

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Reading Borough Council

Electoral review

September 2020

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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.

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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)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (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 the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Reading?

7 We are conducting a review of Reading Borough Council ('the Council') as the value of each vote in borough elections varies depending on where you live in Reading. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

- The wards in Reading are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

Our proposals for Reading

9 Reading should be represented by 48 councillors, two more than there are now.

10 Reading should have 16 wards, the same number as present.

11 The boundaries of all wards, except Park, should change.

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

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.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Reading. We then held three 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
20 August 2019	Number of councillors decided
27 August 2019	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
4 November 2019	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
4 February 2020	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
13 April 2020	End of consultation
8 June 2020	Re-opened consultation on draft recommendations
20 July 2020	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
29 September 2020	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ 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.

	2019	2025
Electorate of Reading	113,590	121,002
Number of councillors	46	48
Average number of electors per councillor	2,469	2,521

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'. All of our proposed wards for Reading will have good electoral equality by 2025.

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 2025, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2020. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 7% by 2025.

23 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our final recommendations.

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

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

Number of councillors

24 Reading Council currently has 46 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that increasing by two will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

25 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 48 councillors.

26 As Reading Council elects by thirds (has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards should we receive compelling evidence during consultation that an alternative pattern of wards will better reflect our statutory criteria.

27 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to the consultation on our draft recommendations. This submission suggested that the council size should increase to 49 and stated that an alternative scheme should be utilised for the borough. However, we did not consider the scheme was supported by sufficient evidence and were therefore not persuaded to increase to 49 councillors. We have therefore maintained 48 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

28 We received 19 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included one borough-wide proposal from the Council, which developed its proposals through a cross-party working group. This was approved at a full Council meeting on 4 November 2019. The remainder of the submissions largely provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

29 One submission was signed by 24 electors from Church ward and contained two partial warding schemes. We gave this submission careful consideration but concluded that the proposal was descriptive in nature and lacked the evidence to support some of its proposals. In particular, we noted that the scheme often mentioned moving electors from certain wards into others without specifying exactly where this should take place. It was therefore difficult to accommodate these suggestions. The submission also reasoned that parliamentary constituency boundaries should be taken into account and used this as an explanation for some of its proposals. However, parliamentary constituencies are not a point of consideration for the Commission as they do not form part of our statutory criteria for assessing ward boundaries. Where possible, and where evidence was provided, we sought to

⁴ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act 2009 paragraph 2(3)(d) and paragraph 2(5)(c).

take account of the points raised in the submission. This submission also received support from the Northcourt Avenue Residents' Association.

30 Some of the submissions made comments regarding the possibility of amending the external borough boundary. We were unable to have regard to this issue in our draft recommendations as amendments to authority boundaries are not considered as part of an electoral review.

31 The borough-wide scheme provided for a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards for Reading. We carefully considered this scheme and were of the view that the proposed pattern of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

32 Our 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 did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

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

34 Our draft recommendations were for 16 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

35 We received 30 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included submissions from the Reading Borough Council's Labour Group and the Conservative Group who both expressed support for our draft recommendations in full. The Reading & Wokingham Green Party contended that our draft recommendations were not fully in line with their views, but nonetheless considered them reasonable.

36 Additionally, we received a full scheme based on a council size of 49 councillors from a local resident. It was difficult to assess the viability of the scheme, as it did not offer detail as to where its proposed boundaries were. Furthermore, the scheme proposed numerous changes across various parts of the borough in councillor size and boundaries, without evidencing why these should occur or giving detail of the geographical location of the proposed boundaries. Overall, we were not

convinced by the evidence put forward and were therefore not persuaded to adopt these proposals as part of our final recommendations.

37 The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals for the area north of the River Thames, as well as our proposals for a ward that straddled the river. We also received a few submissions in relation to Northcourt Avenue and our proposed name change of Minster ward to Coley. The remainder of the submissions largely provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

38 Some of the submissions made comments regarding the possibility of amending the external borough boundary. We were unable to have regard to this issue in our final recommendations as amendments to authority boundaries are not considered as part of an electoral review.

