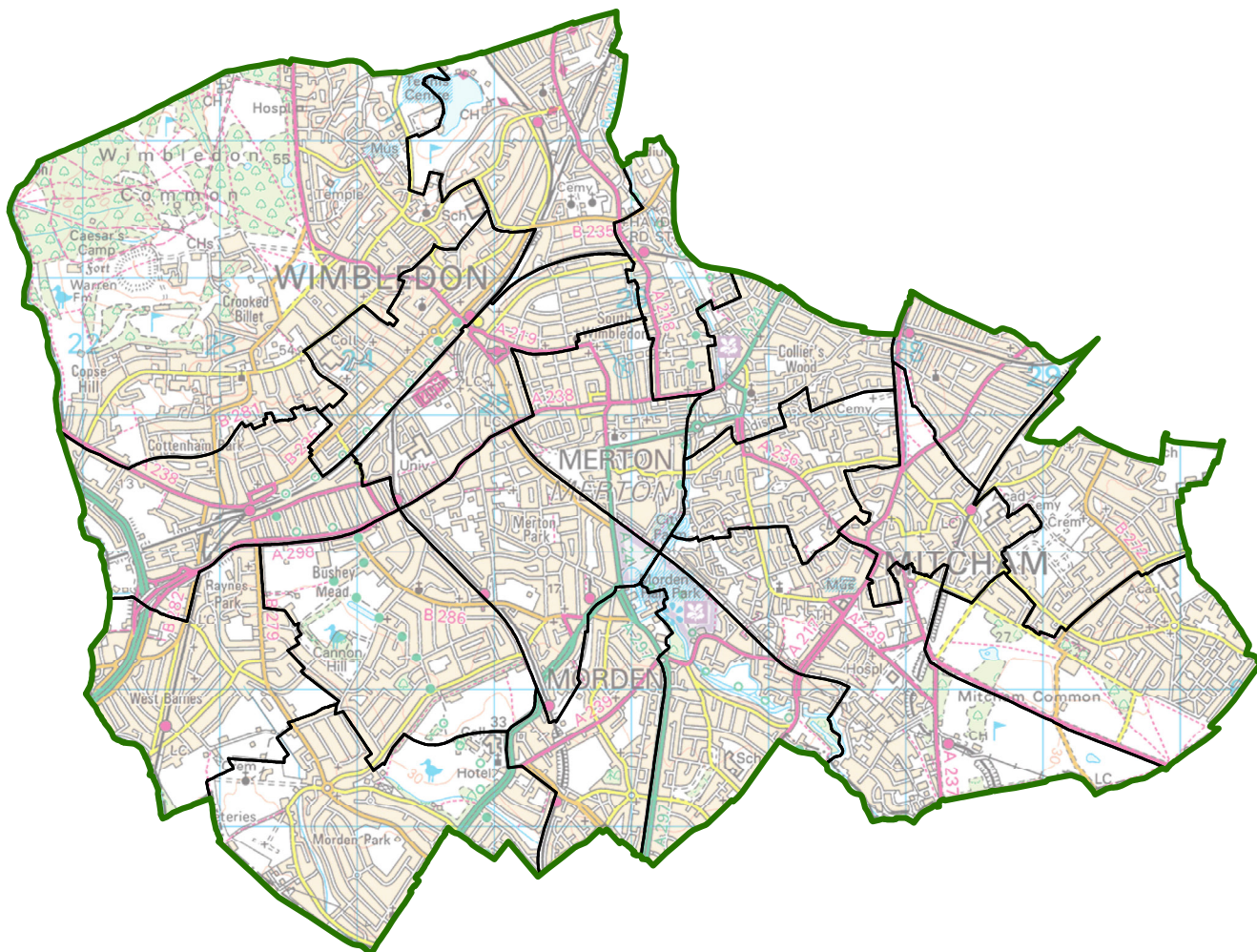


The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England



**New electoral arrangements for  
London Borough of Merton Council  
Final Recommendations**

October 2020

### **Translations and other formats:**

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why Merton?

7 We are conducting a review of Merton Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 1999, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Merton. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

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

## Our proposals for Merton

9 Merton should be represented by 57 councillors, three fewer than there are now.

10 Merton should have 20 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

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

## 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

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<sup>2</sup> 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 take into account 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 Merton. 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
16 April 2019	Number of councillors decided
4 June 2019	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
12 August 2019	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
17 December 2019	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
16 March 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming new recommendations
16 June 2020	Publication of further draft recommendations and start of consultation
27 July 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 October 2020	Publication of final recommendations





## Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation<sup>3</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>4</sup> 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.

	2019	2025
Electorate of Merton	151,605	162,915
Number of councillors	60	57
Average number of electors per councillor	2,527	2,858

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 Merton will have good electoral equality by 2025.

## 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](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2025, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2020. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7% by 2025.

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.

<sup>3</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

## Number of councillors

24 Merton Council currently has 60 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that decreasing by three 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 57 councillors – for example, 57 one-councillor wards, 19 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

26 We received five submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. These submissions either dealt with council size in passing as a result of the implications that a reduction of three councillors overall might have on particular areas of the borough or provided little evidence. We have therefore maintained a warding pattern based on 57 councillors for our final recommendations.

## Ward boundaries consultation

27 We received 26 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included three borough-wide proposals from the local Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

28 The borough-wide schemes provided mixed patterns of two- and three-councillor wards for Merton. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

29 Our draft recommendations also 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.

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

31 Our draft recommendations were for 17 three-councillor wards and three two-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

32 We received 410 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included a large number of submissions from residents and community groups in the Merton Park area suggesting changes to our draft recommendations for this part of the borough. Three submissions were received from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties offering comments on our draft recommendations across the borough. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in the Hillside area, and a small area of our proposed Wandle ward.

33 Having carefully considered the submissions received, we decided to undertake a period of further consultation in the Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields areas of the borough.

## Further draft recommendations

34 In response to this further consultation, we received 138 submissions, including three petitions, regarding our further draft recommendations for Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields wards. As a result of this further consultation, we are persuaded that the further draft recommendations do not best reflect our statutory criteria, and that we should revert back to our original draft recommendations for these wards.

## Final recommendations

35 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications to the wards in the Merton Park, Hillside and Lower Morden areas based on the submissions received. We also make minor modifications to the boundaries in other areas of the borough.

36 Our final recommendations provide for 17 three-councillor wards and three two-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.

