



New electoral arrangements for Sandwell Council Draft Recommendations

March 2025

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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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Who we are and what we do	1
What is an electoral review?	1
Why Sandwell?	2
Our proposals for Sandwell	2
How will the recommendations affect you?	2
Have your say	3
Review timetable	3
Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	7
Draft recommendations	7
Smethwick	9
Rowley Regis	12
Oldbury and Tividale	14
West Bromwich	16
Wednesbury	18
Charlemont, Great Barr, Newton and Yew Tree	20
Conclusions	23
Summary of electoral arrangements	23
Have your say	25
Equalities	29
Appendices	31
Appendix A	31
Draft recommendations for Sandwell	31
Appendix B	34
Outline map	34
Appendix C	36
Submissions received	36
Appendix D	37
Glossary and abbreviations	37

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
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- 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 Sandwell?

7 We are conducting a review of Sandwell ('the Council') as its last review was completed in 2003, and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England 'from time to time'.²

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

- The wards in Sandwell 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 Sandwell

9 Sandwell should be represented by 72 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Sandwell should have 24 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of most wards should change; one 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 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 taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

² Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 56(1).

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 4 March 2025 to 12 May 2025. 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 12 May 2025 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 25 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 Sandwell. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
21 May 2024	Number of councillors decided
23 July 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
30 September 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
4 March 2025	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
12 May 2025	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
2 September 2025	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation³ states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors⁴ 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	2030
Electorate of Sandwell	230,066	240,883
Number of councillors	72	72
Average number of electors per councillor	3,196	3,346

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 Sandwell are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2030.

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 2030, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2025. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 4.6% by 2030.

25 During the initial consultation, we became aware that the Council had based the electorate forecasts for Sandwell off of an inaccurate baseline or current electorate figures. We put these concerns to the Council which agreed that the

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

⁴ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

current electorate data that the forecast figures were based on were inaccurate as 30,000 electors had incorrectly been added to their current electorate.

26 We worked with officers at the Council to develop a revised set of electorate figures based off of correct current electorate data. These revised figures will see a revised forecast electorate figure of 240,883 for Sandwell in 2030. This is a reduction from the original forecast of 271,636 electors which was published on our website at the start of the review. This figure would see an increase in the electorate of 4.7% over the next five years as opposed to 4.6% under the initial figure.

27 The Commission is content that this revised figure is a more realistic forecast for Sandwell, and we have used this figure to produce our draft recommendations.

28 It should be noted that, when assessing the various different proposals received for the borough, we measured these against the revised forecast figure, rather than the original forecast under which they were developed. We are satisfied that the change in the forecast would not, of itself, rule out any of the proposals put forward to us during consultation.

29 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 and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations.

Number of councillors

30 Sandwell Council currently has 72 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

31 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 72 councillors.

32 As Sandwell Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁵ 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

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

division if, in our view or as is shown in evidence provided to us, it is not compatible with our other statutory criteria.

33 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. The submission argued that the number of councillors should be decreased, but did not put forward a preferred number of councillors.

34 We consider that insufficient evidence was provided to demonstrate how the Council would carry out its duties with fewer councillors, and no information was provided as to how these proposals would be accommodated in a warding pattern for the authority. Therefore, we have based our draft recommendations on a 72-councillor council.

Ward boundaries consultation

35 We received 32 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a borough-wide proposal from Sandwell Council ('the Council'). We also received a partial scheme from Halesowen Conservative Association with proposals for the south-west of the borough. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

36 The borough-wide and partial schemes submitted provided for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Sandwell. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

37 Our draft recommendations are broadly based upon the borough-wide proposals made by the Council. However, in the south-west of the borough, we have been persuaded to adopt the Halesowen Conservative Association's proposals, based on evidence of good 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.

Draft recommendations

38 Our draft recommendations are for 24 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 9–22 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Sandwell. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ 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 31 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.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Smethwick



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Bearwood	3	-6%
Bristnall	3	3%
Langley	3	9%
Old Warley	3	2%
Smethwick	3	-1%
Soho & Victoria	3	2%
St Pauls	3	3%

Bearwood

42 The Council proposed a Bearwood ward broadly comprised of the existing Abbey ward. Its proposed ward extends to the north-east to include electors surrounding Bearwood Road and excludes electors to the west of Woodbourne Road, transferring them to its proposed Old Warley ward. We are adopting its proposal for Bearwood ward as part of our draft recommendations with a minor modification to the boundary around the A4030. The Council's proposed boundary runs through the middle of a row of terraced housing opposite Victoria Park, before it

connects with the A4030. Our proposed boundary instead runs behind the houses of Norma Rose Close to retain this row of houses within a single ward. We consider our modification follows a stronger boundary and better reflects communities in this area. The proposed ward name of Bearwood was also supported by several residents. We are therefore satisfied that this name is locally recognised and will help to promote effective and convenient local government.

Soho & Victoria and St Pauls

43 The existing Soho & Victoria and St Pauls wards are forecast to be significantly under-represented by 2030. To improve electoral equality, the Council proposed to transfer the electors of Cheshire Road and Firs Lane currently in Soho & Victoria ward into the neighbouring Smethwick ward. Furthermore, it also proposed to transfer electors west of the High Street and Edgbaston Road into its proposed Bearwood ward.

44 In addition, the Council proposed to shift the boundary between St Pauls and Bristnall wards to follow Warley Road and also put forward a modification to the boundary between St Pauls and Oldbury wards to follow Mallin Street and St Paul's Road.