39 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to our proposed Caversham and Thames wards based on the submissions received. We also make a minor modification to the boundaries between Church and Redlands wards and propose changing the name of our proposed The Heights ward to Caversham Heights.

Final recommendations

40 Our final recommendations are for 16 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.

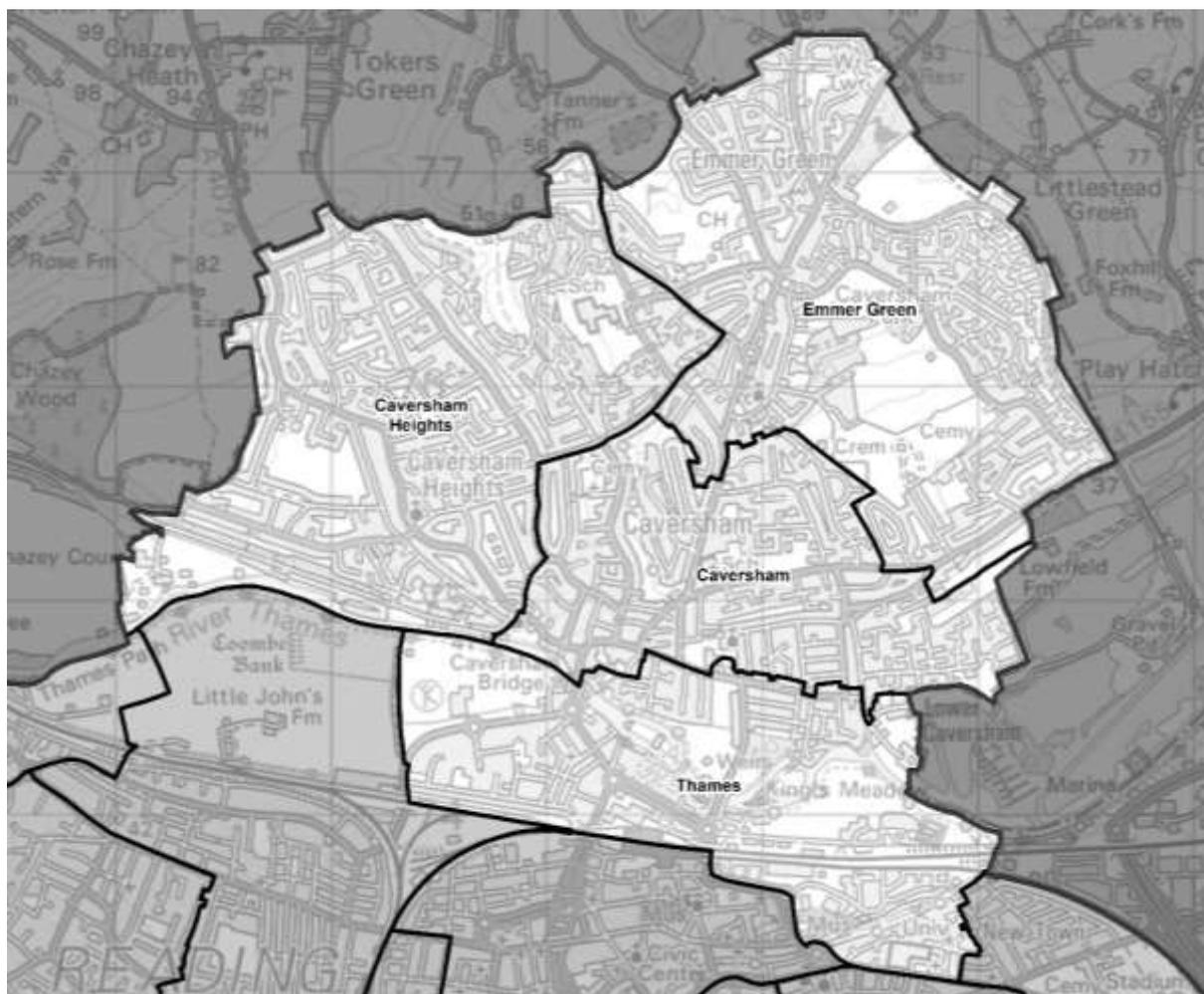
41 The tables and maps on pages 12–21 detail our final recommendations for each area of Reading. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

