

New electoral arrangements for Solihull Council Final Recommendations

March 2025

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Electoral review

March 2025

Translations and other formats:

To get this report in another language or in a large-print or Braille version, please contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at:

Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Licensing:

The mapping in this report is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Keeper of Public Records © Crown copyright and database right. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and database right.

Licence Number: AC0000807452 2025

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 Solihull?	2
Our proposals for Solihull	2
How will the recommendations affect you?	2
Review timetable	3
Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	6
Draft recommendations consultation	7
Final recommendations	7
Urban North	9
Suburban West	12
Rural East and South	16
Conclusions	19
Summary of electoral arrangements	19
Parish electoral arrangements	19
What happens next?	23
Equalities	25
Appendices	27
Appendix A	27
Final recommendations for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	27
Appendix B	29
Outline map	29
Appendix C	31
Submissions received	31
Appendix D	32
Glossary and abbreviations	32

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 detail 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 Solihull?

7 We are conducting a review of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council ('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 Solihull 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 Solihull

9 Solihull should be represented by 51 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Solihull should have 17 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of 16 wards should change; one will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Solihull.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

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

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

Review timetable

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

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
15 August 2023	Number of councillors decided
22 August 2023	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
30 October 2023	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
30 January 2024	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
14 October 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 March 2025	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 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.

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

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

	2023	2030
Electorate of Solihull	161,554	179,177
Number of councillors	51	51
Average number of electors per councillor	3,168	3,513

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. Sixteen of our proposed wards for Solihull are forecast to have good electoral equality by 2030.

Submissions received

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

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2029, a period five years on from the original 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 9% by 2029.

23 We considered the information provided by the Council and were satisfied that the projected figures were the best available at that time. Due to the impact of the General Election on the Commission's work programme, the review will now

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.

conclude in March 2025. However, we are content that these figures remain a reasonable forecast of local electors in 2030 and have therefore used them as the basis for our final recommendations.

24 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

25 Solihull Council currently has 51 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.

26 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 51 councillors.

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

28 We received no submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

29 We received 33 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals, one from the Council and one from the Green Group. The Liberal Democrat Group made a submission in support of the Green Group's pattern. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments on warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

30 The two borough-wide schemes provided a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Solihull. We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the

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

view that both of the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

31 Our draft recommendations were mostly based on the Council's proposals, except in the north of the borough where they were based on the Green Group's proposals. These draft recommendations also took 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 from the Council and the Green Group did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

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

33 Our draft recommendations were for 17 three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

34 We received 158 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included a full response for the borough from the Council, as well as more localised responses from the Solihull & Meriden Labour Party ('the Labour Party'), the Solihull Liberal Democrat Group ('the Liberal Democrats') and the Solihull Green Group ('the Green Group'). Those three political group responses were principally concerned with Shirley, the boundary between Lyndon and Olton, and the boundary between Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood, respectively. The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals for Olton and Meriden, which differed from the existing warding pattern.

Final recommendations

35 Our final recommendations are for 17 three-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

36 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to the wards in the Urban North area based on the submissions received there. We also make minor modifications to Olton's boundaries with Lyndon

and Silhill and the boundary between Shirley South and Shirley West, as well as Knowle, to reflect local evidence received.

