

Appendix 1

Cheshire East Electoral Review

Draft Recommendations Consultation

Response Report

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Technical notes	5
2.1	The terminology used in this report	5
2.2	Production and revision of the Review’s electoral forecasts.....	6
2.3	Local Plan site LPS 15 (Gawsworth Moss area) boundary	7
3	Summary of the Draft Recommendations	9
4	Borough ward recommendations for which a response has yet to be determined.....	13
4.1	Bollington and Macclesfield wards (including Broken Cross & Upton)	14
4.2	Knutsford wards.....	29
5	Parish ward recommendations for which a response has yet to be determined	37
5.1	Crewe Town Council	40
5.2	Knutsford Town Council.....	44
5.3	Macclesfield Town Council	47
5.4	Sandbach Town Council	50

1 Introduction

Cheshire East Council is keen to ensure that the Local Government Boundary Commission's current Electoral Review produces electoral arrangements that:

- enable the Council to deliver public services effectively and efficiently;
- allow an even division of councillors' workloads, taking into factors such as rurality and deprivation, as well as the numbers of electors;
- reflect the interests and identities of the Borough's communities;
- give electors a fair (broadly equal) say in the Council's decision-making and resource allocation.

The Council therefore welcomed the opportunity, at earlier stages of this Review, to submit proposals to the Commission on:

- the future council size (the number of councillors);
- future warding arrangements for the Borough, including where ward boundaries should be drawn, how many councillors should represent each ward, and ward names.

For the same reason, the Council further welcomes the public consultation (from 1 October to 9 December 2024) on the Commission's Draft Recommendations for the Council's new electoral arrangements.

The Council is encouraged by the facts that:

- the Draft Recommendations are largely based on the proposals it submitted in March 2024¹, during this Review's first public consultation stage, on future warding arrangements. In particular, the Commission agreed in full with the proposals for 41 of the Council's 48 would-be new Borough wards. For one of the other seven proposed wards, the Commission's recommendation differed only in terms of the ward name. The only areas where the Commission recommends a different pattern of wards to the Council's proposals are:
 - Macclesfield, where the Commission recommends significantly different boundaries for the wards covering the centre, north, south and west of the town (with a knock-on impact for the would-be Bollington & Rainow Borough ward's boundary) and a division of the town into seven wards (rather than six, as the Council proposed).
 - Knutsford, where the Commission recommends a division into two wards, rather than the single ward favoured by Cheshire East.

¹ These submitted warding proposals were approved by Full Council on 27 February 2024.

- the Commission still takes the view that Cheshire East should in future have 82 councillors (the same number as now). This was the number that the Council itself had proposed in its initial (December 2023) submission to the Commission.

The Council further notes the Draft Recommendations' proposals for changing the boundaries and councillor numbers for some 'parish' wards (the wards into which town councils and some parish councils are divided), so that parish warding arrangements align with the new Borough wards.

However, in developing its response to the Draft Recommendations consultation, it is necessary for the Council to take stock of:

- (a) those of its submitted (March 2024) warding proposals that the Draft Recommendations did not adopt.
- (b) the alternative proposals that the Commission received during the warding consultation stage, for example from town or parish councils, individual councillors, political or community groups, or local residents. In particular, the Council needs to consider not just those alternative proposals the Draft Recommendations have adopted, but also others to which the Commission appears to have attributed significant weight, or about which it seeks further information and evidence. [Bearing this in mind, Electoral & Polling District Review Sub-Committee Members felt it would be helpful to consider, at their 6 November 2024 meeting, Holmes Chapel Parish Council's warding consultation stage submission, which proposed an alternative boundary between the Brereton and Dane Valley Borough wards. However, the Sub-Committee did not feel there was a need to revisit any of the other Cheshire East Council warding consultation submission proposals that the Commission has accepted.](#)
- (c) the knock-on implications for parish warding arrangements. In particular, the Council needs to consider whether the Draft Recommendations' proposed changes to parish wards are appropriate. In cases where the Council has concerns about some of the Commission's parish warding proposals, it may be possible for the Commission to address those concerns in its Final Recommendations. However, it may be that, in some of these cases, the Commission is unable to modify (or decides it is unable to justify modifying) its Draft Recommendations parish warding, and that only a new Community Governance Review (CGR) can resolve such matters. It is therefore important for the Council to have clear guidance on the extent of the Commission's ability to modify parish warding arrangements. The Council has already approached the Commission informally about this issue and received some clarification. Section 5 of this Consultation Response Report sets out the Commission's response on this issue, and the implications, in more detail.
- (d) the electronic boundary line files showing the Commission's (draft) recommended new Borough ward and parish ward boundaries. The Commission shared these files with the Council at the start of the Draft

Recommendations consultation stage and, by loading them into its mapping software, the Council has been able to check out the Commission's recommended boundary lines at a very large scale, where the implications for individual properties and small parcels of land can be readily seen. These checks have proved very informative, as they revealed some locations where the Commission's recommended boundary line (temporarily) follows a different path to that implied by the Council's own map data and the Draft Recommendations report. The Council has contacted the Commission informally, to summarise and provide examples of these unexpected boundary line 'deviations', and the potential implications, as a few cases affect individual residential properties. The Commission has already provided an encouraging response to some of this feedback², but is continuing its investigation into the cases raised. The Council is also checking its own records on past electoral boundary line changes, to help shed light on these matters. However, only a small proportion of the (draft) recommended Borough wards are affected by this issue – and both the Council and the Commission are confident that these divergences can all be explained (and, where appropriate, amended in the Final Recommendations).

As the above narrative indicates, there are only a few of the Commission's (draft) recommended Borough wards for which a formal (Draft Recommendations consultation stage) response may be appropriate.

At its 6 November 2024 meeting, the Sub-Committee determined its intended formal response to the Draft Recommendations for some of these Borough wards. At the same meeting, the Sub-Committee also determined its intended formal response to some of the Commission's Draft Recommendations for parish wards. The details of those determinations on Borough and parish wards can be found in the minutes of the 6 November meeting, and so are not duplicated in this report.

The purpose of this report, to the Electoral & Polling District Review for the Sub-Committee's subsequent (15 November) meeting, is to:

- highlight and summarise those Draft Recommendations for Borough and parish wards, and those alternative warding consultation stage proposals from other consultees, that are likely to merit formal (consultation submission) responses from the Council and for which a formal response has yet to be determined.
- set out potential options for responding to each of those Draft Recommendations and alternative proposals.

² For example, the Commission has stated that some of its divergent boundary lines are the result of it drawing its recommended new boundary lines to align with the current path of a river, rather than tracking long-established electoral boundary lines that were based on the path followed by that river some years back. It also appears that the Commission has taken the view that, in some instances, existing geographical boundaries (such as field boundaries and roads) would provide a clearer Borough or parish ward boundary than existing electoral boundary lines (which, in some locations, cut across fields). In addition, it seems that the Commission has specific (or different) preferences about how best to align electoral boundaries with features such as roadways and roundabouts.

The rest of this report, the latest draft of the Council's working Consultation Response Report, is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the main technical notes relating to this report. These cover terminology (the definitions and abbreviations used in the report) and the development and revision of the electoral forecasts produced for this Review. In addition, this section provides an overview of the Commission's response to some discrepancies identified in its recommended Borough ward electronic boundary line around Local Plan site LPS 15 (Gawsworth Moss) – a matter that the Commission has now satisfactorily addressed.
- To provide further overall context, Section 3 ~~contains provides~~ a summary table, listing the proposed names and councillor numbers (and associated electoral statistics) for each of the Borough wards in the Commission's Draft Recommendations. The table also includes brief details of how (if at all) these recommended Borough wards' names and boundaries differ from those proposed by the Council in its warding consultation stage submission.
- Section 4 covers those Draft Recommendations ~~(and alternative proposals)~~ for Borough wards which it is suggested the Council should consider formally responding to, but for which a response has yet to be determined. For each of the Borough wards covered, there is a separate subsection, which sets out the Draft Recommendations and their underlying rationale, followed by the Council officers' assessment of the relevant evidence and arguments, and (highlighted in a grey-shaded box) advice on the potential consultation responses for Members to consider. As this latest draft of the Report excludes Borough wards for which a response has already been determined, the Section's length and the subsection numbering is different to that in the original (previous) version published for the 6 November Sub-Committee meeting.
- Section 5 covers the Draft Recommendations ~~for relating to changes in parish warding~~ arrangements for which a response has yet to be determined. This section is structured similarly to Section 4. For each of the town and parish councils ~~that Section 5 covers~~ affected, there is a separate subsection, which sets out the Draft Recommendations for that council's parish wards, followed by the Council officers' assessment of the relevant evidence and arguments, and (highlighted in a grey-shaded box) advice on the potential consultation responses for Members to consider. As this latest draft of the Report excludes parish wards for which a response has already been determined, the Section's length and the subsection numbering differs from that in the original (previous) published version of this Report.

Annex A (the 'maps' annex) is a separate document accompanying this main report. This Annex includes detailed maps to which Sections 4 and 5 of the main report refer.

2 Technical notes

2.1 The terminology used in this report

In the interest of concise wording, this report on the Council's evolving consultation response to the Draft Recommendations is referred to as the Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report, or 'Consultation Response Report' (or the/ this 'Report') for short. Other terms, definitions and abbreviations used in this Consultation Response Report are as follows:

- **'The Borough', 'The Borough Council' or 'The Council'**: Cheshire East Council.
- **'Borough ward'**: one of the wards into which Cheshire East is divided.
- **'CGR'**: Community Governance Review – a review, conducted by the local authority, of governance arrangements for the town and parish councils within its area. Except where specified otherwise, the CGR referred to is the one undertaken by Cheshire East Council between 2018 and 2022. The changes arising from this CGR's final recommendations were implemented in April 2023.
- **'The Commission'**: the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- **'Draft Recommendations'**: the Commission's recently-published (October 2024) Draft Recommendations on Cheshire East and the associated report.
- **'Parish ward' or 'town/ parish council ward'**: the wards into which (some) town and parish councils are divided.
- **'Properties'**: except where specified otherwise, this refers only to residential properties, not to commercial or industrial premises or public buildings.
- The **'Review'**: the Commission's current Electoral Review of Cheshire East.
- **'Seats'**: the number of councillors representing a particular electoral area, such as a parish ward, town or parish council, Borough ward or the Borough Council.
- **'Variance'**: the percentage difference between the electors per seat ratio for a given Borough ward and the Borough average.
- **'Warding Proposal Report'**: the Council's submitted (March 2024) response to the first (warding) public consultation stage of this Review.

2.2 Production and revision of the Review's electoral forecasts

For its Electoral Reviews, the Commission requires local authorities to produce electoral forecasts, to help inform the development of consultation stage submissions (both the Council's and those of other consultees) and to help inform the Commission's recommendations.

In late 2023 the Borough Council submitted its electoral forecasts to the Commission. In keeping with the Commission's requirements, these forecasts cover the period from 2023 (the base year for the Review) to 2030.³ The forecasts cover all electoral tiers (apart from parliamentary constituencies), from polling districts up to (current) Borough wards and the Borough as a whole.

