

New electoral arrangements for Newcastle City Council Draft Recommendations

July 2024

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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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.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Liz Treacy
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why Newcastle?

7 We are conducting a review of Newcastle City Council ('the Council') as 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 Newcastle 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 city.

Our proposals for Newcastle

9 Newcastle should be represented by 78 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Newcastle should have 26 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of 23 wards should change; three will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the City or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for an 10-week period, from 9 July 2024 to 16 September 2024. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

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

16 You have until 9 September 2024 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 31 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

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

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
16 January 2024	Number of councillors decided
23 January 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
1 April 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
9 July 2024	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
16 September 2024	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
7 January 2025	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

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

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

	2023	2029
Electorate of Newcastle	186,079	200,854
Number of councillors	78	78
Average number of electors per councillor	2,386	2,575

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Newcastle are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2029.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2029, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2024. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 8% by 2029.

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

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

26 Our mapping tool uses geocoded electoral registers supplied by the Council to locate electors, by associating addresses with specific geographic coordinates. It considers each elector's location to produce precise elector counts for each ward. There can be very slight differences between the electorate figures published on our website at the beginning of the review and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 Newcastle City Council currently has 78 councillors. We looked at evidence provide by the Council's Labour Group ('the Labour Group'), Newcastle Liberal Democrats, Newcastle Independents and Chapel ward councillors. We have been persuaded by the evidence submitted by the Labour Group and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 78 councillors. As Newcastle City Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. In each review of local authorities that elect by thirds, we will aim to deliver a pattern of three-member wards. However, in all cases this consideration will not take precedence over our other statutory criteria, and we will not recommend uniform patterns in the number of councillors per ward or division if, in our view or as is shown in evidence provided to us, it is not compatible with our other statutory criteria.

29 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. One resident supported maintaining the existing number of councillors, while two residents advocated for a reduction in the number of councillors.

30 A resident suggested that the number should be reduced by a third as there were fewer council and ward meetings and that this would save money without impacting on decision-making. They did not provide any details to support their claim and we did not accept their proposal. The other resident was of the view that there ought to be a 50% reduction in councillor numbers. They did not provide any evidence to show how the council would continue to function and meet its obligations with such a reduction. Therefore, we did not adopt their proposals and based our draft recommendations on a 78-councillor council.

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 39 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a city-wide scheme from the Newcastle Liberal Democrat Group ('the Liberal Democrats') and city-wide comments from the Labour Group.

32 The Labour Group provided a list of roads and geographical features that it considered hard boundaries. It also provided information about the different communities in Newcastle with an indication of which ones should be included in the same ward. In some cases it was specific about where it thought the boundaries ought to be.

33 The Liberal Democrats' scheme provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Newcastle. We carefully considered it and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

34 The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the city.

35 Our draft recommendations use the A1, A167, A696 and A1058 as strong and identifiable boundaries as proposed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats. The draft recommendations are based on the proposals and comments from both political groups, but mostly use the specific boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

36 They also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas, we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

37 We conducted a virtual tour of the area in order to look at the various proposals on the ground. This helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

38 Our draft recommendations are for 26 three-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

39 The tables and maps on pages 9–28 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Newcastle. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

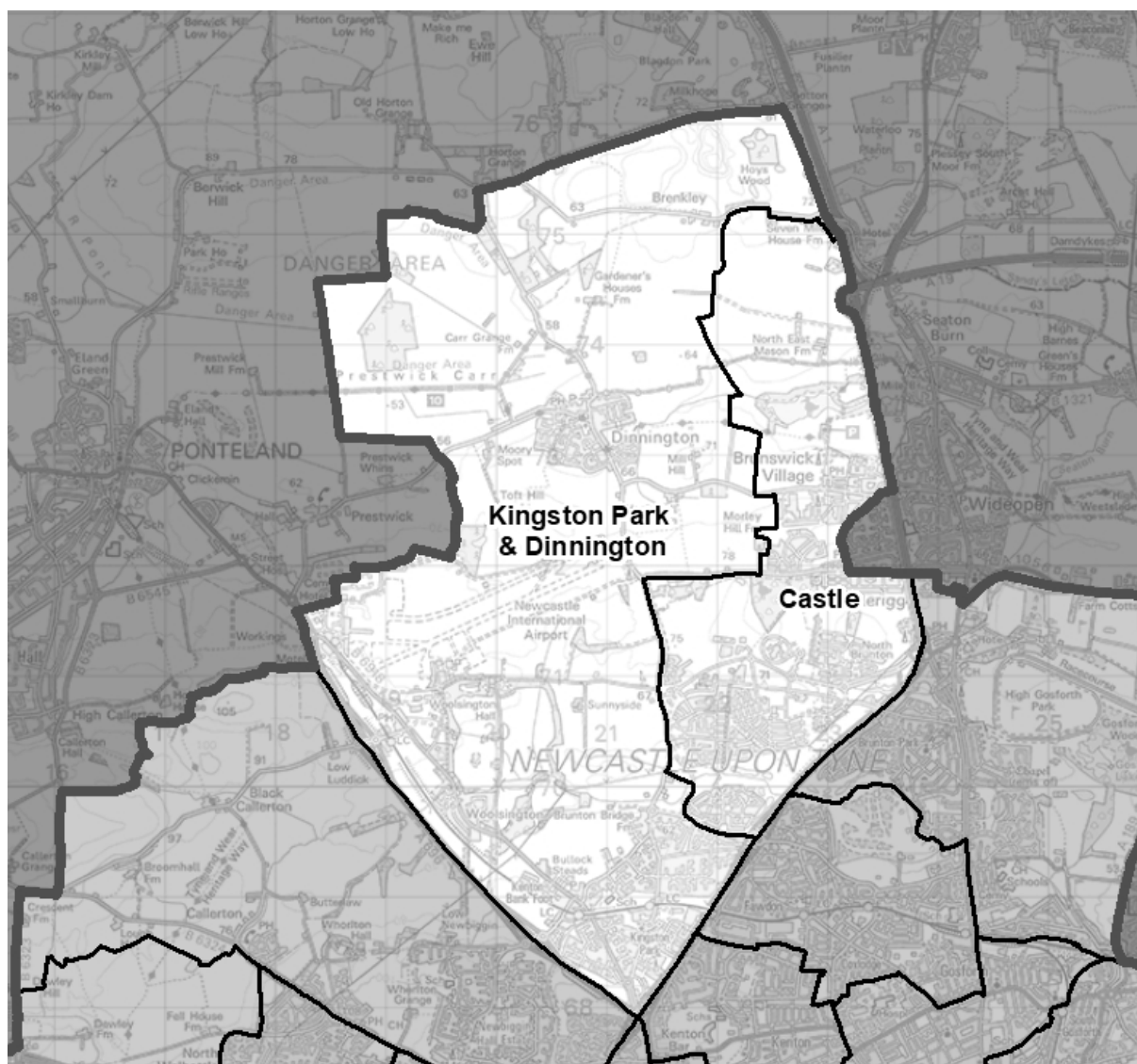
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

40 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 37 and on the large map accompanying this report.

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

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Northwest



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Castle	3	-2%
Kingston Park & Dinnington	3	3%

Castle and Kingston Park & Dinnington

42 In addition to the city-wide comments, we received a submission from Hazelrigg Parish Council and three residents about this area.