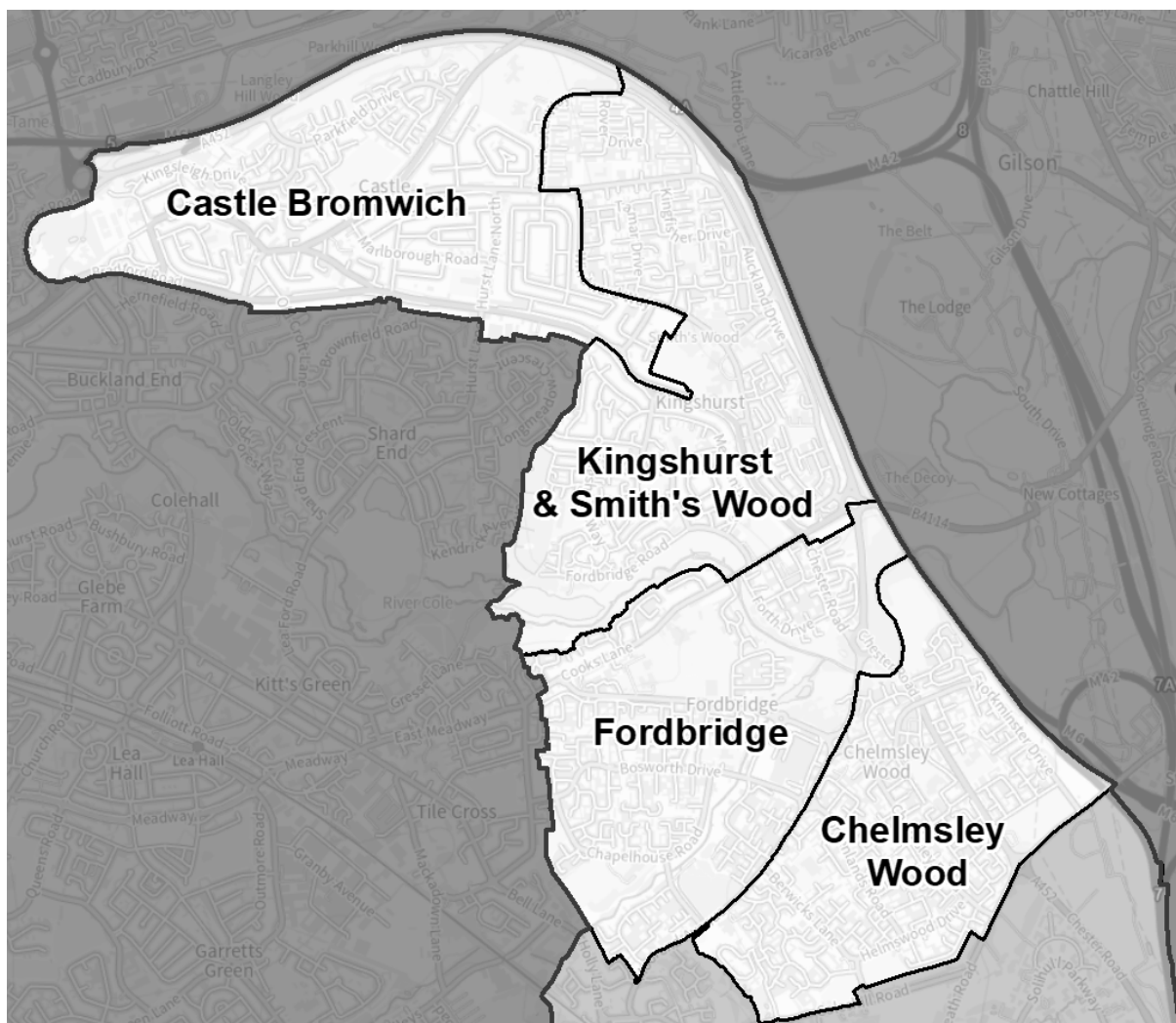
37 The tables and maps on pages 9–18 detail our final recommendations for each area of Solihull. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁶ criteria of:

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

38 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 27 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁶ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Urban North



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Castle Bromwich	3	-7%
Chelmsley Wood	3	-6%
Fordbridge	3	-7%
Kingshurst & Smith's Wood	3	13%

Castle Bromwich and Kingshurst & Smith's Wood

39 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed transferring an area at the north of the borough between Lanchester Way and Auckland Drive (known locally as the Cars Area) from Smith's Wood to Castle Bromwich in order for Castle Bromwich to reach a good forecast variance by 2030. We welcomed additional comments on whether this was an appropriate area to transfer, or whether another area (such as the Buckingham Road area, as originally suggested by the Meriden and Solihull Conservative Associations) would result in a better balance of our statutory criteria.

40 The Council proposed returning the Cars Area to Smith's Wood, with which it has strong ties. It argued that a Castle Bromwich ward including the Cars Area would result in a ward with 'contrasting community identities and interests'. Including the Cars Area in Smith's Wood leaves Castle Bromwich with a forecast variance of -11% and Smith's Wood with a 17% variance. In order to address this electoral imbalance, the Council proposed transferring the Buckingham Road area from Smith's Wood to Castle Bromwich, resulting in wards with variances of 13% and -7%, respectively. It noted that the Buckingham Road residential area shares greater community identity with Castle Bromwich than with Smith's Wood. The Council additionally suggested that Kingshurst & Smith's Wood would be a more appropriate name for that ward.

41 In order to partly address the resulting 13% forecast variance for Smith's Wood ward, the Council suggested transferring a small row of houses along Birmingham Road from Fordbridge. We note that, as the parish boundary runs behind these houses, any small boundary adjustments in the area would result in unviable parish wards, which we consider have too few electors to account for effective and convenient local government.

42 Councillor Feeney, representing Castle Bromwich ward, echoed the concerns of the Council and reiterated his position during the initial consultation; namely, that the Cars Area represents a distinct area of Smith's Wood and that residents of the Buckingham Road area (including Windsor Road and Mey Coppice) would describe themselves as aligning more closely with Castle Bromwich to the west.

43 Five residents all made submissions opposing the inclusion of the Cars Area in Castle Bromwich, highlighting a lack of shared community links between the areas. One resident supported the draft recommendations but provided no further evidence.

44 Councillor McLoughlin, responding on behalf of the Green Group, disagreed with the Council's submission. He argued that the Council's proposals should be disregarded on the basis that they result in a ward with poor electoral equality and rely on interpretations of community identity which are subjective and 'hard to pin down'. He argued that the Cars Area should be in Castle Bromwich, as it is largely distinct from both neighbouring wards, and because the Council's proposed Kingshurst & Smith's Wood ward is divided into two poorly connected chunks.

