

Local Government Boundary Review – warding pattern submission

Purpose

- 1.1 In June 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) informed Derby City Council that an electoral review would be undertaken. The Commission has a legal duty to complete reviews of local authority areas from time to time, with the previous review of the council's area having taken place in 2001.
- 1.2 Council made a submission to the LGBCE in September 2021 in relation to the total number of councillors required to discharge the council's functions and represent residents effectively. The LGBCE has subsequently determined that Derby City Council should continue to be represented by 51 councillors.
- 1.3 The next stage of the review is to establish a warding pattern for council's area. The Commission will determine warding patterns based on the following statutory criteria:
 - Delivering electoral equality for local voters
 - Protecting the interests and identities of local communities; and
 - Ensuring effective and convenient local government
- 1.4 The LGBCE have been undertaking a public consultation which runs from 26 October 2021 to 29 March 2022. The Council have been invited to submit a response to the consultation, alongside other local stakeholders. Council officers have worked closely with local councillors to develop a warding pattern that meets the three criteria.
- 1.5 The proposed warding pattern for inclusion in the council's submission to the LGBCE's consultation is attached at Appendix 1. This report details the methodology and key considerations for developing the proposal.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the draft warding pattern submission attached at Appendix 1 for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 2.2 To agree that the Council favours a uniform warding pattern, comprising of seventeen wards, containing three councillors per ward, and to request that the LGBCE considers the arguments presented at paragraph 4.18 in developing its recommendations.
- 2.3 To request that the LGBCE considers the arguments in favour of respecting Parliamentary boundaries, as detailed at paragraphs 4.20 to 4.23

Reasons

- 3.1 To ensure the views of Council are taken into consideration by the LGBCE in determining its recommendations for a warding pattern for Derby.
- 3.2 The Council Constitution requires that matters relating to the variation of local government electoral areas and representation are approved by Council.

Supporting information

Methodology – mapping Derby's electorate

- 4.1 The Council has previously submitted to the LGBCE data on the total electorate in Derby in 2021 and the projected electorate in 2027 using population estimates supplied by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In both cases, there are several wards where the total electorate is outside of the ten per cent variance recommended by the Commission. The data supplied to the Commission has been published on the LGBCE's consultation website for Derby and is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.2 To begin the development of a proposed warding pattern, officers within the council's Electoral Services and Information Software Support teams have modelled Derby's current and forecast electorate to a Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 4.3 The aim of this project was to create a dynamic forecasting tool which allows the user to define any shape in the GIS and instantly understand through dynamic themes and labelling several facts about the shape. These include:
 - The number of 2021 electors in the shape
 - The projected number of 2027 electors in the shape
 - Whether the shape is within the LGBCE's accepted tolerance
 - What the area represents in terms of number of elected members, based on 3743 electors per councillor.
- 4.4 Throughout 2021, work had been undertaken to fully match the Electoral Register with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). This work enabled data to be exported that could be represented as address point items on a map, each with the number of electors at that location. This data layer represents 99.8% of the electors in the register and is the best representation of elector distribution across the city that could be created.
- 4.5 The model also accounts for projected housing growth in Derby to 2027. Colleagues in Planning were able to provide a list of 27 development sites and the projected number of dwellings, along with the spatial extent of each development. This adds a further 6,717 dwellings that would affect the shape and distribution of electors across the city. This number of dwellings could easily account for the projected increase in electorate.
- 4.6 The premise for a spatial model for 2027 is that the general distribution of electors would not be significantly different from the 2021 model. Therefore, the 2027 electors' layer is made up of the number of electors in 2021, plus the projected developments.

- 4.7 At the time of the review, some developments were part constructed and populated. To account for this, a multiplier was applied based on the projected number of dwellings, that reflected the distribution of electors in the 2021 data (which mirrors life in the city, and includes over and under-occupied homes, as well as empty properties).

4.8 **Figure A: Example of spatial modelling of electors**



In Figure A the size of the point items reflects the number of electors at that location.

The purple shapes are two of the developments: the shape on the right of the diagram is an entirely unbuilt development and the shape on the left is partially built.

The two large point items are the applied adjustments to take account of the developments. Where the point on the right represents the full 365 electors expected in 2027 for that area; and the point on the left represents 416 electors added to the electors already on the map to make up the full site value.

The green rectangle is an example of sampling of the 2021 data to establish appropriate multipliers.

- 4.9 A full summary of the developments and the projected number of electors contained within them can be found at Appendix 3.

