

New electoral arrangements for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Draft Recommendations

October 2021

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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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Who we are and what we do	1
What is an electoral review?	1
Why Tonbridge & Malling?	2
Our proposals for Tonbridge & Malling	2
How will the recommendations affect you?	2
Have your say	3
Review timetable	3
Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	7
Draft recommendations	7
Tonbridge	9
Western parishes	15
Central parishes	21
Eastern parishes	26
Conclusions	31
Summary of electoral arrangements	31
Parish electoral arrangements	31
Have your say	33
Equalities	37
Appendices	39
Appendix A	39
Draft recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling	39
Appendix B	42
Outline map	42
Appendix C	44
Submissions received	44
Appendix D	46
Glossary and abbreviations	46

Introduction

Who we are and what we do

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

2 The members of the Commission are:

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

What is an electoral review?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why Tonbridge & Malling?

7 We are conducting a review of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in borough elections varies depending on where you live in Tonbridge & Malling. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors 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 Tonbridge & Malling are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Tonbridge & Malling

9 Tonbridge & Malling should be represented by 44 councillors, 10 fewer than there are now.

10 Tonbridge & Malling should have 19 wards, five fewer than there are now.

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

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the 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 taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 5 October 2021 to 13 December 2021. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 13 December 2021 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 34 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Tonbridge & Malling. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
20 April 2021	Number of councillors decided
11 May 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
19 July 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
5 October 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
13 December 2021	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
1 March 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 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.

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

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

	2021	2027
Electorate of Tonbridge & Malling	98,327	106,828
Number of councillors	44	44
Average number of electors per councillor	2,235	2,428

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Tonbridge & Malling will have good electoral equality by 2027.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 9% by 2027. This increase is due to developments predominantly in the wards in the north-east of the borough.

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.

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

Number of councillors

26 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council currently has 54 councillors. At the previous stage of the review, we looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that decreasing this number by 11 would ensure the Council could carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

27 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 43 councillors, for example, 43 single-councillor wards or a mix of one-, two- and three- councillor wards.

28 We received three submissions that referred to the number of councillors in response to our consultation on warding patterns. One submission argued for a smaller reduction to 50 councillors, while the other two submissions made general comments about the proposed reduction. None of these alternative proposals or comments outlined how the reductions would be achieved in terms of the decision-making responsibilities of the Council or made reference to our key criteria. We have therefore not adopted any of these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

29 The Commission, when proposing a council size, reserves the right to alter this number if it discovers that an alternative council size would provide a pattern of wards that better reflects its statutory criteria. During our analysis of the proposals for warding arrangements in the borough, we noted that the submissions received for Tonbridge and the neighbouring parish of Hildenborough proposed a number of configurations. The Council and Conservative Group proposed an arrangement which linked Hildenborough parish with a large part of Tonbridge within a three-member ward (paragraph 80), while the Green Party proposed an urban-rural split that used Hilden Brook as a more natural boundary between the urban Tonbridge wards and the more rural communities in the west, with a two-member Hildenborough ward proposed instead (paragraph 82). In total, the Council allocated 13 councillors to Hildenborough and Tonbridge, while the Green Party allocated 14.

30 As set out in paragraph 84, we were convinced by the Green Party's proposal for an urban-rural split. As a consequence of the decision not to adopt the Council and Conservative Group's larger three-member ward for Hildenborough and part of Tonbridge, we have incorporated the Green Party's proposal to allocate 14 councillors to Hildenborough and Tonbridge. Overall across the borough, this has resulted in a slightly increased council size of 44 in order to facilitate a good balance in our statutory criteria within all wards.

31 We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a 44-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

32 We received 87 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included four borough-wide proposals from the Council, the Conservative Group, the Green Party and a local resident. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

33 The four borough-wide schemes proposed mixed patterns of one-, two- and three-councillor wards for Tonbridge & Malling. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that all of the suggested patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

34 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries. Consequently, we have generally based our draft recommendations on the proposals from the Council, the Conservative Group, the Green Party and a member of the public, subject to modifications in some areas to provide clearer boundaries and reflect evidence of community identity received from other local interests.

35 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing, arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Tonbridge & Malling. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

Draft recommendations

36 Our draft recommendations are for seven three-councillor wards, 11 two-councillor wards and one single-councillor ward. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

37 The tables and maps on pages 9–30 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Tonbridge & Malling. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting 39 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

Tonbridge



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Cage Green	2	-4%
Higham	2	5%
Judd	3	5%
Trench	2	-6%
Vauxhall	3	-7%

Cage Green

40 We received eight submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Group of Elected Members, Tom Tugendhat MP, Councillor Davis and a local resident. We have

based our draft recommendations on the schemes submitted by the Green Party and Liberal Democrats.

41 The Green Party proposed a two-councillor Cage Green ward which stretched from Hilden Brook and the Hildenborough parish boundary in the west to Hadlow Road in the east. This ward would be centred on Shipbourne Road. The Liberal Democrats also proposed this ward and argued that residents use the facilities on Shipbourne Road and that the churches of St Saviour and St Philip provide community focal points for Cage Green ward. This ward further includes Hadlow Road, Yardley Park Road and the Ridgeway in the same ward, as suggested by a local resident due to the common issues facing residents near these busy road junctions.

42 The Council and Conservative Group did not propose a comparable Cage Green ward, instead splitting this area between Tonbridge West & Hildenborough and Tonbridge East wards. The proposal for Tonbridge West & Hildenborough included Hildenborough parish and the area of Tonbridge between the parish boundary and Shipbourne Road, whereas the proposal for Tonbridge East ward was similar to the existing Medway ward. They proposed to use Shipbourne Road as the boundary between these two wards. As discussed in paragraph 84, we were not convinced to adopt the proposed Tonbridge West & Hildenborough ward due to the inclusion of a large area of urban Tonbridge with rural Hildenborough parish, which we considered did not reflect community identity.

43 Therefore, due to our decision not to adopt the Council and Conservative schemes in this area, we are proposing to adopt the Green Party and Liberal Democrat proposals for Cage Green, subject to some minor amendments. We consider that this proposed Cage Green ward reflects local communities while also providing for good electoral equality. While both the Green Party and Liberal Democrat schemes include Cage Green Primary School in this ward, we note that the sole access to this school is via White Cottage Road into Shipbourne Road in Trench ward. We have therefore placed the school in Trench ward as part of our draft recommendations. We have also made a slight adjustment to the southern boundary of Cage Green ward to ensure that the entirety of Ferox Hall is located in Judd ward.

