

Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee

Agenda

Date:	Wednesday, 6th November, 2024
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Appointment of Chair**

To appoint a Chair for the Electoral and Polling District Review Sub Committee.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

For requests for further information

Contact: Sam Jones

Tel: 01270 686643

E-Mail: samuel.jones@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Committee Procedure Rules and the Appendix on Public Speaking, as set out in the Constitution, a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the Sub-Committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes to speak; the Chair will have discretion to vary this where he/she considers it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5. **Cheshire East Electoral Review - Warding Proposals** (Pages 3 - 130)

To consider the draft recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England in respect of the Council's electoral arrangements.

6. **Cheshire East Borough Polling District Review** (Pages 131 - 136)

To consider a report which considers the need for the Council to conduct a review of its polling districts and seeks authority for a consultation to take place in respect of the proposals which are set out in this report.

Membership: Councillors J Clowes, L Crane, D Jefferay, C O'Leary, J Pearson, R Vernon, F Wilson and R Kain (Associate Non-Voting Member)

Electoral and Polling District Review Sub-Committee

6 November 2024

Cheshire East Electoral Review – Warding Proposals

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Director of Governance and
Compliance and Monitoring Officer**

Report Reference No: EPDR/01/24-25

Wards: All Cheshire East Wards

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider the draft recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England (“the Commission”) in respect of the Council’s electoral arrangements.
2. The Council may then wish to respond to the draft recommendations as a consultee.
3. In considering the Commission’s draft recommendations, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective, to be an “open and enabling organisation” by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council’s ambitions within the Borough.

Executive Summary

4. The Council submitted its proposals to the Commission for a future council size of 82 Councillors, and these were agreed by the Commission. The Council also completed the second stage of the electoral review and submitted its proposals for future warding arrangements to the Commission. Having considered the Council’s submission, and those of other consultees, the Commission published its draft recommendations on 1 October 2024, upon which the Council and others are now being consulted.
5. The Council may wish to respond to the Commission’s consultation, and this report will enable it to consider doing so.

RECOMMENDATION

The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve, or make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee upon, a draft response to the Commission in respect of its draft recommendations on warding, as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Background

6. The Commission is an independent body set up by Parliament. Its main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England. The Commission is undertaking a review of the Council's electoral arrangements and is at a mid-point of the review process. The Commission has considered consultation responses, including those of the Council in respect of the earlier stages of the review, and is now consulting the Council and others upon its draft recommendations:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/cheshire-east>

7. This Council is being asked to respond to the draft recommendations as a consultee. The Commission will ultimately determine the outcome of the review, and its final recommendations will be laid before Parliament for approval.
8. The electoral review is conducted in two stages. The first stage, now complete, addressed the size of the Council: the number of councillors that Cheshire East Council should have in future. The Council proposed that it should have 82 Councillors, as is currently the case, and provided detailed reasoning to the Commission in support of this. The Council's proposed Council-size received the Commission's support. The second stage of the review addresses the Council's warding arrangements: the number of wards, their names, their boundaries and the number of councillors for each ward.
9. On 27 February 2024, Council agreed its submission to the Commission on warding:

[Cheshire East Council Electoral Review 2023-24: Warding Proposal Report](#)

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/elections/electoral-review/cec-wardingproposalreport-v5-20240315-appendixa-maps.pdf>

Here is a link to the Council agenda, report and minutes of the meeting which took place on 27 February 2024:

[Agenda for Council on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024, 11.00 am | Cheshire East Council](#)

10. The Commission's original timetable for the second stage of the review was as follows:

- Commission to consult on draft recommendations: 30 July – 7 October 2024
- Commission to meet to discuss final recommendations: 17 December 2024
- Final recommendations published: 14 January 2025
- Order laid before Parliament: early 2025
- Order made: spring 2025
- Implementation: 2027

11. However, due to the unexpected calling of the Parliamentary General Election, the proposed consultation upon the Commission's draft recommendations was delayed, but is now taking place. The publication of the Commission's final recommendations and the Parliamentary process in respect of the Commission's order will also be delayed, but implementation of the new arrangements will still take place in 2027. The remainder of the Commission's new timetable is as follows:

- Commission to consult on draft recommendations: 1 October-9 December 2024
- Commission to meet to discuss final recommendations: 15 April 2025
- Final recommendations published: 13 May 2025
- Order laid before Parliament: late spring 2025
- Order made: summer 2025
- Implementation 2027

12. The Electoral Review Sub-Committee was appointed by the Corporate Policy Committee 'to make recommendations to the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Electoral Review'. However, when Council met on 27 February 2024 to agree its final submission to the Commission on warding, it also resolved:

"that the Electoral Review Sub Committee be granted delegated authority:

(b) to respond on the Council's behalf to any further informal or formal consultation by the Boundary Commission which relates to the second period of consultation".

Therefore, whilst the Sub-Committee might wish to make a recommendation to the Corporate Policy Committee which might, in turn, wish to make a recommendation to Council upon this matter, the Sub-Committee does have authority from Council to formally respond to the Commission without referring the matter to the Corporate Policy Committee. The Sub-Committee will need to consider the nature and scale of the Commission's draft recommendations before deciding whether it wishes to exercise the power to determine the Council's final response to the consultation.

13. In considering future warding arrangements, the Sub-Committee must have regard to the statutory warding criteria used by the Commission in its review.

14. The three main criteria are set out below, and are derived from legislation, which must be followed when producing a new pattern of wards:

Delivering electoral equality for local voters

This means ensuring that each local councillor represents roughly the same number of people so that the value of a vote is the same regardless of where a person lives in the local authority area.

Electoral equality is the only criterion which the Commission can measure with precision. It will therefore take a firm view on the extent to which the Council's proposals meet the ambition to deliver electoral fairness. Decisions are based on the number of electors in a ward and not the total population.

Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities

This means establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties, and where boundaries are easily identifiable.

Unlike electoral equality, it is not possible for the Commission to measure levels of community identity. The Commission will therefore be looking for evidence on a range of issues, such as the existence of communication links and facilities, with an explanation of how local people use those facilities; identifiable boundaries such as rivers, major roads and railway lines, and parish boundaries. The Commission will also have regard to urban, suburban and rural characteristics, such areas having different needs and interests.

Promoting effective and convenient local government

This means ensuring that the new wards or electoral divisions can be represented effectively by their elected representative(s) and that the new electoral arrangements as a whole allow the local authority to conduct its business effectively. In addition, the pattern of wards must reflect the electoral cycle of the Council.

Where a council holds whole-council elections every four years, the Commission is able to propose any pattern of wards or divisions that it believes best meets its statutory criteria. This is usually a mixture of single-, two- and three-member wards or divisions.

The Commission will also consider the geographic size of wards, to ensure that they are not so large that it would be difficult for a councillor to represent them.

In addition, the Commission will consider the names of wards which are often important to local people. The Commission rarely has strong views on this aspect of a review and will usually use names which have been proposed by local people.

15. The Commission's decisions on new wards and boundaries will always be based on these criteria. It is therefore much more likely to accept the Council's proposals if they are informed by all these criteria.
16. Occasionally, it will not be possible for the Commission to put forward a boundary proposal that clearly meets all the statutory criteria, which can sometimes contradict one another. For example where a proposed ward might

reflect the shape of local communities but deliver poor levels of electoral equality. In such cases, the Commission will use its discretion, and the quality of the evidence presented to it, to reach a conclusion.

17. In accordance with the electoral review timetable, the Council's response to the Commission's consultation on future warding arrangements would have been required to be submitted to the Commission by 9 December 2024. However, in case Members decide that the submission must be approved by full Council following a recommendation of the Corporate Policy Committee, the Commission has agreed to allow the Council to confirm its response after the meeting of Council on 11 December, thereby obviating the need for a special Council meeting.
18. The officer advice in respect of the Commission's draft recommendations, together with supporting maps, is set out at **Appendix 1**.
19. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider and approve the Council's response to the Commission's draft recommendations, which are set out in **Appendix 1**, and to decide whether it wishes to make a recommendation upon this to the Corporate Policy Committee, or alternatively, to formally determine the Council's response without further reference to the parent committee.

Consultation and Engagement

20. The Council will not undertake any consultation work on the review, except internally. The review is being led by the Commission, not the Council, and the Commission has a clearly identified programme of consultation which it is understood will include the list of stakeholders that the Council provided the Commission, upon its request.

Reasons for Recommendations

21. The recommendation of this report seeks to ensure that the Council can respond to the Boundary Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements in a timely way, in accordance with the timetable laid down by the Commission.
22. In responding to the review, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective of being "an open and enabling organisation" by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough.

Other Options Considered

- 23 The Council could choose not to further engage with the Commission's review, but this would be an unhelpful approach and would deprive the Council of the important opportunity to make submissions, and to influence its electoral arrangements which will apply from 2027.
- 24 *Impact assessment:*

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing (ie do not engage further with the review)	The Council would be deprived of the important opportunity to make representations	The review would not secure the benefit of the Council's further input as the key respondent. The resulting electoral review order, which will be implemented in 2027 would not be further informed by the Council's views.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 25 The main piece of legislation governing the review is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). This consolidates and amends provisions previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 26 Section 56 of the 2009 Act requires that the Commission carry out reviews 'from time to time', of every principal local authority in England and make recommendations about electoral arrangements (but not their external boundaries) (Period Electoral Reviews or PERs). In addition, the Commission can at any time review the arrangements for all or any parts of a principal local authority's area if it appears to the Commission to be desirable.
- 27 Subsections 56(1) and (4) require the Commission to recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements for that area. Electoral arrangements include the total number of councillors to be elected to the council (known as 'council size'); the number and boundaries of wards/divisions; the number of councillors to be elected for each ward/division; and the name of any ward/division.
- 28 In making its recommendations, Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act requires the Commission to have regard to—
 - (a) the need to secure that the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of members of the district council to be elected is, as nearly as possible, the same in every electoral area of the council,
 - (b) the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and in particular—
 - (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and
 - (ii) the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties,
 - (c) the need to secure effective and convenient local government,

Further information on the legal implications of the review can be found in the Commission's Technical Guidance:

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/technical-guidance-june_2023.pdf

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 29 There will be no impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The proposal will be funded from within existing Democratic Services budgets, aided by internal officer resource contributions from various other departments, and it is not anticipated that any external spend will be required in order for the Council to respond to the review.

Policy

- 30 The key policy implication of this report is that, in responding to the review, the Council will be meeting one of its most fundamentally important objectives: providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council's ambitions within the Borough. In doing so, the Council will be fulfilling the objective of empowering and caring about people within the Borough. The electoral representation of the Council is of key importance in this regard.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 31 Given that this report is a response to the Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements, there would appear to be no equality, diversity and inclusion implications.
- 32 However, in developing its recommendations, the Sub-Committee will be mindful of these important considerations. Undoubtedly, the Commission will be equally mindful of these matters when making its final decisions upon the Council's electoral arrangements.

Human Resources

- 33 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

- 34 There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report, other than the matters referred to within it. However, the risks associated with any decision of the Council not to engage with the review are set out above.

Rural Communities

- 35 There are implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of rural communities. These implications have been given careful consideration as the Sub-Committee committee has developed its proposals.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

36 There are no such direct implications.

Public Health

37 No direct public health implications arise from the recommendations of this report.

Climate Change

38 There are no direct climate change implications, which arise from the recommendations of this report.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Contact Officer: Brian Reed Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Background Papers:	Background Papers: Reports to Council on 13 th December 2023 approving the council size submission, and 27 February 2024, approving the Council's proposals on warding. Local Government Boundary Commission for England website. Local Government Boundary Commission for England draft recommendations report.
Appendices	Cheshire East Electoral Review Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report - Appendix 1 Cheshire East Electoral Review Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report - Annex A (maps)

Appendix 1

Cheshire East Electoral Review

Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report

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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.
- (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, both the Council and the Commission are confident that these divergences can be all explained (and, where appropriate, amended in the Final Recommendations).

The purpose of this report to the Electoral & Polling District Review Sub-Committee is to:

- highlight and summarise those Draft Recommendations, and those alternative warding consultation stage proposals from other consultees, that are likely to merit formal (consultation submission) responses from the Council.
- set out potential options for responding to each of those Draft Recommendations and alternative proposals.
- set out options for resolving issues relating to parish warding arrangements, whether these are matters that the current Review's Final Recommendations could address, or ones that would require a new CGR.
- draw attention to those cases where individual properties are affected by the Commission's (draft) recommended boundary lines diverging unexpectedly from the path implied by the Council's own map data and the Draft Recommendations report. These involve a handful of residential buildings that the Commission's boundary lines place partly (or in one case entirely) in a different Borough ward to that indicated by the Council's data and its reading of the Draft Recommendations. Most of the affected properties are along the parish boundary between Crewe and Wistaston, but a few are located elsewhere.
- draw attention to a further boundary line anomaly (within Sandbach), which arises from an historic inconsistency in the Council's own electoral boundary line data.

The rest of this 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

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.

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.

- Section 3 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. 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.

It should be noted, however, that the matters raised in subsections 4.4 (on Crewe West and Wistaston), 4.6 (Sandbach) and 4.7 (a few of the Borough wards not covered elsewhere in Section 4) relate only to the warding of a few individual properties in locations where electoral boundary line anomalies exist. For these cases, the sole concern of the Council is to seek clarification from the Commission on the exact Borough ward boundary line in these locations, and a consensus on which of the affected properties would be in which Borough ward. (As noted earlier, these cases have been raised informally with the Commission, but it may be appropriate to highlight them in the Council's formal submission as well.)

- Section 5 covers the Draft Recommendations relating to changes in parish warding. This section is structured similarly to Section 4. For each of the town and parish councils 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.

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) Brough 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 Confirmation that the Final Recommendations' warding around Gawsworth Moss will have regard to the Local Plan site LPS 15 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 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 data 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 variances 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.

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.

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.

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 to which a response should be considered

It should be noted that the Borough ward names given in the following subsections' headings (4.1 to 4.6) are the Commission's (draft) recommended names. They are not necessarily the names that the Council has proposed, or will propose, in its consultation stage submission.

4.1 Alderley Edge & Chorley

Overview of the Draft Recommendations and their underlying rationale

The Commission accepted the Council's proposal that the existing Alderley Edge Borough ward be expanded in size, to include the parish of Chorley. However, whilst the Council's original submission proposed keeping the existing Borough ward name of 'Alderley Edge', the Commission's draft recommendation is to change the name to 'Alderley Edge & Chorley'. In making this recommendation, the Commission was persuaded by the argument - put forward in submissions from Chorley Parish Council and one of its councillors (Cllr Durbar) – that this would avoid a loss of identity for the parish of Chorley. The Commission also felt that its recommended name would help identify the area that the extended ward would cover.

Assessment

There is a good case for accepting the Commission's recommended name change, given that:

- It would reflect the wishes and arguments of Chorley Parish Council.
- For a rural parish, Chorley has a significant number of electors (378 in 2023 and 380 forecast for 2030¹⁰). It would cover a large proportion of the recommended ward's land area and it is a distinct settlement, on the opposite of the Alderley Edge bypass (Melrose Way) to Alderley Edge village.

¹⁰ These electoral figures are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not available (and cannot be derived for) small geographical areas like Chorley parish.

- The Borough Council's recent (2018-22) Community Governance Review (CGR) – with 75 responses from Chorley parish to the CGR's draft recommendations – revealed very strong evidence of the parish having a separate identity to Alderley Edge and neighbouring parishes: for example, Chorley Village Hall providing a focal point for community activities.
- The current Borough wards' names indicate which one of them ('Wilmslow West & Chorley') contains Chorley. If the expanded Alderley Edge kept its existing name, there could be potential confusion among local residents as to whether Chorley would be part of the new (post-2027) Wilmslow West Borough ward, or part of another neighbouring new ward.

However, arguments can also be made against a change of name. Chorley parish would make up only around a tenth of the electorate of the recommended Borough ward and the rest of the recommended ward's electorate is heavily concentrated in Alderley Edge village. Therefore it could be argued that Chorley's relative demographic size is perhaps not significant enough to justify its inclusion in the ward's name.

'ALDERLEY EDGE & CHORLEY' BOROUGH WARD: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

1) The ward's name.

Options:

(a) Accept the Commission's recommended name of 'Alderley Edge & Chorley'.

or

(b) Continue to argue for the name ('Alderley Edge') proposed in the Council's original submission.

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

Boundary line discrepancy relating to two properties in the Council's proposed Bollington & Rainow Borough ward

The Council has identified a discrepancy between its and the Commission's electoral boundary lines, which may have implications for the warding of two properties in Rainow parish. These two properties would be included in the Bollington & Rainow Borough ward under the Council's proposals, but the Commission's Borough ward electronic boundary lines follows a slightly different path, cutting through these dwellings. However, this matter is covered in subsection 4.7, which also deals with similar boundary discrepancies elsewhere in the Borough, rather than under 4.2.

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 B5090.¹¹

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

¹¹ 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.

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 for 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 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.¹²
- 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 on **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

¹² The 19% variance was calculated by taking the revised (Commission's) 2030 figure for its recommended 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.

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.
- 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 wards¹³, 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 5.5 (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 2030.¹⁴ 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

¹³ 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..."*

¹⁴ 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.

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 highlights 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 5.5 of this Report highlights in more detail.)

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 4,652.¹⁵

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 2030¹⁶ (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 ward¹⁷). 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

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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."*

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.

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 4.2a to 4.2d) include a scenario (Table 4.2c) 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 4.2c 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 4.2d).

It is not conceivable that the Commission would accept either of these last two warding arrangements (those in Tables 4.2c and 4.2d) 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 4.2b). 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 4.2a).

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 estate than to the rest of Tytherington. The Commission's wording in fact suggests that it sees these properties as part of the Springwood estate. 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 Boroughs under different Bollington & Rainow/ Macclesfield Tytherington boundary line options

(The ward order in Table 4.2a places Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington in adjacent, rows at the top of the table, for ease of comparison with the figures in Tables 4.5b to 4.5d.)

Table 4.2a: 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 4.2b: 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 4.2c: 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 4.2d: 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.

4.3 Brereton and Dane Valley wards

Overview of the Draft Recommendations and their underlying rationale

The Commission accepted the Council's proposals for the would-be new 'Brereton' Borough ward (covering a significantly smaller area than the current 'Brereton Rural' Borough ward, though still a very extensive one). It also accepted the Council's proposal that no change be made to the boundary of the existing Dane Valley Borough ward. In its warding consultation stage submission, Brereton Parish Council also supported these proposals, which would keep the whole of Brereton parish within the same (Brereton) Borough ward.

However, the warding consultation stage submission from Holmes Chapel Parish Council requested that the Dane Valley Borough boundary be extended, to take in that part of *"the approved Holmes Chapel Settlement Boundary"* that lies outside the Holmes Chapel parish boundary. In its Draft Recommendations report, the Commission noted it had no information on the area or definition of the settlement boundary and so was unable to consider recommending the Parish Council's proposal at that stage of the Review. However, it welcomed further information and local views on that alternative proposal.

Assessment

The Settlement Boundary that the Holmes Chapel Parish Council submission refers to is the one adopted in 2022 by the Borough Council in the second part of its 2010-30 Local Plan (the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, or SADPD), following a public examination of the SADPD proposals. This settlement boundary covers the part of Holmes Chapel village urban area that falls within Holmes Chapel parish. However, it also includes the adjacent housing development (largely comprising the new Bluebell Green estate) and business premises (the Bepak pharmaceuticals site), which are on the opposite side of the River Croco and which lie in Brereton parish. Holmes Chapel Parish Council's submission indicates (correctly) that this boundary change would still allow the Commission's electoral equality criterion to be met. Its submission further argues that this proposed alternative boundary line would better reflect the Commission's other two main Review criteria than the existing Borough ward boundary does, noting that:

"Many of the residents of this extended area use Holmes Chapel facilities, including schools, shops, health services, library, churches, etc. Holmes Chapel Parish council believes that the residents of this extended area would be better represented by the Ward Councillors for the Dane Valley as there is a lot of synergy with the council requirements of the residents of the parish."

In terms of which electors would be added to the existing Dane Valley Borough ward, the Parish Council's proposal is in fact very similar to the Borough Council's working proposal up until the February 2024 Full Council meeting. That earlier proposal (overturned by an amendment passed at Full Council) would have involved the addition to Dane Valley of the Bluebell Green estate (Bluebell Roads and the streets accessed via it), Field View, Paddock Close, numbers 130 and 132 London Road (the A50) and the six properties on the Dunkirk Farm site. In terms of affected residential properties and non-residential premises, the Parish Council's suggested boundary differs from this only in that:

- it excludes the six Dunkirk Farm properties;
- includes two established properties, Oakwood Cottage and The Oaks, as well the Bespak pharmaceuticals site (all of which are on the opposite side of the A50 to Bluebell Green).

Notwithstanding the decision made at February's Full Council, Sub-Committee Members have noted with interest the proposal from Holmes Chapel Parish Council. Members felt there was merit in reconsidering the boundary between Brereton and Dane Valley in this location.

The case for extending the Dane Valley Borough ward boundary southwards to cover the Bluebell Green area can be summarised as follows:

- As Holmes Chapel Parish Council's submission notes, residents of the properties in and adjacent to Bluebell Green are dependent on Holmes Chapel village for the many key services that are unavailable (or available but geographically more distant) in Brereton parish. Consequently, there are a number of shared interests and ties between the Bluebell Green area and residents who live north of the river. For example, unlike Brereton Green (the village in Brereton parish that is closest by road or foot to Bluebell Green), Holmes Chapel has food/ convenience stores (including a supermarket), as well as a bank/ building society branch, leisure centre, library, post office, GP surgery, optician, pharmacy and community centre.
- During the draft recommendations consultation stage of the recent (2018-22) CGR, there were 68 responses from Holmes Chapel parish residents (and their Parish Council), of which 39 included specific comments. Of the latter 39 responses, 35 provided a clear view on the Holmes Chapel boundary issue and 26 of those (including the Parish Council's submission) argued that Bluebell Green should become part of their parish, while the other nine opposed that boundary change option. In addition, of the many responses (275) from Brereton parish, 13 were from people who specifically identified themselves as residents from the Bluebell Green or Dunkirk Farm developments and most (nine) of those supported the transfer of their area

to Holmes Chapel parish (the other four were opposed). Specific points made in support of Bluebell Green's inclusion in Holmes Chapel parish related mainly to its dependence on Holmes Chapel for services.

- Including the Bluebell Green area in Dane Valley Borough ward could therefore help to promote effective and convenient local government, given that residents who share the same services and who face similar issues would be represented by councillors from the same ward.

However, there are also valid points that can be made for placing the Bluebell Green area in the Brereton Borough ward: that is, in the same Borough ward as the rest of Brereton parish.

In particular, the recent (2018-22) CGR uncovered significant evidence of community ties between Bluebell Green and the rest of its parish. The CGR draft recommendations consultation stage prompted 275 responses from residents of Brereton parish (and their parish council), of which a large majority opposed the option of transferring Bluebell Green to Holmes Chapel parish. Those opposing such a change to the parish boundary cited factors such as:

- Bluebell Green residents using Brereton parish amenities such as its primary schools, scouts, pub, nature reserve and footpaths;
- Brereton Parish Council's success in engaging with Bluebell Green residents; and
- a view that some of Holmes Chapel's facilities and services (such as its schools) had stretched capacity and were therefore less well placed to accommodate Bluebell Green residents' needs.

If, bearing the above issues in mind, the Borough Council were now minded to support the addition of the Bluebell Green area to the Dane Valley Borough ward, it would have to decide which boundary line extension option would better meet the Commission's criteria: the Parish Council's proposal or the Borough Council's working proposal up to February Full Council.

Map 10 of Annex A shows the full extent of the Dane Valley Borough ward under both these alternative options (and under the Draft Recommendations), with the green line marking the Parish Council's proposed boundary and the yellow shaded area indicating the ward's area under the pre-Full Council proposal. However, the section of the ward boundary that would be affected by these alternative proposals is relatively small in relation to the size of the existing Dane Valley Borough ward. Therefore a separate map, **Map 11**, provides a close-up of the Bluebell Green area, with each of the potential boundary lines shown.