37 The tables and maps on pages 9–28 detail our final recommendations for each area of Merton. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>5</sup> criteria of:

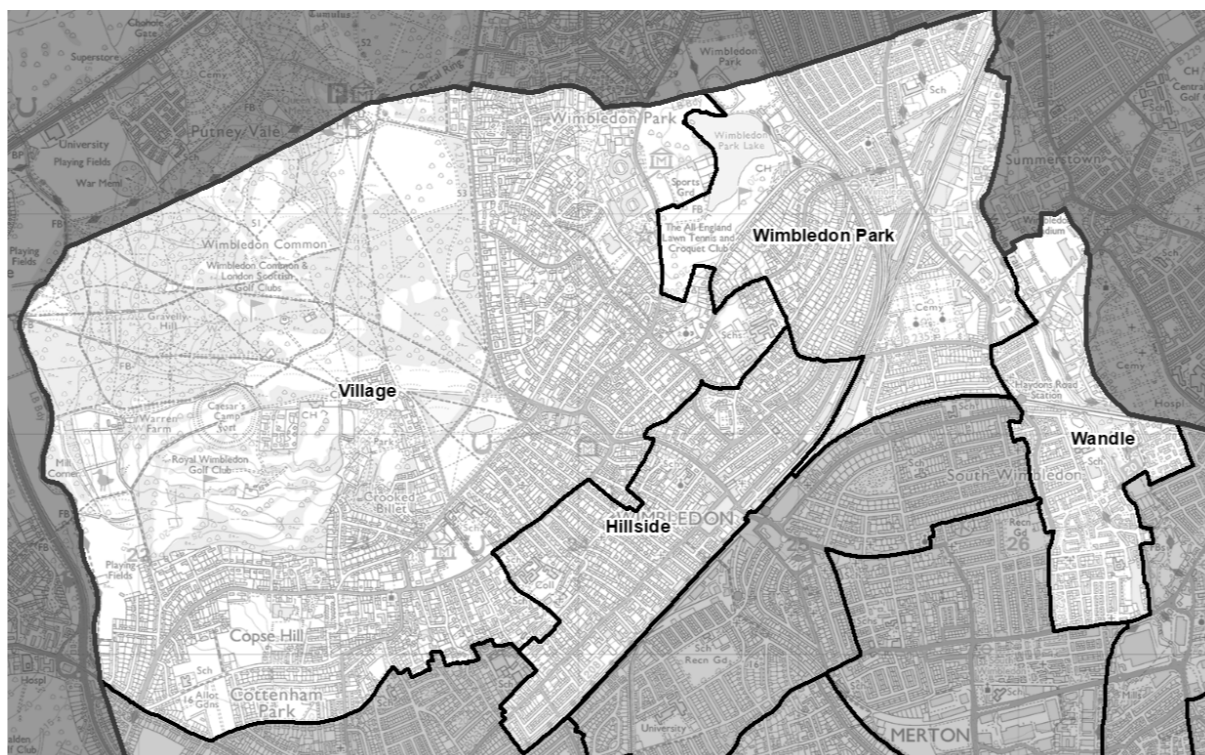
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

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<sup>5</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

38 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.

## North Merton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Hillside	2	5%
Village	3	-1%
Wandle	2	2%
Wimbledon Park	3	4%

### *Hillside and Village*

39 We received 27 submissions regarding the boundary between Village and Hillside wards, including from five residents' associations. The Labour and Conservative parties also commented on the draft recommendations for this ward, with the Labour submission supporting our recommendations, and the Conservatives proposing a change.

40 The submissions from individual residents and residents' associations were unanimous in preferring the existing ward boundary which runs along Ridgway. Our draft recommendations would result in the division of Ridgway Place, Spencer Hill, Denmark Road/Denmark Avenue and Thornton Road/Thornton Hill between wards. These representations argued that this area represented a single community and should not be split. Various suggestions were made with regard to adjustments to the boundary at the western end of Hillside ward, in order to retain Ridgway as the boundary and ensure good electoral equality.

41 We have carefully considered the representations made and the evidence presented in this area and are persuaded that there is sufficient evidence to change our draft recommendations. We therefore propose to revert to a ward boundary that runs along Ridgway, allowing the St John's area to remain in Hillside ward.

42 Our proposed boundary at the western end of Hillside ward, running along Edge Hill and The Downs, was chosen to maximise electoral equality, and was based on numerous suggestions from the Conservative party, residents' associations and individual residents who suggested broadly similar boundaries in this area.

43 The remainder of Hillside and Village wards were supported by local residents and political groups, and with the exception of the changes outlined above, we confirm our draft recommendations in these areas as final.

#### *Wandle and Wimbledon Park*

44 We received mixed representations regarding the north-eastern section of Merton, particularly with regard to our proposal to create a new Wandle ward. All the political groups and councillors who commented on this area supported the draft recommendations. However, a number of residents, and the Wimbledon Park Residents' Association, opposed our plans, either on the grounds that the proposed Wandle ward would lack a single community identity, or that existing communities on either side of Haydons Road would be disrupted.

45 In particular, we received 16 submissions from local residents specifically commenting on the inclusion of Kohat Road, Havelock Road, Kingsley Road and neighbouring streets within Wandle ward. They suggested that these streets shared a sense of community with others on the opposite side of Haydons Road.

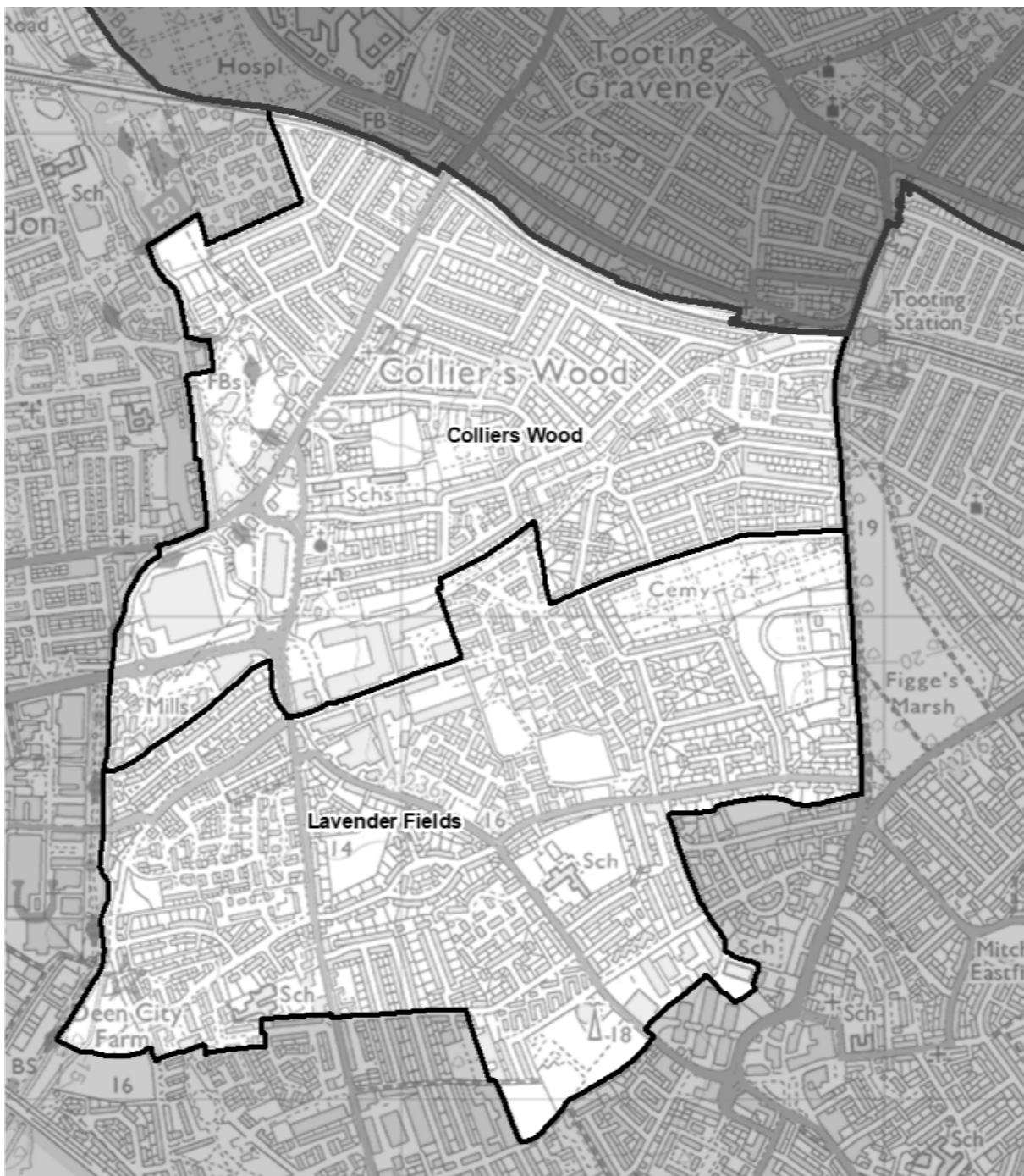
46 We carefully considered all the submissions received with regard to this area. In respect of Kohat Road, Havelock Road and Kingsley Road, we considered modifying our proposed Wandle ward to exclude these streets, but include the area east of Durnsford Road and the Weir Road industrial estate in order to retain electoral equality. The boundary would follow the River Wandle south until the railway line before re-joining our proposed boundary at Haydons Road station.