43 The Labour Group advocated for a Great Park & the Villages ward and a Kingston Park ward. The group stated that Hazelrigg village and the Great Park were connected via Havannah Nature Reserve. It expressed the view that all three northern villages (Brunswick, Dinnington and Hazelrigg) used services in the Great Park. The Labour Group acknowledged that this would be a large ward but it felt that splitting up the villages or the Great Park would break community ties.

44 It stated that Kingston Park ward should unite the community which is currently split across three wards and also include the residents of the new developments in Callerton which, although in Woolsington parish, are developing their own community centred around Kingston Park.

45 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Castle ward comprised of Newcastle Great Park and two of the three villages, Brunswick and Hazelrigg, on electoral equality grounds. They stated that their Kingston Park & Dinnington ward unites all of Kingston Park in a single ward, instead of including a part of Kingston Park with Newbiggin Hall across the A696, where in their view 'there are not strong community ties'.

46 Hazelrigg Parish Council advocated for a Castle ward which included all three northern villages based on what it said were the close ties between them due to their proximity to each other and the local issues and characteristics they shared.

47 A resident advocated for the whole of Kingston Park and Bank Foot to be included in the same ward. Two other residents did not want any part of Kingston Park to be in the same ward with Newbiggin Hall because in their view they did not share any issues or have any community ties.

48 We carefully considered the evidence we received. We have not been persuaded to include the Callerton development, just north of the B6324 Stamfordham Road, in a ward with Kingston Park. To include it we would have to create a ward which crosses the A696. On our virtual tour we noted that the A696 is a significant road and a strong and identifiable boundary. We note that the Labour Group list it as a potential boundary.

49 To keep the three villages in a single ward, we considered creating a ward which consisted only of the villages. This produced a ward with very poor electoral equality; more than 45% fewer electors than the average for Newcastle City Council, by 2029.

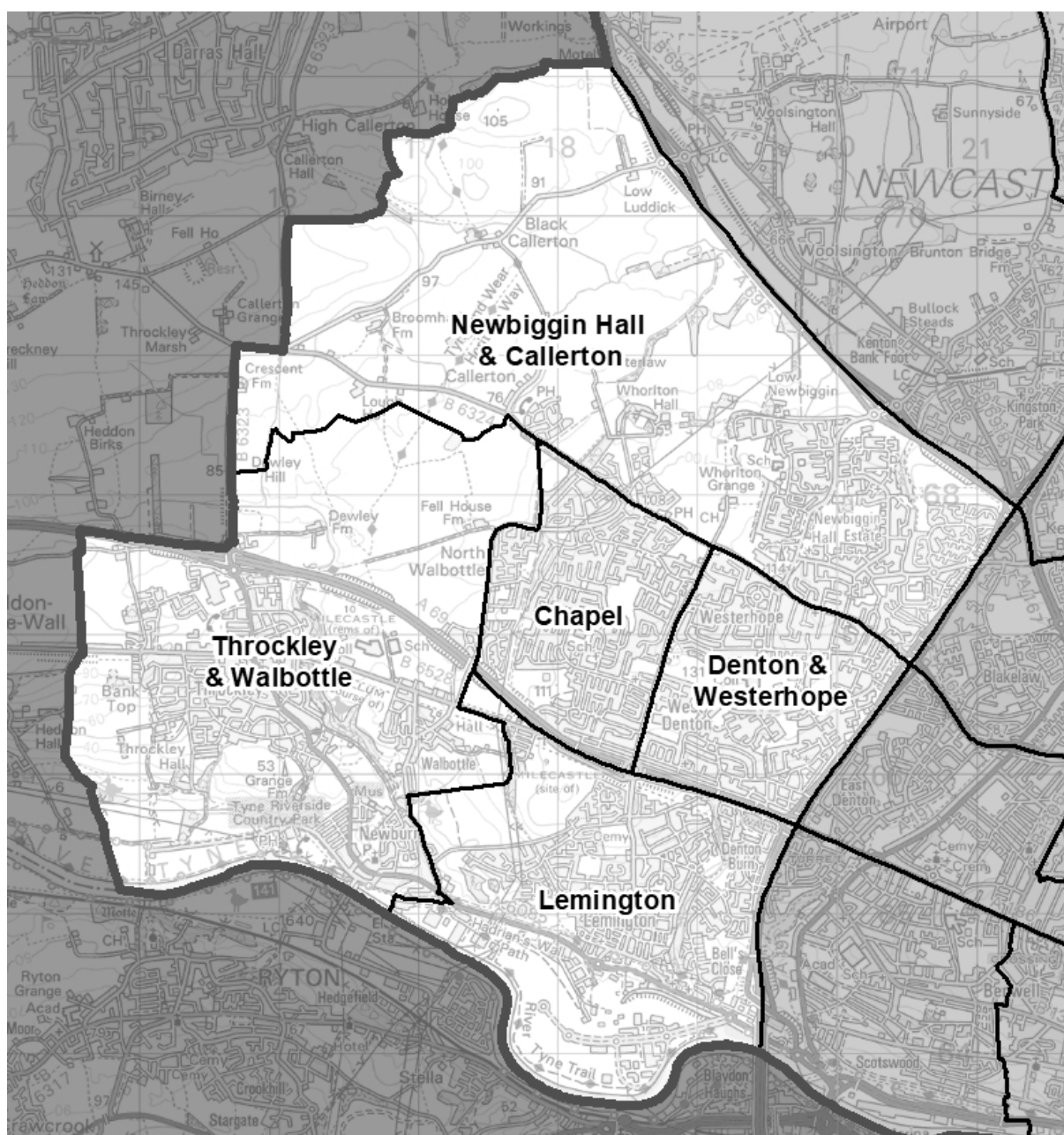
50 We also considered a ward made up of the villages and the Great Park, as suggested by the Labour Group. This also produced a ward with poor electoral equality; 24% more than the average for the local authority area. We consider these variances too high and have not adopted these proposed wards as part of our draft recommendations.

51 At the same time we noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposal for this area unites Kingston Park, uses strong boundaries and both wards have good electoral equality. Although they did not place the three villages in the same ward, they did not split any of them between wards. Neither did the proposal split Great Park.

52 We considered this was the best balance of our statutory criteria and have been persuaded to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations.

53 Castle and Kingston Park & Dinnington wards are forecast to have 2% fewer and 3% more electors, respectively, than the average for Newcastle by 2029.

Southwest & West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Chapel	3	-1%
Denton & Westerhope	3	6%
Lemington	3	1%
Newbiggin Hall & Callerton	3	7%
Throckley & Walbottle	3	0%

Chapel and Throckley & Walbottle

54 We received submissions from three residents in addition to the city-wide submissions.

55 The Labour Group proposed a Chapel ward similar to the existing one, but which excluded the 'new lower Callerton Estate'. This estate, it said, should be linked to Hexham Road on the other side of the A69, which would strengthen relationships with the communities in Throckley and Walbottle. It was of the view that the villages of Newburn, Throckley and Walbottle are intrinsically linked together, with people attending local schools and utilising the two centres in Throckley and Newburn. It proposed that North Walbottle Road should be the boundary between these wards.