45 A local resident suggested that Soho & Victoria ward be renamed 'Cape Hill'. Additionally, a local resident proposed that St Pauls ward be renamed 'Smethwick North'. However, we decided not to adopt these suggestions due to insufficient supporting evidence that these names would better reflect the communities of the proposed wards. Nonetheless, we welcome comments on our ward name proposals for this area as part of the current consultation.

46 As part of our draft recommendations, we propose to adopt the Council's modifications for Soho & Victoria and St Pauls ward as we are content that they provide an elective balance of our statutory criteria. However, we propose to use the railway line as the boundary between St Pauls and Oldbury wards therefore retaining Oldbury Cemetery, Lonsdale Road and Highbury Road in St Pauls ward. We consider the railway line to be a stronger and more locally identifiable boundary that is more likely to reflect communities in this area. Our proposals also result in good electoral equality for both wards by 2030.

Smethwick

47 We are basing our draft recommendations for Smethwick ward on the Council's proposals, subject to a minor modification. The Council proposed to shift the boundary between Smethwick and Bristnall wards from Hurst Road to follow the rear of properties along Thimblemill Road. As part our draft recommendations, we propose to instead use Thimblemill Road as the boundary between these wards as we consider it to be a strong and locally recognisable boundary that will be conducive of effective and convenient local government.

48 Furthermore, the alternative ward names of 'Smethwick South' and 'Uplands' were proposed by two local residents. We decided not to adopt either of these suggestions as part of our draft recommendations due to a lack of supporting community evidence. We propose to retain the existing name of Smethwick which was also proposed by the Council. However, we welcome evidence to support an alternative ward name during the current consultation.

Bristnall and Langley

49 We have decided to base our draft recommendations for Bristnall and Langley wards on the Council's proposals. Our proposed Bristnall ward includes the majority of the existing ward, the electors north of the B4182 as well as the electors west of Thimblemill Road and Queen's Road. We are also adopting the Council's proposal to transfer the Bristnall Fields area into Langley ward. These modifications result in good forecast electoral equality for Bristnall ward by 2030.

50 However, we have not adopted the Council's proposal to transfer electors south of Falcon Road from the existing Langley ward to Old Warley ward. We consider that these electors are more likely to share a closer community connection with electors in Langley ward due to the physical barrier of Brandhall Golf Course which separates these electors from Old Warley ward.