47 However, this proposal would result in a revised Wandle ward with no internal access between the northern and southern sections. In general, the Commission does not believe that wards with unclear communication and transport links provide for effective and convenient local government, particularly where an alternative exists.

48 In conclusion, we consider that our draft recommendations for Wimbledon Park and Wandle wards reflect the best balance of our statutory criteria, and we confirm them as final.



## Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Colliers Wood	3	1%
Lavender Fields	3	4%

### *Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields*

49 After receiving evidence in our initial draft recommendation consultation to significantly change the boundary between these two wards, we undertook a further period of consultation to determine if our proposed boundaries best reflected the statutory criteria.

50 Our further draft proposals were for streets in the Merton Abbey area as far south as Brangwyn Crescent and the culs-de-sac off it to move into Colliers Wood ward, and for Fleming Mead and surrounding streets (the Abbey Orchard Estate) to move into Lavender Fields. These two areas have roughly the same projected electorate. If both areas were placed in Colliers Wood ward, the variance of this ward would be 18%, with a -13% variance for Lavender Fields. This is beyond the bounds of what we consider acceptable electoral equality.

51 The majority of evidence received from the consultation suggested that residents from both areas considered themselves to be a part of the Colliers Wood community. A significant number of residents from the Merton Abbey area stated that they used shopping, community and transport facilities in Colliers Wood regularly. Equally, both signatories to petitions and individual respondents from the Abbey Orchard Estate stated that they considered the estate to be an integral part of the Colliers Wood community, and that the lack of connection for car transport should not be seen as a dividing factor as the majority of residents in this area relied on public transport or cycling.

52 A number of residents suggested that the boundary between the SW19 and CR4 postcode areas should be used as a ward boundary. We note that postcode areas are created solely for the administrative and operational efficiency of Royal Mail, and that we do not consider that a postcode boundary, of itself, is strong evidence of community identity. This is particularly the case with Myrna Close, which has an SW19 postcode but otherwise appears to share a clear community identity with the remainder of the Abbey Orchard Estate.

53 Community organisations and councillors for both existing wards made representations against our further draft recommendations, having been in favour of the wards proposed in our initial draft recommendations. The Colliers Wood Community Centre, in particular, offered evidence of how residents of the Abbey Orchard Estate are integrated within community activities, and argued against breaking this area off from Colliers Wood.

54 Councillors for both Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields wards, together with the Merton Labour Group, argued against our further draft recommendations and in favour of our original draft recommendations. Councillor Cooper-Marbiah (Colliers Wood) argued that her experience with the Crusoe Road Plus Residents' Association, and the use of the Singlegate Primary School by families living in the

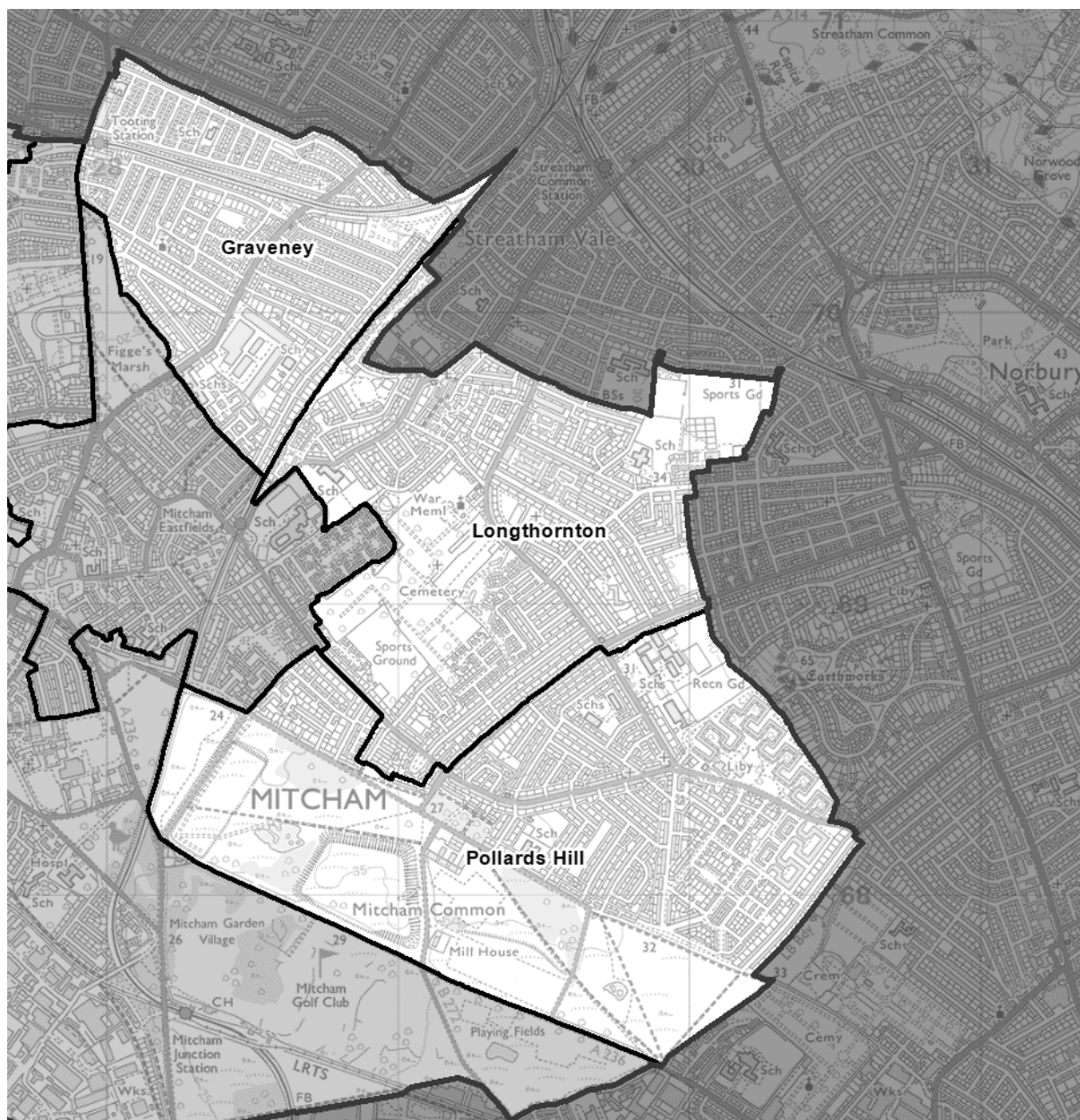
Abbey Orchard Estate, demonstrated community links with the remainder of Colliers Wood. Equally, Councillor Christie (Lavender Fields) argued that the areas around Liberty Avenue had equally strong community links with Lavender Fields as with Colliers Wood, pointing to the proximity of the Lavender Pavilion Community Centre, Haslemere Primary School and Lavender Fields Surgery.