56 This appears to be identical to the Liberal Democrats' proposal. The Liberal Democrats also proposed including the significant new development to the west of the existing Chapel ward into a ward with Walbottle 'where there are close North Walbottle connections'. Their proposed Throckley & Walbottle ward was also comprised of Newburn, Throckley and Walbottle because of what they say are the good community and geographical ties between the communities.

57 A resident advocated for the retention of the existing Chapel ward because, among other things, it has good transport within it and 'works well'. Another resident stated that the existing Callerton & Throckley ward comprised different communities which did not have strong relationships with one another and that transport links were not strong.

58 We have noted the support for most of the boundaries of the existing Chapel ward and as part of our draft recommendations have adopted the identical proposals from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrats for Chapel ward.

59 Our draft recommendations' Throckley & Walbottle ward is based on the specific boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats, and in line with comments from the Labour Group. We make one minor modification by moving a short stretch of the northeastern boundary with Lemington ward to run along the bridge over the A69 and North Walbottle Road. This gives residents of the new estate in Lower Callerton vehicular access to the rest of their ward to the south. We considered moving this boundary further east to run immediately west of the Bus Depot on Hawthorn Terrace B6528. We welcome comments on whether we should do this.

60 Chapel ward is forecast to have 1% fewer electors than the average for the city, in 2029. Throckley & Walbottle ward is forecast to have a similar number of electors than the average for the local authority area.

Denton & Westerhope and Newbiggin Hall & Callerton

61 In addition to the city-wide proposals and comments for this area, we received submissions from three residents.

62 The Labour Group described a Newbiggin Hall & Westerhope ward which had Westerhope Village and the shopping area in Newbiggin Hall as the two centres of

the proposed ward. It also proposed a West Denton & Hillheads ward which it said retained the West Denton community in a single ward, combined with Hillheads.

63 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Denton & Westerhope ward based on the existing ward. This proposed ward retains all but the northern boundary of the existing ward which they move south to run along Stamfordham Road.

64 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a Newbiggin Hall & Callerton ward which has a 'more logical community boundary and maintains good electoral equality'. They expressed the view that it also facilitates the breakup of the existing Throckley & Callerton ward, which in their view covers too large an area and does not represent communities very well.

65 The residents were of the view that Newbiggin Hall should not be in the same ward with any part of Kingston Park. One resident stated that this was an opportunity to create a more coherent ward focused on Callerton and the areas immediately surrounding it.

66 On careful consideration, we note that both city-wide submissions propose the breakup of the existing Callerton & Throckley ward on community identity grounds. Furthermore, there appears to be a consensus from all the respondents that Newbiggin Hall and the south of Kingston Park are different communities which do not share community ties.

67 We note that the boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats in this area are strong and identifiable, result in wards with good electoral equality and, based on the evidence received, do not split communities. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on their proposals.

68 Although the Labour Group did not provide specific boundaries for its wards in this area, we note that our draft recommendations use two of its hard boundaries and two of its suggested potential boundaries for Denton & Westerhope ward.

69 Denton & Westerhope and Newbiggin Hall & Callerton wards are forecast to have 6% and 7% more electors respectively than the average for the city by 2029.

70 We note that the Labour Group proposed different names for its wards in this area and we welcome comments on the names of these wards as well as the boundaries.

Lemington

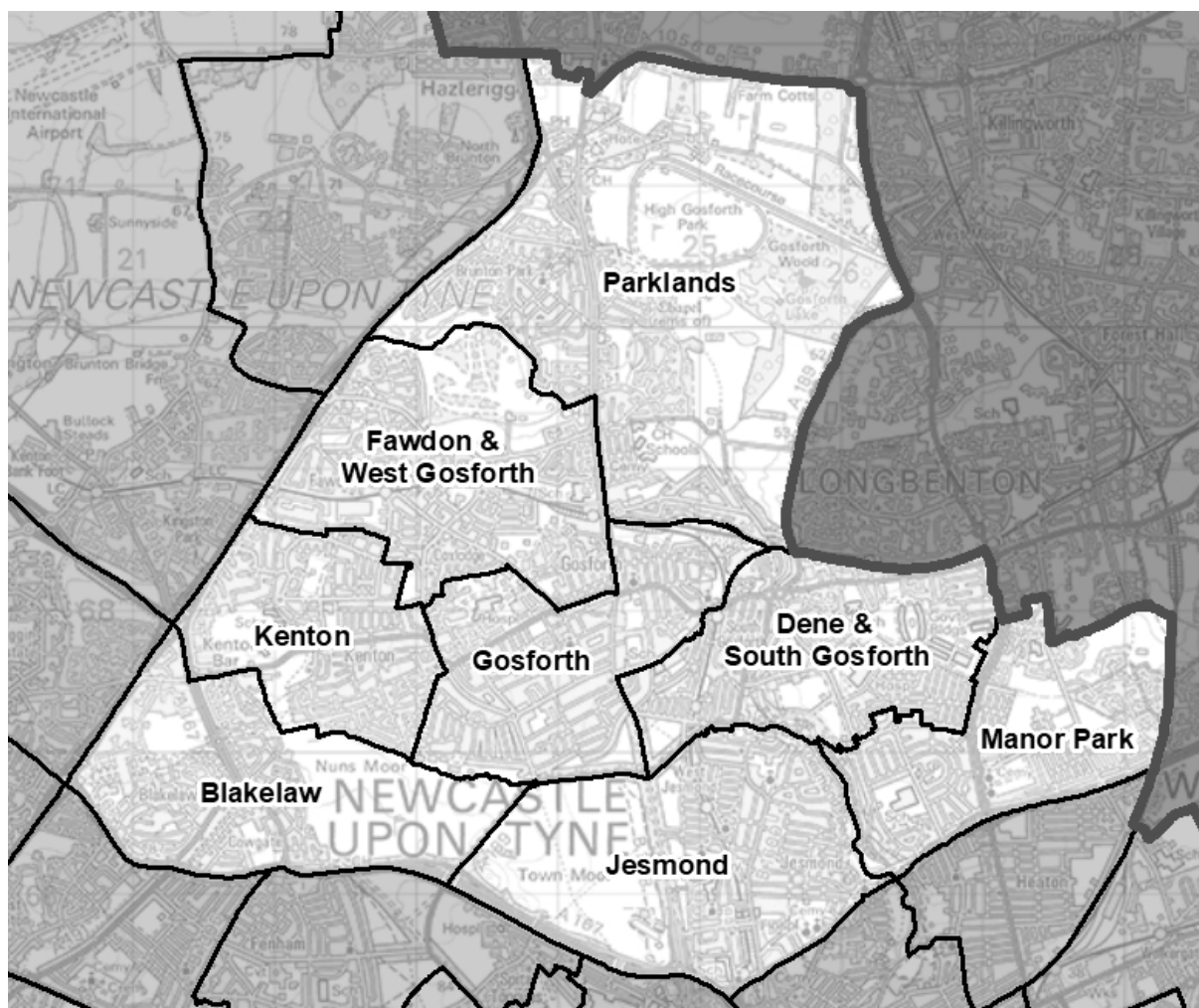
71 The two city-wide proposals were the only submissions we received for Lemington. Both proposed retaining the boundaries of the existing ward.

