

**Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Electoral Review 2022**  
**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 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-elector 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 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 the agreement of the Commission, our Full Council approved the proposals on 27 April. In doing so, Council endorsed the further discussion with the Commission on a small number of options, consistent with our proposals, which we would wish to finesse further.

#### ***Draft proposals – further work***

10. We are conscious that the certain areas around Wycombe and Aylesbury require additional attention to ensure a more sound balance of the three criteria: for example, while the proposals around Wycombe provide good electoral equality, we believe there are options for maximising yet further the degree of community identity.
11. Similarly, while 96% of our ward proposals achieve electoral equality within +/- 10% of the target figure, seven wards require further attention, five of these only marginally so. Our outline proposal for Aston Clinton and Weston Turville reflects community identity but requires further work to bring a better balance of electoral variance; we will present options for this and would welcome discussion of them with the Commission.
12. The areas where we intend working up more detailed options are:
  - A) **Electoral variance:** options will be presented to achieve electoral equality within the overall framework of our proposal (current variance in brackets):
    - i. Aston Clinton & Weston Turville (+18%)
    - ii. Bierton & Wing (+14%)
    - iii. Hazlemere (-12%)
    - iv. Aylesbury North West (+11%)
    - v. Aylesbury West (-11%)
    - vi. Stone & Waddesdon (+11%)
    - vii. Winslow (+11%)
  - B) **Community identity and effective governance:** options will be presented, particularly around the area of Wycombe. Principally:
    - i. Booker, Cresssex and Castlefield Ward: cross-party options are being reviewed by the Working Group
    - ii. Gerrards Cross & Hedgerley Ward/Denham & Wexham Ward: potential options for certain polling districts are being reviewed
    - iii. Chalfont St Peter Ward: the parish proposal

13. Our cross-party Electoral Review Working Group will continue to meet to develop options. We would very much value working closely with the Commission during its own fact-finding phase to explore those options. We would also welcome such dialogue throughout the next formal consultation period.

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

**April 2022**