

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Dorset Council

Electoral review

July 2018

Translations and other formats

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

Tel: 0330 500 1525

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk

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: GD 100049926 2018

Table of Contents

Summary	1
Who we are and what we do	1
Electoral review	1
Why Dorset?	1
Our proposals for Dorset	1
Have your say	1
What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?	2
1 Introduction	3
What is an electoral review?	3
How will the recommendations affect you?	4
2 Analysis and draft recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	5
Number of councillors	6
Ward boundaries consultation	6
Draft recommendations	7
Ferndown, Corfe Mullen and Verwood	8
North-east Dorset	12
North Dorset	16
South-east Dorset	20
Mid Dorset	24
North-west Dorset	28
West Dorset	30
Weymouth and environs	32
Conclusions	35
Summary of electoral arrangements	35
Parish electoral arrangements	36
3 Have your say	39
Equalities	40
Appendix A	41
Draft recommendations for Dorset	41
Appendix B	47
Outline map	47
Appendix C	49
Submissions received	49
Appendix D	50
Glossary and abbreviations	50

Summary

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. 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.

2 Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

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

Why Dorset?

4 The Secretary of State has decided to create a new authority of Dorset Council. We are conducting a review of Dorset Council to ensure that the new unitary council has appropriate electoral arrangements. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality' where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal. We also seek to ensure that wards reflect local communities and ensure effective and convenient local government.

Our proposals for Dorset

- Dorset should be represented by 82 councillors.
- Dorset should have 52 wards.

Have your say

5 We are consulting on our draft recommendations for an eight-week period, from 3 July 2018 to 27 August 2018. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to contribute to the design of the new wards – the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be when analysing all the views we receive.

6 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

You have until 27 August 2018 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 39 for how to send us your response.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

8 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Andrew Scallan CBE

- Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

9 In 2018, the Government agreed in principle to the establishment of a new unitary council to take over the responsibility for all local government services which were formerly provided by East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council and Dorset County Council. A Structural Changes Order² was subsequently approved by Parliament on 25 May 2018, establishing a new Dorset unitary authority from 1 April 2019. It is the view of the Commission that an electoral review of the area is appropriate at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure the new council has electoral arrangements that reflect its functions and responsibilities in time for its first elections in May 2019.

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

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

What is an electoral review?

11 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

12 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

13 This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
24 May 2018	Existing local authorities submit proposals for warding arrangements and the number of councillors
19 June 2018	Commission agrees its draft recommendations
3 July 2018	Publication of draft recommendations, start of consultation
27 August 2018	End of consultation, we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
23 October 2018	Publication of final recommendations

² The Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018 (S.I 2018/648).

How will the recommendations affect you?

14 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 town or parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

15 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.

16 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.

17 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.

	2018	2023
Electorate of Dorset	295,195	308,050
Number of councillors	82	82
Average number of electors per councillor	3,600	3,757

18 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 but one of our proposed wards for Dorset will have good electoral equality by 2023.

19 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the new council – these have been decided by Parliament and we cannot amend them. Our recommendations will not 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.

Submissions received

20 See Appendix C for details of the warding submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices by appointment, or on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

21 Dorset Area Joint Committee (the Joint Committee) submitted electorate forecasts for 2023, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2018. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 4% by 2023.

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.

22 We considered the information provided by the Joint Committee and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

Number of councillors

23 In January 2018, representatives of the existing councils in the area submitted a proposal to The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government that the new council should have 82 councillors. In developing its proposal, the new authority was encouraged by the Ministry to follow our guidance in developing its proposals. The Secretary of State subsequently laid a Structural Changes Order in Parliament to create the new authority with 82 councillors.

24 As part of its submission on warding arrangements, the Joint Committee confirmed its preference for a council size of 82. We note that the proposal for 82 councillors for Dorset would constitute a reduction of 60% in terms of the overall number of councillors representing the area to be covered by the new authority. We have looked at evidence provided by the Joint Committee and have concluded that the proposed number of councillors will ensure the Council can carry out its new roles and responsibilities effectively.

25 We have therefore formulated these draft recommendations based on an 82-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

26 We received two submissions on ward boundaries for the new council. These included one detailed Dorset-wide proposal from the Joint Committee. This proposed a mixed pattern of 52 wards for Dorset. The other submission was from Broadwindsor Group Parish Council, which made specific points relating to the Joint Committee's proposals for its area.

27 The Joint Committee held five roadshows with current district, borough and county councillors to discuss its proposals. A summary of councillors' comments and the responses to them was included in the Joint Committee's submission. We have taken these comments into account in our draft recommendations.

28 We carefully considered all the information provided in the Joint Committee's submission and noted that all but one of the proposed wards would have good levels of electoral equality and, outside of the larger towns, used parish boundaries or current parish ward boundaries.

29 Our draft recommendations are based on the Joint Committee's submission. However, in some places we considered that its proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

30 Our draft recommendations are for eight three-councillor wards, 14 two-councillor wards and 30 one-councillor wards. We consider that our draft

recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests based on the evidence we have received so far.

31 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table on page 35 and on the large map accompanying this report.

32 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards. We will be conducting a tour of Dorset before confirming our final recommendations.

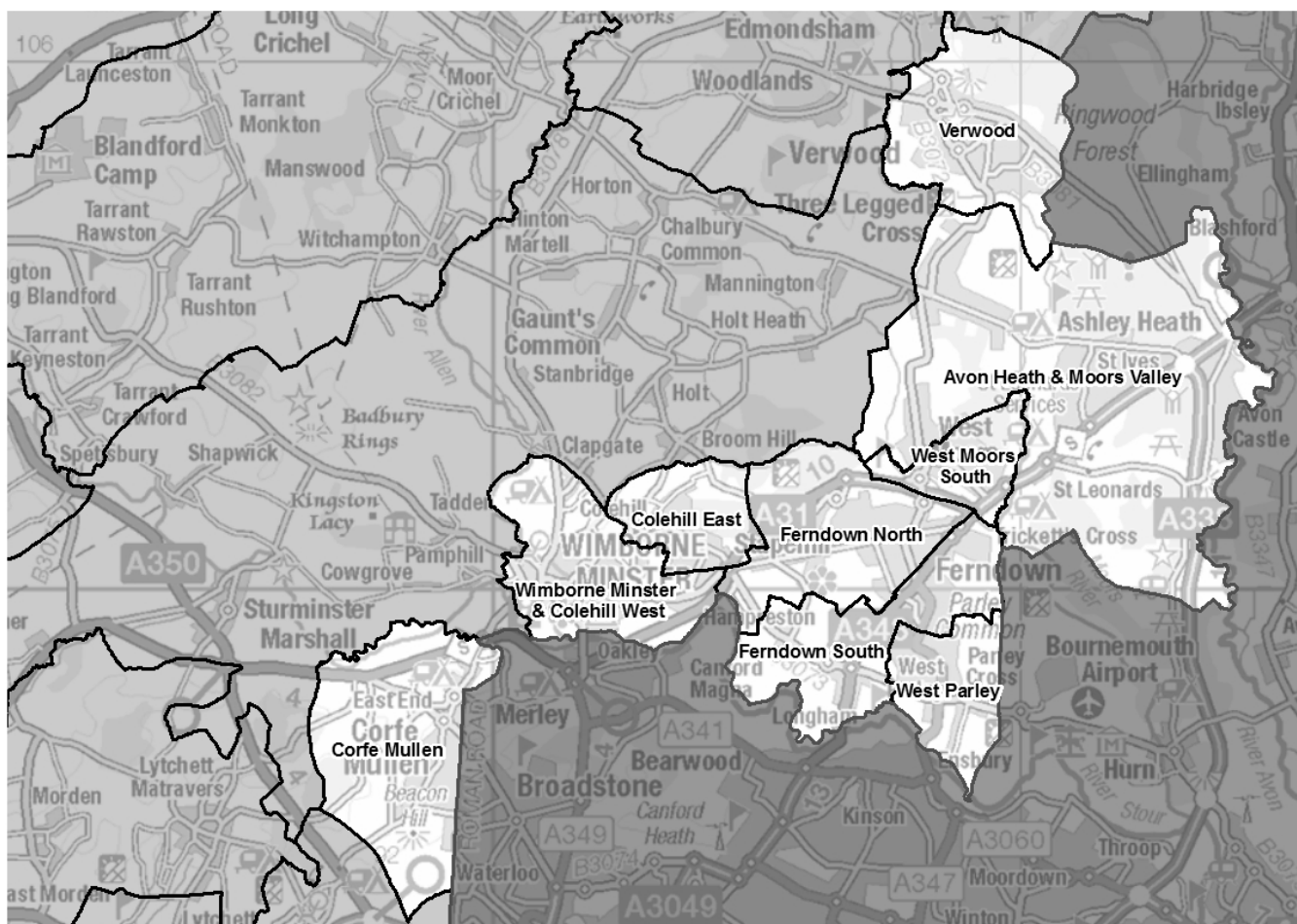
Draft recommendations

33 The tables and maps on pages 8–34 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Dorset. 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

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Ferndown, Corfe Mullen and Verwood



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Avon Heath & Moors Valley	3	-8%
Colehill East	1	6%
Corfe Mullen	2	10%
Ferndown North	2	1%
Ferndown South	2	-8%
Verwood	3	2%
West Moors South	1	-2%
West Parley	1	1%
Wimborne Minster & Colehill West	3	-1%

Avon Heath & Moors Valley, Verwood and West Moors South

34 The Joint Committee reported several comments from councillors in relation to these wards. Firstly, there was support for a three-councillor Verwood ward as it was wholly within Verwood parish and consisted of an area that is either part of or linked to the town. However, it was also suggested that the Potterne area should be included in Verwood ward as electors in this area associate more with Verwood than Three Legged Cross to their south. Finally, there was an objection to the Joint Committee's three-councillor Avon Heath & Moors Valley ward as it consisted of too many different communities that have little in common. Instead, it was proposed to create two two-councillor wards, one consisting of St Leonards & St Ives parish and the other of West Moors parish and Three Legged Cross. The latter would have an electoral variance of -11% in 2023.