72 The Labour Group explained that Lemington is constrained by the A1 to the east, the A69 to the north and that there is a clear boundary to the west as a result of the large open space between Lemington and Walbottle. We note that it is also constrained by the city boundary to the south.

73 We are therefore content to adopt the identical proposals from the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrats for this ward, with one modification. As mentioned in the section on Throckley & Walbottle, we move a short stretch of its northwestern boundary to run along the bridge over the A69 (North Walbottle Road) to provide vehicular access to residents in the north and south of the neighbouring ward to the west.

74 Lemington ward is forecast to have 1% more electors than the average for the local authority area, by 2029.

Northeast and central



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Blakelaw	3	-7%
Dene & South Gosforth	3	4%
Fawdon & West Gosforth	3	9%
Gosforth	3	9%
Jesmond	3	-6%
Kenton	3	-1%
Manor Park	3	-5%
Parklands	3	-2%

Blakelaw

75 We received one submission from a resident in addition to the city-wide submissions we received about this area.

76 The Labour Group was of the view that the communities in this area, namely Blakelaw, Cowgate, North Fenham and a more peripheral community to the

northeast, work well. It stated that activities concentrated around the new sports hub, the Blakelaw Centre, English Martyrs Church, the Cowgate Centre and Cowgate Cricket Club. Labour did not appear to be suggesting any changes to the existing ward.

77 The Liberal Democrats also did not propose any changes to the boundaries of the existing ward.

78 In view of this, we have adopted the existing ward as part of our draft recommendations. Blakelaw ward is forecast to have 7% fewer electors than the average for Newcastle City Council, by 2029.

79 A resident proposed that the ward be renamed Blakelaw & Cowgate ward for community identity reasons. We have not done this as part of the draft recommendations because we are unable to tell if this name will resonate more widely. We therefore invite comments, specifically as to whether or not Blakelaw & Cowgate is an appropriate name for this ward.

Dene & South Gosforth and Manor Park

80 We received two submissions from residents in addition to the city-wide ones, for this area.

81 The Labour Group and the two residents were of the view that the existing Dene & South Gosforth ward included two separate communities, and should therefore be split. The Labour Group stated that the area west of Haddricks Mill Road/Jesmond Dene Road was part of Gosforth while the area to the east was a different community with children attending schools in Heaton and not Gosforth. It suggested that we include residents on both sides of Benton Road and Newton Road in a Dene ward. It also suggested that the existing Manor Park ward could be replaced with a ward containing 'Cochrane Park, Victoria Glade, Haydon Grange, Wills Building, the Spinney and the bungalows area and other housing to the south of the coast road'. A resident also proposed a North Heaton/Manor Park ward that crossed Coast Road (A1058) and the creation of an East Gosforth ward similar to what existed before the last electoral review.

82 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Dene & South Gosforth ward based on the existing one. The main difference to existing boundaries was that they proposed moving part of the western boundary from Moor Road South and behind properties on the eastern side of The Grove to run behind the properties on the western side of The Grove. Like the Labour Group, they exclude Jesmond Dene from this ward.

83 We noted the comments we received and considered the possibility of creating a ward that crossed the A1058 Coast Road. However, on our virtual tour of this road, we noted that it was a significant road which for the most part is more suited to being

a boundary, as there were very few crossings. We also noted that the A1058 'from Jesmond Road to the local authority boundary' was suggested as being a hard boundary by the Labour Group. After careful consideration, we were not persuaded to create a ward that crossed it.

84 We considered creating a Dene ward along the lines proposed by Labour, taking in both sides of Benton Road and extending the southern boundary to the A1058 Coast Road. While this produced a Dene ward with good electoral equality, the resulting Manor Park ward was forecast to have very poor electoral equality with 42% fewer electors than the average for the city.

85 We also considered creating three two-councillor wards: Dene, East Gosforth and Gosforth to take in the Gosforth, South Gosforth and Dene area. These wards would be forecast to have 16% fewer, 20% more and 15% more electors than the average for the local authority area by 2029.

86 Furthermore, we considered splitting the Dene and South Gosforth area into a single-councillor South Gosforth and a two-councillor Dene ward, with a boundary along Haddricks Mill Road. This also produced wards with poor electoral equality: -16% and 44%, respectively, as well as departing from the presumption of three-member wards.

87 We considered all these variances too high and did not create any such wards. Therefore, after careful consideration, as part of our draft recommendations, we have adopted the Liberal Democrats' proposals with one main modification. We propose to move a stretch of the western boundary to run along The Grove until the junction with Stoneyhurst Road West. After here the boundary runs behind numbers 46 to 68 The Grove. Our virtual tour persuaded us that this was a more identifiable boundary than what was proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

88 While we note that the area east of Haddricks Mill Road may be a different community from those to the west, we consider that this is the best balance of our statutory criteria. In order to balance our criteria, we sometimes have to include different communities in a single ward.

89 Manor Park ward is based on the existing ward, with its western boundary moved to run along the Ouseburn River east of the Jesmond Dene Road Allotments and west of Red Walk.

90 Dene & South Gosforth and Manor Park wards are forecast to have 4% more and 5% fewer electors, respectively, than the average for the local authority area by 2029.

Fawdon & West Gosforth, Gosforth and Parklands

91 In addition to the city-wide comments and proposals for this area, we received two submissions from residents.

92 The Labour Group stated that much of this area looked to Gosforth High Street for shopping, and that although Fawdon had its own shopping area, it was also linked to Gosforth through the education system.

93 The Liberal Democrats sought to reduce Parklands ward for electoral equality reasons, in a way that in their view 'balances community boundaries'.

94 To do this, they proposed moving Grange Estate into Fawdon & West Gosforth ward. They also moved an area between Salters Road, Kenton Road, Jubilee Road and St Nicholas Park into Gosforth ward. Finally, they suggested moving residents of The Grove, Roseworth Avenue and Roseworth Crescent into Dene & Gosforth ward. In their view, the residents around The Grove could see themselves as either Gosforth or South Gosforth.

95 As mentioned in the section on Dene & South Gosforth, a resident suggested that we consider creating an East Gosforth ward similar to what existed before the last electoral review. They were of the view that this would include some electors from Parklands ward, thereby facilitating good electoral equality in Parklands. However, as explained earlier, we have not been persuaded to create a ward that crosses the A1058. Instead, we have been persuaded to retain most of the boundaries of Dene & South Gosforth ward.

96 On careful consideration of the proposed boundaries for the wards in this area, we note that they are mostly identifiable and they produce wards with good electoral equality. We consider that the communities in this built-up area of the city are interconnected and will share some facilities between them. We consider that the proposed wards reflect this.

97 Accordingly, we are content to adopt the boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats with one modification as described in the section on Dene & South Gosforth.

98 Fawdon & West Gosforth and Gosforth wards are both forecast to have 9% more electors than the average for the local authority area by 2029. Parklands ward is forecast to have 2% fewer electors.

99 A resident pointed out that a section of the boundary between the existing Gosforth and Kenton wards ran along The Croft. They noted that residents of The Croft were in Kenton ward while the nearby Kenton Park Shopping Centre was in Gosforth ward. They stated that residents of The Croft only received information

about issues and events in Gosforth ward, not for Kenton. In their view, residents of The Croft ought to be included in Gosforth or election distribution lists should be updated so they are sent information about Kenton ward.

