an electoral variance of 12% in Greenlands & Lakeside. Adopting the proposal from Councillor Marshall would provide for acceptable electoral equality, but we consider that this arrangement would arbitrarily divide the Abbeydale/Riverside area between Greenlands & Lakeside and North wards. We are also of the view it would leave part of Abbeydale geographically isolated from the remainder of North ward and not provide effective and convenient local government.

50 We also considered the submissions that did not approve of a ward containing the areas of Matchborough and Woodrow. As mentioned earlier, this review of Redditch must have a presumption towards providing a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for the borough. The existing Matchborough ward elects two councillors and to produce a ward that is represented by three councillors it is necessary to propose a ward that includes Matchborough and a neighbouring area. As a result of the submissions, we received during the first consultation, we concluded that the most suitable area would be Woodrow. We do not consider we have received compelling evidence to persuade us move away from the proposal.

51 We therefore propose to make no change to the draft recommendations of two three-councillor wards of Greenlands & Lakeside and Matchborough & Woodrow with electoral equality of 5% and 6% by 2028, respectively.

North and Winyates

52 We received three submissions that specifically mentioned our proposals in this area. Two local residents did not agree with the inclusion of the whole Abbeydale/Riverside area in Greenlands & Lakeside ward and thought it should be included in North ward. One local resident did not support any changes being made to the existing Winyates ward and another thought the inclusion of the Ipsley area in Winyates ward was sensible.

53 As part of our draft recommendations, we looked at where to include the Abbeydale area and concluded that the best balance of our statutory criteria would be to include it in Greenlands & Lakeside. To include the Abbeydale area in North ward, whilst also maintaining the strong boundary of the A4023 Coventry Highway as the southern boundary, would result in North ward having 20% more electors than other wards in Redditch. We are of the view that this level of electoral inequality is not justified given the submissions we have received.

54 We therefore propose that our final recommendations for these two wards are as per our draft recommendations. We propose two three-councillor wards of North and Winyates which will have electoral variances by 2028 of -2% and -7%, respectively.

Conclusions

55 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Redditch, referencing the 2021 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

	Final recommendations	
	2021	2028
Number of councillors	27	27
Number of electoral wards	9	9
Average number of electors per councillor	2,354	2,402
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

Redditch Borough Council should be made up of 27 councillors serving nine 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 Redditch Borough Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Redditch Borough Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

56 We have now completed our review of Redditch. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2024.

Equalities

57 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

Final recommendations for Redditch

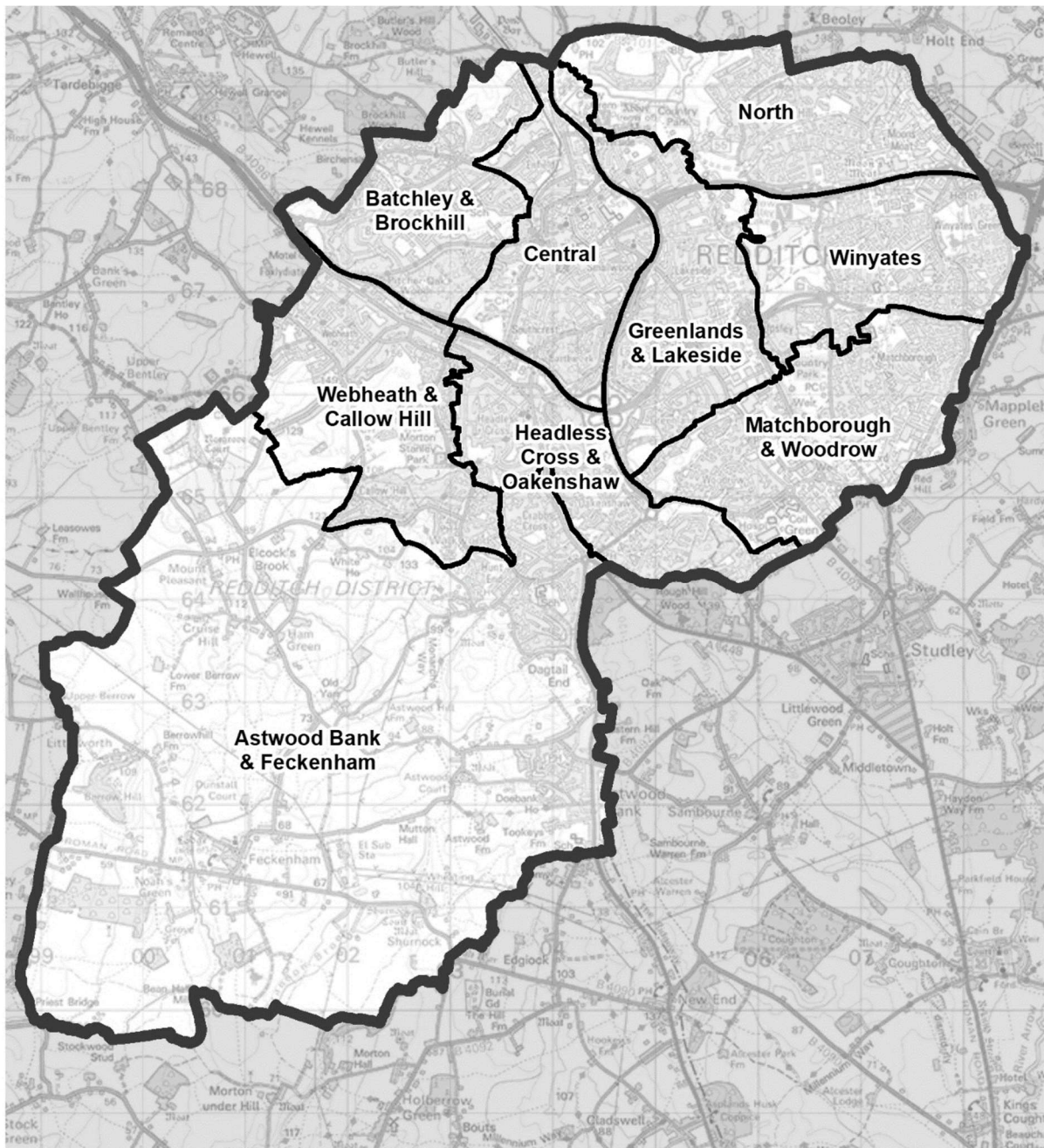
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Astwood Bank & Feckenham	3	6,902	2,301	-2%	7,010	2,337	-3%
2	Batchley & Brockhill	3	7,082	2,361	0%	7,686	2,562	7%
3	Central	3	6,455	2,152	-9%	6,675	2,225	-7%
4	Greenlands & Lakeside	3	7,475	2,492	6%	7,541	2,514	5%
5	Headless Cross & Oakenshaw	3	7,172	2,391	2%	7,305	2,435	1%
6	Matchborough & Woodrow	3	7,550	2,517	7%	7,613	2,538	6%
7	North	3	7,031	2,344	0%	7,061	2,354	-2%
8	Webheath & Callow Hill	3	7,129	2,376	1%	7,247	2,416	1%
9	Winyates	3	6,749	2,250	-4%	6,709	2,236	-7%
Totals		27	63,545	–	–	64,848	–	–
Averages		–	–	2,354	–	–	2,402	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Redditch Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



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/redditch

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/worcestershire/redditch

Councillors

- Councillor K. Ashley (Redditch Borough Council)
- Councillor E. Marshall (Redditch Borough Council)

Local Residents

- 36 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

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

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

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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