44 The Liberal Democrats suggested the name of Dry Hill & Cage Green for this ward. While we have not been persuaded to adopt this name as part of our draft recommendations, we welcome comments about this suggestion during this period of consultations.

45 We consider that our proposed Cage Green ward provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria. This ward will have two councillors and is forecast to have 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

Higham and Trench

46 We received seven submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Group of Elected Members, Tom Tugendhat MP and Councillor Davis.

47 The schemes from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party and Liberal Democrats all proposed a similar warding arrangement for Trench and Higham wards. All of these submissions proposed to centre these two wards on York Parade and Martin Hardie Way, respectively. This principle was also supported by Councillor Davis. The differences between the schemes concerned the area to the western end of Whistler Road and the area around Norwich Avenue west of Pen Stream. The Council and Conservative Group also proposed to name the two wards Tonbridge North East and Tonbridge North West.

48 The Council and Conservative Group proposed to place the area west of Pen Stream into their Tonbridge North East ward. They argued that residents in this area use facilities on Martin Hardie Way and Hunt Road, with public footpaths and roads linking the two areas. The submissions also proposed to run the boundary between their Tonbridge North West and Tonbridge North East wards through the middle of Whistler Road, running down Reynolds Close and behind the properties on Knight Road.

49 While we recognise the community links between the areas east and west of Pen Stream, we were not convinced that the boundary on Whistler Road would be clear and identifiable. The Green Party and Liberal Democrats both argued that residents along Whistler Road consider themselves part of Higham Wood and that Pen Stream is a logical natural boundary. We have therefore adopted the proposal made by both the Green Party and Liberal Democrats in this area, which places the entirety of Whistler Road in Higham ward and the area west of Pen Stream in Cage Green ward. We consider that this arrangement provides for a clearer and more identifiable boundary, especially in the area of Whistler Road and Shipbourne Road.

50 While we acknowledge the alternative names proposed by the Council and Conservative Group for the wards in this area, we consider that the existing names better reflect the communities within the wards we are proposing as part of our draft recommendations.

51 Our draft recommendations are for a two-councillor Higham ward and two-councillor Trench ward, with electoral variances of 5% and -6%, respectively, by 2027.

Judd and Vauxhall

52 We received 12 submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Group of Elected

Members, Tom Tugendhat MP, Councillor Boughton, Councillor Hood, Councillor Lark and three local residents. The Council and Conservative Group proposed the same boundaries, as did the Green Party, Green Group of Elected Members and Liberal Democrats.

53 The Council and Conservative Group proposed the same warding arrangement for this area. This proposal would see the current Medway ward retained with some minor changes and renamed Tonbridge East. The submissions further proposed to link together the current Judd and Vauxhall wards into a single ward named Tonbridge South, with the exception of the houses on Pembury Road immediately west of the railway line which were included in the proposed Tonbridge East ward in order to achieve electoral equality.

54 Both wards proposed by the Council and Conservative Group crossed the railway line either side of Tonbridge station. In the proposed Tonbridge East ward, communities either side of the Tonbridge–Paddock Wood railway line – as well as an industrial estate immediately north of the railway – were linked together as within the existing Medway ward. This proposal was supported by Councillor Boughton and Councillor Lark, who argued that the Tonbridge–Paddock Wood railway line should not be considered a boundary in this area. In support of this proposal, a resident stated that they would not like the existing ward of Medway to be grouped with communities in the south-west of Tonbridge, as they use different services and amenities. For the proposed Tonbridge South ward, communities either side of the railway line were linked as far north as the River Medway. The Conservative Group stated that there are good public transport and pedestrian links across the railway, linking the Barden Park area with the Brook Street area and schools south of the railway. The submissions also argued that Quarry Hill Parade, St Stephen’s Church and Haysden Country Park provide focal points for the community in the proposed Tonbridge South wards.

55 The Green Party proposed a different configuration of wards in the south of Tonbridge. They proposed to retain the existing Vauxhall ward, including its western boundary along Quarry Hill Road, while also extending the ward northwards to the railway line. The Green Party argued that the industrial estate immediately north of the railway line – currently at the heart of the existing Medway ward – split the communities within the ward, with residents to the south much more closely associated with Vauxhall than with those to the north of the industrial estate. The Green Party therefore argued that a warding arrangement which extended the existing Vauxhall ward north to the railway line would reflect communities in the area, as well as form a strong and identifiable boundary for the ward. This proposed arrangement was supported by the Green Group of Elected Members and a local resident, who both argued that the existing Medway ward is not cohesive as a result of the industrial estate at its centre. The Green Group of Elected Members added that there is no unifying community hub within the existing Medway ward, and that

residents send their children to different schools, as well as use different pubs, shops and buses.

56 The resident also argued that the existing Judd and Vauxhall wards have very few links, and they supported the retention of Quarry Hill Road as the boundary between Judd and Vauxhall.

57 The Liberal Democrats proposed the same, extended Vauxhall ward as the one submitted by the Green Party, arguing that Pembury Road would provide a central focal point for this ward.

58 Having carefully considered all the evidence received, we are of the view that the proposals from the Green Party and Liberal Democrats provides for the strongest balance of our statutory criteria. We consider that that the boundaries of Quarry Hill Road and the railway are strong and identifiable, and that the communities to the north and south of the industrial estate would be best placed in separate wards. However, we are proposing a slight modification to the proposed warding arrangement. The Council and Conservative Group described Quarry Hill Parade as a focal point for facilities that serve the surrounding area. For this reason, we are not proposing to split Quarry Hill Parade between two wards. We are instead proposing to run the western boundary of Vauxhall ward along Alexandra Road behind the eastern parade of shops, thereby placing the entirety of Quarry Hill Parade in Judd ward. We are therefore proposing to adopt a three-member Vauxhall ward as part of our draft recommendations.

59 Due to the decision not to group together the existing Judd and Vauxhall wards across Quarry Hill Road, we are therefore proposing to base Judd ward on the schemes submitted by the Green Party and Liberal Democrats. Their identical proposal groups together the communities in the existing Judd ward with those in the town centre to The Slade in the north-west and the junction between Cannon Lane and Hadlow Road in the north-east.