45 Kingshurst Parish Council proposed renaming Smith's Wood as Smith's Wood & North Kingshurst, to reflect the fact that the majority of Kingshurst parish is proposed to fall within the same ward as Smith's Wood. It identified Kingshurst as an area with strong boundaries that correspond to the proposed warding pattern. The parish council's comments were supported by Councillor Browning, who made two submissions regarding the name of the ward.

46 Three members of the public made submissions noting the incongruity of a Smith's Wood ward which included almost all of Kingshurst parish, including the Kingshurst Village Centre, but did not reference Kingshurst in its name. They suggested renaming these wards to accommodate the proposed boundary shift.

47 Three members of the public opposed the proposals to include Kingshurst in a Smith's Wood ward, arguing that Kingshurst has a distinct and different character from neighbouring areas and should be represented separately.

48 We are persuaded by the comments of the Council, Councillor Feeney and most residents, who opposed the inclusion of the Cars Area in Castle Bromwich. We consider that including the Buckingham Road area in Castle Bromwich better reflects the community evidence we have received, and that a Kingshurst & Smith's Wood ward (named to include both parishes) including the Cars Area achieves a better balance of our statutory criteria, even though it results in poorer electoral equality.

Chelmsley Wood and Fordbridge

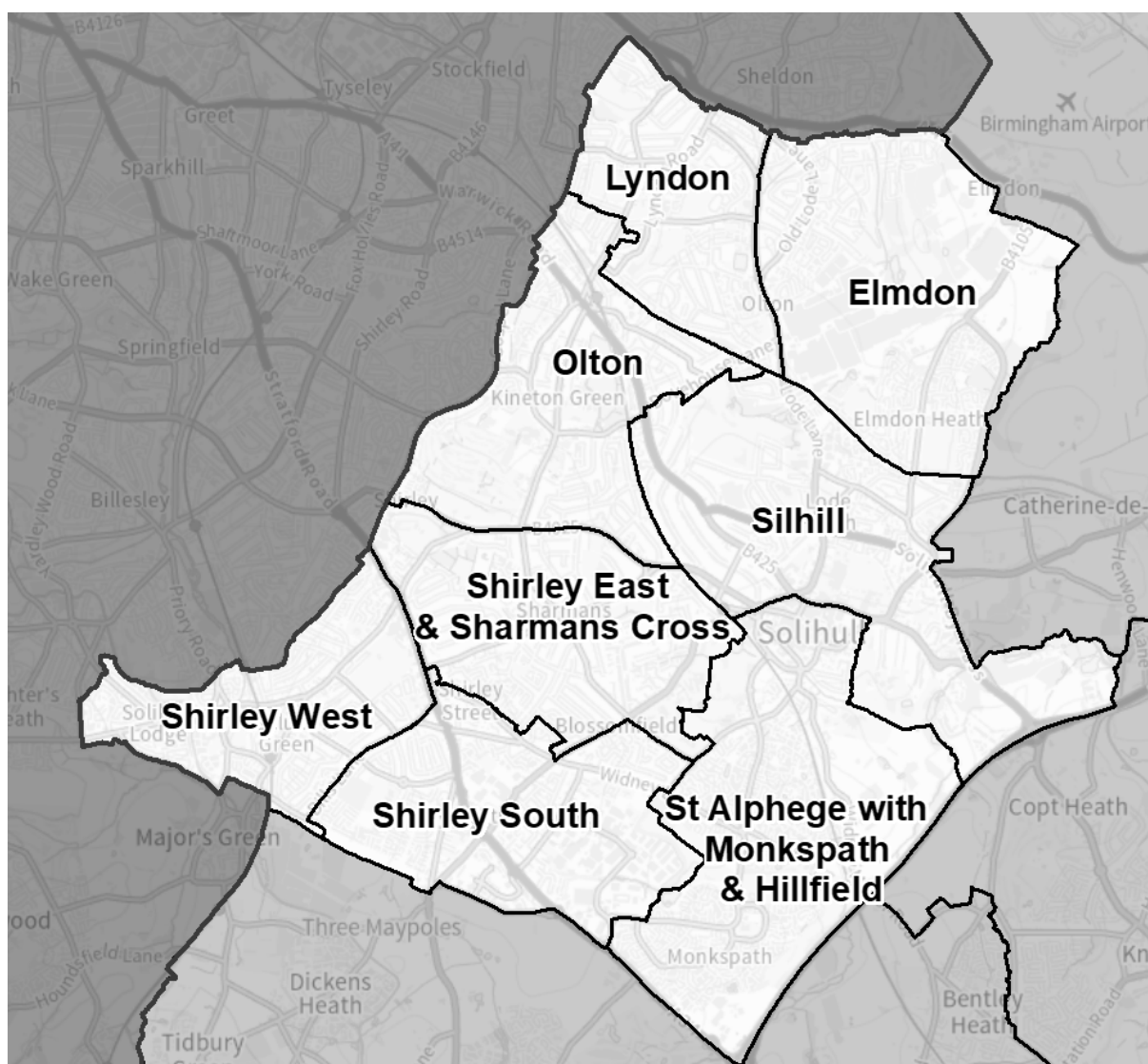
49 Residents from Cambridge Drive and Gloucester Way, which we proposed including in Fordbridge, opposed the draft recommendations. They expressed a strong preference to remain in the same ward as the rest of Bickenhill & Marston Green parish, indicating strong community ties to Marston Green.