Whilst the Settlement Boundary, being part of the Borough Council's adopted Local Plan, is clearly understood, it could be argued that the Borough Council's variant option would provide clearer boundaries and better reflect local communities' identities and interests. In particular:

- Vehicular access to and from the Dunkirk Farm properties is possible only via the road that connects those properties, and the ones on Field View and Paddock Close, to the A50. Field View and Paddock Close are therefore Dunkirk Farm's nearest and most accessible neighbours and placing these properties in different Borough wards is unlikely to reflect community identity. It could also make for less effective and convenient local government if, for example, issues arose over those properties' shared access roads and Borough ward councillors were involved.
- Oakwood Cottage and The Oaks are established properties that (until the development of Bluebell Green) lay some distance outside the 'Holmes Chapel' conurbation. As such, it is likely that their residents have a separate, more rural identity and do not necessarily share the same interests as the occupants of Holmes Chapel village.
- The Borough Council's variant option largely uses the railway line and the A50 for the extended boundary, whereas the Parish Council's proposal would mainly rely on rear property boundaries and field boundaries.

All three of the boundary options discussed above – the Borough Council's submitted proposal (as currently recommended by the Commission), its pre-Full Council working proposal and the Parish Council's proposal – would, however, satisfy the Commission's electoral equality criterion. In other words, for all three options, the electors per seat ratios for the would-be Brereton and Dane Valley Borough wards would, as of 2030, be within the range (10% of the Borough average) that the Commission usually seeks. This is shown in Tables 4.3a to 4.3c, which present the elector numbers, ratios and variances arising from each option.

Table 4.3a: Brereton and Dane Valley warding under the Commission's recommendations (the Borough Council's submitted 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)
Brereton	1	3,760	3,760	-2%	4,532	4,532	+10%
Dane Valley	2	8,315	4,158	+8%	8,494	4,247	+3%

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).

Table 4.3b: Brereton and Dane Valley warding under Holmes Chapel Parish Council's 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)
Brereton	1	3,368	3,368	-12%	4,128	4,128	0%
Dane Valley	2	8,707	4,354	+13%	8,898	4,449	+8%

Note: All the electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Borough Council's original numbers, as the Commission's revised figures are not available (and cannot be derived for) the geographical areas involved in these alternative proposals.

Table 4.3c: Brereton and Dane Valley warding under the Borough Council's original working proposal (rejected at February 2024 Full Council meeting)

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)
Brereton	1	3,361	3,361	-12%	4,121	4,121	0%
Dane Valley	2	8,714	4,357	+14%	8,905	4,453	+8%

Note: All the electoral figures in the above table are taken from the Borough Council's original numbers, as the Commission's revised figures are not available (and cannot be derived for) the geographical areas involved in these alternative proposals.

As noted in the Introduction of this report, the Commission is required to ensure that each Borough ward consists of whole parishes or, where this is not possible, of whole parish wards. Hence, for the options involving an extension to the Dane Valley Borough ward, Brereton parish (currently unwarded) would need to be divided into two parish wards: one covering the part (the Bluebell Green area) within the new Dane Valley Borough ward, and one covering the rest of Brereton parish. Tables 4.3d and 4.3e show the likely impact of this on the Commission's recommended governance arrangements for Brereton Parish Council, should its Final Recommendations conclude that the Dane Valley Borough ward boundary should be extended. These tables assume that (as with the parish ward councillor numbers presented in the Commission's Draft Recommendations report) the seat allocations for each parish ward are based on their respective shares of the Parish Council's expected total electorate as of 2030.

Table 4.3d: Likely Brereton Parish Council warding under Holmes Chapel Parish Council's proposals

Parish ward area	Probable recommended number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Bluebell Green area	3	392	404	131	135
Rest of Brereton parish	6	967	950	161	158
Total	9	1,359	1,354	151	150

Note: These electoral figures are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not available (and cannot be derived for) small geographical areas like Brereton parish.

Table 4.3e: Likely Brereton Parish Council warding under the Borough Council's original working proposal (rejected at February 2024 Full Council meeting)

Parish ward area	Probable recommended number of seats	Electors (2023)	Electors (2030)	Ratio of electors to seats (2023)	Ratio of electors to seats (2030)
Bluebell Green area	3	399	411	133	137
Rest of Brereton parish	6	960	943	160	157
Total	9	1,359	1,354	151	150

Note: These electoral figures are taken from the Council's originally submitted data, as the Commission's revised figures are not available (and cannot be derived for) small geographical areas like Brereton parish.

BRERETON AND DANE VALLEY BOROUGH WARDS: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

1) Whether the Dane Valley Borough ward's southern boundary (along the River Croco) should be extended to include the Bluebell Green area and if so, how this change can be justified. Options:

- a) The Draft Recommendations boundary: no change to the current Dane Valley Borough ward boundary (and therefore the Bluebell Green area is included in Brereton Borough ward).**
- b) Holmes Chapel Parish Council proposal: Dane Valley Borough ward boundary extended to include the whole Holmes Chapel Settlement Boundary area (largely comprising the Bluebell Green estate).**
- c) The Council's original work proposal: same as Holmes Chapel Parish Council proposal, but including the Dunkirk Farm properties and excluding Oakwood Cottage/ The Oaks and the Bepak site.**

Any alternative proposal to the Draft Recommendations would have to be carefully explained, given that this would represent a change of view from the Council's warding consultation stage submission (with which the Commission currently agrees).

4.4 Crewe West and Wistaston wards

Overview and assessment

The issues relating to the Crewe West and Wistaston Borough wards' boundaries involve boundary line discrepancies that affect only a very small number of properties. (As indicated earlier in this Consultation Response Report, the Commission's Draft Recommendations accepted in full the Borough Council's submitted proposals for all Borough wards covering Crewe and Wistaston.)

More specifically, as indicated in Section 1 of this Report, the electronic boundary lines provided by the Commission have revealed some locations where its (draft) recommended boundary line follows a different path to that implied by the Council's own map data and the Draft Recommendations report. As also noted in Section 1, the Council and the Commission are currently engaged in informal correspondence and an ongoing investigation, to ensure that both parties understand the reasons for these divergences, that any boundary inconsistencies are addressed and that any errors are amended as appropriate in the Final Recommendations.

Only a handful of these divergences affect individual properties, but most of those are located along the parish boundary between Crewe and Wistaston – which also forms the Commission's recommended (and the Council's proposed) boundary between the Crewe West and Wistaston Borough wards. From the Council's dialogue with the Commission so far, it appears as though the Commission's records of current parish boundary lines (which it in turn obtained from Ordnance Survey) differ slightly in this location from the Council's own records. However, this needs to be confirmed, and the ongoing investigation concluded, before the implications for the small number of affected properties can be determined.

It would not be an efficient use of Council resources for one (or even a few) properties in a particular parish to be a different Borough ward to the rest of that parish's properties. This is because the very small number of electors affected would require their own separate combination of ballot papers (and hence a separate polling station) for local elections, to avoid the risk of them being issued with the wrong papers. Therefore it is crucial to secure a common understanding, between the Council and the Commission, as to the exact path followed by parish boundary line (and consequently by the recommended Borough ward boundary line) in this area of Crewe and Wistaston, and as to which parish the affected electors are in.

Table 4.4a below lists details of the affected properties, the map (in Annex A) showing their location, the nature of the divergence and the potential implications. In each case, the Council's existing boundary lines place the whole dwelling and its plot within a

single proposed future Borough ward, whereas the Commission's recommended Borough and parish ward boundaries place all or part of the dwelling in a different Borough ward.

With the exception of 41 Thirlmere Road – which the Commission's lines place in its recommended Crewe West Borough ward, rather than in Wistaston Borough ward, as the Council proposed – the Commission's lines run through (not around) the affected dwellings. As Ordnance Survey data does not record which electoral areas a property's electors are registered to vote in, it may be that, for these 'bisected' properties (all those bar 41 Thirlmere Road), the Commission is able to base its decision on the (final) recommended Borough ward boundary on the Council's Electoral Register records. However, this has yet to be confirmed.

Table 4.4a: Residential properties potentially affected by the Commission's and the Council's differing parish boundary lines between Crewe and Wistaston

Map No. in Annex A	Property address(es)	Electoral areas the dwelling(s) is/ are or will be in, based on the Council's boundary line and Electoral Register records	Details of how the Commission's boundary line diverges from this	Potential implications if the warding of this/ these dwelling(s) do not reflect the Council's proposals
Map 12	76 Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe parish	Current electoral areas: polling district 1BAR, which is within the current Crewe West parish ward, Crewe parish and Crewe West Borough ward Future (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward: Crewe West	Unclear which recommended Borough ward the Commission sees the property's electors as being in. Its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary line cuts through the dwelling, placing it partly in the recommended Crewe West parish and Borough wards, and partly in the recommended Wistaston Borough ward.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in Wistaston Borough ward, as their most immediate neighbours by foot or car (77-78, 80 and 82 Dane Bank Avenue) would be in a different Borough ward (Crewe West).
Map 13	111 Moreton Road, Crewe parish	As for 76 Dane Bank Avenue	As for 76 Dane Bank Avenue	As for 76 Dane Bank Avenue, except that the most immediate neighbours are 108-110 Moreton Road.

Map No. in Annex A	Property address(es)	Electoral areas the dwelling(s) is/ are or will be in, based on the Council's boundary line and Electoral Register records	Details of how the Commission's boundary line diverges from this	Potential implications if the warding of this/ these dwelling(s) do not reflect the Council's proposals
Map 12	41 Thirlmere Road, Wistaston parish	Current electoral areas: polling district 1FG2, which is within the current Wistaston Green parish ward, Wistaston parish and Wistaston Borough ward Future (Draft Recommendations) Borough ward: Wistaston	The Commission's recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary lines place the whole dwelling and its plot in the recommended Crewe West parish and Borough wards.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in the Crewe West Borough and parish wards, as (apart from 84 Dane Bank Avenue, which is one of the adjacent properties) the residents' most immediate neighbours by foot or car (those on the rest of Thirlmere Road) would be in a different Borough ward (Wistaston).
Map 14	1 & 2 Wistaston Avenue, Wistaston parish	Current electoral areas: polling district 1FG1, which is within the current Wistaston Green parish ward, Wistaston parish and Wistaston Borough ward Future (draft recommendations) Borough ward: Wistaston	Unclear which recommended Borough ward the Commission sees these properties' electors as being in. Its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary line cuts through both dwellings, placing each partly in the recommended Crewe West parish and Borough wards, and partly in the recommended Wistaston Borough ward.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in Crewe West Borough and parish wards, as their most immediate community (by foot or car), the rest of the Wistaston Avenue residents, would be in a different Borough ward (Wistaston).
Map 15	74 & 98 Wistaston Green Road, Wistaston parish	As for 1 & 2 Wistaston Avenue	As for 1 & 2 Wistaston Avenue	As for 1 & 2 Wistaston Avenue, except that the most immediate community is the rest of Wistaston Green Road.

CREWE WEST AND WISTASTON BOROUGH WARDS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) That officers continue to work with the Commission, to establish the cause of the boundary line discrepancies identified along the Crewe and Wistaston parish boundary.**
- 2) That officers seek to reach a common understanding with the Commission on which current and future electoral areas each of the affected properties are/ would be in.**
- 3) That the Council's formal response to Draft Recommendations explains that the Commission's statutory criteria (particularly on local communities' interests and identities) would be best met by placing the affected properties in the Borough ward that the Council's submitted proposals envisaged, namely:**
 - a) 76 Dane Bank Avenue and 111 Moreton Avenue in Crewe West Borough ward (and Crewe West parish ward); and**
 - b) 41 Thirlmere Road, numbers 1 and 2 Wistaston Avenue and numbers 74 and 98 Wistaston Green Road in Wistaston Borough ward.**

4.5 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 18 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 19 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 16 (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 17** 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 20 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 contains 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 Hanforth 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 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 4.5a and 4.5b present the elector numbers, ratios and variances arising from the Commission’s recommendations (4.5a) and from the single-ward proposal submitted by the Borough Council, Town Council and Liberal Democrats (4.5b). 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 4.5a: 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 4.5b: 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 developing the Council's consultation response

Regardless of the position that the Sub-Committee decides to adopt 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.

4.6 Sandbach wards (including Wheelock & Winterley)

Overview and assessment

The sole issue relating to the Sandbach Borough wards' boundaries involves a boundary line discrepancy that affects a single property. (As indicated earlier in this Consultation Response Report, the Commission's Draft Recommendations accepted in full the Borough Council's submitted proposals for all Borough wards covering this area, namely Wheelock & Winterley, Sandbach East & Central and Sandbach Elworth & Ettiley Heath.)

However, the electronic boundary line files provided by the Commission place one Sandbach property in a different recommended Borough ward to that which the Council intended. The affected property is 1 Mill Hill Lane. It transpires that the Commission's boundary lines in that location arise from a historic inconsistency in the Council's own electoral boundary records, which was replicated in proposed new Borough ward boundary line data file that the Council submitted to the Commission in March 2024.

To elaborate:

- This property, along with all the others on Mill Hill Lane, is in the SAWR polling district. The Borough Council's submitted Warding Proposal Report correctly indicates the Council's proposals for this part of Sandbach, in stating (on pages 95 and 106 of that report) that all of SAWR, except for Park Lane, Fields Drive and Drovers Way, would fall within its proposed Wheelock & Winterley Borough ward.
- The electronic boundary line files that the Council submitted to the Commission did, however, contradict that report by incorrectly placing 1 Mill Hill Lane in the Council's proposed Sandbach East & Central Borough ward.
- This drafting error around 1 Mill Hill Lane was due to the Council basing its proposed new Borough ward boundary lines in this location on its electronic boundary line data for current Borough wards. The Council has now noticed that its current Borough ward boundary lines incorrectly place that property in the current Sandbach Heath & East Borough ward, rather than in its actual ward, which (as the Electoral Register confirm and as the Council's parish ward and polling district boundary lines indicate) is the current Sandbach Ettiley Heath & Wheelock Borough ward.

- It is clear from the Commission's Draft Recommendations electronic boundary lines that it too has followed the Council's current (incorrect) section of the Borough ward boundary line here and included 1 Mill Hill Lane in the recommended new Sandbach East & Central Borough ward (and consequently in its recommended Sandbach Heath & East parish ward).

The resulting boundary line error can be seen in **Map 21 of Annex A**. In this map, the current polling district (thin brown) and parish ward (slightly thicker pale blue) lines indicate the proposed new Borough ward boundary line that the Council's Warding Proposal Report envisaged, but the Commission's recommended Borough ward and parish ward lines (the thicker orange and green lines) take a detour around 1 Mill Hill Lane (the property to the immediate right of the map's 'SAWR' label).

If the Commission were to base its final recommendations on the (incorrect) electronic boundary line submitted by the Council, rather than the (correct) proposed boundary definition set out in the Council's Warding Proposal Report, that would meet the Commission's criteria less well.

The identities and interests of local communities would be less well reflected, as:

- The neighbouring properties that are closest to reach on foot (and by car) from 1 Mill Hill Lane, such as 2 Mill Hill Lane (almost directly opposite) and 148 or 150 Crewe Road, would all (unlike now) be in a different parish and Borough ward to 1 Mill Hill Lane, as would all the other properties on Mill Hill Lane (arguably its most immediate community and the one with which it is most likely to share common issues).
- 1 Mill Hill Lane would be in the same Borough parish ward as the properties on Hungerford Place that adjoin it to the side (east) and rear (north). There is a footpath a few metres away from the property (opposite number 4 Mill Hill Lane) that connects its street to end of Hungerford Place where those adjoining properties are, but car travel between these two roads involves somewhat longer route, via Crewe Road and Third Avenue.

Warding 1 Mill Hill Lane separately from the rest of its street would also result in less effective and convenient local government. For example, issues relating to Mill Hill Lane (a relatively narrow road where vehicle access and parking might potentially be an issue) might have to involve councillors from two different wards, not one.

SANDBACH/ WHEELLOCK & WINTERLEY BOROUGH WARDS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

1) That the Council's formal response to Draft Recommendations:

- a) explains the historic boundary line inconsistency around 1 Mill Hill Lane; and**
- b) explains that the Commission's statutory criteria (particularly on local communities' interests and identities) would be best met by placing this property in the Wheelock & Winterley Borough ward (and consequently in the Commission's recommended Sandbach Wheelock parish ward).**

4.7 Other wards for which a response might possibly be appropriate

Overview and assessment

The issues covered in this subsection involve boundary line discrepancies that affect only a very small number of properties that, according to the Council's records, lie just inside the boundaries of its proposed Bollington & Rainow, Odd Rode and Wybunbury Borough wards. (As indicated earlier in this Consultation Response Report, the Commission's Draft Recommendations accepted in full the Borough Council's submitted proposals for these three Borough wards, with the exception of a recommended alternative boundary between Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington.)

More specifically, as indicated in Section 1 and subsection 4.4 of this Report, the electronic boundary lines provided by the Commission have revealed some locations where its (draft) recommended boundary line follows a different path to that implied by the Council's own map data and the Draft Recommendations report – cases which the Council and the Commission are currently investigating.

Only a handful of these divergences affect individual properties and most of those are located along the parish boundary between Crewe and Wistaston (and therefore covered in subsection 4.4). The other three cases – each affecting either a single residential property or two properties - are dispersed elsewhere across the Borough. However (as with the Crewe/ Wistaston cases) they appear to be the result of the Commission's record of current parish boundary lines (which it has obtained from Ordnance Survey) differing slightly in these locations from the Council's own records. However, the ongoing investigation needs to be concluded before the implications for the affected properties can be determined.

As explained in subsection 4.4, it would not be an efficient use of Council resources for one property (or even a few) in a particular parish to be a different Borough ward to the rest of that parish's properties, due to the need to provide separate polling facilities. Therefore it is crucial to secure a common understanding, between the Council and the Commission, as to the exact path followed by parish boundary line (and consequently by the recommended Borough ward boundary line) in these locations, and to which parish the affected electors are in.

Table 4.7a below lists details of the three affected properties, the map (in Annex A) showing their location, the nature of the divergence and the potential implications. In each case, the Council's existing boundary lines place the whole (or virtually the whole) dwelling and its plot within a single proposed future Borough ward, whereas the Commission's recommended Borough and parish ward boundaries place part (but not all) of the dwelling in a different Borough ward.

As Ordnance Survey data does not record of which electoral areas a property's electors are registered to vote in, it may be that, for these 'bisected' properties, the Commission is able to base its decision on their (final) recommended Borough ward on the Council's Electoral Register records. However, this has yet to be confirmed.

Table 4.7a: Residential properties (excluding Crewe/ Wistaston area) that are potentially affected by the Commission's and the Council's differing parish boundary lines

Map No. in Annex A	Property address(es)	Electoral areas the dwelling(s) is/ are or will be in, based on the Council's boundary line and Electoral Register records	Details of how the Commission's boundary line diverges from this	Potential implications if the warding of this/ these dwelling(s) do not reflect the Council's proposals
Map 22	'Roughwood', Roughwood Hollow, Hassall parish (but bordering Alsager parish)	Current electoral areas: polling district LAW4, which is within the current (unwarded) Hassall parish and Brereton Rural Borough ward Future (draft recommendations) Borough ward: Odd Rode	Unclear which recommended Borough ward the Commission sees the property's electors as being in. Its recommended Borough ward boundary line cuts through the dwelling, splitting it between the would-be Alsager and Odd Rode Borough wards.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in Alsager Borough ward, as their most immediate neighbours by foot or car (Rose Cottage and Roughwood Cottage, which are just across the road) would be a in different Borough ward (Odd Rode) and the 2018-22 CGR revealed no evidence of residents in this location having a separate identity or interests to the rest of Hassall parish.
Map 23	Lower Windyway Farm and Lower Windy Way Barn, Crookedyard Road, Rainow parish (but bordering Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Parish)	Current electoral areas: polling district 4FF1, which is within the current (unwarded) Rainow parish and Sutton Borough ward Future (draft recommendations) Borough ward: Bollington & Rainow	Same issue as for 'Roughwood', except that the Commission's recommended Borough boundary line splits each of these dwellings between the would-be Bollington & Rainow and Sutton Borough wards.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in Sutton Borough ward, as their most immediate neighbours by foot or car (Walker Barn Cottage/ Farm and The Old Post House) would be a in different Borough ward (Bollington & Rainow) and the 2018-22 CGR revealed no evidence of residents in this location having a separate identity or interests to the rest of Rainow parish.

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Map No. in Annex A	Property address(es)	Electoral areas the dwelling(s) is/ are or will be in, based on the Council's boundary line and Electoral Register records	Details of how the Commission's boundary line diverges from this	Potential implications if the warding of this/ these dwelling(s) do not reflect the Council's proposals
Map 24	'Moorlands', Wybunbury parish (but bordering Stapeley parish)	Current electoral areas: polling district 1GN1, which is within the current (unwarded) Wybunbury parish and Wybunbury Borough ward Future (draft recommendations) Borough ward: Wybunbury	Same issue as for 'Roughwood', except that the Commission's recommended Borough boundary line splits each of this property between the would-be Nantwich South & Stapeley and Wybunbury Borough wards.	Local community identity and interests not reflected if the residents are placed in Nantwich South & Stapeley Borough ward, as their most immediate neighbours by foot or car (The Hawthorns and The Byres) would be in a different Borough ward (Wybunbury) and the 2018-22 CGR revealed no evidence of residents in this location having a separate identity or interests to the rest of Wybunbury parish.

OTHER BOROUGH WARDS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

- 1) That officers continue to work with the Commission, to establish the cause of the boundary line discrepancies identified along the Alsager/ Hassall, Rainow/ Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough and Wybunbury/ Stapeley parish boundaries.**
- 2) That officers seek to reach a common understanding with the Commission on which current and future electoral areas each of the affected properties are/ would be in.**
- 3) That the Council's formal response to Draft Recommendations explains that the Commission's statutory criteria (particularly on local communities' interests and identities) would be best met by placing the affected properties in the Borough ward that the Council's submitted proposals envisaged, namely:**
 - a) 'Roughwood' in Odd Rode Borough ward;**
 - b) Lower Windyway Farm and Lower Windy Way Barn in Bollington & Rainow Borough ward; and**
 - c) 'Moorlands' in Wybunbury Borough ward.**

5 Parish ward recommendations

Overview of this report section

The tables and accompanying narrative in this section summarise the nature of, and reasons for, the Commission's 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).

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. 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. Examples of this are the recommended Sandbach Heath & East and Sandbach Town parish wards (which would collectively comprise the same area as the new recommended Sandbach East & Central Borough ward), and the recommended new Wilmslow East and Wilmslow Dean Row parish wards (which would collectively comprise the same area as the new Wilmslow East & Dean Row Borough ward). The Council's initial judgement, based on the Commission's clarification so far, is that the Commission would probably see these particular merger options as a matter that should be decided through a CGR (as they involve merging a redrawn parish ward, not a merger of existing parish wards). However, the Council has not consulted the Commission on those specific cases and so cannot be certain.

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 slides 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 electors totals or electors-per-seat ratios for the town or parish council in question.¹⁸

¹⁸ 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 Congleton Town Council

Table 5.1a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Congleton '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 25 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Congleton, 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 the Congleton Central and South East parish (Town Council) wards, to align with its proposed Borough ward boundaries. These changes would bring the whole Kestrel Close estate into the South East parish ward.

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

- the Congleton Central parish ward loses one seat and the Congleton South East gains one;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would be less evenly distributed than at present. Under the current warding, each parish ward has either four or five seats. Under the recommendations, their seat allocations vary from three (Congleton Central) to six (Congleton South East).