60 Councillor Hood argued that Judd is a self-contained community, but that the most sensible addition to the existing ward would be the properties north of Botany Stream, extending the ward across The Big Bridge and the properties to the west of the High Street, including The Slade and properties south of London Road. He further argued that extending the ward to include the areas around the various channels of the River Medway would be appropriate due to the common issue of flooding, and added that the central retail area should be brought into a single ward. Supporting this view, a resident argued that children in Judd ward attend schools north of the railway line and that it would make sense to extend Judd northwards to The Slade area. Two additional local residents also argued against using the River Medway as a barrier in this area, citing numerous crossings. However, they also stated that the High Street would be a suitable boundary for the ward.

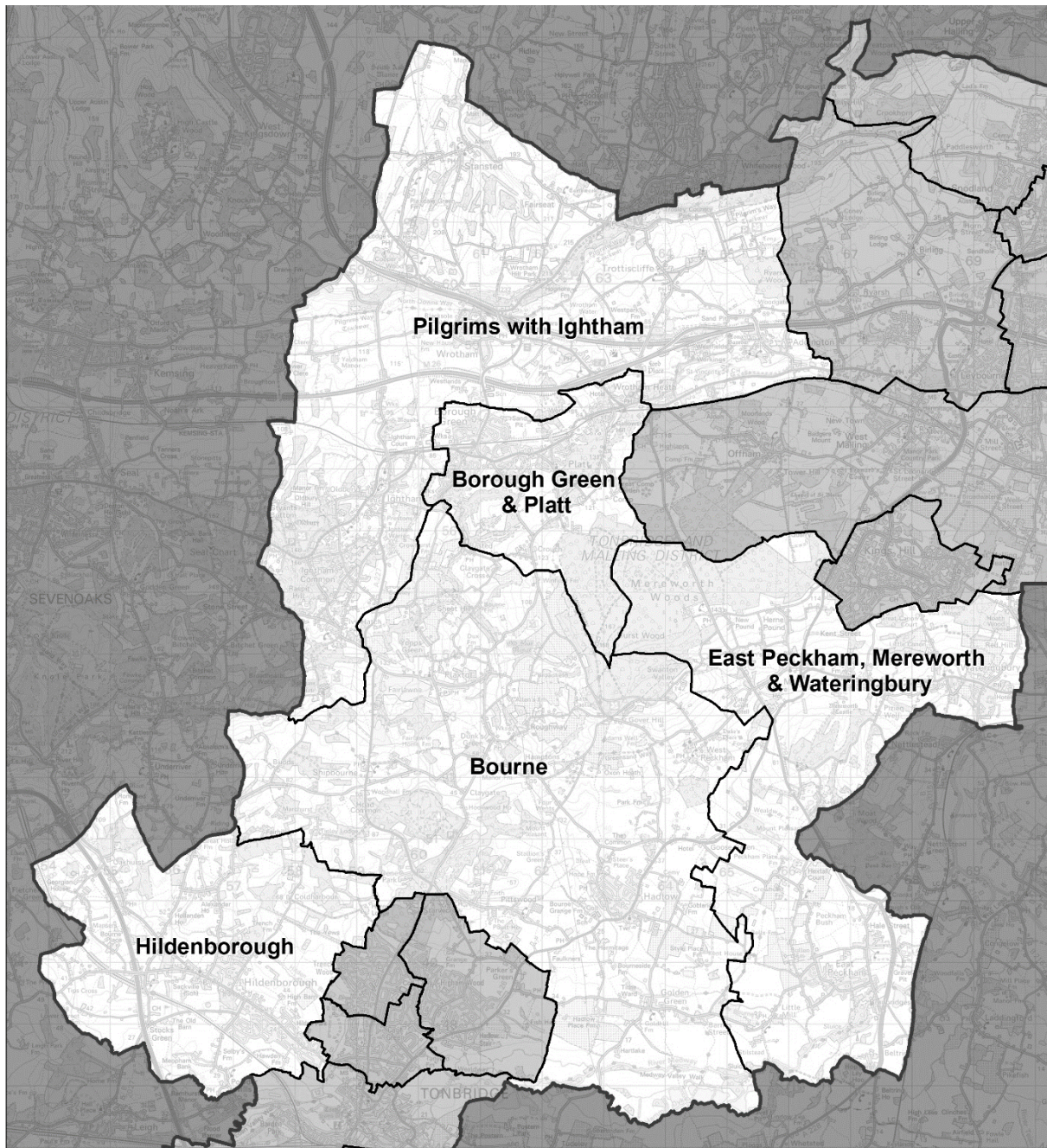
61 The Liberal Democrats argued that Tonbridge town centre and the areas to the east and west should be united in the same ward rather than split. They argued that this area has a unified feel and common character.

62 After carefully considering all the evidence provided to us, we have been persuaded to propose a three-councillor Judd ward formed of the existing Judd ward and areas around The Slade, High Street and Cannon Lane. While we appreciate that this ward spans a large area, we were persuaded by the evidence provided to us which describes how the area south of the railway in the current Judd ward links closely with Barden Park and The Slade, and that the town centre should be represented in a single ward. We would be particularly interested to hear from residents about our proposals in southern and central Tonbridge.

63 We were convinced to retain the existing names for these wards rather than adopt Tonbridge South and Tonbridge East, as proposed to us by the Council and Conservative Group. We considered that these better reflect the spread of communities within the wards.

64 Under our proposals, Judd and Vauxhall wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2027, with forecast variances of 5% and -7%, respectively.

Western parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Borough Green & Platt	2	-1%
Bourne	2	-1%
East Peckham, Mereworth & Wateringbury	2	4%
Hildenborough	2	-5%
Pilgrims with Ightham	2	0%

Borough Green & Platt and Bourne

65 We received 12 submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Independent Alliance (Kent), Borough Green Parish Council, Hildenborough Parish Council, Plaxtol Parish Council, Shipbourne Parish Council and four residents.

66 The Council, Conservative Group and Green Party proposed to group together the parishes of Shipbourne, Plaxtol, Hadlow and West Peckham in a two-councillor ward. The Council and Conservative Group proposed to name this ward Bourne, citing the River Bourne which would run north–south through the proposed ward. The Green Party proposed to name this ward Tonbridge Villages. The Conservative submission described the strong educational links between these parishes. They also argued that these four parishes have a strong emphasis on the rural economy and share common issues, for example broadband connectivity. Hadlow is described as the largest population centre for the ward with the surrounding parishes looking towards it for services.