100 We note these comments but also note that distribution lists and sending of information is a matter for the Council and councillors. We are content that the boundary in that area is strong and identifiable.

Jesmond

101 We received submissions from Jesmond Residents' Association and six residents in addition to the comments from the Labour Group and Liberal Democrats. Under the existing arrangements, there is a Jesmond North ward and a Jesmond South ward. Both city-wide proposals advocated a single ward in this area, as did some of the residents.

102 The Labour Group described a Jesmond community that is bounded by the Town Moor to the west and by Jesmond Dene to the east which in its view creates hard boundaries between communities and for transport. It stated that in a part of the south, the A167 (M) Central Motorway separates the community from the City Centre, and also to the south the A1058 Jesmond Road is a significant barrier between communities on either side. The group advocated a ward that brings together this community and that includes Jesmond Dene.

103 The Liberal Democrats also shared the view that the A1058 and the A167(M) are strong boundaries in this area. Their proposals appeared to share many similarities with what Labour described. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Jesmond ward had boundaries along Great North Road to the west, Jesmond Dene Road to the north, the A1058 to the south, the A167(M) in the southwest and through Jesmond Dene to the east.

104 Jesmond Residents' Association preferred that North Jesmond and South Jesmond wards remain unchanged. Together with a resident, they expressed concern that we calculate electoral variances based on the number of electors rather than the total population. The residents' association believe that low registration by young people, and thus low elector figures, explain why there is such poor electoral equality forecast for these and a few other wards in the city.

105 Three of the residents supported the creation of a single Jesmond ward. One of them specified that the A1058 should be the southern boundary. Another resident specifically advocated for Chester Street, Gladstone Terrace and other neighbouring streets to be excluded from a Jesmond ward on community identity grounds.

106 We note the Jesmond Residents' Association's comments about young people not being on the electoral register and thereby skewing the electoral variances. We

are required by law to consider not the total population, but the number of electors within each ward, and we have therefore not adopted the approach suggested by the residents' association.

107 On careful consideration of the submissions we received, we considered that the boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats reflect the fact that the Jesmond community does not appear to extend south of the A1058, in line with the comments from the Labour Group and a resident. On our virtual tour, we confirmed that the A1058 was a strong boundary.

108 We also considered which ward to include Town Moor in. The Liberal Democrats included it in their proposed Wingrove ward. We note that there is some access to this shared space from three different wards. While we agree that the B1318 Great North Road is a strong boundary, we considered the A167 a more substantial boundary for the wards to the southwest of Jesmond. Accordingly, we have included Town Moor in Jesmond ward as part of our draft recommendations, and welcome comments on this. We considered whether to include it in Blakelaw ward to the west but decided against it at this stage. We also considered moving it into a ward directly to its south. We welcome comments on this too.

109 Our draft recommendations for Jesmond ward are based on the Liberal Democrats' boundaries with some modifications. We include Town Moor in this ward, and its eastern boundary runs along the Ouseburn River. Jesmond ward is forecast to have 6% fewer electors than the average for Newcastle City Council, by 2029. While it has strong boundaries and is forecast to have good electoral equality, we do note that the electoral variance may fluctuate due to registration rates among students.

Kenton

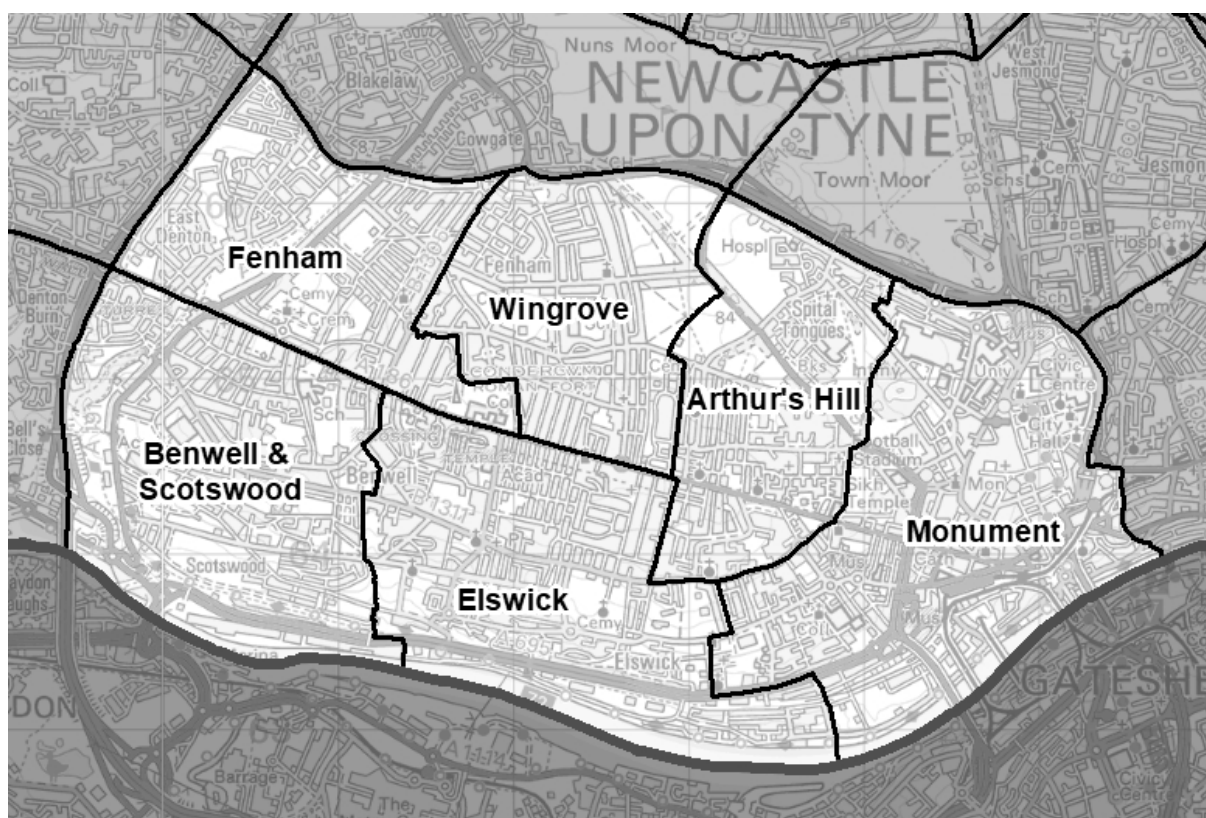
110 We received a submission from a resident in addition to the boundaries proposed by the Liberal Democrats for this area.

111 The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the boundaries of the existing ward. The resident proposed excluding The Croft from Kenton ward because residents never received any information about that ward. As mentioned in the section on Gosforth, the distribution of leaflets and information to residents in any particular ward is a matter for the Council and councillors.

112 We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundaries are a good balance of our statutory criteria. As they are the only proposals we received, we have adopted them as part of our draft recommendations.