CONGLETON PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

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

Table 5.1a: Congleton 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	4	3,777	4,021	944	1,005
North	4	3,934	3,983	984	996
North East	5	5,740	5,907	1,148	1,181
South East	5	5,165	5,167	1,033	1,033
West	4	4,648	4,689	1,162	1,172
Whole Council	22	23,264	23,767	1,057	1,080

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: Congleton 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	3	2,772	2,924	924	975
North	4	3,934	3,983	984	996
North East	5	5,740	5,907	1,148	1,181
*South East	6	6,170	6,264	1,028	1,044
West	4	4,648	4,689	1,162	1,172
Whole Council	22	23,264	23,767	1,057	1,080

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.

5.2 Crewe Town Council

Table 5.2a 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 5.2b 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 26 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 5.2b 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 covered 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 5.2b (which assume no merger) with those in Table 5.2c.
- 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: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

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

Table 5.2a: 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 5.2b: 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 5.2c: 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.

5.3 Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council

Correction in Draft Recommendations report relating to Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths parish warding

Following the original publication of the Commission's Draft Recommendations report, the Borough Council informally queried the report's stated new allocation of seats within Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish Council. The original report version proposed only one seat for the new 'Hulme Walfield' parish ward and five for the 'Somerford Booths' parish ward. However, bearing in mind the forecast future numbers of electors in those respective parish wards, the Borough Council suggested that those numbers should be reversed. The Commission acknowledged this error, which (as of 14 October) it had corrected in the report version now on its website. (To the Council's knowledge, this is, at the time of writing, the only amendment the Commission has made to its published report since the start of the Draft Recommendations consultation.)

Overview and assessment of the Draft Recommendations

Table 5.3a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths 'parish' (Parish 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 Parish Council area.

Map 27 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths, and how these compare to its recommended Borough ward boundaries and to existing electoral boundaries.

As the map indicates, the Commission recommends leaving the Somerford Booths parish ward boundary unchanged, but dividing the current Hulme Walfield parish ward into two smaller ones:

- 'Giantswood' (covering the part of the Parish Council that would be in the Commission's recommended Congleton West Borough ward; and
- 'Hulme Walfield', covering the rest of the current parish ward's area, including the actual village of Hulme Walfield and Local Plan site LPS 27.

The proposed name for the new 'Giantswood' parish ward clearly comes from the main residential road through that area (Giantswood Lane), though the Commission's report does not explicitly mention the reason for this choice of name.

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

- the Somerford Booths parish ward loses two of its existing three seats and reduced-size Hulme Walfield has five seats (rather than three as at present), to accommodate Giantswood's fair share of seats (three, based on its expected share of the electorate as of 2030);
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward would still vary somewhat. Under the current warding, one parish ward has three seats while the other has six. Under the recommendations, the seat allocations for each new parish ward vary from one (Somerford Booths) to five (Hulme Walfield).

HULME WALFIELD & SOMERFORD BOOTHES PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

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

Table 5.3a: Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish 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)
Hulme Walfield	6	352	1,952	59	325
Somerford Booths	3	166	184	55	61
Whole Council	9	518	2,136	58	237

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: Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths Parish 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)
*Giantswood	3	277	790	92	263
*Hulme Walfield	5	75	1,162	15	232
Somerford Booths	1	166	184	166	184
Whole Council	9	518	2,136	58	237

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 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 5.4a 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 5.4b 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 28 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 do not have significantly different identities, despite the recommendation that they be placed in different Borough wards.

As Table 5.4b 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 5.4a: 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 5.4b: 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.

5.5 Macclesfield Town Council

Table 5.5a 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 5.5b 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 29 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 wards¹⁹ 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 5.5b 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.

¹⁹ 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 5.5b 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 4.2) 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 5.5a: 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 5.5b: 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.

5.6 Nantwich Town Council

Table 5.6a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Nantwich 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.6b 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 30 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Nantwich, 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 the Nantwich North and Nantwich South parish (Town Council) wards, to align with its proposed Borough ward boundaries. These changes would transfer polling district 1NA3 from the North to the South parish ward, but otherwise leave the Nantwich parish ward boundaries as they currently are.

As Table 5.6b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- the North parish ward loses two seats and the South and West parish wards each gain one seat²⁰;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would (unlike now) be unevenly distributed. Under the current warding, each parish ward has five seats. Under the recommendations, the North parish ward would have three seats, but the other two parish wards would have six each.

²⁰ It is helpful to explain why, despite its recommended boundary being the same as now, the West parish ward would be allocated an extra seat under the Commission's proposals. This allocation reflects the fact that, even when electoral boundaries stay unchanged, the population and electorate size grows faster in some geographical areas than others. The Nantwich West parish ward is a location of significant demographic growth, as it includes two major new housing development sites. The recent CGR, which took account of electorate forecasts up to 2025, made some allowance for this high growth in its decision to allocate five seats to the (then) new West parish ward. However, the still-more-recent electorate forecasts produced for the current Review, which factor in even more up-to-date evidence and go up to 2030, predict that (by 2030) the West parish ward's share of Nantwich's electorate will be higher still (around 38%), entitling it to six of the Town Council's 15 seats if broad electoral equality across the three parish wards is to be maintained.

Table 5.6a: Nantwich 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)
North	5	4,294	4,275	859	855
South	5	4,285	4,286	857	857
West	5	4,564	5,255	913	1,051
Whole Council	15	13,143	13,816	876	921

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 5.6b: Nantwich 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)
*North	3	3,159	3,145	1,053	1,048
*South	6	5,420	5,416	903	903
West	6	4,564	5,255	761	876
Whole Council	15	13,143	13,816	876	921

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.

NANTWICH PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

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

5.7 Sandbach Town Council

Table 5.7a 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 5.7b 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 31 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 5.7b 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.²¹

However, this particular merger scenario involves a location where the new Borough ward boundary that 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.**

²¹ 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 5.7a: 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 5.7b: 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.

5.8 Wilmslow Town Council

Table 5.8a below shows the current warding arrangements for the Wilmslow 'parish' (Town Council) wards, along with the numbers of electors and electors per seat for each of these existing wards. Table 5.8b 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 32 in Annex A shows the Commission's recommended new parish ward boundaries for Wilmslow, 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 the Wilmslow East and Wilmslow West parish wards, to align with its proposed Borough ward boundaries. However, under its Draft Recommendations, Dean Row and East would remain as separate parish wards (though with the East parish ward covering a different geographical area than it currently does, to reflect the recommended changes to the Borough ward boundaries in this part of Wilmslow). This is despite the Commission's recommendation that the current Wilmslow Dean Row Borough ward and an area comprising most of the current Wilmslow East Borough ward (plus a small transferred part of the current Wilmslow West & Chorley Borough ward) be merged into a single new (Wilmslow East & Dean Row) Borough ward.

As Table 5.8b indicates, the impact of the recommendations on seat allocations would be:

- Wilmslow East parish ward would lose a seat, while the Wilmslow West would gain one;
- the Dean Row and Lacey Green parish wards (unaffected by boundary changes) would have the same numbers of seats as now;
- consequently, the number of seats each parish ward has would be less evenly distributed than at present. Under the current warding, the numbers of seats for each parish ward varies from three to five. Under the recommendations, the allocated number of seats would range from two (East) to six (West).

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, subject to certain criteria being met. Therefore the Borough Council or other consultees could, in theory, propose that the (draft) recommended Wilmslow Dean Row and Wilmslow

East parish wards be merged into a single (Wilmslow East & Dean Row) parish ward that covers the same geographical area as the recommended Wilmslow East & Dean Row Borough ward. It could be argued that such a merger would enable more effective and convenient local government, as:

- all the Wilmslow 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 three Borough and parish wards with relatively similar names that each covered different geographical areas (Wilmslow East & Dean Row Borough ward, Wilmslow East parish ward and Wilmslow Dean Row parish ward).

Merging Wilmslow East and Wilmslow Dean Row into a single parish ward would, however, only marginally improve electoral equality within the Town Council. The ratios (as of 2030) would consequently range from 1,253 for Wilmslow Lacey Green to 1,414 for the merged Wilmslow East & Dean Row parish ward, rather than varying from 1,253 (Lacey Green) to 1,430 (Dean Row).

Merging Wilmslow East and Wilmslow Dean Row into a single parish ward would also result in a less even distribution of seats than at present (and arguably a less even distribution than under the Draft Recommendations), with the merged East & Dean Row parish ward and the West having six seats each, but Lacey Green only three.

In any case, this particular merger scenario involves a location where the new Borough ward boundary that 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 that 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.

Table 5.8a: Wilmslow 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)
Dean Row	4	5,700	5,719	1,425	1,430
East	3	3,285	3,546	1,095	1,182
Lacey Green	3	3,684	3,758	1,228	1,253
West	5	7,632	7,669	1,526	1,534
Whole Council	15	20,301	20,692	1,353	1,379

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 5.8b: Wilmslow 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)
Dean Row	4	5,700	5,719	1,425	1,430
*East	2	2,555	2,765	1,278	1,383
Lacey Green	3	3,684	3,758	1,228	1,253
*West	6	8,362	8,450	1,394	1,408
Whole Council	15	20,301	20,692	1,353	1,379

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.

WILMSLOW PARISH WARDING: ISSUES FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER

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

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Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) Review of Cheshire East Council's Electoral Arrangements

Electoral Review Draft Recommendations Consultation Response Report

Annex A (maps annex) (slides 1 to 36)

Electoral & Polling District Review Sub-Committee

6 November 2024 meeting

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Map 29: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Macclesfield

Map 30: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Nantwich

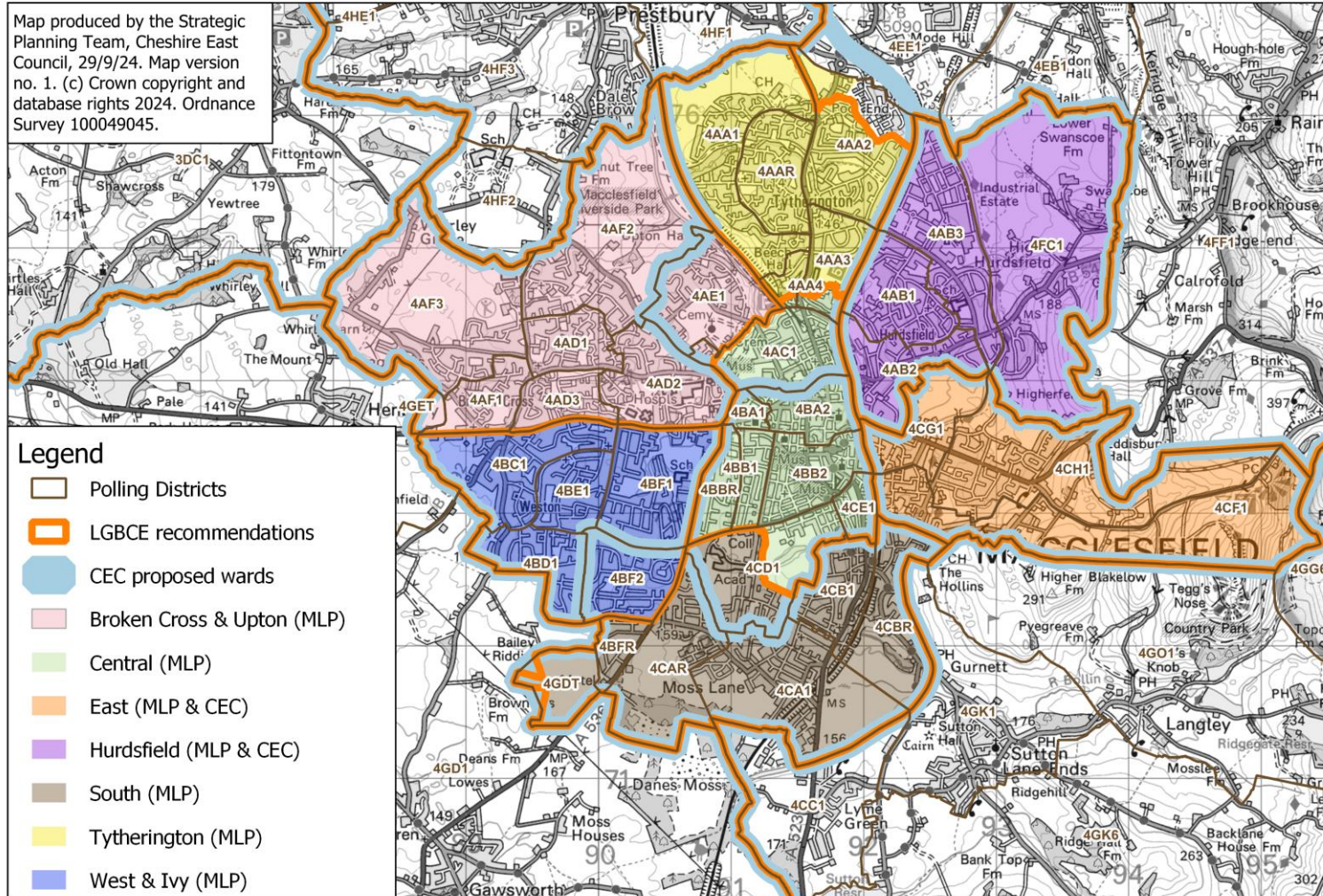
Map 31: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Sandbach

Map 32: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Wilmslow

Map 1: Macclesfield – Comparison of alternative proposals

In the map below, the Commission's recommended Borough wards are shown by orange lines, the Council's warding consultation stage proposals by pale blue lines and Macclesfield Labour Party's (MLP) proposals by the shaded areas.

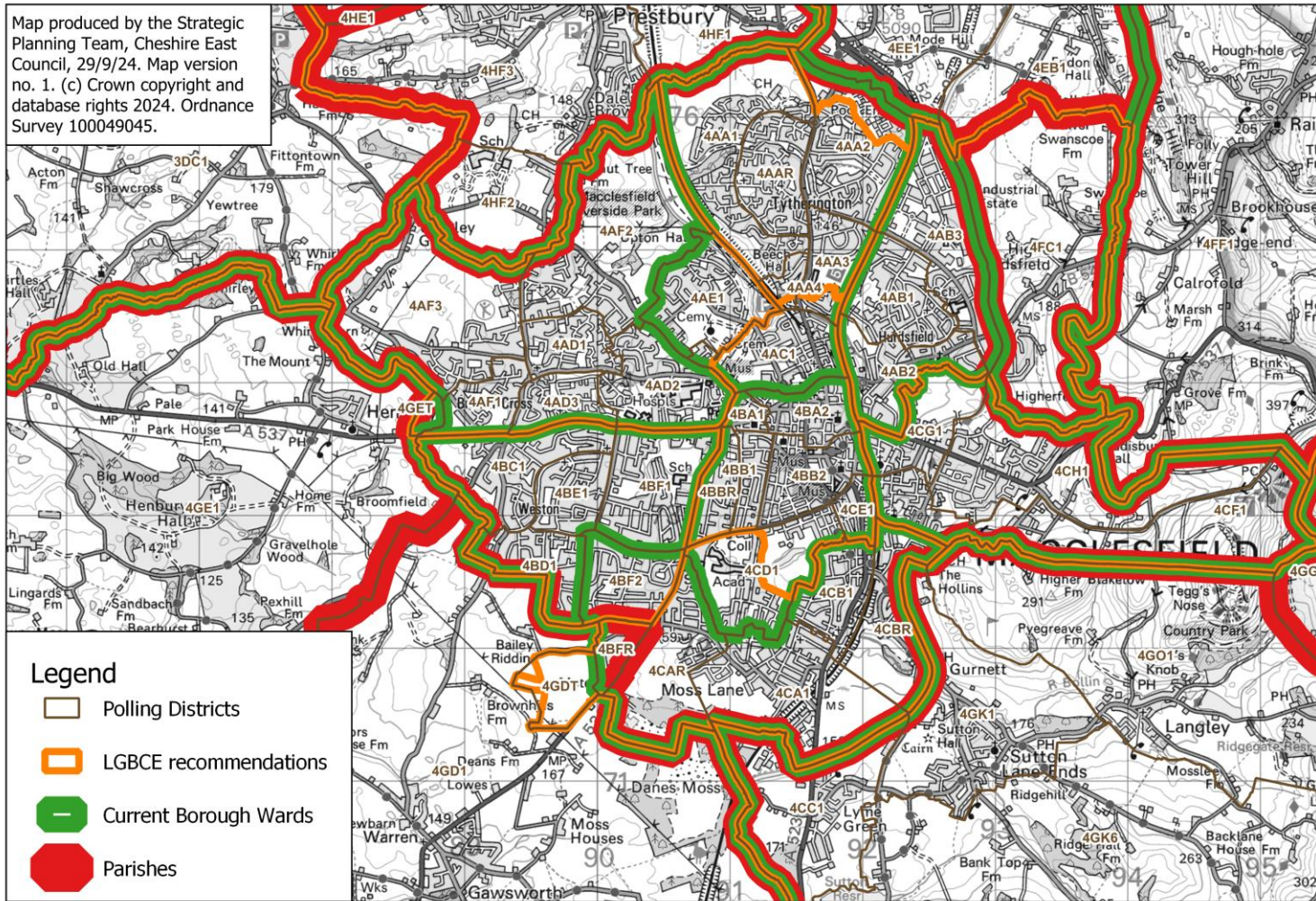
Warding for Macclesfield under Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council (CEC) submission and Macclesfield Labour Party (MLP) submission



Map 2: Macclesfield – Draft Recommendations and current boundaries

In the map below, the Commission's recommended Borough wards are shown by orange lines, current Borough wards by dark green lines and current parish boundaries by red lines.

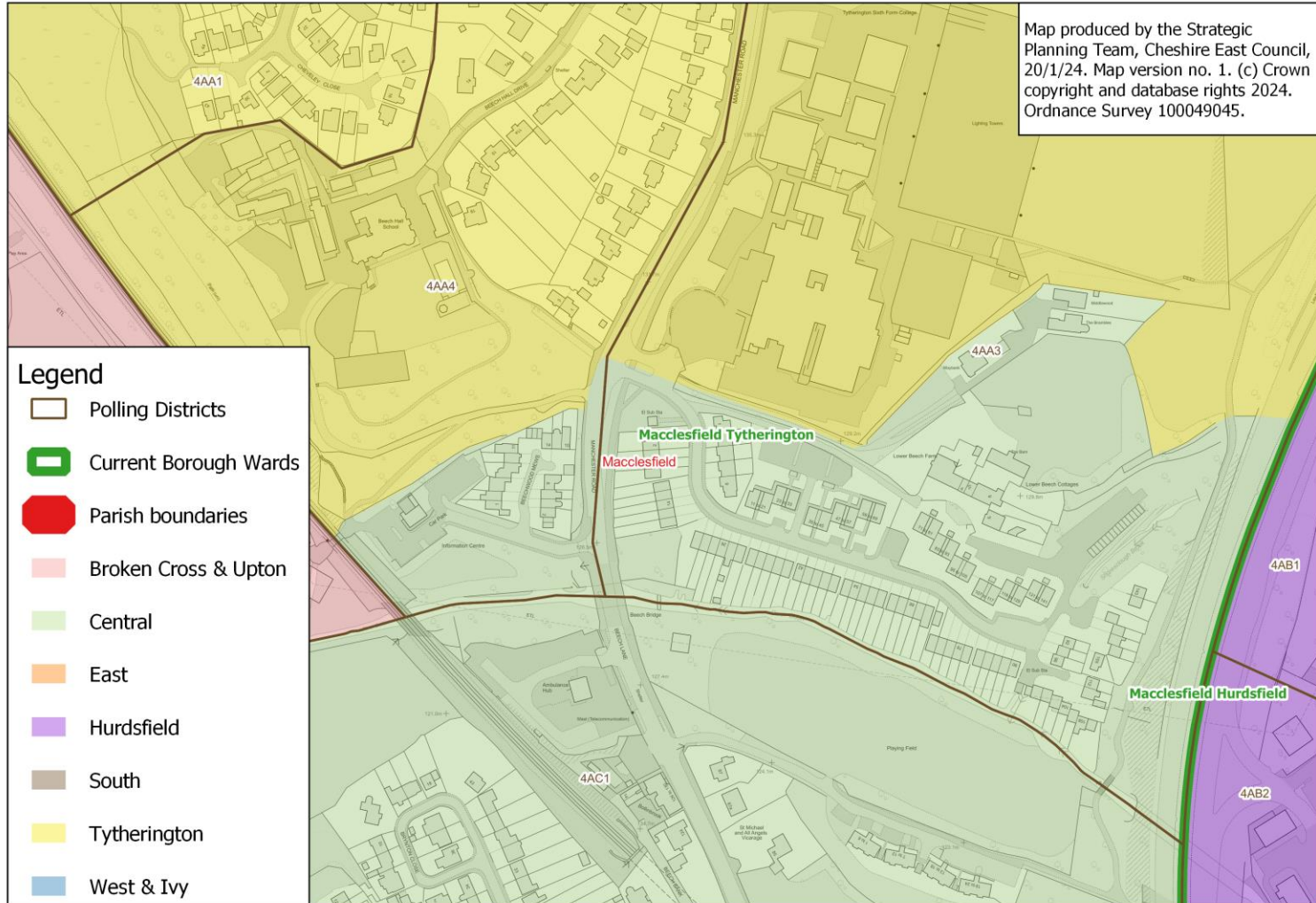
Warding for Macclesfield under Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, with current Borough Wards and parish boundaries overlaid



Map 3: Macclesfield – Division of 4AA3 and 4AA4

This map shows the Commission's recommended division of polling districts 4AA3 and 4AA4 between the Macclesfield Central and Macclesfield Tytherington Borough wards.

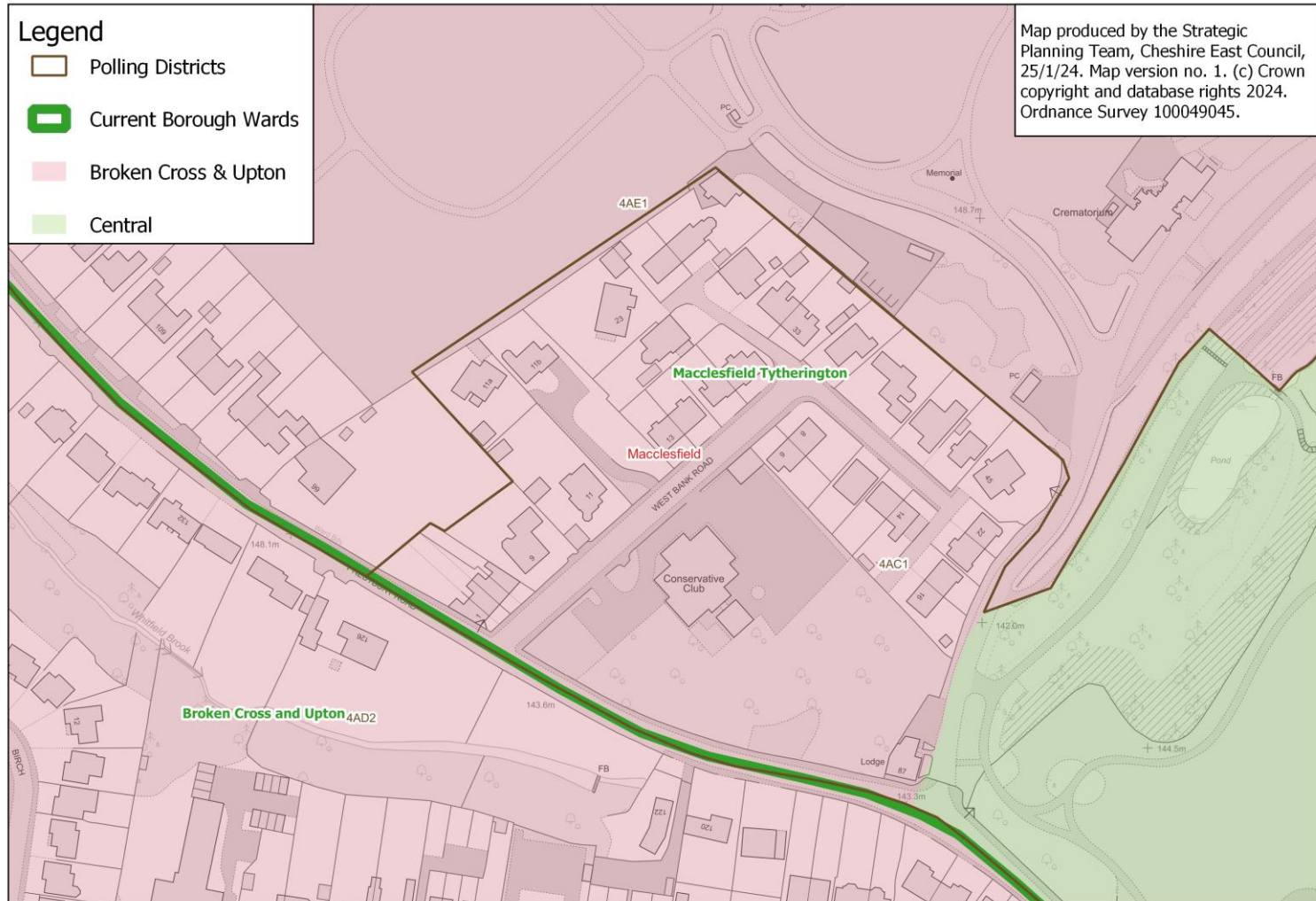
Macclesfield warding proposal (20/1/24 version): close-up of division of 4AA3 & 4AA4 (in Beechwood Mews/ Beech Farm Drive area)



Map 4: Macclesfield – Division of 4AC1

This map shows the Commission's recommended division of polling district 4AC1 between the Broken Cross & Upton and Macclesfield Central Borough wards.