67 A local resident proposed to place Shipbourne parish with Hildenborough parish. They also proposed to place Plaxtol parish with Hadlow and West Peckham parishes. This submission argued that this configuration reflects strong links between these three parishes. However, Hildenborough Parish Council argued that Hildenborough is separated from Shipbourne by extensive farm and woodlands, and that this natural boundary should not be crossed. This argument was also made by the Green Party.

68 We noted that several submissions, including those from Independent Alliance (Kent) and Borough Green, Shipbourne and Plaxtol parish councils, suggested that the parishes of Shipbourne and Plaxtol be included in a ward along with Borough Green and Platt parishes, providing good evidence of community links between the four parishes. However, given the distribution of settlements in this area, and the proximity of the borough boundary, we were unable to place these parishes together while also ensuring good electoral equality. Retaining the current Borough Green & Long Mill ward would result in an electoral variance of -18%.

69 Submissions from Shipbourne Parish Council and Plaxtol Parish Council proposed an alternative arrangement, stating that if they were unable to be retained in a ward with Borough Green and Platt parishes that they would fit well in a ward with Hildenborough. Adding Shipbourne and Plaxtol parishes to Hildenborough would result in a variance of -18% for a three-councillor ward. While we acknowledge the community evidence provided to us, we are not of the view that this level of electoral inequality has been justified. However, we do acknowledge the strong links between Shipbourne and Plaxtol parishes and are therefore not proposing to split them between different wards.

70 The Green Party proposed to link together the parishes of Ightham and Borough Green in a single ward. However, they offered little community evidence to support this proposal and, as discussed in paragraph 89, we were persuaded to place Ightham in Pilgrims with Ightham ward due to the rural nature of these north-western parishes.

71 The Council, Conservative Group and a local resident proposed a Borough Green & Platt ward. The Conservative Group argued that the parishes of Borough Green and Platt are more densely populated than their surrounding areas, with residents from both parishes using common facilities, such as King George's Field. This submission further describes the common issues faced by residents of these two parishes, including traffic from the A25 and air quality. We looked at the links between Borough Green and Platt during our virtual tour and agree that these two parishes appear to be closely linked.

72 Following careful consideration of the evidence we received, we have adopted the Council and Conservative Group schemes in this area as part of our draft recommendations. While we have been unable to link Shipbourne and Plaxtol parishes with those to the north due to the poor levels of electoral equality that would result, we have been able to ensure they remain in the same ward and have included them in a ward with Hadlow and West Peckham parishes. We consider that this arrangement provides for the best balance in our statutory criteria but would welcome further alternative proposals for this area.

73 Our draft recommendations are therefore for a two-councillor Borough Green & Platt ward and a two-councillor Bourne ward. These wards are both forecast to have 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2027.

East Peckham, Mereworth & Wateringbury

74 The Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Tom Tugendhat MP, Mereworth Parish Council, Wateringbury Parish Council, Councillor Hudson and 10 local residents all suggested linking together Mereworth and Wateringbury parishes. They argued that the two are closely connected, with both holding a similar rural outlook and connected via the A26. A number of these submissions also argued against linking Wateringbury with East Malling or Kings Hill due to the differing urban and rural nature of these areas. Additionally, East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council argued against linking East Malling with Wateringbury due to the lack of road access and physical separation between these areas. Due to this evidence received, we have been persuaded to incorporate Mereworth parish and Wateringbury parish in the same ward as part of our draft recommendations.

75 To the south, the Council and Conservative Group proposed to create a single-councillor East Peckham ward. They argued that residents in East Peckham look outside of the borough for their services. While we acknowledge these arguments, a single-councillor East Peckham ward would have a high electoral variance of 12%.

We were not persuaded that this higher level of electoral inequality has been justified by the evidence.

76 Councillor Anderson and two residents proposed that the parishes of Mereworth, Hadlow, West Peckham and East Peckham be placed in the same ward, arguing that these parishes are closely connected and that West Peckham and Mereworth residents use amenities in Hadlow. This arrangement would result in a good level of electoral equality, with a variance of -6% by 2027. While we acknowledge the close connections between these parishes, this would leave the parish of Wateringbury isolated. Adding Wateringbury into this ward would result in an electoral variance of 17% by 2027 and we note the objections to including Wateringbury in a ward with Kings Hill and East Malling, as mentioned in paragraph 74. Therefore, we have not been persuaded to place Mereworth, Hadlow, West Peckham and East Peckham in a single ward.

77 The Green Party placed East Peckham in a ward with Mereworth and Wateringbury parishes. They argued that East Peckham has strong road links to Mereworth via the A228. We consider that these broadly rural parishes share common characteristics and would form a cohesive ward. We also note, however, that East Peckham could be incorporated into Bourne ward while still achieving good levels of electoral equality by 2027. We would be interested to hear from local residents which arrangement would better reflect their community.

78 Our draft recommendation is therefore for a two-councillor East Peckham, Mereworth & Wateringbury ward, with a forecast electoral variance of 4% by 2027.

Hildenborough

79 We received nine submissions for this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Liberal Democrats, Hildenborough Parish Council, Councillor Branson, Councillor King and two local residents.

80 The Council and Conservative Group proposed to link together Hildenborough parish with the majority of the existing Castle ward up to Shipbourne Road to create a three-councillor Hildenborough & Tonbridge ward. They argued that these areas are closely linked by public transport and students crossing the parish boundary to attend schools. The Conservative Group's submission further pointed to the joint flood prevention work being done in Tonbridge and Hildenborough.

81 Councillor King and Councillor Branson supported the proposal of the Council and Conservative Group to link Hildenborough parish with an area of central Tonbridge. They argued that these two areas flow freely into one another and that the Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground and Tonbridge Farm Sportsground should remain in one ward.

82 The Green Party and Liberal Democrats argued strongly against the proposal made by the Council and Conservative Group. The Green Party argued that the rural community in Hildenborough would not be best reflected by the addition of Tonbridge residents and that there is little to no community commonality between these two areas. They argued that Hilden Park, in the south-east of the existing Hildenborough ward, is one continuous community which is arbitrarily split by the Hildenborough parish boundary and existing ward boundary. The Green Party instead proposed to use Hilden Brook as a natural boundary between a rural-facing Hildenborough ward and urban-facing Tonbridge wards. They argued that this would unite the community of Hilden Park while simultaneously retaining the urban–rural split between Hildenborough and Tonbridge.

