

# New electoral arrangements for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Final Recommendations

May 2023

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# Introduction

## Who we are and what we do

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

2 The members of the Commission<sup>2</sup> are:

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

## What is an electoral review?

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

## Why Tunbridge Wells?

7 We are conducting a review of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2001, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Tunbridge Wells are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

## Our proposals for Tunbridge Wells

9 Tunbridge Wells should be represented by 39 councillors, nine fewer than there are now.

10 Tunbridge Wells should have 14 wards, six fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Tunbridge Wells.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

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

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local

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<sup>3</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

## Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Tunbridge Wells. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
14 December 2021	Number of councillors decided
11 January 2022	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
21 March 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
2 August 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
10 October 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
18 October 2022	Review paused while Council considered electoral cycle
16 May 2023	Publication of final recommendations





## Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation<sup>4</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>5</sup> there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

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

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

	2022	2028
Electorate of Tunbridge Wells	85,271	91,034
Number of councillors	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	2,186	2,334

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. Eleven of our proposed wards for Tunbridge Wells are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

## Submissions received

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

22 At the beginning of the review the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7%. We must consider electoral equality not only now but for a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022, in line with legislation.

<sup>4</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

23 The Council's original forecast included 680 more electors in polling district CC than there should have been. This was an administrative error caused by an accidental double counting of electors. This has now been corrected and the revised forecast has the correct number of electors in this area.

24 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We are publishing our final recommendations in 2023, later than originally scheduled. However, we are content that the original 2027 forecast is a reasonable estimate of the forecast number of electors likely to be present in the authority in 2028 and we do not intend to update the figures at this time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

## Number of councillors

25 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council currently has 48 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and concluded that in light of the scale of the reduction in service provision and time spent on meetings as detailed by the Council and group of councillors, decreasing the total number of councillors by nine will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 39 councillors.

27 As Tunbridge Wells Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation<sup>6</sup> that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

28 We received several submissions that referred to the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. Some of them expressed general support for the reduced number of councillors, while some objected. Those that did not support the reduction objected either because of the size of the resultant three-councillor wards, the perceived effect on councillor workload or its effect on diversity and opportunity.

29 However, they did not submit any detailed evidence to support their views and we have maintained 39 councillors as part of our final recommendations.

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<sup>6</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

## Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 108 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals from the Council's then Cabinet and one from its Liberal Democrat Group ('the Liberal Democrats').

31 The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for wards arrangements in particular areas of the borough. The parish councils that responded did not want their parishes split across borough wards.

32 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that most of the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

33 Our draft recommendations were based on the 39-councillor scheme proposed by the Cabinet. We considered that with some modifications, this scheme best reflected communities while providing an acceptable level of electoral equality and returning a uniform pattern of three-member wards. Although we used these proposals as the basis for our draft recommendations, we considered each of the proposals received to see how they could improve our draft recommendations on the basis of our statutory criteria. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

34 We visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of Tunbridge Wells helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

35 Our draft recommendations were for 13 three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

## Draft recommendations consultation

36 We received 179 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included borough-wide comments from Tunbridge Wells Conservative Association ('TWCA'), Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party ('Labour Party') and Tunbridge Wells Liberal Democrats ('Liberal Democrats'). The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in Capel, Goudhurst, Paddock Wood and Southborough.

37 The TWCA proposed some changes in the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It also proposed modifications in the Paddock Wood and Capel area. As part of its proposals the TWCA proposed six wards with one or two councillors.

38 The Labour Party supported some of our draft recommendation wards. However, it objected to our proposal to include the High Brooms area of Southborough in a ward with an area of Royal Tunbridge Wells town. It sought to improve the electoral equality of some of the wards. In doing so, it created wards in Rusthall and Royal Tunbridge Wells which were not supported by other evidence we received over the course of the review. While we recognise that its proposals would provide for good electoral equality, we do not consider that they provide a good reflection of the other statutory criteria, and we were not persuaded to adopt them.

39 The Liberal Democrats supported a significant part of our draft recommendations. It proposed modifications in Capel, Pembury, Rusthall, Speldhurst and the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

40 The Green Party also provided some comments. These were mostly about the electoral cycle and elections, something that is outside our remit and the responsibility of the Council. It also expressed its view that the existing boundaries should be maintained but reduced to two-councillor wards. As mentioned above, because the Council elects by thirds, the Commission must consider the desirability of returning a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards and we were not persuaded to move to a pattern of two-member wards in light of alternatives that we consider better reflect the statutory criteria and which are for three-member wards.

41 We received other submissions that advocated a more mixed pattern of warding. As mentioned above, while we must consider the desirability of returning a uniform pattern of three-member wards we may move away from a uniform pattern of wards where we consider we have received sufficient evidence that we can provide a better reflection of all of our criteria.

42 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to two of the wards in the east of the borough where we are uniting all of Goudhurst parish in one ward. We are also modifying one of our draft recommendations in High Brooms and the St John's area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, based on the submissions received. In doing so we have departed from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We are content to do so considering the additional evidence we received during this consultation.

43 Several respondents also commented on the names of the draft recommendation wards. Comments included that parish names should be reflected, be more imaginative and not just use compass points. Some respondents proposed

specific names. As a result of this, we changed the names of some wards across the borough.

44 Following the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received a request from the Council to pause the drawing up of final recommendations until the Council had concluded whether to change its electoral cycle from the existing pattern of having elections ‘by thirds’ to a pattern of ‘all-out’ elections. The electoral cycle of an authority is entirely a matter for the Borough Council. However, what the electoral cycle is has implications for the review. This is because the legislation states that in an authority that elects ‘all out’ – i.e., when all councillors are elected once every four years – the Commission has more flexibility to return a mixed pattern of one-, two- or three-councillor wards. In an authority that elects by thirds – i.e., when a third of councillors are elected in three out of four years – the Commission must consider the desirability of returning a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

45 In December 2022, the Council decided to continue electing by thirds and the Commission proceeded to conclude the review.

## Final recommendations

46 Our final recommendations are for 12 three-councillor wards, one two-councillor ward and one single-councillor ward. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

47 The tables and maps on pages 10–27 detail our final recommendations for each area of Tunbridge Wells. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>7</sup> criteria of:

