

New electoral arrangements for Oxford City Council

Final recommendations

February 2019

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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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Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. 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.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

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

Why Oxford?

4 We are conducting a review of Oxford City Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in city council elections varies depending on where you live in Oxford. 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.

Our proposals for Oxford

- Oxford should be represented by 48 councillors, the same number as there are now.
- Oxford should have 24 wards, the same number as there are now.
- The boundaries of 21 wards should change. Three (Hinksey Park, Marston and Rose Hill & Iffley) will stay the same.

5 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Oxford.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

7 The members of the Commission are:

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

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

1 Introduction

8 This electoral review was carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Oxford 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 city.

What is an electoral review?

9 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

10 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

11 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Oxford. We then held three periods of consultation on warding patterns for the city. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft and final recommendations.

12 This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
19 December 2017	Number of councillors decided
9 January 2018	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
2 April 2018	End of consultation, we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
5 June 2018	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
13 August 2018	End of consultation, we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 November 2018	Publication of further draft recommendations for south-east Oxford; start of further limited consultation
4 December 2018	End of further limited consultation, we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
5 February 2019	Publication of final recommendations

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 ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

14 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

15 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.

16 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.

	2017	2024
Electorate of Oxford	108,667	116,037
Number of councillors	48	48
Average number of electors per councillor	2,264	2,417

17 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 Oxford will have good electoral equality by 2024.

18 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 take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

19 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

20 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2023, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2018. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7% by 2023. Due to the need for further consultation, our final recommendations are being published in 2019. The Council have confirmed that there are no significant changes in the electorate between 2023 and 2024.

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

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

21 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.

Number of councillors

22 Oxford City Council currently has 48 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.

23 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 48 councillors.

24 As Oxford City Council elects by halves (meaning it has elections in two out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council should have a uniform pattern of two-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that applying such a pattern in a particular area of the authority would be inconsistent with satisfying the statutory criteria.

25 We received no submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. We have therefore maintained 48 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

26 We received nine submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included identical city-wide proposals from the Council and Oxford & District Labour Party ('the Labour Party'). The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for wards in particular areas of the city.

27 The city-wide schemes proposed a uniform pattern of 24 two-councillor wards for the city. Having carefully considered the proposals received, we were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the city and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. We noted the preference in the city-wide submissions for using property boundaries as boundaries between wards, rather than the centre of roads. We based our draft recommendations on the city-wide schemes with some modifications to provide for better electoral equality and more identifiable boundaries.

28 Our draft recommendations were for 24 two-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations provided for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests, based on the evidence we received.

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c)

Draft recommendations consultation

29 We received 152 submissions during the consultation on our draft recommendations, many of which referred to more than one ward. These included alternative proposals for most of the wards in the city from Oxford Conservative Association and Oxford West & Abingdon Conservative Association ('the Conservatives'). Oxford East Green Party ('the Greens') proposed major changes to our proposals in the southern part of east Oxford. They also supported the proposals of Oxford City Council Liberal Democrat Group and the Oxford City Branch of Oxford West & Abingdon Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') in other parts of the city. A resident proposed an alternative pattern of wards in west Oxford and Headington.

30 The largest number of submissions from local residents referred to our proposals in the southern part of east Oxford, Jericho, Cutteslowe and Wolvercote.

31 Some submissions included proposals to rename wards after distinguished Oxford residents with connections to the wards concerned. There were also objections to the Council's proposal to use the name 'Bannister' from residents living in the St Clement's area. Our approach is that ward names should, as accurately and succinctly as possible, describe the area concerned. The ward's name should also be immediately recognisable to as many residents in the ward as possible. While we appreciate the desire of the Council and others to honour the likes of Sir Roger Bannister, J.R.R. Tolkien or Colin Dexter, the primary purpose of a ward name is to describe the communities living in the ward. We are not persuaded that this was achieved by the alternative names put forward.

32 There was discussion in some submissions about the possibility of an electoral review of Oxfordshire County Council before the next county council elections in 2021. While each of our reviews are separate and have no bearing on other reviews, we can confirm that the County Council is not part of our current work programme. Therefore, for the purposes of this review, it has been assumed that no changes to division boundaries are imminent.

33 The representations that we received on the draft recommendations persuaded us to make a number of changes to the warding pattern across the city. These changes are explained in this report. In the southern part of east Oxford we considered that the changes were significant and substantial enough that we should consult on them again specifically. The purpose of the 'further draft recommendations consultation' was to attract views and evidence about this area (seven of the wards detailed in our draft recommendations: Bartlemas, Cowley, Donnington, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Temple Cowley and St Clement's) and about the degree to which the further draft recommendations would reflect community identities and to better inform us when we came to make our final recommendations.

34 In the northern part of east Oxford, and Blackbirds Leys and Northfield Brook, we are proposing no changes to our draft recommendations, other than to rename our Barton ward Barton & Sandhills.

35 In west Oxford our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with modifications to the following wards: Cutteslowe, Jericho, Summertown, Walton Manor and Wolvercote. We have also renamed our Jericho ward Carfax & Jericho.

Further draft recommendations consultation

36 We received 49 submissions in response to our consultation on the further draft recommendations, one of which referred to a ward outside the consultation area. Approximately half of the submissions objected to our revised proposals in Iffley on two grounds. Firstly, our proposal put Anne Greenwood Close, Stone Quarry Lane and part of Tree Lane in our Rose Hill ward when, residents argued, they are part of Iffley. Secondly, some respondents objected to Iffley and Rose Hill being placed in separate wards due to the longstanding connections between the two areas. There were also objections to our proposal to place the Newman Road area of Littlemore in Rose Hill ward rather than Littlemore ward. Finally, the submissions we received broadly supported the further draft recommendations for St Clement's and St Mary's wards.

37 In the southern part of east Oxford, we are making no changes to our further draft recommendations for St Clement's or St Mary's wards but are reverting to the boundaries proposed in our draft recommendations for Littlemore and Rose Hill & Iffley wards. We are amending our Cowley, Donnington and Temple Cowley wards as proposed by the Council in its further draft recommendations submission.

