

Worcester City Council

Response to LGBCE

**Draft Recommendations for New Electoral Arrangements for Worcester
City Council**

November 2022

DRAFT

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DRAFT

1. Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE, The Commission) identified Worcester City Council as a local authority that requires a review of its electoral arrangements. The last review was completed in 2002. There is an evident level of electoral imbalance in two areas of the city which breach the acceptable 'levels of equality' endorsed by the LGBCE. This electoral inequality scenario becomes more acute when taking into account the electorate population forecast growth up to 2028 (the Commission's target date).

The review commenced in late 2021 and as part of the first stage of the review, the Council made a submission to the Commission in February 2022, as to the number of councillors that Worcester City Council should have. The Council submitted that the number of councillors should preferably remain at 35, although it would accept up to 39 Councillors if required. Simultaneously the Council resolved that it should change its electoral cycle from elections by thirds, to whole-Council elections.

One consequence of this decision to move to whole-council elections is that, for the purposes of the Commission's review, the number of councillors representing each ward in the city may be any number from 1 to 4, with 3 councillors typically being the highest number representing each ward.

The Commission has advised that it is minded to recommend that the Council size should be 35 councillors and so the review has moved to the second stage; to determine revised warding arrangements for the district, based upon 35 councillors.

At its July meeting, the Council agreed a draft submission on the warding pattern, supported by the leaders of its four Political Groups, ([Draft Warding submission Worcester City Council July 2022.pdf](#)) and resolved:

"That the Council agrees the Warding Arrangements Submission set out in Appendix 1, Paragraph 4 - Summary of the Council's Proposals as its collective response to the initial consultation being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to submit this document to the Commission, on behalf of the Council."

The submission was sent to the Commission in July 2022.

In early November 2022 the Commission produced proposals in the document "New electoral arrangements for Worcester City Council, Draft Recommendations, November 2022" ([Report - Worcester draft recommendations - cover.pdf](#)).

Following consultation with Leaders of the Council's four Political Groups this document has been produced to set out the Council's response to these draft

recommendations, giving due consideration to the three main criteria set by the Commission in determining warding arrangements:

1. Delivering electoral equality for local voters
2. Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities
3. Promoting effective and convenient local government

The Council considers that this response meets the criteria as set by the Commission.

The attached response is supported by all four of the Political Group Leaders.

It is understood that Political Groups and individual Councillors may also submit their own comments to the Commission.

2. Methodology

Officers presented the Commission's proposals at a meeting of the Political Group Leaders, and followed this with further discussion with Group Leaders individually and their nominated Group Members.

Officers worked to the objective of achieving a consensus response as far as possible, whilst noting where Groups held differing views and a consensus could not be achieved.

3. Overall Approach

The Council operates a Committee System and there is currently no overall political control. The four Political Group Leaders agreed that only a response that they all supported would be recommended to full Council and voted on.

Individual Political Groups may choose to make their own responses to supplement the Council's response and explain their individual perspectives.

4. The Council's response

The Council's original position was that

"there is a consensus that the majority of wards work well, providing electoral equality (electors per Councillor), upholding the interests and identities of communities, and supporting effective and convenient local government. Changes are therefore only proposed where there is significant electoral inequality – namely in Cathedral (too large for three Councillors) and the Warndon Parish wards (need to be rebalanced between North and South).

Whilst this requires an additional Councillor to facilitate the proposals for Cathedral Ward the Council has not reached a consensus on how to generate this additional Councillor, although a number of options have been discussed".