Methodology – developing a proposal

- 4.10 Once the current and forecast electorate had been mapped to GIS, a data layer was added that highlighted constraints presented by transport infrastructure, watercourses

and other natural boundaries. On this basis, officers were then able to start developing a draft warding pattern.

- 4.11 As a starting point, a warding pattern was developed based solely on the criteria for electoral equality. Whilst this pattern brought all wards within a 10 per cent variance, it presented several anomalies that did not reflect community interests and identities. The warding pattern was then refined so that an initial proposal could be presented to councillors and other stakeholders for consultation.
- 4.12 At a series of workshops held between December 2021 and February 2022, councillors have been supported using GIS tools to further develop the proposed warding pattern to reflect the three statutory criteria. The feedback provided by councillors in relation to community identity is detailed at paragraphs 4.24 to 4.41 of the report.
- 4.13 Several variations of the warding pattern attached at Appendix 1 have been shared with councillors via an online portal, which allows the proposal to be overlaid with the Council's current warding pattern and other data layers developed within GIS.
- 4.14 Officers have been able to incorporate many recommendations provided by councillors at the workshops into the proposal attached at Appendix 1.

In circumstances where there was no clear agreement between neighbouring wards over where a boundary should be located, officers have included the proposal that best meets the three statutory criteria. Whilst electoral equality can be objectively assessed, considerations for determining community identity have included factors such as natural boundaries, local transport links and school catchment areas.

- 4.15 The proposal presented at Appendix 1 brings all but one ward within a ten per cent variance and to the greatest extent possible respects community interests and identities, whilst ensuring effective and convenient local government.

Impact of whole Council elections

- 4.16 The Council voted to adopt whole council elections on 19 January 2022, with effect from May 2023. In circumstances where Council's elect by thirds, the LGBCE will only recommend a uniform warding pattern. However, in areas with whole council elections the Commission may recommend wards of different sizes, to better reflect community identities.
- 4.17 As part of the consultation with councillors, officers developed an indicative warding pattern comprising of one, two and three member wards. However, the feedback received as part of the consultation was that councillors favoured a uniform warding pattern of seventeen, three member wards.
- 4.18 Arguments cited in favour of retaining three member wards have included:
- Three member wards contribute towards effective and convenient local government by ensuring a greater level of representation for residents.
 - Residents benefit from greater knowledge and expertise amongst councillors, whilst allowing new councillors to learn from more experienced counterparts.

- Where a ward councillor holds a position of special responsibility (for example, as the Leader, Mayor or Cabinet Member), ward duties can be shared with other councillors.
- Three member wards encourage a more diverse range of individuals to seek election, as those in employment or with caring responsibilities can share their duties with others.

Councillors also cited several arguments against single member wards:

- If a councillor is unwell or otherwise unavailable, residents are left without effective representation for an indefinite period.
- Councillors may feel unwilling or unable to take time away from their duties, leading to concerns around wellbeing, stress and anxiety.
- Councillors in single member wards do not have recourse to a colleague when dealing with particularly complex, challenging or sensitive local issues.
- Single member wards give one individual a disproportionate level of influence over local decision making within the Council.

4.19 The proposal at Appendix 1 has therefore been developed with a presumption in favour of three member wards as Derby City Council's preferred option.

Parliamentary boundaries

4.20 Whilst the Boundary Commission for England will take account of local government boundaries when making its recommendations on Parliamentary boundaries, the LGBCE is under no obligation to reflect those boundaries in forming its recommendations on the council's warding pattern.

4.21 The current national review of Parliamentary constituencies is due to conclude in July 2023, but will be based on local government boundaries as they were at March 2020. Therefore, the LGBCE may recommend a warding pattern that is substantially different to Parliamentary boundaries that will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

4.22 The proposal at Appendix 1 respects the Parliamentary boundary between Derby North and Derby South to a significant extent, except for one substantial area in the city centre and a smaller area on the boundary of Derwent and Oakwood wards, which would form their own polling districts. Whilst recognising that the LGBCE are under no obligation to do so, recommendation 2.3 urges the Commission to consider respecting existing Parliamentary boundaries on the basis that doing so meets the objective for effective and convenient local government.

4.23 Substantially departing from Parliamentary boundaries may lead to the following:

- Voter confusion arising from electors being in the same ward, but different Parliamentary constituencies.
- Added complexity and risk in the administration of elections, particularly in relation to the count and postal vote processing.
- Added costs in the administration of elections owing to the requirement for polling districts containing very few electors to have their own Polling Station and Presiding Officer.