The Commission checked and approved the Council's submitted forecasts. The Commission then published these forecasts on the Cheshire East Review page of its website in January 2024, to coincide with the public launch of the Review and the start of its first (warding) public consultation stage.

It should be noted, though, that the Commission has subsequently produced slightly revised electorate figures for the 2023-30 period and is now using these revised numbers to inform its decision-making.⁴

By way of an explanation of these revisions, paragraph 26 of the Commission's Draft Recommendations report cautions that:

"There can be very slight differences between the electorate figures published on our website at the beginning of the review and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations."

The Council has compared the Commission's revised electoral statistics against the Council's original figures and is satisfied that:

- the differences are indeed relatively small; and
- the Commission's decision to base its Draft Recommendations on its revised figures has not had a material, adverse impact on the strength of the Council's warding consultation stage (March 2024) proposals. As far as it is possible to

³ The base date for the forecasts is 1 July 2023, as (at the time the forecasts were produced) this was the date of the most recently available Electoral Register data. The Commission's guidance on electorate forecasts highlights a requirement for an electoral review to consider changes in the electorate that are likely to occur within five years of the release of the review's final recommendations. At the time the Council produced and submitted its forecasts, the Commission intended to publish its final recommendations in January 2025 (since postponed until May 2025, following changes to the Review timetable). Hence forecasts were required up to January 2030. The resulting forecasts are therefore for the period from mid-2023 (1 July 2023) to the start of 2030 (January 2030).

⁴ However, as of mid-October 2024, the electoral forecast data file published on the Commission's Cheshire East Review page still contained the original figures submitted by the Council. The Council therefore assumes that the only published documents containing any of the Commission's revised electoral figures will be its Draft Recommendations and Final Recommendations reports.

judge, the electoral equality figures (the electors per seat ratios and the variances of these from the Borough average) resulting from those submitted proposals remain broadly the same, even based on the Commission's revised numbers of electors.

To ensure maximum consistency with the Commission's approach and the data it is now using for its decision-making, the statistics in this Consultation Response Report are taken or derived, wherever practical, from the Commission's revised figures for its recommended Borough wards. However, for some of the alternative warding arrangements discussed in this Report, this is not possible and the Council's original figures are used instead, as a proxy measure. Where this Report presents tables of electoral data, or quotes electoral statistics within its commentary, it therefore includes a footnote or similar aside, specifying whether the figures are the Council's original ones or the Commission's revised ones.

2.3 Local Plan site LPS 15 (Gawsworth Moss area) boundary

As noted in Section 1 of this report, the Commission provided the Council with electronic boundary files, allowing its (draft) recommended new boundary lines to be mapped and assessed by the Council at very large scale. During the course of this assessment, the Council noticed that the Commission's Borough ward boundary line diverged sharply from the LPS 15 site boundary line in some places, despite this being contrary to what the Draft Recommendations report indicated. However, this issue has been raised by the Council and the Commission has confirmed that this oversight will be rectified (if at that stage the Commission still favours a Borough ward boundary in this location) in the Final Recommendations.

To elaborate, LPS 15 covers the same area as polling district 4GDT. This polling district, along with the established properties in the adjacent polling district to the northwest (4BFR), makes up Gawsworth Parish Council's Moss parish ward. Unlike Gawsworth's other parish ward (Village), Moss is currently part of the Macclesfield South Borough ward.

The Draft Recommendations accept the proposals - made by both the Council and the Macclesfield Labour Party – that 4GDT be added to the existing Macclesfield South Borough ward. However, the Draft Recommendations electronic boundary line provided by the Commission follows fences or field boundaries rather than the actual LPS 15 site boundary and, in doing so, it excludes (from Macclesfield South) two large triangular subsections of the LPS 15 site land where new homes could potentially be built by 2030, as well as leaving out some smaller sections of land.

Map 9 in Annex A shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations boundary line (in orange) and the LPS site boundary (marked by the pale blue parish ward and brown polling district lines).

Although no construction has started yet and a planning application (necessary for indicating the likely distribution of dwellings across the site) has yet to be approved, the forecasts the Council produced for this Review anticipate a significant volume of

development, with around 500 electors living on the site by 2030. Clearly a Borough ward boundary that placed sizeable sections of the site (and whatever properties those eventually had) in Gawsworth Borough ward, whilst placing the rest of the site's homes in Macclesfield South Borough ward, would artificially divide what is likely to be a single community with shared interests and ties. It would also make for inefficient and ineffective local government, as Members from two different Borough wards would have to liaise over issues affecting the development and its residents. As Borough wards are required to consist of whole parish wards, it would, in addition, mean that the boundary between Gawsworth's two parish wards would have to be redrawn (in a way that would not reflect community identity).

The Council raised the above concerns with the Commission informally in October, as part of its more general feedback on locations where the Commission's Draft Recommendations boundary lines diverged from the path implied by the Commission's report and the Council's own electoral boundary data. In response, the Commission has confirmed in writing that its Final Recommendations will have regard to the exact LPS 15 site boundary and avoid splitting the site between two Borough wards. It has also explained that its Draft Recommendations boundary line in this location was based on Ordnance Survey data and therefore did not take proper account of development site boundaries or indeed the existing parish ward boundary. (Ordnance Survey does not hold comprehensive information on housing site boundaries and nor, as the Council understands, does it hold comprehensive information on parish ward boundaries.)

3 Summary of the Draft Recommendations

Table 3.1 below lists each of the Borough wards in the Commission’s Draft Recommendations and briefly explains how (if at all) these recommended wards’ names and boundaries differ from those proposed by the Council in its warding consultation stage (March 2024) submission.

Figures are included for elector numbers, ratios (electors per seat) and variances (the percentage variation of the ward’s ratio from the Borough average) for each of the proposed wards, for 2030 (the end of the Review’s forecast period). The Commission tries to ensure that, for all wards, the electors per seat ratio at the end of the Review’s forecast period is no more than 10% different from the Borough average. As can be seen, the Draft Recommendations warding would, based on the Commission’s (revised) electoral figures, ensure that by 2030 all but two of the new wards have ratios that are no more than 10% from the Borough average.

Table 3.1: Summary information on the Draft Recommendations’ Borough wards⁵

Name of new (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward	Council seats	Electors, Jan 2030	Electors per seat ratio, Jan 2030	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jan 2030	Differences (if any) from the Council’s original (March 2024) submission
Alderley Edge & Chorley	1	4,095	4,095	0%	The Commission’s recommended name is different to the one (‘Alderley Edge’) proposed by the Council.
Alsager	3	12,503	4,168	+1%	None
Audlem	1	4,432	4,432	+8%	None
Bollington & Rainow	2	7,964	3,982	-3%	The Commission’s recommended boundary with the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward is based on the submission from the local (Macclesfield) Labour Party ⁶ , but with a further small modification.
Brereton	1	4,532	4,532	+10%	None

⁵ All the elector numbers, ratios and variances in Table 3.1 are based on the Commission’s slightly revised electoral figures, not the Council’s originally submitted data.

⁶ The Macclesfield Labour Party’s proposals for the town’s warding and for the Macclesfield Tytherington/ Bollington & Rainow Borough ward boundary were the same as those presented to (but not adopted by) Full Council at its 27 February 2024 meeting.

Appendix 1 - Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report (V2, 7/11/24)

Name of new (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward	Council seats	Electors, Jan 2030	Electors per seat ratio, Jan 2030	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jan 2030	Differences (if any) from the Council's original (March 2024) submission
Broken Cross & Upton	2	8,335	4,168	+1%	Local (Macclesfield) Labour Party submitted proposals accepted in full. ⁷
Bunbury	1	4,019	4,019	-2%	None
Chelford	1	3,976	3,976	-3%	None
Congleton East	3	12,099	4,033	-2%	None
Congleton West	3	12,426	4,142	+1%	None
Crewe East	2	8,968	4,484	+9%	None
Crewe Maw Green	1	3,718	3,718	-10%	None
Crewe North	2	8,565	4,283	+4%	None
Crewe South	2	7,650	3,825	-7%	None
Crewe St Barnabas	1	4,038	4,038	-2%	None
Crewe West	2	8,059	4,030	-2%	None
Dane Valley	2	8,494	4,247	+3%	None
Disley	1	4,253	4,253	+3%	None
Gawsworth	1	4,321	4,321	+5%	None
Handforth	2	7,238	3,619	-12%	None
Haslington	1	4,394	4,394	+7%	None
High Legh	1	3,701	3,701	-10%	None
Knutsford North East	1	3,724	3,724	-9%	The Commission recommends splitting the town (Town Council area) into two wards: Knutsford North East (one seat) and Knutsford South & West (two seats). Its recommended dividing line is based on the submission from the local (Tatton) Labour Party ⁸ , but with a further small modification.
Knutsford South & West	2	7,915	3,958	-4%	See entry above for Knutsford North East.

⁷ The Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals for the town's warding were the same as those presented to (but not adopted by) Full Council at its 27 February 2024 meeting.

⁸ The Tatton Labour Party proposal was the same as that presented by Mr Joe Godden to Corporate Policy Committee (but not adopted by the Committee) at its 13 February 2024 meeting.

Appendix 1 - Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report (V2, 7/11/24)

Name of new (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward	Council seats	Electors, Jan 2030	Electors per seat ratio, Jan 2030	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jan 2030	Differences (if any) from the Council's original (March 2024) submission
Leighton	2	7,708	3,854	-6%	None
Macclesfield Central	2	8,714	4,357	+6%	See entry above for Broken Cross & Upton.
Macclesfield East	1	4,106	4,106	0%	None
Macclesfield Hurdsfield	1	4,024	4,024	-2%	None
Macclesfield South	2	7,401	3,701	-10%	See entry above for Broken Cross & Upton.
Macclesfield Tytherington	1	4,618	4,618	+12%	The Commission's recommended boundary is based largely on the local (Macclesfield) Labour Party proposal, but with a further small modification to the boundary with the would-be Bollington & Rainow Borough ward. ⁹
Macclesfield West & Ivy	2	7,829	3,915	-5%	See entry above for Broken Cross & Upton.
Middlewich	3	12,623	4,207	+2%	None
Mobberley	1	3,978	3,978	-3%	None
Nantwich North & West	2	8,399	4,200	+2%	None
Nantwich South & Stapeley	2	8,830	4,415	+7%	None
Odd Rode	2	8,237	4,119	0%	None
Poynton	3	12,098	4,032	-2%	None
Prestbury	1	4,239	4,239	+3%	None
Sandbach East & Central	2	8,611	4,306	+5%	None
Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath	2	8,020	4,010	-3%	None
Shavington	2	8,764	4,382	+7%	None
Sutton	1	3,995	3,995	-3%	None
Weston	1	4,278	4,278	+4%	None
Wheelock & Winterley	1	3,842	3,842	-7%	None
Wilmslow East & Dean Row	2	8,669	4,335	+5%	None

⁹ The Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals for the town's warding and for the Macclesfield Tytherington/ Bollington & Rainow Borough ward boundary were the same as those presented to (but not adopted by) Full Council at its 27 February 2024 meeting.