35 We have carefully considered all the comments and propose to amend the Joint Committee's scheme by including the Potterne area in Verwood ward. This affects only 13 electors so has almost no effect on electoral equality and, based on the evidence we have received, also better reflects the community identity of those electors.

36 Subject to that amendment, we propose to adopt the other wards in this area as proposed by the Joint Committee. While we have considered the alternative proposal for this area, no more evidence was provided in relation to the community links within these wards than in the Joint Committee's scheme. Without more detailed evidence, we are unwilling to create a ward with a relatively high electoral variance. However, we would welcome additional evidence in relation to this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations.

Ferndown North, Ferndown South and West Parley

37 We noted that the Joint Committee amended its initial proposals for Ferndown in response to the comments it received from councillors and that there was support for a single-councillor West Parley ward coterminous with West Parley parish. Therefore, we propose to adopt the proposed Ferndown North, Ferndown South and West Parley wards as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

Colehill East and Wimborne Minster & Colehill West

38 The Joint Committee reported an objection to its proposals in Wimborne Minster and Colehill due to Colehill being split between wards. However, it also reported support for a single-councillor Colehill East ward.

39 We have considered the proposals in this area, noting that a two-councillor ward coterminous with Colehill parish would have an electoral variance of -17% and a two-councillor ward consisting of Wimborne Minster parish and the Pamphill South parish ward of Pamphill & Shapwick Parish Council would have a variance of 18%. We do not consider such high levels of electoral inequality to be acceptable, particularly in neighbouring wards.

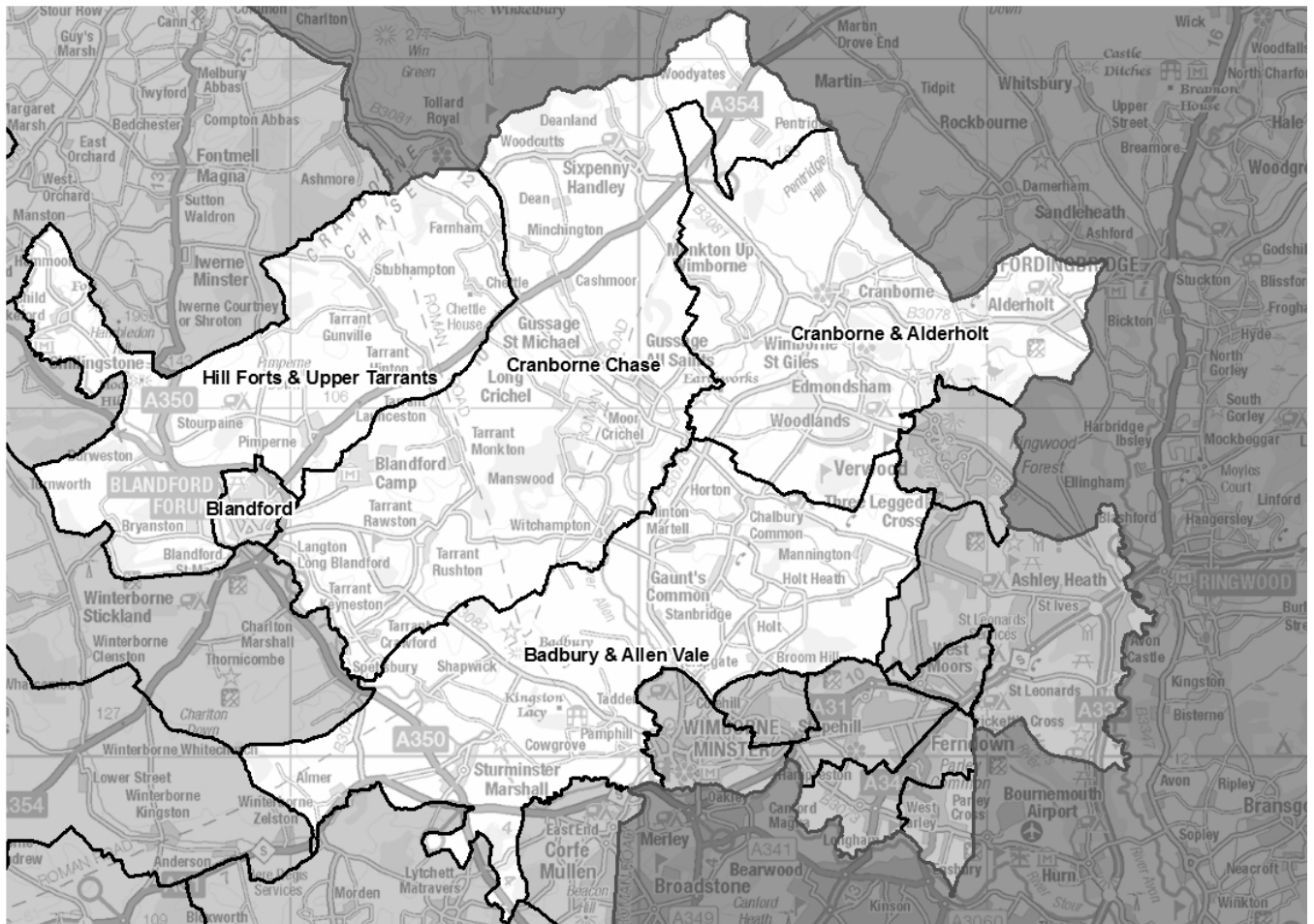
40 When considering the Joint Committee's proposal, we noted that the boundary between Colehill East and Wimborne Minster & Colehill West wards to the south of Cutlers Place and Dales Drive ran through, rather than around, some properties. We have therefore made a very small amendment that affects no electors to create a

clearer boundary in this area. Subject to that amendment, we are adopting the wards proposed by the Joint Committee in this area.

Corfe Mullen

41 We note that no comments were made in relation to the Joint Committee's proposed Corfe Mullen ward and that the ward is coterminous with Corfe Mullen parish. Therefore, we propose to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

North-east Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Badbury & Allen Vale	1	10%
Blandford	2	1%
Cranborne & Alderholt	1	7%
Cranborne Chase	1	4%
Hill Forts & Upper Tarrant	1	2%

Badbury & Allen Vale, Blandford, Cranborne & Alderholt and Cranborne Chase

42 The only objection the Joint Committee reported in relation to any of these wards was that Blandford Camp, which is split between Tarrant Launceston and Tarrant Monkton parishes, should be warded with Blandford as residents in the Camp associate strongly with the town.

43 While we have noted this point, the Camp has about a quarter of the electorate of the proposed Cranborne Chase ward so adding it to Blandford would lead to poor electoral equality in both wards. The only alternative would be to combine the wards and we are not persuaded that councillors could effectively represent both the town and the large, sparsely populated rural area to its north and east. We are therefore adopting the Blandford ward proposed by the Joint Committee without amendment.

44 The Joint Committee's scheme for this area proposed that two grouped parish councils should be split between wards. The area covered by Knowlton Parish Council (consisting of Chalbury, Horton, Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes) was divided between Badbury & Allen Vale and Cranborne & Alderholt wards, and the area covered by Vale of Allen Parish Council (consisting of Crichel, Hinton, Gussage All Saints and Witchampton parishes) was divided between Badbury & Allen Vale and Cranborne Chase wards.

45 Our view is that having grouped parishes in the same ward contributes to effective and convenient local government as, for example, it avoids small parishes having to deal with several different district councillors. Splitting grouped parishes between wards should therefore be avoided unless there is strong evidence that such a split would lead to a better balance of our three statutory criteria.