50 Two residents of the Brooklands area, west of Berwicks Lane, made similar comments regarding a lack of connection to Chelmsley Wood and suggested that it should be included in the same ward as Marston Green. They provided evidence of the area's ties in the parish, noting that 'children go to schools in Marston Green, our leisure time is spent in Marston Green – at restaurants, the Tavern or walking through its two parks and the Recreation Ground (even watching the cricket club)'.

51 Bickenhill & Marston Green Parish Council submitted comments in opposition to the draft recommendations, expressing dissatisfaction with a pattern which would see the parish split between three borough wards and the parish council needing to co-ordinate with nine borough councillors. It noted a preference for the Council's proposals for the area during the initial consultation, which would only split the parish between two wards. It additionally suggested that the separation of the Brooklands and Low Brook areas could potentially disrupt community ties within the parish area.

52 We note the concerns of residents and the parish council in this area; however, we consider that any alterations to boundaries to accommodate these would result in wards with unacceptable forecast variances. A Fordbridge ward that did not include Low Brook would be 15% smaller than the average for Solihull by 2030, and a Chelmsley ward without Brookfields would be 17% smaller by 2030. We therefore propose retaining our draft recommendations for these wards, though with a name change to reflect Kingshurst's inclusion with Smith's Wood rather than Fordbridge.

Suburban West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Elmdon	3	-7%
Lyndon	3	0%
Olton	3	3%
Shirley East & Sharmans Cross	3	10%
Shirley South	3	2%
Shirley West	3	9%
Silhill	3	5%
St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield	3	9%

Elmdon

53 We received very few responses regarding our proposed Elmdon ward. The Council supported the draft recommendations here, which aligned to its original proposals. We therefore propose retaining Elmdon in our final recommendations.

Lyndon and Olton

54 Our proposed boundary between Lyndon and Olton wards elicited the greatest level of response across the entire borough. More than 50 local residents, a local organisation (architecture:nw) as well as two local borough councillors and the Liberal Democrats, opposed the decision to use the Grand Union Canal as the boundary between these wards. They argued in favour of retaining the existing ward boundary, which runs east of Richmond Road and south of Pierce Avenue.

55 The Liberal Democrats noted that while ‘the canal may represent a hard boundary, it does not make sense for the purposes of reflecting community identity’ as residents in the Richmond Road area connect more with Olton than Lyndon.

56 Councillor Jones, of Elmdon ward, supported the Liberal Democrats’ response. Councillor Bradley, of Olton ward, made a detailed submission in favour of retaining the existing boundary between the wards, which better reflects the Olton community.

57 One resident stressed the ‘unbreakable connection between St Margaret’s School and St Margaret’s Church [in Olton]... and that it is formal but it is also part of the lived experience of children and parents that have grown up together over the last decade.’ They additionally described how transport flows from the residential roads into Olton; another resident also emphasised the minimal walking distance from the area to Olton Station and Olton Library, of around 10 minutes or less.

58 The Council and the Labour Party supported the proposals for these wards, arguing that the Grand Union Canal is a sufficiently strong boundary to use here.

59 We received two additional submissions from members of the public regarding a different aspect of Olton, specifically its boundary with Silhill to the east. These two residents fall within a small area west of Warwick Road and east of the rail line which is currently in Olton ward. The anomalous nature of this area was well summarised by one respondent who noted: ‘The boundary between the two wards makes an unnatural move away from the railway line along Wadleys Road, leaving our houses as a kind of adjunct to Olton ward. It would be much more logical for the boundary to continue along the railway line to Grange Road, so that we would then be in Silhill ward. We have much more in common with Silhill ward than with Olton ward.’

60 We consider that the comments of the many local respondents regarding the boundary between Lyndon and Olton provide significant evidence in favour of retaining the existing boundary here, which results in a minimal impact on electoral equality. We are also persuaded by the two residents who suggested a Grange Road boundary with a small area transferred to Silhill.

61 As part of our final recommendations we therefore propose an unchanged Lyndon ward (from the existing arrangement), and an Olton ward with an amended boundary with Silhill ward along Grange Road.

Silhill

62 We received relatively few submissions regarding our proposed Silhill ward. Three members of the public made submissions in support of the draft recommendations. In addition to the two responses described in paragraph 59 above, we received two submissions from residents of Knowle ward who provided persuasive evidence to be included in Silhill ward; these respondents live north of the M42 motorway and feel a greater sense of community with Silhill than Knowle. Paragraphs 85–87 below provide more detail on why we are adopting this suggestion.