55 We have carefully considered all the evidence provided and consider that this is a finely balanced judgment. On balance, we have been persuaded to revert to our original draft recommendations, which maintain the existing ward boundary between Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields. We are persuaded by the evidence from councillors, local organisations and residents that the Abbey Orchard area has a strong community identity with Colliers Wood.

56 We acknowledge that many residents in and around Liberty Avenue also felt a natural affinity with Colliers Wood. However, we were persuaded that the community identity of Abbey Orchard with Colliers Wood was at least as strong, and that the strong and identifiable boundaries for the existing wards in this area promote a clear identity of the two wards.

57 Both Colliers Wood and Lavender Fields wards will have good electoral equality by 2025, and we confirm our initial draft recommendations for these wards as final.

## South East Merton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Graveney	3	0%
Longthornton	3	-5%
Pollards Hill	3	-7%

### *Graveney, Longthornton and Pollards Hill*

58 Very few representations were received with regard to these areas. The Labour Group suggested retaining the existing boundary between Pollards Hill and Longthornton wards along Tamworth Lane, but offered limited evidence as to why this would better reflect our statutory criteria. In particular, the Labour Group asserted that moving Barnfield Avenue and Marlowe Square into Pollards Hill ward

would better reflect community identity, but provided no supporting evidence for this assertion. The Labour Group also suggested moving the boundary between Pollards Hill and Cricket Green wards to the A237, and renaming Pollards Hill ward as 'Mitcham Common' to reflect this change.

59 We are not persuaded by the evidence offered for these relatively minor changes, either to boundaries or names. We consider that Graveney, Longthornton and Pollards Hill continue to reflect the balance of evidence received. We note that our proposed Pollards Hill ward is very similar to the existing ward, and that to change the names of wards where there are only minor changes to boundaries has the potential to create unnecessary confusion. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

## Cricket Green and Figge's Marsh



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Cricket Green	3	6%
Figge's Marsh	3	-3%

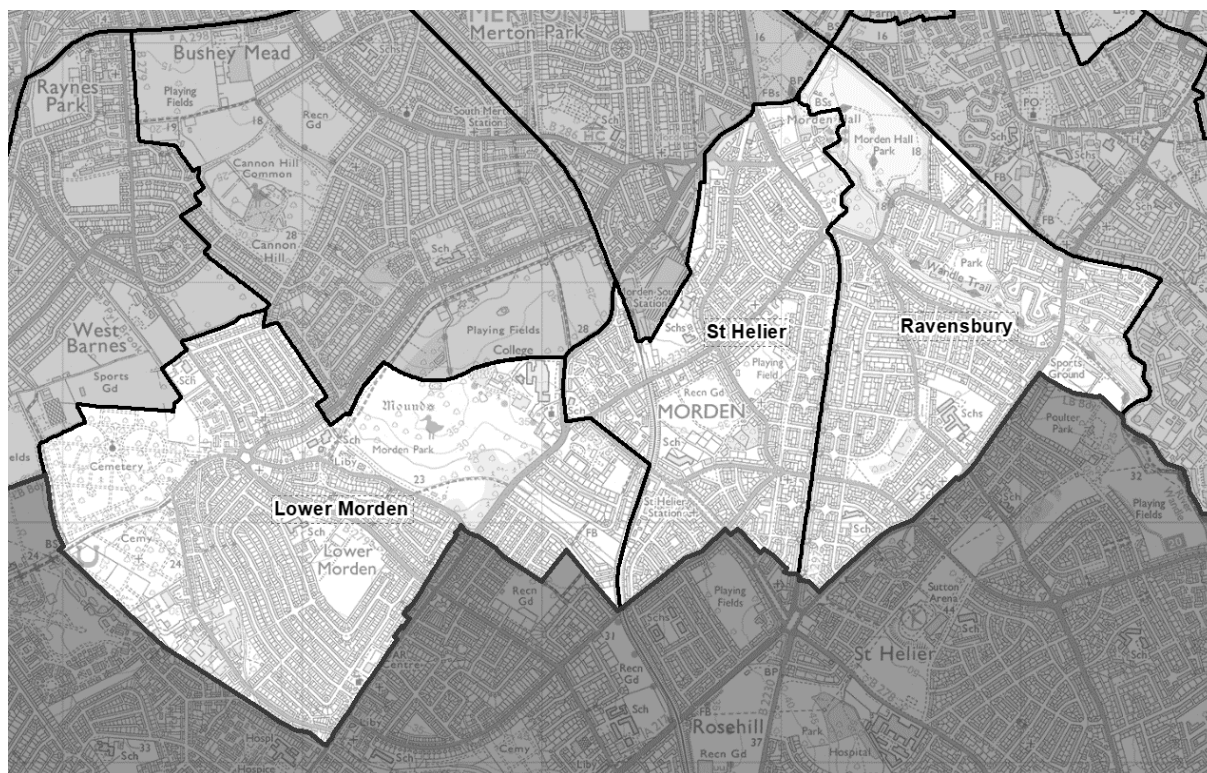
### *Cricket Green and Figge's Marsh*

60 We received relatively few representations with regard to these wards. Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage supported our proposed boundary, which follows the boundary of a conservation area. The Labour Group indicated that they preferred the boundary in this area to remain unchanged and noted that our draft recommendations left Hallowell Close as an isolated portion of Figge's Marsh. We are persuaded by this and have revised the boundary to ensure that Hallowell Close moves into Cricket Green ward together with its neighbouring streets. This has a marginal effect on electoral equality, with Cricket Green ward now having an electoral variance of +6%, and Figge's Marsh -3%.