46 We have looked at different warding patterns for this area and concluded that it is not possible to create wards with acceptable electoral equality in this area without splitting both grouped parishes. Firstly, putting all of Knowlton Parish Council in Cranborne & Alderholt ward will lead to an electoral variance of 20%. Given Cranborne & Alderholt's location on the district boundary, it is not possible to remove parishes from it to ensure acceptable electoral equality. It also cannot be combined with the neighbouring three-councillor Verwood ward.

47 Alternatively, if we were to put Knowlton Parish Council in Badbury & Allen Vale ward and then Vale of Allen Parish Council in Cranborne Chase ward, there would be electoral variances of 21% in Badbury & Allen Vale, -13% in Cranborne & Alderholt and 13% in Cranborne Chase. We consider this level of electoral inequality to be so high that it is preferable that both groups of parishes be located in more than one ward.

48 We considered two other alternatives. The first would be to amend several other rural wards across the eastern part of Dorset. Given the Joint Committee provided some evidence to support its wards and no councillors objected to its proposed Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne Chase and Cranborne & Alderholt wards, we are unwilling at this stage to make major changes to the Joint Committee's proposals in what would be little more than a numerical exercise.

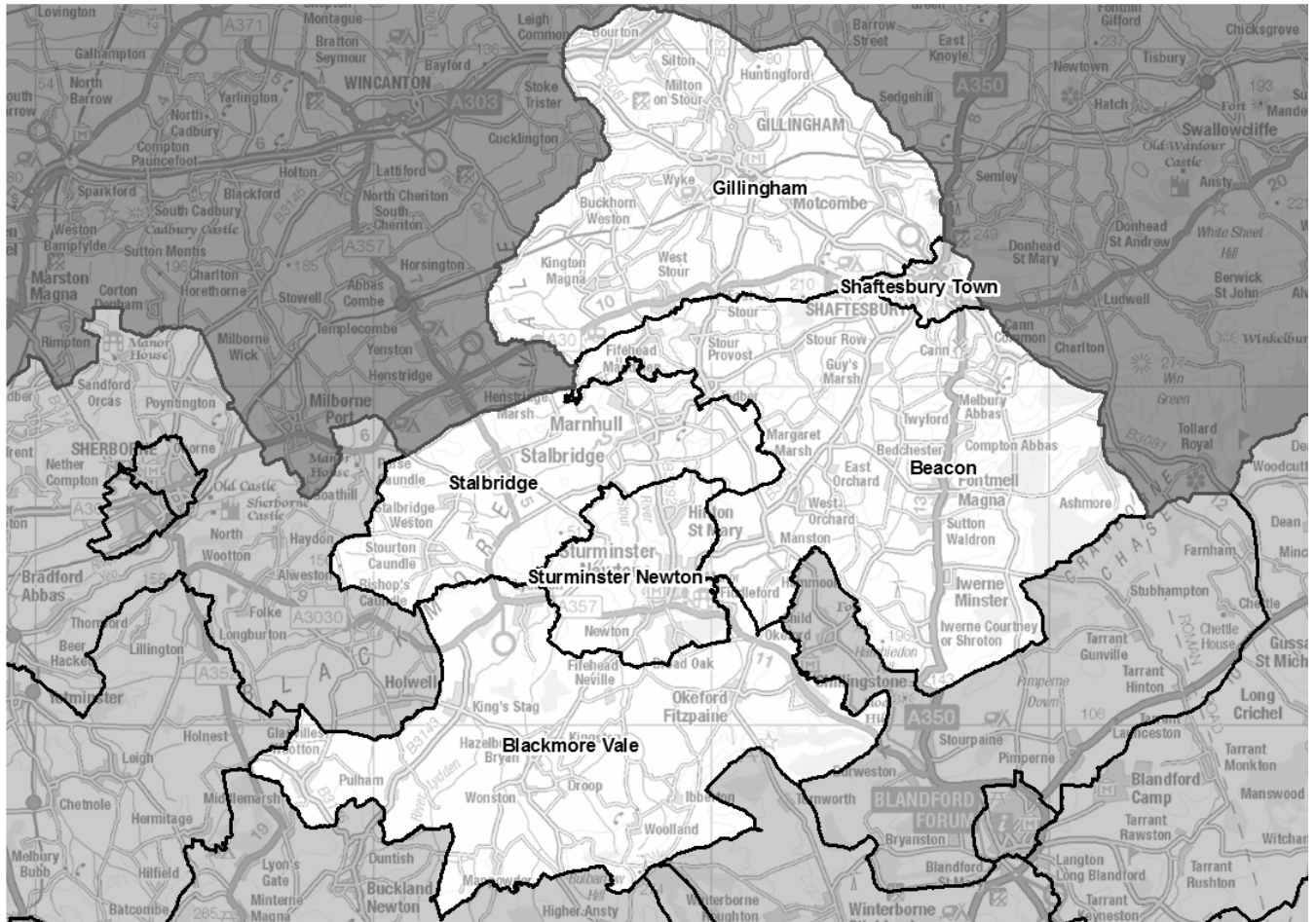
49 The final alternative, and one we considered, was to combine Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne & Alderholt and Cranborne Chase wards into a three-councillor ward. However, this would cover more than 110 square miles and consist of more than 20 parishes. On balance, we consider that such a large ward would be difficult to represent and therefore would not meet our criterion in relation to effective and convenient local government.

50 We are making one small amendment to the Joint Committee's proposal. This is to put all of Horton parish in Badbury & Allen Vale ward. The Joint Committee included the Wedge Hill area in its Cranborne & Alderholt ward and if we were to follow this proposal we would be required to create a parish ward which is projected to have only six electors in 2023. Subject to that change, we are adopting the Badbury & Allen Vale, Cranborne Chase and Cranborne & Alderholt wards as proposed by the Joint Committee.

Hill Forts & Upper Tarrant

51 We note both that the Joint Committee changed its initial proposals for Hill Forts & Upper Tarrant ward in response to the one comment it received and that the comment contained some community evidence in support of the ward now proposed. In the absence of further evidence, we propose to adopt the Hill Forts & Upper Tarrant ward as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

North Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Beacon	1	6%
Blackmore Vale	1	-3%
Gillingham	3	8%
Shaftesbury Town	2	-8%
Stalbridge	1	7%
Sturminster Newton	1	-8%

Beacon, Gillingham and Stalbridge

52 The Joint Committee reported supportive comments for all three of these wards. However, there were concerns in relation to the electorate forecast for Gillingham and an argument that there should be four councillors for Gillingham, rather than three, representing two two-councillor wards. We need compelling evidence for us to change the agreed electorate forecast and this has not been provided. We are also unclear of where the boundaries of the two-councillor wards would be.

53 The Joint Committee's scheme proposed that the area of The Stours Parish Council (consisting of East Stour, Stour Provost, Todber and West Stour parishes) should be split between Beacon and Gillingham wards. As stated above, we consider that splitting grouped parishes between wards should be avoided unless there is strong evidence that such a split would lead to a better balance of our three statutory criteria.

54 Putting The Stours Parish Council in Gillingham ward would also require us to put Fifehead Magdalen Parish Council in Stalbridge ward as it would be wholly detached from the rest of Beacon ward. This would lead to electoral variances of 13% in Gillingham ward and -12% in Beacon. Alternatively, putting The Stours Parish Council in Beacon ward would mean an electoral variance in Beacon of 20%. A two-councillor Beacon & Stalbridge ward would have an electoral variance of 15%.

55 On balance, we consider that the level of electoral inequality created by putting The Stours Parish Council in one ward to be too high. We also note that the comments received by the Joint Committee in relation to these three wards were mainly supportive.

56 Therefore, we are adopting the Joint Committee's proposed Beacon, Gillingham and Stalbridge wards as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

Blackmore Vale

57 The Joint Committee mainly reported either supportive comments for its proposed Blackmore Vale ward or comments that had led to it revising its initial scheme. The only objection was to the inclusion of Glanvilles Wootton parish in this ward but a second comment pointed out that the parish 'worked' as part of the current Blackmore Vale division.