83 Hildenborough Parish Council stated that the current boundaries of Hildenborough ward should be maintained. They argued that Hildenborough is a self-contained community, with its own shops, churches, community hubs and a variety of clubs and associations. A resident also stated that the unparished area of Tonbridge should be self-contained, as it represents a coherent community. The Liberal Democrats proposed to maintain the current ward boundary between Hildenborough ward and Castle ward. However, an unchanged Hildenborough ward would have an electoral variance of -18% by 2027. We were not convinced that the evidence provided justifies this level of electoral inequality.

84 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we were persuaded to adopt the Green Party proposal for Hildenborough. While we recognise the links between Hildenborough and Tonbridge, we were not persuaded that grouping together these two areas would provide for a good reflection of community identity. We are of the view that a warding arrangement which unites Hilden Park and retains an urban–rural split between Hildenborough and Tonbridge would provide for the best balance in our statutory criteria.

85 Our draft recommendation is for a two-councillor Hildenborough ward, with a forecast electoral variance of -5% by 2027.

Pilgrims with Ightham

86 We received eight submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Addington Parish Council, Trottiscliffe Parish Council, Councillor Stapleton, Parish Councillor Garrett and a local resident.

87 All these submissions, apart from the Green Party, argued that the current Wrotham, Ightham & Stansted ward should be extended to the east to include the parishes of Addington and Trottiscliffe. The Conservative Group argued that these five parishes have a similar identity with their rural setting, schools and common issues, such as the impact of the motorway and preservation of green spaces. They also stated that while many residents of these five parishes do look towards Borough

Green for some of their facilities and amenities, they have a much more rural nature and as such should be grouped together to better reflect this and to handle common issues.

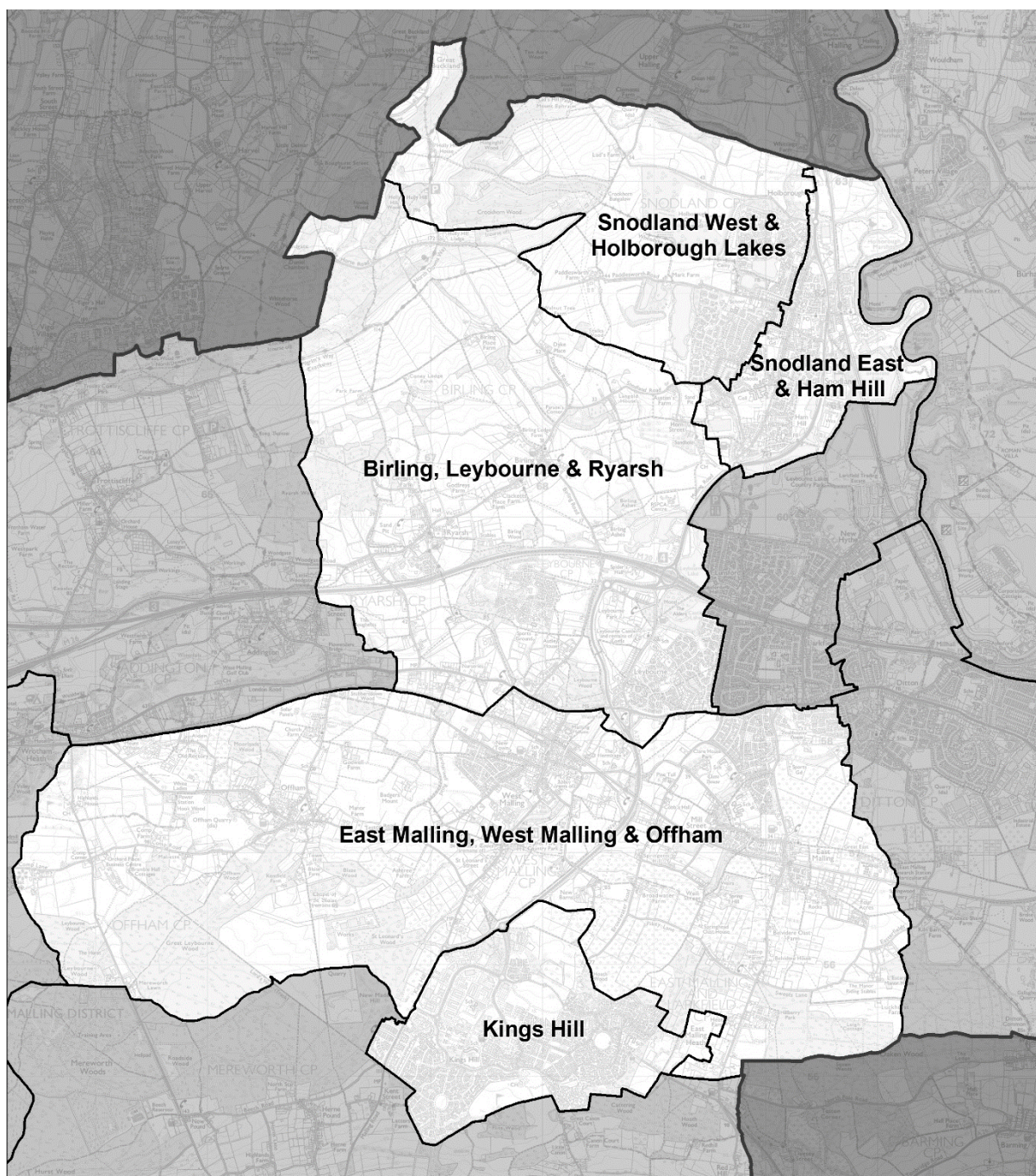
88 The Green Party instead proposed to group together the parishes of Stansted, Wrotham, Trottiscliffe, Addington, Platt and Offham in a ward named Wrotham & Rural North West. While this configuration would group together some rural parishes, the submission provided little community evidence. As discussed in paragraph 100, we received submissions stating that Offham is more closely linked with West Malling parish. We were therefore not convinced to adopt the Wrotham & Rural North West ward as part of our draft recommendations.