Final recommendations

38 Pages 10-24 detail our final recommendations for each area of Oxford. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

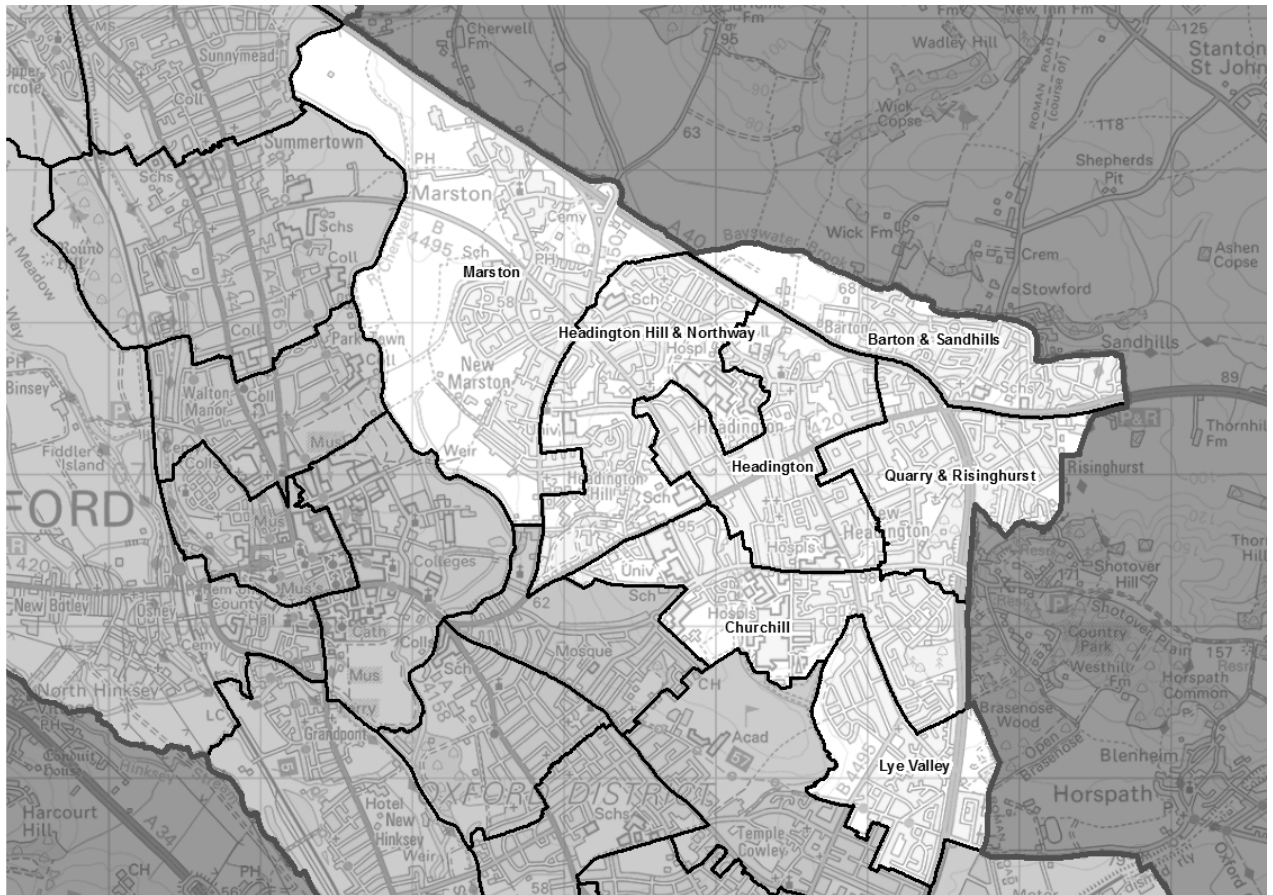
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

39 Our final recommendations are for 24 two-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

40 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on pages 28-29 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

North-east Oxford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2024
Barton & Sandhills	2	4%
Churchill	2	0%
Headington	2	9%
Headington Hill & Northway	2	-2%
Lye Valley	2	-2%
Marston	2	-2%
Quarry & Risinghurst	2	10%

Churchill, Headington, Headington Hill & Northway, Marston and Quarry & Risinghurst

41 We received 15 submissions which related to this area, including alternative proposals for the whole area from the Conservatives and a local resident. The only objection that appeared in more than one submission was that Old Road, rather than the county division boundary, should be used as the boundary between our Churchill and Quarry & Risinghurst wards. The objectors stated that Old Road would be a clearer boundary and using it would correct an anomaly in the division boundary.

42 The other objections to our proposals included that the Old Headington Conservation Area should be in one ward, William Street should be part of our Headington Hill & Northway ward and that the Harberton Mead area should be in our Marston ward.

43 In justifying their alternative proposal, the Conservatives argued that the current Marston ward, which we retained in our draft recommendations, did not include all of the area that people considered to be Marston. There were also areas outside our Headington Hill & Northway ward that had a strong connection to that area. However, placing the William Street and Ferry Road areas in their proposed St Clement's & St Mary's ward, led to an electoral variance of 19% in that ward.

44 The resident's proposal aimed to improve the relatively high electoral variances in our wards in this area and also sought to create a better division between communities in Marston and Northway and to more closely reflect the boundary of Marston parish.

45 We have carefully considered all the submissions received for this part of the city and visited it after the consultation on our draft recommendations closed.

46 Regarding the boundary proposed by the Council and others on Old Road, we do not consider that any new evidence has been provided that was not available when we developed our draft recommendations. As we noted in our draft recommendations report, a boundary on Old Road would require us to create two parish wards of Risinghurst & Sandhills parish each with just over 100 electors. We do not consider that such small parish wards lead to effective and convenient local government. In addition, having visited the area, we do not consider that Old Road is such a strong boundary that it justifies those small parish wards or the small deviation from the county division boundary in this part of the city. Therefore, we propose no changes to our recommended ward boundaries for this area.

47 As stated above, there were a large number of other issues raised and alternatives proposed for this area. However, we consider that none were supported by strong community or other evidence. We did give serious consideration to the proposal from The Friends of Old Headington that all the Old Headington Conservation Area be placed in one ward. However, we concluded that this potentially divided the community in the Dunstan Road area and decided, on balance, to make no change to our draft recommendations.

48 In relation to the two area-wide schemes we received, the nature of the changes proposed meant either accepting one in its entirety or retaining our draft

recommendations. As noted above in paragraph 43, the proposal by the Conservatives led to very high electoral inequality in a neighbouring ward. As neither submission was supported by substantial community evidence, our primary assessment of both schemes was through our tour of the area. We concluded that while the wards we had proposed contained several different communities (most notably our Headington Hill & Northway ward), this was a common feature of many wards in the city.

49 While we accept that our boundary between Headington and Quarry & Risinghurst wards on Barton Road is imperfect, we considered that none of our wards obviously split a community. In respect of the other proposals received, we were particularly concerned by the resident's proposed boundary between Headington Hill and Old Marston & Northway. While this followed the parish boundary, it did not appear to be a community boundary. We considered our boundary on Marston Road to be much clearer. We were equally concerned by the Conservatives' proposal to put the William Street and Ferry Road areas in their St Clement's & St Mary's ward given that William Street and Ferry Road are approximately half a mile from the nearest residential property in the rest of this proposed ward.