63 We propose an amended Silhill ward with extensions to Grange Road and the M42 motorway, as described, as part of our final recommendations.

Shirley East & Sharmans Cross and St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield

64 The Labour Party proposed renaming our proposed Sharmans Cross ward as Shirley East & Sharmans Cross, which it felt better reflected the separate elements of this ward. A member of the public made similar comments, noting that many local residents identify parts of the ward as Shirley.

65 Two respondents here raised questions regarding specific ward boundaries, including around Featherstone Crescent, but did not provide alternative suggestions.

66 Two residents of our proposed St Alphege & Monkspath ward made comments in support of the draft recommendations. The Council reiterated its preference for the ward to include Hillfield in its name, arguing that it is not excessively long and reflects the three composite areas of the ward.

67 Five residents of Stonor Park Road made submissions in opposition to the draft recommendations, which proposed transferring their area from St Alphege to Olton. They noted that they lie geographically more closely to St Alphege than Olton.

68 We do not consider that there is an arrangement of wards which would allow Stonor Park Road to be included in a St Alphege ward with good electoral equality. We consider that our proposed boundaries for these two wards provide the best balance of our statutory criteria. We are persuaded by the proposed name changes of the Labour Party and the Council, and are therefore proposing Shirley East & Sharmans Cross and St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield wards, respectively.

Shirley South and Shirley West

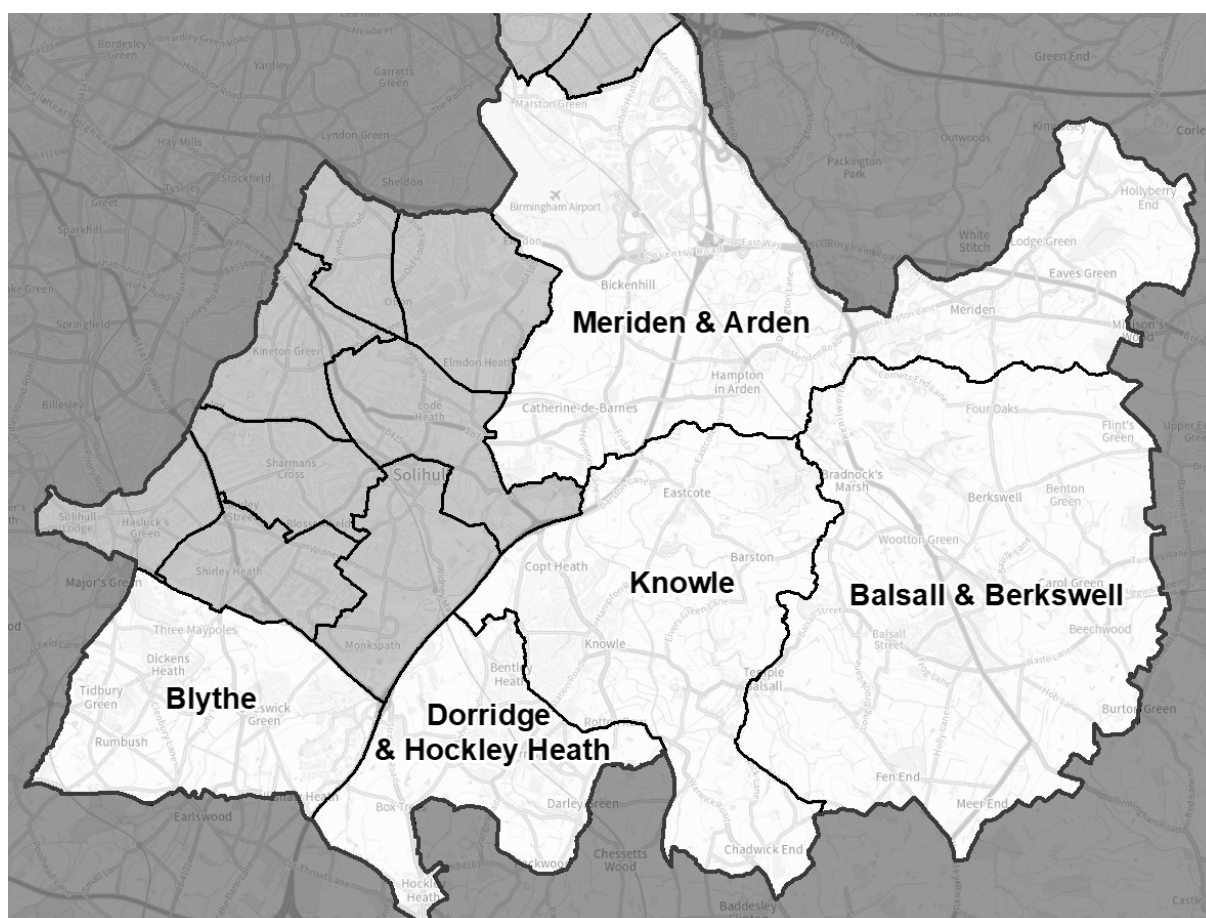
69 Three residents disagreed with our proposed Shirley West ward, identifying the A34 (Stratford Road) as a strong boundary which should not be crossed. One respondent suggested that Bills Lane should form Shirley West's eastern boundary, along with the A34. One respondent suggested a more appropriate name for the ward would be Solihull Lodge & Hasluck's Green.