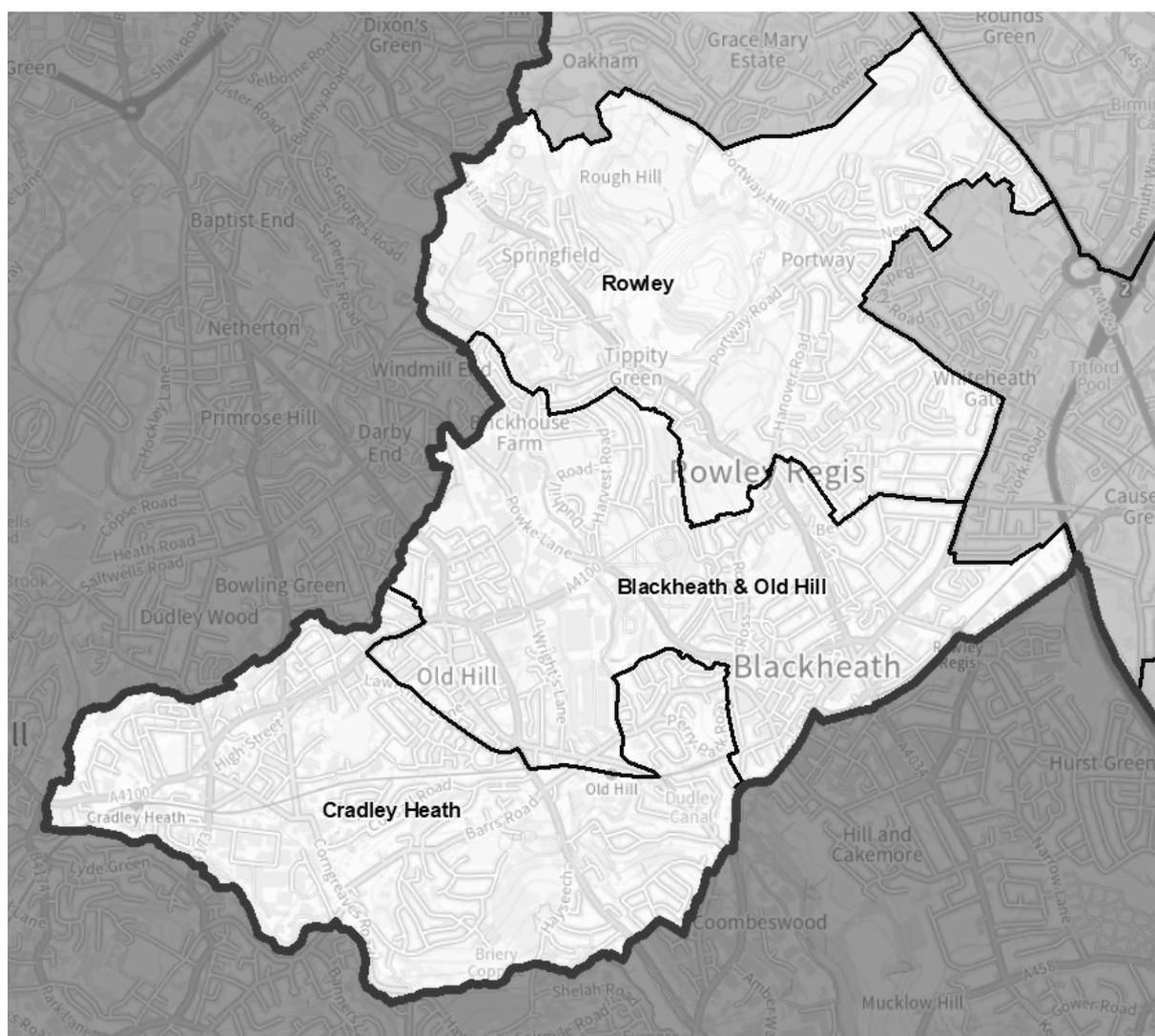
Old Warley

51 The Council's proposed Old Warley ward is comprised of the existing ward with a proposed extension to its north-eastern boundary so that it follows the rear of properties on George Road, Pottery Road and Hesket Avenue.

52 A local resident proposed Old Warley ward to be renamed to Brandhall. We did not adopt this proposal as we determined insufficient evidence had been supplied to justify this name change. However, we would welcome local evidence on our proposed ward name during the current consultation.

53 In the absence of alternative proposals or conflicting evidence, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for Old Warley ward. We consider this ward to reflect local community identities and note that it is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2030.

Rowley Regis



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Blackheath & Old Hill	3	6%
Cradley Heath	3	2%
Rowley	3	-1%

Blackheath & Old Hill and Cradley Heath

54 The Council proposed to retain the existing arrangements for Cradley Heath & Old Hill and Blackheath wards subject to minor amendments. These amendments included transferring the trading estates west of the Dudley Canal and the electors surrounding Station Road from the existing Cradley Heath & Old Hill ward to its proposed Blackheath ward. The Council also proposed to include electors east of the B4171 from the existing Rowley ward and Boundary Avenue from the existing Langley ward in its proposed Blackheath ward.

55 The Halesowen Conservative Association supported by Councillor Phipps proposed alternative arrangements for Cradley Heath and Blackheath & Old Hill which they argued would allow for Cradley Heath to be wholly contained within a single ward as opposed to being split across three wards, as under the existing arrangements. Several local residents also echoed this argument stating that the existing arrangements made no sense, as well as causing confusion and difficulty for electors to understand which councillor represents them.

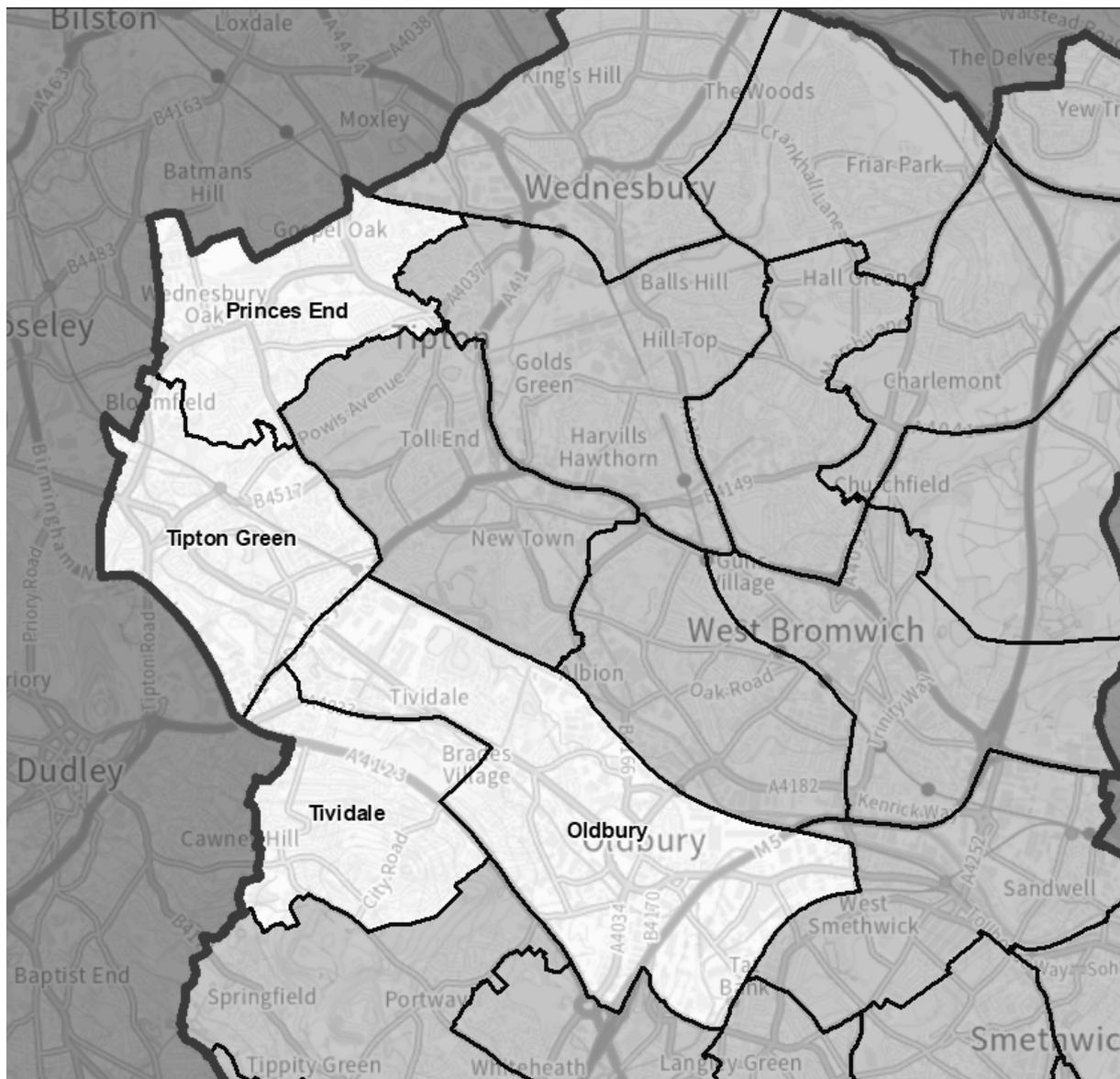
56 The Association's proposed Cradley Heath ward extends to Lawrence Lane and Beechcroft Road and includes electors on Hickman's Avenue and Brook Lane. It also proposed that electors in the Waterfall Lane and Perry Park Road area that are currently in Blackheath ward be located in its proposed Cradley Heath ward. The proposed Blackheath & Old Hill ward excludes the area north of Mincing Lane but includes electors south of Park Avenue and those west of The Westminster School in the Brickhouse Farm area.