61 A submission from a local resident suggested that the name of the ward was no longer appropriate as Figge's Marsh park now forms only a corner of the ward. Eastfields was suggested as an alternative name. In the absence of more substantial evidence that a ward name change is appropriate, we are not persuaded to change our recommendations in this area.

62 As outlined at paragraph 58, we rejected a proposal to move the boundary between Cricket Green and Pollards Hill to the A237. We received no other representations regarding these wards. Subject to the minor change of Hollowell Close moving to Cricket Green ward, we confirm our draft recommendations as final.

## South West Merton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Lower Morden	3	0%
Ravensbury	3	-4%
St Helier	3	-3%

### *Lower Morden and St Helier*

63 We received a small number of representations regarding this area, with one local resident arguing that the A24 should be the boundary between these two wards. We rejected this proposal in our draft recommendations owing to the poor electoral equality (-12% for Lower Morden) which would result.

64 The Labour and Liberal Democrat parties suggested that, given we had crossed the A24 with our draft recommendations, there would be benefit in moving the boundary further north in order to improve electoral equality.

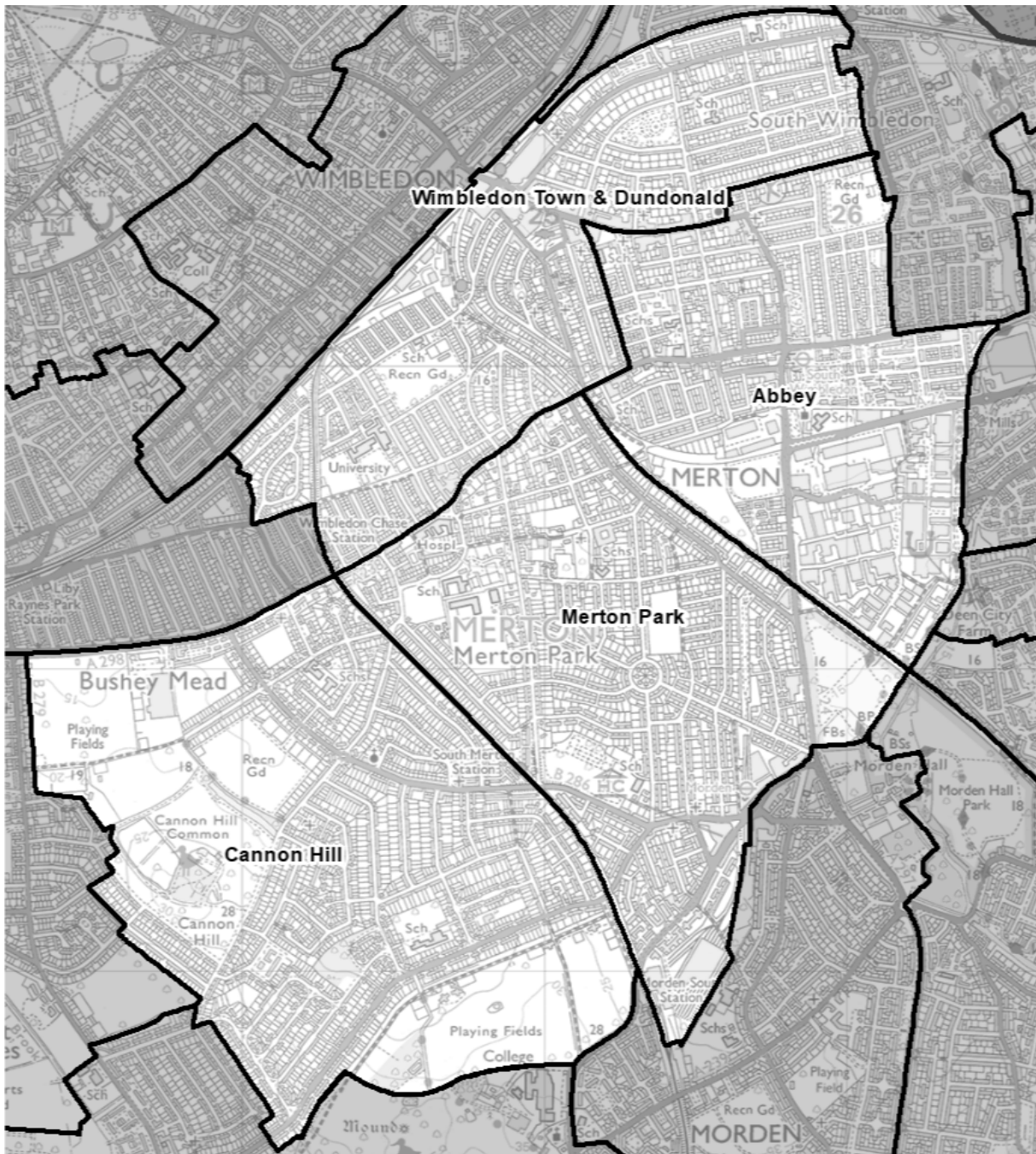
65 We carefully considered all the submissions received for this area. We concluded that the Liberal Democrats' proposal had merit. In particular, it would improve electoral equality and use Green Lane as a ward boundary, which we consider to be a clear and identifiable feature. We have therefore decided to adopt it as part of our final recommendations. This results in electoral variances of 0% for Lower Morden ward, and -3% for St Helier.



*Ravensbury*

66 We received no representations suggesting changes to our draft recommendations for Ravensbury ward. The Labour Group considered that our proposals would create a cohesive ward. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final.

## Central Merton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Abbey	3	4%
Cannon Hill	3	-10%
Merton Park	2	9%
Wimbledon Town & Dundonald	3	7%

### *Abbey*

67 The majority of responses to our draft recommendations for Abbey ward were positive, with residents noting that the entirety of the 'Battles' area would be in the new ward.

68 The Liberal Democrats and a number of local residents expressed concern with regard to the ward boundary running along the length of South Park Road, which we recognise is not a major road. However, the proposed alternatives would also divide relatively minor roads between wards and have a negative impact on the electoral equality for Wimbledon Town & Dundonald ward. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt these suggested changes.

69 The Labour Group proposed more extensive changes to Abbey ward. These were dependent on proposed changes to Merton Park and Wimbledon Town & Dundonald wards, which we have not adopted as outlined at paragraph 81. We were therefore not persuaded to change our draft recommendations in this area, and we confirm these as final.