Appendix 1 - Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report (V2, 7/11/24)

Name of new (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward	Council seats	Electors, Jan 2030	Electors per seat ratio, Jan 2030	Ratio's % variance (from Borough average), Jan 2030	Differences (if any) from the Council's original (March 2024) submission
Wilmslow Lacey Green	1	3,758	3,758	-9%	None
Wilmslow West	2	8,264	4,132	0%	None
Wistaston	2	8,576	4,288	+4%	None
Wrenbury	1	4,024	4,024	-2%	None
Wybunbury	1	4,282	4,282	+4%	None

4 Borough ward recommendations for which a response has yet to be determined

Overview of this report section

As indicated in Section 1 of this Consultation Response Report:

- Only a small proportion of the Commission's (draft) recommended Borough wards differ, in terms of their boundaries or names, from what the Borough Council proposed in its warding consultation stage submission.
- Following the publication of the Draft Recommendations report, Sub-Committee Members felt it would be helpful to consider, at their 6 November 2024 meeting, Holmes Chapel Parish Council's proposed alternative boundary between the Brereton and Dane Valley Borough wards. However, the Sub-Committee did not feel there was a need to revisit any of the other Cheshire East Council warding consultation submission proposals that the Commission has accepted.
- Consequently, there are only a few of the Commission's (draft) recommended Borough wards for which a formal (Draft Recommendations consultation stage) response has been (or is being) sought. At its 6 November meeting, the Sub-Committee determined its intended formal response to the Draft Recommendations for some of these Borough wards. The details of those determinations can be found in the minutes of that meeting, and so are not duplicated here. Instead, Section 4 of this Consultation Response Report focuses only on those (draft) recommended Borough wards on which the Sub-Committee has yet to make a decision.

4.1 Bollington and Macclesfield wards (including Broken Cross & Upton)

Overview of the Draft Recommendations

In its Draft Recommendations, the Commission has accepted in full the Borough Council's proposals for the Macclesfield East and Macclesfield Hurdsfield Borough wards. For those two wards, the Council's proposals were the same as those submitted by the Macclesfield Labour Party and by Cheshire East Liberal Democrats.

For the rest of the town, the Commission's recommendations are based – with one modification - on the proposals set out in the Macclesfield Labour Party submission. The Macclesfield Labour Party proposals are the same as those as put forward by Cllr Wilson, as an amendment at Full Council in February 2024. The Commission's modification to those proposals is one that places a small number of additional properties in the new Bollington & Rainow Borough ward (rather than in the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward, as the local Labour Party's submission proposed). These additional properties (19 currently, with no more expected to be built in that small area by 2030) are those in the current Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward that are accessed via the B5090 (Tytherington Lane) or border the B5090.¹⁰

The Commission's justification for this modification (cited in paragraph 107 of its Draft Recommendations report) is as follows:

"We propose to include the electors east of Tytherington Lane into the proposed Bollington & Rainow ward, to ensure the entirety of Springwood Estate is contained within one ward. This reflects the evidence received from the Council which stated that their recent community governance review consultation revealed the existence of community ties between Springwood Estate residents and the area of Bollington north of The Silk Road. Our proposed modification also improves electoral equality slightly from a 13% to a 12% forecasted variance. While this electoral variance is slightly higher than what we would usually recommend, we consider it is justified, when taken into consideration along with our other two statutory criteria."

Apart from this modification, the Commission has accepted all the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals for the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward.

As the Macclesfield Labour Party's and the Borough Council's submitted proposals relating to Bollington & Rainow differ only in terms of where they draw that ward's boundary with Macclesfield Tytherington, it follows that the Commission has also accepted

¹⁰ The 19 properties involved (those which the local Labour Party proposed keeping in Macclesfield Tytherington but which the Commission recommends for inclusion in Bollington & Rainow) are: numbers 15 to 41 Tytherington Lane, Ridge View, The Manor Cottage, Manor Bungalow, Manor House, The Little Manor, Manor Farm, Step Cottage and Bramshill.

all of Council's proposals for the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, except for the boundary line between that ward and Macclesfield Tytherington.

The Commission's underlying rationale for its Macclesfield warding recommendations

The Draft Recommendations set out the Commission's reasons for supporting the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals (bar the small modification discussed above). Its rationale for the recommended Macclesfield East and Macclesfield Hurdsfield Borough wards is not summarised in this Consultation Response Report, as its reasoning is essentially the same as in the Council's submission. However, the Commission's justification for its recommended warding in the rest of Macclesfield is summarised below.

Firstly, Bollinbrook (polling district 4AE1) lacks community ties to the rest of its current Borough ward (Tytherington) and so can be warded separately. The Draft Recommendations report highlights the Macclesfield Labour Party's argument that Bollinbrook is a distinct community, with the railway and River Bollin acting as a physical barrier between it and the part of Tytherington adjoining it to the east. The Commission received consultation responses from many residents who also felt there were no community ties between these areas. Macclesfield Civic Society's response also noted that the river separated the two communities. The Commission made a site visit to that area of Macclesfield and came to the same conclusion.

Secondly, Congleton Road and Chester Road provide clear boundaries for the local Labour Party's proposed Broken Cross & Upton and West & Ivy wards.

Thirdly, the Borough Council's (and Liberal Democrats') proposal to merge the existing Broken Cross & Upton and West & Ivy wards into a single three-Member 'West' ward is incompatible – in terms of electoral equality - with the Commission's proposed separation of Bollinbrook from Tytherington. Adding Bollinbrook to the Council's proposed 'West' ward would, the Draft Recommendations report states, result in that ward having an electors per seat ratio 20% above the average. However, including Bollinbrook in Broken Cross & Upton, as the Macclesfield Labour Party proposes, would result in good electoral equality for that Borough ward and the other (West & Ivy) western Macclesfield Borough ward that the local Labour Party proposes.

Fourthly, as the submission from the local Labour Party (and one from a local resident) argued, Hibel Road is not a physical barrier between the Coare Street/ Station Street area and the town centre area to the immediate south. Therefore 4AC1 (the Coare Street/ Station Street area, which is in the current Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward) can be brought within the

Macclesfield Central Borough ward. The Draft Recommendations note that the Commission found the Borough Council's arguments on this issue (that 4AC1 is a separate community and Hibel Road is a physical barrier) less compelling.

Fifthly, the Commission was satisfied the local Labour Party's proposal to extend the Macclesfield South Borough ward further north (to the boundary of South Park, thereby taking in part of the current Macclesfield Central Borough ward) would reflect local community identity.

Sixthly, the Commission visited the Gawsworth Moss area and concluded that it had an urban character, with close links to Macclesfield for amenities and services – and should therefore still be included in a Macclesfield (South) Borough ward (as both the local Labour Party and the Borough Council had proposed). On that basis, it was not persuaded by the argument put forward by a Gawsworth parish councillor that bringing all of Gawsworth parish within the same (Gawsworth) Borough ward would better reflect community ties.

Maps

There are a number of **maps in Annex A** that show how the Commission's recommended boundaries, the local Labour Party's proposals and the Council's proposals for Macclesfield compare, and which show in detail how some individual polling districts would be split under the Draft Recommendations:

- **Map 1** compares the boundaries proposed by the Commission (as orange lines), the Council (as thicker pale blue lines) and the local Labour Party (as areas shaded in different colours: for example, green for Macclesfield Central).
- **Map 2** compares the boundaries proposed by the Commission (orange lines again) with the boundaries for current Borough wards (dark green lines) and parishes (thick red lines).
- **Maps 3 to 5** show how specific polling districts would be split between different Borough wards under the local Labour Party's and the Commission's proposals:
 - **Map 3** shows the division of 4AA3 and 4AA4 between the proposed Macclesfield Central and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards;

- **Map 4** shows the division of 4AC1 between the proposed Broken Cross & Upton and Macclesfield Central Borough wards;
- **Map 5** shows the division of 4CD1 between the proposed Macclesfield Central and Macclesfield South Borough wards.
- **Map 6** provides a close-up of the northern part of Tytherington and southern part of Bollington, showing how the alternative boundary lines (the Commission's, the local Labour Party's and the Council's) affect individual streets. In this map:
 - The thick, curved blue line (following the path of the Silk Road, the A523) would be the boundary between the Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards under the Council's submitted proposals. Under these proposals, the area of 4EE1 (currently part of Bollington parish) that lies south of the Silk Road would be included in the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward, as would the whole of 4AA2 (which is currently part of the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough and parish wards).
 - The pink and yellows shaded areas show, respectively, the areas covered by the Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards under the local Labour Party's proposals. These proposals would include the whole of 4EE1 in the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, along with the pink shaded area of 4AA2.
 - The orange line that bisects 4AA2 shows the boundary between the Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards that the Commission recommends. Its recommendations would include the whole of 4EE1 in the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, along with the whole section of 4AA2 (part pink, part yellow) that lies north of the orange line.
- **Map 7** shows, at an even larger scale, the area (around Tytherington Lane) that would be affected by the Commission's modification to the local Labour Party's proposals. In this map, the affected area (which the Commission proposes to include in the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, but the local Labour Party did not) is the yellow-shaded area of 4AA2 that lies north of the orange line.

Assessment – Part 1: Macclesfield warding proposals on which there appears to be broad agreement

The Sub-Committee's earlier (warding consultation stage) deliberations over Macclesfield warding included detailed discussion of all of the boundary changes that Macclesfield Labour Party proposed and that the Commission is now recommending. However, a

number of these proposals were ones that did not, in themselves, prompt any significant disagreement from Sub-Committee Members. These relatively uncontentious proposals related to:

- 4BF2 (the residential area around Ivy Bank Primary School, which is currently part of Macclesfield South Borough ward) fitting better in Macclesfield West & Ivy. The Draft Recommendations report does not mention the rationale for this change, but (as the Council's own warding consultation stage submission acknowledges) it would better reflect the Ivy Bank area's community ties. (The Council's original submission had, on balance, discounted the removal of 4BF2 from the South ward on the grounds that that would result in electors per seat ratios for both its proposed Macclesfield South Borough ward and its Macclesfield West Borough ward that would be considerably more than 10% different from the Borough average.)
- the division of 4CD1 between the Central and South Borough wards. As the Macclesfield Labour Party's submission indicates, the area of 4CD1 around Ryles Park Road and Ridge View is not part of the town centre 'community': this area lies south of Park Lane and west of South Park, which act as physical boundaries between it and central Macclesfield. Hence the local Labour Party's proposal that this area be moved from the Macclesfield Central to the Macclesfield South Borough ward.
- the exclusion of the West Bank Road part of 4AC1 from Macclesfield Central. This street is adjacent to residential properties in the Bollinbrook area (4AE1) and the southeastern (4AD2) part of the current Broken Cross & Upton Borough ward, but is geographically distant from the other residential areas of 4AC1, with the crematorium/ cemetery entrance and West Park lying in between.

In addition, both the Council's and the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals agreed that 4GET (part of Local Plan site LPS 18) should be included in a (west) Macclesfield Borough ward and that 4GDT (Local Plan site LPS 15) should be added to the Macclesfield South Borough ward, to reflect the dependence that residents in these new developments would have on the town for services and amenities.