50 Therefore, we propose no changes to our draft recommendations in this part of the city and confirm our Churchill, Headington, Headington Hill & Northway, Marston and Quarry & Risinghurst wards as final without amendment.

Barton & Sandhills

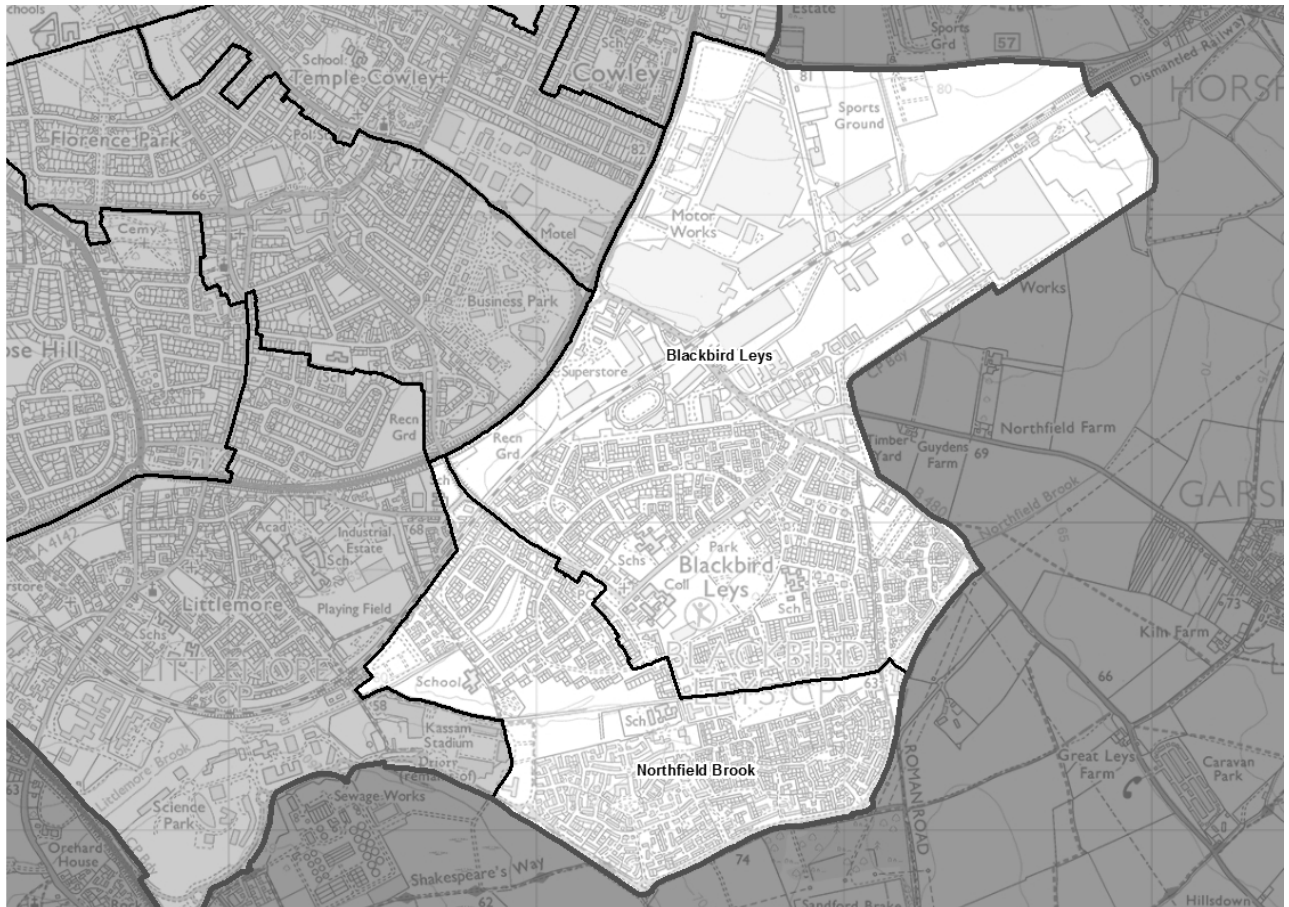
51 We received 14 submissions that referred to this ward. There were two main objections. Firstly, five submissions argued that Sandhills should be part of our Quarry & Risinghurst ward as it has much stronger connections with Risinghurst as part of Risinghurst & Sandhills parish. However, without substantial changes to neighbouring wards for which we received no evidence to justify those changes, this would lead to an electoral variance of more than 20% in our Quarry & Risinghurst ward. We do not consider this to be an acceptable level of electoral equality.

52 The other nine objections, including those of the Council and the Conservatives, argued that, while the Barton and Sandhills areas could be warded together, we should amend our proposed ward name to include 'Sandhills'. We note that Sandhills covers a substantial part of the ward and agree that changing the ward's name to Barton & Sandhills will better reflect the identity of residents in Sandhills. Subject to that change, we confirm our Barton & Sandhills ward as final.

Lye Valley

53 We received two submissions that referred to this ward. One argued that the ward should be broken up and divided between neighbouring wards, but this would have led to very poor electoral equality. The other submission proposed that both sides of Hollow Way should be in our Temple Cowley ward. However, this would lead to a small number of properties in the same city ward but in different county divisions. We do not consider that this would enhance effective and convenient local government in this part of the city. Therefore, we confirm our Lye Valley ward as final without amendment.

Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2024
Blackbird Leys	2	-5%
Northfield Brook	2	-3%