### *Merton Park*

70 More than half of the submissions received in the consultation commented on our draft recommendations for Merton Park ward. Many of these offered evidence of the community links between residential areas within Merton Park and suggested alternative boundaries that would allow certain areas to remain within this ward. Other submissions focused on matters that under our statutory criteria we cannot consider. These included the political party that has historically been successful in Merton Park ward, the desire for Merton Park to retain three councillors under any and all circumstances, and the nature of the development of Merton Park in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and before.

71 Submissions were received from a large number of residents, as well as the John Innes Society, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and the Wimbledon Society Planning & Environment Committee. A joint submission from the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents political party and the Merton Park Ward Residents' Association was also received.

72 Some representations argued that the existing Merton Park ward had served the community well, including multiple references to the ward being measured as having the highest level of social capital within the borough, and that therefore there was no need to alter any of the existing boundaries. However, the existing three-member ward is projected to have an electoral variance of -14% by 2025, or a 29% variance as a two-member ward. It is a key democratic principle that electors should have a vote of broadly equal weight and we are not persuaded that these variances would provide for that.

73 Most of the representations made with regard to Merton Park referred to one of two separate areas. The first (the Southern area), bounded by Kingston Road to the north and the railway line to the west, we proposed be moved to Cannon Hill ward in our draft recommendations. The second (the Northern area) includes the culs-de-sac to the north of Kingston Road, and the area south of Henfield Road. In our draft recommendations, we proposed moving this area into Trinity ward (now named Wimbledon Town & Dundonald).

74 We received strong evidence of community identity from residents in the Southern area, with those on Aylward Road in particular arguing that they felt a strong sense of community with the central area of Merton Park, but little with the remainder of Cannon Hill ward. It was also suggested in several submissions that the railway line made for a clearer and more identifiable ward boundary than Watery Lane and that our proposals in this area would divide the John Innes-Merton Park Conservation Area between wards.

75 In contrast, we received supportive evidence for our draft recommendations from Councillor McLean, the Liberal Democrats, and a number of residents. In particular, they argued that it was natural for the entirety of Cannon Hill Lane to be placed in the ward of that name; or that Blakeney Walk should form a boundary, allowing Manor Gardens and the whole of Watery Lane to remain in Merton Park.

76 We carefully considered all the submissions for this area. Given the clear evidence that residents of Aylward Road consider they are part of the Merton Park community, and the presence of a strong, natural boundary in the railway line, we are persuaded to change our draft recommendation in this area, and revert to the existing boundary between Merton Park and Cannon Hill wards.

77 With regard to the Northern section of Merton Park (defined at paragraph 73), the community evidence was less clear. Some residents in this area felt that they were part of the Merton Park community and provided evidence of occasions where the residents' association had assisted with a small development scheme. In contrast, a number of respondents felt that there was a difference in community identity, and that the streets to the north of Kingston Road fell within the Wimbledon Chase or Dundonald communities.

78 We received a number of different views about the appropriateness of using Kingston Road as a boundary. A number of residents felt that it was an appropriate boundary, and clearly identifiable. Others felt that, in terms of major roads in London, it was relatively easy to cross and did not present a significant barrier. It was noted by one consultation respondent that the current Wikipedia entry on Merton Park referred to Kingston Road as the northern boundary of the area, while outlining that for administrative convenience, the current ward exceeded this area.

79 In terms of local organisations, several local residents suggested that the John Innes Society was a key community link across Merton Park. The society itself provided material on its operations, which noted that the area benefited by the society did not follow existing ward boundaries. Furthermore, it did not include the roads between Quintin Avenue and Rothesay Avenue that we moved into our proposed Wimbledon Park & Dundonald ward.

80 The Merton Park Ward Residents' Association (which sponsors the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR) political group) accepted that there was a necessity for change owing to electoral equality. They proposed a ward boundary extending as far north as Dundonald Road, and to the tramline in the east, in addition to restoring the areas both north and south of Kingston Road to Merton Park ward. This proposal offered good electoral equality for Merton Park but would require significant boundary changes to adjoining wards.

81 The Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' submissions supported our draft recommendations with regard to the northern boundary of Merton Park. The Labour Group proposed adding the majority of polling district PA to a revised 'Merton Park & Dundonald' ward and making significant consequential changes across the central area of the borough. This would involve Merton Park retaining three councillors, and a revised Abbey ward reducing to two councillors. However, this proposal did not offer evidence of significant community ties between the Dundonald area and the remainder of Merton Park, and we consider that this level of expansion runs the risk, mentioned in several residents' submissions, of diluting the community identity and social capital associated with Merton Park.

82 We have carefully considered all of the evidence received with regard to the northern boundary of Merton Park, but are not persuaded to alter our draft recommendations in this area. We consider that, while the road may have served a different purpose during John Innes' development of the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kingston Road currently serves as an effective and identifiable boundary.

83 While the alternative proposals put forward by the Labour Group and MPWIR to expand Merton Park ward to the north offered good electoral equality for Merton Park as a three-councillor ward, this came at the expense of significant consequential changes, affecting wards from West Barnes and Lower Morden in the west to Abbey in the East. These changes had very little supporting evidence in themselves.

84 We also noted that while there were some residents from the area to the north of the existing ward who expressed an interest in Merton Park extending into their area, there were also residents who were concerned that this would dilute the existing identity of Merton Park ward.

85 In conclusion, we have decided to alter our draft recommendations for the boundary between Merton Park and Cannon Hill wards, with the boundary reverting to the railway line. We have decided that Kingston Road should remain as the northern boundary of Merton Park ward. We consider that these boundaries best reflect our statutory criteria, and we confirm these recommendations as final.

### *Cannon Hill*

86 Few submissions were received with regard to our proposed Cannon Hill ward in isolation from Merton Park. One resident suggested that our proposed boundary dividing Churston Drive was arbitrary, and that Churston Drive residents looked more towards Cannon Hill, along Shaldon Drive, than to Lower Morden.

87 Given the need to expand Cannon Hill ward so that its eastern boundary follows the railway line, as well as the need to ensure acceptable electoral equality, we have adopted this proposal as part of our final recommendations. We have also made a minor adjustment to the boundary between Cannon Hill and West Barnes wards, which means that Cannon Hill will have a variance of -10% by 2025.

### *Wimbledon Town & Dundonald*

88 The submissions we received with regard to this ward specifically (as opposed to the consequential changes based on neighbouring wards) were broadly supportive. The South Park Estate Residents' Association welcomed our proposal that their area remain part of the ward and noted that the parts of the former Dundonald ward bordering the town centre also looked in this direction. Councillors Holmes and Ormrod stated that they had consulted residents across the ward and were supportive of the draft recommendations.

89 The Wimbledon Society suggested that this ward lacked both coherence and a single community identity. We accept that there are differences between the areas at either end of this ward but consider that the hub of Wimbledon Town Centre acts as a central focus for all parts of this ward.