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

42 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 29 and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Caversham, Caversham Heights, Emmer Green and Thames



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Caversham	3	3%
Caversham Heights	3	0%
Emmer Green	3	3%
Thames	3	-9%

Caversham Heights and Emmer Green

43 We received a submission from a resident in relation to the ward boundaries in this area. The submission contended that the ward boundary should be adjusted to run along Surley Row rather than St Barnabas Road and Evesham Road. This was on the basis that this triangular area had stronger links with the Emmer area and that residents used facilities in Emmer Green. We considered this alternative but were not persuaded we had received sufficient evidence to justify this change.

44 The remaining submissions proposed that different ward names should be used for this area. Two submissions from local organisations argued that the wards should be renamed Caversham East and Caversham West on the basis that they were

neutral ward names. The submissions argued that The Heights inferred elitism, with one of the submissions suggesting that the ward did not contain the area wholly known as Caversham Heights. The submissions also stated that our proposed Emmer Green ward contained an area that is not locally referred to as Emmer Green and proposed that Caversham East would be a more neutral and fitting choice of ward name.

45 We received another submission from a resident who expressed their disagreement with the ward name The Heights, arguing that its use was elitist. Councillor Barnett-Ward agreed with our proposed Emmer Green ward name but argued that The Heights should be renamed Caversham Heights. Similarly, a local resident agreed with our choice of Emmer Green as a ward name on the basis that it 'better reflects the community' and was more fitting than the current ward name of Peppard. The submission also proposed that The Heights ward should be renamed Caversham Heights as it 'is used by a number of local community organisations/facilities' whilst The Heights is not widely used in the local area.

46 We considered the different arguments put forward in relation to the ward names for the area. Whilst we understood the logic behind the proposed Caversham East and Caversham West ward names, we did not consider them to be fully representative of the area. On the basis of the evidence received, we consider Caversham Heights to be a more fitting ward name than The Heights and we have therefore decided to make this change as part of our final recommendations. We considered our proposed ward name of Emmer Green to be sufficiently representative of the area and better known locally. Furthermore, we note that our proposed ward is similar to the current ward, which is named Peppard. We therefore consider there is no necessity to include 'Caversham' in the ward name.

47 We confirm our draft recommendations as final for this area, with one amendment to change the name of our proposed The Heights ward to Caversham Heights.

Caversham and Thames

48 We received the most submissions in relation to our proposals for this area. Eight submissions disagreed with our proposals for Thames ward, with many stating that governance issues would arise from a ward that spanned the river. The bulk of arguments put forward to us argued that there was also a lack of commonality between communities either side of the river. Some submissions also contended that the area south of the Kennet and Avon Canal had different needs, with one respondent stating that this area was in fact Newtown and should therefore be placed in Park ward.

49 We considered the evidence put forward to us and looked at possible alternative options for the area. We noted that were we to draw the boundary along

the river as some suggested, this would split this area into a single-councillor and two-councillor ward and the former would have poor electoral equality. Similarly, it is worth noting that it is not possible to add the area to the south of the Kennet & Avon Canal to Park ward and achieve good electoral equality in either Thames ward or Park ward. We therefore do not recommend adopting any of these changes. Furthermore, we are statutorily obliged to adopt a three-councillor ward pattern where a council elects by thirds, unless there is substantial evidence to counter this. Whilst we note the concerns raised in relation to our proposals, we would contend that the proposal still provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria, in that it has good electoral equality and follows generally clear and identifiable boundaries. While some comments have been made in relation to community links, no strong evidence has been provided for a viable alternative warding pattern for this area.