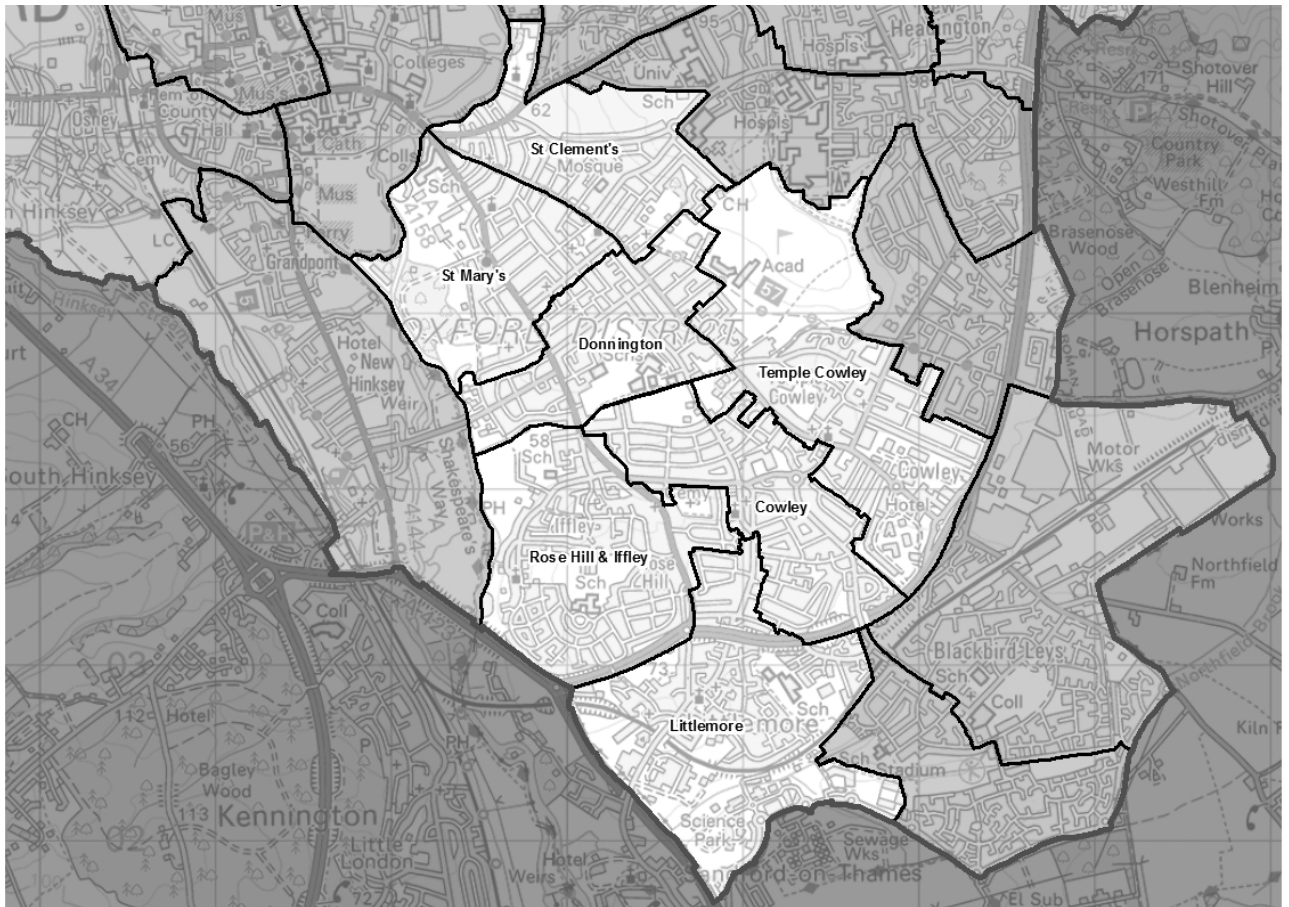
Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook

54 We received one submission from a resident who argued that the boundaries of the current Blackbird Leys ward should remain unchanged. The Conservatives also proposed that Plant Oxford, which manufactures the Mini, was put in Temple Cowley ward.

55 The current Blackbird Leys ward would have an electoral variance of -12% in 2024 and we proposed minor adjustments to the ward to ensure good electoral equality. These changes were supported by some community evidence submitted by the Council and the Labour Party at the previous stage of the review. We do not consider that the resident supplied sufficiently strong evidence to justify an electoral variance of -12%.

56 Regarding Plant Oxford, the Conservatives stated that our proposals had 'caused concern'. However, this concern was not expressed in any other submissions that we received. Therefore, we do not intend to amend either our Blackbird Leys or Northfield Brook wards and confirm them as final without amendment.

South-east Oxford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2024
Cowley	2	10%
Donnington	2	-5%
Littlemore	2	0%
Rose Hill & Iffley	2	4%
St Clement's	2	-8%
St Mary's	2	4%
Temple Cowley	2	-3%

Cowley, Donnington, Littlemore, Rose Hill & Iffley, St Clement's, St Mary's and Temple Cowley

57 This section of the report reflects the two periods of consultation we carried out for these wards. Firstly, it describes the consultation responses we received for our draft recommendations and the conclusions we reached. These conclusions were published on 6 November 2018 in the form of a letter to the Chief Executive of Oxford City Council. Then the report describes the consultation responses we received to those further draft recommendations and the final recommendations we created having received that additional evidence. Our final recommendations are based on the evidence we received during both periods of consultation.

58 In response to our original draft recommendations, we received 63 submissions that referred to one of these wards. These included alternative proposals for the whole area from the Greens and the Conservatives. The Greens' proposal was supported by the Liberal Democrats. However, the Conservatives' proposal was supported by relatively little evidence and, when we analysed it, contained two wards with poor electoral equality. The Council and the Labour Party made similar submissions that proposed minor amendments to Cowley, Donnington, St Clement's and Temple Cowley wards.

59 A significant number of submissions related to three issues: our proposals for Bartlemas, Donnington and St Clement's wards; the proposed boundary in the Florence Park area between Cowley and Temple Cowley wards; and the Council's and the Labour Party's proposal to rename our St Clement's ward 'Bannister'.

60 Firstly, all four political parties, the Council, several local organisations and approximately ten residents objected to our proposals in the Florence Park area. They argued that the Clive Road area of Florence Park, which had been placed in Temple Cowley ward, had little connection with the rest of Temple Cowley. They considered that our boundary on Rymers Lane was not a natural one, whereas the current ward boundary to the east on Oxford Road was a natural divide between communities.

61 We considered that strong community evidence had been provided to place the boundary on Oxford Road and also noted that this was supported by the Council and all four political parties. We amended our draft recommendations accordingly and changed this boundary in our further draft recommendations.

62 There were approximately 25 objections to the draft recommendations for Bartlemas, Donnington and St Clement's wards. Respondents argued that the proposals split streets or groups of streets, such as Charles Street, Howard Street and Percy Street, that are part of the same community. Respondents considered that the proposals also used illogical or confusing boundaries that were hard for residents to understand. The Greens argued that the draft recommendations split the areas covered by five residents' associations, two Neighbourhood Watch areas and four controlled parking zones between wards.

63 There was some support for the draft recommendations from the Labour Party, which pointed out that Cowley Road is the centre of a succession of communities

and our proposals reflected this. They also expressed concern at the size and number of communities contained in the Greens' Donnington & Iffley ward.