89 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we were persuaded to adopt the Council and Conservative Group's proposals for a two-councillor Pilgrims ward. We consider that this provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria while reflecting the rural-facing nature of the five parishes grouped in this ward.

90 As the geographic centre of this ward has moved north-eastwards due to the addition of Addington and Trottiscliffe parishes, we are of the view that the ward name should be altered to represent the larger population centres. We are therefore proposing to adopt the Council's and Conservative Group's suggested ward name of Pilgrims, due to the Pilgrims Way which runs through the northern part of this ward, with a slight change to Pilgrims with Ightham. We welcome comments and suggestions on this name.

91 Pilgrims with Ightham will be represented by two councillors and will have a forecast electoral variance of 0% by 2027.

Central parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh	2	1%
East Malling, West Malling & Offham	3	-3%
Kings Hill	3	9%
Snodland East & Ham Hill	2	-6%
Snodland West & Holborough Lakes	2	-8%

Kings Hill

92 We received 11 submissions regarding Kings Hill from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Tom Tugendhat MP, Councillor Stapleton, Councillor Tanner and five residents. All but one submission argued that the existing Kings Hill ward should be retained, and that Kings Hill is a tight community with distinct boundaries. One resident argued that Kings Hill should be grouped with Wateringbury. However, this was opposed by Councillor Stapleton and two residents, who argued that Kings Hill should not be placed with villages in the surrounding area due to its distinct community identity.

93 The Council and Conservative Group proposed to remove the properties west of Malling Road, in the area of Mosquito Road, from Kings Hill ward in order to unite the parish of Mereworth into a single ward. However, a resident argued that this area was part of the urban sprawl of Kings Hill and that residents in this area use amenities in Kings Hill and share a strong relationship.

94 Our draft recommendations for Kings Hill have adopted the proposals made by the Green Party and a local resident, which proposed to retain the current ward boundaries of Kings Hill. We were persuaded by the community evidence provided that the area west of Malling Road should remain in Kings Hill ward. We have also extended the ward to the east to include the entirety of Kings Hill parish within a single ward, as proposed by the Council and Conservative Group.

95 Our proposed Kings Hill ward will be represented by three councillors and have an electoral variance of 9% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh and East Malling, West Malling & Offham

96 We received 13 submissions regarding this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Tom Tugendhat MP, Birling Parish Council, East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council, Ryarsh Parish Council, West Malling Parish Council, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Roud, Councillor Thornewell and two local residents. The schemes we received from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party and local residents all proposed different wards in this area. We have based our draft recommendations on the scheme submitted by a local resident.

97 The Council and Conservative Group submissions proposed an East Malling ward and linked West Malling with Offham, Birling, Ryarsh and Leybourne parishes. Tom Tugendhat MP, Councillor Thornewell and East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council supported a separate East Malling ward. The Parish Council argued that linking East Malling with Ditton, Kings Hill or Wateringbury parishes would not reflect local communities due to the lack of road access and physical separation between these areas. In order to achieve electoral equality for a two-member East Malling ward, the Council and Conservative Group proposed to include properties on Lunsford Lane and Willow Road in East Malling ward. They argued that upcoming

development to the south of the A20 would bridge the gap between East Malling and the west of Larkfield. We were not convinced that this proposed addition provided for a clear and identifiable boundary, especially when we considered the evidence provided earlier in the Conservative submission that identified the A20 as a strong and identifiable boundary. Councillor Roud also proposed adding in electors from the existing Larkfield ward into East Malling, including properties on both sides of New Hythe Lane to the south of Kingfisher Road and Laburnum Drive. We are of the view that this would also not provide for a clear and identifiable boundary and consider the A20 to be a stronger boundary. We have therefore not been persuaded to create a two-member East Malling ward as part of our draft recommendations.

98 The Green Party also proposed a two-councillor East Malling ward, adding in electors from Ditton in order to achieve electoral equality. While we are of the view that this would be a more logical addition, we also received evidence from Councillor Cooper concerning the lack of access between Ditton and East Malling. In addition, the boundary provided by the East Malling Research Station persuaded us to not propose a ward which crossed the parish boundary in this area.

99 A local resident proposed joining East Malling, West Malling and Offham parishes to form a three-member ward. They argued that East Malling and West Malling have strong historical links, and that West Malling has strong links to Offham through a regular bus service. The resident further argued that the inclusion of Lunsford Lane in East Malling, as proposed by the Council and Conservative Group, is artificial and unclear.

100 West Malling Parish Council supported placing East Malling and West Malling in the same ward, arguing that they are well connected by road and rail. They further argued that West Malling is also well linked with Offham, and that they would support a ward containing these three parishes. Councillor Stapleton suggested that East Malling and West Malling should be in the same ward with Offham. He argued that there are good road links between West Malling and Offham, and that residents of all three parishes use medical practices and amenities in West Malling. The Green Party also considered placing Offham with West Malling as part of their submission.

101 After carefully considering all the evidence we received, we are of the view that joining East Malling, West Malling and Offham in a three-member ward provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria.

102 Moving north, Councillor Stapleton and two residents argued that Leybourne, Ryarsh and Birling should be placed in the same ward. Councillor Stapleton argued that these three parishes share schools and doctors' surgeries, and a resident further explained that Birling and Ryarsh parishes are joined by rural roads. Birling Parish Council stated that Birling parish should be included in a ward with other rural parishes.

103 After considering the evidence received, we are of the view that these three parishes should be joined together in a two-councillor Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh ward. We consider that this provides for the best balances of our statutory criteria, while also reflecting the decisions made to the south in East Malling, West Malling & Offham.

104 Our draft recommendations are therefore for a three-councillor East Malling, West Malling & Offham ward and a two-councillor Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh ward. These wards are forecast to have 3% fewer and 1% more electors than the borough average respectively by 2027.

Snodland East & Ham Hill and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes

105 We received nine submissions regarding Snodland from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Snodland Labour Party, Snodland Town Council, Councillor Bell, Councillor Hickmott, Councillor Lettington and a resident. We have based our Snodland wards on the Council, Conservative Group and Green Party schemes.

106 The Council, Conservative Group, Snodland Town Council, Councillor Hickmott and a resident all argued that Snodland should remain separate from surrounding areas, pointing to the strong community in Snodland and various social clubs and amenities used by residents. We were convinced by the community evidence received and so are not proposing to join Snodland with any of the surrounding parishes.