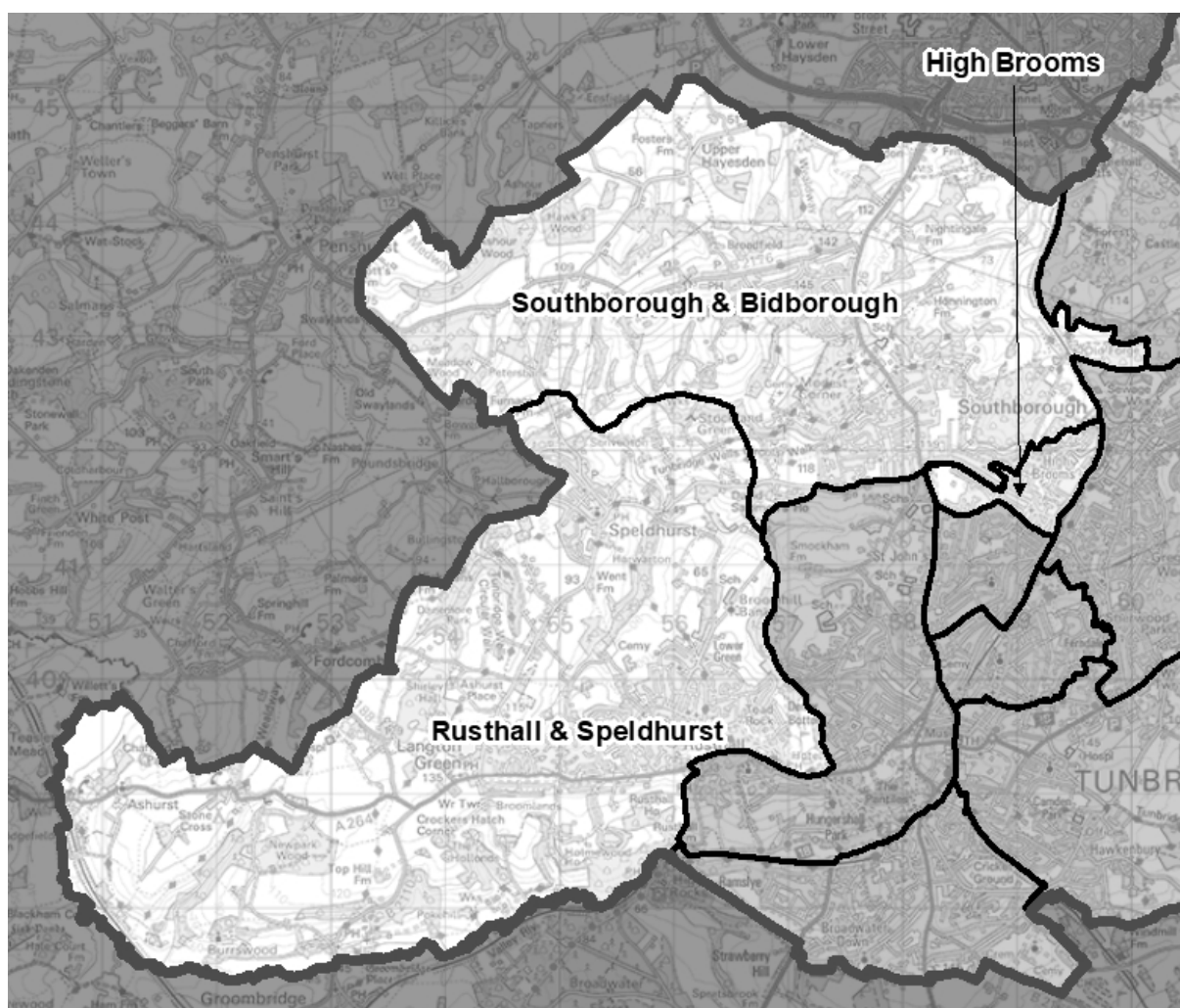
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

48 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 35 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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<sup>7</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Western Parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
High Brooms	1	7%
Rusthall & Speldhurst	3	12%
Southborough & Bidborough	3	8%

### *Rusthall & Speldhurst*

49 In addition to the borough-wide comments, we received submissions from Councillor Funnell, Rusthall Parish Council, Speldhurst Parish Council and residents.

50 The TWCA supported the draft recommendations which included the parishes of Rusthall and Speldhurst in a single ward. Rusthall and Speldhurst parish councils also supported the draft recommendations. Rusthall Parish Council expressed disappointment that we did not create a two-councillor ward coterminous with its parish, but it also stated that it understood the reasons we gave and therefore supported what we had done. It stated that its parish had more in common with the villages in Speldhurst parish than other areas nearer ‘the centre of Tunbridge Wells’.

This view was echoed by Speldhurst parish who said it had more in common with Rusthall than with Bidborough parish to its north. Rusthall Parish Council also supported the name of the ward, as in its view the identities of both parishes were preserved and it was easily understood and recognised by their residents.

51 The Labour Party advocated for the retention of the existing Speldhurst & Bidborough ward. It was of the view that both communities within this ward are rural and this would allow them to retain their existing representation. It opposed our draft recommendations Rusthall & Speldhurst ward arguing that it was too large and that it included an affluent part of the borough with one that was not. Instead, it proposed a Rusthall & Broadwater ward which extended south to include Ramslye and an area east of Eridge Road. It was of the view that the best way to have an effective scheme across the borough was to include Rusthall parish with most of the existing Broadwater borough ward. This would produce a ward which had better electoral equality than the 12% draft recommendations ward.

52 Among other things, the Labour Party was also concerned that Speldhurst parish would have greater influence in the ward and that the needs of Rusthall would not be met.

53 The Liberal Democrats, Councillor Funnell and a resident proposed a single-councillor Rusthall ward and a two-councillor Speldhurst ward. The Liberal Democrats believed that the strength of Rusthall's community identity warranted a single-councillor ward. However, a single-councillor Rusthall ward is forecast to have 65% more electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells. We are not minded to create a ward with such poor electoral equality and did not adopt this proposal.

54 Some residents were of the view that the needs of Rusthall and Speldhurst residents are very different. They wanted the existing two-councillor Rusthall ward retained. We considered doing this as part of our draft recommendations, in response to evidence of Rusthall parish residents' strong community identity received during the first consultation. Such a ward also produced poor electoral equality (18% fewer electors than the average for the borough) which is why we did not propose such a ward. We included Rusthall parish in a ward with Speldhurst in line with evidence we received during the first consultation.

55 One resident of Langton Green in Speldhurst parish supported the draft recommendations. They stated that both communities shared a GP surgery, pharmacy and local buses into Tunbridge Wells. Another resident, of Rusthall, also expressed support for including the two parishes in a single ward.

56 We carefully considered the submissions we received across both consultations. While we recognise Rusthall's strong community identity, we note its proximity to a significant part of Speldhurst parish i.e., Langton Green. The boundary

between them runs through a built-up area which will split near neighbours across different borough wards in this area. We also note that the parishes have the use of some shared facilities. Stone Cross and Ashurst also have a good road connection to the Rusthall area.

57 We therefore consider that Rusthall is better placed with Speldhurst than with the Broadwater area of Royal Tunbridge Wells. We are also of the view that Bidborough residents look more towards Southborough than Speldhurst. As mentioned in our draft recommendations report, we consider that residents to the north, west and south of Darnley Drive are likely to share community irrespective of the parish boundary. Accordingly, we are not persuaded to adopt the Labour Party's proposals. Instead, we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

58 Although it is forecast to have 12% more electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells by 2028, we consider that this is the best balance of our statutory criteria.

59 A resident told us that the boundary between Rusthall & Speldhurst and Southborough & Bidborough wards runs alongside their garden wall, bisecting a plot of land. We note that this is a parish boundary and can only be changed by the Council by way of a Community Governance Review (CGR). We have followed the parish boundary in this area because if we move away from it, we must create a parish ward and we do not consider a parish ward with no or very few electors is justified.

60 The Labour Party also pointed out that some residents who consider themselves part of Rusthall are actually in Speldhurst parish and requested that we amend the parish boundaries. As mentioned above, parish boundaries are outside our remit and can only be amended by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council after conducting a CGR.