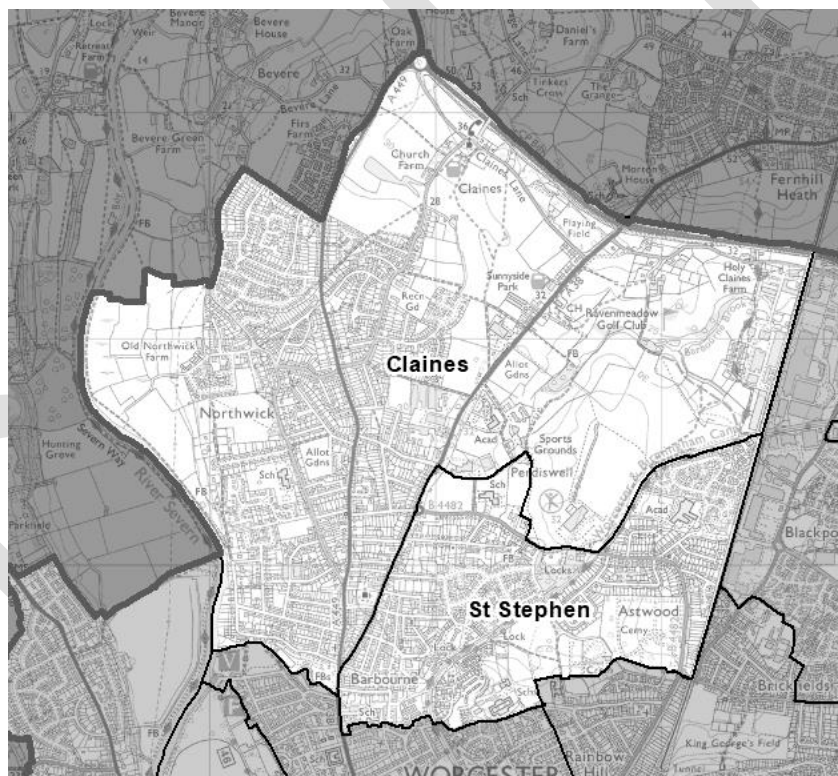
These options to facilitate the proposals for Cathedral Ward were included with the Council's submission but did not form part of the submission as the Political Groups were unable to reach a consensus on any of these options.

This response to the Commission's proposals is presented as a comment on each of the draft changes recommended, which affect the boundaries of 12 of the 15 wards.

This response is grouped into North-west, North-east and East, Central and West, and South as in the Commission's Draft Recommendations. The maps from the LGBCE document are produced below. An interactive map is available at [Local Government Boundary Commission for England Consultation Portal \(lgbce.org.uk\)](https://www.lgbce.org.uk).

Where responses affect more than one of the four areas they are repeated under each relevant area to assist in association with individual wards.

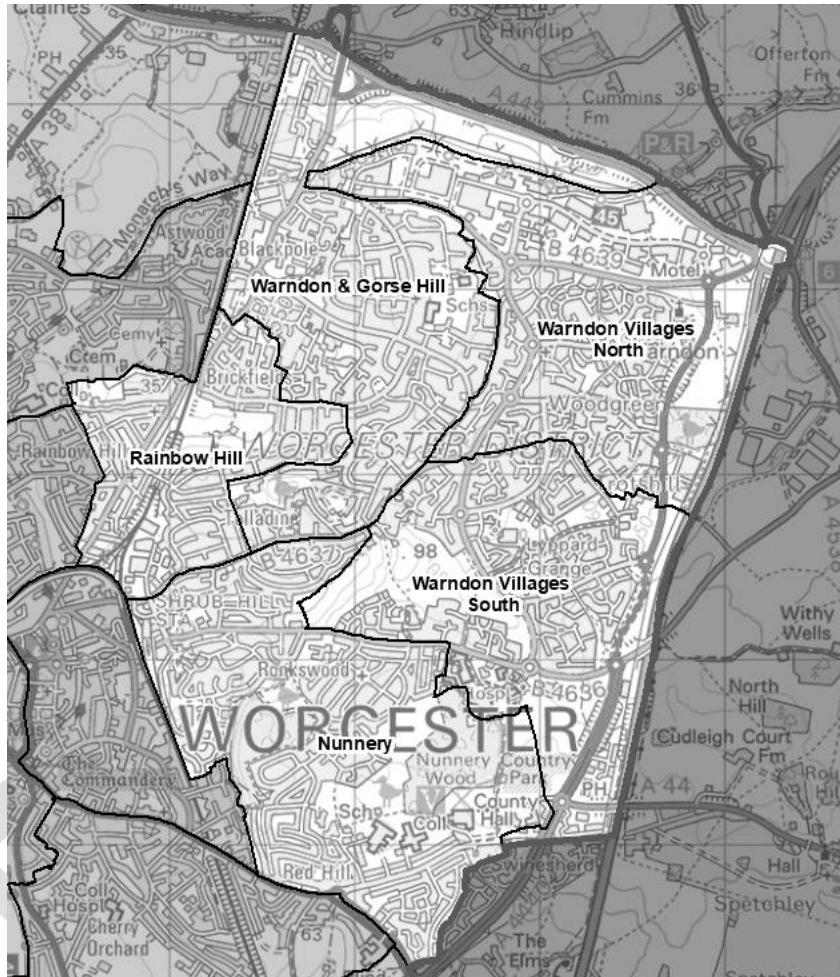
4.1 North-west (p9 of LGBCE Draft Recommendation)