113 Kenton ward is forecast to have 1% fewer electors than the average for the local authority area, by 2029.

Southcentral



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Arthur's Hill	3	-1%
Benwell & Scotswood	3	-5%
Elswick	3	-6%
Fenham	3	-9%
Monument	3	3%
Wingrove	3	-7%

Arthur's Hill, Benwell & Scotswood, Elswick and Monument

114 In addition to the city-wide comments, we received one submission from a resident.

115 The Labour Group advocated for the Spital Tongues area to be included in a single ward. It was of the view that the ward should also include Castle Leazes student accommodation which was currently part of Arthur's Hill ward. It also felt that given that Monument ward is a city centre ward addressing city centre concerns, the Newcastle Helix housing development should be included in Monument ward.

116 The Liberal Democrats proposed four wards in this area which in their view provided for good electoral equality but also took account of the sub communities in the Benwell, Scotswood and Elswick areas. Their proposed Arthur's Hill ward

crosses Westgate Road where they state that the natural community crosses the road. They state that their proposals for Monument ward simplifies the western boundary and allows room for growth should a proposed development go ahead. The Liberal Democrats were of the view that Benwell, Elswick and Scotswood were well defined to the north by West Road, but that they were less defined to the east, close to the city centre.

117 The resident was of the view that Hawthorn Terrace should be included in Monument ward instead of Elswick where it was at present.

118 We carefully considered the submissions we received. As part of our draft recommendations, we have been persuaded to include the Newcastle Helix housing development in a city centre-focused ward on the grounds that residents in this commercial and residential space in the heart of the city will look towards the centre of Newcastle for their facilities and community. This is in line with the Labour Group's proposal.

119 We have also been persuaded to unite Castle Leazes and Richardson Road student accommodation with Spital Tongues. We have included them in Arthur's Hill ward to facilitate an Arthur's Hill ward with good electoral equality because, without doing this, our modifications with regards to the Newcastle Helix area produced an Arthur's Hill ward forecast to have an electoral variance of -13%. However, at this stage we have not moved the boundary as far as Queen Victoria Road, east of the Royal Victoria Infirmary, because we did not want to split the University of Newcastle academic buildings across wards. We consider that the University will face similar issues in relation to those facilities. Therefore, we have maintained the existing boundary along Claremont Street. This means that some residents of Claremont Road to the east of Claremont Street are in a different ward from those to the west, as at present. We welcome comments with community evidence as to whether a boundary which runs along Queen Victoria Road and excludes the Royal Victoria Infirmary from Monument ward would better reflect communities in this area.

120 With regards to the south of West Road and Westgate Road, and the Liberal Democrats' proposed wards, we note that they have good electoral equality. On our virtual tour, we considered the boundaries along Bentinck Road and Elswick Road to be logical and identifiable. We are also of the view that the boundaries between Benwell & Scotswood and Elswick wards are logical. We note that the proposals place Hawthorn Terrace in Monument ward in line with the resident's comments. Accordingly, we have adopted them as part of our draft recommendations.

121 Our draft recommendations for these four wards are based on the Liberal Democrats' proposals with modifications to Arthur's Hill and Monument wards in line with the Labour Group's comments.

122 Arthur's Hill, Benwell & Scotswood and Elswick wards are forecast to have 1%, 5% and 6% fewer electors than the average for the local authority area respectively, by 2029. Monument is forecast to have 3% more electors by the same year.

Fenham and Wingrove

123 The city-wide submissions were the only ones we received for this area of Newcastle. Our draft recommendations are based on both of them.

124 The Labour Group described a Wingrove ward bordered by the A167 in the north, and West Road in the south. It was of the view that the Newcastle Campus for Ageing & Vitality was the natural eastern boundary. It advocated for the roads starting from Wingrove Avenue westwards to Baxter Avenue to be included in a single ward. It also stated that the area south of Fenham Hall Drive should not be split across wards and that Kingsway and Queensway should also be included in a single ward.

125 The group described the natural borders of West Fenham to be the A1, the A167 and West Road. It did not consider Netherby Drive, Silver Lonnen (A191) and Two Ball Lonnen as borders because in its view residents crossed them all the time to access schools.

126 The Liberal Democrats utilised many of the boundaries specified by Labour. They retained the existing wards in their entirety. These crossed Silver Lonnen and Netherby Drive and most of Two Ball Lonnen.

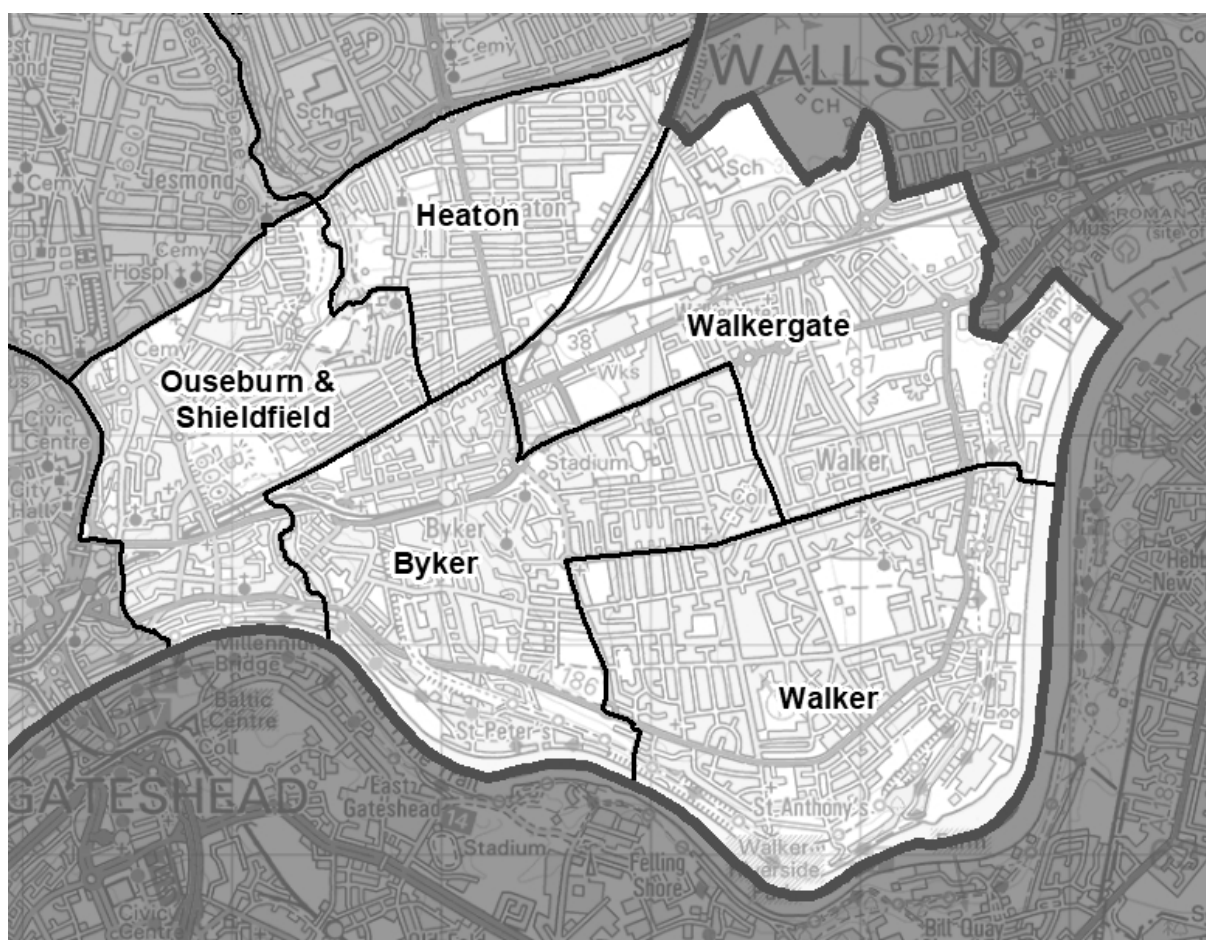
127 However, their proposed Wingrove ward crossed the A167 to include Town Moor. On careful consideration, we have not been persuaded to create a ward that crosses the A167. As mentioned in the section on Jesmond, we consider the A167 a strong and identifiable boundary and have used it as a boundary in this area. We have also included the area around Hunter's Road in Spital Tongues, in Arthur's Hill ward and not Wingrove.