57 Having carefully considered the evidence received, we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the proposals of the Halesowen Conservative Association. We consider that these proposals use stronger and more locally identifiable boundaries. We are persuaded that they will better reflect community identities and interests, based on convincing community evidence received. We also determined that these arrangements will help to promote effective and convenient local government and will unite communities in the same ward that are divided between wards under the existing arrangements. Both our proposed Cradley Heath and Blackheath & Old Hill wards are forecast good electoral equality by 2030.

Rowley

58 Our draft recommendations for Rowley ward are based on a combination of the two warding schemes received. As described in paragraph 56, we have adopted the boundary suggested by the Halesowen Conservative Association to the south. However, we have adopted the Council's proposal to run the boundary north of Dudley Golf Club and Portway Hill to connect with Wolverhampton Road. We consider this ward comprises areas that share community identities and interests, which centre around the green spaces in this area.

Oldbury and Tividale



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Oldbury	3	-9%
Princes End	3	-1%
Tipton Green	3	5%
Tividale	3	-5%

Princes End and Tipton Green

59 The Council proposed to broadly retain the existing Princes End and Tipton Green wards with some small modifications to their shared boundary. It proposed to transfer the electors residing west of Central Avenue and Tibbington Terrace (which are currently in Tipton Green ward) into its proposed Princes Green ward. The Council argued that this proposal reflects a unified and recognisable community.

Antonia Bance MP (Tipton & Wednesbury) also expressed support for the Council's proposals in this area.

60 Bloomfield Over 50s Club stated that two councillors instead of three for Tipton Green ward would suffice. We did not adopt this proposal as we determined that the evidence supplied was not persuasive enough for us to depart from the presumption that the borough be represented by a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards.

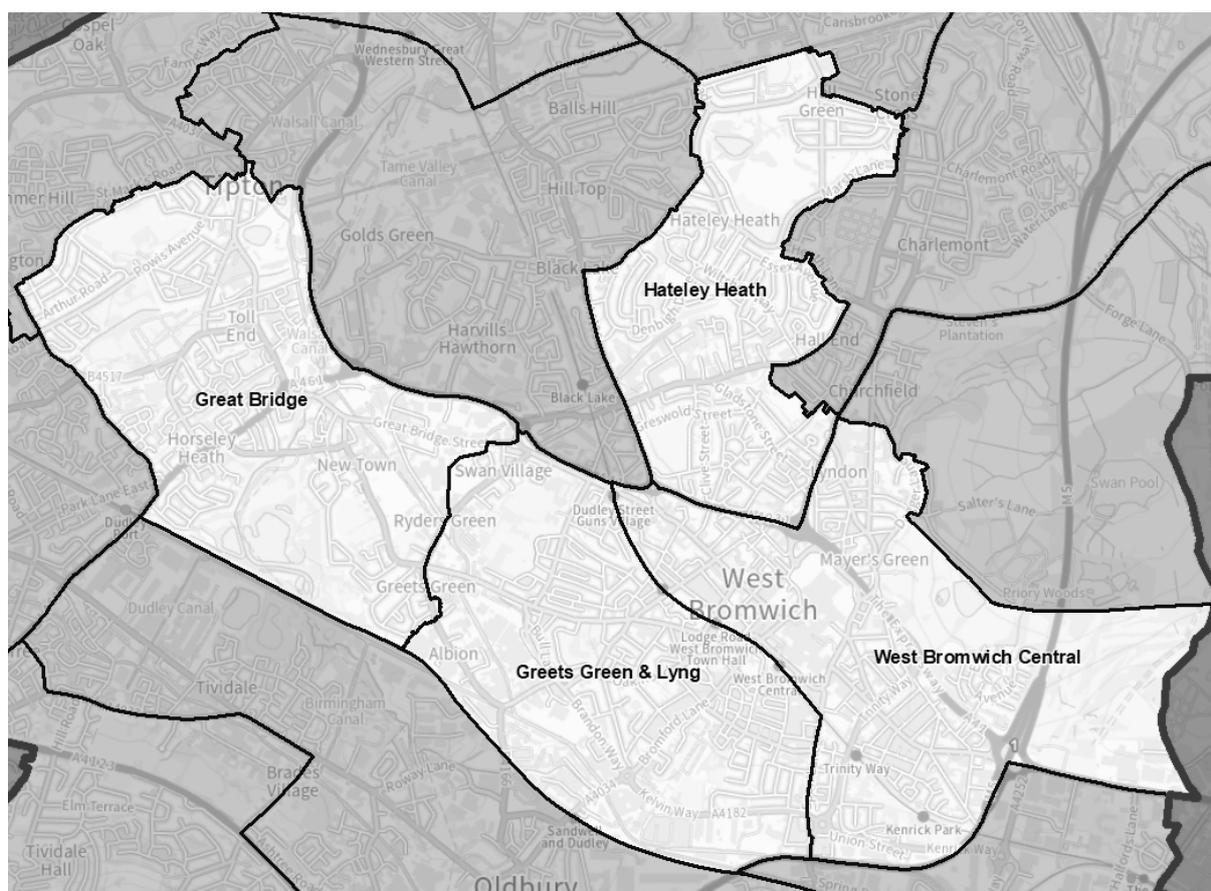
61 Councillor Jeffcoat expressed support for the Council's proposals for this area but proposed that the entirety of Locarno Road to be transferred to Tipton Green ward.