- 4.1.1 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move the St. Stephen and Rainbow Hill boundary to include within Rainbow Hill properties to the North of Green Lane and properties on and accessed via Tintern Avenue. This was proposed in the Council's submission in July 2022.
- 4.1.2 The Council supports the draft recommendation to realign the Claines and St Stephen boundary along the canal adjacent to Drovers Way and Suffolk Drive.

4.1.3 The Council supports the draft recommendation to realign the Claines and Arboretum boundary along the centre line of the Barbourne Brook through Gheulvelt Park.

4.2 North-east and East (p11 of LGBCE Draft Recommendation)



4.2.1 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move the St. Stephen and Rainbow Hill boundary to include within Rainbow Hill properties to the North of Green Lane and properties on and accessed via Tintern Avenue. This was proposed in the Council's submission in July 2022.

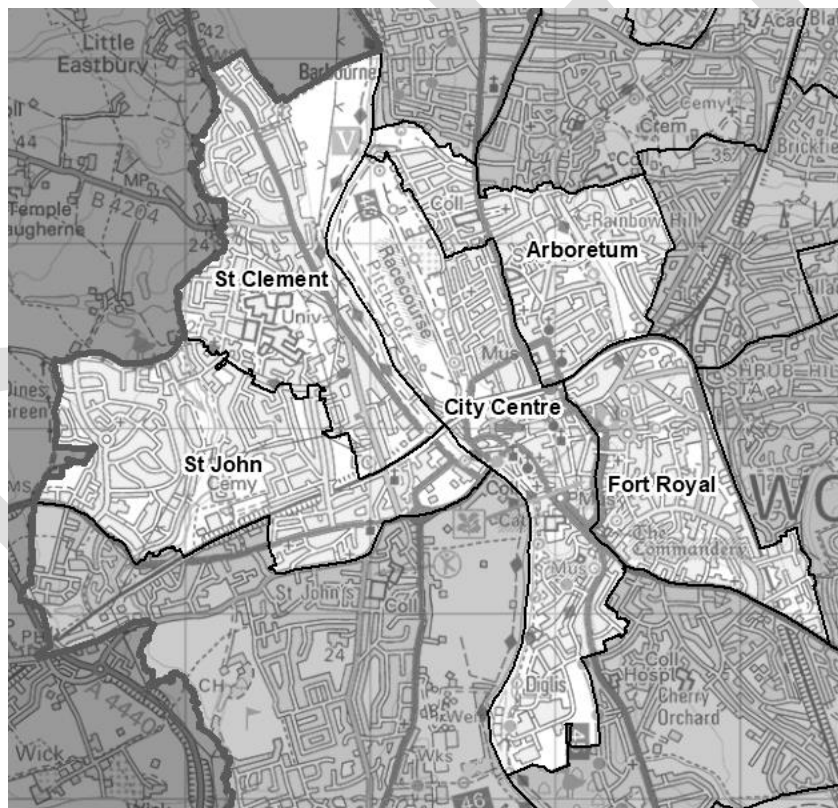
4.2.2 The Council has not reached a consensus regarding the draft recommendation to merge Warndon and Gorse Hill and therefore this response is silent on this draft recommendation.

4.2.3 The Council has not reached a consensus response to the draft recommendation to extend the Nunnery boundary to the North to align with Tolladine Road, moving into Nunnery properties in the

Avon Road, Teme Road, Cherwell Close, Conway and Avon Close. Therefore this response is silent on this draft recommendation.

- 4.2.4 The Council supports the draft recommendation of ward name changes to Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South.
- 4.2.5 The Council supports the draft recommendation of the boundary between Warndon Villages North and Warndon Villages South.
- 4.2.6 The Council supports the draft recommendation of the boundary between Warndon Villages South and Nunnery that leaves the entire Worcestershire Royal Hospital site in Warndon Villages South.
- 4.2.7 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move properties in Lilburne Close, Cranbourne Grove and the North side of Perrywood Walk from Nunnery into Fort Royal.