50 We received a submission from the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens that stated that the St Peter's Conservation Area should be placed within our proposed Caversham ward. This sentiment was echoed in other submissions and the Caversham & District Residents' Association submitted a proposal that placed this area and some of the High Street in Caversham ward. The association stated that the High Street area belonged with Caversham and would also help ease the burden on Thames ward, as the councillors would not have to deal with issues arising from this area, which had more similarities with Caversham.

51 We carefully considered the evidence received and have decided to amend the boundary between the two wards. Furthermore, we consider that moving the centre of Caversham into Caversham ward will help alleviate some of the governance concerns raised in relation to our proposed Thames ward. We also received a suggestion from Councillor Barnett-Ward to rename our proposed Thames ward either Riverside or Thameside. Councillor Barnett-Ward suggested the latter on the basis that Thameside Primary School is in the ward and that both 'would be fitting names that would make sense to residents'. Whilst we accept that Thameside had prevalence in the ward, we still deemed Thames to be an accurate description, in light of the River Thames spanning the centre of the ward. On this basis we have not chosen to rename the ward.

52 Therefore, we confirm our draft recommendations as final for this area, with one amendment between the boundaries of the ward, as discussed above.

Abbey, Battle and Kentwood

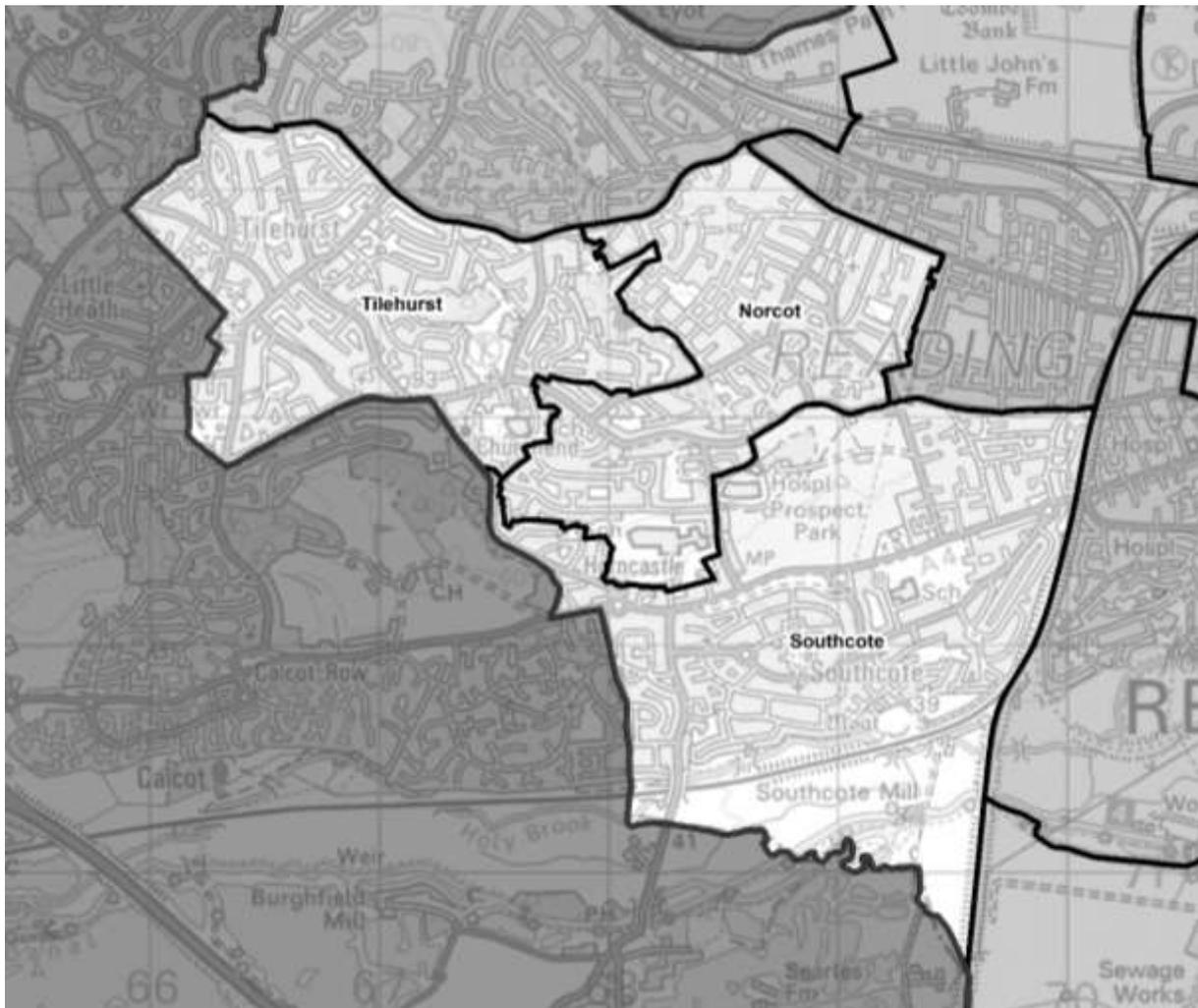


Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Abbey	3	-3%
Battle	3	2%
Kentwood	3	-8%

Abbey, Battle and Kentwood

53 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Norcot, Southcote and Tilehurst