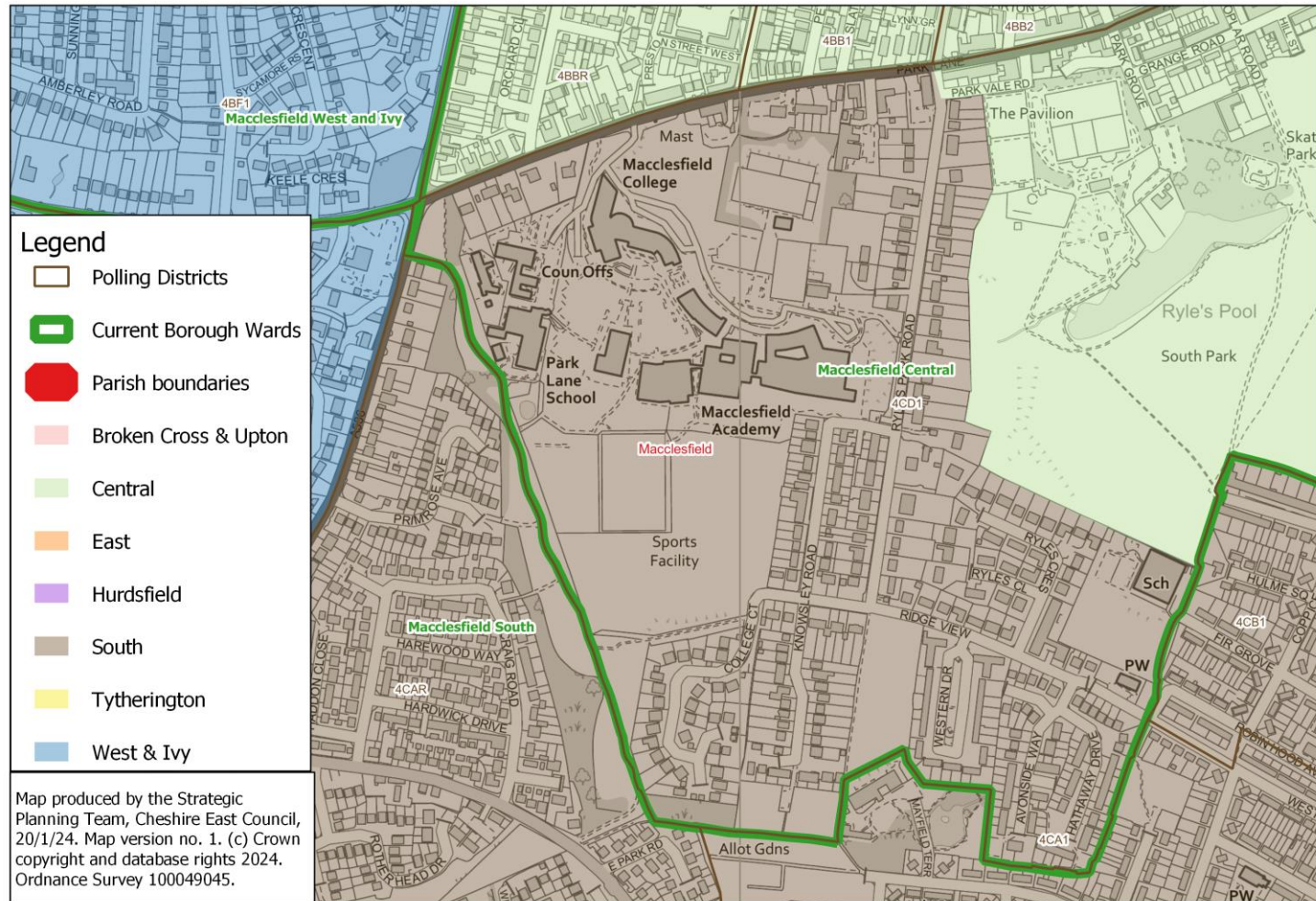
Macclesfield warding: inclusion of West Bank part of 4AC1 in Broken Cross & Upton



Map 5: Macclesfield – Division of 4CD1

This map shows the Commission's recommended division of polling district 4CD1 between the Macclesfield Central and Macclesfield South Borough wards.

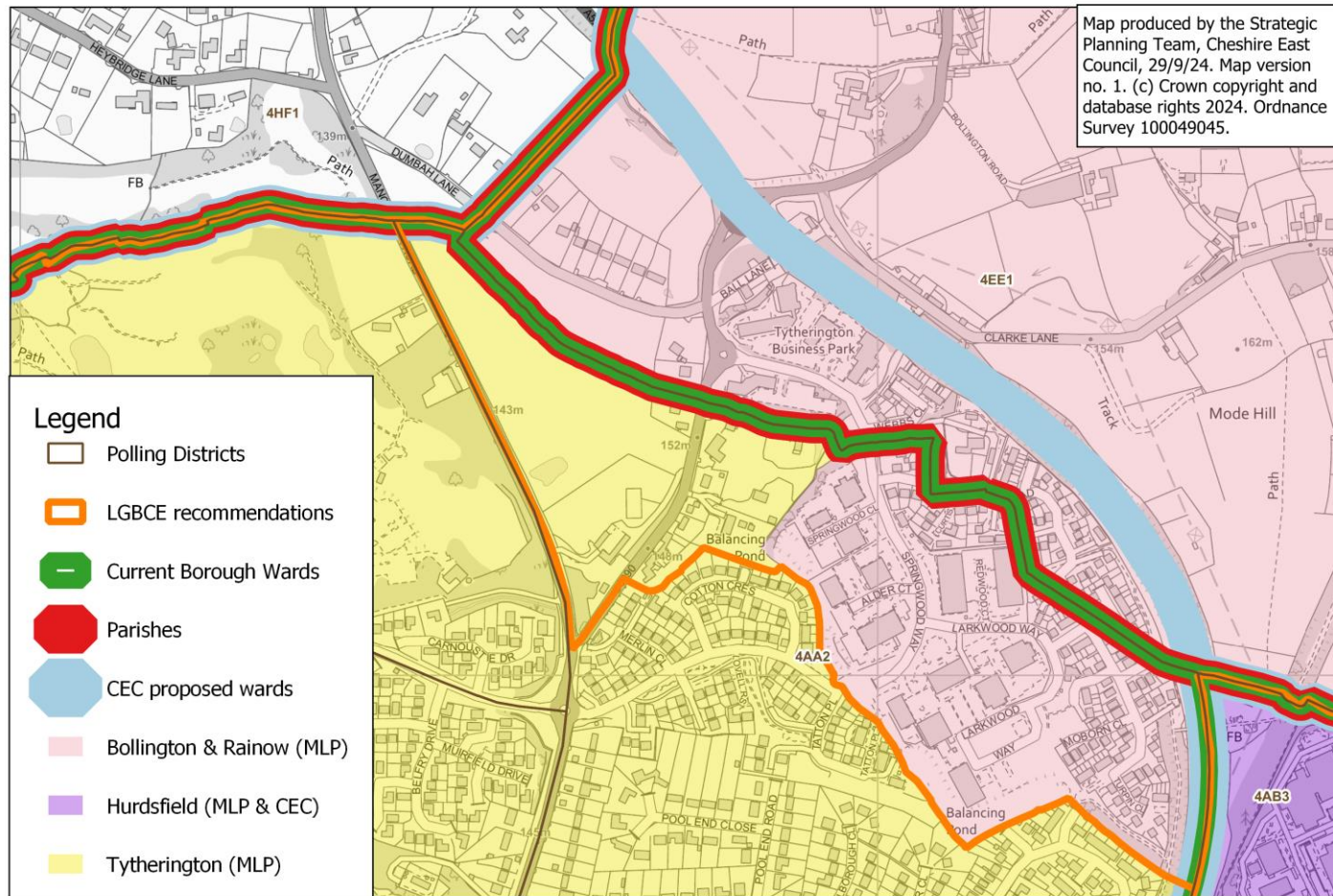
Macclesfield warding proposal (20/1/24 version): close-up of division of 4CD1 (in Ryles Park Road area)



Map 6: Macclesfield – Tytherington/ Bollington - alternative proposals

This map shows the boundary between the Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow Borough wards under the Commission's recommendations (orange line), the Macclesfield Labour Party's (MLP) proposals (the pink and yellow shading) and Cheshire East Council's (CEC) warding consultation stage proposals (pale blue line).

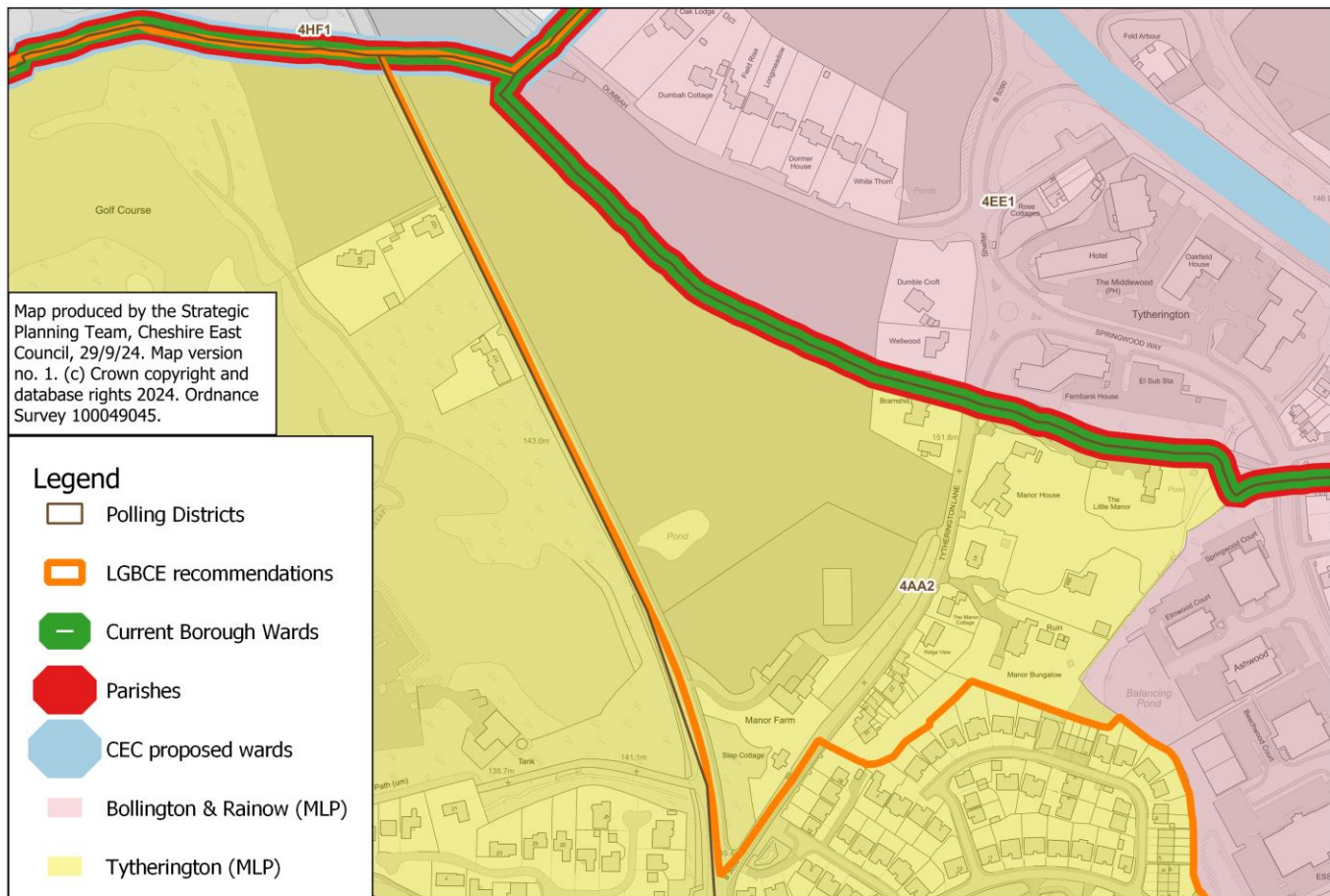
Ward boundary in Springwood Way (Macclesfield Tytherington/ Bollington) area under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council's (CEC) submission and Macclesfield Labour Party (MLP) submission



Map 7: Macclesfield – Tytherington/ Bollington – Tytherington Lane area

This map – a close-up of the Tytherington Lane area - shows the how the boundary between the Macclesfield Tytherington and Bollington & Rainow Borough wards under the Commission's recommendations (orange line) differs from that under the Macclesfield Labour Party's (MLP) proposals (the pink and yellow shading). The boundary under Cheshire East Council's (CEC) warding consultation stage proposals (the pale blue line) is also partly in view.

Ward boundary in Springwood Way (Tytherington/ Bollington) area under the Commission's (LGBCE) draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council (CEC) submission and Macclesfield Labour Party (MLP) submission: close-up of area (yellow part of 4AA2) that only the LGBCE proposes to ward with Bollington & Rainow

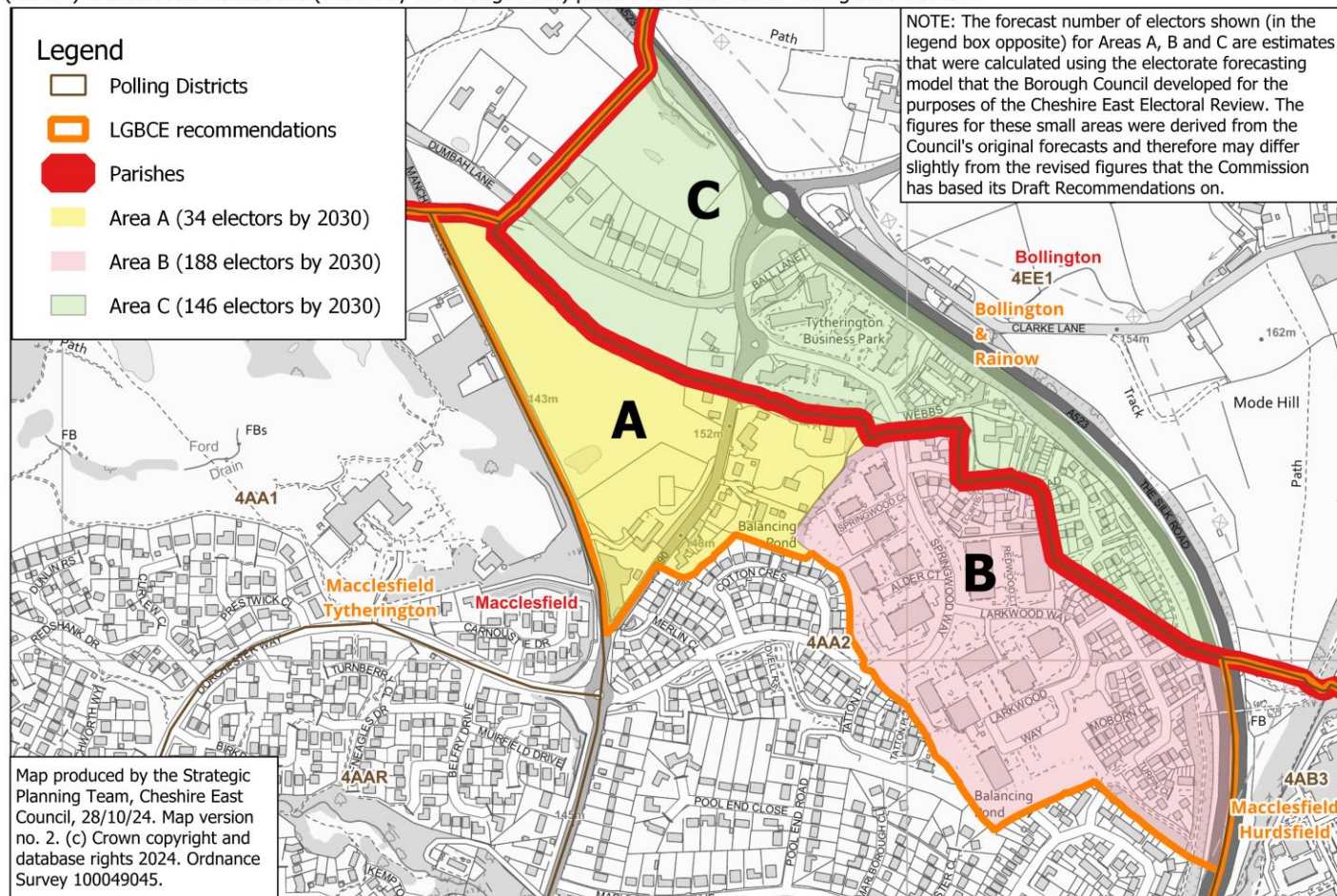


Map 8: Macclesfield – Tytherington/ Bollington, with key areas labelled

This map identifies and labels (as Areas A, B and C) the three areas around the Silk Road/ Springwood Way that would be warded differently under the Commission's (LGBCE) recommendations, the Macclesfield Labour Party's proposals and the Council's warding consultation stage proposals. 2030 elector forecasts for each area are included in the map legend.

Proposals for Borough ward boundary between Bollington & Rainow and Macclesfield Tytherington

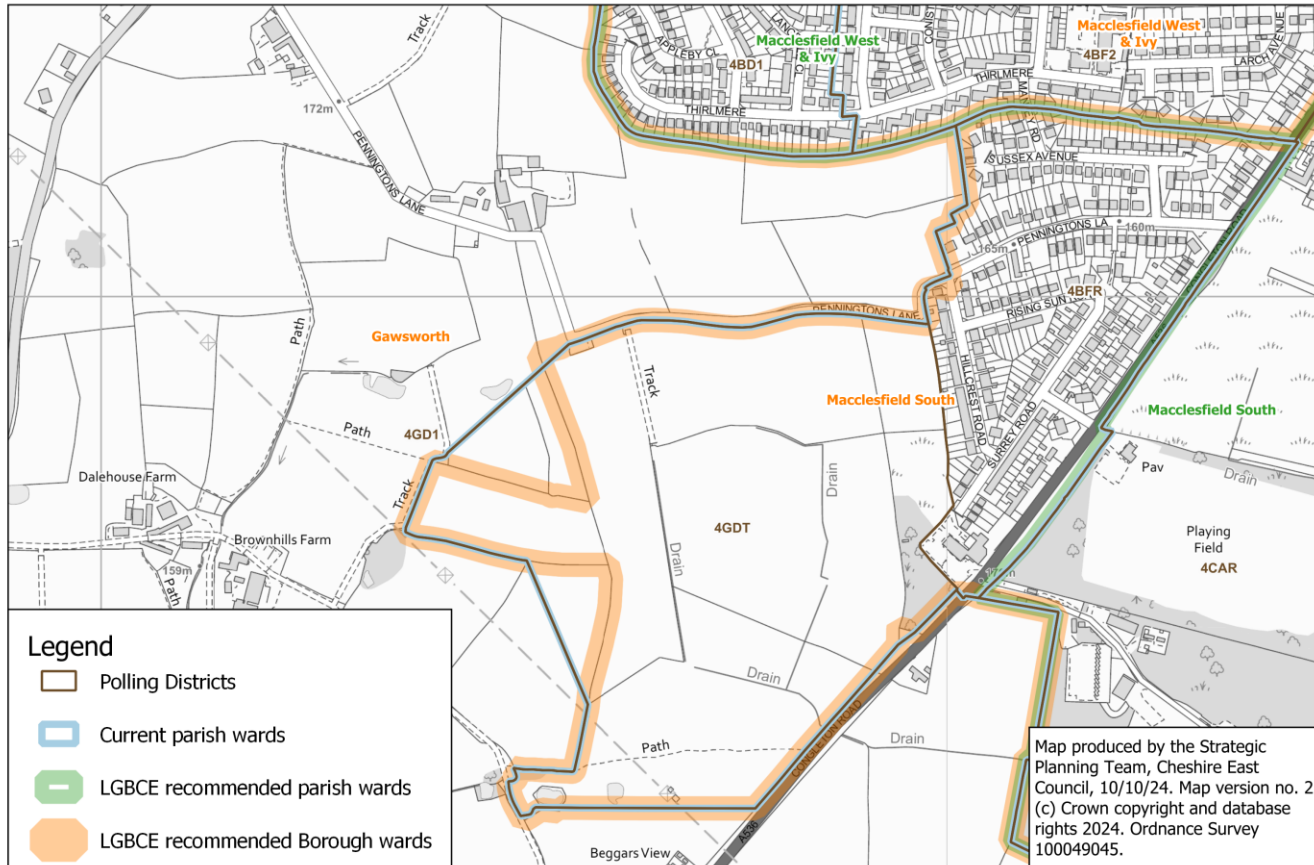
Under the Council's original submission, Areas A (yellow), B (pink) and C (green) would all be included in a two-Member Macclesfield Tytherington Borough ward. However, under the Macclesfield Labour Party proposal, B and C would be in the Bollington & Rainow ward, and the Commission's (LGBCE) Draft Recommendations (shown by the orange lines) place all three areas in Bollington & Rainow.



Map 9: Macclesfield – Gawsworth Moss (LPS 15) boundary correction

This map shows (as a pale orange line) the Commission's Draft Recommendations Borough ward boundary line in the Local Plan site LPS 15 area (LPS 15 covers the same area as polling district 4GDT). The Council has informally queried this line with the Commission, as it excludes two large triangular segments of LPS 15/ 4DGT – and in response the Commission has confirmed its Final Recommendations will have regard to the actual LPS 15 boundary and will ignore the 'deviations' below.

Warding for southwest Macclesfield and the adjacent area of Gawsworth under LGBCE draft recommendations: close-up of the divergence of LGBCE Borough ward boundary from current polling district boundaries, placing parts of 4GDT (same area as site LPS 15) in different Borough ward to the rest of that polling district.