107 The Council, Conservative Group and Green Party all proposed the same boundaries for Snodland, supported by Councillor Bell and Councillor Lettington. This proposal would split Snodland into two two-councillor wards and moves properties accessing onto Malling Road from Snodland West & Holborough Lakes ward to Snodland East & Ham Hill ward. The Conservative Group argued that this proposal would avoid splitting Malling Road across two wards and keeps together the properties that access out onto Malling Road.

108 The Snodland Labour Party and a resident proposed to split Snodland between a one-councillor ward and a three-councillor ward. They proposed to run the boundary down Malling Road before cutting east along Sharnal Lane. Councillor Hickmott also supported this proposal. The Snodland Labour Party argued that this split was geographically more sensible for the town and used a clearer boundary when compared to the Council scheme.

109 Councillor Lettington argued that the Snodland Labour Party's proposed boundary down Malling Road would be arbitrary, and instead supported splitting Snodland into two two-councillor wards. We looked at the proposed Malling Road boundary on our virtual tour and were of the view that this boundary would

unnecessarily split residents across this road. While we considered running the boundary behind the properties on the western side of Malling Road, this would result in electoral variances of 20% and -19% for Snodland East & Ham Hill and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes, respectively. We have therefore not adopted the Snodland Labour Party's scheme as part of our draft recommendations.

110 Following careful consideration of the evidence received, we have decided to adopt the Council, Conservative Group and Green Party wards in Snodland. This arrangement does not split the properties either side of Malling Road and we consider that this proposal instead unites the properties that access out onto Malling Road. We also consider that splitting Snodland between two two-councillor wards provides for more effective and convenient local governance.

111 Our proposed Snodland East & Ham Hill and Snodland West & Holborough Lakes wards are forecast to have two councillor each and 6% and 8% fewer electors, respectively, than the borough average by 2027.

Eastern parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham	3	8%
Aylesford South & Ditton	3	0%
Larkfield	3	2%
Walderslade	1	4%

Larkfield

112 We received eight submissions regarding Larkfield from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council, Councillor Stapleton, Councillor Thornewell and two local residents.

113 All of these submissions supported a three-councillor Larkfield ward. The Green Party proposed to use the East Malling & Larkfield parish boundary as the ward boundary, apart from in the south of the ward where they proposed to use London Road as the southern boundary. A local resident also proposed this arrangement as part of their submission. The Conservative submission argued that Larkfield is separated from East Malling via the strong boundary of the A20, and that these areas are two distinct communities. A local resident further described how residents of this area are served by local schools, village halls and the Larkfield Community Group. We consider that a Larkfield ward would reflect community identity, while also providing good levels of electoral equality.

114 We consider that a Larkfield ward, bounded by the parish boundary and the A20, would reflect community identity in the area. As discussed in paragraph 97, we were not persuaded by the Council and Conservative Group proposal to move the electors on Lunsford Lane into an East Malling ward. Under our proposal, all properties south of the A20 would be located in East Malling, West Malling & Offham ward, with the exception of those around Walnut Tree Court. All proposals placed these properties in Larkfield ward as a result of this area being currently located in Larkfield South parish ward.

115 Our draft recommendation is therefore for a three-councillor Larkfield ward, with a forecast electoral variance of 2% by 2027.

Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham

116 We received eight submissions for this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Councillor Dalton, Councillor Davis and three local residents.

117 The Council, Conservative Group and local resident proposed to create a two-councillor ward that brought together the villages of Burham, Eccles and Wouldham. They argued that there were strong links between these rural villages as well as geographic separation from Blue Bell Hill and Walderslade. This proposed ward would have an electoral variance of 11% more electors than the borough average by 2027. A local resident also proposed this warding arrangement and argued that the connection between these villages is strong enough to justify an electoral variance over 10%.

118 Councillor Dalton, Council Davis and two residents argued that due to proposed future developments in the area, this ward should be served by three councillors rather than two. However, under the boundaries proposed by the Council and

Conservative Group, this would result in a variance of -26%. Due to this high level of electoral inequality, we have not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

119 We also have not been persuaded that the evidence received justifies an electoral variance over 10% for a two-member Burham, Eccles & Wouldham ward. However, we recognise the close links between these parishes are therefore not proposing to split them between wards.

120 The Green Party proposed to link the three parishes of Burham, Eccles and Wouldham with North Aylesford. This proposal provides for an improved level of electoral equality at -2%, and in our view reflects communities in the area by retaining these rural villages united in the same ward. We have therefore adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations with, however, an alteration to the southern boundary as discussed below. This ward would be served by three councillors.

121 A local resident proposed to use the M20 as the southern boundary for Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham. We looked at this proposed boundary on our virtual tour and consider it strong and identifiable. While the Green Party's proposal of using the River Medway as the southern boundary would result in an electoral variance of -2% for Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham, Aylesford South & Ditton would have an electoral variance of 13%. Therefore, we are proposing to adopt the proposal put forward by a local resident to use the M20 as a strong boundary, which also provides for good electoral equality for both Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham at 8%, and Aylesford South & Ditton at 0%.

122 Our draft recommendation is for a three-councillor Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham ward. This ward is forecast to have 8% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Aylesford South & Ditton

123 We received six submissions about this area from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Stapleton and a local resident.

124 The Council and Conservative Group proposed a Ditton ward comprising the parish and the area of Holtwood in Aylesford parish. This was supported by Councillor Cooper, who stated that this proposed inclusion of Holtwood unites a community while also providing for a clearer boundary. Councillor Cooper also provided extensive community evidence describing the places that Ditton residents use, including sport centres, churches, shops, community groups and more. While we recognise that Ditton is a strong self-contained community, our decision to include North Aylesford with Burham, Eccles and Wouldham would create an electoral variance in South Aylesford of 35% fewer electors than the borough

average with two councillors or 30% more electors than the borough average with a single councillor. We consider this variance too high to accept and consequently we must find an alternative arrangement for South Aylesford.

125 In order to provide a good level of electoral equality south of the M20, we are proposing to adopt a proposal submitted to us by a local resident and supported by Councillor Stapleton, and similar to the scheme provided by the Green Party. This arrangement proposes to link Ditton parish with the area of Aylesford south of the M20. While we are sympathetic to the submissions which define Ditton as a self-contained community, we consider that this arrangement provides for a good balance of our statutory criteria. We further note that the communities of Ditton and South Aylesford are linked by London Road and Councillor Cooper described how some residents of Ditton use large supermarkets in Aylesford.