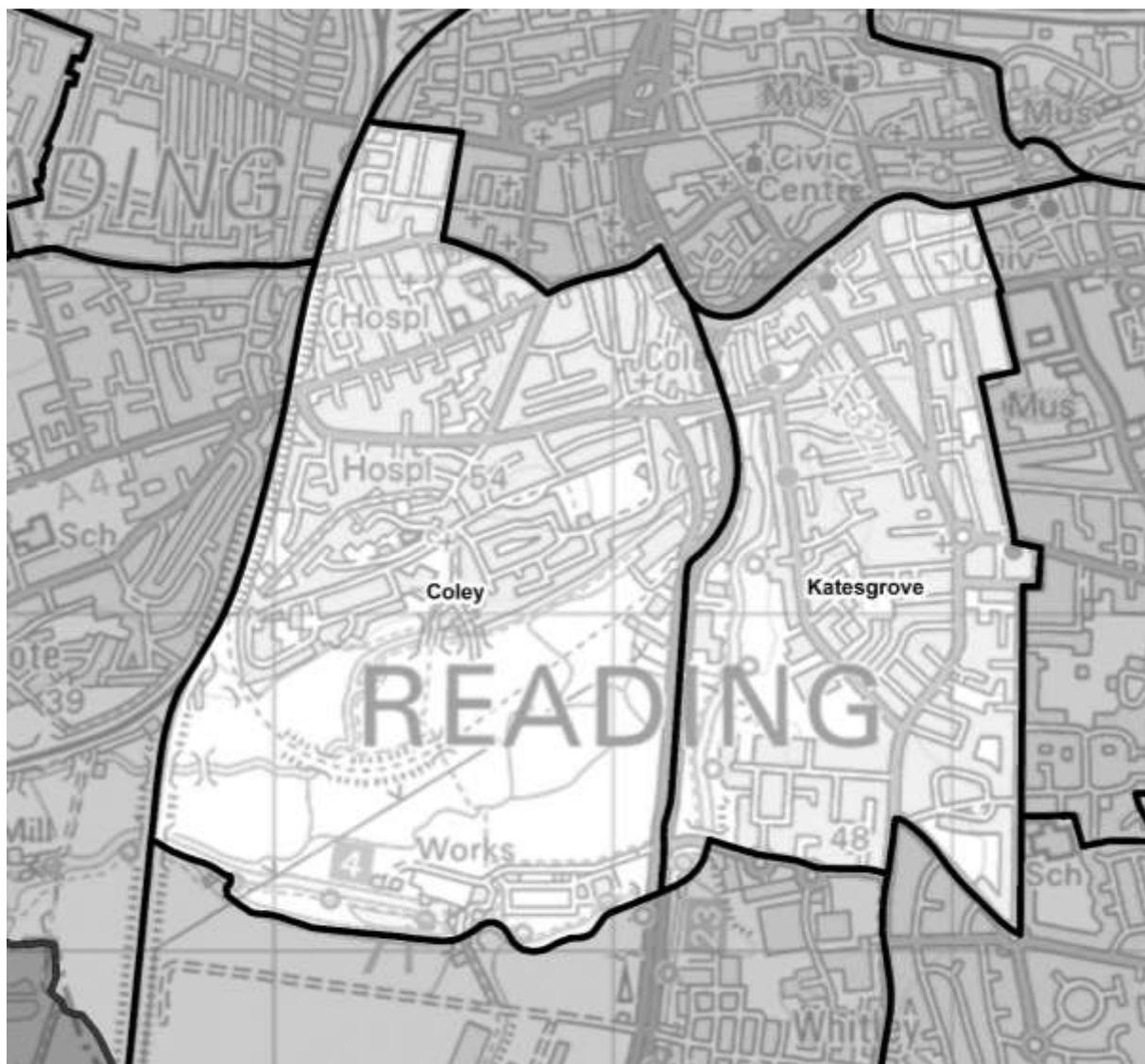


Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Norcot	3	4%
Southcote	3	3%
Tilehurst	3	-2%

Norcot, Southcote and Tilehurst

54 We received no submissions that related directly to these wards. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Coley and Katesgrove



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Coley	3	-7%
Katesgrove	3	3%

Coley

55 We received six comments in relation to our draft proposals for this ward. The comments largely referred to our proposed name choice of Coley, with four arguing that the current ward name of Minster should be retained based on its historical importance