#### *High Brooms and Southborough & Bidborough*

61 Our draft recommendations for this area were for two three-councillor wards: Southborough & Bidborough and Royal Tunbridge Wells North. The latter ward included an area of High Brooms, which is in Southborough parish, in a ward with the St John's area of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

62 We received a significant number of submissions in response to this mostly in opposition to our draft recommendations. In addition to the borough-wide comments, we received representations from Southborough & High Brooms Branch Labour Party ('SHBLP'), councillors Alan Bullion, Luke Everitt, Dariel Francis, Dianne Hill, Alain Lewis and Jacqueline Prance, Rusthall Parish Council, Southborough Town Council, Southborough & District Lions Club, Southborough & High Brooms District Overseas Friendship Association, and residents.



63 Although the Liberal Democrats and TWCA supported our draft recommendations, almost all the other respondents did not. They expressed concern that the High Brooms area of Southborough parish was included in a borough ward with part of the unparished area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and not with the rest of its parish. They stated that aside from being part of the same parish, Southborough and High Brooms have strong community connections and shared interests with many residents using the same schools and other distinct Southborough and High Brooms community facilities. We were told that they were distinctly separate from the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

64 Separate concerns were also expressed because the draft recommendations placed St Matthew's Church in a separate ward (Royal Tunbridge Wells North) from its associated school which is St Matthew's High Brooms Church of England (VC) Primary School.

65 To address this, many advocated for the retention of two two-councillors wards which together would be coterminous with the parish boundaries. The Labour Party, Southborough Town Council, SHBLP and others proposed two such wards which modified the existing wards in Southborough and High Brooms. However, we note that to facilitate this, and as mentioned in the section on Rusthall & Speldhurst, a ward comprising Speldhurst and Bidborough parishes would be required and, as discussed previously, we have not been persuaded to adopt such a ward.

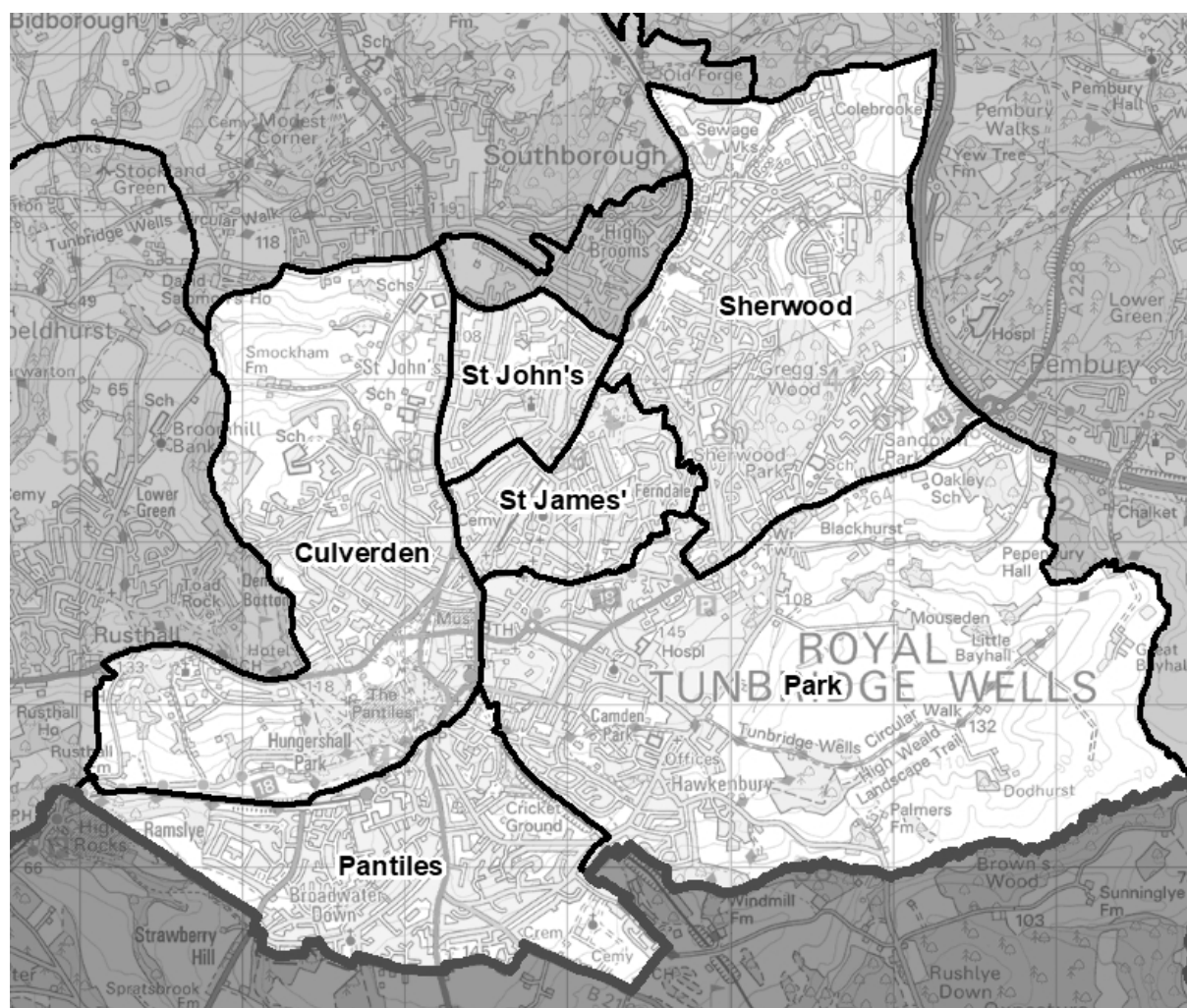
66 However, after careful consideration of the representations we received, we have been persuaded of the strong community links between High Brooms and Southborough to its north. We also note evidence that suggests that High Brooms does not look south for its community interests. We recognise that not including any part of Southborough parish with Royal Tunbridge Wells would better reflect communities in this area.

67 We are still content to include Bidborough in a ward with Southborough and not Speldhurst because we believe that they look more to facilities in Southborough which is near it and so doing this better reflects the community in that area.

68 While we start our reviews with a presumption in favour of a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards when determining our warding pattern in authorities that elect by thirds, we were persuaded that there was overwhelming community identity evidence from a broad range of residents, community groups, councillors and stakeholders that justified separating the High Brooms area from the town of Tunbridge Wells. Accordingly, we are content to depart from a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards and create a single-councillor High Brooms ward which is comprised of the High Brooms area of Southborough parish previously included in what was Royal Tunbridge Wells North. We have also united St Matthew's High Brooms C of E (VC) Primary School with St Matthew's Church in this ward.

69 Our final recommendations for this area are for a three-councillor Southborough & Bidborough ward and a single-councillor High Brooms ward. Both are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

## Royal Tunbridge Wells



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Culverden	3	-9%
Pantiles	3	2%
Park	3	-2%
Sherwood	3	-6%
St James'	3	-10%
St John's	2	-8%

70 We received submissions, including from the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum ('the Town Forum') and residents in addition to the borough-wide comments for Royal Tunbridge Wells. The names of our draft recommendations wards in this area were all prefixed with 'Royal Tunbridge Wells' and were based on compass points. Several respondents, including the Town Forum, objected to this. Some wanted names that they considered better reflected residents' sense of identity. We have been persuaded to change the names of the wards to reflect this, in line with proposals from the Town Forum.

