

Buckinghamshire Council
Electoral Review 2022
DRAFT Response to Consultation on Pattern of Wards

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is undertaking an electoral review of Buckinghamshire Council. This submission is the Council's **draft** response to the Commission's consultation on the ***pattern of wards*** to apply from the 2025 council elections.
2. Our response has taken into account the Commission's [published criteria](#) for achieving a pattern of wards:
 - Electoral equality
 - Community identity
 - Effective local government
3. We have taken into account the Commission's recommendation of 98 councillors as the target 'council size'. As such, we have followed the councillor-electors ratio of one councillor per 4,521 electors, based on the projected 2027 electorate published by the Commission.

Our draft proposal

A pattern of 50 wards – comprising two one-member and 48 two-member wards. The list of proposed wards and their names is attached at **Annex 1**.

Annex 2 items the changes and the variances. **Annex 3** maps the proposals in PDF. An interactive version is [here](#).

4. The Council has been very mindful that 'one size' does not fit all. It has been important to us, in recommending a pattern of wards, that our recommendations should involve a pattern of representation suited to our communities.
5. In framing our proposals, we have not simply followed existing structures as an easy rule. We have sought to ensure our proposals reflect, and promote, community identity. Neither have we thought it necessary simply to disregard existing ward arrangements if there have been good reasons to build on them.
6. In our view, the review represents an opportunity to provide a stable basis for electoral representation after a period of considerable structural change for Buckinghamshire's local governance. As a new unitary authority, it is important that the pattern of wards meets the needs of our communities and provides the best possible reflection of community identity and effective government.
7. We are a member-led authority which sees our democratic relationship with the electorate and local communities as pivotal to Buckinghamshire's future. This perspective has been important to us from the outset; for example as expressed through our 16 innovative community boards, which provide action-based local forums where

our elected members meet regularly with parish and town councils, community groups and local stakeholders to identify key local priorities.

8. Our proposals are consistent with sustaining this effective, community-based commitment to local governance.
9. The proposals were worked up by a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group of the Standards & General Purposes Committee of Buckinghamshire Council. The Group met twice over February and March, making a recommendation to the Committee on 17 March, which was approved, with no votes against. With the agreement of the Commission, our Full Council will formally consider the proposal on 27 April, for final submission.

Draft proposals – further work

10. This is the Council's draft submission, which gives the broad proposal that the Council wishes to make. We are conscious that several areas still require attention, and we will work on these prior to Full Council and would also value working closely with the Commission.
11. We are conscious that the areas around Wycombe and Aylesbury require additional attention to ensure a sound balance of the three criteria: for example, while the draft proposals around Wycombe provide good electoral equality, we would like to explore the potential for increasing yet further the degree of community identity.
12. Also, while 96% our ward proposals achieve electoral equality within +/- 10% of the target figure, seven wards require further attention, five of these only marginally so. Our draft proposal for Aston Clinton and Weston Turville reflects community identity but requires further work to bring a better balance of electoral variance.
13. Our Electoral Review Working Group will continue to meet to explore further options for these areas. We would particularly value working closely with the Commission during its own fact-finding phase to explore those options. We would welcome such dialogue now, following our submission, and throughout the next formal consultation period.
14. We will articulate our submission further. However, we wanted the Commission to see, in draft form, the direction of the Council's thinking and aspiration.

Cllr Thomas Broom
Chairman of the Standards and General Purposes Committee and its Electoral Review Working Group.

March 2022