to the area. One of the respondents stated that they were happy with our proposed ward boundaries. Councillor Barnett-Ward agreed with our proposed choice of Coley, on the basis that it is more widely used by people in the area. Similarly, we also received a submission from a local resident stating a preference for the name of Coley as it corrected 'the historic anomaly relating to the fact that Minster is no longer situated in the ward'. The resident also argued that Coley was a

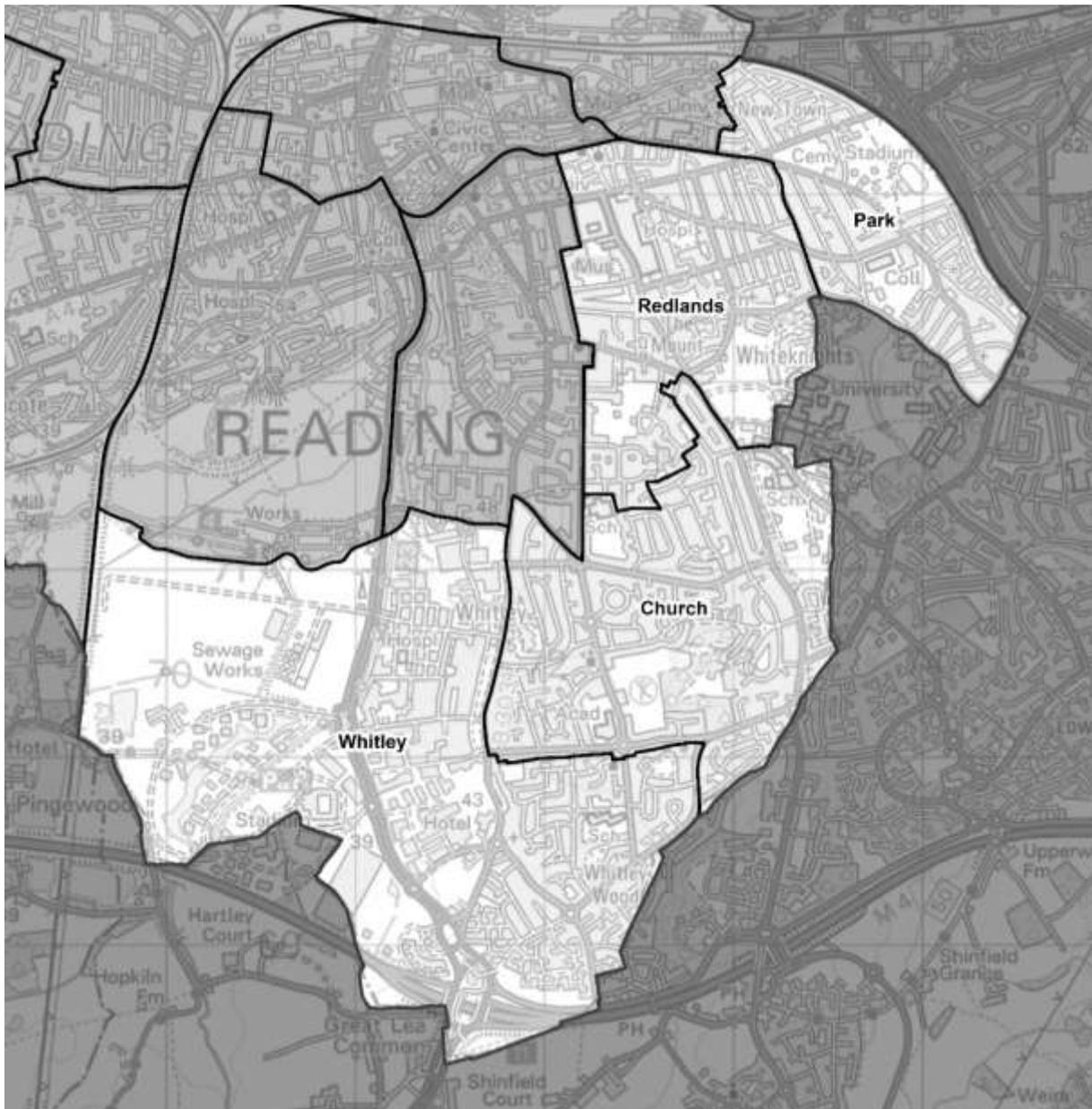
better reflection of local community identity, particularly as the new ward largely covers the areas of Coley and Coley Park.