62 We carefully considered the evidence received and have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for Princes End and Tipton Green wards, subject to a minor modification. We propose to include the entirety of Locarno Road in Tipton Green ward as we considered this would better reflect local communities while providing for a clear ward boundary. Princes End and Tipton Green wards are also forecast good electoral equality by 2030, with anticipated electoral variances of -1% and 5%, respectively.

Oldbury and Tividale

63 As part of our draft recommendations, we are adopting the Council's proposals for Oldbury and Tividale wards. These wards broadly reflect the existing arrangements, subject to the extension of Tividale ward up to the A4033 and the rear of properties along Tividale Street. We consider these proposals will reflect communities, promote effective and convenient local government, and ensure good levels of electoral equality by 2030.

West Bromwich



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Great Bridge	3	7%
Greets Green & Lyng	3	-3%
Hateley Heath	3	-3%
West Bromwich Central	3	-1%

Greets Green & Lyng and Great Bridge

64 The Council proposed to broadly retain the existing Greets Green & Lyng and Great Bridge wards aside from minor amendments to the boundary between them. These amendments included the transfer of electors around Whitgreave Street and Stour Street, east of Oldbury Road, into Great Bridge ward. In addition, the Council also suggested to amend the boundary between these wards to follow the Walsall Canal and the A41.

65 As part of our draft recommendations, we have adopted the proposals put forward to us by the Council as we consider them to provide a fair reflection of local communities by separating residential and industrial areas. However, we have not adopted the Council's proposal to retain electors on Tasker Street in Greets Green & Lyng ward and instead propose to use Ryders Green Road as the boundary in this

area. We determined that this was a stronger and more locally identifiable boundary which would help to promote effective and convenient local government. Both wards are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2030.

West Bromwich Central

66 A local resident argued that the existing boundaries of West Bromwich Central ward should be retained and that four councillors should be assigned to the ward due to the number of visitors that Sandwell General Hospital, Dartmouth Park and Sandwell Valley Country Park attract. We have not adopted this proposal as part of our draft recommendations as the current West Bromwich Central ward is forecast to be under-represented by 2030. Consequently, we must make changes to the existing arrangements to ensure good electoral equality for the ward. Additionally, we only take account of local government electors rather than visitors to a specific area when formulating our recommendations. Overall, we were not persuaded by the evidence received to move away from the principle that the authority have a uniform pattern of three-member wards. In any event, we generally consider that a ward represented by more than three councillors potentially dilutes the accountability of councillors to the electorate.