70 The Labour Party made proposals similar to the resident, suggesting Bills Lane and the A34 (Stratford Road) as boundaries for Solihull West. The area along Longmore Road and Featherstone Crescent, originally proposed to be included in Shirley West, would be transferred instead to Shirley South in this arrangement.

71 We consider that the evidence presented regarding the strength of local boundaries, which allow for more effective and convenient local government, is persuasive and that amending these two wards accordingly provides a better balance of our statutory criteria. We note that using Church Road as a boundary, rather than School Road, between Bills Lane and the A34 (Stratford Road), results in Shirley South and Shirley West wards with more balanced forecast electorates.

72 We therefore propose amendments to Shirley South and Shirley West in line with the suggestions of the resident and the Labour Party as described, with a boundary between the two wards running along the A34 (Stratford Road), Bills Lane and Church Road. We do not consider that alternative names in this area would be more representative than Shirley South and Shirley West.

Rural East and South



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Balsall & Berkswell	3	-10%
Blythe	3	-3%
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	3	-9%
Knowle	3	-8%
Meriden & Arden	3	5%

Balsall & Berkswell and Meriden & Arden

73 As part of our draft recommendations here, we proposed including Meriden in an Arden ward separate from Balsall and Berkswell. We received a significant level of dissatisfaction from residents of Meriden parish in response to this proposal. Thirty residents of the parish, including from Millison's Wood, as well as Meriden Parish Council, all opposed the draft recommendations. They preferred the existing warding pattern, with a Meriden ward comprising parishes of Meriden, Balsall and Berkswell.

74 Meriden Parish Council's response noted the longstanding working relationship between the parish and the neighbouring parishes of Balsall and Berkswell on local issues. It additionally noted that Meriden falls under the orbit of Coventry, to its east, and that this was a position shared by the Balsall and Berkswell areas.

75 Residents of Meriden expressed similarly strong ties to Balsall and Berkswell, noting the local secondary school in Balsall Common which takes students from all three parishes. Some also referenced the shopping patterns, policing zones, and health activities (including Balsall and Meriden GP Practice) straddling the parishes.

76 Three residents made no comment on proposed boundaries but did emphasise the importance of including the name Meriden in any warding configuration. The significance of the Meriden name was also noted by Meriden Parish Council. One resident of Bickenhill suggested an alternative Bickenhill & Arden ward name.

77 Councillor Burrow, representing Meriden ward, made a submission which supported the draft recommendations. He noted that expected electorate growth in Balsall Common prohibited a configuration in which Meriden, Balsall and Berkswell would all be included within the same ward as such a ward would be too large.

78 The Council supported our draft recommendations here as well, and made no further suggestions. Saqib Bhatti MBE MP, representing Meriden & Solihull East constituency, made comments supporting the Council's response for the borough. He suggested a ward name of Arden & Meriden for this ward, arguing that the village of Meriden is of historical significance and should be included alongside Arden.

79 Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council submitted coordinated responses, as they did during the initial consultation. Both parish councils supported the draft recommendations for Balsall & Berkswell ward, which they considered reflects local communities; they did not consider that there were any improvements to be made to either the configuration or name of the ward. Three local residents of these wards also made submissions in support of the draft recommendations.

80 We note the responses of Meriden Parish Council and residents of Meriden regarding local ties to Balsall and Berkswell, and consider they present good evidence of community ties and effective and convenient local government. However, we note that a ward comprising Balsall, Berkswell and Meriden parishes would result in poor electoral equality; such a ward would have a forecast variance 17% more than the average for the borough by 2030, and would leave an Arden ward (including Barston parish) with a forecast variance of -17% by 2030. We do not consider that wards of 17% and -17% reflect a balance of all three of our statutory criteria, and this imbalance of electoral equality is very strong.

81 We did consider whether an alternative pattern here, such as a single-member and two-member ward configuration, could address this issue; however, a single-member ward of Meriden parish would be too small, and any other balance of parishes would be too large for a single-member ward.

82 We propose retaining our draft proposals for the boundaries of these wards. We are persuaded by some residents, and Saqib Bhatti MBE MP, that it is appropriate to include the name Meriden in a ward, and propose that the ward including the parish should be called Meriden & Arden. We propose transferring Barston parish to Knowle ward (see paragraphs 86–87 below) and propose a Balsall & Berkswell ward otherwise unchanged from our draft recommendations.