71 We note that these names are mostly based on the names of existing wards with sometimes very different boundaries, and that there were other names suggested. Accordingly, although we consider the names we are adopting will be the most identifiable to residents, if there is a desire to change ward names in the five years following a review, a local authority may seek the Commission's agreement to change the name of a ward if this reflects community identity and sentiment. After five years, a local authority may make a change without seeking the agreement of the Commission.

#### *Culverden, Pantiles and Park*

72 These wards were named Royal Tunbridge Wells Central, Royal Tunbridge Wells South and Royal Tunbridge Wells West in our draft recommendations.

73 The TWCA supported two of the draft recommendations wards, but proposed changes to a section of the boundary between Royal Tunbridge Wells Central and Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert ward, so that it ran along Ferndale. It considered this a better boundary. While we agree that its proposed boundary is identifiable, we have united both sides of Ferndale in a single ward to facilitate a ward with good electoral equality and have not been persuaded to move away from this as it would result in there being 11% fewer electors than the average in Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert, and we do not think that using Ferndale as a ward boundary justifies this.

74 The Labour Party proposed different boundaries for this area. It retained most of the boundary between the existing Broadwater and Pantiles & St Mark's wards, effectively splitting our proposed Royal Tunbridge Wells South in two. The area around Ramslye was included in its proposed Rusthall & Broadwater ward. The area to the east of Ramslye and on both sides of Mount Pleasant were included in a Royal Tunbridge Wells Town & Pantiles ward. This appears in line with comments from a resident who expressed the view that the Pantiles and Mount Sion should not be included in a ward with Ramslye on the grounds that they are different populations. The Labour Party's proposals also included a Culverden & St John's ward to the north-west.

75 As detailed in the section above on Rusthall & Speldhurst, we were not persuaded to adopt Labour's proposals for that area, and we are not adopting its proposals for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town & Pantiles either which facilitates its Speldhurst & Bidborough ward. We also note that its Culverden & St John's ward excludes St Stephen's Road and the section of Queen's Road which a resident considered identifies as being part of St John's. The inclusion of residents on the northern side of Queen's Road and all of St Stephen's Road in the proposed Culverden & St John's ward brings its variance to 15%. For all these reasons we did not adopt the Labour Party proposals.

76 The Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations for Royal Tunbridge Wells West but advocated for a boundary change between Royal Tunbridge Wells Central and Royal Tunbridge Wells South. They stated that several roads in Royal Tunbridge Wells Central shared a community of interest with the Mount Sion area of Royal Tunbridge Wells South on the other side of the railway cutting. To achieve good electoral equality, they suggested that 'some areas of the ward furthest east (including Forest Road) could be included in Royal Tunbridge Wells Central ward' but did not specify which areas.

77 We considered doing this. Moving the boundary to the east of the railway cutting, in line with this proposal, would produce a Royal Tunbridge Wells South ward with 15% more electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells. We consider this a high variance, particularly in this built-up area. Without a specific boundary or detailed community identity evidence, regarding which areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells South to move into Royal Tunbridge Wells Central to improve the electoral equality, we have no way of knowing that we would not be splitting another community by choosing a significantly different boundary that has not been consulted on. We also note that both the Labour Party and the TWCA supported using the railway cutting as a boundary. We have therefore retained our draft recommendations boundary except for a modification at The Grove where we use a ground detail and not the railway tunnel in line with a comment from a resident.

78 A resident of York Road felt that the boundary between Royal Tunbridge Wells Central and Royal Tunbridge Wells West should run along London Road and not Mount Pleasant. Another resident stated something similar in that they were of the view that the boundary should be a little west of Mount Pleasant. We considered doing this, but it adds more than 1,000 electors to Royal Tunbridge Wells Central. The resultant Royal Tunbridge Wells Central and Royal Tunbridge Wells West wards would be forecast to have 16% more and 24% fewer electors, respectively, than the average for the borough, by 2028. We considered these variances too high, especially in a built-up area where communities are close to one another.

79 A resident wanted Ferndale to be included in Royal Tunbridge Wells Central and not Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert. However, doing this produced a Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert ward with 17% fewer electors than the borough average. Accordingly, we were not persuaded to adopt this proposal.

80 After careful consideration, we are confirming our draft recommendations ward boundaries as final, except for two modifications: one around The Grove to follow ground detail in the park and the other to include residents of Grampian Close, Quantock Close and Willicombe Park into Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods ward to the east, as proposed by the Labour Party (see section on Sherwood and St James' below). It improves the electoral variance of that ward and reflects the access of the residents. As mentioned above, we are also changing the names of

the wards. We are naming Royal Tunbridge Wells Central, Royal Tunbridge Wells South and Royal Tunbridge Wells West as Park, Pantiles and Culverden, in accordance with proposals from the Town Forum.

### *Sherwood and St James'*

81 Our draft recommendations in this area were for two wards: Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert and Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods. The Liberal Democrats supported these wards.

82 The TWCA proposed the inclusion of Ferndale in Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods to improve its electoral equality. It also proposed replacing the three-councillor Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert ward with a two-councillor ward to reflect the reduction in electorate. This ward would also lose the area north of Woodbury Park Road (or alternatively north of Upper Grosvenor Road) to Royal Tunbridge Wells North.

83 The Labour Party proposed some modifications to the draft recommendations, to improve the electoral equality of the Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods ward. It proposed moving Grampian Close, Quantock Close and Willicombe Park into Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods ward because 'it made more logistical sense' and would improve the electoral equality of the ward. It also proposed moving The Coach House and adjacent properties from Pembury parish into this ward.

84 We considered these proposals carefully. We note that the TWCA's proposals require the moving away from a three-councillor ward in this area in order to improve electoral equality. We did not receive compelling evidence that we considered justified moving away from three-councillor wards in this area because our wards here already have what we consider is an acceptable level of electoral equality. Accordingly, we have not been persuaded to adopt the TWCA's proposals.

85 Nevertheless, we have been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations and adopt part of the Labour Party's proposal, which is to include Grampian Close, Quantock Close and Willicombe Park in Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods, as part of our final recommendations. We note that as well as improving the access of these residents, it also improves the electoral variance of our Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods.

86 However, we have not included the Coach House and Garden Cottage in this ward. These dwellings are in Pembury parish and creating a borough ward that crosses parish boundaries in this way requires us to create a parish ward. We do not consider there enough electors to justify a parish ward in this area.

87 A resident queried why we had split Queen's Road across wards. We did not make any changes to the existing ward boundary along Queen's and Dunstan roads. We maintained the existing boundary because it facilitates the creation of a Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert ward with good electoral equality. We have not identified an alternative boundary that we consider should be adopted instead in this area.

88 As mentioned earlier, we are adopting the ward names proposed by the Town Forum. Therefore, Royal Tunbridge Wells Grosvenor & Hilbert and Royal Tunbridge Wells North Woods are renamed, St James' and Sherwood, respectively. Both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2028.