56 We considered the arguments put forward and agree that the name Coley is more reflective of how the area is referred to by residents. Whilst we acknowledge the historical importance of Minster to the area, we consider that this is not representative of its community identity. Therefore, we confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final.

Katesgrove

57 We received no submissions that directly related to this ward. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Church, Park, Redlands and Whitley



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Church	3	9%
Park	3	-8%
Redlands	3	-2%
Whitley	3	10%

Church

58 We received four submissions in relation to our draft recommendations for Church ward. Three of these submissions were from a local resident, Matt Rodda MP (Reading East) and the Northcourt Avenue Residents' Association, who all contended that Northcourt Avenue should remain in Church ward. Matt Rodda MP

argued that the ward boundary should run along Christchurch Road as this is a clear and identifiable boundary. He also stated there was strong community evidence to keep Northcourt Avenue in the same ward, owing to the work that the residents' association does, which demonstrates a strong community.

59 The Northcourt Avenue Residents' Association similarly argued that they should be kept in the same ward owing to their strong community ties. Unlike Matt Rodda MP, they proposed that the ward boundary should instead extend to include Northcourt Avenue, running along Shinfield Road and behind the housing on Northcourt Avenue.

60 We received a further submission from a local resident stating that they were content with our draft recommendations for Church ward but that the ward should be renamed Whitley. They argued that the name Church did not reflect the community contained in the proposed ward and noted that it contained areas often identified as Whitley. We considered the argument put forward but would contend that renaming this ward Whitley would likely result in more confusion. Whilst we accept that some areas currently in Whitley would be moved into this ward, we would also contend that both wards still broadly resemble the current warding arrangements. Therefore, we do not propose adopting this name change.

61 Having carefully considered the evidence received, we agree that there is considerable evidence to suggest that Northcourt Avenue has strong community ties and should therefore remain wholly in the same ward. Whilst we agree with Matt Rodda MP that Christchurch Road is a clear and identifiable boundary, it is not possible to use this as a ward boundary and ensure good electoral equality. We also studied the boundary put forward by the Northcourt Avenue Residents' Association but noted that it would include some areas of Reading University campus, such as the field extension of St Patrick's Hall. We therefore propose adopting this suggestion but with an amendment, running the boundary partially along Northcourt Avenue to ensure that the university premises along the road are kept within Redlands ward. In doing this, we consider our recommendations will ensure effective and convenient local government. We were of the view that Marlborough House should be kept in Church ward, as it constitutes part of Northcourt Avenue.