58 In the absence of more detailed evidence about the community identity of electors in Glanvilles Wootton, we propose to adopt the Blackmore Vale ward as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

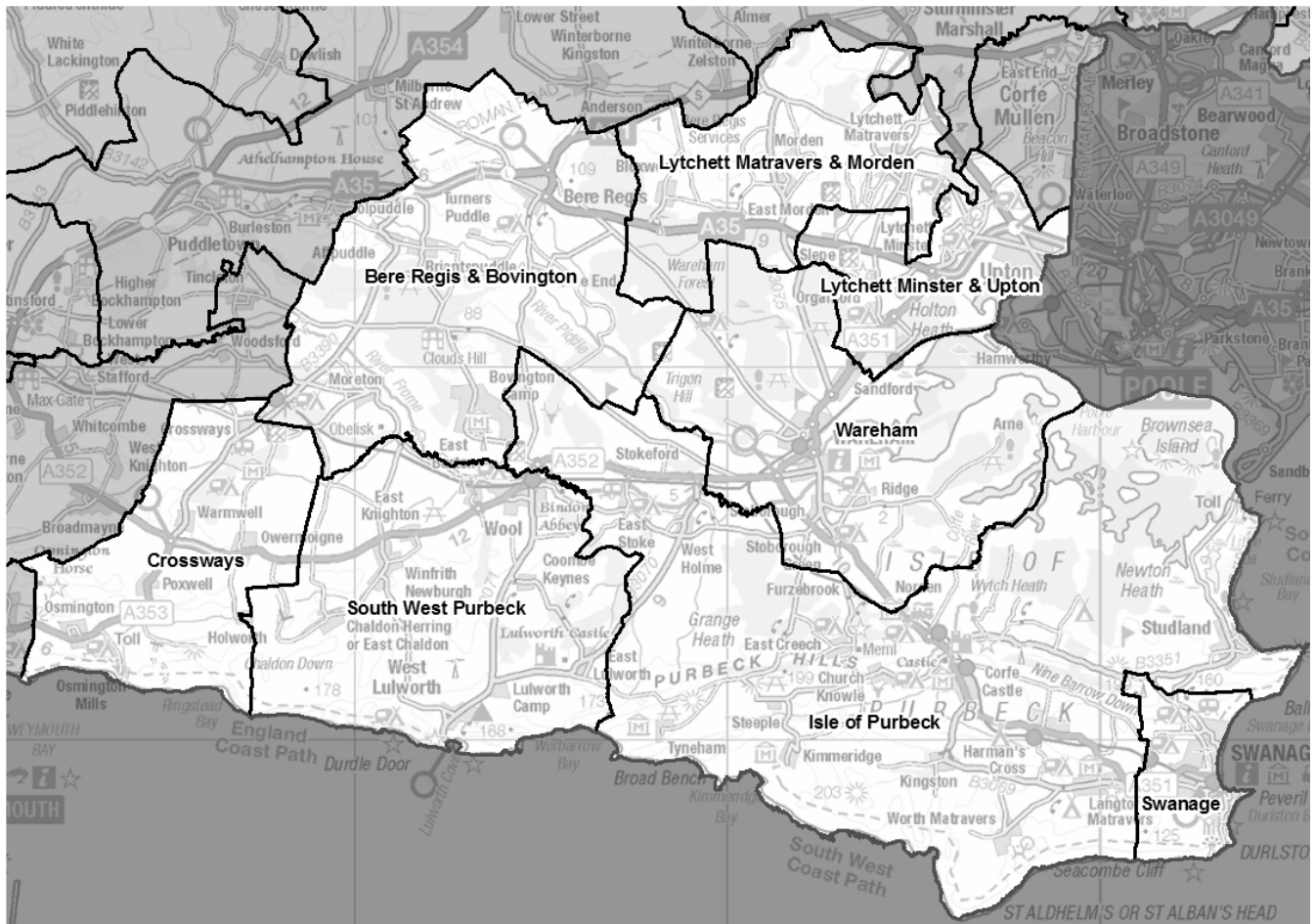
Shaftesbury Town

59 The Joint Committee reported a suggestion from a councillor to create two single-councillor wards in Shaftesbury. However, as no boundaries were specified for single-councillor wards and the two-councillor ward proposed by the Joint Committee is coterminous with Shaftesbury parish, we propose to adopt a two-councillor Shaftesbury Town ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Sturminster Newton

60 We note that the only comment made in relation to the Joint Committee's proposed Sturminster Newton ward was supportive and provided a small amount of community evidence. Therefore, we propose to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

South-east Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Bere Regis & Bovington	1	-4%
Crossways	1	-5%
Isle of Purbeck	1	-4%
Lytchett Matravers & Morden	1	-13%
Lytchett Minster & Upton	2	-7%
South West Purbeck	1	4%
Swanage	2	9%
Wareham	2	3%

Lytchett Matravers & Morden, Lytchett Minster & Upton and Wareham

61 The only comments the Joint Committee reported in relation to Lytchett Minster & Upton ward related to its name. We are therefore adopting the Joint Committee's proposed Lytchett Minster & Upton ward without amendment.

62 Regarding Wareham, there was support for a two-councillor ward. There was also an objection to the inclusion of Coldharbour in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward as Coldharbour has 'strong local connectivity' with Wareham.

63 We note that the Joint Committee included the Coldharbour area in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward to ensure good electoral equality. However, not only are electors in Coldharbour around five miles by road from the nearest housing in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward but the road links mean they would need to leave the ward in order to complete this journey. Conversely, they are around two miles by a direct road from Wareham town centre.

64 We consider that including Coldharbour in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward will separate its residents from their natural community to the extent that we are prepared to accept a relatively high electoral variance in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward. Therefore, we are including the Coldharbour area in our Wareham ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Bere Regis & Bovington and Crossways

65 The Joint Committee reported comments which argued that Moreton has no connection with Bovington as its residents predominantly look to Dorchester or Crossways for work and social activities. A second comment both supported this argument and added that Bloxworth, in the Joint Committee's proposed Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward, is closely connected with Bere Regis and should be warded together. The Joint Committee rejected these suggestions due to the high level of electoral inequality that would result but pointed out that 'these representations have strong community cohesion evidence to support them' without explaining in detail what this evidence was.

66 We have carefully considered the arguments in relation to these wards noting that putting Moreton in Crossways ward will lead to an electoral variance of -12% in Bere Regis & Bovington ward. While adding Bloxworth to Bere Regis & Bovington would give it acceptable electoral equality, it would then lead to an electoral variance of -17% in Lytchett Matravers & Morden ward.

67 Given the Joint Committee did not set out in detail what the strong evidence was to support Moreton being part of Crossways ward, we are not persuaded to create a second ward in this part of Dorset with a relatively high electoral inequality. We also consider an electoral variance of -17% to be too high without exceptionally strong community evidence to support it.

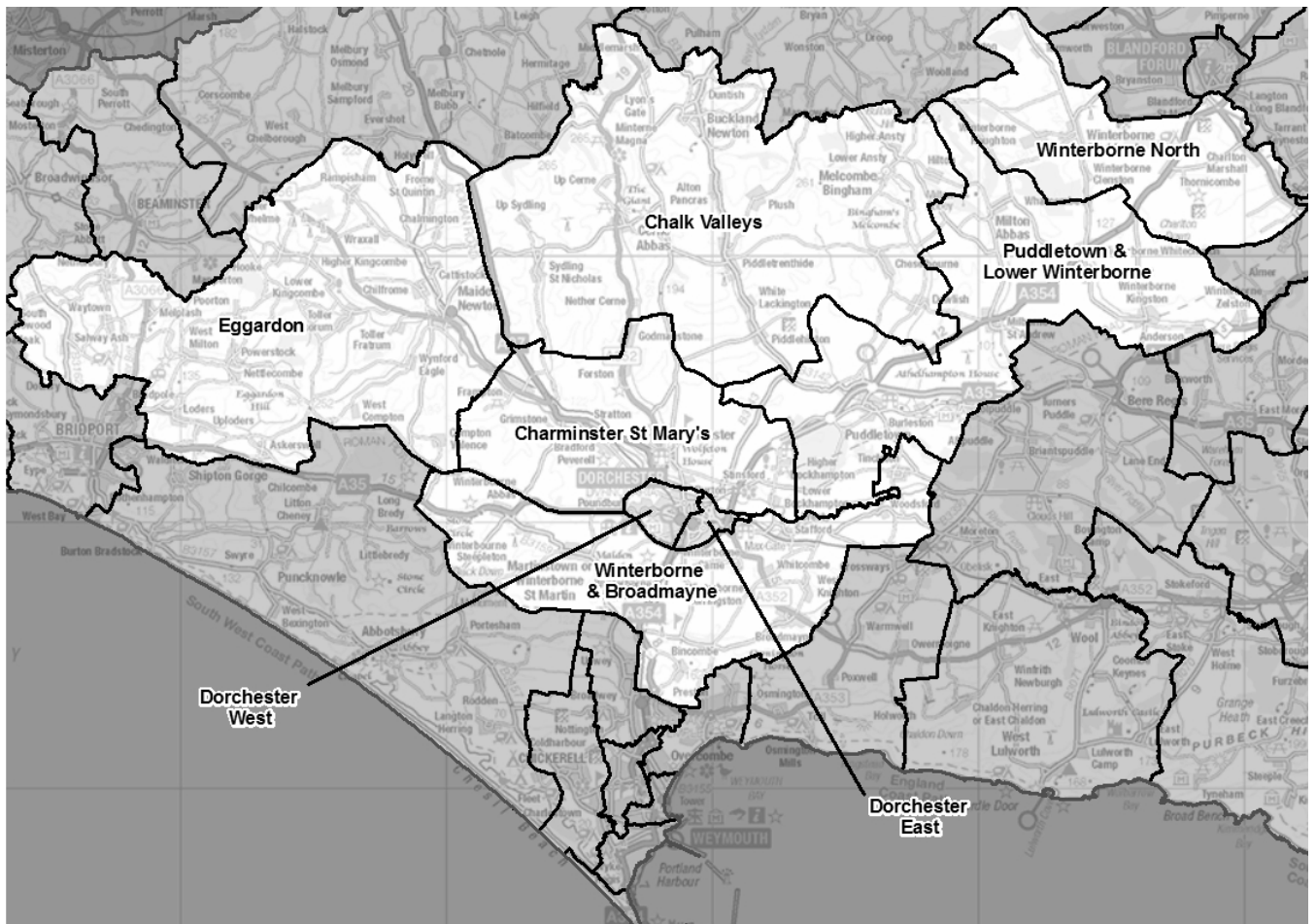
68 Therefore, we are adopting the Joint Committee's proposed Bere Regis & Bovington and Crossways wards as part of our draft recommendations without amendment. We would particularly welcome further community evidence relating to this area during the current consultation.