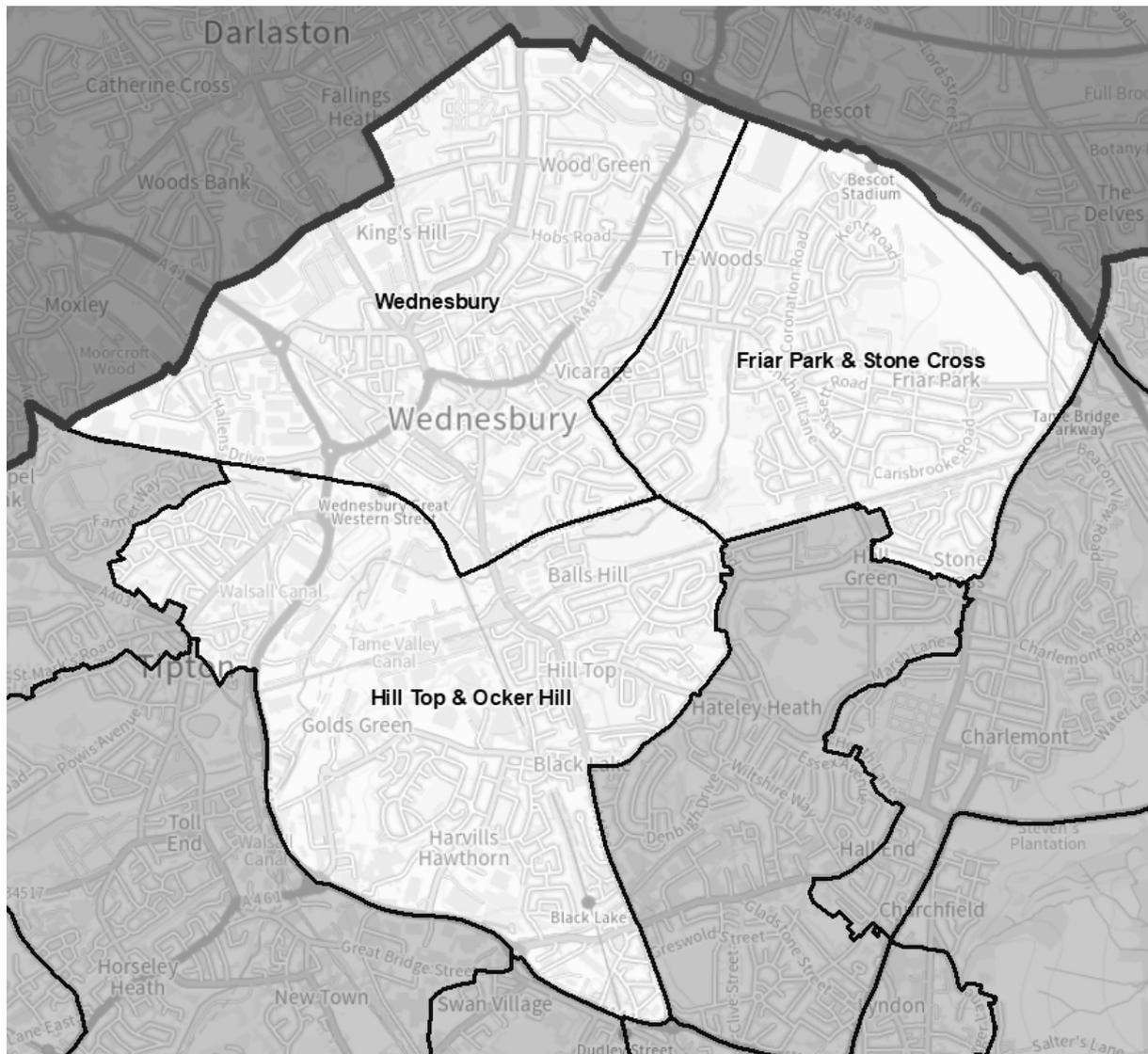
67 The Council's proposals, which were supported by Sarah Coombes MP (West Bromwich), provided for the transfer of Sandwell Valley Country Park from West Bromwich Central ward into its proposed Newton & Valley ward. It also proposed to exclude from the ward some electors in the Oakwood Park and Old Meeting Street areas and to use the A41 as a ward boundary in this area.

68 We are adopting these proposals as part of our draft recommendations as we consider including the entirety of Sandwell Valley Country Park in a single ward will promote effective and convenient local government and reflect community interests. We also consider the A41 provides a strong and clearly identifiable ward boundary. Under our draft recommendations, West Bromwich Central ward is also forecast a -1% electoral variance by 2030.

Hateley Heath

69 We are recommending a Hateley Heath ward that reflects the Council's proposals. This ward consists of part of the existing Hateley Heath ward, minus the Stone Cross area and the electors surrounding Heath Lane Hospital. We also propose that the ward include Oakwood Park from the existing West Bromwich Central ward. Antonia Bance MP expressed support for this proposal stating that it reunited the Tantany Estate within a single ward and would be reflective of communities.

Wednesbury



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Friar Park & Stone Cross	3	-5%
Hill Top & Ocker Hill	3	2%
Wednesbury	3	3%

Hill Top & Ocker Hill and Wednesbury

70 The Council proposed a Wednesbury ward which comprises the existing Wednesbury North ward but extends the boundary to the south to include the electors north of Woden Road South. It also proposed a Hill Top & Ocker Hill ward which would comprise of the current Wednesbury South ward and electors south of New Swan Lane and east of the A41. The Sandwell Liberal Democrats expressed support for the Council's proposals and stated that its proposed ward name was more sensible.