126 Our draft recommendation is therefore for a three-councillor Aylesford South & Ditton ward. This ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of 0% by 2027.

Walderslade

127 We received four submissions regarding Walderslade from the Council, Conservative Group, Green Party and a local resident.

128 The Council and Conservative Group proposed to place Walderslade in a ward with Aylesford. In their submissions, they described how the areas of Blue Bell Hill and Walderslade are linked to Aylesford through use of amenities and community events, as well as through strong road links, public bridleways and footpaths. We were persuaded to retain Blue Bell Hill in a ward with Aylesford.

129 However, we note the proposals from the Green Party and local resident which placed Walderslade in a single-member ward. A local resident argued that Walderslade has no affinity with Burham, Eccles, Wouldham or Aylesford, and that the M2 provides a strong physical barrier. They argued that the villages on the southern side of the M2 are directly linked to Aylesford through Rochester Road but that Walderslade is physically separated.

130 Following careful consideration of the evidence, we have been persuaded to propose a single-councillor Walderslade ward. This will be defined by the M2 and the external borough boundary. The boundary along the M2 will divert east around Robin Hood Lane (Upper) to ensure that this road is kept in a ward with Blue Bell Hill. We consider that this provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria.

131 Walderslade will be represented by one councillor and is forecast to have 4% more electors than the borough average by 2027.

Conclusions

132 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Tonbridge & Malling, referencing the 2021 and 2027 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2021	2027
Number of councillors	44	44
Number of electoral wards	19	19
Average number of electors per councillor	2,235	2,428
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council should be made up of 44 councillors serving 19 wards representing one single-councillor wards, 11 two-councillor wards and seven 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 the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

133 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.

134 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, Tonbridge & Malling Borough 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.

135 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 Aylesford and Snodland.

136 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Aylesford parish.

Draft recommendations

Aylesford Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Aylesford North	3
Aylesford South	7
Blue Bell Hill	2
Eccles	3
Walderslade	5

137 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Snodland parish.

Draft recommendations

Snodland Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Snodland East & Ham Hill	8
Snodland West & Holborough Lakes	7

Have your say

138 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

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

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

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

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

142 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Tonbridge & Malling which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

143 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

144 Electoral equality:

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

145 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

146 Effective local government:

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

147 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lqbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

148 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

149 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

150 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Tonbridge & Malling in 2023.

Equalities

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

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham	3	6,406	2135	-4%	7,889	2630	8%
2	Aylesford South & Ditton	3	6,871	2290	2%	7,254	2418	0%
3	Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh	2	4,633	2317	4%	4,886	2443	1%
4	Borough Green & Platt	2	4,514	2257	1%	4,783	2392	-1%
5	Bourne	2	4,495	2248	1%	4,813	2407	-1%
6	Cage Green	2	4,390	2195	-2%	4,684	2342	-4%
7	East Malling, West Malling & Offham	3	6,502	2167	-3%	7,072	2357	-3%
8	East Peckham, Mereworth & Wateringbury	2	4,679	2340	5%	5,034	2517	4%
9	Higham	2	4,760	2380	7%	5,097	2549	5%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10 Hildenborough	2	4,321	2161	-3%	4,612	2306	-5%
11 Judd	3	7,206	2402	7%	7,619	2540	5%
12 Kings Hill	3	6,509	2170	-3%	7,916	2639	9%
13 Larkfield	3	6,966	2322	4%	7,430	2477	2%
14 Pilgrims with Ightham	2	4,563	2282	2%	4,861	2431	0%
15 Snodland East & Ham Hill	2	4,282	2141	-4%	4,556	2278	-6%
16 Snodland West & Holborough Lakes	2	4,296	2148	-4%	4,490	2245	-8%
17 Trench	2	4,246	2123	-5%	4,559	2280	-6%
18 Vauxhall	3	6,353	2118	-5%	6,738	2246	-7%
19 Walderslade	1	2,335	2335	4%	2,535	2535	4%
Totals	44	98,327	–	–	106,828	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,235	–	–	2,428	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Tonbridge & Malling. 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



Number	Ward name
1	Aylesford North with Burham, Eccles & Wouldham
2	Aylesford South & Ditton
3	Birling, Leybourne & Ryarsh
4	Borough Green & Platt
5	Bourne
6	Cage Green
7	East Malling, West Malling & Offham
8	East Peckham, Mereworth & Wateringbury
9	Higham

10	Hildenborough
11	Judd
12	Kings Hill
13	Larkfield
14	Pilgrims with Ightham
15	Snodland East & Ham Hill
16	Snodland West & Holborough Lakes
17	Trench
18	Vauxhall
19	Walderslade

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/south-east/kent/tonbridge-and-malling

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/tonbridge-and-malling

Local Authority

- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Political Groups

- Conservative Group
- Green Group of Elected Members
- Green Party
- Independent Alliance (Kent)
- Liberal Democrats
- Snodland Labour Party
- Tonbridge, Edenbridge & Malling Conservative Association

Councillors

- Councillor J. Anderson (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor S. Bell (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Snodland Town Council)
- Councillor M. Boughton (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor V. Branson and Councillor K. King (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Cooper (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor R. Dalton (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Burham Parish Council)
- Councillor D. Davis (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor M. Davis (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor P. Garrett (Addington Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Hickmott (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council) (two submissions)
- Councillor M. Hood (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor S. Hudson (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor J. Lark (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Lettington (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor R. Roud (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)

- Councillor N. Stapleton (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and West Malling Parish Council)
- Councillor K. Tanner (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor G. Thomas (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Thornewell (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)

Members of Parliament

- Tom Tugendhat MP (Tonbridge & Malling)

Parish and Town Councils

- Addington Parish Council
- Birling Parish Council
- Borough Green Parish Council
- East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council
- Hadlow Parish Council
- Hildenborough Parish Council
- Mereworth Parish Council
- Plaxtol Parish Council
- Ryarsh Parish Council
- Shipbourne Parish Council
- Snodland Town Council
- Trottiscliffe Parish Council
- Wateringbury Parish Council
- West Malling Parish Council
- West Peckham Parish Council

Local Residents

- 43 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

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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