Isle of Purbeck, South West Purbeck and Swanage

69 The Joint Committee reported concerns about the size of its Isle of Purbeck ward and to Wool parish being split between wards, albeit along an existing parish ward boundary. However, there were no alternative proposals suggested. The only comment relating to Swanage ward was supportive of the Joint Committee's proposal.

70 In the absence of any other comments or alternative proposals, and given the support for Swanage ward, we are adopting the Isle of Purbeck, South West Purbeck and Swanage wards proposed by the Joint Committee as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

Mid Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Chalk Valleys	1	0%
Charminster St Mary's	1	2%
Dorchester East	2	-8%
Dorchester West	3	-1%
Eggardon	1	8%
Puddletown & Lower Winterborne	1	10%
Winterborne & Broadmayne	1	4%
Winterborne North	1	7%

Chalk Valleys, Charminster St Mary's and Eggardon

71 The Joint Committee reported no comments in relation to the boundaries of either Charminster St Mary's or Eggardon wards. Regarding Chalk Valleys ward, concerns were expressed about its size and lack of cohesion. It was also argued that Godmanstone parish associates much more closely with the other parishes in the proposed Chalk Valleys ward than with the parishes in Charminster St Mary's ward. The Joint Committee's reason for not putting Godmanstone in Chalk Valleys ward was that it would lead to an electoral variance of 14%.

72 We note that Godmanstone is part of the area of Cerne Valley Parish Council (consisting of Cerne Abbas, Godmanstone, Nether Cerne and Up Cerne parishes). As stated above, we consider that splitting grouped parishes between wards should be avoided unless there is strong evidence that such a split would lead to a better balance of all three of our statutory criteria.

73 We have considered the wards in this area and have decided to amend the Joint Committee's proposal. Putting Godmanstone in Chalk Valleys ward with the rest of Cerne Valley Parish Council and then putting the area of Frome Valley Parish Council (consisting of Cattistock, Frome St Quintin and Chilfrome parishes) in Eggardon ward will lead to good electoral equality in all the wards in this area. It will also ensure that no grouped parishes are split between wards in this area.

Dorchester East and Dorchester West

74 The Joint Committee reported that there had been lengthy discussions with councillors regarding the warding pattern for Dorchester, with most councillors supporting a three-councillor West ward and a two-councillor East ward. Councillors also felt it was important to ward Poundbury with the rest of Dorchester. A map was provided that showed five single-councillor wards but no evidence was provided to support the boundaries proposed.

75 While there clearly has been considerable discussion amongst councillors about the warding pattern for Dorchester, there was very little evidence in the Joint Committee's submission to support either a multi-member or single-councillor warding pattern in the town. As most councillors supported two multi-member wards, we are adopting the Dorchester East and Dorchester West wards proposed by the Joint Committee as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would welcome further evidence during the consultation on our draft recommendations either in support of this proposal or for single-councillor wards in Dorchester.

Puddletown & Lower Winterborne and Winterborne North

76 The one comment reported by the Joint Committee in relation to its Winterborne North ward was a suggestion to ward Winterborne on an east-west, rather than a north-south, basis and that this configuration would better reflect community identities. The Joint Committee explained that it had considered different options for this area, but its proposal was the only one where both wards had acceptable electoral equality.

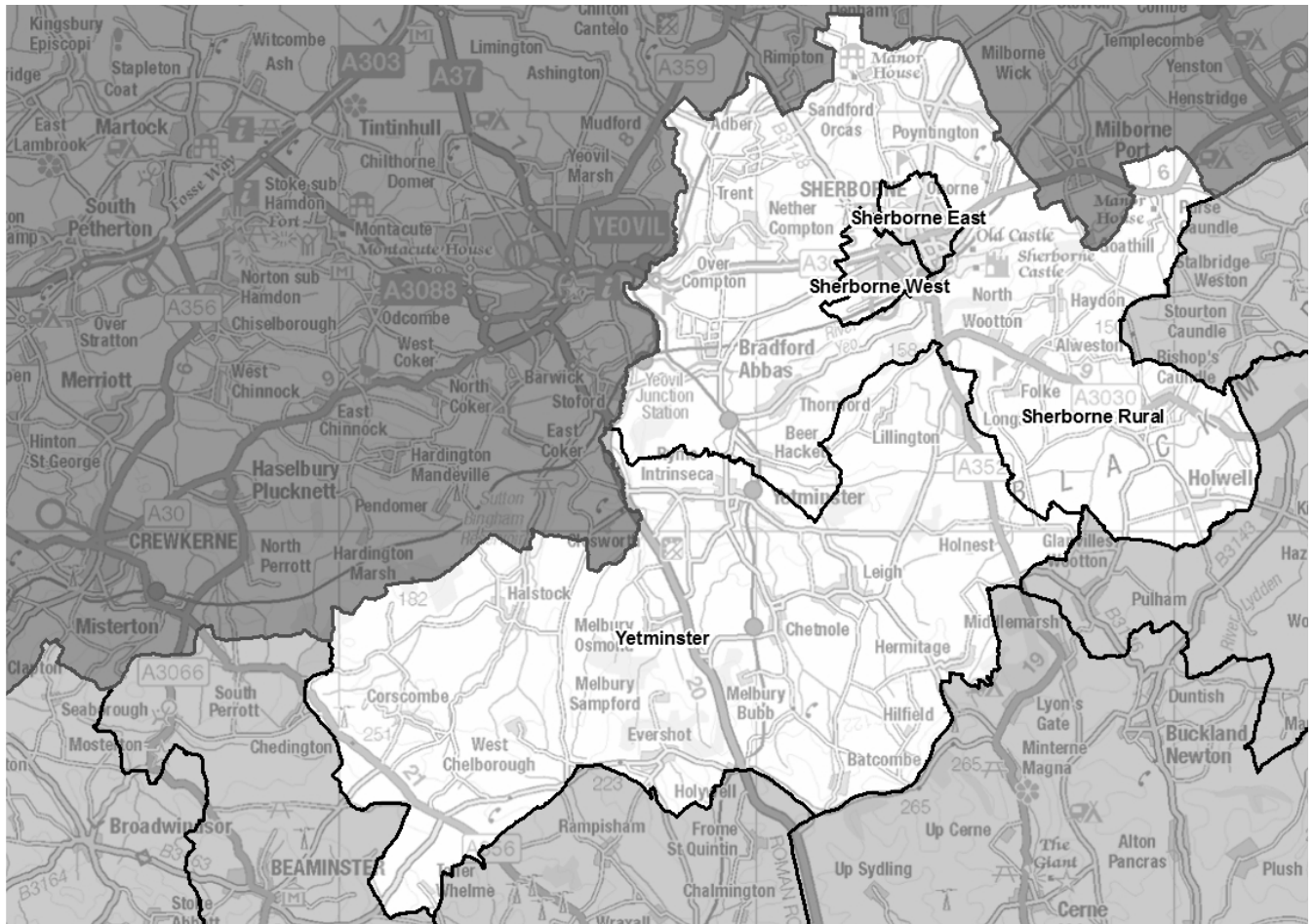
77 As none of the alternative proposals were explained in detail, we are unwilling to amend the Joint Committee's proposals at this stage and so are adopting them as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would welcome alternative warding

patterns for this area during the current consultation that will provide for good electoral equality.

Winterborne & Broadmayne

78 We note that no comments were made in relation to the Joint Committee's proposed Winterborne & Broadmayne ward. Therefore, we propose to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

North-west Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Sherborne East	1	4%
Sherborne Rural	1	-1%
Sherborne West	1	-4%
Yetminster	1	3%

Sherborne East and Sherborne West

79 We note that the comments made in relation to the Joint Committee's proposed Sherborne East and Sherborne West wards were either neutral or supportive. We therefore propose to adopt both wards as part of our draft recommendations subject to a very small amendment that places all the Barton Farm development in Sherborne West ward.