Key considerations by area

- 4.24 For the purposes of developing the proposal, the city was divided into four quarters. Separate workshops were held with councillors from the existing wards contained within each quarter, with further sessions arranged with individual councillors or groups of councillors on request. The feedback from those sessions and the key considerations in determining a warding pattern for the area are detailed below.

North-East

- 4.25 **Allestree** - no changes are proposed to the boundary of Allestree ward and the community in that area is well defined. No substantial development is planned in the ward by 2027, and it is expected to retain good electoral equality. The A38 is a major highway and acts to separate communities in the Darley Abbey and the Broadway areas from the rest of Allestree.
- 4.26 **Darley** - it is proposed to include the area in the city centre bounded by the inner ring road to the north, and Friar Gate, Wardwick. Victoria Street and Albert Street to the south in Darley ward. The entire area within the inner ring road is currently part of Arboretum ward, but the northern part has stronger community ties with the existing Darley ward. This change also helps achieve greater electoral equality in Arboretum and Darley wards.

Consideration was given to including the Little Chester area in Derwent ward, but this was ruled out due to the barrier created by the railway line which has limited crossing points. Whilst the river also creates a barrier it was felt that the area has better transport links with Darley ward, including the northern part of the city centre.

- 4.27 **Mackworth** – A section of the boundary between Mackworth and Abbey wards has been adjusted to follow the line of a former railway. A small number of dwellings on the south side of Slack Lane that are currently part of Abbey ward will be brought into Mackworth ward, reflecting the local community there.

The boundary between Mackworth and Mickleover wards has been altered so that areas of open space to the east of Station Road are now included in Mackworth, to help ensure that any potential future development there would not take Mickleover further out of tolerance.

Consideration was given to placing either the Starflower Way development, the Onslow Road development, or both developments, in Mackworth Ward. These changes were not included in this proposal because of the community identity that exists in the established housing around Starflower Way, and due to the good transport links between the Onslow Road development and the rest of the community in Mickleover ward. These areas do not share community identity with communities in Mackworth.

- 4.28 **Mickleover** – Mickleover currently includes a substantial development to the west of Station Road around Starflower Way that includes some established housing with community links to Mickleover. Further development is expected to the east of Station Road near Onslow Road.

It is proposed that both areas remain in Mickleover ward as this will best reflect the identity of existing and future communities in both development areas, along with that of the existing housing on the northern end of Station Road.

It is forecast that Mickleover would be over tolerance for electoral equality by 2027 under this proposal, with a variance of 11%, but this was considered more desirable than creating divisions within communities. The boundary between Mickleover and Mackworth wards has been altered so that areas of open space to the east of Station Road are now included in Mackworth, to help ensure that any potential future development there would not take Mickleover further out of tolerance.

Consideration was given to placing either the Starflower Way development, the Onslow Road development, or both developments, in Mackworth Ward. These changes were not included in this proposal because of the community identity that exists in the established housing around Starflower Way, and due to the good transport links between the Onslow Road development and the rest of the community in Mickleover ward. These areas do not share community identity with communities in Mackworth.

Mickleover councillors indicated their preference to retain the Starflower Way development, but if necessary to place the Onslow Road development in Mackworth ward. This was discounted as the sole access to the development is likely to be from Station Road. The importance of Mickleover Sports Club to Mickleover residents was also highlighted by ward Councillors and this proposal would retain the club within the ward, which is situated at the northern end of Station Road.

No change is proposed to the boundary between Mickleover and Littleover wards. The area bounded by Uttoxeter Road, the A38 and the A516 includes a community that identifies strongly with Mickleover. Whilst the areas around Stanage Green and Girton Way share weaker ties with the rest of Mickleover ward it was considered that the A38 provided a significant boundary which should be retained.

North-West

- 4.29 **Derwent** - consideration was given to including the Little Chester area in Derwent ward, but this was ruled out due to the barrier created by the railway line from the north which has limited crossing points.

It is proposed to move the boundary between Derwent and Oakwood Wards to run along Hill Top A608. This would place a part of the new build estate and existing housing to the north-west of Hill Top that is currently in Oakwood into Derwent ward, helping to create a cohesive community by locating the whole development in the same ward.

This change means the ward and constituency boundaries are no longer coterminous and would necessitate the creation of a polling district for this area.

The part of Derwent Ward outside of the Breadsall Hilltop area forms a community with Chaddesden Ward. The current boundary between these wards was retained as this maintains acceptable electoral equality across the two wards.