62 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Church ward as final, with an amendment to the ward boundary described above.

Park, Redlands and Whitley

63 We received two submissions in relation to this area. One resident proposed that the boundary of Whitley ward should continue along Basingstoke Road to the B3031 rather than along Hartland Road. The submission argued that this would accommodate the new build areas of Green Park, Kennet Island and Reading Gateway, and ensure that their needs are not overlooked by the rest of the ward. We

considered this argument but note that this proposal would not achieve good electoral equality for Church ward. Therefore, we do not recommend adopting this proposal.

64 We also received a submission from a resident who argued that the wards Whitley and Park should be renamed. They suggested that Whitley ward could be renamed Whitley Wood, Whitley Wood & Kennet Island or West Whitley. As discussed earlier, this respondent also proposed that Church ward should be renamed Whitley. We considered this proposal but chose not to adopt this name choice. We are not convinced that any of the alternative names provide a better reflection of communities in the proposed ward. The submission also proposed renaming Park ward to Palmer Park. It was stated that this is an identifying feature of the ward and would identify the significance of George Palmer, a prominent historical figure associated with the area. We considered this suggestion and noted the historical reference but would contend that Park is a better reflection of current community identities in this area of the borough.

65 We received no submissions that directly related to Redlands ward. In consideration of all the evidence received, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final for Park and Whitley wards, with an amendment to Redlands ward as discussed in the context of Church ward above.

Conclusions

66 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Reading, referencing the 2019 and 2025 electorate figures. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2019	2025
Number of councillors	48	48
Number of electoral wards	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	2,366	2,521
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendations

Reading Council should be made up of 48 councillors serving 16 wards representing 16 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 Reading Borough Council. You can also view our final recommendations for Reading Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

67 We have now completed our review of Reading 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 2022.

Equalities

68 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Reading Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey	3	5,883	1,961	-17%	7,315	2,438	-3%
2	Battle	3	7,281	2,427	3%	7,709	2,570	2%
3	Caversham	3	7,648	2,549	8%	7,769	2,590	3%
4	Caversham Heights	3	7,543	2,514	6%	7,586	2,529	0%
5	Church	3	8,218	2,739	16%	8,246	2,749	9%
6	Coley	3	6,946	2,315	-2%	7,061	2,354	-7%
7	Emmer Green	3	7,652	2,551	8%	7,804	2,601	3%
8	Katesgrove	3	7,066	2,355	0%	7,825	2,608	3%
9	Kentwood	3	6,795	2,265	-4%	6,975	2,325	-8%
10	Norcot	3	7,645	2,548	8%	7,901	2,634	4%
11	Park	3	6,811	2,270	-4%	6,987	2,329	-8%
12	Redlands	3	6,838	2,279	-4%	7,408	2,469	-2%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Southcote	3	7,642	2,547	8%	7,763	2,588	3%
14 Thames	3	5,434	1,811	-23%	6,892	2,297	-9%
15 Tilehurst	3	7,255	2,418	2%	7,411	2,470	-2%
16 Whitley	3	6,933	2,311	-2%	8,350	2,783	10%
Totals	48	113,590	–	–	121,002	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,366	–	–	2,521	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Reading 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



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/south-east/berkshire/reading

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/berkshire/reading

Political Groups

- Reading & Wokingham Green Party
- Reading Borough Council Conservative Group
- Reading Borough Council Labour Group

Councillors

- Councillor A. Barnett-Ward (Reading Borough Council)

Members of Parliament

- Matt Rodda MP (Reading East)

Local Organisations

- Caversham & District Residents' Association
- Caversham GLOBE
- Friends of Caversham Court Gardens
- Northcourt Avenue Residents' Association
- North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum

Local Residents

- 20 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 fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
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. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
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 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