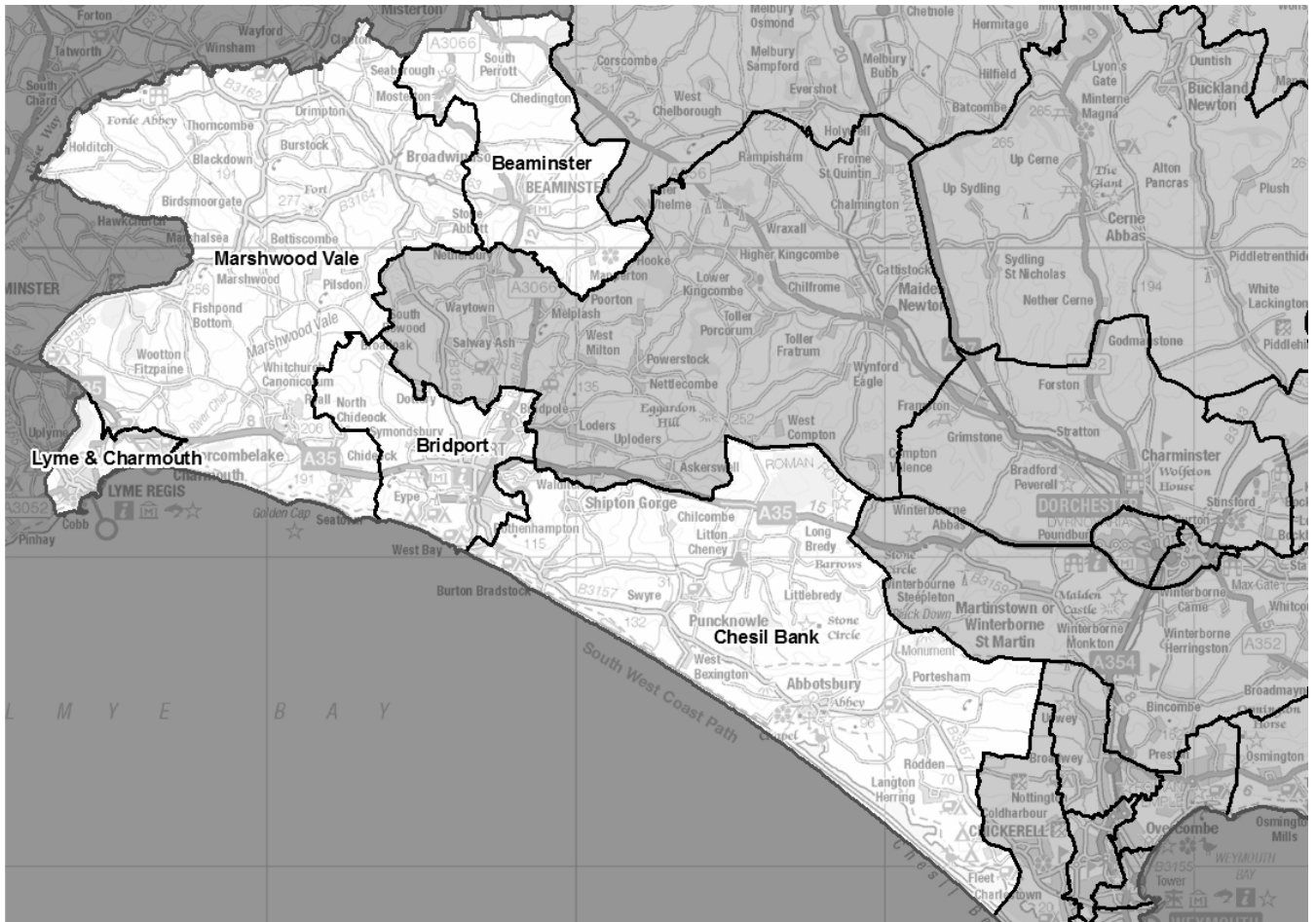
Sherborne Rural

80 The Joint Committee reported two comments in relation to its Sherborne Rural ward. One was supportive, the other said that a doughnut ward – a ward that surrounds one or more other wards – should be avoided. While our guidance states that we do not normally recommend such wards, in this case the 'doughnut effect' is caused by Castleton parish surrounding Sherborne. The alternative to creating a doughnut ward would be to split both Castleton parish, which is forecast to have 105 electors in 2023, and Yeo Head Parish Council, which is a grouped parish council. We do not consider splitting a parish with such a small electorate would meet our criterion in relation to effective and convenient local government as we would be required to create parish wards with very few electors. Therefore, we are adopting the Sherborne Rural ward proposed by the Joint Committee without amendment.

Yetminster

81 We note that the Joint Committee changed its initial Yetminster ward in response to the one comment it received. In the absence of any other comments, we propose to adopt the Yetminster ward as now proposed as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

West Dorset



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Beaminster	1	-7%
Bridport	3	5%
Chesil Bank	1	1%
Lyme & Charmouth	1	7%
Marshwood Vale	1	1%

Beaminster, Bridport, Chesil Bank and Marshwood Vale

82 The Joint Committee reported several comments in relation to its wards in this area. Firstly, there was an objection to the area of the grouped Broadwindsor Parish Council (consisting of Broadwindsor, Burstock and Seaborough) being split between wards. This point was elaborated in a separate submission from Broadwindsor Parish Council itself which argued that Seaborough parish should be in the same ward as the rest of the group. It was stated that Seaborough is an integral part of Broadwindsor's neighbourhood plan and there was concern that splitting the grouped parish between wards would have a significant negative impact on that work.

83 In relation to Bridport and Chesil Bank wards, the Joint Committee reported comments that were supportive of part of Symondsburry parish being included in Bridport ward. However, there were also objections to Bothenhampton parish being split between wards.

84 As stated above, we consider that keeping grouped parishes in the same ward contributes to effective and convenient local government. The Joint Committee's argument against putting all of Broadwindsor parish in the same ward is that this would either lead to poor electoral equality or the creation of a very large rural two-councillor ward covering Beaminster and Marshwood Vale.

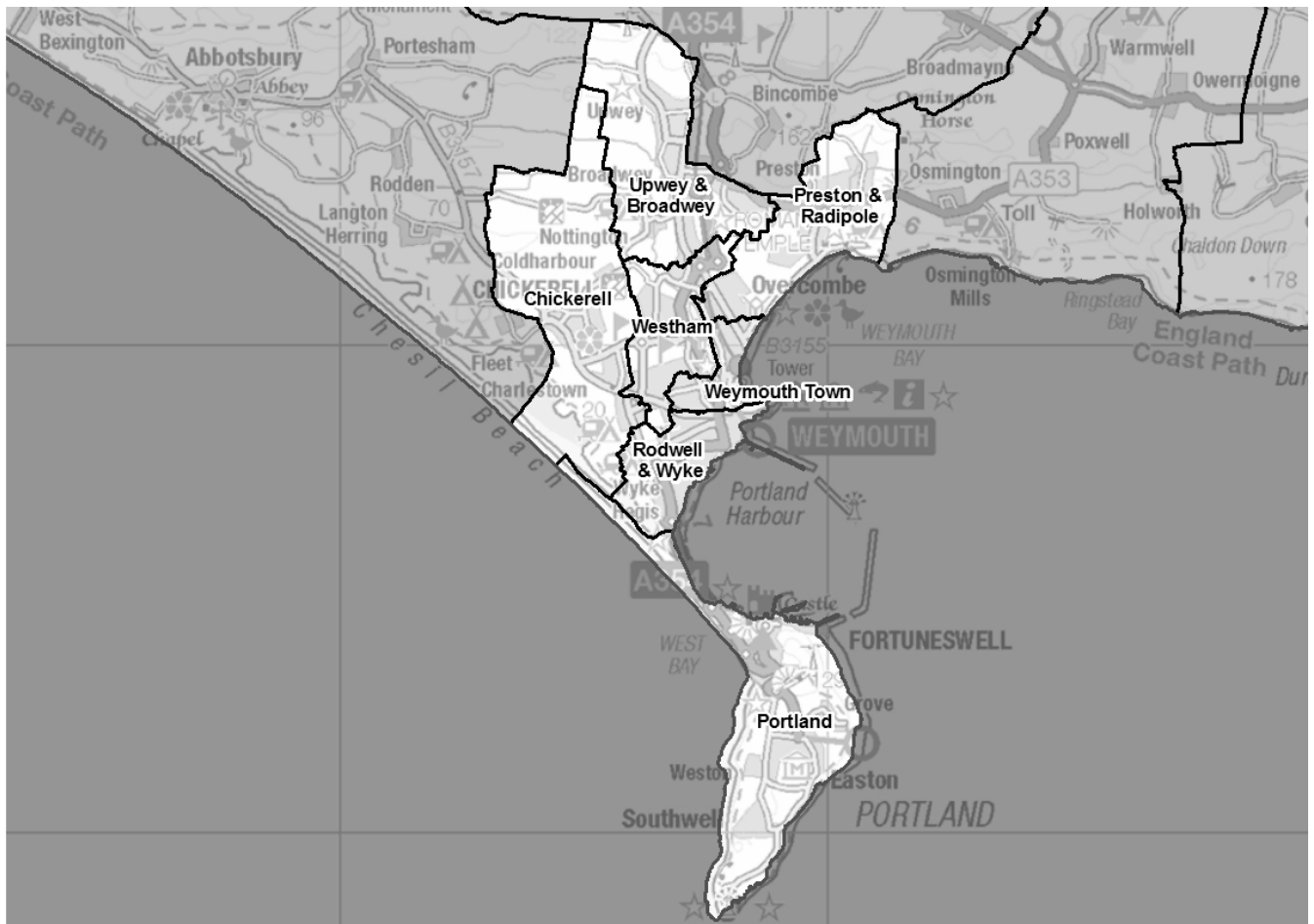
85 However, if all, rather than part of Symondsburry parish is placed in Bridport ward, all of Broadwindsor parish can be included in Marshwood Vale ward, with Beaminster, Bridport and Marshwood Vale wards all having good electoral equality. While the comments to the Joint Committee suggested that only the parts of Symondsburry parish that directly adjoin Bridport should be included in Bridport ward, we note that most electors in the parish live closer to Bridport than any town in the proposed Marshwood Vale ward. Therefore, we consider it acceptable to include all of Symondsburry parish in our proposed Bridport ward.