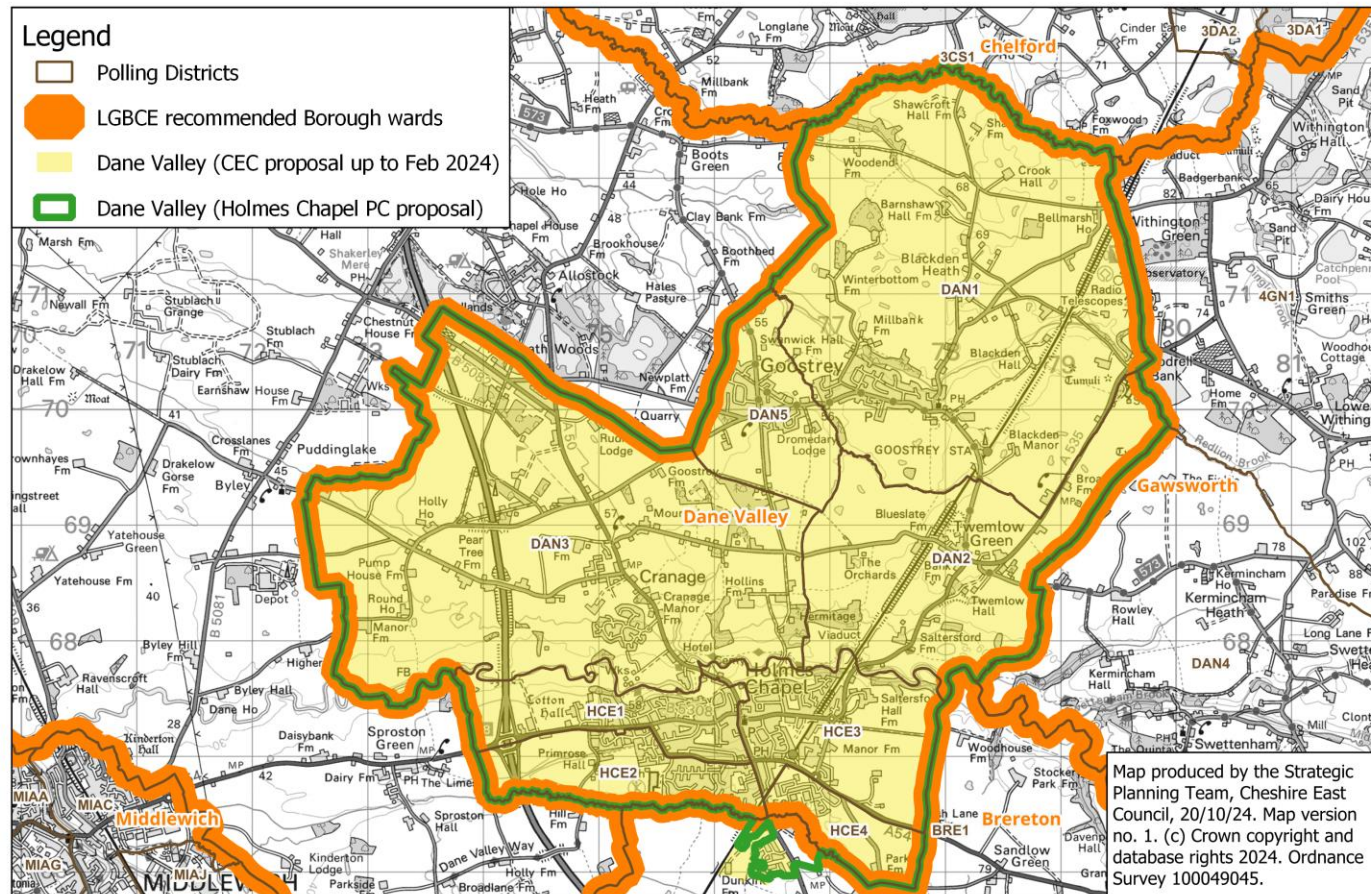


Map 10: Dane Valley – Alternative boundary proposals

Holmes Chapel Parish Council's proposal (the green line) and the Borough Council's working proposal up to the February 2024 Full Council (the yellow shaded area) differ from the Draft Recommendations line (shown in orange), in that they extend the Borough ward boundary south, to take in residential and commercial development south of the River Croco.

Borough ward boundary options for Dane Valley (with knock-on impact on Brereton)

Dane Valley Borough ward boundary under Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations (orange lines), the Borough Council's original (pre-Feb 2024 Full Council) proposals (yellow shaded area) and Holmes Chapel Parish Council proposal (green line).

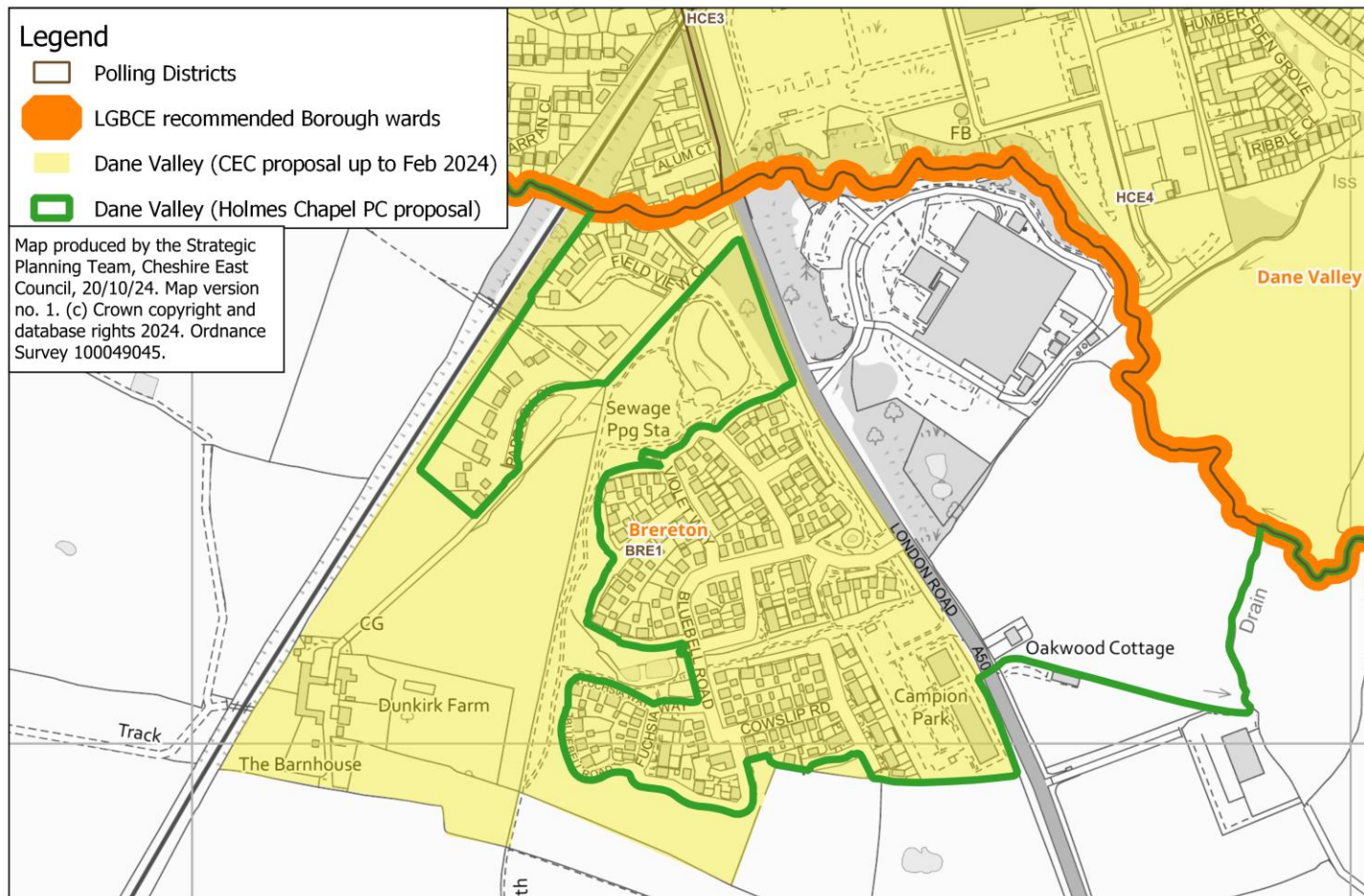


Map 11: Dane Valley – Alternative boundaries – Bluebell Green area

This map is a close-up of the Bluebell Green area, showing how it would be affected under Holmes Chapel Parish Council's proposal (the green line), the Council's working proposal up to the February 2024 Full Council (the yellow shaded area) and the Draft Recommendations (the orange line).

Borough ward boundary options for Dane Valley: close-up of Bluebell Green area

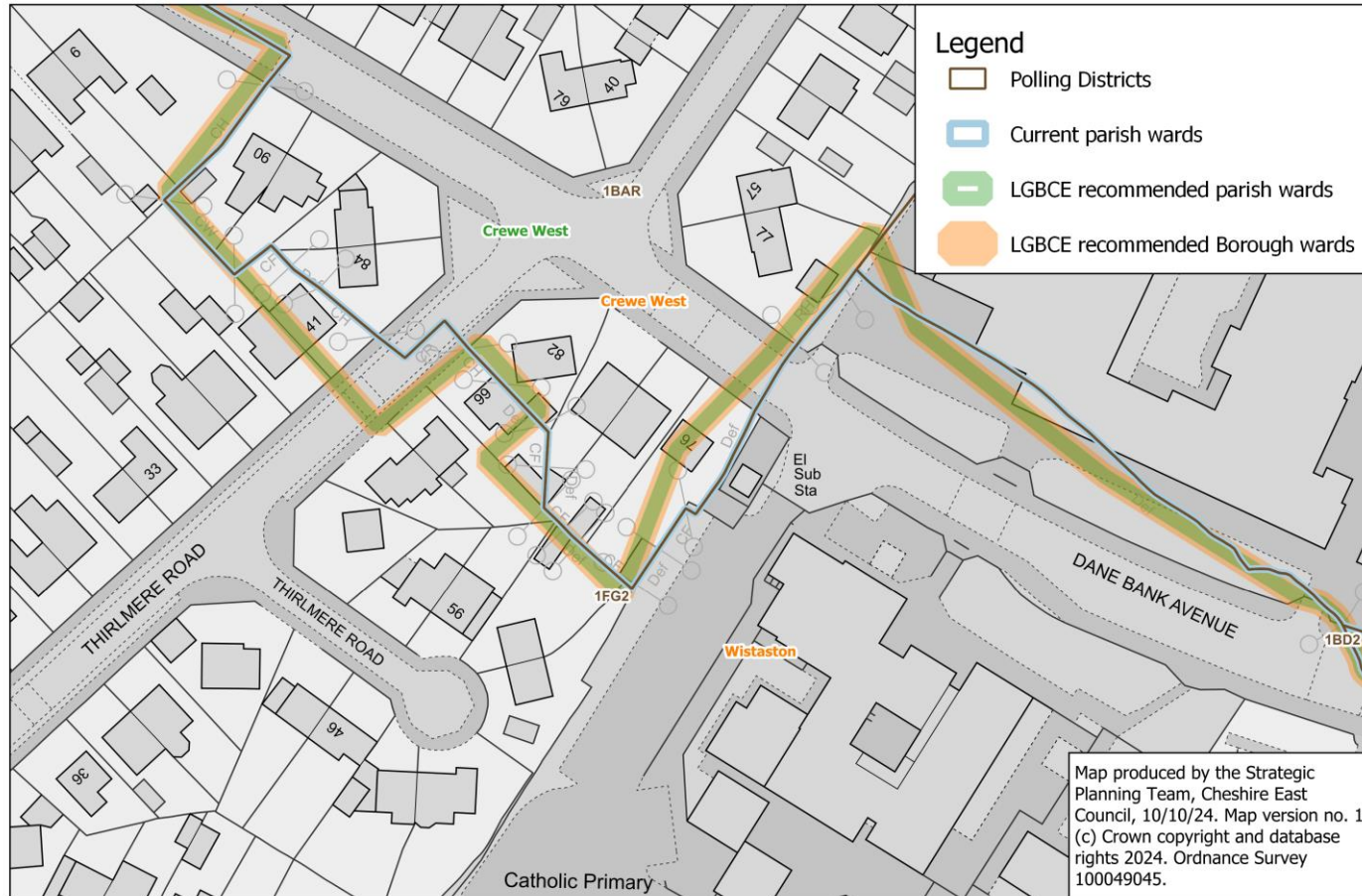
Dane Valley Borough ward boundary under Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations (orange lines), the Borough Council's original (pre-Feb 2024 Full Council) proposals (yellow shaded area) and Holmes Chapel Parish Council proposal (green line).



Map 12: Boundary anomalies – Crewe/ Wistaston – Dane Bank Avenue/ Thirlmere Road

The Commission's Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary lines (the orange and green lines below) should align with the existing polling district and parish ward boundaries (brown and blue lines) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting 76 Dane Bank Avenue and 41 Thirlmere Road.

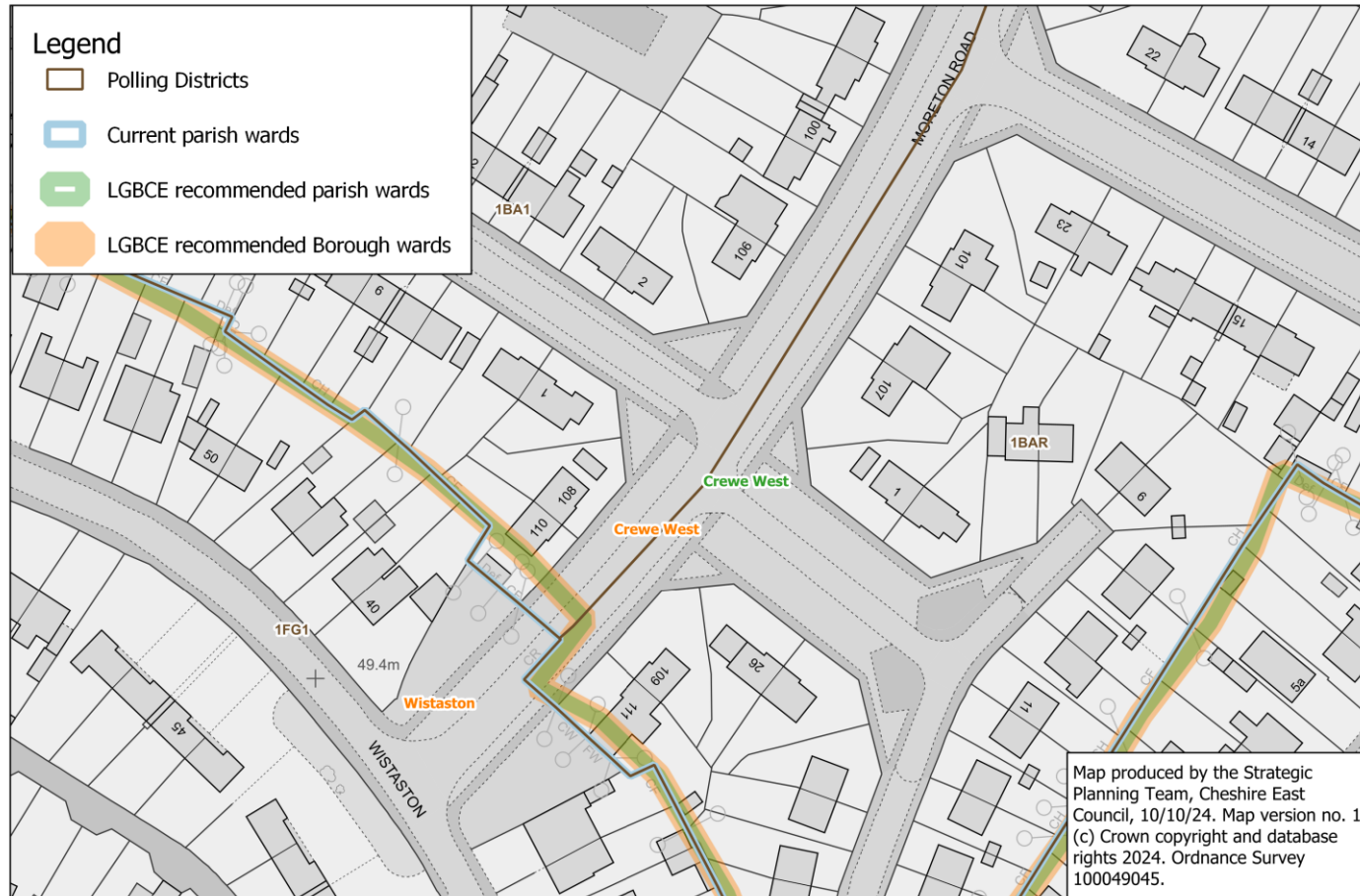
Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries from current electoral boundaries: impact on 41 Thirlmere Road and 76 Dane Bank Avenue



Map 13: Boundary anomalies – Crewe/ Wistaston – Moreton Road

The Commission's Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary lines (the orange and green lines below) should align with the existing polling district and parish ward boundaries (brown and blue lines) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting 111 Moreton Road.

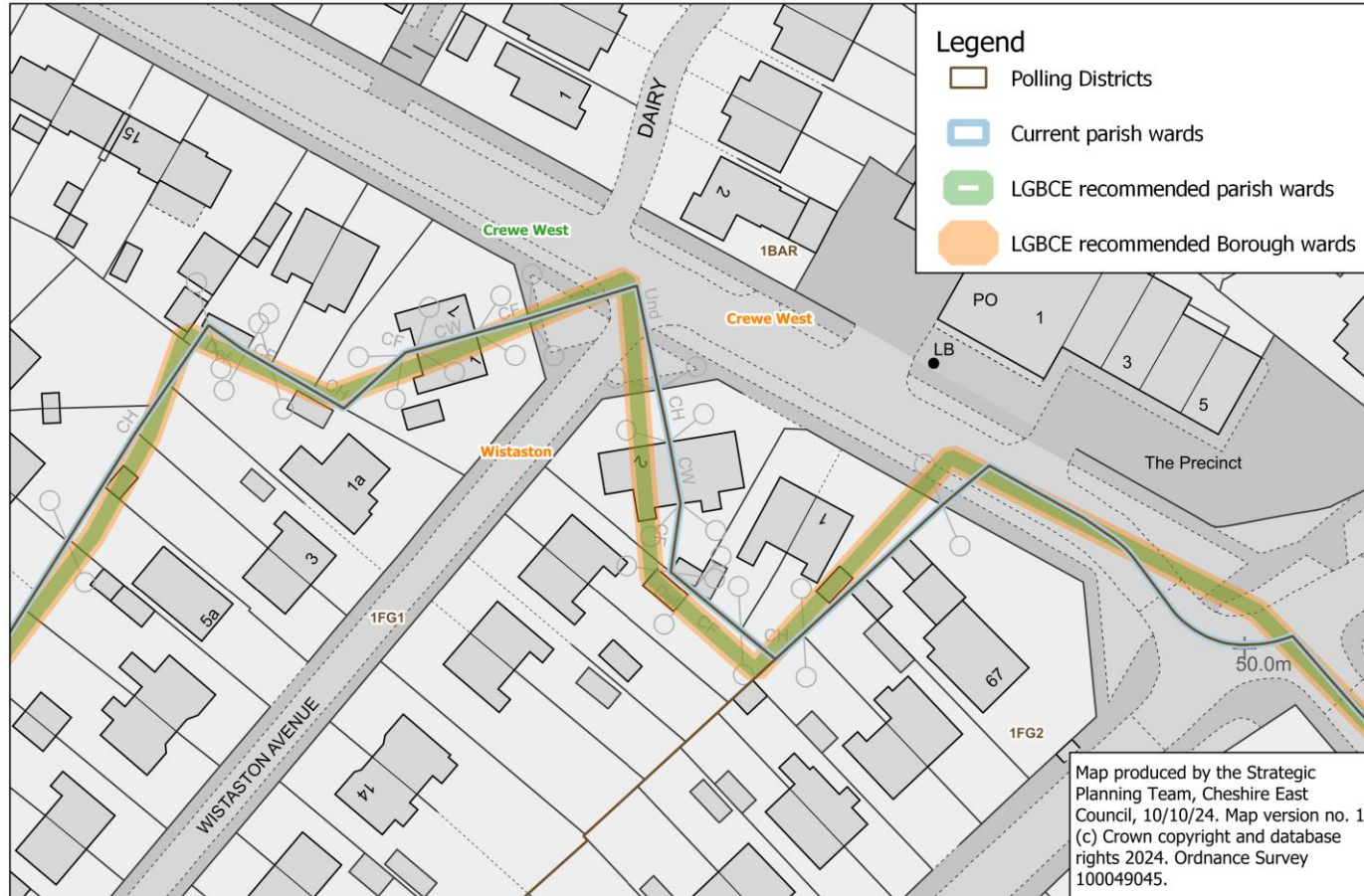
Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries from current electoral boundaries: impact on 111 Moreton Road



Map 14: Boundary anomalies – Crewe/ Wistaston – Wistaston Avenue

The Commission's Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary lines (the orange and green lines below) should align with the existing polling district and parish ward boundaries (brown and blue lines) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting 1 and 2 Wistaston Avenue.

Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries from current electoral boundaries: impact on nos 1 & 2 Wistaston Avenue



Map 15: Boundary anomalies – Crewe/ Wistaston – Wistaston Green Road

The Commission's Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough (and parish) ward boundary lines (the orange and green lines below) should align with the existing polling district and parish ward boundaries (brown and blue lines) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting 74 and 98 Wistaston Green Road.

Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries from current electoral boundaries: impact on nos 74 & 98 Wistaston Green Road

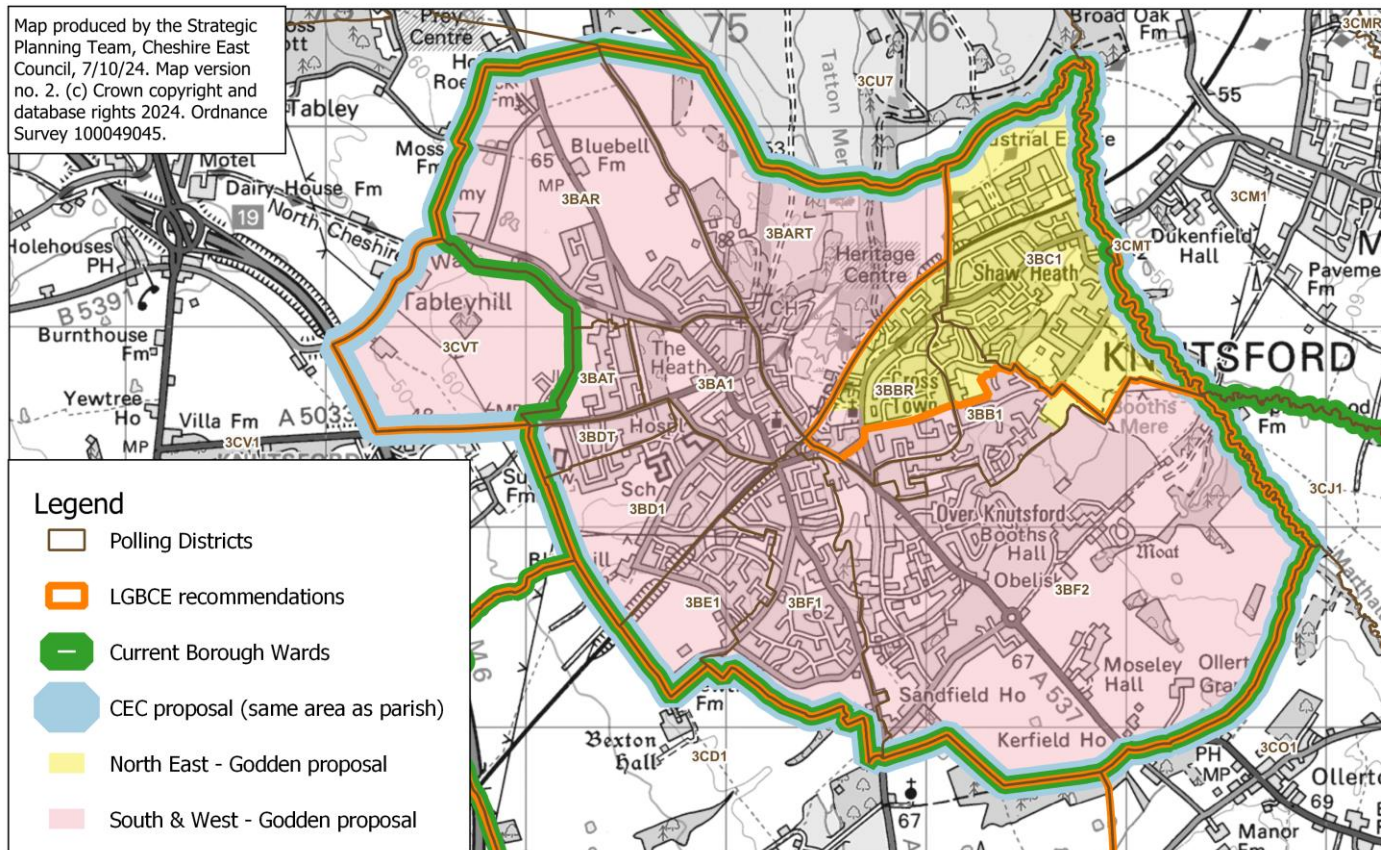


Map 16: Knutsford – Alternative proposals

The map below shows the Borough warding for Knutsford under the Commission's Draft Recommendations (the orange lines), the Tatton Labour Party proposals submitted by Joe Godden (the shaded yellow and pink areas) and Cheshire East Council's (CEC) warding consultation stage proposals (the pale blue line).

Warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council's (CEC) proposal and Joe Godden's (Feb 2024) proposal

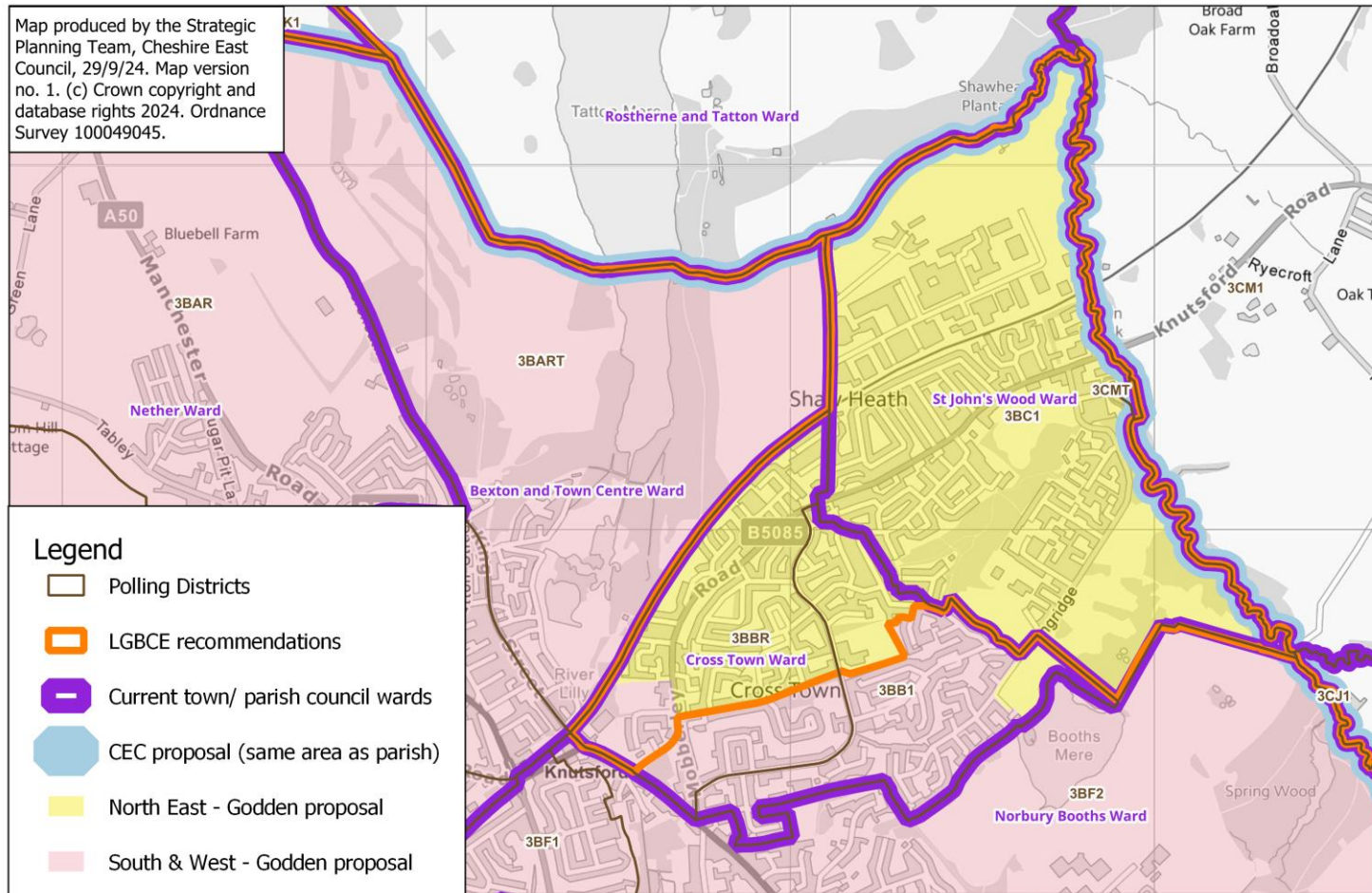
NOTE: The LGBCE draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council's submitted proposal and the Godden proposal all involve the Borough Council's Knutsford Members collectively representing the same area as the current Knutsford parish (that is, the Town Council area). However, the Borough Council proposal involves a single ward for the town, whereas the Godden proposal and the LGBCE draft recommendations would divide the parish into two Borough wards.



Map 17: Knutsford – Alternative proposals – northeast Knutsford

The map below shows the Borough warding for the northeastern part of Knutsford under the Commission's Draft Recommendations (the orange lines), the Tatton Labour Party proposals submitted by Joe Godden (the shaded yellow and pink areas) and Cheshire East Council's (CEC) warding consultation stage proposals (the pale blue line).

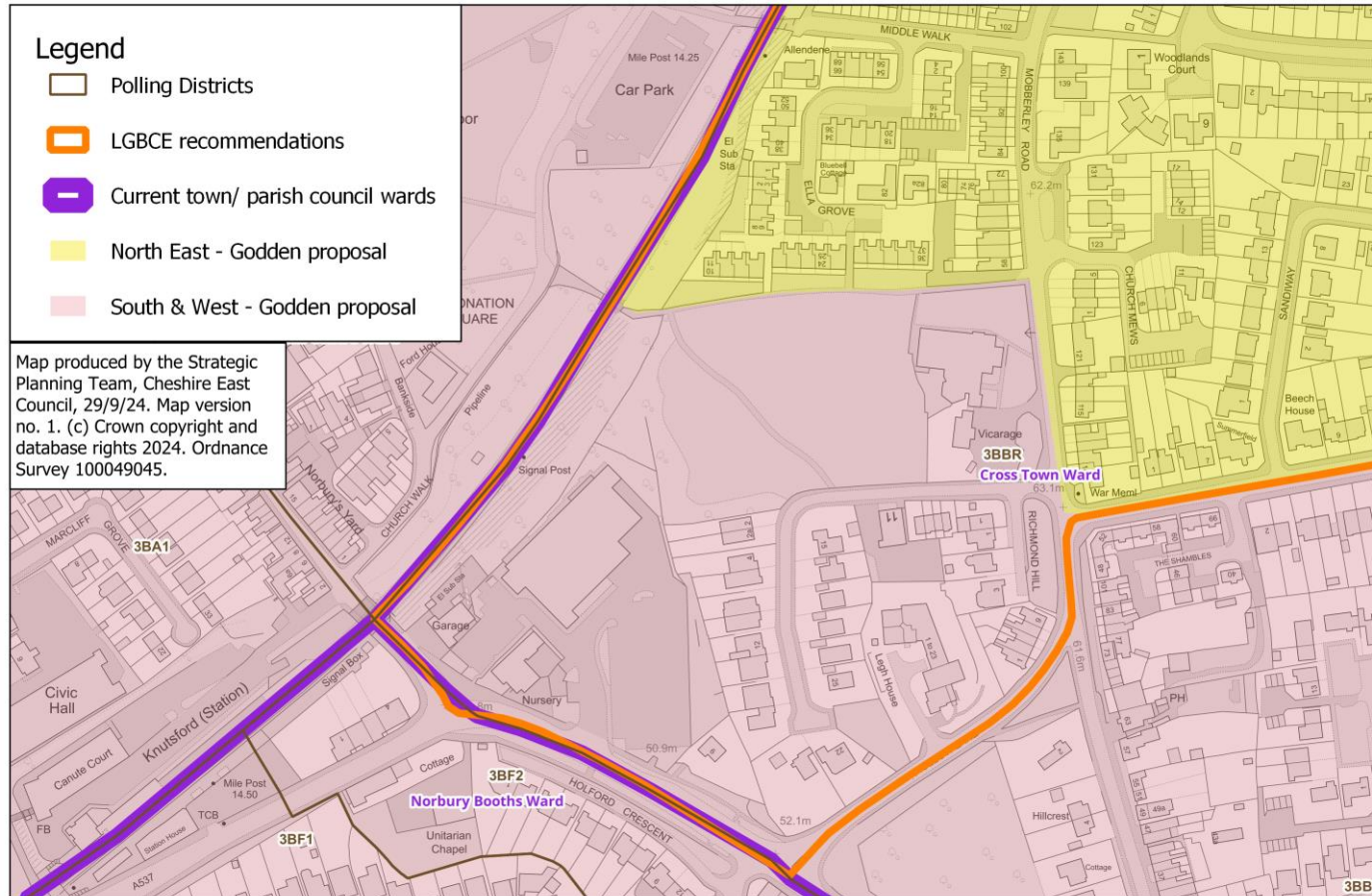
Warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, Cheshire East Council's (CEC) proposal and Joe Godden's (Feb 2024) proposal: close-up of the LGBCE's proposed Knutsford North East ward



Map 18: Knutsford – Alternative proposals – Branden Drive area

In the map below, the Commission's recommended Borough wards are shown by the orange lines and the Tatton Labour Party (Joe Godden) proposals by the shaded (yellow and pink) areas. Including the Branden Drive/ Richmond Hill area in the North East ward is one of the Commission's two modifications to the Tatton Labour Party proposal.

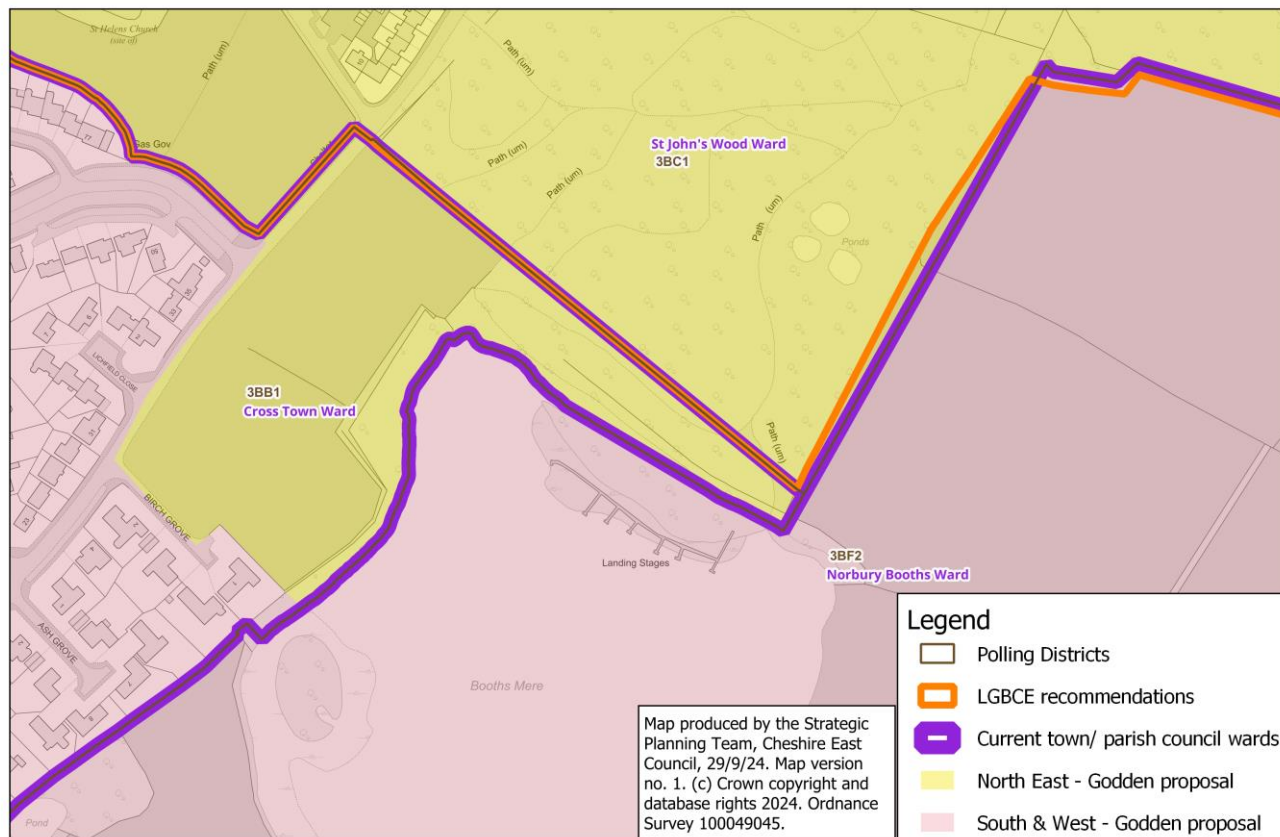
Warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, as compared to Joe Godden's (Feb 2024) proposal: close-up of the Branden Drive area of LGBCE's proposed Knutsford North East ward



Map 19: Knutsford – Alternative proposals – Birch Grove/ LPS 38 area

In this map, the Commission's recommended Borough wards are shown by orange lines and the Tatton Labour Party (Joe Godden) proposals by the shaded (yellow and pink) areas. The undeveloped area of 3BC1 in view is largely part of Local Plan site LPS 38. Including the easternmost area of the Cross Town (Town Council) ward in the proposed Knutsford South & West Borough ward (the undeveloped area of 3BB1 northeast of Birch Grove) is one of the Commission's two modifications to the Tatton Labour Party proposal.

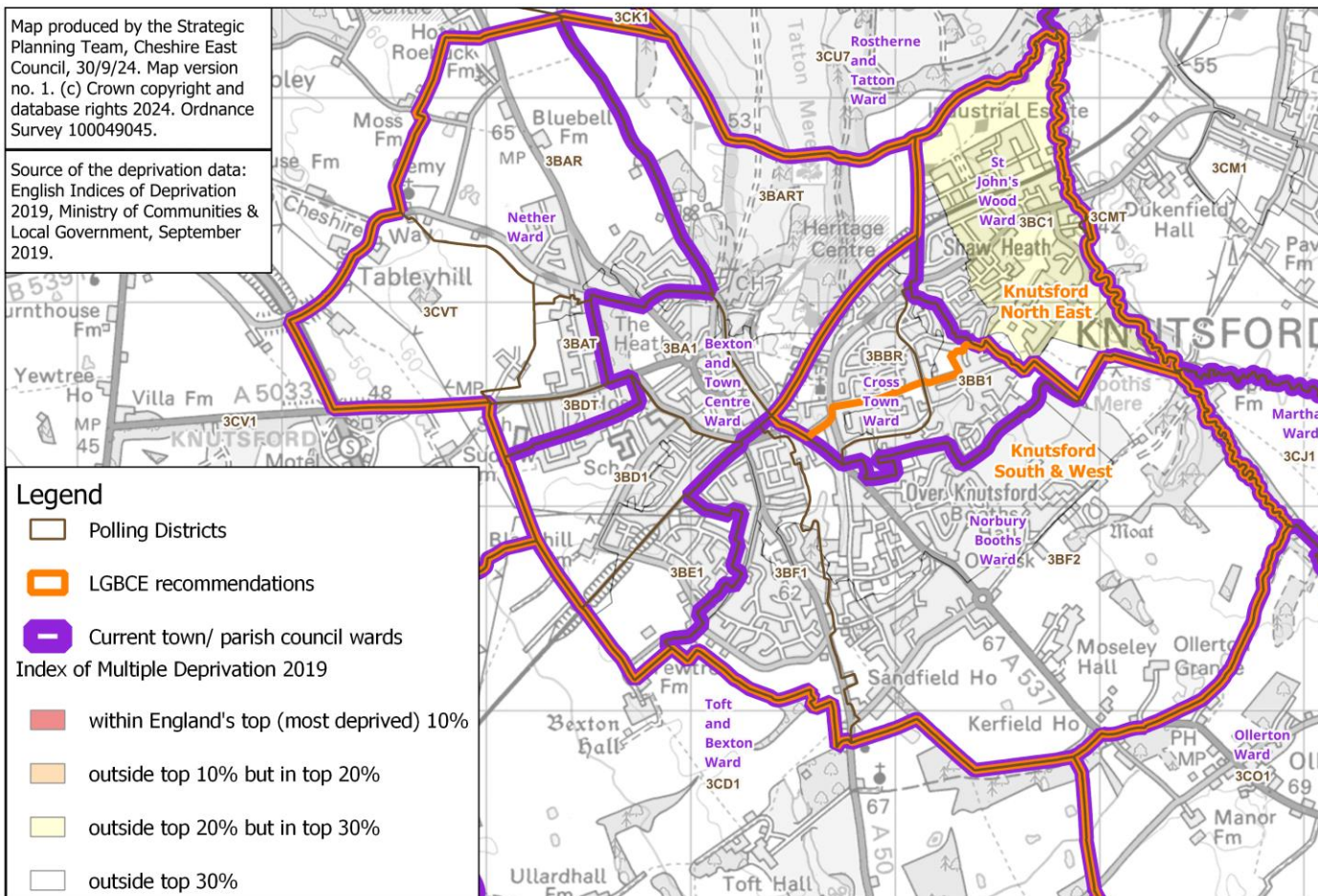
Warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, as compared to Joe Godden's (Feb 2024) proposal: close-up of the Longridge/ Local Plan site LPS 38 area of LGBCE's proposed Knutsford North East ward



Map 20: Knutsford – Deprivation

In this map, the Commission's recommended Borough wards are shown by orange lines and Knutsford's main area of deprivation (covering most of the St John's Wood parish ward) is shown in pale yellow shading.

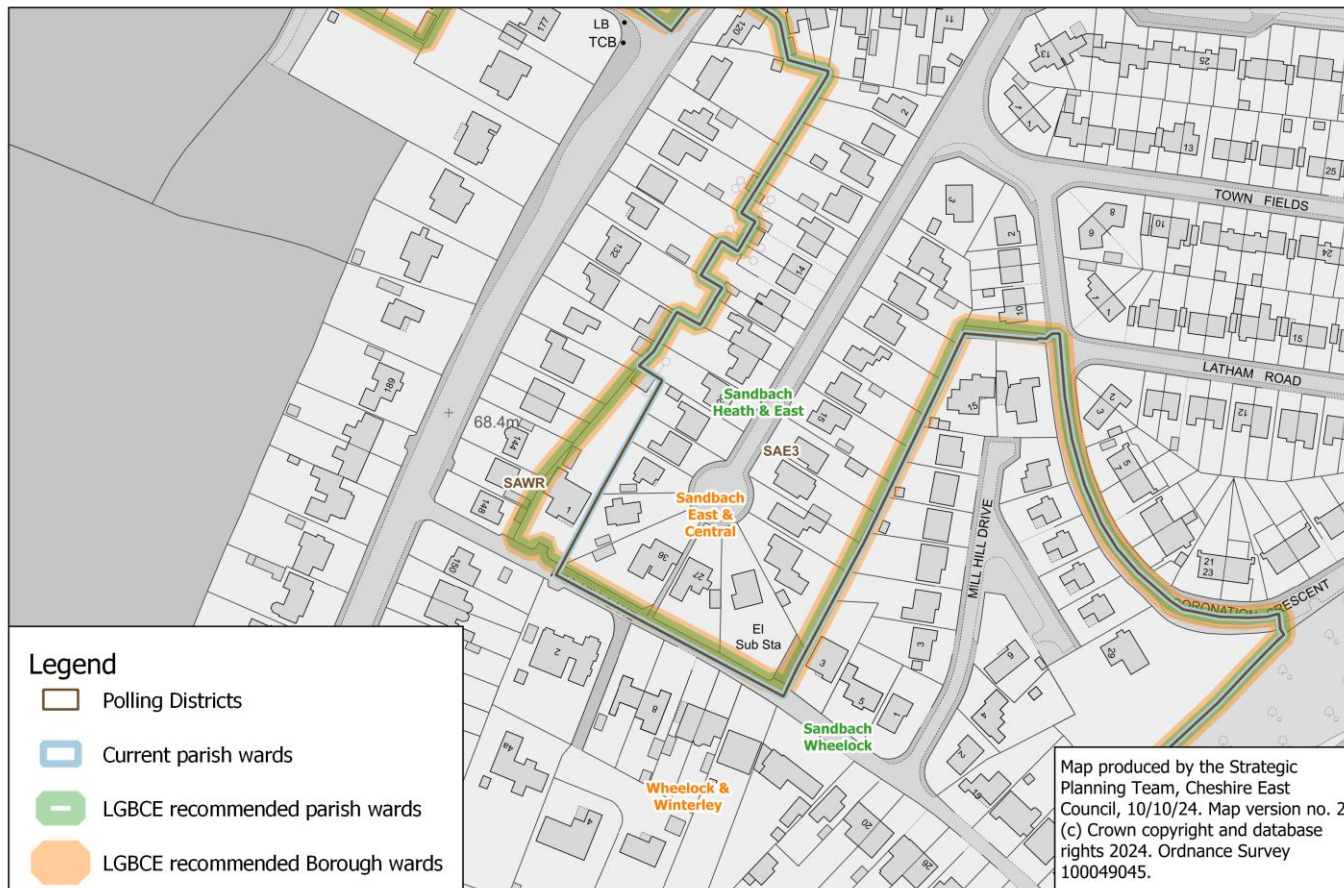
Warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations, with most deprived area shown



Map 21: Boundary anomalies - Sandbach – 1 Mill Hill Lane

As shown below, the Commission's recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries deviate from the existing parish ward and polling district lines, to place No. 1 Mill Hill Lane in a different Borough and parish ward to all those adjacent properties to which it has the most immediate pedestrian and vehicular access. This oversight arises from an inconsistency in the Council's own electoral boundary data, which the Review should be able to rectify.