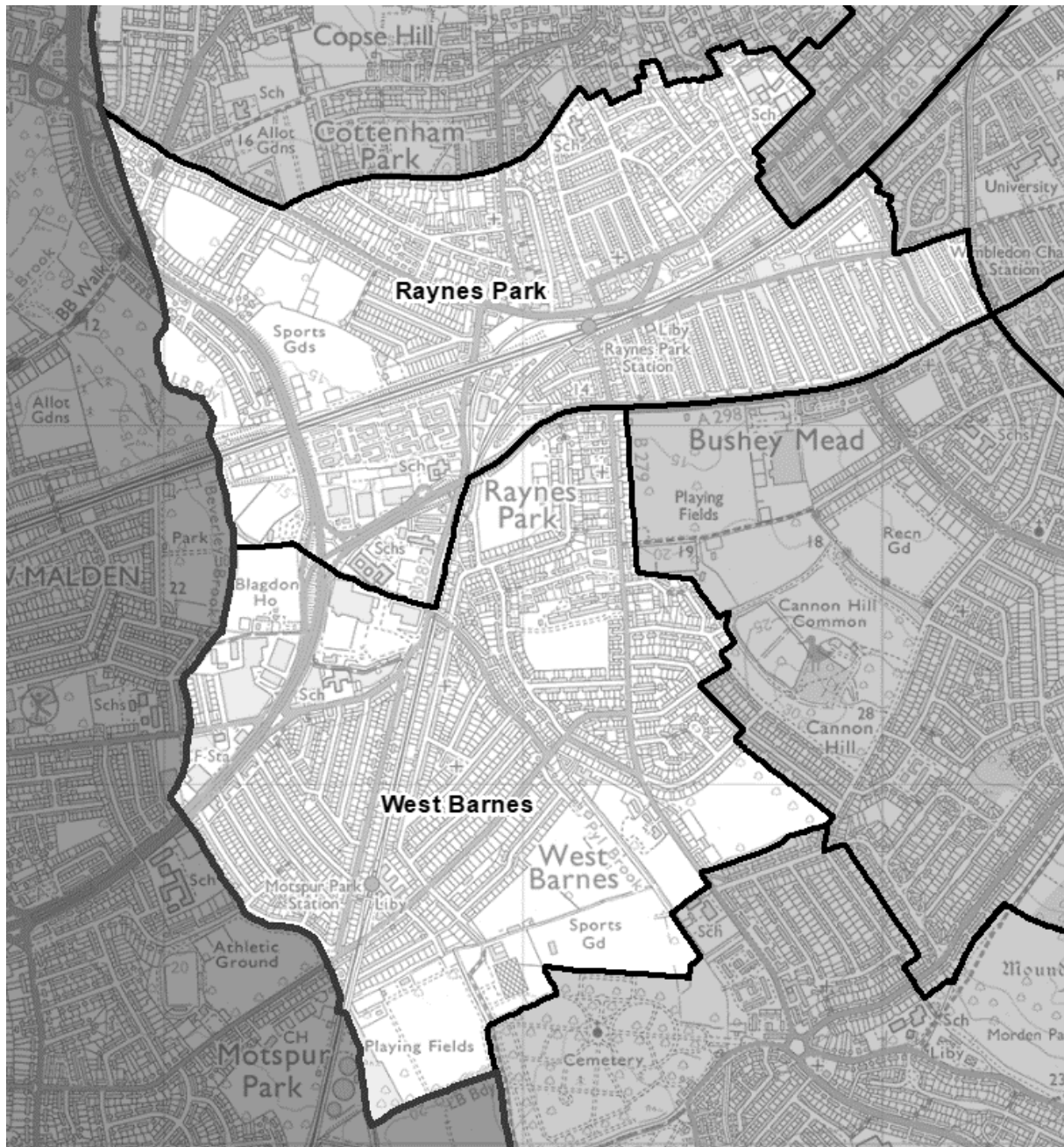
90 The Liberal Democrats proposed minor adjustments to our draft recommendations. They proposed that Chaseside Avenue and Oxford Avenue move into this ward, and proposed another amendment near South Park Road, discussed at paragraph 68. We considered this carefully, but the net effect of these changes would be to increase the size of this ward by roughly 700 electors by 2025, leading to an electoral variance of 14%. We have concluded that this is too great a variance and have therefore not adopted these proposals as part of our final recommendations.

91 We received various representations with regard to the name of this ward. The Liberal Democrats suggested names based on the ward covering the Wimbledon

Central Business District, and a number of residents suggested that it would be regrettable for the name 'Dundonald' to be lost completely. We are persuaded by these representations and propose to change our proposed ward name from Trinity to Wimbledon Town & Dundonald.

92 As mentioned previously (paragraphs 80 and 81) we received separate proposals for changes to Merton Park and Abbey wards, which would have consequential impacts upon Wimbledon Town & Dundonald. As we did not adopt these changes, we confirm our draft recommendation boundaries for this ward as final.

## West Merton



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Raynes Park	3	4%
West Barnes	3	-7%

### *Raynes Park*

93 We received mostly supportive submissions with regard to our draft recommendations for Raynes Park ward. Councillors A. Bush and O. Bush welcomed the broad outline of this ward but suggested that it could be further expanded to include the area around Lower Downs Road, as residents in this area access services and facilities in Raynes Park along Worple Road. We considered



this carefully in conjunction with proposed changes to Hillside ward (discussed at paragraph 42), but concluded that the 600+ electors in this area could not move into Raynes Park ward without a significant increase in electoral variances.

94 The Labour Group suggested that to the west of West Barnes Lane, the boundary between Raynes Park and West Barnes should run along the railway line, moving roughly 850 electors into West Barnes ward. While the effects of the change on electoral equality would be minor, we consider that the evidence of community identity provided across both consultations, and the disadvantage of having facilities such as Raynes Park High School outside of the ward of that name, mean that we should not adopt the proposed changes.

95 We consider that our draft recommendations for Raynes Park best reflect the statutory criteria, and we confirm them as final.

### *West Barnes*

96 We received only one representation from a resident specifically regarding the boundaries of our proposed West Barnes ward although, as discussed elsewhere, some changes proposed for other wards would have consequential impacts on West Barnes. The one submission we received supported our draft recommendation to retain the existing West Barnes ward.

97 As discussed at paragraph 87, our proposed changes to Cannon Hill ward require moving a small number of electors from West Barnes in order to maintain acceptable electoral equality. Subject to this change, we confirm our draft recommendations as final.