Assessment – Part 2: Macclesfield Tytherington southern and western boundaries

Consequently, the only boundary lines that have generated very varied responses within Cheshire East Council – ones that could be relatively challenging to reconcile – are those relating to Macclesfield Tytherington. Sub-Committee Members (and Cheshire East Members more generally) have expressed different views on whether 4AE1 (Bollinbrook) and 4AC1 (Coare Street/ Station Street) have ties to Tytherington and should remain in that ward. Opinions also vary on the appropriate boundary between Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow. These differing positions within the Sub-Committee and at Full Council were

reflected in contrasting proposals for the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward that are set out in the Council's and the local Labour Party's submission.

Both the Council's and the local Labour Party's submission included extensive evidence and arguments to support their respective warding proposals for Macclesfield. However, the wording of the Draft Recommendations report suggests that, based on the submission evidence received so far, the Commission feels the Labour Party's proposals (supported by some of the submissions from other consultees) are significantly more persuasive. It could therefore be particularly challenging for the Borough Council, if it so wished, to compile enough additional evidence to persuade the Commission that 4AE1 and 4AC1 should, after all, remain in the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward. A simple reiteration of the case made in the Council's warding consultation stage submission, without new evidence, will not affect the Commission's current view. It should also be stressed that, were the Council to challenge the Commission's proposals to remove 4AE1 and 4AC1 from Tytherington, this would have a knock-on effect on viable warding options for the rest of Macclesfield. Hence the Council would also have to explain how it would alter the other Macclesfield Borough ward boundaries to ensure the Commission's criteria were still met.

As noted earlier, the Draft Recommendations report sets out in some detail the evidence that underpins its recommendation that 4AE1 be removed from Tytherington. For its decision on 4AC1, the Draft Recommendations refer only very briefly to the supporting evidence provided by Macclesfield Labour Party. Therefore, to provide more context, it is worth quoting the core part of the Labour Party's comments on 4AC1 in full:

“Coare Street and Station Street areas are close to the town centre. Hibel Road is not [as the Council's submission claims] ‘a clear physical barrier’. There are crossing points used daily by hundreds of residents including schoolchildren. The new section of Hibel Road, from the Beech Lane junction to Cumberland Street, actually bisected existing streets like Brock Street which is now partly in Central and partly in Tytherington. This community has existed for decades, long before the Tytherington estate was built. There is an opportunity to reunite a divided community with longstanding links to Central ward.”

As shown in **Map 3 of Annex A**, the Commission's recommendations also involve moving parts of 4AA3 (the Beech Farm Drive part) and 4AA4 (the Beechwood Mews part) from Macclesfield Tytherington to Macclesfield Central, as the Macclesfield Labour Party's submission proposes. Neither the Macclesfield Labour Party's submission nor the Draft Recommendations explicitly refer to or set out the rationale for the proposed changes to these specific sections of the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward boundary. It seems reasonable to suggest, however, that the underlying motives include:

- a need to achieve good electoral equality. The Borough Council's electorate figures indicate that, as of 2030, the Beechwood Mews part of 4AA4 would have only an estimated 23 electors, but that the Beech Farm Drive area of 4AA3 would have 254. If these areas and their estimated 277 electors were added to the Commission's recommended new (single-Member) Tytherington Borough ward, the new ward's electors per seat ratio (12% above the Borough average, based on the Draft Recommendations' boundaries) would instead be 19% above the average.¹¹
- providing a clear boundary, with Tytherington High School, Beech Hall School and the non-residential land around them acting as a physical buffer between the new Tytherington Borough ward and the redrawn Macclesfield Central.

However, the Draft Recommendations report makes no reference to any submissions providing evidence on the local community identity or interests of Beech Farm Drive or Beechwood Mews residents.

Assessment – Part 3: Macclesfield Tytherington northern boundary

As noted above (and as shown in some of the Annex A maps mentioned earlier), the Commission, Macclesfield Labour Party and the Borough Council have each (at least initially) put forward different views about where the boundary line between the proposed Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards should be drawn.

The distinction between – and the implications of - these three competing boundary lines is the focus of **Map 8 in Annex A**. In this map:

- Area A (shaded yellow), which is currently in Macclesfield parish and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward, is the area affected by the Commission's sole modification of the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals. This is the area that the Commission would include in its recommended Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, but which the Macclesfield Labour Party's and the Council's submissions would keep in the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward.
- Area B (pink) is the part of Macclesfield parish (and the current Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward) that the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals place in the new Bollington & Rainow Borough ward.

¹¹ The 19% variance was calculated by taking the revised (Commission's) 2030 figure for the Draft Recommendations' Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward (4,618), adding on 277 and dividing by the Borough-wide electors per seat average figure (4,114) cited in the Draft Recommendations.

- Area C (green) is the part of Bollington parish (and the current Bollington Borough ward) that the Council's submission places in its proposed Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward.
- Areas A and B collectively make up the part of Macclesfield parish that would, under the Commission's Draft Recommendations, be in the new Bollington & Rainow Borough ward.
- The legend box (top left) includes the Council's estimates of the number of electors it expects there to be in each of these areas (A, B and C) by 2030. As indicated in the map's separate 'NOTE' box, these electorate figures are derived from the Council's original forecasts for this Review and therefore may not align exactly with the slightly revised numbers the Commission is now basing its decisions on.

A key limitation with each of these three potential boundary lines – the Commission's recommended one, the local Labour Party's and the Council's submitted proposal – is that they require the creation of a new parish ward with very few electors. This is because each one would split an existing parish ward (Bollington West in the case of the Council's proposal, and Macclesfield Tytherington in the case of the others) between two Borough wards. As Borough wards have to consist of whole parishes or parish wards¹², the affected current parish ward would have to be subdivided along the new Borough ward boundary line.

As is apparent from both the elector numbers in **Map 8 (Annex A)** and the analysis in subsection 5.3 (on the Draft Recommendations for Macclesfield parish warding), the Commission's recommendations would involve the creation of a new parish ward (Macclesfield Springwood) with one councillor but only an estimated 222 electors as of 2030.¹³ This parish ward would be limited to Areas A and B in **Map 8**. The rest of the recommended Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward would be a separate parish ward, also with its own councillor, but would (as of 2030) have around 4,600 electors (4,618 based on the Commission's revised electorate figures and a very similar number if the Council's original figures are used). The contrasting numbers of electors for these two new parish wards highlight the extreme electoral inequality involved, with one parish ward having an electors per seat ratio of less than 225 and the other a ratio of around 4,600. (Apart from Springwood, Macclesfield's parish wards would, under the Commission's recommendations, all have ratios in excess of 3,000, as subsection 5.3 of this Report highlights in more detail.)

¹² This is explained in paragraph 127 of the Draft Recommendations report, which notes that *"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 Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different [Borough] wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single [Borough] ward..."*

¹³ The figure of 222 is based on the Council's original electoral data, as the Commission's revised figures are not available for this small area.

Under the local Labour Party's proposals, electoral inequality between Macclesfield's parish wards would be slightly more extreme still, with the Springwood parish ward (limited to Area B in **Map 8 of Annex A**) having just 188 electors and the redrawn Tytherington parish ward having 4,652.¹⁴

The Council's submitted proposal would involve the same sort of outcome for parish warding, but in reverse – and with an even smaller parish ward. The existing Bollington West parish ward would have to be split into two new parish wards, one covering the part of Bollington West south of the Silk Road (Area C in **Map 8 of Annex A**) and one covering the rest. The consequence would probably be one parish ward on Bollington Town Council (the Area C part) having only 146 electors as of 2030¹⁵ (though it is not certain whether the Commission would consider that 146 electors is, in this particular case, enough to justify the creation of a separate parish ward¹⁶). As each parish ward has to have a minimum of one councillor and the Commission's reviews do not usually change the total number of seats on a town or parish council, the seat allocations for Bollington's other parish wards would have to be adjusted accordingly.

The Council's forecasts for elector numbers (as of 2030) in each of the current Bollington parish wards are as follows: Bollington Central 2,264; Bollington East 1,843; and Bollington West 2,258 (of whom, as indicated earlier, an estimated 146 would be south of the Silk Road). Bollington Town Council has 12 seats, with four seats at present for each of its three parish wards. Therefore, if the Council's proposed boundary line were to be adopted, the area south of the Silk Road would become a separate parish ward with one councillor and the fairest distribution of the remaining eleven seats (based on each area's share of the 2030 electorate) would be Central four, East three (down one) and the redrawn West (minus the area south of the Silk Road) four. The electors per seat ratios for the latter three parish wards would vary from 528 to 614, in contrast to the far lower ratio of 146 for the fourth, very small ward.

¹⁴ The figure of 188 is based on the Council's original electoral estimates, as the Commission's revised figures are not available for such small areas. The Council's original estimates put the number of electors in Map 8's Area A (the properties along Tytherington Lane) at 34 as of 2030. The figure of 4,652 was derived by adding these 34 electors to the Commission's revised figure (4,618) for its recommended Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward, which would cover the same area as its recommended Macclesfield Tytherington parish ward.

¹⁵ The figure of 146 is based on the Council's original electoral estimates, as the Commission's revised figures are not available for such small areas.

¹⁶ The Commission's current guidance on Electoral Reviews (*'Electoral reviews Technical guidance – Updated June 2023'*) indicates that new parish wards must have a minimum of 100 electors, but of course that does not mean that numbers in excess of 100 will always be accepted, as other relevant criteria also have to be weighed up. Paragraph 7.4 of the guidance states that *"We will not normally recommend the creation of parish wards that contain no or very few electors (less than a hundred) unless it can be demonstrated to us that, within a short period of time, there will be sufficient electors as to warrant the election of at least one parish councillor. This is because each parish ward must by statute return at least one parish councillor. To do so, there must be a reasonable number of local government electors in the parish ward to make the election of a councillor viable."*

The creation of such small parish wards, with very low electors per seat ratios and consequently high levels of electoral inequality across the affected the parish, is a matter that could potentially be resolved through a new Community Governance Review. A new CGR could address such electoral inequalities by further redrawing parish ward boundaries, or (something the Commission cannot do) changing parishes' external boundaries. However, there is no guarantee that a CGR could achieve more standard-sized parish wards in the Tytherington and Bollington areas, as its recommendations would depend on the nature and quality of the evidence it received, particularly during public consultation stages.

It is indeed possible that another CGR would yield mixed or inconclusive evidence about Springwood Way. On one hand, there are arguments and evidence to demonstrate its links to Macclesfield. The residential properties in the area (mainly on or accessed from Livesley Road) are of similar character and age to those in the adjacent Tytherington estates further south and west – and the Silk Road and farmland lie between the Springwood development and the town of Bollington. Services in Bollington town centre are relatively distant on foot (but so, it can be argued, is Macclesfield town centre). In addition, much of the proposed Bollington & Rainow Borough ward (specifically the parishes of Rainow and Pott Shrigley) are very rural in character – whereas Springwood Way is within a large urban conurbation (Macclesfield). (On this basis, it could be argued that the Commission's recommended Bollington & Rainow Borough ward could result in a ward whose communities had somewhat dissimilar interests and identities.)