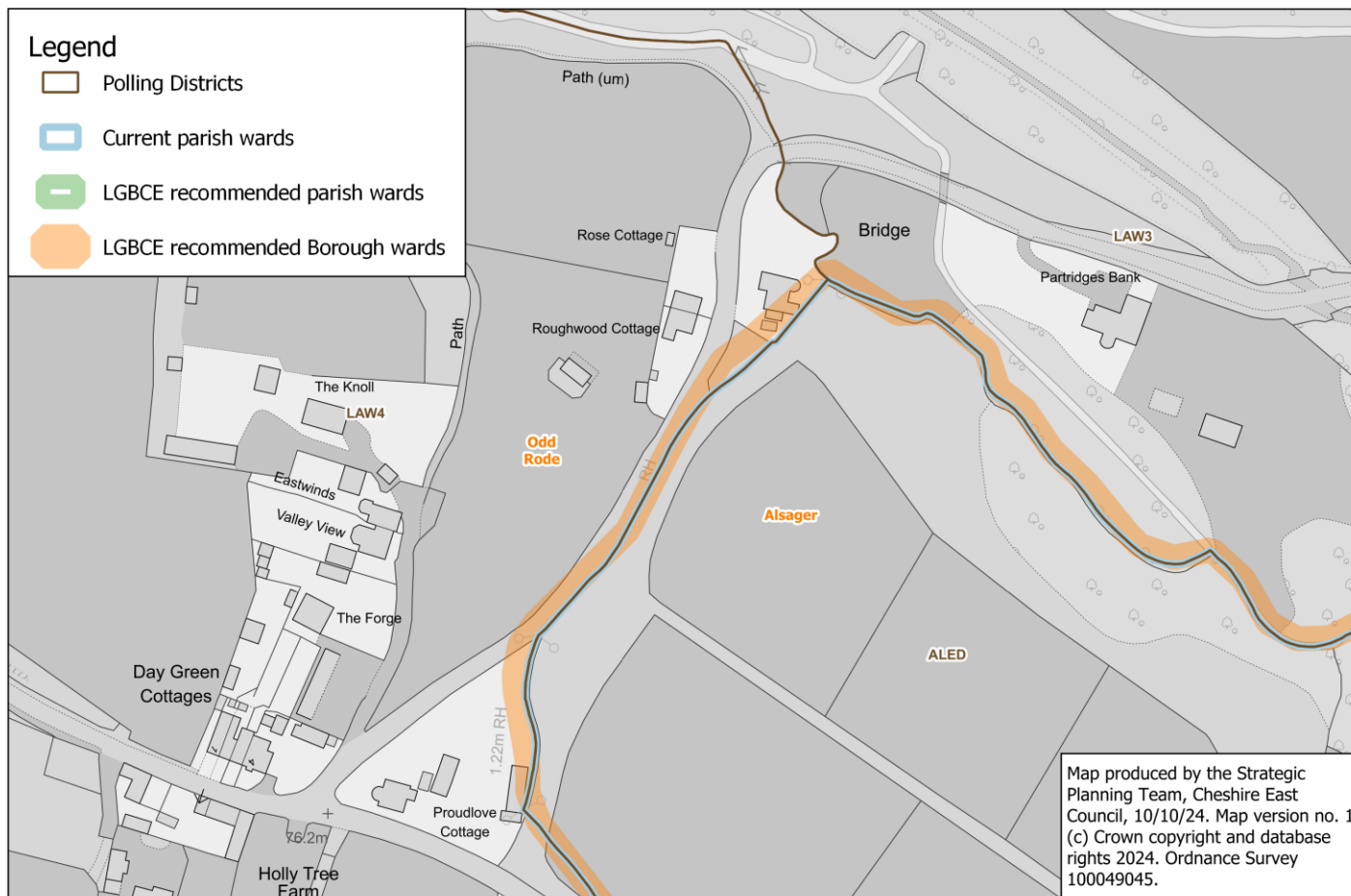
Parish warding for Sandbach under LGBCE draft recommendations: close-up of divergence of LGBCE boundary from current Town Council ward boundaries, placing 1 Mill Hill Lane in different Borough and parish wards to the rest of that street.



Map 22: Boundary anomalies – Alsager/ Odd Rode – ‘Roughwood’

The Commission’s Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough ward boundary line (the orange line below) should align with the existing polling district and parish ward boundaries (brown and blue lines) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting ‘Roughwood’ (the property opposite Rose Cottage/ Roughwood Cottage).

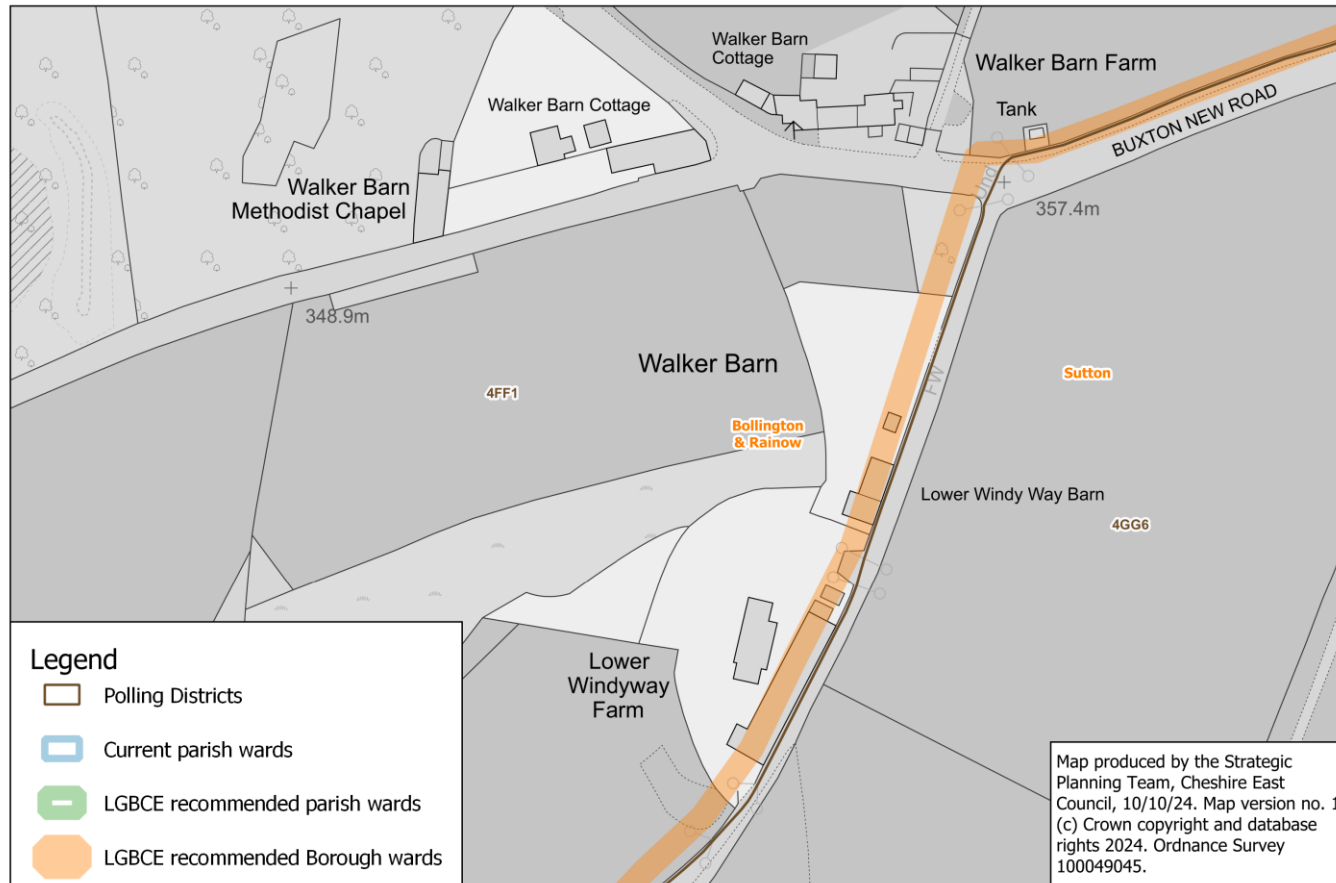
Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward boundary from current electoral boundary: impact on ‘Roughwood’, Roughwood Hollow, Hassall parish



Map 23: Boundary anomalies – Bollington & Rainow/ Sutton – Lower Windyway Farm/ Barn

The Commission's Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough ward boundary line (the orange line below) should align with the existing polling district boundary (the brown line) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting Lower Windyway Farm and Lower Windy Way Barn.

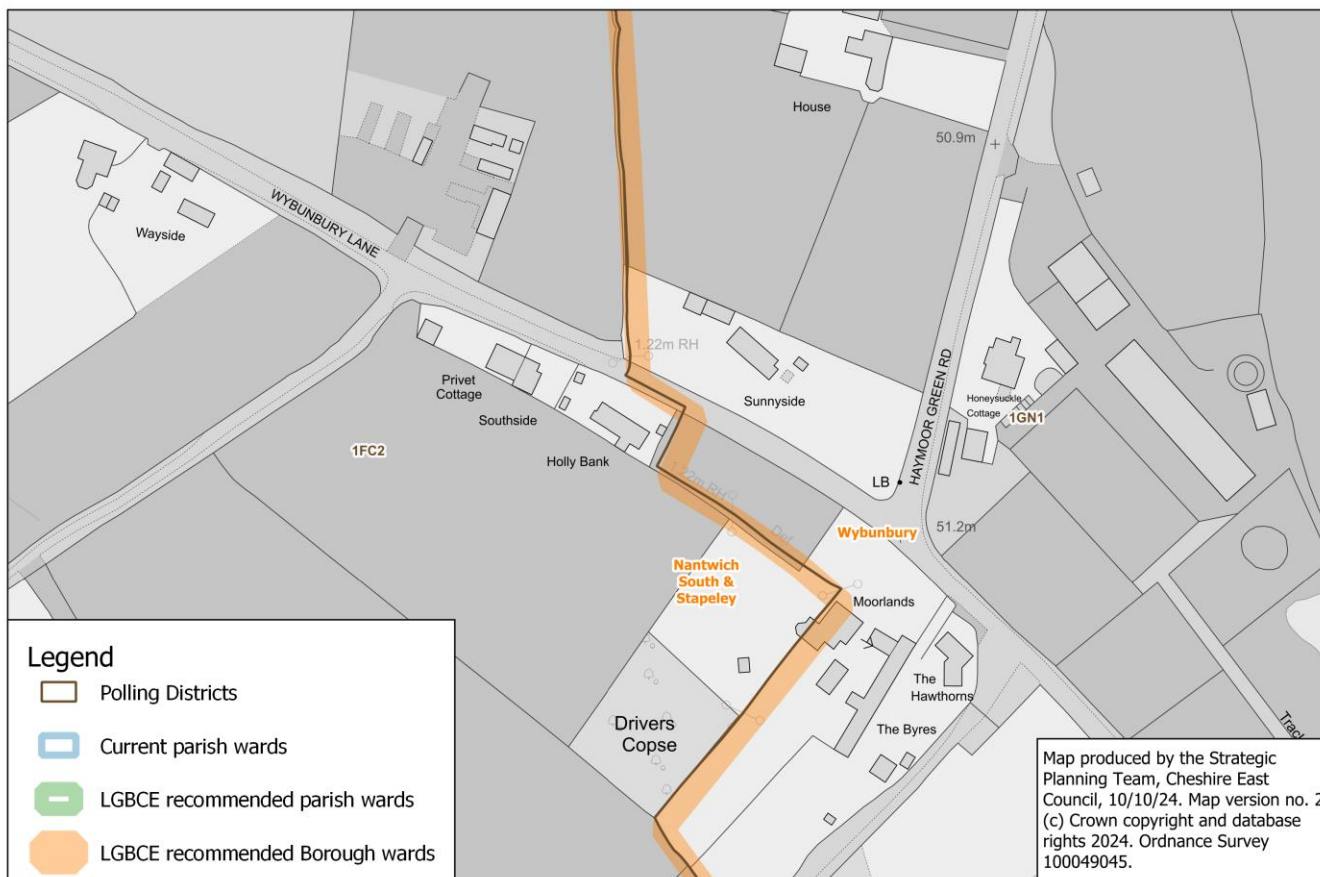
Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward and parish ward boundaries from current electoral boundaries: impact on Lower Windy Way Barn and Lower Windyway Farm in Rainow parish



Map 24: Boundary anomalies – Nantwich South & Stapeley/ Wybunbury – ‘Moorlands’

The Commission’s Draft Recommendations report suggests its recommended Borough ward boundary line (the orange line below) should align with the existing polling district boundary (the brown line) in this location. However, they diverge, affecting the property ‘Moorlands’.

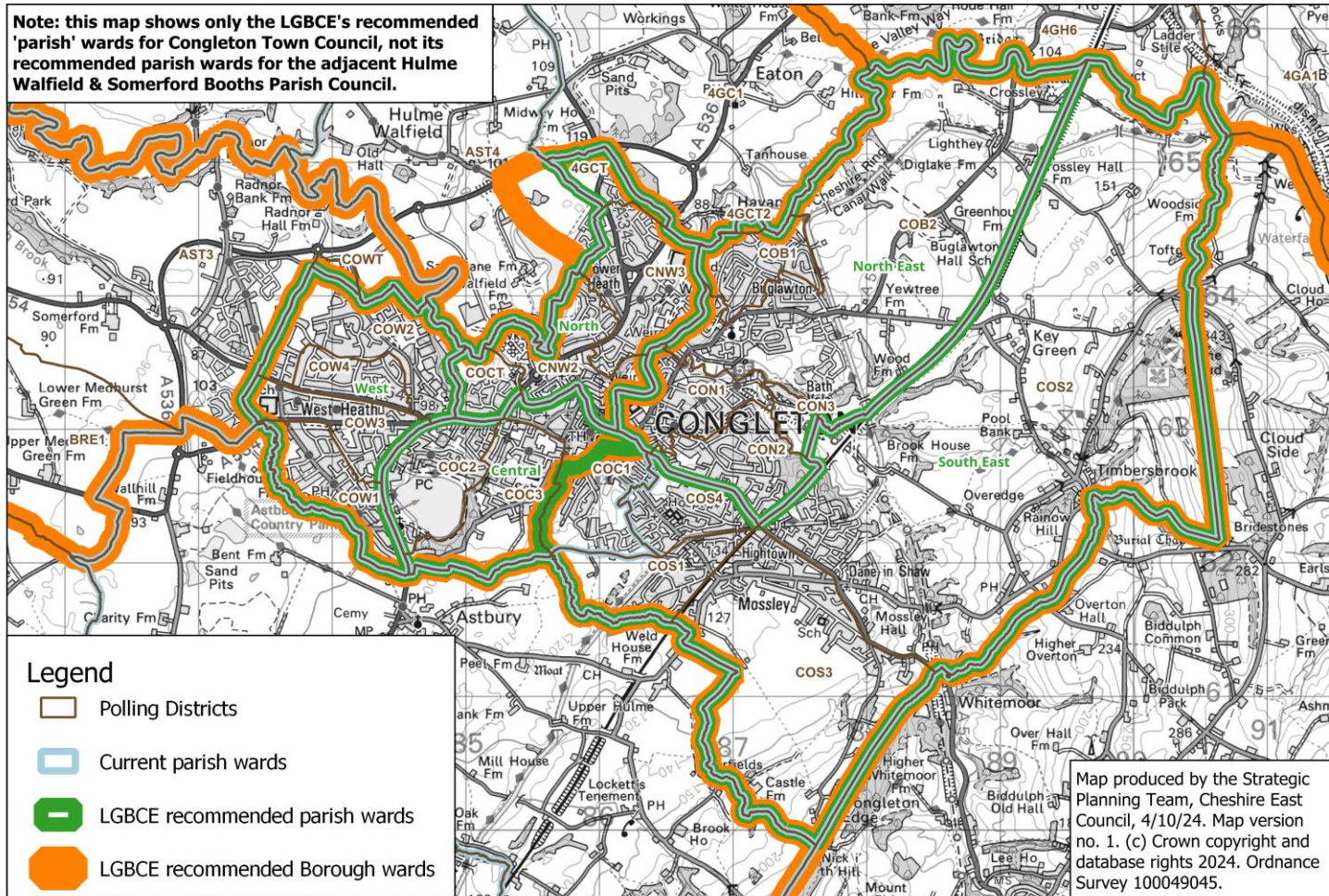
Divergence of LGBCE recommended Borough ward boundary from current electoral boundary: impact on ‘Moorlands’, Wybunbury Lane, Wybunbury parish



Map 25: Draft Recommendations parish warding - Congleton

The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

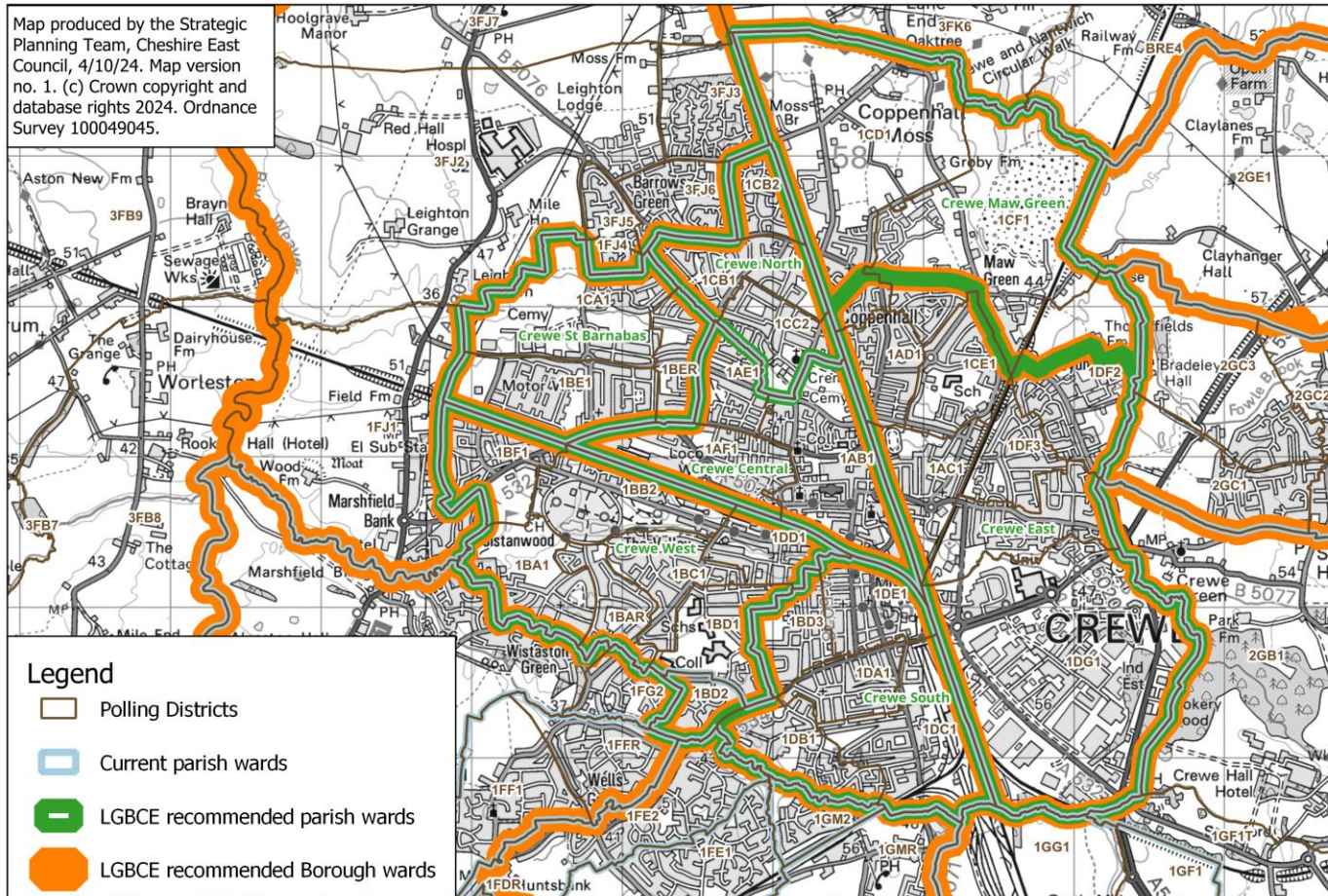
Parish (Town Council) warding for Congleton under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 26: Draft Recommendations parish warding - Crewe

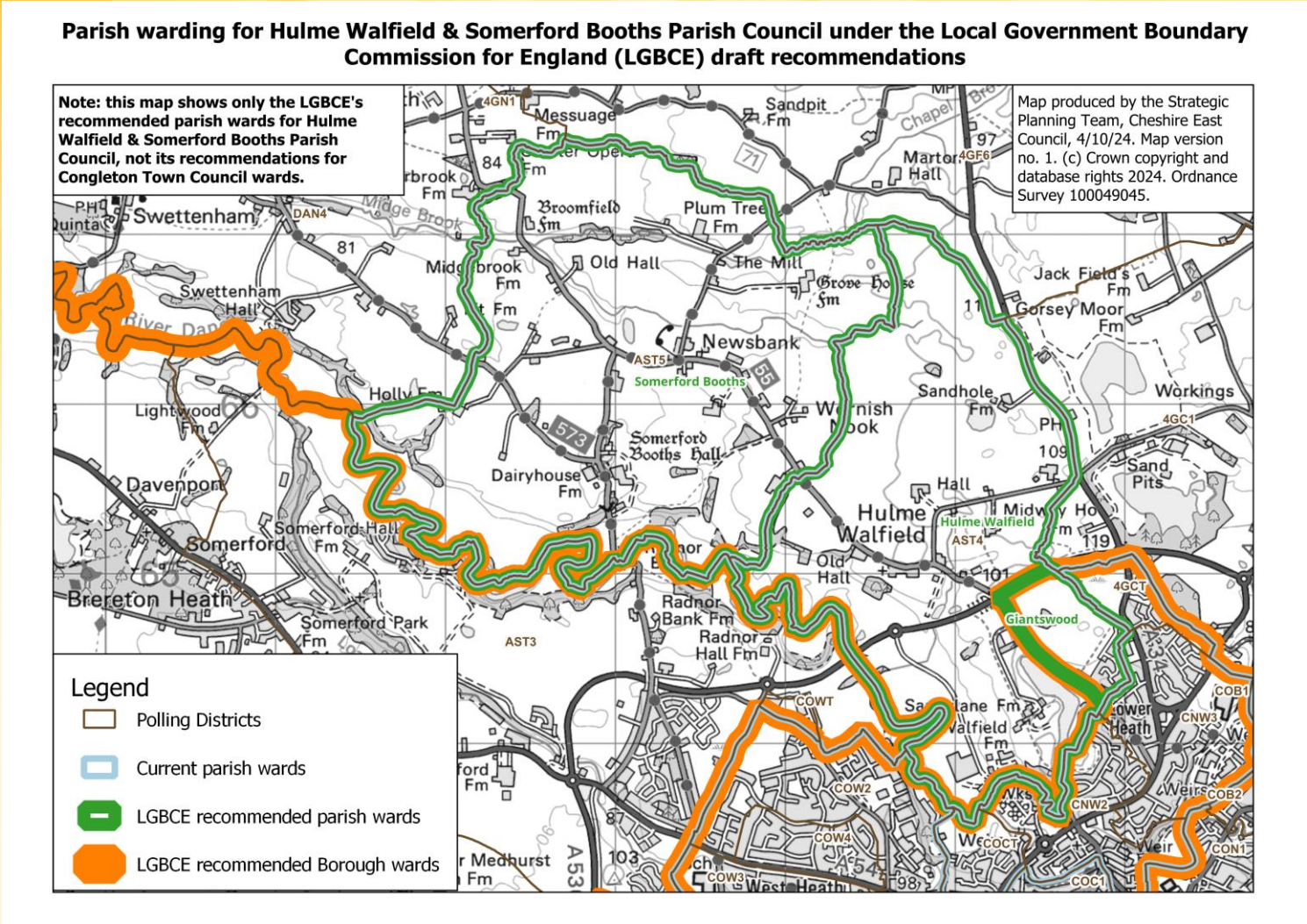
The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

Parish warding for Crewe under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 27: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Hulme Walfield & Somerford Booths

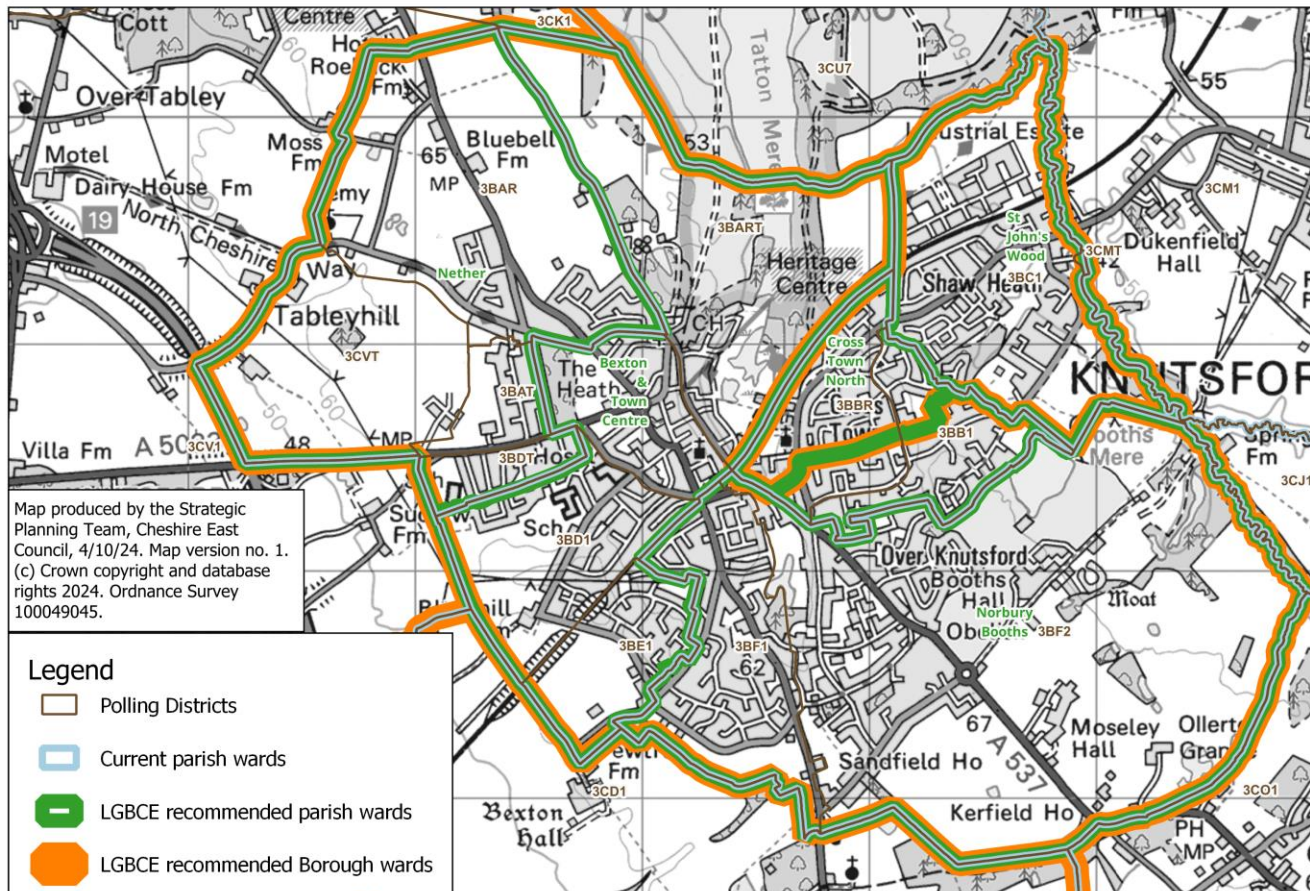
The map below shows the Commission’s Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.