86 In relation to the comments regarding Bothenhampton parish, we note that making the proposed changes to the Joint Committee's scheme would lead to poor electoral equality in either Chesil Bank or Eggardon wards. As discussed earlier, we have placed Frome Valley Parish Council in Eggardon ward and this would allow us to make the adjustments proposed in the comments and achieve acceptable electoral equality. However, having carefully considered this option, we have decided to make no further change to the Joint Committee's proposals. This is primarily because we are not persuaded to make changes to the proposed Chesil Bank ward without more detailed evidence. We would welcome such evidence or any other comments on our wards for this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations.

Lyme & Charmouth

87 We note that no comments were made in relation to the Joint Committee's proposed Lyme & Charmouth ward. In the absence of an alternative pattern of wards, we propose to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

Weymouth and environs



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2023
Chickerell	2	-3%
Portland	3	-8%
Preston & Radipole	2	-4%
Rodwell & Wyke	3	2%
Upwey & Broadwey	2	3%
Westham	2	-5%
Weymouth Town	2	-3%

Chickerell, Preston & Radipole, Upwey & Broadwey, Westham and Weymouth Town

88 The Joint Committee's submission included an appendix with five submissions from councillors representing wards in or around Weymouth. Four of these councillors proposed a largely single-councillor warding pattern (the councillors' proposal) that differed substantially from that of the Joint Committee. We have assessed these wards as best we can, based on the information provided to us.

89 In this area, the Joint Committee proposed four two-councillor wards. The councillors proposed four single-councillor wards for Broadwey, Melcombe Regis, Radipole and Radipole Lake. They also discussed potential single-councillor wards for Westham, Littlemoor and Preston but the descriptions were not sufficiently clear for us to draw boundaries for single-councillor wards in these areas. We have therefore assessed them as two-councillor Westham and Littlemoor & Preston wards.

90 In relation to Westham, a two-councillor ward on the approximate boundaries in the councillors' proposal would lead to an electoral variance of -16%. While it would be possible to add part or all of the Lanehouse area to improve electoral equality, this would lead to poor electoral equality in the neighbouring Chickerell ward. Therefore, in the absence of a more detailed explanation of the councillors' proposals for Chickerell and Westham that would also ensure good electoral equality, we are adopting the Joint Committee's wards for this area.

91 Creating these wards has a substantial knock-on effect on the rest of our proposals for Weymouth to the extent that we are also adopting the Joint Committee's proposed Preston & Radipole, Upwey & Broadwey and Weymouth Town wards subject to some small amendments. However, we also considered that elements of the councillors' proposals did not meet our criteria. In particular, the Corfe Road area was isolated in the proposed Radipole Lake ward, with no direct access to the rest of the ward. The Manor Road area also appeared isolated in the proposed Radipole ward.

92 As stated above, we intend to make three small amendments to the Joint Committee's proposals. Firstly, we have changed the boundary between the Upwey & Broadwey and Preston & Radipole wards so that the Destiny Fields development is entirely in Upwey & Broadwey ward. Secondly, the boundary between Upwey & Broadwey and Westham wards appears to run down a small residential street (Manor Road). We have moved the boundary south so that it follows the current Dorset County Council boundary between Broadwey and Westham divisions. This places all of Manor Road as well as Radipole Primary School in Upwey & Broadwey ward. Finally, we are including all the Curtis Fields development in Chickerell ward.

Rodwell & Wyke

93 The Joint Committee proposed a three-councillor Rodwell & Wyke ward, whereas the councillors' proposal was for three single-councillor wards.

94 Having assessed both proposals, the Chickerell Road area of the councillors' Old Weymouth ward appears to be cut off and separate from the rest of the ward. Given the lack of explanation for this proposal or evidence to support it, we consider that this may not reflect the community identity of electors in this area. Adding the

Chickerell Road area to the councillors' Wyke East ward, which is how it is currently warded, leads to an electoral variance of 16%.

95 Therefore, on balance, we prefer the three-councillor ward proposed by the Joint Committee and are adopting it as part of our draft recommendations.

Portland

96 The Joint Committee proposed one three-councillor ward for Portland, whereas the councillors' proposal was for three single-councillor wards. However, in the latter proposal, Underhill would have an electoral variance of -12% and Tophill East ward would have a variance of -16%. We note that, due to the number of electors in Portland, it is difficult to create single-councillor wards with good electoral equality. However, we do not consider that this justifies the high level of electoral inequality in the councillors' proposal. Therefore, we are adopting the three-councillor Portland ward which was proposed by the Joint Committee.

Conclusions

97 The table below shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2018 and 2023 electorate figures.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2018	2023
Number of councillors	82	82
Number of electoral wards	52	52
Average number of electors per councillor	3,600	3,757
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	15	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	0

Draft recommendation

Dorset Council should be made up of 82 councillors serving 52 wards representing 30 single-councillor wards, 14 two-councillor wards and eight three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Dorset.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Dorset Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Parish electoral arrangements

98 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.

99 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, district and borough councils in Dorset currently have, and Dorset Council will have, powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

100 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Colehill Parish Council, Dorchester Town Council, Sherborne Town Council, Verwood Town Council and West Moors Parish Council.

101 As 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 Colehill parish.

Draft recommendation Colehill Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Colehill East	10
Colehill Hayes	3
Colehill West	3

102 As 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 Dorchester parish.

Draft recommendation Dorchester Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Dorchester East	5
Dorchester North	7
Dorchester South	3
Dorchester West	5

103 As 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 Sherborne parish.

Draft recommendation

Sherborne Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Sherborne East	6
Sherborne West	6

104 As 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 Verwood parish.

Draft recommendation

Verwood Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Dewlands North	2
Dewlands South	8
Stephen's Castle	7
Three Cross	1

105 As 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 West Moors parish.

Draft recommendation

West Moors Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
West Moors North	5
West Moors South	7

3 Have your say

106 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole district or just a part of it.

107 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Dorset, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

108 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps and draw your own proposed boundaries. You can find it at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

109 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Dorset)
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
1st Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

110 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Dorset which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively

111 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government

112 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in the council area?

113 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?

- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

114 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

115 Please note that the consultation stage of an electoral review is a public consultation. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in Windsor House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

116 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as your name, postal or email address, signature or phone number from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

117 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

118 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Electoral Changes Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Dorset Council in 2019.

Equalities

119 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.