64 Having visited the area twice and considered all the submissions, we concluded that the Greens' submission best reflected the evidence we had received at that time. In particular, their St Clement's and Bannister wards used boundaries that appeared logical on the ground and were supported by residents' submissions. While their Donnington & Iffley ward contained several communities, we did receive some evidence of links between Donnington and Iffley village. Accordingly, we adopted the Greens' Cowley, Donnington & Iffley, Littlemore, Rose Hill, St Clement's St Mary's and Temple Cowley wards in our further draft recommendations.

65 We noted that the Greens proposed to name one of their wards 'Bannister'. Our approach is that ward names generally should, as accurately and succinctly as possible, describe the area concerned. The ward's name should also be recognisable to as many residents in the ward as possible. While we appreciate the desire to honour the likes of Sir Roger Bannister, the primary purpose of a ward name is to describe the communities living in the ward.

66 We were not persuaded that this was achieved by the alternative name put forward. Instead, we named this ward 'St Mary's' as it was reasonably similar to the current ward of the same name.

67 We then consulted for four weeks on our further draft recommendations, as set out above.

68 In response to our further draft recommendations, we received 48 submissions that referred to the wards in this area.

69 The Conservatives, Greens, Liberal Democrats and two residents supported the further draft recommendations in their entirety. They argued that the boundaries were clearer, were a better reflection of communities than our draft recommendations and aligned better with residents' associations and other local groups. These respondents considered that while our Donnington & Iffley ward contained two distinct communities, this was the only way to ensure good electoral equality.

70 The Council and the Labour Party mostly objected to the further draft recommendations and made an identical alternative proposal. They stated that, while they preferred the boundaries they had proposed in response to our draft recommendations, our further draft recommendations for St Clement's and St Mary's wards were acceptable. They proposed we revert to the Littlemore and Rose Hill & Iffley wards we used in our draft recommendations. Finally, they made minor amendments to the boundaries of Cowley, Donnington and Temple Cowley wards to ensure good electoral equality.

71 Our St Clement's and St Mary's wards were supported by three residents who argued that the boundaries were a significant improvement compared with those in the draft recommendations and better reflected how people live and work. One

resident objected to our proposals, stating that moving Iffley Fields into St Mary's ward would make Donnington & Iffley ward much less diverse.

72 There were approximately 25 objections to the boundary between our Donnington & Iffley and Rose Hill wards in addition to those of the Council and the Labour Party. There were two main issues. Firstly, our boundary west of Stone Quarry Lane and Anne Greenwood Close, which followed the Oxfordshire County Council division boundary, put a small part of Iffley in Rose Hill ward. Residents stated that this is an integral part of Iffley, with many people in the area actively involved in the Iffley community. In the absence of any other changes, it was proposed that the boundary was moved to the east of Anne Greenwood Close and Stone Quarry Lane.

73 There were also objections to our proposal to pair Iffley with Donnington rather than Rose Hill. While it was accepted there are some links between Donnington and Iffley, it was argued that the links between Iffley and Rose Hill are considerably stronger. It was pointed out, for example, that Rose Hill residents attend St Mary's Church in Iffley, there was one Low Carbon Group for the whole area, Lenthall Road allotments were used by people from both areas and Rose Hill Junior Youth Club is actively supported by Iffley residents.

74 A further three residents objected to the pairing of the Howard Street area with Iffley, arguing that the two areas have very few connections. Respondents argued that the Howard Street area has stronger connections to the north in our St Mary's ward or to the north-east in our Temple Cowley ward.

75 One submission supported the further draft recommendations for our Littlemore ward, arguing that they were more coterminous with the boundaries of Littlemore parish. However, there were four objections to our proposals, including from Littlemore Parish Council and Littlemore Partnership, in addition to those of the Council and the Labour Party. These argued that the Oxford Ring Road (A4142) is not a boundary as it goes over Littlemore, with the community sitting underneath it on both sides of the Ring Road. Our further draft recommendations placed Littlemore Village Green, which is managed by the Parish Council, in Rose Hill ward. Finally, it was pointed out that Cowley Road is part of Littlemore and its residents do not relate to Rose Hill. It should be in Littlemore ward. As a ward coterminous with Littlemore parish would have poor electoral equality, the Parish Council stated that either the Mayfair Road area could be warded with Rose Hill or the Herschel Crescent area could be warded with Cowley, as in our draft recommendations.

76 In relation to our Cowley and Temple Cowley wards, we received three submissions in addition to the area-wide submissions, all of which supported the further draft recommendations in the Florence Park area.

77 We have carefully considered all the submissions we received throughout the review for this part of the city. In relation to our St Clement's and St Mary's wards, we have noted the detailed evidence provided by the Green Party, the Liberal Democrats and residents in response to our draft recommendations. While the Council and the Labour Party stated that these boundaries were not their preference, they did not provide additional evidence to support an alternative arrangement in

response to our further draft recommendations. We consider that our boundaries for these wards reflect communities and are clear on the ground. Therefore, we confirm our further draft recommendations for St Clement's and St Mary's wards as final without amendment.

78 The largest number of objections to our further draft recommendations related to the boundary between our Donnington & Iffley and Rose Hill wards. The reasons are set out in more detail in paragraphs 72-73, above.

79 Our further draft recommendations in this part of the city mostly followed a proposal from the Green Party. Their reasons for warding Donnington and Iffley together were that Donnington residents attend St Mary's Church in Iffley, and it would be beneficial to use the Oxfordshire County Council division boundary between Iffley and Rose Hill as a city council ward boundary.

80 We consider that we received more and better evidence to support joining Iffley with Rose Hill, as in our draft recommendations, than Iffley with Donnington. We note in particular the number of groups and associations that exist between the two areas. We received much less evidence in relation to Donnington and Iffley.