## Conclusions

98 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Merton, referencing the 2020 and 2025 electorate figures. 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	
	2019	2025
Number of councillors	57	57
Number of electoral wards	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,660	2,858
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

#### Final recommendations

Merton Council should be made up of 57 councillors serving 20 wards representing three two-councillor wards and 17 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 Merton Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Merton on our interactive maps at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)



## What happens next?

99 We have now completed our review of Merton. 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 2022.



## Equalities

100 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 Merton

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey	3	7,382	2,461	-3%	8,925	2,975	4%
2	Cannon Hill	3	7,326	2,442	-3%	7,695	2,565	-10%
3	Colliers Wood	3	8,274	2,758	9%	8,619	2,873	1%
4	Cricket Green	3	8,084	2,695	7%	9,058	3,019	6%
5	Figge's Marsh	3	7,598	2,533	0%	8,305	2,768	-3%
6	Graveney	3	8,217	2,739	8%	8,586	2,862	0%
7	Hillside	2	5,998	2,999	19%	6,023	3,127	5%
8	Lavender Fields	3	8,003	2,668	0%	8,933	2,978	4%
9	Longthornton	3	8,127	2,709	7%	8,175	2,725	-5%
10	Lower Morden	3	8,488	2,829	12%	8,605	2,875	0%
11	Merton Park	2	5,978	2,989	18%	6,228	3,105	9%
12	Pollards Hill	3	8,014	2,671	6%	8,004	2,668	-7%



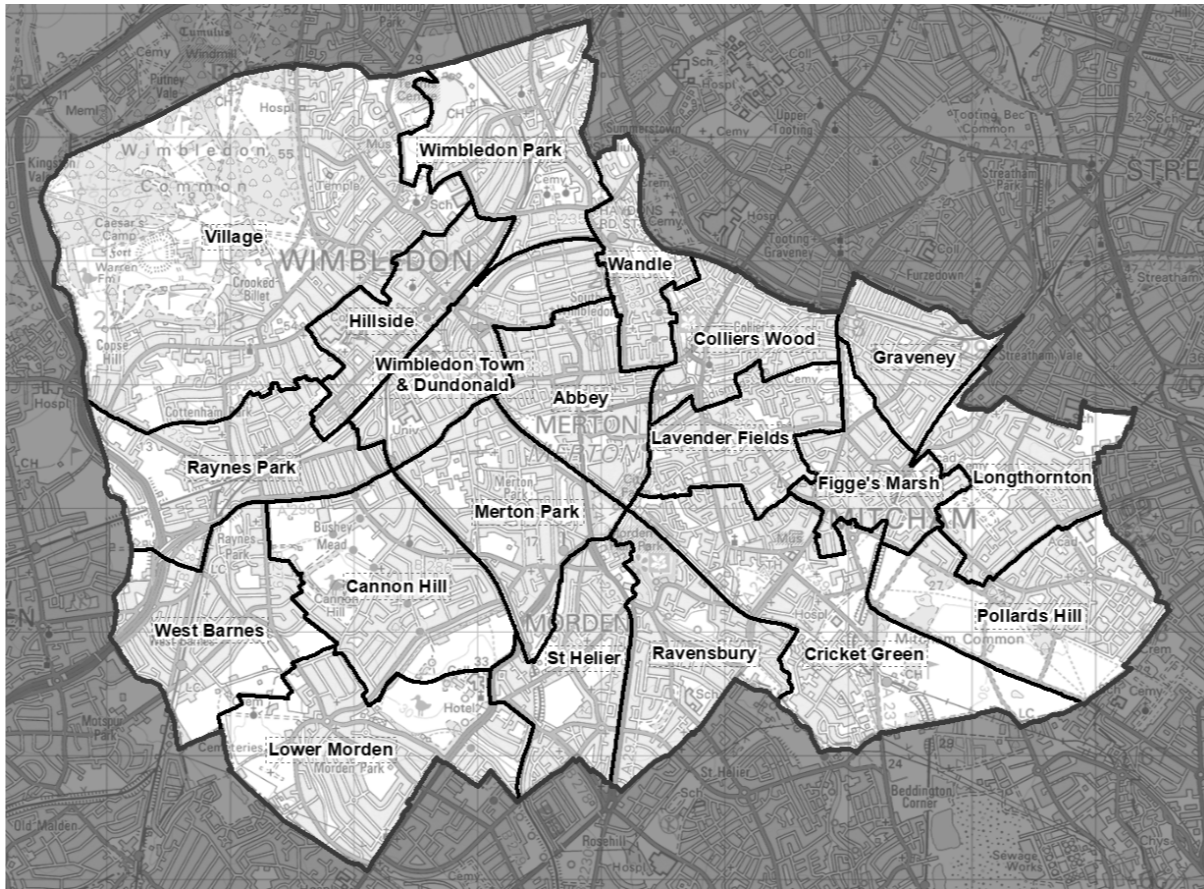
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Ravensbury	3	6,858	2,286	-10%	8,224	2,741	-4%
14 Raynes Park	3	8,613	2,871	14%	8,956	2,985	4%
15 St Helier	3	7,564	2,521	0%	8,287	2,762	-3%
16 Village	3	8,464	2,821	12%	8,475	3,049	-1%
17 Wandle	2	4,486	2,412	-11%	5,805	4,122	2%
18 West Barnes	3	7,503	2,501	-1%	7,955	2,077	-7%
19 Wimbledon Park	3	7,678	2,447	1%	8,905	2,652	4%
20 Wimbledon Town & Dundonald	3	8,945	2,982	18%	9,147	2,826	7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>151,605</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>162,915</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,858</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Merton 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/greater-london/greater-london/merton](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/merton)

## Appendix C

### Submissions received

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

[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/merton](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/merton)

#### *Political Groups*

- Merton Conservatives
- Merton Labour Group
- Merton Liberal Democrats
- Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR)

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor T. Barlow
- Councillor A. Bush
- Councillor O. Bush
- Councillor S. Crowe
- Councillor D. Dean
- Councillor E. Gretton
- Councillor D. Holden
- Councillor J. Holmes
- Councillor J. Howard
- Councillor N. McLean
- Councillor O. Moulton
- Councillor H. Ormrod
- Councillor D. Simpson
- Councillor M. Whelton
- Councillor D. Williams

#### *Members of Parliament*

- Stephen Hammond MP (Wimbledon)

#### *Local Organisations*

- Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
- The John Innes Society
- Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
- Ridgway Place Residents' Association
- South Ridgway Residents' Association

- South Park Estate Residents' Association
- St John's Area Residents' Association
- Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association
- Wimbledon Park Residents' Association
- Wimbledon Society Planning & Environment Committee
- Wimbledon Village Ward Safer Neighbourhood Police Panel

#### *Local Residents*

- 378 local residents

#### *Anonymous*

- 1 Anonymous

### Submissions received in response to further draft recommendations

#### *Political Groups*

- Merton Labour Group

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor M. Allison
- Councillor L. Attawar
- Councillor B. Christie
- Councillor C. Cooper-Marbiah
- Councillor E. MacAuley

#### *Members of Parliament*

- Siobhain McDonagh MP (Mitcham & Morden)

#### *Local Organisations*

- Colliers Wood Community Centre
- Colliers Wood Residents' Association
- Crusoe Road Plus Residents' Association
- Fusion Merton Multicultural Group

*Local Residents*

- 125 local residents

*Petitions*

- 3 petitions

## 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 fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
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. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
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 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 <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
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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