However, on the other hand, as the Commission's Draft Recommendations report notes, the last CGR received substantial evidence of ties between the Springwood Way area and the part of Bollington parish north of the Silk Road - and consequently decided to leave the parish boundary unchanged. For example, in its response to the CGR draft recommendations consultation, Bollington Town Council provided examples of how the Silk Road does not act as a barrier between communities: it mentioned safe pedestrian crossings, school and bicycle journeys across the road and people in the Springwood Way area relying on Bollington for leisure and other amenities. There were only 10 CGR draft recommendations consultation responses that came from Bollington parish residents (or the Town Council) and which responded to questions about the CGR draft recommendations' specific proposals (which included moving the parish boundary to the Silk Road), but most (six) of those disagreed overall with those proposals and only two agreed (the other two offered no view). During that same CGR consultation stage, Macclesfield Town Council also opposed a change to its parish boundary with Bollington, citing the views of local residents. The consultation responses from Macclesfield residents were also mostly opposed to the CGR draft recommendations, though many were expressing views about other or multiple aspects of the CGR proposals, not necessarily passing judgement on the Silk Road boundary proposal in particular.

Given the impact of the Commission's, Labour Party's or the Council's Borough ward boundary line proposals on electoral equality at parish ward level, the tables of electoral statistics below (Tables 4.1a to 4.1d) include a scenario (Table 4.1c) under which the boundary between the Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow Borough wards follows the Macclesfield/ Bollington parish boundary, but the rest of the two Borough wards' boundaries follow the Commission's recommendations. Such a boundary would avoid the need to create a small parish ward with very few electors. However, as Table 4.1c shows, the resulting electoral equality for the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward would be poor, with an electors per seat ratio 18% above the Borough average.

If instead the Borough ward boundary between the Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow Borough wards were to follow the Silk Road (the Council's proposal), but with the other sections of the two wards' boundaries following the Commission's recommendations, the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward would be larger still, with an even higher ratio. As of 2030, it would have an estimated 4,986 electors and a ratio 21% above the Borough average (as shown in Table 4.1d).

It is not conceivable that the Commission would accept either of these last two warding arrangements (those in Tables 4.1c and 4.1d) as modifications to its Draft Recommendations, because of the poor electoral equality involved for the Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward.

Under the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals, electoral equality for that Borough ward would be significantly better, but still high, at 13% above the Borough average (Table 4.1b). As noted in the Draft Recommendations report, part of the Commission's justification for modifying the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposal was to reduce this variance a little further, to 12% (as shown in Table 4.1a).

Whilst the Commission's reasoning on electoral equality is clear, it is perhaps debatable whether (as the earlier quote from paragraph 107 of the Draft Recommendations report implies) the properties affected by its modification have stronger ties to the Springwood Way area than to the rest of Tytherington. The Commission's wording in fact suggests that it sees these properties as part of the 'Springwood Estate' area. However, the houses along Tytherington Lane are established properties, not part of the Springwood development, and of a different character. It may therefore be that the local Labour Party's proposal, while it involves slightly worse electoral equality (at both Borough and parish ward level) than the Draft Recommendations, is a better reflection of community identity.

Electoral statistics for Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Borough wards under different Bollington & Rainow/ Macclesfield Tytherington boundary line options

(The ward order in Table 4.1a places Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington in adjacent rows at the top of the table, for ease of comparison with the figures in Tables 4.1b to 4.1d.)

Table 4.1a: Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield warding under the Commission’s recommendations

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Bollington & Rainow	2	7,817	3,909	+2%	7,964	3,982	-3%
Macclesfield Tytherington	1	4,632	4,632	+21%	4,618	4,618	+12%
Broken Cross & Upton	2	8,087	4,044	+5%	8,335	4,168	+1%
Macclesfield Central	2	8,020	4,010	+4%	8,714	4,357	+6%
Macclesfield East	1	3,620	3,620	-6%	4,106	4,106	0%
Macclesfield Hurdsfield	1	4,042	4,042	+5%	4,024	4,024	-2%
Macclesfield South	2	6,022	3,011	-22%	7,401	3,701	-10%
Macclesfield West & Ivy	2	7,506	3,753	-2%	7,829	3,915	-5%

Note: All the electoral figures in the above table are Commission’s revised electoral figures.

Table 4.1b: Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington warding under the Macclesfield Labour Party proposals

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Bollington & Rainow	2	7,783	3,892	+1%	7,930	3,965	-4%
Macclesfield Tytherington	1	4,666	4,666	+22%	4,652	4,652	+13%

Note: The figures in the above table have been derived by taking the Commission’s revised figures for its recommended Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards, and adjusting them so that the Council’s estimated number of electors in the Tytherington Lane area (Area A in Map 8 of Annex A) are counted as part of Macclesfield Tytherington, not Bollington & Rainow. Consequently, the figures in this table differ marginally from those in the Macclesfield Labour Party’s submission, which took its statistics from the Council’s original electoral data.

Table 4.1c: Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington warding if the boundary **between those wards follows the parish boundary, but the **other** sections of their boundaries follow the Commission’s recommendations**

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Bollington & Rainow	2	7,594	3,797	-1%	7,742	3,871	-6%
Macclesfield Tytherington	1	4,855	4,855	+27%	4,840	4,840	+18%

Note: The figures in the above table have been derived by taking the Commission’s revised figures for its recommended Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards, and adjusting them so that the Council’s estimated number of electors in the Tytherington Lane and Springwood Way areas of Macclesfield parish (Areas A and B in Map 8 of Annex A) are counted as part of Macclesfield Tytherington, not Bollington & Rainow.

Table 4.1d: Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington warding if the boundary **between** those wards is as per the Council's submission (the Silk Road), but the **other** sections of their boundaries follow the Commission's recommendations

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Bollington & Rainow	2	7,447	3,724	-3%	7,596	3,798	-8%
Macclesfield Tytherington	1	5,002	5,002	+30%	4,986	4,986	+21%

Note: The figures in the above table have been derived by taking the Commission's revised figures for its recommended Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards, and adjusting them so that the Council's estimated number of electors in the Tytherington Lane and Springwood Way areas of Macclesfield parish and in the Springwood Way area in Bollington parish (Areas A, B and C in Map 8 of Annex A) are counted as part of Macclesfield Tytherington, not Bollington & Rainow.

BOLLINGTON & RAINOW AND MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH WARDS: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Whether to challenge the Commission's recommended warding for the Broken Cross & Upton, Macclesfield Central, Macclesfield South or Macclesfield West & Ivy Borough wards.**
- 2) Whether to challenge the Commission's recommended removal from the current Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward of 4AE1 (Bollinbrook), 4AC1 (the Coare Street/ Station Street area) and parts of 4AA3 (the Beech Farm Drive area) and 4AA4 (the Beechwood Mews area).**
- 3) Where the boundary line between the Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards should be, and how this line can be justified. Options:**
 - a) The Draft Recommendations boundary (placing Tytherington Lane and Springwood Way in Bollington & Rainow).**
 - b) Macclesfield Labour Party's proposal (keeping Tytherington Lane in Macclesfield Tytherington, but placing Springwood Way in Bollington & Rainow).**
 - c) The current parish boundary.**
 - d) The Silk Road (A523), as proposed by the Council in its original submission.**

Any challenge to the Draft Recommendations for warding in Macclesfield and Bollington & Rainow would require significant additional evidence and proposals for a different configuration of ward boundaries that met the Commission's statutory criteria.

4.2 Knutsford wards

Overview of the Draft Recommendations and their underlying rationale

The Draft Recommendations report mentions the submission of two alternative warding arrangements for Knutsford:

- The proposal put forward (independently) by the Borough Council, Knutsford Town Council and Cheshire East Liberal Democrats, for a single three-Member ward covering the same area as Knutsford Town Council.
- An alternative proposal, from Tatton Labour Party, to divide the town into two Borough wards, Knutsford North East (with one seat) and Knutsford South & West (with two seats). The Tatton Labour Party proposal was submitted by Joe Godden and the boundary it proposed for dividing the town was identical to that proposed by Mr Godden (but not adopted by Members) at the Borough Council's February 2024 Corporate Policy Committee meeting. However, these two wards would, collectively, cover the same (Town Council) area as under the proposal put forward by the Borough Council and others.

The Commission's report also noted that a local resident's submission also argued in favour of making the Knutsford ward(s) boundaries coterminous with the Town Council boundary.

As the Draft Recommendations indicate, the Commission is currently persuaded that, of the two submitted warding proposals, the Tatton Labour Party one would better reflect community identities and interests within Knutsford, and would better meet its statutory criteria overall.

However, it noted that the Tatton Labour Party proposal would result in the Knutsford North East Borough ward having an electors per seat ratio that was 11% below the Borough average by 2030. Therefore it considered alternative boundary lines that reduce this variance and thereby improve electoral equality – something it investigated during a site visit to the town.

As its report sets out, the Commission consequently decided on a recommendation which modifies the Tatton Labour Party proposal by extending the would-be Knutsford North East Borough ward's southwestern limit a little further towards the centre of the town, as far as Hollow Lane. It argued that this modification would provide a clear boundary and pointed out that its adjustment reduced the variance of the North East ward to 9% below the Borough average. The area 'added' to the North East ward by this modification is the pink shaded part of polling district 3BBR (the area consisting of Branden Drive, Richmond Hill and the Vicarage) shown in **Map 12 of Annex A**.

Though this is not acknowledged in the Commission's report, its recommended boundary line for the Knutsford North East Borough ward makes another small modification to the Tatton Labour Party proposal, by placing the undeveloped easternmost area of the Town Council's Cross Town ward (the land northeast of Birch Grove) in the Knutsford South & West Borough ward, rather than (as the Tatton Labour Party proposed) in the North East ward. The area 'removed' from the North East ward by this modification is the yellow shaded part of polling district 3BB1 shown in **Map 13 of Annex A**. Consequently, the Commission's modified boundary between the North East and South & West Borough wards is more closely aligned with parish (Town Council) ward boundaries than the Tatton Labour Party proposals, although both of these 'two-ward' options would split the Town Council's Cross Town ward and its two polling districts.

Map 10 (in Annex A) shows the full extent of the proposed ward(s) for Knutsford under the Borough Council's submitted proposal, the Tatton Labour Party (Godden) proposal, and the Commission's Draft Recommendations. **Map 11** provides a close-up – covering the would-be Knutsford North East Borough ward area only – of how the Tatton Labour Party's and the Commission's proposed boundaries for that ward compare.

Assessment

Looking at the Draft Recommendations report narrative and at the main submissions on Knutsford (those from the Borough Council, Town Council, Tatton Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats), it would seem that the Commission has heard relatively little so far about the arguments in a favour of a single-ward Knutsford (or against a division into two wards).

This is partly because Mr Godden's two-ward proposal did not emerge until after the publication (for the 31 January 2024 Sub-Committee meeting) of the first draft of the Council's Warding Proposal Report. Therefore this alternative proposal was not discussed as an option in that first draft. Substantive changes made in later drafts were limited to changes agreed by the Sub-Committee, Corporate Policy Committee and Full Council – and these did not include a request for the report to assess the two-ward option.