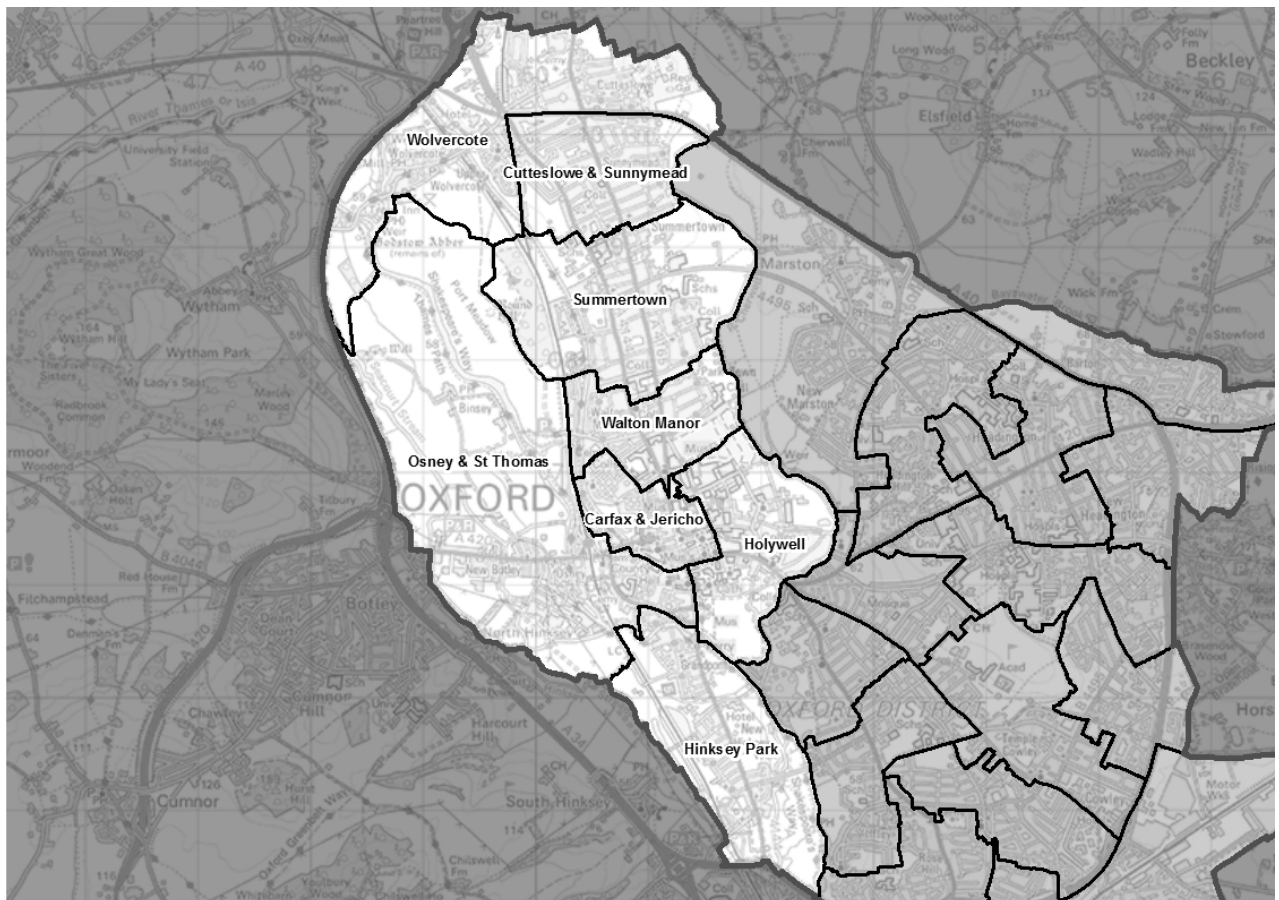
81 In relation to our Littlemore ward, we consider, again, that we have received better evidence to support our draft recommendations than to support our further draft recommendations. In particular, we accept the point made by Littlemore Parish Council and others that the Ring Road is not a boundary; this is supported by what we saw when we visited the area. It is also clearly important to local people that Littlemore Village Green is in Littlemore ward.

82 Therefore, as proposed by the Council and Labour Party, we intend to use the Littlemore and Rose Hill & Iffley wards we proposed in our draft recommendations for our final recommendations. We consider that, across the entirety of the review, we received the best evidence for these boundaries and therefore confirm them as final.

83 Given the strong evidence that supports our Littlemore, Rose Hill & Iffley, St Clement's and St Mary's wards, the only proposal we received that would lead to good electoral equality in the remaining three wards was that provided by the Council and the Labour Party. This amended our further draft recommendations in two areas. Firstly, Phipps Road, Napier Road, St Luke's Road and Oxford Business Park South were placed in Temple Cowley ward. In its response to our draft recommendations, the Council had argued that these streets not only faced Temple Cowley ward but had better access to shops and services there than in Cowley. Secondly, approximately six streets between Belvedere Road and Glanville Road would be placed in Donnington ward.

84 While little evidence was provided to support the second of these changes, we did visit this area on our second tour of the city and considered that these streets were relatively isolated, and Cowley Road appeared to be a weaker boundary in this area than it was in other parts of the city. Therefore, we consider the alternative boundaries proposed by the Council and the Labour Party to be acceptable and we are adopting them as part of our final recommendations.

West Oxford



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2024
Carfax & Jericho	2	3%
Cutteslowe & Sunnymead	2	3%
Hinksey Park	2	-8%
Holywell	2	-4%
Osney & St Thomas	2	0%
Summertown	2	-1%
Walton Manor	2	4%
Wolvercote	2	-7%

Cotteslowe & Sunnymead and Wolvercote

85 We received 22 submissions that referred to these wards. Three submissions referred to the boundary between our draft Cotteslowe and Summertown wards. We noted that they all proposed different boundaries and we were not persuaded they were supported by sufficient evidence to warrant any of the changes proposed.

86 Most of the submissions, including that of Harbord Road Area Residents' Association ('the Residents' Association') objected to the boundary between these two wards. The main objections were: Banbury Road is not a major boundary and can be crossed, whereas the A40 is a substantial road that can only be crossed at the Cotteslowe Roundabout or via the footbridge; the footbridge was not, as the Council stated, 'at the heart of the area' and its use had been exaggerated; the Northern Gateway will integrate more closely with the Five Mile Drive area than the area south of the A40; Harbord Road and Five Mile Drive have community links with Wolvercote; and that Neighbourhood Plan areas were being split between wards. As an alternative, the Residents' Association proposed a Wolvercote ward consisting of Wolvercote village and the St Peter's Road, Five Mile Drive and Harbord Road areas, and a Cotteslowe ward consisting of the area south of the A40 from the railway line to the River Cherwell. Both proposed wards would have good electoral equality.

87 The Conservatives proposed that the current Wolvercote ward should remain largely as it is, but it should use Banbury Road as its eastern boundary, north of the A40. This, they stated, would ensure that more of the community around Wolvercote village was in the same ward.

88 The Liberal Democrats, supported by the Greens, proposed that the name of our Cotteslowe ward be changed to reflect its different communities. There were several suggestions, including 'Tolkien', 'Cotteslowe & Cherwell', 'Cherwell River' or 'Dexter'.