128 Accordingly, in order to facilitate a Wingrove ward with good electoral equality, we move an area from Cedar Road up to Lonnen Avenue into Wingrove ward as part of our draft recommendations for this area.

129 The Labour Group suggested that West Fenham be renamed Fenham ward because there was no East, North or South Fenham wards. We are content to do so.

130 Fenham and Wingrove wards are forecast to have 9% and 7% fewer electors, respectively, than the average for Newcastle, by 2029.

Southeast



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2029
Byker	3	1%
Heaton	3	1%
Ouseburn & Shieldfield	3	5%
Walker	3	2%
Walkergate	3	0%

Byker, Walker and Walkergate

131 The city-wide submissions were the only ones we received for this area.

132 The Labour Group was of the view that the existing wards in this area worked well, were cohesive and were readily identified by local residents. Therefore, it requested that only minor changes be made to the wards to achieve good electoral equality in Walkergate ward. In its view, Welbeck Road was a focal point for the wider community and was not a boundary. It suggested changes between Walkergate and Walker along Welbeck Road as well as to the boundary between Walker and Byker at the Welbeck Road/Kingston Avenue boundary.

133 The Liberal Democrats also proposed minor changes to the existing wards for electoral equality purposes. They were of the view that the three wards had well-defined centres but that the crossover from one area to the next was not so clear.

134 Under their proposals the boundary between Byker and Walker wards would move from Flodden Street/Kingston Avenue to Allendale Road. This appears to be in line with Labour's suggestion. On our virtual tour, we considered that Allendale Road would make a good boundary. The verge and layout of the properties at the north end of the road and Harbottle Park to the south, make it identifiable. Accordingly, we have adopted this as part of our draft recommendations

135 The Liberal Democrats also proposed moving the boundary between Byker and Walkergate from Roman Avenue to Scrogg Road, north of Welbeck Road. We note that this is different from the Labour Group's suggestion to amend the Walker/Walkergate boundary along Welbeck Road.

136 We considered both options carefully and note the Labour Group's views that Welbeck Road is a focal point. We considered moving the boundary between Walker and Walkergate wards to run behind the properties on the northern side of Welbeck Road. However, we noted that this will still leave sections of the road as a boundary. For instance, the western end between Byker and Walker, and also east of the A186. This would make the boundary in this area less identifiable. Furthermore, with the changes already made to the boundary between Byker and Walker wards, doing this produced a Byker ward forecast to have 13% fewer electors than the average for Newcastle, by 2029. If we united the western end of Welbeck Road, then Byker ward would have 14% fewer electors than the average for Newcastle. Walkergate ward is forecast to have 10% more electors under these proposals. We decided against creating a Byker ward with poor electoral equality.

137 We are satisfied that Welbeck Road is an identifiable boundary. We suspect that it is a focal point for residents of more than one ward in this area.

138 We considered the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundary along Scrogg Road and came to the view that it was a good boundary. The three proposed wards all had good electoral equality. Accordingly, we have adopted these proposals as part of our draft recommendations, with one minor modification to the east of Welbeck Road where we unite the Baker Hughes – Newcastle Energy Technology Innovation Centre building in a single ward.

139 Byker and Walker are forecast to have 1% and 2% more electors than the average for the city respectively, by 2029. Walkergate ward is forecast to have the same number of electors as the average for the local authority area, by 2029.

Heaton

140 The city-wide submissions were the only ones we received for this area.

141 The Labour Group was of the view that Heaton was bounded by the Ouseburn River to the west, the A1058 Coast Road to the north and the railways to the south. It stated that the amenities for this area were located on Chillingham Road and Heaton Road. It proposed that Heaton Park be excluded from this ward.

142 The Liberal Democrats proposed a Heaton ward which was similar to the existing one except that it excluded Heaton Park. This ward was also centred around Chillingham Road and included most of Heaton Road, as at present. The Liberal Democrats were of the view that this ward already had good community boundaries and good electoral equality.

143 We note that the Labour Group's proposals appear to mirror the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundaries. We are therefore content to adopt this as part of our draft recommendations.

144 Heaton ward is forecast to have 1% more electors than the average for Newcastle City Council, by 2029.

Ouseburn & Shieldfield

145 In addition to the city-wide proposals, we received submissions from Dwellbeing Shieldfield, Shieldfield Art Works and four residents.

146 The Labour Group advocated for a ward which placed the 'Inner East' areas of Sandyford, Shieldfield and Battlefield in a single ward. It was of the view that they had an interconnected community bounded by the A167(M) and Jesmond Road. It advocated for the inclusion of Heaton Park in this ward.

147 The Liberal Democrats proposed an Ouseburn ward with the A1058 Jesmond Road as its northern boundary and the A167(M) and Argyle Street as its western boundary. They too were of the view that the A167(M) was a well-recognised boundary between communities and stated that using this boundary united the Shieldfield community. They also included Heaton Park in this ward.

148 A resident felt that Harrison Place, Gladstone Terrace, Chester Crescent, Portland Road, parts of Chester Street and the Milton Green estate were part of the Shieldfield area and ought to be included in a ward with the rest of their community rather than with Jesmond. This was in line with the proposals in the city-wide submissions.

149 On consideration of the submissions, we note that both city-wide proposals unite the communities in this area in a single ward. They also suggest the use of identical boundaries in places and include Heaton Park in this ward.

150 We agree that the A1058 Jesmond Road and the A167(M) are strong boundaries. We note that the Liberal Democrats use the Ouseburn River and the railway line as additional identifiable boundaries. We consider the proposed ward logical and coherent and are content to base our draft recommendations on both proposals, specifically the boundaries submitted by the Liberal Democrats. Heaton Park is included in this ward.

151 Dwellbeing Shieldfield, Shieldfield Art Works and a resident suggested that the ward be renamed Ouseburn & Shieldfield to reflect the community identity of a significant population in the ward. We are content to do this.

152 Ouseburn & Shieldfield ward is forecast to have 5% more electors than the average for the local authority area, by 2029.

Conclusions

153 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Newcastle, referencing the 2023 and 2029 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2023	2029
Number of councillors	78	78
Number of electoral wards	26	26
Average number of electors per councillor	2,386	2,575
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Newcastle City Council should be made up of 78 councillors serving 26 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for the Newcastle City Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Newcastle City Council on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

154 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.