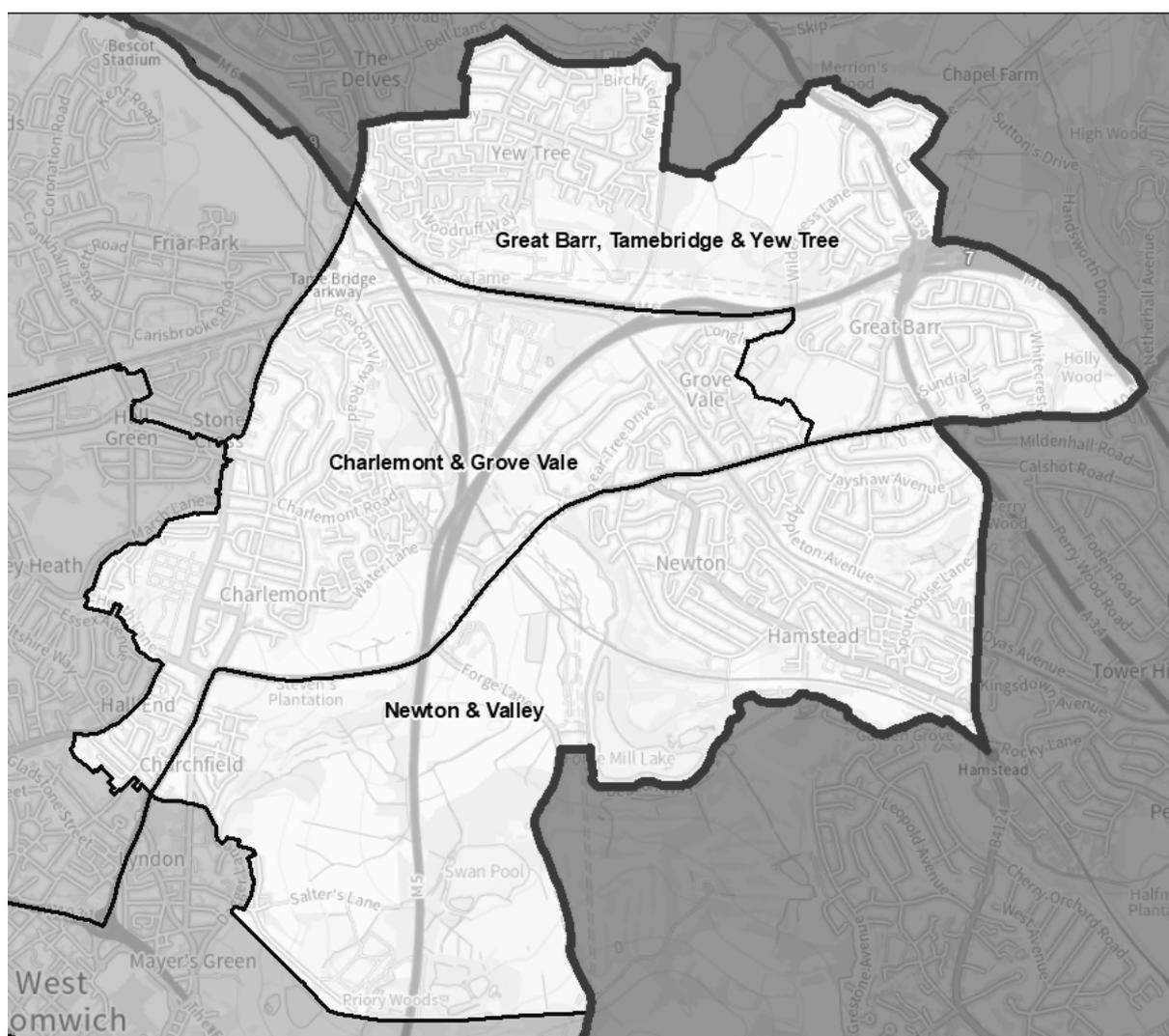
71 Furthermore, the Council's proposals also received support from Antonia Bance MP who argued that including electors north of Woden Road South in the proposed Wednesbury ward made sense as it reunites Wednesbury town in a single ward. She also expressed support for the Council's proposed ward names, arguing that the 'Hill Top & Ocker Hill' name is locally identifiable and that the current name of Wednesbury South was no longer appropriate as it does not reflect community identities and interests.

72 We were persuaded by the evidence received to adopt the Council's proposals for Wednesbury and Hill Top & Ocker Hill wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, the Council's proposed boundary between these wards divides the train station car park and the industrial area south of Smith Road. We have instead followed the railway line as the ward boundary in this area. We consider that the boundaries and names of these wards better reflect communities, are stronger and more locally identifiable, and will achieve good electoral equality by 2030.

Friar Park & Stone Cross

73 As part of our draft recommendations, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposals for Friar Park & Stone Cross ward, which is comprised of the existing Friar Park ward and the Stone Cross area. We consider Walsall Road and the railway line to provide strong and locally identifiable boundaries. While the evidence to justify the inclusion of the Stone Cross area in this ward was limited, we did not receive any alternative proposals. Therefore, we would welcome any evidence during the current consultation as to whether this ward reflects community identities and interests.

Charlemont, Great Barr, Newton and Yew Tree



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Charlemont & Grove Vale	3	-3%
Great Barr, Tamebridge & Yew Tree	3	-2%
Newton & Valley	3	-5%

Charlemont & Grove Vale and Great Barr, Tamebridge & Yew Tree

74 A resident proposed two new wards for this area. One ward comprised of the Great Barr and Grove Vale areas and the other combined the Charlemont and Yew Tree areas. They argued that these areas are very distinct and that this suggested warding pattern reflects where these areas look to for their amenities and services. However, their proposed Great Barr & Grove Vale ward and Charlemont & Yew Tree ward would result in forecast electoral variances of -37% and 26%, respectively. We determined that these electoral variances were far too high for us to accept, based on the evidence received.

75 The Sandwell Liberal Democrats described the Council's proposal to include electors south of Heath Lane in its proposed Charlemont & Grove Vale ward as an 'oddity'. They argued that including the area around Glastonbury Road and Lincoln Road in Charlemont & Grove ward was more logical. We were not persuaded to adopt this suggestion as part of our draft recommendations, as we did not consider that sufficient evidence had been supplied to demonstrate how this proposed arrangement would better reflect community identities and interests in this area.

76 Consequently, we are adopting the proposal put forward to us by the Council for a Charlemont & Grove Vale ward. This broadly reflects the existing arrangements but uses Walsall Road as the ward boundary to the east and includes electors around Heath Lane Cemetery. We consider the M6 and Newton Road to provide strong and identifiable ward boundaries that will aid in the promotion of effective and convenient local government.

77 We have also decided to adopt the Council's proposed Great Barr, Tamebridge & Yew Tree ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward is based on the existing arrangements but includes 'Tamebridge' in its name. The Sandwell Liberal Democrats expressed support for this proposed name, stating that it 'recognises the reality of how locals think of the area'. We consider that our draft recommendations for this area of the authority will provide an effective balance our three statutory criteria.