Similarly, the other Borough-wide warding consultation stage submission (from the Liberal Democrats) did not comment on the two-ward option. The Town Council's response did include important arguments against such a division, though these were fairly brief, noting that:

“...having three members representing the whole town works well and delivers effective representation. It enables members to focus on policy areas (for example on highway matters affecting the town) rather than...following every borough matter in a small area. This also ensures that the representative workload can be effectively shared, ensuring the town is represented in meetings regardless of health/holiday etc.”

On the other hand, the Tatton Labour Party submission adds weight to Mr Godden’s original (February 2024 Corporate Policy Committee) case by presenting some additional evidence. Furthermore, the Commission may have seen or heard evidence, during its site visit to Knutsford, that helped persuade it that a single-ward arrangement would work less well (although there is no reference to such evidence in the Draft Recommendations report).

The arguments for each option (the Council’s single-ward option and Tatton Labour Party’s two-ward option) are summarised in the bullet points below. However, it should be emphasised that more evidence will be required to justify the single-ward option if the Council wishes to successfully challenge the Commission’s working preference for the two-ward arrangement.

Arguments and evidence for the two-ward option (and against the single-ward option):

- The points made by Mr Godden (at February’s Corporate Policy Committee), namely that:
 - the northeast part of Knutsford is deprived and residents feel detached and disengaged from the rest of the town. To help provide some further context here, **Map 14 in Annex A** identifies (in pale yellow shading) the most deprived part of the town, which covers much of the Town Council’s St John’s Wood ward, including Longridge. (This map is one produced to inform the Council’s Draft Recommendations consultation stage response: it did not form part of Mr Godden’s case to the Corporate Policy Committee or part of Tatton Labour Party’s submission to the Commission.)
 - consequently, the current single-ward arrangement does not represent that area’s specific interests and voter turnout is correspondingly low.
- Points made in the Tatton Labour Party submission (in addition to the above ones):
 - The Longridge, Shaw Heath, Parkgate and Manor Park areas of Knutsford (all proposed for inclusion in the North East ward) are socioeconomically and demographically different to the rest of Knutsford. In broad terms, they are financially less well-off and there is greater ethnic diversity.

- There is limited public transport from these northeastern areas into the town centre (which is two miles from the easternmost end of Longridge).
- These northeastern areas have some of their own local services (a primary school, GP surgery, two sets of shops) and employment centres (two industrial estates, where many locals work), which contributes to their strong community identity.
- The proposed ward boundary would reflect the higher workload of the more deprived North East ward by leaving it with a significantly lower electors per seat ratio than the South & West ward.
- Labour Party members in Knutsford consulted 30 of these areas' residents on warding options in March. The Tatton Labour Party submission states that all those consulted were in favour of a separate, single-Member ward, with a strong feeling that this would improve communications with local councillors; it also states that several residents said they had never seen a Cheshire East councillor in the area. However, the Borough Council does not know how the surveyed residents were selected, whether they were a representative sample (30 is a small sample by any measure), what information they were given on the Review and alternative warding options, what questions they were asked and how these were phrased, nor how clear or ambiguous their responses might have been. The survey findings should therefore be treated with some caution.
- There are some general advantages to wards having a single Member, such as residents knowing exactly whom to approach and hold accountable.

Arguments and evidence for the single-ward option (and against the two-ward option):

- Those councillors with the most detailed local knowledge of Knutsford and its needs are generally in favour of the single-ward option: the Town Council's submission sought a single ward and officers are aware that most (if not all) of the Borough Council's three Knutsford Members support that option.
- At Town Council level, Knutsford is divided into five wards (each with three councillors), following the recent (2018-22) Community Governance Review (CGR) exercise. The post-CGR boundaries were based on detailed proposals made by the Town Council itself, which persuasively argued that these changes would better reflect local communities' sense of identity.

- The CGR concluded that Cross Town was a sufficiently distinct but cohesive community to justify having its own ward on the Town Council. However, the Commission’s recommendations would split Cross Town residents between two different Borough wards, despite the CGR evidence of them having a common identity and interests.
- The CGR also resulted in a separate Town Council ward for St John’s Wood (which includes Longridge and Shaw Heath). (Prior to the CGR, a single large Town Council ward, Over, covered an area that corresponded fairly closely to the current Cross Town and St John’s Wood wards.) It is therefore possible, to some extent, for issues and interests that are specific to this area (such as deprivation) to be raised and addressed via its three town councillors. That begs the question of whether it is necessary for the area to have its own separate representation at Borough ward level as well.
- Points made by Sub-Committee Members and Knutsford Borough Members during earlier stages of this Review (following the emergence of Mr Godden’s two-ward option):
 - There is significant political engagement with those communities in the northeast of Knutsford, with two town councillors being Longridge residents and several others living elsewhere in the Town Council’s St John’s Wood or Cross Town wards.
 - The division (arising from the recent CGR) of St John’s Wood and Cross Town into separate Town Council wards was made in part to address the separate issues and feeling of disconnection that some in the Longridge area had. (It could be added here that the fact a sense of isolation still persists may be partly because the still-very-recent CGR changes are taking time to have an impact, not necessarily because the warding at Borough level dilutes Longridge’s voice.)
 - There are community ties stretching both across and beyond the North East Knutsford ward area proposed by Tatton Labour Party and Mr Godden (similar to the Commission’s proposed area). For example, two community groups currently active in the area – Friends of St John’s Wood and KROW (Knutsford Residents of Over Ward) draw members from across the two existing (Cross Town and St John’s Wood) Town Council wards covering the northeast. It may be harder for these groups to coordinate their work if they had to liaise with councillors for two different Borough wards.
 - Residents of Cheshire East’s smaller towns, such as Knutsford, tend to have common interests and community ties. Keeping them within a single ward promotes collaborative activities and a sense of shared identity, whereas dividing these towns into separate wards runs the risk of polarising their communities.

To elaborate on the final bullet point above, there is evidence from elsewhere in the Borough which demonstrates the potential advantages and achievements that can result from warding arrangements that combine neighbourhoods with different socioeconomic backgrounds and different types of services and amenities within the same Borough ward, rather than divide them into separate wards. For example, both the current and (draft) recommended Congleton East Borough ward contain the communities of Buglawton, Bromley Farm and Mossley. There is extensive evidence – not least in the Bromley Farm Community Development Trust’s warding consultation stage submission to the Commission – of mutual dependencies, connections and social bonds between these communities, and of long-term socioeconomic improvements following on from this cross-community cohesion. The same broad principles apply to Knutsford’s varied communities. The same principles have, indeed, been applied by the Council in its proposal (accepted by the Commission) that Colshaw Farm (currently part of Handforth Borough ward) be included in the new Wilmslow East & Dean Row Borough ward. Colshaw Farm is a relatively deprived area, in contrast to other parts of the would-be Wilmslow East & Dean Row Borough ward. However, it identifies with and has clear connections to the neighbouring part of Wilmslow; its inclusion in the new ward should help to strengthen these ties further and with tackling Colshaw Farm’s specific socioeconomic issues. It could be argued that placing Knutsford’s more deprived areas in a separate Borough ward would be inconsistent with what the Commission is recommending for neighbourhoods like Colshaw Farm.

There are also some general disadvantages to wards having a single Member, such as loss of representation if, for example, the sole Member resigns, falls sick or has limited capacity to attend to local casework due to major Council duties (e.g. chairing a committee) or changes in family circumstances. This could be more of an issue in deprived areas, where residents may be more dependent on elected representatives to address local challenges.

Electoral equality under the one- and two-ward options

Tables 4.2a and 4.2b present the elector numbers, ratios and variances arising from the Commission’s recommendations (4.2a) and from the single-ward proposal submitted by the Borough Council, Town Council and Liberal Democrats (4.2b). It can be seen that both the single- and two-ward options result in good electoral equality, with electors per seat ratios for each of these potential wards being within 10% of the Borough average as of 2030.

Table 4.2a: Knutsford warding under the Commission’s recommendations

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Knutsford North East	1	3,171	3,171	-17%	3,724	3,724	-9%
Knutsford South & West	2	7,242	3,621	-6%	7,915	3,958	-4%

Note: All the electoral figures in the above table are Commission’s revised electoral figures.

Table 4.2b: Knutsford warding under the proposal made by the Borough Council, Town Council and others

Ward name	Seats	Electors (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)	Variance of ratio from Borough average (2030)
Knutsford	3	10,413	3,471	-10%	11,639	3,880	-6%

Note: All the electoral figures in the above table are Commission’s revised electoral figures (but in this case they are all exactly the same as the Borough Council’s original numbers).

Other observations and potential points to consider in developing the Council’s consultation response

Regardless of the position that the Sub-Committee takes on Knutsford’s warding, it is probably helpful to make the Commission aware of the unusually high level of analysis and scrutiny that underpins Knutsford’s current (post-Community Governance Review) Town Council warding – and of the major role played by the Town Council in that.

During the pre-consultation survey stage of the CGR, the Town Council developed and submitted detailed proposals for new (very different) ‘parish’ ward boundaries. These proposals included large-scale maps the Town Council had prepared of each proposed ward; the proposals also gave careful consideration to the implications of future Local Plan housing development and to adjustments to the boundaries around individual streets that would better accord with the CGR criteria.

In the Borough Council’s view, this Knutsford Town Council CGR response was one of the most detailed and carefully considered of all the CGR submissions (around 5,000 in total) in terms of its proposals for redrawing parish ward boundaries. The Borough

Council examined the Town Council's proposals in depth and decided to accept them all (bar one proposal to extend the Town Council area into one of the rural parishes to its north).

KNUTSFORD BOROUGH WARD(S): ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

1) The number of wards.

Options*:

(a) Accept the Commission's recommendation that Knutsford be divided into two wards, collectively covering the Town Council area, and with the boundary line between the two wards being that proposed by the Commission in its Draft Recommendations report.

or

(b) Continue to support the Borough Council's original (warding consultation stage) submission option, of a single ward for Knutsford, covering the Town Council area.

2) The names of the wards, if (whether the Borough Council decides to support this change or not) there are to be two wards for Knutsford.

***NOTE: For Issue 1 above, the Sub-Committee determined, at its 6 November 2024 meeting, that Option b was, provisionally, its preferred option.**

5 Parish ward recommendations for which a response has yet to be determined

Overview of this report section

As noted in Section 1 of this Consultation Response Report, the Commission's Draft Recommendations include proposed changes to 'parish' (town and parish council) warding arrangements, where it judges these to be necessary. In particular, the Commission seeks to ensure that:

- each Borough ward consists of whole parish wards; and
- the number of councillors allocated to each of the affected (redrawn or newly created) parish wards reflects their expected number of electors at the end of Review's forecast period (2030 in Cheshire East's case). However (in contrast to the decisions on arrangements for Borough wards), there is no requirement in legislation for the Commission to provide for electoral equality. Hence, unlike for Borough wards, there is no 'target' for the parish wards within a particular town or parish council to have an electors per seat ratio that is within 10% of that (town or parish) council's average.

For the vast majority of Cheshire East's town and parish councils, the Commission's (draft) recommended changes to Borough wards do not involve knock-on changes to parish warding. However, several town and parish councils are affected, including just over half of the Borough's town councils (but only one parish council).