- 4.30 **Oakwood** - it is proposed to move the boundary between Derwent and Oakwood Wards to run along Hill Top A608. This would place a part of the new build estate to the north-west of Hill Top that is currently in Oakwood into Derwent ward, helping to create a cohesive community by locating the whole development in the same ward.

This change means the ward and constituency boundaries are no longer coterminous and would necessitate the creation of a polling district for this area.

- 4.31 **Chaddesden** - the part of Derwent Ward outside of the Breadsall Hilltop area forms a community with Chaddesden Ward. The current boundary between these wards was retained as this provides for electoral equality across the two wards.

The community to the west of Acorn Way identifies with Chaddesden, so it was not considered possible to move the boundary with Spondon ward to the west.

- 4.32 **Spondon** - there are no changes proposed to the boundary of Spondon ward, despite the ward being close to being under-tolerance for electoral equality.

The community to the west of Acorn Way identifies with Chaddesden. This community is separated from Spondon by green space with the only transport link via Derby Road. A change to this part of the boundary was considered incompatible with the objective to reflect community interests and identity.

There is a significant natural barrier formed by the River Derwent and the surrounding flood plain to the south. The only transport link to Alvaston is via Raynesway (A5111) in the south-west of the ward which runs through a commercial and industrial area.

South-East

- 4.33 **Alvaston** - no changes are proposed to Alvaston ward and it is expected to remain within acceptable electoral equality tolerances with current boundaries. No substantial development is planned in the ward by 2027.

The ward covers a geographically large area due to areas of mostly commercial and industrial usage in the west and undeveloped flood plain to the north. The areas of housing in the Litchurch and Wilmorton areas are linked to the rest of the ward by the A6/A5194 London Road, a major route into the city and as such identify closely with Alvaston ward.

- 4.34 **Boulton** - the existing and future housing on the Boulton Moor development will form a single community. The current boundary between Chellaston and Boulton wards divides this community, therefore it is proposed to move the Chellaston boundary south, bringing the entire development area into Boulton ward. This change improves electoral equality and ensures community identity is appropriately maintained.

Harvey Road, Shardlow Road and Merrill Way are retained as ward boundaries as these are major highways that divide the community in Boulton ward from the surrounding areas.

- 4.35 **Chellaston and Shelton Lock** - the existing and future housing on the Boulton Moor development will form a single community. The current boundary between Chellaston and Boulton wards divides this community therefore it is proposed to move the

Chellaston boundary south, bringing the entire development area into Boulton ward. This approach brings Chellaston ward into tolerance for electoral equality and helps maintain community identity.

It is proposed that the ward be named 'Chellaston and Shelton Lock' to reflect the identity of the two distinct communities making up this ward.

- 4.36 **Sinfin and Osmaston** - the Osmaston area in the north of Sinfin ward is separated from the community in Sinfin itself by the Rolls Royce works and the areas share limited community identity. Consideration was given to creating a single-member ward in the Osmaston area, but the constraints of the city boundary and the railway line meant that it was not possible to create an acceptable level of electoral equality in the remainder of the ward.

It is proposed that this ward be named 'Sinfin and Osmaston' to reflect the identity of both communities making up this ward.

South-West

- 4.37 **Abbey** - the Manor Kingsway area, which is currently part of Littleover ward has been added to Abbey ward. The site has yet to develop a strong sense of community identity and placing it within Abbey helps to maintain the electoral balance between Littleover and Abbey wards.

Existing housing on both sides of the A516 and the A5111 near the Royal Derby Hospital was also included in Abbey ward, as these dwellings form part of a community with housing to the east of the A516/A5111 junction, which is also currently in Abbey ward.

- 4.38 **Arboretum** - it is proposed to include the area in the city centre bounded by the inner ring road to the north, and Friar Gate, Wardwick. Victoria Street and Albert Street to the south in Darley ward. The entire area within the inner ring road is currently part of Arboretum ward but the northern part has stronger community ties with Darley ward. This change also helps achieve greater electoral equality in Arboretum and Darley wards, accommodating significant housing developments (Derbyshire Royal Infirmary and Castleward sites) within the existing Arboretum boundary to the south of the ward.

To improve electoral equality, it is proposed to amend the boundary between Normanton and Arboretum wards to Cambridge Street. The area between Cambridge Street and the current boundary shares community identity with adjacent areas in both wards. There was not unanimous support amongst Arboretum and Normanton councillors regarding changes to this part of the boundary.

- 4.39 **Blagreaves** - dwellings on Stenson Road, Sunny Hill Avenue and those on the residential streets leading off these roads are currently part of Normanton ward. These areas share stronger community identity with those on the opposite side of Stenson Road and Sunny Hill Avenue and it is proposed to bring this area into Blagreaves ward, which also improves electoral equality.