Blythe and Dorridge & Hockley Heath

83 We received few submissions regarding these two wards. The Council supported our proposals, as did a resident of Cheswick Green who noted the area was not aligned to Hockley Heath across the motorway. We propose retaining Blythe and Dorridge & Hockley Heath wards as part of our final recommendations.

Knowle

84 We received submissions from three members of the public in support of our draft recommendations for Knowle. The Council additionally agreed with the proposals here, which aligned to its original submission during the initial consultation.

85 Two members of the public argued that the M42 motorway should form the northern boundary of Knowle ward, with areas beyond the motorway aligned to Silhill. One resident noted: 'I do all my activities in Solihull and am interested in what is happening in the town. I am not interested in Knowle, as I don't shop there. I think the dividing line should be the M42 motorway and not the Blyth River.' The other respondent included additional detail, suggesting: 'The motorway is a clearly-defined barrier that hinders interaction between residents on opposite sides of the motorway.' They also noted: 'To use the motorway as the boundary for these wards would be in keeping with the M42 motorway already being proposed as the boundary between the Blythe/Dorridge & Hockley Heath wards.'

86 We note that such a warding pattern would result in a Knowle ward with a forecast variance of -12%. We are persuaded that the M42 is a strong boundary between Knowle and Silhill and that it would better reflect community ties as well as allowing for more effective and convenient local government. However we considered whether there was a way to improve the variance of -12%. We note that transferring Barston parish into Knowle ward would allow for Knowle and Balsall & Berkswell to have good electoral equality by 2030. Including Barston with Knowle was originally suggested by the Council during the initial consultation due to proximity of services in Knowle, and we propose to transfer it to form part of our final recommendations.

87 We therefore propose a Knowle ward with the M42 motorway as its northern boundary, and including Barston parish, as part of our final recommendations. We also transfer several properties at the end of Barston Lane (at Copt Heath Wharf) for access reasons, as these residents can only access their area via Barston Lane.

Conclusions

88 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Solihull, 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

	Final recommendations	
	2023	2030
Number of councillors	51	51
Number of electoral wards	17	17
Average number of electors per councillor	3,168	3,513
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	8	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendations

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council should be made up of 51 councillors, with 17 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 Solihull.

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

Parish electoral arrangements

89 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.

90 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, Solihull Borough Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

91 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 Bickenhill & Marston Green, Kingshurst and Smith's Wood.

92 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Bickenhill & Marston Green parish.

Final recommendations

Bickenhill & Marston Green Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bickenhill	2
Blackfirs	1
Brooklands	2
Low Brook	2
Marston Green	5

93 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kingshurst parish.

Final recommendations

Kingshurst Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Cooks Lane	2
Kingshurst North	3
Kingshurst South	7

94 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Smith's Wood parish.

Final recommendations

Smith's Wood Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bosworth	3
Buckingham Road	1

Burton	3
Chester	2
Smith's Wood	3

What happens next?

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

Final recommendations for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

	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	Balsall & Berkswell	3	7,457	2,486	-22%	9,512	3,171	-10%
2	Blythe	3	7,711	2,570	-19%	10,194	3,398	-3%
3	Castle Bromwich	3	9,384	3,128	-1%	9,835	3,278	-7%
4	Chelmsley Wood	3	9,041	3,014	-5%	9,857	3,286	-6%
5	Dorridge & Hockley Heath	3	8,925	2,975	-6%	9,571	3,190	-9%
6	Elmdon	3	9,314	3,105	-2%	9,801	3,267	-7%
7	Fordbridge	3	9,064	3,021	-5%	9,813	3,271	-7%
8	Kingshurst & Smith's Wood	3	11,233	3,744	18%	11,909	3,970	13%
9	Knowle	3	8,266	2,755	-13%	9,723	3,241	-8%
10	Lyndon	3	10,020	3,340	5%	10,557	3,519	0%
11	Meriden & Arden	3	8,420	2,807	-11%	11,063	3,688	5%