### *St John's*

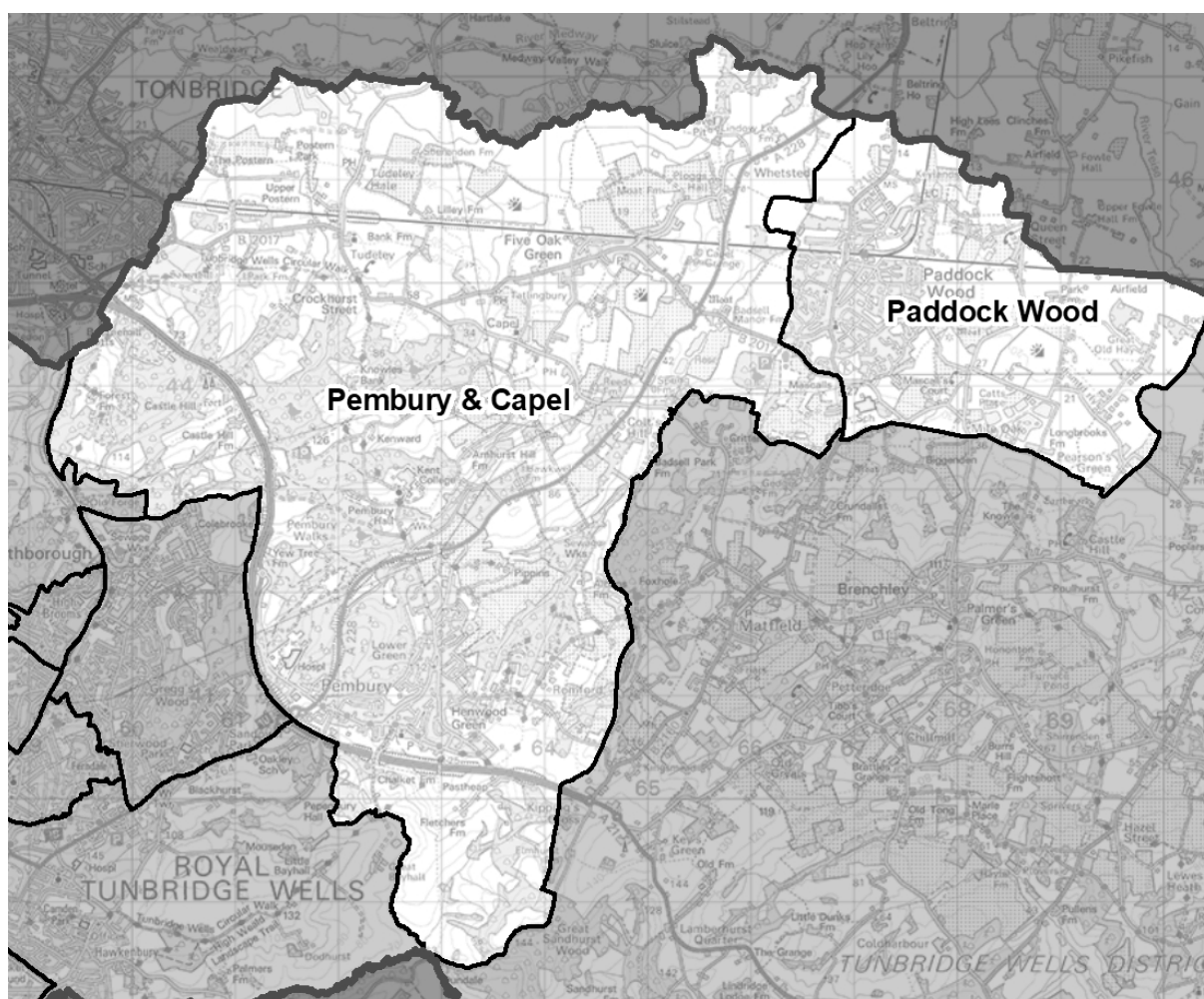
89 The Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations Royal Tunbridge Wells North ward. The Labour Party, and most of other responses from councillors, local organisations and residents, objected to this ward.

90 The objections related to the inclusion of an area of Southborough parish known as High Brooms with part of Royal Tunbridge Wells. They advocated, with strong community evidence, the exclusion of High Brooms from our draft recommendations Royal Tunbridge Wells North.

91 As discussed in the section on Southborough & Bidborough and High Brooms, we have been persuaded by the compelling community evidence to move away from our draft recommendations. We are therefore excluding High Brooms from the ward in this area. We have also renamed Royal Tunbridge Wells North to St John's in line with the Town Forum's proposal.

92 Our final recommendations for this area are for a two-councillor St John's ward forecast to have good electoral equality.

## Paddock Wood and Pembury & Capel



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Paddock Wood	3	5%
Pembury & Capel	3	6%

### *Paddock Wood*

93 We received comments for this area from Paddock Wood Town Council, Paddock Wood Labour Party ('PWLP') and residents in addition to the borough-wide submissions.

94 Most of the respondents objected to the exclusion of the Foal Hurst Wood developments south of Badsell Road from Paddock Wood ward as this area is considered part of Paddock Wood town. We considered including these developments in Paddock Wood as part of our draft recommendations. However, it produced a ward forecast to have at least 16% more electors than the borough average by 2028. One resident proposed moving the boundary between Paddock Wood ward and the ward to its west to run along the A228 (Maidstone Road/Whetsted Road) and Crittenden Road on the South edge. While we appreciate



that this produces identifiable boundaries, the electoral equality is equally high at 18%. We consider both variances too high and did not adopt either proposal.

95 Some respondents, including the Town Council and the PWLP, also mentioned that the scale of developments in the Council's draft local plan is much greater than reflected in the forecast figures used as part of this review. The PWLP also felt that 13 wards did not work for the local authority area and objected to the consequential creation of a parish ward in the Foal Hurst Wood area. The Town Council also suggested that the occupancy ratio of those that were included in the forecast figures was underestimated by the Council.

96 While we note that the local plan covers a much longer period than five years, we are unable to consider new developments and occupants after that period. At the start of every review, the Council provides a forecast which includes *electors* forecast to occupy developments five years from the completion of our review. This time is set out in legislation.

97 We recognise that the number of occupants per property may vary but we do not consider the forecasts provided by the Council are incorrect and are not persuaded to revisit this detail of the forecasts. Furthermore, while we are aware that planning decisions are likely to be made throughout the duration of this review, we take the view that a line must be drawn and that the forecasts provided at the beginning of a review are those that should be used as the base forecast throughout. This is because it ensures that all who wish to make a submission to us can use the same baseline forecast figures. Our approach of not updating the forecast throughout the review ensures that we are able to maintain clarity over what the figures are so that people are able to respond on the same basis throughout.

98 We note the PWLP's concerns about Paddock Wood South parish ward in particular. Having taken the decision to include this area in Pembury & Capel ward, we must create a parish ward. This is because legislation states that where we create borough wards that cross parish boundaries, we must create a parish ward.