Map 28: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Knutsford

The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

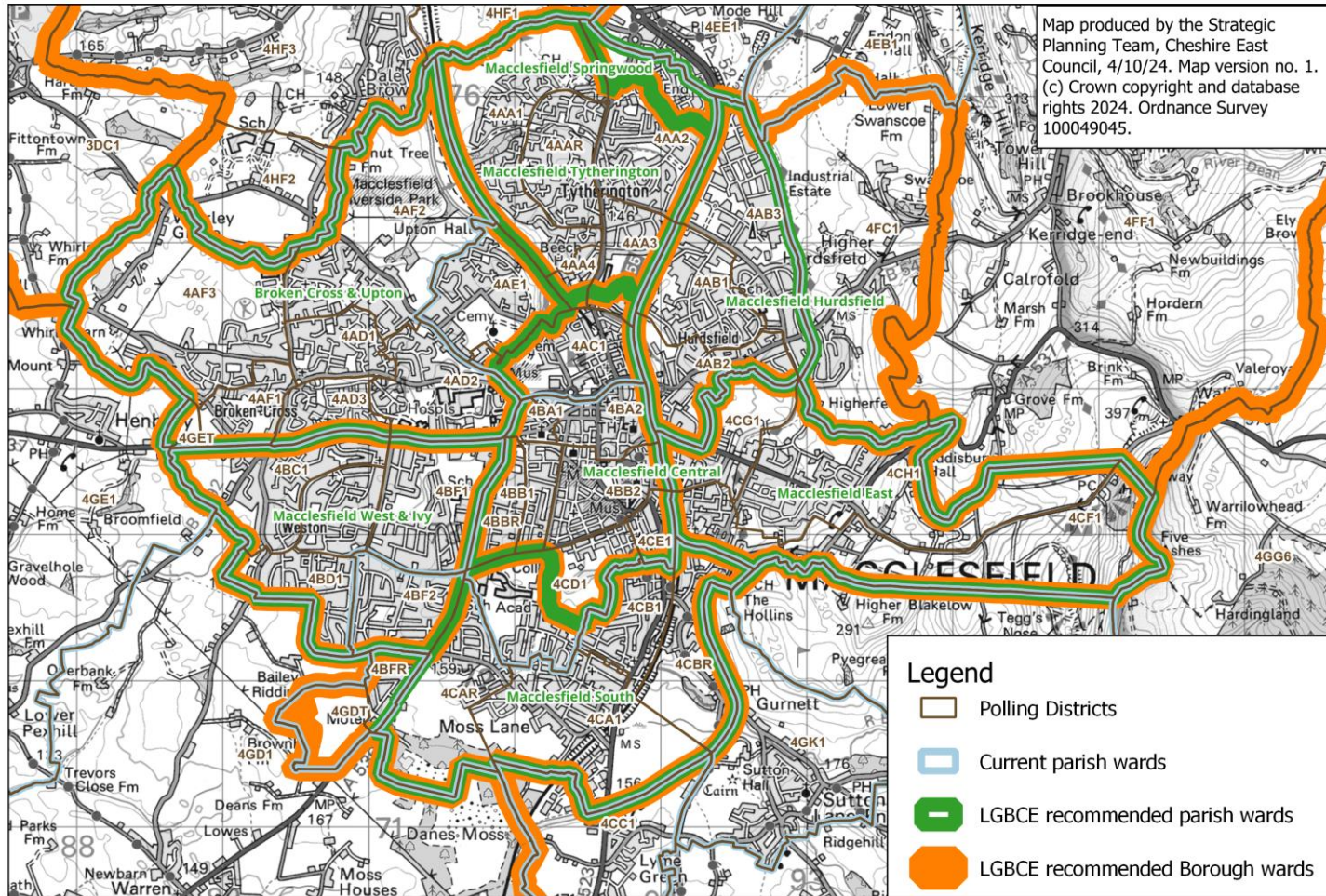
Parish warding for Knutsford under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 29: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Macclesfield

The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

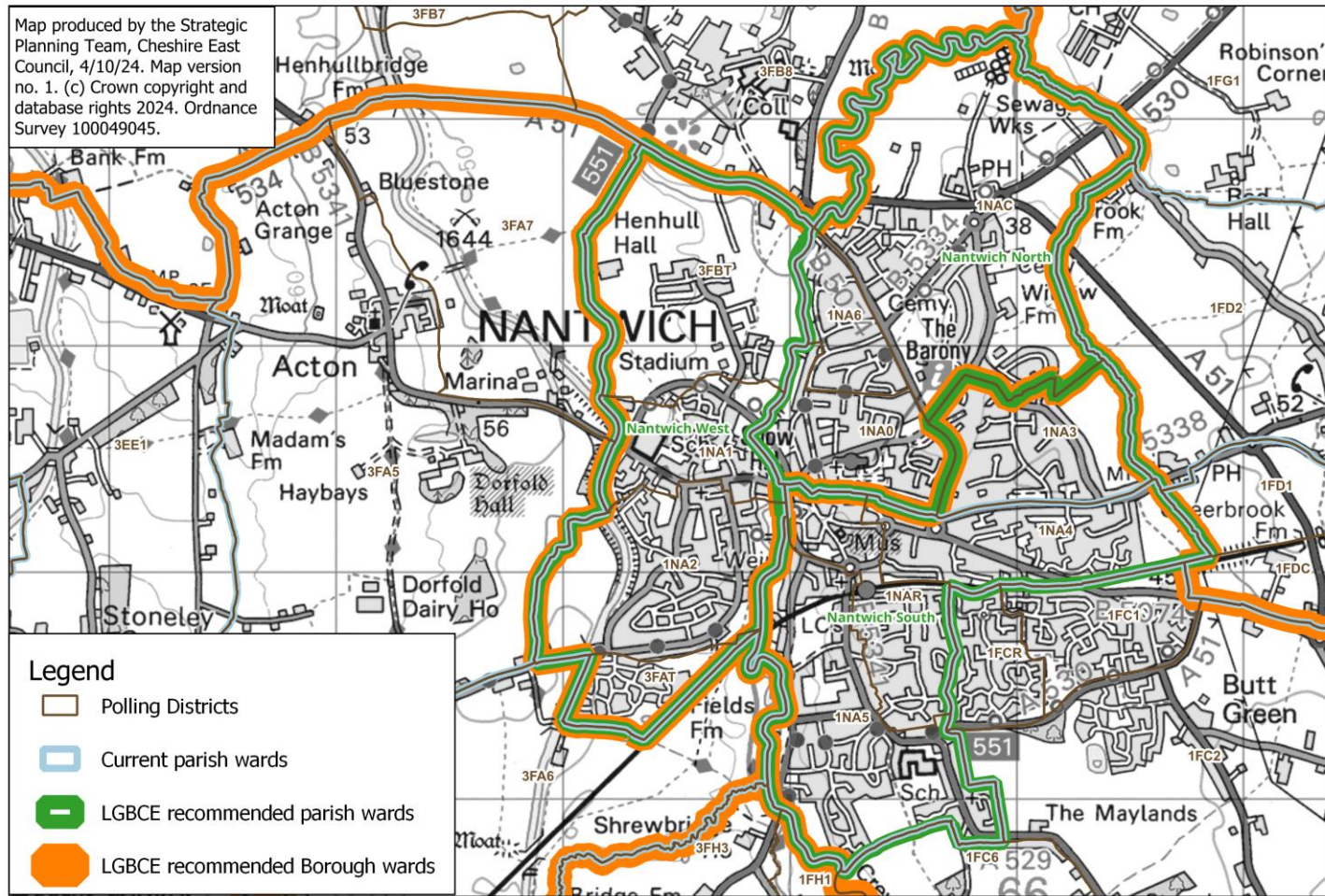
Parish warding for Macclesfield under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 30: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Nantwich

The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

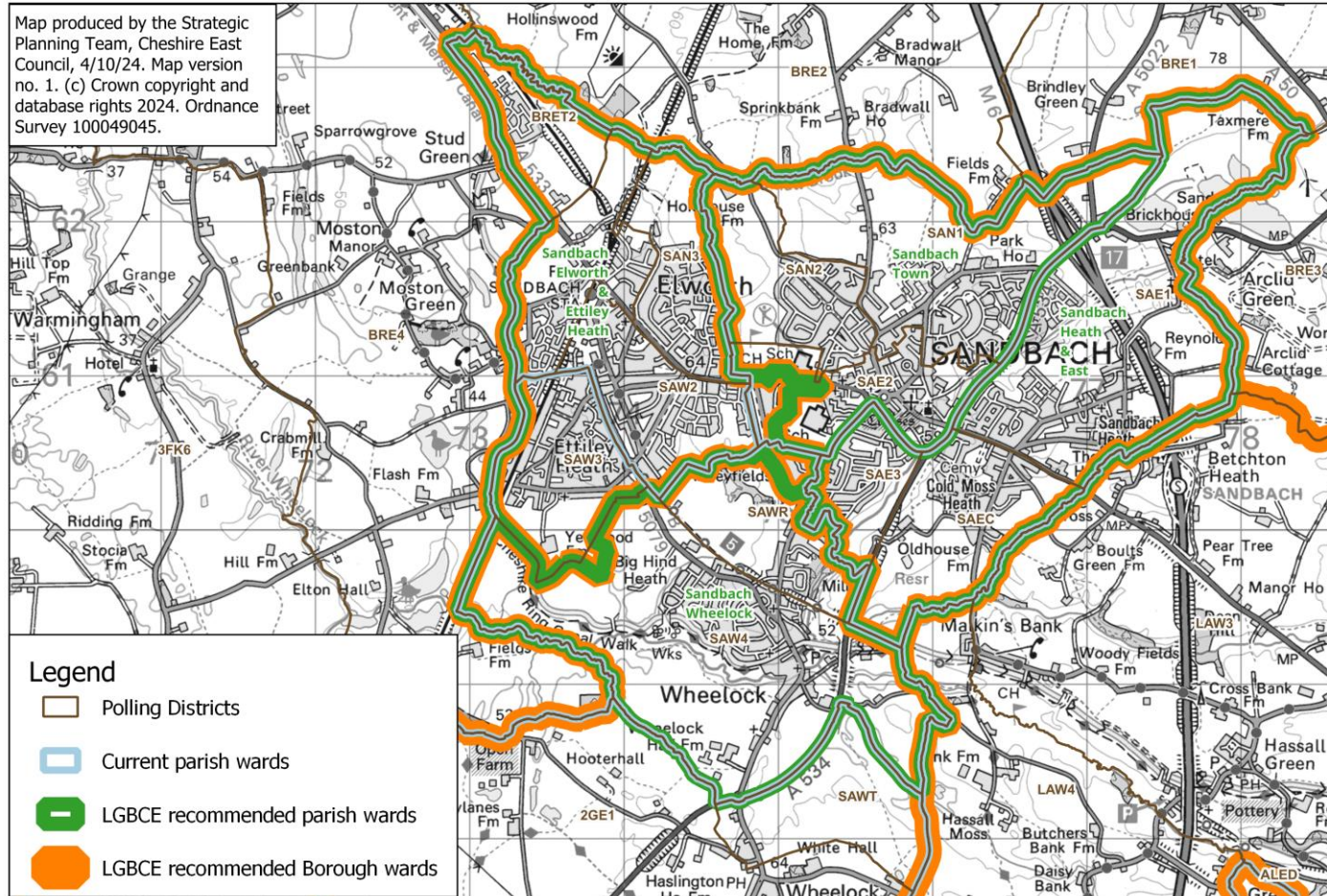
Parish warding for Nantwich under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 31: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Sandbach

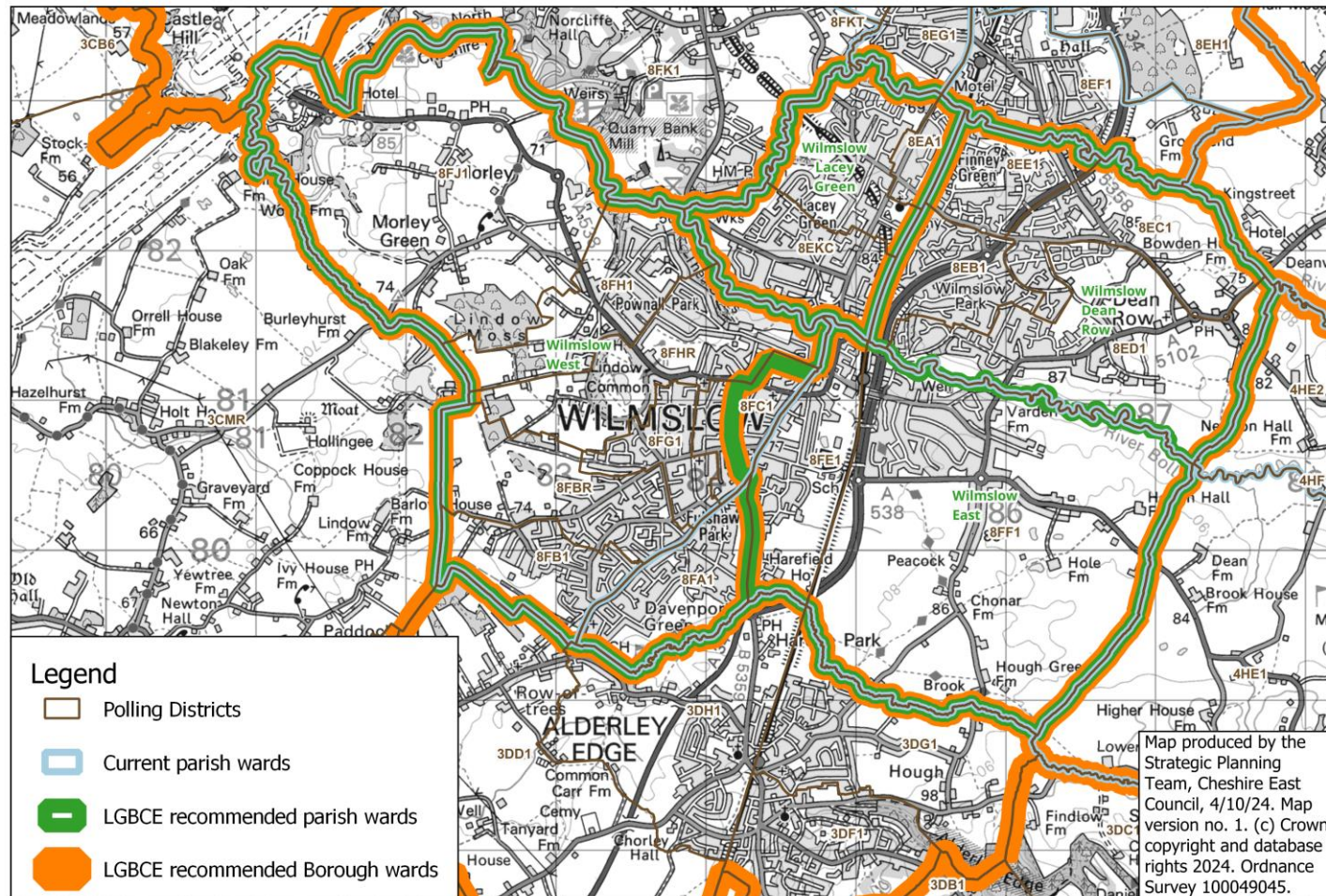
The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.

Parish warding for Sandbach under the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) draft recommendations



Map 32: Draft Recommendations parish warding – Wilmslow

The map below shows the Commission's Draft Recommendations parish ward boundaries (the dark green lines), with its recommended Borough wards (orange) and current parish wards (pale blue) also displayed.



**Electoral and Polling District Review
Sub-Committee****6 November 2024****Cheshire East Borough Polling District
Review**

**Report of: Janet Witkowski, Acting Director of Governance and
Compliance, and Monitoring Officer****Report Reference No: EPDR/02/24-25****Wards: All Cheshire East Wards****Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report informs the Sub-Committee of the need for the Council to conduct a review of its polling districts and seeks authority for a consultation to take place in respect of the proposals which are set out in this report.
- 2 In conducting a polling district review, the Council will be fulfilling its Corporate Plan objective, to be an “open and enabling organisation” by providing strong community leadership and by working transparently with residents, businesses and partners, to deliver the Council’s ambitions within the Borough.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Council is obliged by statute to undertake a polling district review within the Borough, by the beginning of 2025. Authority is sought from the Sub-Committee to commence the review by undertaking a consultation, and to take any other associated actions. A report will then be brought back to the Sub-Committee upon the outcome of the consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the commencement of a Polling District Review for the Cheshire East Borough.
2. Authorise Officers to undertake a consultation upon proposals for the Council's Polling Districts, as set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of this report, and to take any other associated actions: and
3. Agree that a report will be brought back to the Sub-Committee in due course which will provide details of the consultation responses, together with any other associated matters.

Background

- 4 Section 18 C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to undertake a review of polling districts and polling places. This review must take place by the beginning of 2025. However, the legislation also provides for a further such review to be undertaken after this deadline, should the need to do so, arise.
- 5 On 13 June 2024, the Corporate Policy Committee empowered the Electoral and Polling District Review Sub-Committee to formally determine all matters relating to the Cheshire East Council Polling District Review, without any further reference to the Corporate Policy Committee.
- 6 The Electoral Commission's guidance sets out the detailed requirements of polling district reviews:

[The legislative requirements of a polling place review | Electoral Commission](#)

- 7 The key points are set out below.
- 8 The length of the review process is not prescribed, provided all the steps required by the legislation can be undertaken within it. However, the time allowed for consultation should be sufficient to enable interested persons and groups to read and understand the proposals, gather comments and respond with any alternative arrangements that they may wish to submit.
- 9 When carrying out the review, local authorities must:
 - Publish a notice of the holding of a review.
 - Consult the (Acting) Returning Officer (“(A) RO”) for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area.
 - Publish all representations made by an (A) RO within 30 days of receipt by posting a copy of them at the local authority's office and in at least one

conspicuous place in their area and by placing a copy on the authority's website.

- Seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (A) RO(s).

10 On completion of a review, the local authority must give reasons for its decisions and publish:

- All correspondence sent to an (A) RO in connection with the review.
- All correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.
- All representations made by any person in connection with the review.
- The minutes of any meeting held by the council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review.
- Details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review.
- Details of the places where the results of the review have been published.

11 Whilst the Council is required by statute to conduct a polling district review by the beginning of 2025, the Boundary Commission's current review of Cheshire East Council's electoral arrangements puts the Council in a unique and difficult position. The Commission's review is ongoing and it has only very recently published its draft recommendations for the Council's electoral arrangements. These draft recommendations will be subject to consultation until December 2024, after which the Commission will consider the details of consultation responses. The Commission expects to have done this and to have published its final recommendations by 13 May 2025, following which the Parliamentary process commences, with the final Order being made in the summer of 2025.

12 In short, the obligation upon the Council to undertake its polling district review by the beginning of 2025 is incompatible with the timetable for the Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements, because the latter will fundamentally affect the Council's polling arrangements. The Council's ward boundaries will change, with consequent implications for polling districts.

13 Only when the final outcome of the Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements is known, will the Council will be in a position to make an informed judgement upon all of its polling district matters and undertake a full review upon its proposals.

14 For this reason, and given that the Council is not currently aware of any specific polling district issues which are significant enough to justify polling district changes in the context of the ongoing electoral review by the Commission, it is proposed that the Sub-Committee should determine that the Council consults on

the basis that its current preferred option is for no change to the Council's existing polling districts but notwithstanding this provisional view, it welcomes and will give consideration to submissions from individuals, electors, organisations and partner bodies on any polling district matters considered to be in need of review and, in particular, suggestions for alternative polling arrangements.

- 15 Should this be an acceptable course of action to the Sub-Committee, the Sub-Committee would need to make a resolution to this effect, and this would be the subject of the required consultation.

Consultation and Engagement

- 16 As required by legislation, and as referred-to in the Electoral Commission guidance consultation will take place.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 To ensure that the Council fulfils its obligation to comply with legislation, but acknowledging that a full review of polling district matters will take place once the outcome of the Boundary Commission's review of the Council's electoral arrangements is known.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	The Council would not be compliant with legislation.	The Council could be open to legal challenge. This could be damaging to the Council's reputation.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 18 In addition to the legal requirements of the Review placed on the Council detailed in paragraph 9 above, Schedule A1 of Representation of the People Act 1983 makes it clear that the Acting Returning Officer must make representations which include information as to the location of polling stations whether existing or proposed and that any elector in a constituency situated in whole or in part in the authority's area may make representations on the Review as a whole.
- 19 Whilst the nature of the consultation is prescribed by the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must nevertheless conduct its consultation in accordance with the principles of consultation set out in *R v. Brent London Borough Council, ex parte Gunning* (1985) 84 LGR 168 at 169 (commonly referred to as 'Gunning Principles'). Specifically, (i) consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage; (ii) sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response; (iii) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and (iv) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 20 There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Policy

- 21 In undertaking the polling district review, the Council will be adhering to the following policy implications.

An open and enabling organisation

Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 22 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications, but the proposed consultation will give those who the authority believes have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability, the opportunity to make submissions for further consideration.

Human Resources

- 23 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

- 24 There are no direct risk management issues associated with the recommendations of this report.

Rural Communities

- 25 There are no direct implications for rural communities but the proposed full review of polling districts will consider issues which are raised, during the consultation, which are a concern to individuals in rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 26 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

Public Health

- 27 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

- 28 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Brian Reed Head of Democratic Services and Governance Brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	
Background Papers:	None which are not contained within the main body of this report.