At its 6 November 2024 meeting (as Section 1 of this Report also notes), the Sub-Committee determined its intended formal (consultation submission) response to some of the Commission's (draft) recommended changes to parish warding. The details of those determinations can be found in the minutes of that meeting, and so are not duplicated here. Instead, Section 5 of this Consultation Response Report focuses only on those (draft) recommended parish warding changes on which the Sub-Committee has yet to make a decision.

In most cases, the outstanding decisions relate to the whole of the affected town or parish council. However, Crewe Town Council is different, in that the Sub-Committee has determined its response (to accept the Commission's proposals) for five of the seven Crewe parish wards, but has not yet determined its response to the recommended Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards.

Scope for the Commission to modify its draft recommendations for parish wards

It must be stressed that, like the proposed changes to Borough wards, the proposals for parish wards are only the Draft Recommendations and therefore subject to potential modification in the Commission's Final Recommendations report. However, the Borough Council has sought confirmation from the Commission as to what sort of modifications to the parish warding Draft Recommendations it (the Commission) is able and willing to consider as part of the current Review, and what modifications could be made only be made through a new Community Governance Review.

The Commission's response to these queries has confirmed that it can potentially merge its (draft) recommended parish wards, subject to certain criteria being met. For example, it would consider a merger of two existing (pre-Review) parish wards, providing that the 'enlarged' parish ward would still fall entirely within one of its recommended Borough wards (and subject, of course, to relevant reasons being given: for example, evidence that the merger would enable more effective and convenient local government). Therefore it would, for example, consider a merger of the current Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards (which its Draft Recommendations propose no changes to), thus creating a single (Crewe North) parish ward covering the same area as its recommended Crewe North Borough ward.

However, the Commission's response has also confirmed that there are some potential parish warding changes that it would not consider, and which, it advises, are best addressed through a CGR. In particular, where (unlike the Crewe Central/ Crewe North example given above) the Commission is proposing a new Borough ward boundary that does not align with existing parish ward boundaries, it considers further division of the resulting, redrawn (Draft Recommendations) parish wards to be a matter that should be left to a CGR. By way of an example of this – one that the Council informally cited to the Commission as a possible, theoretical proposed modification that a consultee might put forward - the Commission has specifically confirmed that the division of the Commission's draft recommended Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath parish ward into two smaller parish wards is not something the Commission would recommend as part of the current Review and is instead something tackled most effectively by a CGR.

Other types of cases also exist. For example, there are some locations where the Commission is proposing a new Borough ward boundary that does not align with existing parish ward boundaries and where it appears as though one of the resulting, redrawn (Draft Recommendations) parish wards could potentially be merged with another parish ward. However, the Council has not consulted the Commission on those specific cases and so cannot be certain what the Commission's position on those merger scenarios might be.

Use of electoral statistics in this section of the Report

As the Commission’s report does not include its own (revised) figures for each of its recommended town and parish council wards, the statistics presented in this section of the Report are based entirely on the Borough Council’s original electoral figures.

The Commission’s revised figures could be used in those cases where a recommended Borough ward and parish ward cover identical geographical areas, but presenting a mixture of revised and original figures for a particular town or parish council area – the inevitable consequence of such an approach - would mean that the figures for each parish ward on that council could not be meaningfully aggregated to provide overall electorate totals or electors-per-seat ratios for the town or parish council in question.¹⁷

¹⁷ The vast majority of the recommended new parish wards, including two or more on each of the affected town/ parish councils, cover different geographical areas to the recommended Borough wards in which they would lie.

5.1 Crewe Town Council

Important note

As noted in the opening paragraphs of Section 5, the Sub-Committee has already determined its response (to accept the Commission's proposals) for five of the seven Crewe parish wards, but has not yet determined its response to the recommended Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards.

Overview and assessment of the Draft Recommendations

Table 5.1a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Crewe 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.1b shows the changes the Commission proposes to make to these arrangements, to reflect its recommended changes to the Borough wards that cover the Town Council area.

Map 15 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Crewe, and how these compare to its recommended Borough ward boundaries and to existing electoral boundaries.

As the map indicates, the Commission recommends dividing the existing East parish ward into two smaller ones (East and Maw Green), and slightly redrawing the boundary between the existing South and West parish wards, to align with its recommended Borough wards for Crewe. However, under its Draft Recommendations, Central and North would remain as separate parish wards (each covering the same geographical areas as they currently do), despite the Commission's recommendation that the Central and North Borough wards be merged into a single (North) Borough ward.

As Table 5.1b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- the new (smaller) Crewe East parish ward having four seats and the new Crewe Maw Green parish ward having two, instead of (as now) their combined area being covering by a single Crewe East parish ward with six seats;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would be more evenly distributed than at present. Under the current warding, each parish ward's seat allocation varies from two seats (Crewe Central, North and St Barnabas) to six (Crewe East). Under the recommendations, each parish ward would have either two or four seats.

As noted in the opening paragraphs of Section 5, the Commission has confirmed that it is able and potentially willing to consider mergers of its (draft) recommended parish wards into a larger parish ward, provided that the larger area is still wholly within a single Borough ward, and that the merger involves two existing parish wards (ones with boundaries unaffected by the Draft Recommendations). Therefore the Borough Council could potentially propose that the (draft) recommended Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards be merged into a single (Crewe North) parish ward that covers the same geographical area as the recommended Crewe North Borough ward. It could be argued that such a merger would enable more effective and convenient local government, as:

- All the Crewe parish wards would then cover the same geographical area as the (recommended future) Borough wards of the same name.
- Consequently, there would be no risk of residents being confused by the existence of a Crewe North parish ward that covered only part of the Crewe North Borough ward.
- The Draft Recommendations' Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards would have, by some distance, the highest (Crewe Central) and lowest (Crewe North) electors per seat ratios on the Town Council. Merging them into a single parish ward would significantly improve electoral equality within the Town Council, as the ratios for each of Crewe's parish wards would (as of 2030) then be within a much narrower range. The ratios would range from 1,913 for Crewe South to 2,206 for Crewe East, rather than varying from 1,793 (Crewe North) to 2,489 (Crewe Central). This was also part of the rationale for the Council (and Commission) proposing the merger of the Crewe Central and Crewe North Borough wards. The full impact of such a merger on electoral equality can be seen by comparing the figures in Table 5.1b (which assume no merger) with those in Table 5.1c.
- As noted in the Borough Council's Warding Proposal Report, the current Crewe North Borough ward (the same area as the Draft Recommendations' Crewe North parish ward) has growing communities of varying nationalities, making it increasingly similar to the current Crewe Central Borough ward (the same area as the Draft Recommendations' Crewe Central parish ward). Hence it could be argued that there is less need for them to have separate representation, even at parish ward level.

CREWE PARISH WARDING: REMAINING ISSUE FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Whether to propose that the (draft) recommended Crewe Central and Crewe North parish wards be merged into a single (Crewe North) parish ward that covers the same geographical area as the recommended Crewe North Borough ward – and if so, on what grounds.**

Table 5.1a: Crewe Town Council – current warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Central	2	4,855	4,978	2,428	2,489
East	6	11,647	12,679	1,941	2,113
North	2	3,602	3,586	1,801	1,793
South	4	7,719	8,086	1,930	2,022
St Barnabas	2	3,546	4,038	1,773	2,019
West	4	7,565	7,628	1,891	1,907
Whole Council	20	38,934	40,995	1,947	2,050

Note: The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

Table 5.1b: Crewe Town Council – Commission’s (draft) recommended warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Central	2	4,855	4,978	2,428	2,489
*East	4	8,845	8,824	2,211	2,206
*Maw Green	2	2,802	3,855	1,401	1,928
North	2	3,602	3,586	1,801	1,793
*South	4	7,284	7,653	1,821	1,913
St Barnabas	2	3,546	4,038	1,773	2,019
*West	4	8,000	8,061	2,000	2,015
Whole Council	20	38,934	40,995	1,947	2,050

Notes: [1] Asterisks next to a parish ward name indicate where the Commission’s proposals involve merging, splitting or otherwise changing the boundary of an existing parish ward. [2] The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

Table 5.1c: Crewe Town Council – Commission’s (draft) recommended warding, but modified so there is a single Crewe North parish ward covering the same area as the recommended Crewe North Borough ward

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
*East	4	8,845	8,824	2,211	2,206
*Maw Green	2	2,802	3,855	1,401	1,928
*North	4	8,457	8,564	2,114	2,141
*South	4	7,284	7,653	1,821	1,913
St Barnabas	2	3,546	4,038	1,773	2,019
*West	4	8,000	8,061	2,000	2,015
Whole Council	20	38,934	40,995	1,947	2,050

Notes: [1] Asterisks next to a parish ward name indicate where the proposals involve merging, splitting or otherwise changing the boundary of an existing parish ward. [2] The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

5.2 Knutsford Town Council

Important note

It should be emphasised at the outset that the Commission's recommendations for changes to Knutsford's 'parish' (Town Council) wards arise solely from its recommendation to divide the town into two Borough wards.

Were the Commission to change its view and accept the Borough Council's warding consultation stage proposal (for a single ward, covering the same area as the Town Council), it would no longer be required to recommend changes to Knutsford's parish wards, as the new Knutsford Borough ward would contain all of the current Knutsford parish wards (and would exclude all parishes and parish wards outside of Knutsford).

Overview and assessment of the Draft Recommendations

Table 5.2a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Knutsford 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.2b shows the changes the Commission proposes to make to these arrangements, to reflect its recommended changes to the Borough wards that cover the Town Council area.

Map 16 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Knutsford, and how these compare to its recommended Borough ward boundaries and to existing electoral boundaries.

As the map indicates, the Commission recommends splitting the current Cross Town parish ward into two smaller ones: Cross Town North (the part that would be in the recommended Knutsford North East Borough ward) and Cross Town South (the part that would be in the recommended South & West Borough ward).

The reasoning behind the proposed names for the two new parish wards is not explained in the Commission's report. However, the choice of names possibly indicates that the Commission has come across no evidence to persuade it that the northern and southern parts of Cross Town have significantly different identities, despite the recommendation that they be placed in different Borough wards.

As Table 5.2b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- Cross Town parish ward (three seats) being replaced by a Cross Town North parish ward with two seats and a Cross Town South parish ward with one seat;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would be (unlike now) unevenly distributed. Under the current warding, each parish ward has three seats. Under the recommendations, the number of seats for each parish ward would range from one (Cross Town South) to three (most of the other parish wards).