99 While we have considered the comments we received very carefully, we have not been persuaded to change our draft recommendations. We note that including the developments in a Paddock Wood ward would result in poor electoral equality which we have not been persuaded is justified on the basis of any of our statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Paddock Wood as final.

#### *Pembury & Capel*

100 We received additional submissions from Capel Parish Council, Councillor Hugh Patterson and residents in addition to the borough-wide ones.

101 The Labour Party supported our draft recommendations for the area. However, it noted that a proposed future development may lead to a rapid growth of electors beyond 2028 and necessitate another electoral review. Several other respondents also alluded to future developments outside of the review period.

102 The Liberal Democrats, the TWCA and Capel Parish Council proposed a single-councillor Capel ward on community identity grounds.

103 Several respondents, including Councillor Patterson, were concerned that Capel parish would lose effective representation because of its small size when compared to Pembury parish. They were of the view that there were very few community links between the two parishes. Although we note that there are good road links, the councillor stated that there was no public transport linking the two areas.

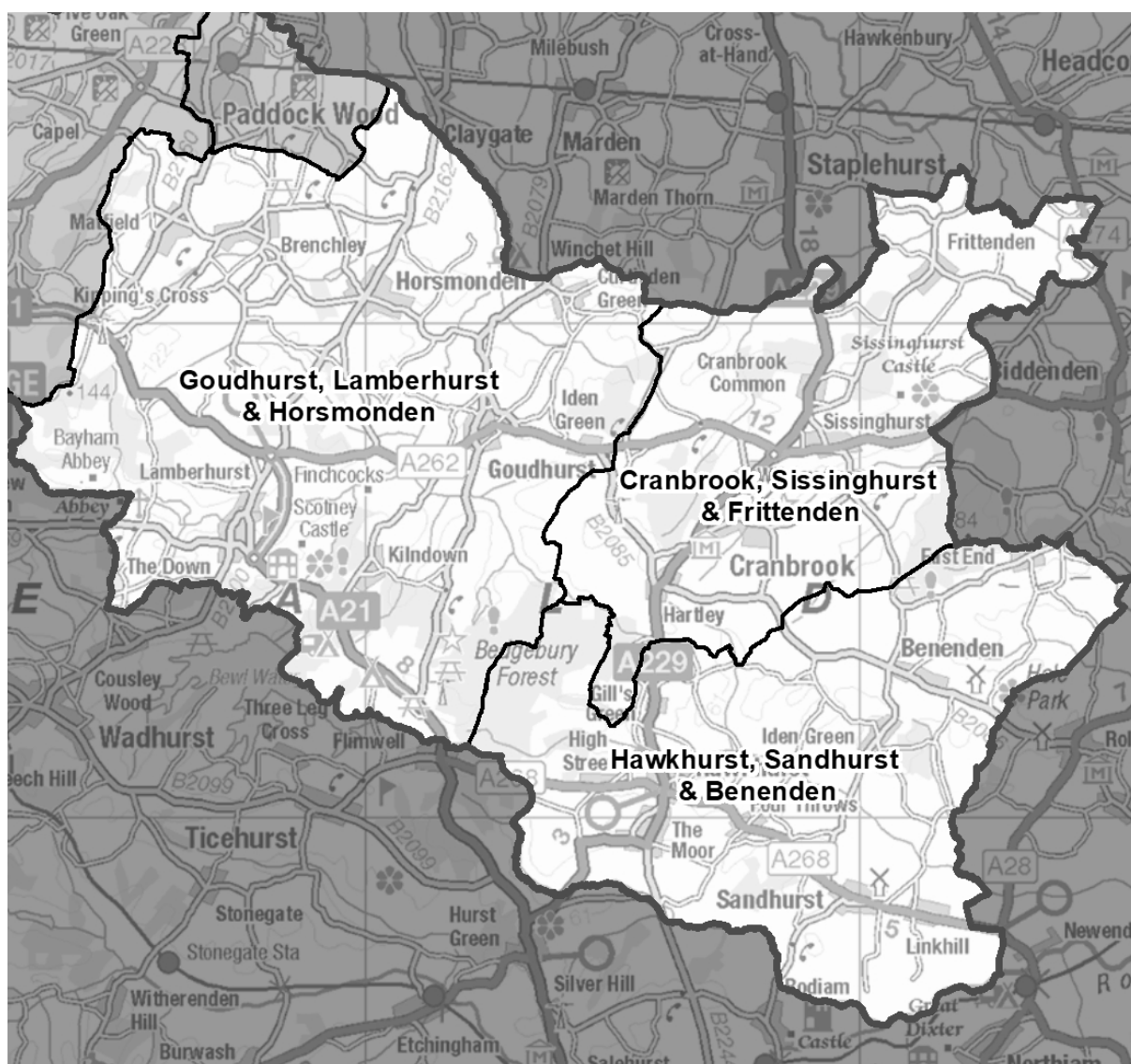
104 Some cited 4,000 additional properties set to be built to the east of Capel parish under the draft local plan as evidence that it was not necessary to include Capel and Pembury parishes in a single ward. Some were of the view that if Capel had to be included in a ward with another parish, Paddock Wood was more suitable as there were stronger links between the two communities. Councillor Patterson was of the view that the potential additional development in the draft local plan made it more imperative that Capel had strong representation at borough council level.

105 We understand this rationale and considered creating a single-councillor ward in Capel, in line with the proposal put forward by the Liberal Democrats, TWCA and Capel Parish Council. The parish council proposed that we create a ward comprised of Capel parish and the new developments to the south of Paddock Wood. This produces a ward of more than 2,750 electors (18% more electors than the average for the borough) by 2028 (the year which we must take into account) and not 2,400 as the parish council states. Excluding the developments produces a ward forecast to have 19% fewer electors. We consider these figures too high and not the best balance of our criteria.

106 We accept that Pembury and Capel are different communities. However, we do consider it preferable to combine distinct communities in the same ward to ensure good electoral equality and a better balance of our criteria than create a ward with such high variance.

107 We are confirming our draft recommendations for Pembury & Capel ward as final. However, we note the comments about future growth in the Capel area.

## Eastern Parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden	3	-14%
Goudhurst, Lamberhurst & Horsmonden	3	15%
Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden	3	-5%

108 We received a significant number of submissions which objected to the size of the wards in this part of the borough. Some respondents questioned why they had to change and could not retain smaller wards. Since the last review of Tunbridge Wells, legislation has changed. Because the Council has elections in three out of every four years, there is a presumption in legislation<sup>8</sup> that the Council should have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards

<sup>8</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect all of our statutory criteria.

109 We sought to reflect the proposals that we received in the east of the borough, and considered whether amending the overall number of councillors would allow us to reflect communities better in this area. However, any changes we identified would have a knock-on effect on other wards across the borough which we did not think would be acceptable in those areas. We could not identify any alternative pattern of wards that we considered would reflect our statutory criteria. We were not persuaded by the evidence provided that we should move away from a pattern of three-member wards.

#### *Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden*

110 We received submissions from Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council and some residents, in addition to the borough-wide comments. The TWCA and Liberal Democrats both supported our draft recommendations for this area.

111 The Labour Party proposed including Benenden parish in this ward to improve the electoral equality of the ward. Its proposals included a Lamberhurst, Hawkhurst & Sandhurst ward made up of those parishes and Kilndown parish ward of Goudhurst parish.