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Dorset

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Avon Heath & Moors Valley	3	10,017	3,339	-7%	10,386	3,462	-8%
2	Badbury & Allen Vale	1	3,922	3,922	9%	4,125	4,125	10%
3	Beacon	1	3,888	3,888	8%	3,984	3,984	6%
4	Beaminster	1	3,399	3,399	-6%	3,493	3,493	-7%
5	Bere Regis & Bovington	1	3,538	3,538	-2%	3,594	3,594	-4%
6	Blackmore Vale	1	3,848	3,848	7%	3,650	3,650	-3%
7	Blandford	2	8,206	4,103	14%	7,564	3,782	1%
8	Bridport	3	11,422	3,807	6%	11,869	3,956	5%
9	Chalk Valleys	1	3,885	3,885	8%	3,752	3,752	0%
10	Charminster St Mary's	1	3,854	3,854	7%	3,841	3,841	2%
11	Chesil Bank	1	3,829	3,829	6%	3,802	3,802	1%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Chickerell	2	5,753	2,877	-20%	7,254	3,627	-3%
13 Colehill East	1	3,944	3,944	10%	3,977	3,977	6%
14 Corfe Mullen	2	7,982	3,991	11%	8,250	4,125	10%
15 Cranborne & Alderholt	1	3,906	3,906	9%	4,010	4,010	7%
16 Cranborne Chase	1	3,426	3,426	-5%	3,916	3,916	4%
17 Crossways	1	3,052	3,052	-15%	3,567	3,567	-5%
18 Dorchester East	2	6,647	3,324	-8%	6,902	3,451	-8%
19 Dorchester West	3	9,577	3,192	-11%	11,118	3,706	-1%
20 Eggardon	1	4,173	4,173	16%	4,041	4,041	8%
21 Ferndown North	2	7,404	3,702	3%	7,592	3,796	1%
22 Ferndown South	2	6,570	3,285	-9%	6,899	3,450	-8%
23 Gillingham	3	12,189	4,063	13%	12,168	4,056	8%
24 Hill Forts & Upper Tarrants	1	3,678	3,678	2%	3,832	3,832	2%
25 Isle of Purbeck	1	3,547	3,547	-1%	3,606	3,606	-4%
26 Lyme & Charmouth	1	4,147	4,147	15%	4,020	4,020	7%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Lytchett Matravers & Morden	1	3,223	3,223	-10%	3,271	3,271	-13%
28 Lytchett Minster & Upton	2	6,802	3,401	-6%	6,979	3,490	-7%
29 Marshwood Vale	1	3,877	3,877	8%	3,790	3,790	1%
30 Portland	3	9,261	3,087	-14%	10,399	3,466	-8%
31 Preston & Radipole	2	7,427	3,714	3%	7,188	3,594	-4%
32 Puddletown & Lower Winterborne	1	4,343	4,343	21%	4,149	4,149	10%
33 Rodwell & Wyke	3	11,072	3,691	3%	11,492	3,831	2%
34 Shaftesbury Town	2	6,575	3,288	-9%	6,934	3,467	-8%
35 Sherborne East	1	3,896	3,896	8%	3,904	3,904	4%
36 Sherborne Rural	1	3,833	3,833	6%	3,721	3,721	-1%
37 Sherborne West	1	3,332	3,332	-7%	3,611	3,611	-4%
38 South West Purbeck	1	3,760	3,760	4%	3,922	3,922	4%
39 Stalbridge	1	4,254	4,254	18%	4,036	4,036	7%
40 Sturminster Newton	1	3,530	3,530	-2%	3,446	3,446	-8%

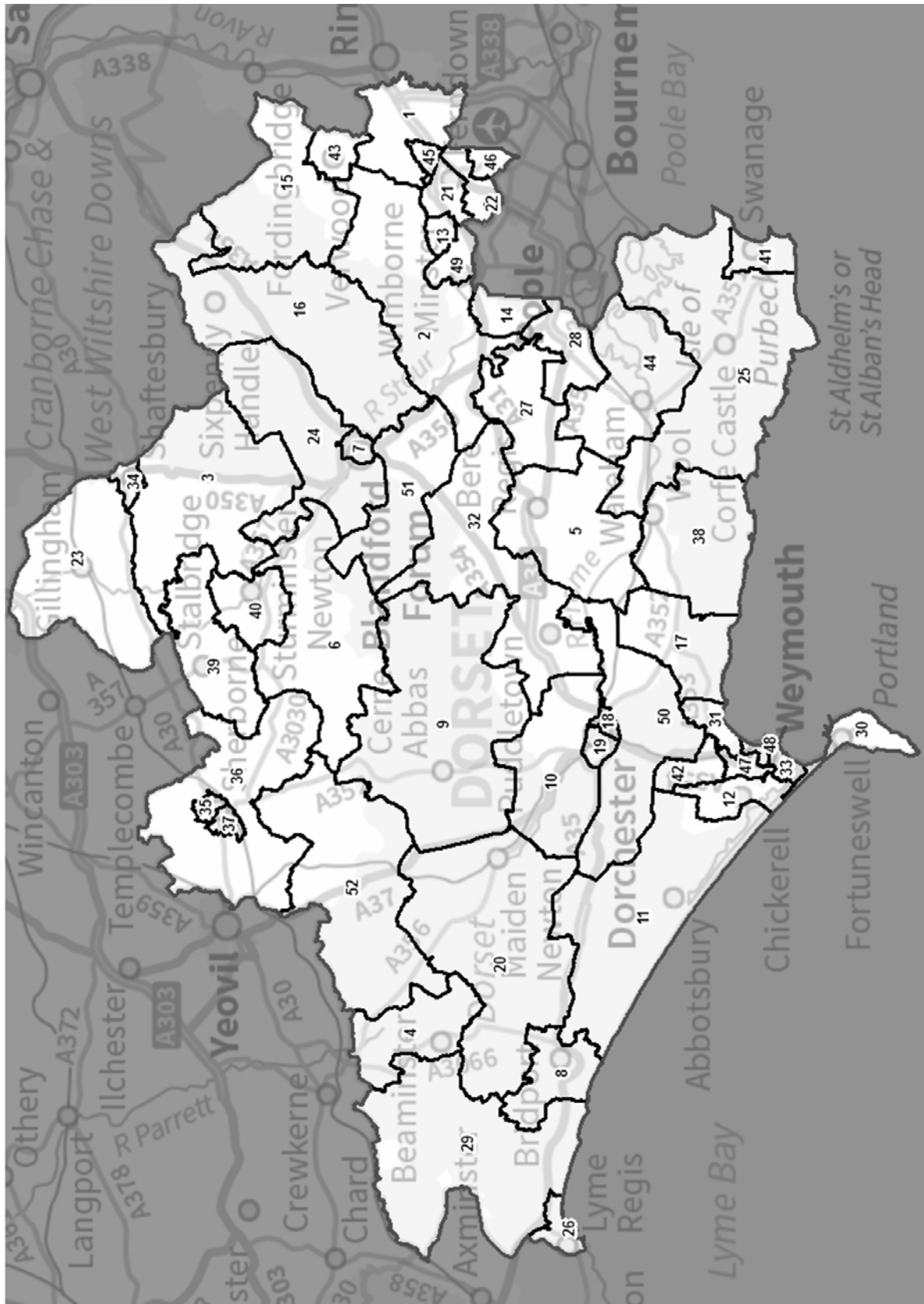
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2023)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
41 Swanage	2	8,108	4,054	13%	8,187	4,094	9%
42 Upwey & Broadway	2	7,216	3,608	0%	7,743	3,872	3%
43 Verwood	3	10,538	3,513	-2%	11,473	3,824	2%
44 Wareham	2	7,681	3,841	7%	7,726	3,863	3%
45 West Moors South	1	3,657	3,657	2%	3,685	3,685	-2%
46 West Parley	1	3,095	3,095	-14%	3,805	3,805	1%
47 Westham	2	7,178	3,589	0%	7,107	3,554	-5%
48 Weymouth Town	2	7,430	3,715	3%	7,316	3,658	-3%
49 Wimborne Minster & Colehill West	3	8,512	2,837	-21%	11,170	3,723	-1%
50 Winterborne & Broadmayne	1	3,483	3,483	-3%	3,904	3,904	4%
51 Winterborne North	1	3,324	3,324	-8%	4,013	4,013	7%
52 Yetminster	1	3,985	3,985	11%	3,867	3,867	3%
Totals	82	295,195	-	-	308,050	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,600	-	-	3,757	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Dorset Area Joint Committee.

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



Key

1. Avon Heath & Moors Valley
2. Badbury & Allen Vale
3. Beacon
4. Beaminster
5. Bere Regis & Bovington
6. Blackmore Vale
7. Blandford
8. Bridport
9. Chalk Valleys
10. Charminster St Mary's
11. Chesil Bank
12. Chickerell
13. Colehill East
14. Corfe Mullen
15. Cranborne & Alderholt
16. Cranborne Chase
17. Crossways
18. Dorchester East
19. Dorchester West
20. Eggardon
21. Ferndown North
22. Ferndown South
23. Gillingham
24. Hill Forts & Upper Tarrant
25. Isle of Purbeck
26. Lyme & Charmouth
27. Lytchett Matravers & Morden
28. Lytchett Minster & Upton
29. Marshwood Vale
30. Portland
31. Preston & Radipole
32. Puddletown & Lower Winterborne
33. Rodwell & Wyke
34. Shaftesbury Town
35. Sherborne East
36. Sherborne Rural
37. Sherborne West
38. South West Purbeck
39. Stalbridge
40. Sturminster Newton
41. Swanage
42. Upwey & Broadway
43. Verwood
44. Wareham
45. West Moors South
46. West Parley
47. Westham
48. Weymouth Town
49. Wimborne Minster & Colehill West
50. Winterborne & Broadmayne
51. Winterborne North
52. Yetminster

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

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk>

Local Authority

- Dorset Area Joint Committee

Parish Council

- Broadwindsor Group Parish Council

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Structural Changes Order	A legal document which implements changes to the local government structure of an area.
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