89 We have carefully considered all the submissions for this area and visited it after the consultation on our draft recommendations closed. We have noted the strong objection in most of the submissions to a Cotteslowe ward that crosses the A40. We also recognise that some evidence has been provided which demonstrates community links between Wolvercote and the Five Mile Drive and Harbord Road areas. We consider that the Residents' Association's proposal fits best, not only with the evidence in the submissions we received, but also what we saw when we visited the area. Therefore, we are adopting the Residents' Association's proposal as part of our final recommendations. We are renaming their Cotteslowe ward 'Cotteslowe & Sunnymead' to reflect the fact that it contains more than one community.

Carfax & Jericho, Holywell, Osney & St Thomas, Summertown and Walton Manor

90 We received 48 submissions that referred to these wards, in addition to those mentioned above that discussed the northern boundary of our Summertown ward. This included one that came in response to our further draft recommendations for south-east Oxford. There was one supportive submission, which stated that the boundaries of our Jericho and Summertown wards were a better reflection of those areas than the current wards. Of the 46 other submissions, there were several different, sometimes conflicting, objections to our proposals.

91 The largest number of objections were in relation to our Jericho ward. Nine submissions solely objected to the inclusion of the Rewley Park area in our Osney & St Thomas ward. These pointed out that Rewley Park residents see themselves as part of a wider Jericho community. It was argued that these links, as well as the access between the two areas, will become stronger once the development at Jericho Wharf with its proposed footbridge is complete. The objectors also pointed out that similar issues, such as antisocial behaviour around the current footbridge, affect residents equally on either side of the canal. The Liberal Democrats, supported by the Greens, proposed an alternative boundary that ran between Rewley Road and the Saïd Business School.

92 Jericho Community Association, supported by South Jericho Community Association and approximately 13 residents, argued that there is a strong shared interest between Jericho and St Thomas. This interest is not shared between Jericho and the city centre. Jericho Community Association stated that ‘the logical ward boundaries’ would follow the parish boundary of St Barnabas and St Thomas, which merged in 2015. Jericho Community Association also objected to the name of our proposed Jericho ward, arguing that it is inappropriate to extend the historic name of ‘Jericho’ to neighbouring parts of the city. Other residents suggested that, should we confirm our draft ward boundaries as final, ‘Carfax’ should be added to the name to reflect the inclusion of the city centre.

93 Regarding our Summertown and Walton Manor wards, three residents argued that the Chalfont Road area should be included in our Walton Manor ward. However, none of the residents clearly defined an alternative boundary and we are not persuaded that such a configuration could be achieved without either poor electoral equality or major changes to several of our other wards in west Oxford.

94 Finally, the Liberal Democrats, supported by the Greens, the Conservatives and a resident argued that the Norham Manor and Park Town areas have little in common with Summertown and are more connected to communities in our Walton Manor ward. It was pointed out that residents in these areas use the shops on North Parade Avenue – in our Walton Manor ward – as their local hub.

95 We have carefully considered all the submissions we received for this part of the city and revisited the area after the consultation on our draft recommendations closed.

96 In relation to the proposal from Jericho Community Association, were we to adopt what they described as the logical boundaries for their community, this would not only lead to poor electoral equality in the ward containing Jericho, but would also require us to create a single-councillor ward consisting of Osney and New Botley. As stated in paragraph 24, above, as Oxford City Council elects by halves there is a presumption in favour of two-councillor wards unless compelling evidence is provided. We do not consider that sufficiently compelling evidence has been received either to persuade us to accept a single-councillor ward or a ward with poor electoral equality.

97 However, we do accept that residents in Rewley Park have provided good evidence that they are part of the Jericho community and are subject to similar local

issues. We are therefore adding the Rewley Park area to our Jericho ward, using the boundary proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

98 Regarding the name of our proposed Jericho ward, we accept the argument that it contains two different communities and that the inclusion of the city centre in the ward should be reflected in its name. We are therefore renaming the ward 'Carfax & Jericho' in our final recommendations.

99 When we visited Oxford, we spent some time considering the boundary between our Summertown and Walton Manor wards. On the one hand, our Walton Manor ward appeared to be a compact community and Norham Manor and Park Town have as clear links to the north in our Summertown ward as to the west in our Walton Manor ward. On the other hand, we have received some community evidence which suggests that residents in Norham Manor and Park Town use facilities in our Walton Manor ward and have closer links with that area. On balance, we have decided that the evidence to change our draft recommendations is stronger than that to support them. We are therefore adopting the boundary proposed by the Conservatives between these two wards as, unlike the Liberal Democrats' proposal, it has good electoral equality.

Hinksey Park

100 We received one submission that referred to this ward. This was from a resident who queried why part of the ward was north of the River Thames but made no alternative proposal. Removing the area referred to by the resident would lead to an electoral variance of -19% in Hinksey Park ward. Given the ward's location between the city boundary and the Thames, there are no other closer communities that could be added to it to ensure good electoral equality. Therefore, we confirm our Hinksey Park ward as final without amendment.

Conclusions

101 The table below shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2017 and 2024 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2017	2024
Number of councillors	48	48
Number of electoral wards	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	2,264	2,417
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Oxford City Council should be made up of 48 councillors serving 24 wards, representing 24 two-councillor wards. The details and names of wards are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Oxford.

You can also view our final recommendations for Oxford on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

102 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.

103 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, Oxford

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.

104 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Blackbird Leys Parish Council and Littlemore Parish Council.

105 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 Blackbird Leys parish.

Final recommendation Blackbird Leys Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Blackbird Leys	7
Greater Leys	7

106 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 Littlemore parish.

Final recommendation Littlemore Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bodley Road	2
Littlemore	13
Sandy Lane West	1

3 What happens next?

107 We have now completed our review of Oxford City Council. 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 2020.

Equalities

108 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Oxford City Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barton & Sandhills	2	4,111	2,056	-9%	5,020	2,510	4%
2	Blackbird Leys	2	4,339	2,170	-4%	4,577	2,289	-5%
3	Carfax & Jericho	2	4,705	2,353	4%	4,961	2,481	3%
4	Churchill	2	4,620	2,310	2%	4,850	2,425	0%
5	Cowley	2	5,045	2,523	11%	5,315	2,658	10%
6	Cotteslowe & Sunnymead	2	4,975	2,488	10%	4,975	2,488	3%
7	Donnington	2	4,492	2,246	-1%	4,616	2,308	-5%
8	Headington	2	4,973	2,487	10%	5,258	2,629	9%
9	Headington Hill & Northway	2	4,254	2,127	-6%	4,728	2,364	-2%
10	Hinksey Park	2	4,453	2,227	-2%	4,453	2,227	-8%
11	Holywell	2	4,385	2,193	-3%	4,651	2,326	-4%
12	Littlemore	2	4,079	2,040	-10%	4,817	2,409	0%
13	Lye Valley	2	4,056	2,028	-10%	4,719	2,360	-2%