Newton & Valley

78 The Council proposed a Newton & Valley ward which comprises the existing Newton ward and extends south-west to include Sandwell Valley Country Park and electors from the Churchfield area and Warstone Drive. This proposal received support from Sarah Coombes MP who stated that this arrangement would result in the entirety of Sandwell Valley Country Park being contained in a single ward which would support the promotion of effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, she stated that the electors proposed to be included in this ward are all connected by Newton Road and are 'heavily linked and entwined with' Sandwell Valley Country Park.

79 The Sandwell Liberal Democrats expressed concern over the geographical distance between Newton and electors to the south-west of the Council's proposed Newton & Valley ward. However, they concluded that electoral equality was difficult to achieve in this area without negatively impacting on neighbouring wards and recognised that the proximity of the borough boundary exacerbates this issue.

80 As part of our draft recommendations, we are adopting the Council's proposals for Newton & Valley ward. Whilst we acknowledge the Sandwell Liberal Democrats' concerns regarding this ward, we consider that this proposal achieves the best balance of our statutory criteria and is reflective of the community that is centred

around Sandwell Valley Country Park and Newton Road. However, we welcome comments, supported by evidence, with regard to this ward during the current consultation.

Conclusions

81 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Sandwell, referencing the 2023 and 2030 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found in Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided in Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2023	2030
Number of councillors	72	72
Number of electoral wards	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	3,196	3,346
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Draft recommendations

Sandwell Council should be made up of 72 councillors serving 24 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 Sandwell.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Sandwell on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Have your say

82 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 borough or just a part of it.

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

84 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

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

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

Review Officer (Sandwell)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

87 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Sandwell 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.

88 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.

89 Electoral equality:

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

90 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?

91 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?

92 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.

93 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.

94 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.

95 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 Sandwell in 2026.

Equalities

96 The Commission is satisfied that it complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act and that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Sandwell

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bearwood	3	8,843	2,948	-8%	9,421	3,140	-6%
2	Blackheath & Old Hill	3	10,698	3,566	12%	10,690	3,563	6%
3	Bristnall	3	10,134	3,378	6%	10,335	3,445	3%
4	Charlemont & Grove Vale	3	9,816	3,272	2%	9,756	3,252	-3%
5	Cradley Heath	3	10,252	3,417	7%	10,236	3,412	2%
6	Friar Park & Stone Cross	3	9,449	3,150	-1%	9,503	3,168	-5%
7	Great Barr, Tamebridge & Yew Tree	3	9,625	3,208	0%	9,868	3,289	-2%
8	Great Bridge	3	10,358	3,453	8%	10,768	3,589	7%
9	Greets Green & Lyng	3	8,805	2,935	-8%	9,742	3,247	-3%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10	Hateley Heath	3	9,333	3,111	-3%	9,715	3,238	-3%
11	Hill Top & Ocker Hill	3	9,388	3,129	-2%	10,256	3,419	2%
12	Langley	3	10,494	3,498	9%	10,922	3,641	9%
13	Newton & Valley	3	9,552	3,184	0%	9,563	3,188	-5%
14	Old Warley	3	10,299	3,433	7%	10,262	3,421	2%
15	Oldbury	3	8,527	2,842	-11%	9,098	3,033	-9%
16	Princes End	3	9,937	3,312	4%	9,944	3,315	-1%
17	Rowley	3	9,764	3,255	2%	9,968	3,323	-1%
18	Smethwick	3	9,284	3,095	-3%	9,937	3,312	-1%
19	Soho & Victoria	3	8,557	2,852	-11%	10,228	3,409	2%
20	St Pauls	3	8,930	2,977	-7%	10,305	3,435	3%
21	Tipton Green	3	9,751	3,250	2%	10,531	3,510	5%
22	Tividale	3	9,437	3,146	-2%	9,541	3,180	-5%
23	Wednesbury	3	10,338	3,446	8%	10,381	3,460	3%
24	West Bromwich Central	3	8,495	2,832	-11%	9,914	3,305	-1%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Totals	72	230,066	–	–	240,883	–	–
Averages	–	–	3,196	–	–	3,346	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Sandwell 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	Bearwood
2	Blackheath & Old Hill
3	Bristnall
4	Charlemont & Grove Vale
5	Cradley Heath
6	Friar Park & Stone Cross
7	Great Barr, Tamebridge & Yew Tree
8	Great Bridge
9	Greets Green & Lyng

10	Hateley Heath
11	Hill Top & Ocker Hill
12	Langley
13	Newton & Valley
14	Old Warley
15	Oldbury
16	Princes End
17	Rowley
18	Smethwick
19	Soho & Victoria
20	St Pauls
21	Tipton Green
22	Tividale
23	Wednesbury
24	West Bromwich Central

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/sandwell

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

Local Authority

- Sandwell Council

Political Groups

- Halesowen Conservative Association
- Sandwell Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor R. Jeffcoat (Sandwell Council)
- Councillor S. Phipps (Dudley Council)

Members of Parliament

- Antonia Bance MP (Tipton & Wednesbury)
- Sarah Coombes MP (West Bromwich)

Local Organisations

- Bloomfield Over 50s Club

Local Residents

- 24 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
7th Floor, 3 Bunhill Row,
London,
EC1Y 8YZ

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Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk
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