4.3 Central and West (p18 of LGBCE Draft Recommendation)

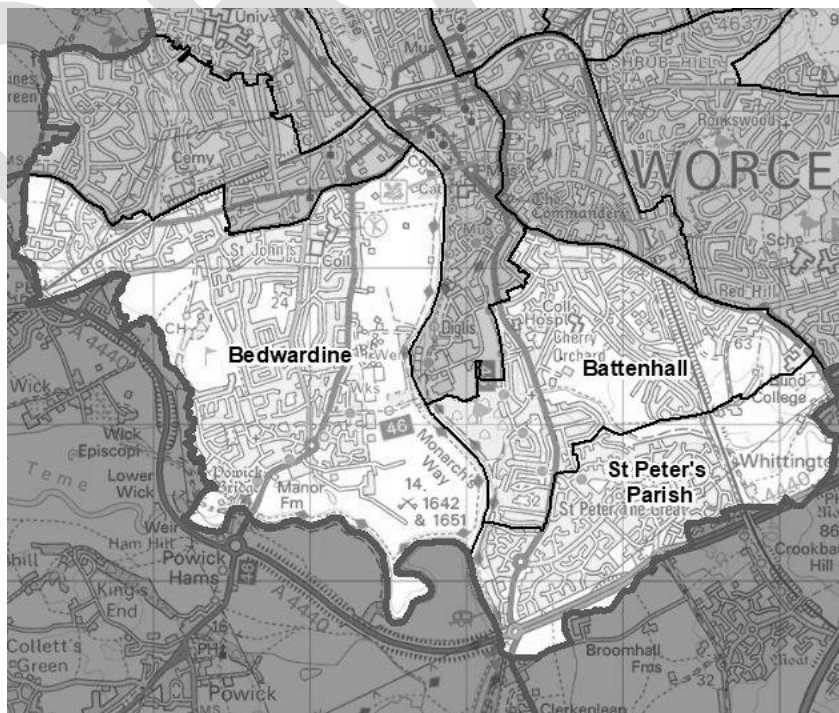


- 4.3.1 The Council supports the draft recommendations to realign the boundary between St John and Bedwardine at the following locations
 - Junction of Watery Lane / Bransford Road,
 - Junction of Bromyard Road and Watery Lane to the rear of Happy Land West
 - Junction of Tudor Way and Bromyard Road

- Earl's Court Cottage, Bromyard Road

- 4.3.2 The Council supports the draft recommendation to realign the Claines and Arboretum boundary along the centre line of the Barbourne Brook through Gheulvelt Park.
- 4.3.3 The Council supports the draft recommendation for the division of Cathedral into City Centre and Fort Royal along the boundaries recommended. This is broadly aligned to the proposals within the Council's submission in July 2022, subject to some minor amendments to the proposed ward boundaries.
- 4.3.4 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move properties in Lilburne Close, Cranbourne Grove and the North side of Perrywood Walk from Nunnery into Fort Royal.
- 4.3.5 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move the boundary between Battenhall and City Centre (formerly Cathedral), which moves properties in Waverley Street, Cavendish Street, Orchard Street, Berwick Street, Cavalier Crescent and the East side of Bath Road into Battenhall.
- 4.3.6 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move properties in Pitchcroft Lane from City Centre (formerly Cathedral) into Arboretum.

4.4 South (p22 of Draft LG BCE Recommendation)



4.4.1 The Council supports the draft recommendation to realign the boundary between St John and Bedwardine at the following locations

- Junction of Watery Lane / Bransford Road,
- Junction of Bromyard Road and Watery Lane to the rear of Happy Land West
- Junction of Tudor Way and Bromyard Road
- Earl's Court Cottage, Bromyard Road

4.4.2 The Council supports the draft recommendation to move the boundary between Battenhall and City Centre (formerly Cathedral), which moves properties in Waverley Street, Cavendish Street, Orchard Street, Berwick Street, Cavalier Crescent and the East side of Bath Road into Battenhall.

5. Summary of the Council's Response

5.1 The Council's response supports the LGBCE Draft Recommendations with the exception of the proposed move of an area around Avon and Teme Roads into Nunnery and the amalgamation of Warndon and Gorse Hill. The Council makes no response on these two issues.