112 Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council was of the view that the geographical size of three-councillor wards in rural areas made them less ideal. It expressed its view that the Council should move to all-out elections to enable a mixed pattern of wards. The electoral cycle is a matter for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to consider and not the Commission.

113 Some residents objected to the inclusion of Sissinghurst and, in particular, Frittenden in a ward with Cranbrook. They were of the view that the interests of these smaller villages would be overlooked. However, one resident of Sissinghurst supported our draft recommendations Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden ward because there were 'current links between the villages'.

114 We carefully considered the comments we received. Although the Labour Party proposal improved the electoral equality of this ward, it was dependent on retaining the split of Goudhurst parish across two wards, something that we have been persuaded to move away from in light of compelling community identity evidence. We also considered the representation from our first consultation which suggested that there were links between Benenden and the parishes to the south (e.g., GP practices) and that 'Benenden was not particularly associated with Cranbrook' being much more residential. Accordingly, we were not persuaded to adopt its proposal.

115 With regards to Frittenden, we considered whether to create a single-councillor ward in this area which is on the edge of the borough. It is too small to form a ward of its own as it is forecast to have 69% fewer electors than the borough average and the resulting two-councillor Cranbrook & Sissinghurst ward would have 14% more electors. Even a single-councillor Sissinghurst & Frittenden ward is forecast to have 21% fewer electors than the borough average. We were not persuaded to create a ward with such poor electoral equality.

116 After careful consideration of the different options, we have concluded that our draft recommendations provide the best balance of our statutory criteria, and we therefore confirm them as final. Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden ward is forecast to have 14% fewer electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells, by 2028.

117 The Liberal Democrats proposed renaming the ward Cranbrook & Sissinghurst. However, we consider it very important to reflect the community of Frittenden in the name of the ward. We have therefore not renamed it.

118 We are unable to comment on the Council's electoral cycle as this is outside our remit and is the responsibility of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

*Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden and Goudhurst, Lamberhurst & Horsmonden*

119 We received a significant number of submissions for this area in addition to the borough-wide comments. These included submissions from councillors Linda Hall, David Knight and Beverley Palmer, Brenchley & Matfield, Goudhurst, Hawkhurst and Lamberhurst parish councils, Goudhurst & Kilndown Local History Society and many residents.

120 The Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, others did not. Some respondents objected to the reduction in council size because the wards covered a larger geographical area with the same number of councillors. Others advocated for smaller wards in this rural part of the local authority area. Almost all the respondents objected to the splitting of Goudhurst parish area across two borough wards on community identity grounds. We were told that Kilndown residents in the south of Goudhurst parish look to Goudhurst village in the north for their shopping and other needs and that they had common issues and interests, including traffic issues. We also heard that both communities shared clubs, held joint events and that the churches in both villages are part of a joint benefice. In its response, Goudhurst Parish Council included a petition signed by 30 residents which called for a 'community-based warding for local representation' in addition to the inclusion of Kilndown and Goudhurst villages in the same ward.

121 After consideration of the compelling evidence we received about the community identity across the whole of Goudhurst, we considered that it would be desirable to unite the parish in a single ward. We considered a number of different

ways for how we could best do this which would provide the best balance of our statutory criteria. We also considered how we could do this while retaining three-councillor wards in the area.

122 The Conservatives proposed single-councillor Goudhurst and Horsmonden wards, coterminous with the parishes of the same name. They also proposed a two-councillor Brenchley & Lamberhurst ward which included the eastern part of Paddock Wood parish to improve its electoral equality. While its Goudhurst ward had good electoral equality, its proposed Horsmonden ward was forecast to have 19% fewer electors than the average for the borough. Its proposed Brenchley & Lamberhurst ward is forecast to have 13% fewer electors than the borough average and it further split Paddock Wood parish across wards. We were not persuaded to adopt this proposal.

123 Hawkhurst Parish Council also proposed a single-councillor Goudhurst ward coterminous with the parish. To accommodate this, it proposed an increase in the number of councillors for Tunbridge Wells. It acknowledged that the resultant rural ward to the west of Goudhurst would have poor electoral equality but was of the view that it is justified because of its geographical size. However, we note that in addition to a forecast variance of -18% for the resultant three-councillor Rural Tunbridge Wells ward, increasing the council size to 40 has a knock-on effect and worsens the variances of some other wards elsewhere in the borough. For example, Rusthall & Speldhurst's and Southborough & Bidborough's variances would become 15% and 11%, respectively.

124 We considered a two-councillor Rural Tunbridge Wells ward, but this was forecast to have 21% more electors than the average for the council. This variance is very high and we did not consider this was justified.

125 The Labour Party's proposed two wards: Goudhurst, Horsmonden & Matfield ward in the north and Lamberhurst, Hawkhurst & Sandhurst to the south. Goudhurst parish remained split across two borough wards and its Goudhurst, Horsmonden & Matfield ward also had 13% fewer electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells. In light of this still dividing Goudhurst parish, we did not adopt its proposal.

126 After careful consideration of the evidence we received we have decided to include the whole of Goudhurst parish in the rural ward to its west. We note that this produces a ward with 15% more electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells, but due to the community evidence supporting the inclusion of Goudhurst parish in one ward, we consider that this is the best balance of our statutory criteria in this rural part of the borough. The resultant ward to the east is forecast to have 5% fewer electors than the average for Tunbridge Wells. We consider Goudhurst parish has sufficient links to parishes to the west and that it is preferable to unite the whole parish in one ward. Overall, this provides the best balance of the statutory criteria.

We have been persuaded that the excellent evidence of community identity for Goudhurst parish justifies the 15% variance that this ward will have.

127 There were a number of proposals about the names of the wards in this area. Hawkhurst Parish Council suggested that the ward which it was a part of be renamed Weald or Tunbridge Wells Weald. The Liberal Democrats suggest that this ward be named Hawkhurst & Bedgebury after the largest settlement in the area and Bedgebury Forest.

128 At the same time, a resident proposed that Rural Tunbridge Wells be renamed Goudhurst, Lamberhurst & Horsmonden or Central High Weald ward. Another resident suggested Tiese Valley while the Liberal Democrats proposed Weald Villages.

129 It appears that the Weald or High Weald area extends further than either of these wards. We are also not sure if residents of these wards would identify with Bedgebury or Tiese Valley. Therefore, we have decided to name the wards after all or most of the constituent parishes. However, if there is a desire to change ward names in the five years following a review, a local authority may seek the Commission's agreement to change the name of a ward if this reflects community identity and sentiment. After five years, a local authority may make a change without seeking the agreement of the Commission.





## Conclusions

130 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Tunbridge Wells, referencing the 2022 and 2028 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

### Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2022	2028
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	14	14
Average number of electors per councillor	2,186	2,334
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

#### Final recommendations

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council should be made up of 39 councillors serving 14 wards representing 12 three-councillor wards, one two-councillor ward and one single-councillor ward. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

#### Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Tunbridge Wells on our interactive maps at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

### Parish electoral arrangements

131 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that

each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

132 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

133 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Paddock Wood and Southborough.

134 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Paddock Wood parish.