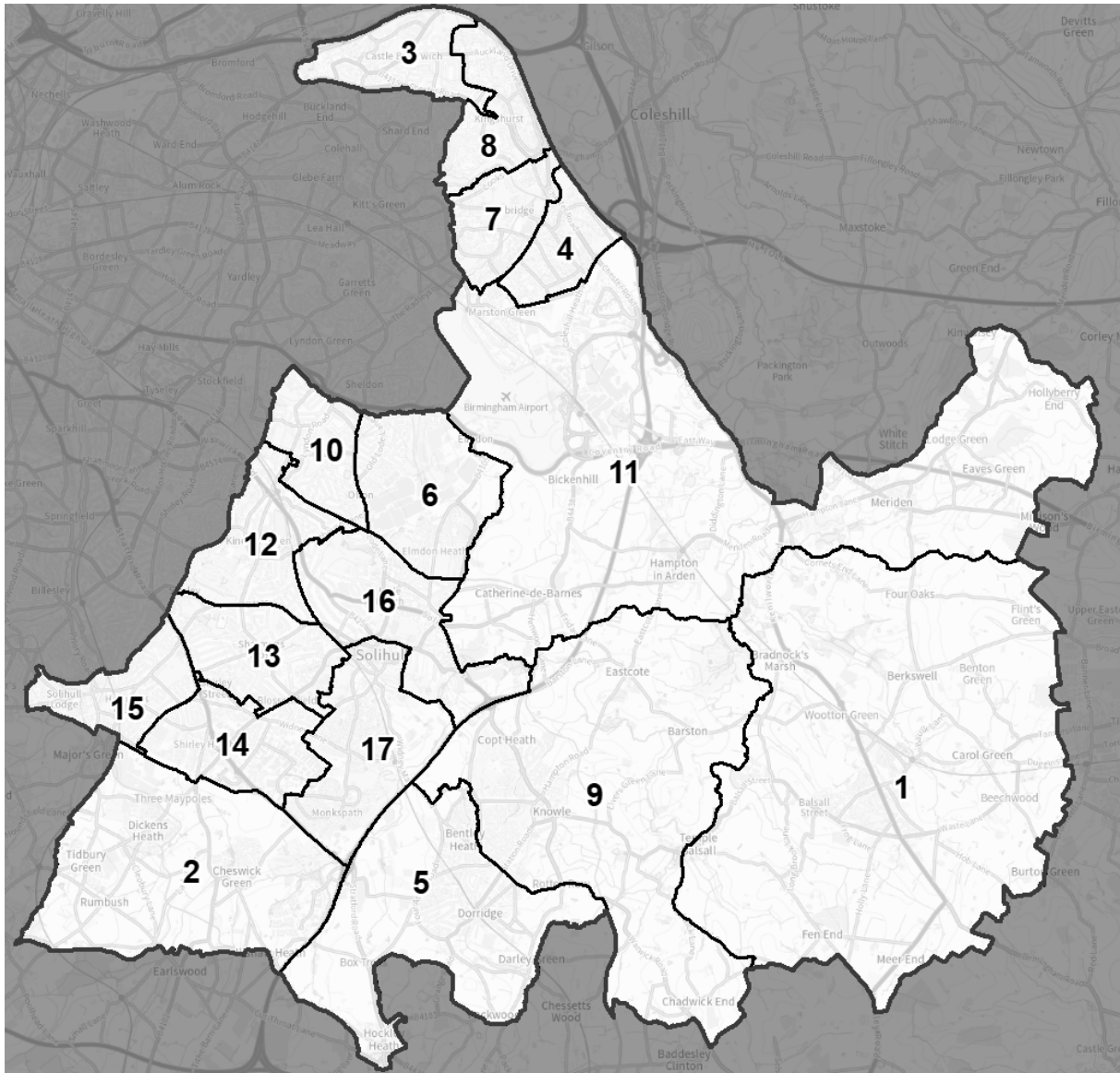
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Olton	3	10,378	3,459	9%	10,857	3,619	3%
13 Shirley East & Sharmans Cross	3	10,856	3,619	14%	11,619	3,873	10%
14 Shirley South	3	9,560	3,187	1%	10,730	3,577	2%
15 Shirley West	3	11,002	3,667	16%	11,518	3,839	9%
16 Silhill	3	10,411	3,470	10%	11,085	3,695	5%
17 St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield	3	10,512	3,504	11%	11,533	3,844	9%
Totals	51	161,554	-	-	179,177	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,168	-	-	3,513	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

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

Appendix B

Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Balsall & Berkswell
2	Blythe
3	Castle Bromwich
4	Chelmsley Wood
5	Dorridge & Hockley Heath
6	Elmdon
7	Fordbridge
8	Kingshurst & Smith's Wood
9	Knowle
10	Lyndon
11	Meriden & Arden
12	Olton
13	Shirley East & Sharmans Cross
14	Shirley South
15	Shirley West
16	Silhill
17	St Alphege with Monkspath & Hillfield

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/solihull

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/solihull

Local Authority

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Political Groups

- Solihull Green Group (Councillor M. McLoughlin)
- Solihull and Meriden Labour Party
- Solihull Liberal Democrat Group

Councillors

- Councillor J. Bradley (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)
- Councillor L. Browning (Kingshurst Parish Council) (x2)
- Councillor A. Burrow (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)
- Councillor A. Feeney (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)
- Councillor K. Jones (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)

Members of Parliament

- Saqib Bhatti MBE MP (Meriden and Solihull East)

Local organisations

- Architecture:nw

Parish and Town Councils

- Balsall Parish Council
- Berkswell Parish Council (x2)
- Bickenhill & Marston Green Parish Council
- Kingshurst Parish Council
- Meriden Parish Council

Local residents

- 140 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

Translations and other formats:

To get this report in another language or in a large-print or Braille version, please contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at:

Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Licensing:

The mapping in this report is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Keeper of Public Records © Crown copyright and database right. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and database right.

Licence Number: AC 0000807452 2025

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.

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

Telephone: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Online: www.lgbce.org.uk

www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

X: @LGBCE