155 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, Newcastle City 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.

156 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 Woolsington parish.

157 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Woolsington parish.

Draft recommendations

Woolsington Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bedeburn	3
Callerton	2
Newbiggin Hall	4
Woolsington & Bank Foot	3

Have your say

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

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

160 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say www.lgbce.org.uk

161 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

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

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

163 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Newcastle which delivers:

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

164 A good pattern of wards should:

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

165 Electoral equality:

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

166 Community identity:

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

167 Effective local government:

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

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

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

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

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

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Newcastle City Council in 2026.

Equalities

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

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Newcastle City Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arthur's Hill	3	7,472	2,491	4%	7,630	2,543	-1%
2	Benwell & Scotswood	3	6,245	2,082	-13%	7,320	2,440	-5%
3	Blakelaw	3	6,879	2,293	-4%	7,178	2,393	-7%
4	Byker	3	7,174	2,391	0%	7,789	2,596	1%
5	Castle	3	6,183	2,061	-14%	7,575	2,525	-2%
6	Chapel	3	7,317	2,439	2%	7,671	2,557	-1%
7	Dene & South Gosforth	3	7,684	2,561	7%	8,044	2,681	4%
8	Denton & Westerhope	3	7,813	2,604	9%	8,217	2,739	6%
9	Elswick	3	7,001	2,334	-2%	7,284	2,428	-6%
10	Fawdon & West Gosforth	3	8,131	2,710	14%	8,410	2,803	9%
11	Fenham	3	6,767	2,256	-5%	7,050	2,350	-9%
12	Gosforth	3	8,063	2,688	13%	8,417	2,806	9%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Heaton	3	7,210	2,403	1%	7,774	2,591	1%
14 Jesmond	3	6,993	2,331	-2%	7,225	2,408	-6%
15 Kenton	3	7,329	2,443	2%	7,664	2,555	-1%
16 Kingston Park & Dinnington	3	7,285	2,428	2%	7,985	2,662	3%
17 Lemington	3	7,078	2,359	-1%	7,796	2,599	1%
18 Manor Park	3	7,117	2,372	-1%	7,377	2,459	-5%
19 Monument	3	6,002	2,001	-16%	7,,974	2658	3%
20 Newbiggin Hall & Callerton	3	7,276	2,425	2%	8,287	2,762	7%
21 Ouseburn & Shieldfield	3	7,613	2,538	6%	8,083	2,694	5%
22 Parklands	3	7,263	2,421	1%	7,600	2,533	-2%
23 Throckley & Walbottle	3	6,458	2,153	-10%	7,752	2,584	0%
24 Walker	3	7,507	2,502	5%	7,852	2,617	2%
25 Walkergate	3	7,303	2,434	2%	7,730	2,577	0%

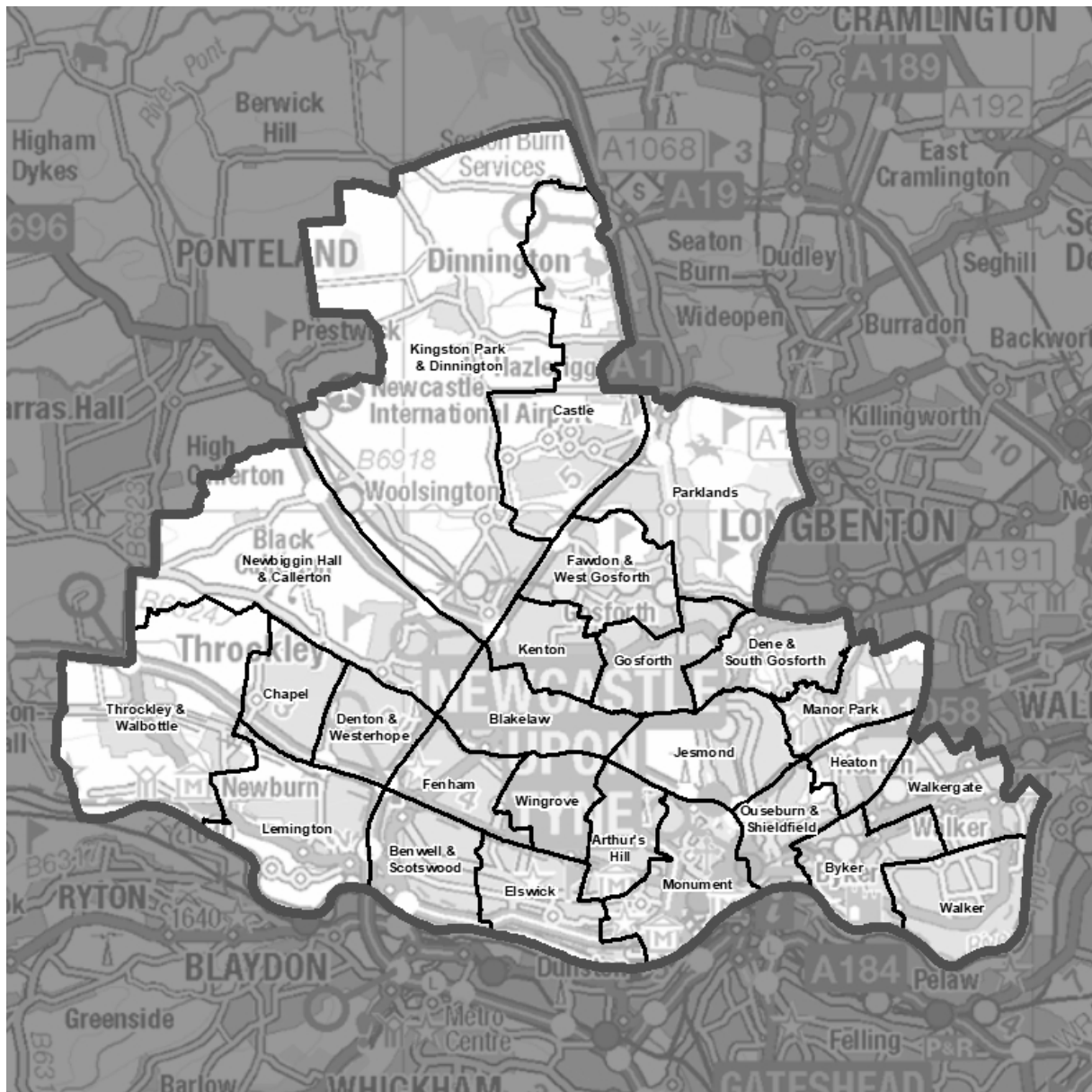
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2029)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Wingrove	3	6,916	2,305	-3%	7,170	2,390	-7%
Totals	78	186,079	–	–	200,854	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,387	–	–	2,575	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newcastle City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower-than-average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



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/newcastle-upon-tyne

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/newcastle-upon-tyne

Political Groups

- Newcastle City Council's Labour Group
- Newcastle City Council's Liberal Democrat Group

Local Organisations

- Dwellbeing Shieldfield (x2)
- Jesmond Residents' Association
- Shieldfield Art Works

Parish and Town Councils

- Hazlerigg Parish Council

Local Residents

- 32 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral 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 www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

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

Local Government Boundary Commission for
England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street, London
SW1H 0TL

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www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

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