#### Final recommendations

Paddock Wood Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Paddock Wood East	7
Paddock Wood South	1
Paddock Wood West	5

135 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Southborough parish.

#### Final recommendations

Southborough Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Southborough East	1
Southborough High Brooms	5
Southborough North	7
Southborough West	5

## What happens next?

136 We have now completed our review of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2024.



## Equalities

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



# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Final recommendations for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden	3	5,579	1,860	-15%	6,041	2,014	-14%
2	Culverden	3	6,192	2,064	-6%	6,391	2,130	-9%
3	Goudhurst, Lamberhurst & Horsmonden	3	7,761	2,587	18%	8,051	2,684	15%
4	Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden	3	6,394	2,131	-3%	6,671	2,224	-5%
5	High Brooms	1	2,403	2,403	10%	2,500	2,500	7%
6	Paddock Wood	3	6,176	2,059	-6%	7,337	2,446	5%
7	Pantiles	3	6,819	2,273	4%	7,133	2,378	2%
8	Park	3	6,417	2,139	-2%	6,839	2,280	-2%
9	Pembury & Capel	3	6,281	2,094	-4%	7,450	2,483	6%
10	Rusthall & Speldhurst	3	7,505	2,502	14%	7,844	2,615	12%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2022)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Sherwood	3	6,234	2,078	-5%	6,603	2,201	-6%
12 Southborough & Bidborough	3	7,311	2,437	11%	7,597	2,532	8%
13 St James'	3	6,025	2,008	-8%	6,286	2,095	-10%
14 St John's	2	4,174	2,087	-5%	4,291	2,146	-8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>85,271</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>91,034</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,186</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,334</b>	<b>-</b>

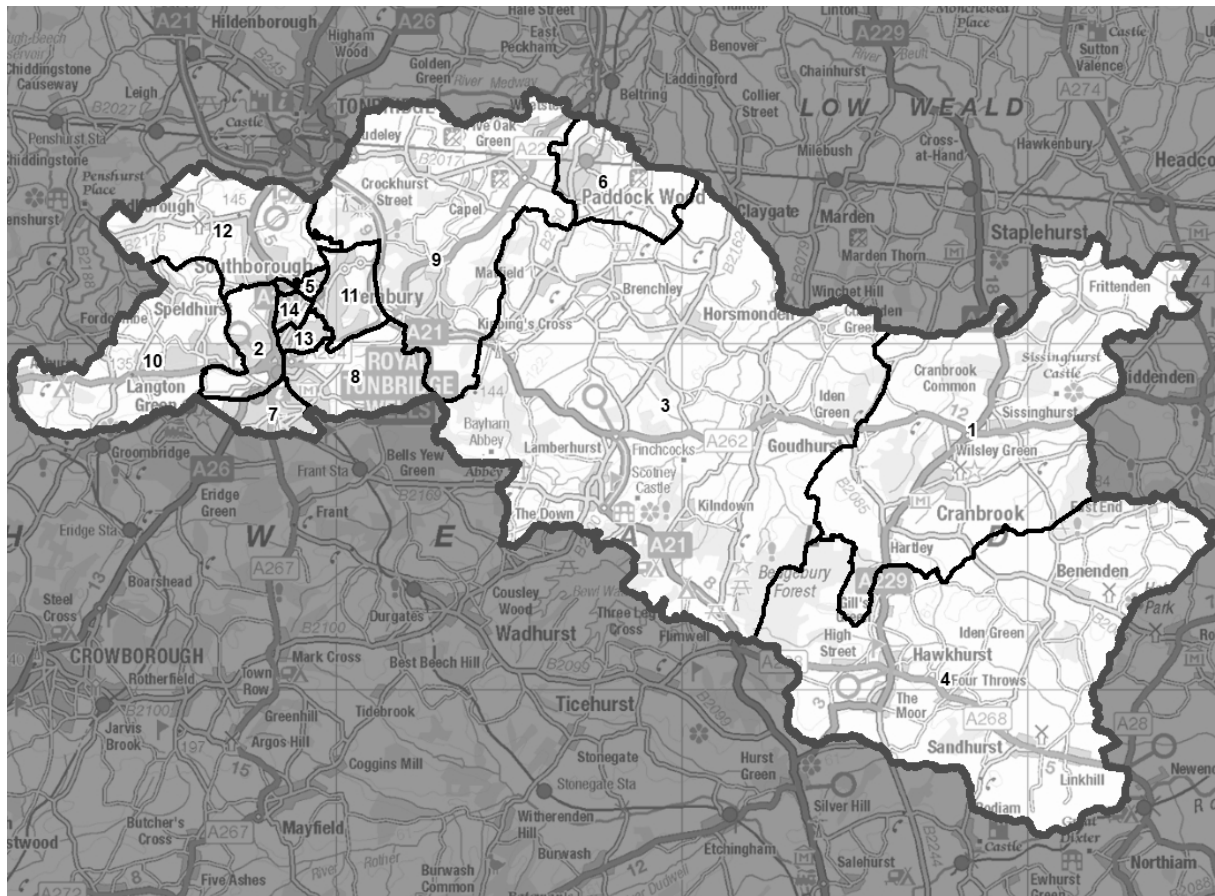
Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower-than-average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



## Appendix B

### Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Cranbrook, Sissinghurst & Frittenden
2	Culverden
3	Goudhurst, Lamberhurst & Horsmonden
4	Hawkhurst, Sandhurst & Benenden
5	High Brooms
6	Paddock Wood
7	Pantiles
8	Park
9	Pembury & Capel
10	Rusthall & Speldhurst
11	Sherwood
12	Southborough & Bidborough
13	St James'
14	St John's

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: [www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/tunbridge-wells](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/tunbridge-wells)

## Appendix C

### Submissions received

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

[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/tunbridge-wells](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/tunbridge-wells)

#### *Political Groups*

- Paddock Wood Labour Party
- Southborough & High Brooms Branch Labour Party
- Tunbridge Wells Conservative Association
- Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party
- Tunbridge Wells Green Party
- Tunbridge Wells Liberal Democrats

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor A. Bullion (Southborough Town Council)
- Councillor L. Everitt (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Francis (Southborough Town Council)
- Councillor D. Funnell (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Councillor L. Hall (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Councillor D. Hill (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Southborough Town Council)
- Councillor D. Knight (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Goudhurst Parish Council)
- Councillor A. Lewis (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Southborough Town Council)
- Councillor B. Palmer (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
- Councillor H. Patterson (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Capel Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Prance (Southborough Town Council)
- Councillor P. Roberts (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)

#### *Local Organisations*

- Goudhurst & Kildown Local History Society
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum
- Southborough & District Lions Club
- Southborough & High Brooms District Overseas Friendship Association
- St Matthew's Church

### *Parish and Town Councils*

- Brenchley & Matfield Parish Council
- Capel Parish Council
- Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council
- Goudhurst Parish Council
- Hawkhurst Parish Council
- Lamberhurst Parish Council
- Paddock Wood Town Council
- Rusthall Parish Council
- Southborough Town Council
- Speldhurst Parish Council

### *Local Residents*

- 145 local residents

### *Anonymous*

- One

## Appendix D

### Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority.
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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