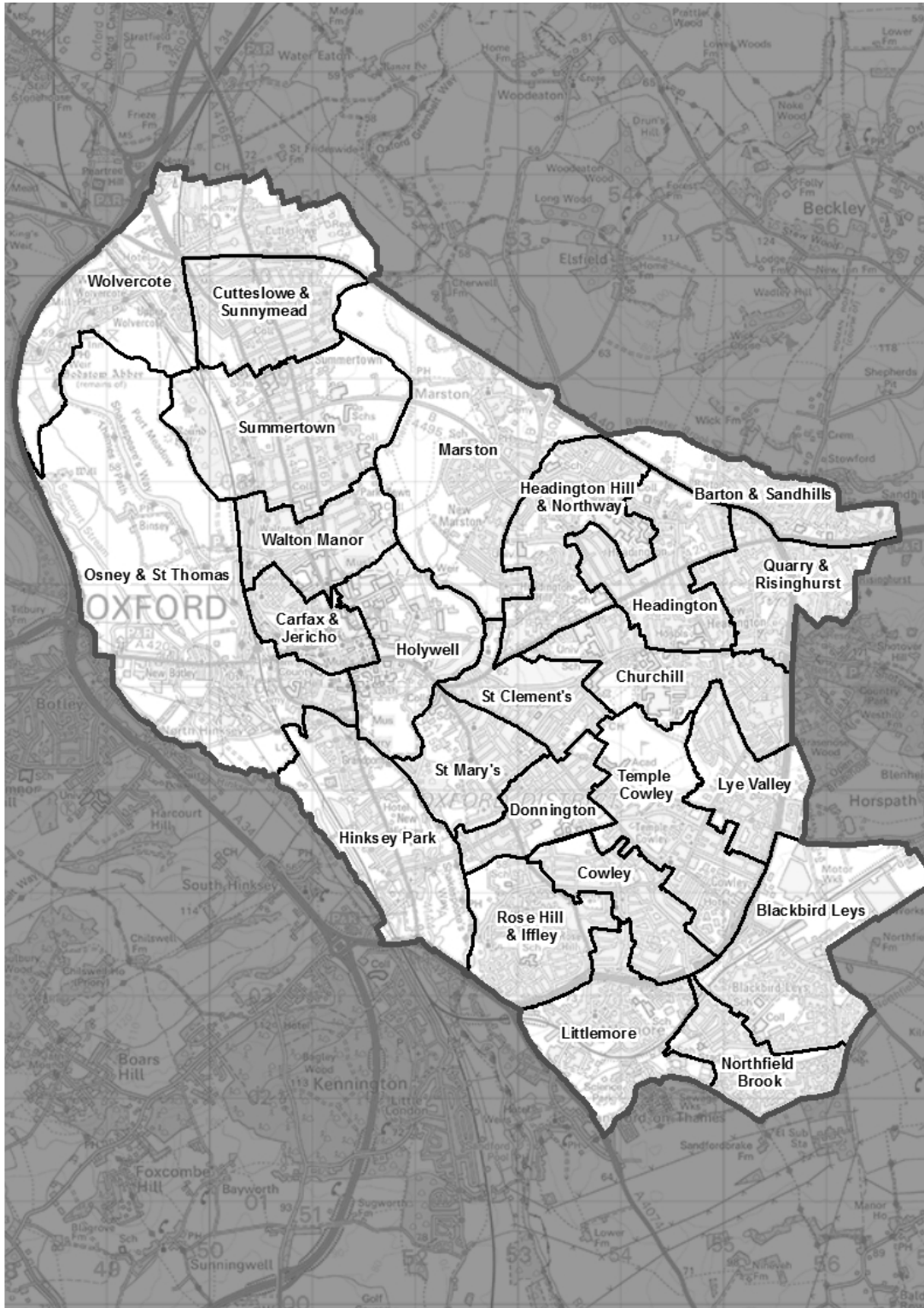
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14 Marston	2	4,733	2,367	5%	4,733	2,367	-2%
15 Northfield Brook	2	4,491	2,246	-1%	4,707	2,354	-3%
16 Osney & St Thomas	2	4,389	2,195	-3%	4,847	2,424	0%
17 Quarry & Risinghurst	2	5,130	2,565	13%	5,297	2,649	10%
18 Rose Hill & Iffley	2	4,840	2,420	7%	5,013	2,507	4%
19 St Clement's	2	4,465	2,233	-1%	4,465	2,233	-8%
20 St Mary's	2	5,042	2,521	11%	5,042	2,521	4%
21 Summertown	2	4,808	2,404	6%	4,808	2,404	-1%
22 Temple Cowley	2	4,583	2,292	1%	4,669	2,335	-3%
23 Walton Manor	2	4,080	2,040	-10%	5,015	2,508	4%
24 Wolvercote	2	3,619	1,810	-20%	4,501	2,251	-7%
Totals	48	108,667	-	-	116,037	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,264	-	-	2,417	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Oxford 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: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/oxfordshire/oxford>

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can be viewed on our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/oxfordshire/oxford>

Submissions on draft recommendations

Local Authority

- Oxford City Council

Political Groups

- Oxford & District Labour Party
- Oxford City Branch of Oxford West & Abingdon Liberal Democrats
- Oxford City Council Liberal Democrat Group
- Oxford Conservative Association and Oxford West & Abingdon Conservative Association
- Oxford East Green Party

Councillors

- Councillor M. Rush (Oxford City Council)
- Councillor E. Turner (Oxford City Council)
- Councillor D. Wolff (Oxford City Council)

Local Organisations

- Clive Road Area Residents' Association
- Donnington Tenants' & Residents' Association
- Florence Park Community Association
- Friends of Iffley Village
- Harbord Road Area Residents' Association
- Iffley Fields Residents' Association
- Jericho Community Association
- Local Environmental Action, Florence Park
- South Jericho Residents' Association
- The Friends of Old Headington

Parish Council

- Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Council

Local Residents

- 132 local residents

Submissions on further draft recommendations

Local Authority

- Oxford City Council

Political Groups

- Oxford & District Labour Party
- Oxford City Council Liberal Democrat Group
- Oxford Conservative Association

Councillors

- Councillor C. Simmons and Councillor D. Wolff (Oxford City Council) (joint submission)
- Councillor E. Turner (Oxford City Council)

Local Organisations

- Friends of Iffley Village
- Littlemore Partnership
- Local Environmental Action, Florence Park
- Rose Hill & Iffley Low Carbon Community Group

Parish Council

- Littlemore Parish Council

Local Residents

- 38 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 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 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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