KNUTSFORD PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Whether to accept the Commission's draft recommendations for parish ward boundary, seat allocation and name changes in Knutsford. If the Borough Council decides to accept these parish warding draft recommendations, its consultation response will need to specify whether:**
 - a) the Council now accepts the Commission's recommended division of Knutsford into two Borough wards: or**
 - b) it is challenging the division of Knutsford into two Borough wards, but agrees that the recommended parish warding would be the most suitable way of aligning parish wards if the Commission sticks to its recommendation of two Borough wards.**

Table 5.2a: Knutsford Town Council – current warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Bexton & Town Centre	3	2,345	2,356	782	785
Cross Town	3	2,439	2,427	813	809
Nether	3	1,640	2,308	547	769
Norbury Booths	3	2,329	2,328	776	776
St John's Wood	3	1,660	2,220	553	740
Whole Council	15	10,413	11,639	694	776

Note: The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

Table 5.2b: Knutsford Town Council – Commission's (draft) recommended warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Bexton & Town Centre	3	2,345	2,356	782	785
*Cross Town North	2	1,622	1,614	811	807
*Cross Town South	1	817	813	817	813
Nether	3	1,640	2,308	547	769
Norbury Booths	3	2,329	2,328	776	776
St John's Wood	3	1,660	2,220	553	740
Whole Council	15	10,413	11,639	694	776

Notes: [1] Asterisks next to a parish ward name indicate where the Commission's proposals involve merging, splitting or otherwise changing the boundary of an existing parish ward. [2] The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

5.3 Macclesfield Town Council

Table 5.3a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Macclesfield 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.3b shows the changes the Commission proposes to make to these arrangements, to reflect its recommended changes to the Borough wards that cover the Town Council area.

Map 17 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Macclesfield, and how these compare to its recommended Borough ward boundaries and to existing electoral boundaries.

As the map indicates, the Commission's recommends involve significant changes to the boundaries of the existing Macclesfield Central, South, Tytherington and West & Ivy parish wards, and the existing Broken Cross & Upton parish ward. Each of the recommended new parish wards for these areas (and those for Macclesfield East and Macclesfield Hurdsfield) would largely cover the same areas as the recommended Borough wards of the same name. However, they would obviously exclude those parts of the seven 'Macclesfield' Borough wards¹⁸ that fall outside the Town Council area (namely Higher Hurdsfield parish and Gawsworth Moss parish ward). They would also involve the creation of a new Macclesfield Springwood parish ward (covering the part of the recommended Bollington & Rainow Borough ward that would lie within the Macclesfield Town Council boundary) and a reduced-size Macclesfield Tytherington parish ward (covering the same area as the recommended Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward).

Although not stated in the Commission's report, it is assumed the choice of name for the new Macclesfield Springwood parish ward comes from the main road (Springwood Way) that runs through its main residential area.

As Table 5.3b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- the new (much smaller) Tytherington parish ward and the new Macclesfield Springwood parish ward (a sub-area of the existing Tytherington parish ward) having one seat each, instead of (as now) Tytherington having two seats;
- consequently, each ward on the Town Council would continue to have either one or two seats.

¹⁸ Macclesfield is placed in quotes here, as one of the seven Borough wards referred to (Broken Cross & Upton) does not have 'Macclesfield' in its name, but is nevertheless within the Macclesfield Town Council area.

It is appreciated that the Commission's proposal to have a separate (Springwood) parish ward is a necessary consequence of its (draft) recommendation to place this area in the recommended Bollington & Rainow Borough ward, rather than in a Macclesfield (Tytherington) Borough ward. However, as Table 5.3b shows, the would-be Macclesfield Springwood's very small number of electors would mean that, even with a single councillor for that parish ward, electoral equality across the Macclesfield Town Council wards would be extremely poor. Springwood would have under 225 electors per seat as of 2030 (and as at 2023), but the electors per seat ratios for the other Town Council wards would range from around 3,100 to around 4,600. In addition, this arrangement would not promote effective and convenient local government, as a councillor representing only around 200 electors – particularly in what is a fairly compact, relatively affluent residential area of Borough – is unlikely to face similar levels of casework to other Macclesfield town councillors (a number of whom would be representing relatively deprived areas).

Options for ensuring much greater electoral equality and effective government depend heavily on the Borough ward boundaries for Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow that appear in the Commission's Final Recommendations. Consequently, these options, and the knock-on implications for parish warding in northern Macclesfield (and potentially for Bollington Town Council too) are considered in detail in the subsection of this Consultation Response Report (subsection 4.1) that deals with Bollington and Macclesfield Borough wards.

MACCLESFIELD PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Whether to accept the Commission's recommendations for parish warding for Macclesfield.**
- 2) How to respond to the Commission's recommendation for a very small new parish ward (Macclesfield Springwood, with under 225 electors) and the high level of electoral inequality that would arise from the (draft) recommended Borough and parish warding arrangements in the Tytherington area. The options here depend on the Council's decisions regarding Borough warding in the Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow areas.**
- 3) Which other elements of the parish warding recommendations (if any) should be challenged, and why.**

Table 5.3a: Macclesfield Town Council – current warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Broken Cross & Upton	2	6,742	6,992	3,371	3,496
Central	2	7,380	7,640	3,690	3,820
East	1	3,620	4,106	3,620	4,106
Hurdsfield	1	3,428	3,413	3,428	3,413
South	2	6,223	7,064	3,112	3,532
Tytherington	2	7,525	7,947	3,763	3,974
West & Ivy	2	6,167	6,496	3,084	3,248
Whole Council	12	41,085	43,658	3,424	3,638

Note: The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

Table 5.3b: Macclesfield Town Council – Commission’s (draft) recommended warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
*Broken Cross & Upton	2	8,079	8,325	4,040	4,163
*Central	2	8,215	8,914	4,108	4,457
East	1	3,620	4,106	3,620	4,106
Hurdsfield	1	3,428	3,413	3,428	3,413
*South	2	5,418	6,266	2,709	3,133
*Springwood	1	223	222	223	222
*Tytherington	1	4,596	4,583	4,596	4,583
*West & Ivy	2	7,506	7,829	3,753	3,915
Whole Council	12	41,085	43,658	3,424	3,638

Notes: [1] Asterisks next to a parish ward name indicate where the Commission’s proposals involve merging, splitting or otherwise changing the boundary of an existing parish ward. [2] The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

5.4 Sandbach Town Council

Table 5.4a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Sandbach 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.4b shows the changes the Commission proposes to make to these arrangements, to reflect its recommended changes to the Borough wards that cover the Town Council area.

Map 18 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Sandbach, and how these compare to its recommended Borough ward boundaries and to existing electoral boundaries.

As the map indicates, the Commission recommends changing the boundaries of most of the Sandbach parish (Town Council) wards (all those bar Heath & East), to align with its proposed Borough ward boundaries. However, under its Draft Recommendations, Heath & East and Town would remain as separate parish wards (though with the Town parish ward covering a slightly different geographical area than it currently does). This is despite the Commission's recommendation that the current Sandbach Heath & East Borough ward and the vast majority of the current Sandbach Town Borough ward be merged into a single new (Sandbach East & Central) Borough ward.

As Table 5.4b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- the new Elworth & Ettiley Heath parish ward (consisting of the existing Elworth parish ward, much of the existing Ettiley Heath & Wheelock parish ward and a small part of the existing Town parish ward) would have nine seats;
- the redrawn (slightly smaller) Town parish ward would lose one seat;
- the new Wheelock parish ward (the Wheelock part of the existing Ettiley Heath & Wheelock parish ward) would have three seats, whilst Heath & East would continue to have five seats;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would (unlike now) be unevenly distributed. Under the current warding, Elworth parish ward has six seats and the other parish wards have five seats each. Under the recommendations, the allocated number of seats would range from three (Wheelock) to nine (Elworth & Ettiley Heath).

It should be noted that the Commission's allocation of nine seats to its recommended Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath parish ward stands out as being unusually high – and not just in comparison to the recommended seat numbers for Sandbach's other parish wards. In particular:

- no town councils in Cheshire East currently have more than seven seats for any of their parish wards; and
- apart from Sandbach, the Commission's report assigns no more than six seats to any parish ward on any of the town (or parish) councils that its recommendations affect.

The Borough Council, the Town Council or local residents might therefore feel that nine seats is too many for a single town council parish ward. (Two warded parish councils, Haslington and Shavington, do, though, contain parish wards with ten councillors.)

However, it would appear that only a Community Governance Review could address such a concern. As noted in the opening paragraphs of Section 5, the Commission has confirmed that in cases where it is proposing a new Borough ward boundary that does not align with existing parish ward boundaries, it considers further division of the resulting, redrawn (Draft Recommendations) parish wards to be a matter that should be left to a CGR. This advice was in fact provided in response to the question of dividing the Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath parish ward into two, which the Council informally cited to the Commission as a possible, theoretical proposed modification that a consultee might put forward. The Commission's position on this specific option of a Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath parish ward 'split' is therefore clear.

As also noted in the opening paragraphs of Section 5, the Commission has confirmed that it is able and potentially willing to consider mergers of its (draft) recommended parish wards into a larger parish ward, subject to certain criteria being met. Therefore the Borough Council or other consultees could, in theory, propose that the (draft) recommended Heath & East and Town parish wards be merged into a single parish ward that covers the same geographical area as the recommended Sandbach East & Central Borough ward and which could be given the same (Sandbach East & Central) name. However, careful consideration would need to be given to whether such a merger would better promote effective and convenient local government or better reflect local communities' identities and interests. It would actually worsen electoral equality a little overall, with electors per seats ratios (as of 2030) consequently ranging from 866 (the merged Heath & East/ Town parish ward) to 1,161 (Wheelock), rather than from

774 (Wheelock) to 1,030 (Town). Such a merger would also make the distribution of seats between each parish ward still more uneven, with Wheelock having only two seats whilst the other 19 seats were shared between the other two wards.¹⁹

However, this particular merger scenario involves a location where the new Borough ward boundary does not align with existing parish ward boundaries. The Council's initial judgement, based on clarification received from the Commission so far, is that it (the Commission) would probably see this type of merger as a matter that should be decided through a CGR (as it involves merging a redrawn parish ward, rather than merging existing parish wards). However, the Council has not consulted the Commission on this specific case and so cannot be certain.

SANDBACH PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Whether to accept the Commission's recommendations for parish warding for Sandbach.**
- 2) Which elements of the parish warding recommendations (if any) should be challenged, and why.**

¹⁹ Under such a merger scenario, data rounding issues mean that (very marginally) the fairest allocation based on respective electorate shares as of 2030 would actually be 10 seats for the merged Heath & East/ Town parish ward, nine for Elworth and only two for Wheelock.

Table 5.4a: Sandbach Town Council – current warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Elworth	6	5,494	5,766	916	961
Ettiley Heath & Wheelock	5	4,372	4,362	874	872
Heath & East	5	4,195	4,539	839	908
Town	5	4,264	4,280	853	856
Whole Council	21	18,325	18,947	873	902

Note: The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.

Table 5.4b: Sandbach Town Council – Commission’s (draft) recommended warding

Parish ward area	Proposed number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
*Elworth & Ettiley Heath	9	7,695	7,966	855	885
Heath & East	5	4,195	4,539	839	908
*Town	4	4,105	4,121	1,026	1,030
*Wheelock	3	2,330	2,321	777	774
Whole Council	21	18,325	18,947	873	902

Notes: [1] Asterisks next to a parish ward name indicate where the Commission’s proposals involve merging, splitting or otherwise changing the boundary of an existing parish ward. [2] The electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Council’s originally submitted data, as the Commission’s revised figures are not generally available (and cannot generally be derived for) individual town and parish councils and their (recommended future) parish wards.