Normanton councillors proposed moving the boundary between Blagreaves and Normanton wards to the north bringing the Austin estate area into Blagreaves. This

was suggested as an improvement to community identity due to Sunny Hill Community Centre serving the communities on both side of Sunny Hill Avenue.

Blagreaves councillors put forward the opposite view and stated that there was no significant shared community identity between the area south of Sunny Hill Avenue and the Austin estate.

This proposal retains the Austin estate in Normanton ward. The area has ties to both wards, but it was considered that the school catchment area for Village Primary School demonstrated a stronger link with Normanton.

The existing boundary between Blagreaves ward and Sinfin ward lies along a railway line that divides two communities. It is proposed that this boundary be retained.

- 4.40 **Littleover** - Littleover currently includes substantial part-built and proposed developments at Manor Kingsway, Rykneld Road, Allan Avenue and Burton Road.

In this proposal, the development in the Manor Kingsway area has been added to Abbey ward. The site has yet to develop a strong sense of community identity and placing it within Abbey helps to maintain the electoral balance between Littleover and Abbey wards. Existing housing on both sides of the A516 and the A5111 near the Royal Derby Hospital was also included in Abbey ward, as these dwellings form part of a community with housing to the east of the A516/A5111 junction, which is also currently in Abbey ward.

It is not considered feasible to move the boundary between Mickleover and Littleover to Uttoxeter Road/Etwall Road as the community on both sides of Uttoxeter Road are strongly identifiable as part of Mickleover.

The A38 and A516 are retained as a boundary as these are major highways that divide the communities in Mickleover and Littleover.

- 4.41 **Normanton** - Dwellings on Stenson Road, Sunny Hill Avenue and those on the residential streets leading off these roads are currently part of Normanton ward. These areas share stronger community ties with those on the opposite side of Stenson Road and Sunny Hill Avenue and it is proposed to bring this area into Blagreaves ward, which also improves electoral equality.

Normanton councillors proposed moving the boundary between Blagreaves and Normanton wards to the north bringing the Austin estate area into Blagreaves. This was suggested as an improvement to community identity due to Sunny Hill Community Centre serving the communities on both side of Sunny Hill Avenue.

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This proposal retains the Austin estate in Normanton ward. The area has ties to both wards, but it was considered that the school catchment area for Village Primary School demonstrated a stronger link with Normanton.

To improve electoral equality, it is proposed to change the boundary between Normanton and Arboretum wards to Cambridge Street. The area between Cambridge Street and the current boundary shares community identity with adjacent areas in both wards. There was not unanimous support among Arboretum and Normanton councillors regarding changes to this part of the boundary.

Next Steps

- 4.42 The LGBCE will launch a further period of consultation on its draft recommendations from 5 July 2022 to 12 September 2022, to which Council will be invited to respond. The final recommendations are expected to be published on 29 November 2022 and an order laid in Parliament shortly afterward. A whole Council election will be held on 4 May 2023, based on the new warding patterns.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 As detailed at paragraphs 4.12 to 4.15, workshops have been held with ward councillors where feedback has been provided, particularly in relation to community interests and identity. Feedback has also been collected from various locality-based teams working within Derby City Council.
- 5.2 The Council's submission forms part of a wider consultation being undertaken by the LGBCE which runs from 26 October to 29 March. The recommendations of the Commission will be subject to a further round of public consultation.

Other options

- 6.1 To develop a proposal based on an unequal warding pattern, totalling 51 councillors. This option has been explored and discussed as part of the member workshops, but has been discounted on the basis that it did not attract widespread support.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None directly arising.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The review is being undertaken in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The LGBCE was created under the provisions of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None directly arising.

Other significant implications

- 10.1 The review has the potential to dramatically alter the political landscape of the city, that will consequently have a substantial impact on the future direction of Derby City Council. Although the Council is not the ultimate decision-maker in this statutory process, failure to submit a response to the LGBCE that is consistent with the three statutory criteria decreases the likelihood that the Council's views and preferences will be taken into account.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Emily Feenan, Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services	16 February 2022
Report sponsor	Simon Riley, Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	16 February 2022
Other(s)	Paul Simpson, Chief Executive	16 February 2022
	Mick Styne, Electoral Services and Land Charges Manager	16 February 2022

Background papers:	None.
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Proposed warding pattern Appendix 2 – Forecast electorate data Appendix 3 – Summary of housing developments