

Full Council

22 October 2026

New Warding Proposals for Dorset Council – response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader, Climate, Performance, Communications and Safeguarding

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair - Director, Assurance and Governance

Report author and job title:

Jacqui Andrews

Service Manager, Democratic & Electoral Services

Email: jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament that undertakes electoral reviews of local authorities with the aim of delivering electoral equality for voters, establishing electoral areas for local authorities that reflect, as far as possible, community identities in that area and promoting effective and convenient government.
- 1.2 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority including the total number of councillors to be elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward.
- 1.3 Following the submission of a proposed warding pattern agreed by Full Council on 14 May 2026, LGBCE have now published their draft recommendations for consultation. This report seeks a recommendation in respect of the response proposed by the cross-party task and finish group,

established to consider the electoral review, to the draft recommendations from the Commission.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Full Council is asked to agree the response to the LGBCE draft recommendations in respect of a warding pattern and ward names as set out in Appendix A.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the warding pattern and ward names adopted by the LGBCE achieve electoral equality and recognise the distinct communities in the Dorset Council area.

4. Background

- 4.1 Following agreement to the council's submission on council size agreed at Full Council on 10 February 2026, the LGBCE published its minded-to proposal for council size (82 councillors) and opened its public consultation on warding arrangements which ran from 24 March 2026 to 1 June 2026. On 14 May 2026, Full Council agreed and submitted a warding pattern for the Dorset Council area with a council size of 84 members.
- 4.2 On 1 September 2026, the LGBCE published its draft recommendations for a warding pattern and ward names for consultation. The proposals include a revised council size of 84 councillors as proposed by Dorset Council, and broadly supported many of warding arrangements proposed by the council. However, there were a number of changes that the council are asked to consider.

5. Task and Finish Group recommendations

- 5.1 The cross-party task and finish group established by Full Council met on 3 September and 23 September to consider a response to the draft recommendations. All councillors were invited to comment on the task and finish group's initial views, and all responses received from councillors were considered by the group before they reached their final proposed response that Full Council is being asked to consider.
- 5.2 In developing its recommended response, the task and finish group had regard to the following principles:
- The new ward arrangements should, in so far as is possible, result in electoral equality based on the projected electorate for 2032. This is a mandatory requirement of the Commission.
 - Wards should, as far as possible, reflect established community interests and identities, and have clearly identifiable boundaries.
 - Warding arrangements should facilitate effective and convenient local government.

- 'Natural' barriers, such as rivers and railway lines, should be taken into account when developing warding proposals.
- Wards must be contiguous ie sharing a common border – 'island' and 'donut' wards are not permitted.

5.3 There were areas where the task and finish group did not believe that LGBCE had applied its reasoning for warding proposals across the entire area, and the group felt it was important that arguments for warding were applied consistently. There were also proposals for ward name changes that the group did not feel accurately reflected the local communities/areas.

5.4 Appendix A sets out the detail of the response proposed by the task and finish group for submission to the LGBCE.

6. **Alternative options considered**

6.1 The task and finish group considered alternative proposals put forward by councillors, taking into account the representation levels for each ward and considering how local communities were best represented.

6.2 The council could choose not to respond during the consultation period on draft recommendations from the LGBCE, but this would deprive the council of the important opportunity to make a submission and to influence the electoral arrangements which will apply from 2029.

7. **Legal considerations**

7.1 The electoral review is conducted by LGBCE. They will follow a timetable that is compliant with legislation and Dorset Council have provided data and information in accordance with requests made by them.

8. **Financial implications**

8.1 The council has agreed a scheme of allowance under which each councillor is entitled to receive a basic allowance, currently £16,528 per annum. If the draft recommendation for a council size of 84 councillors is confirmed, this will increase the budget by £33,056 in 2029 when the changes will take effect. This figure may be slightly different if allowances increase/decrease before 2029.

9. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

9.1 There are no natural environment, climate or ecology implications associated with this report.

10. **Well-being and health implications**

10.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

11. Other implications

- 11.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

12. Risk implications

- 12.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

13. Equalities

- 13.1 The request for an electoral review by the council was to ensure that, in so far as is possible, electoral equality is achieved. The review is being carried out by the LGBCE who will be responsible for conducting an appropriate equalities impact assessment.

14. Appendices

- 14.1 Appendix A – proposed response to the draft recommendations published by LGBCE.

15. Background papers

- 15.1 [Draft recommendations publish by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#)

16. Report sign-off

- 16.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member.

Dorset Council's response to the Local Government Commission for England's draft recommendations for ward boundaries for the Dorset Council area

Council size: 84 Councillors

Warding arrangements: 58 wards

38 x single member wards

14 x two member wards

6 x three member wards

Map ref. on DC proposals	Ward	Summary of change from Dorset Council proposals	Working Party Comments
2	Beaminster	Include Mapperton parish	Accept
8	Broadwindsor	Include Evershot parish Remove Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Samford and Stockwood parishes	Accept
6	Bridport	Include new residential development to the west of the town (currently partly in parish of Symondsburys)	Accept
12	Chesil	Remove parishes of Askerswell and Loders	Accept
27	Lyme & Charmouth	No change to Council's proposal	
30	Marshwood Vale	Only the village of Symondsburys included and the Foundry Lea development to form part of Bridport (reference above).	Accept

7	Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale	Include Bincombe parish	Object - The reason for the inclusion of Bincombe (which on reflection would fit better in the Littlemoor and Preston Ward) is due to the development in the village area and is the same reasoning as the Commission have used for the creation of the warding in Symondsbury for Foundry Lea. The Council ask that the Commission reconsider this proposal with the Bincombe area being included in the Littlemoor and Preston ward.
9	Chalk Valleys	Include parishes of Mappowder and Stoke Wake (currently in Blackmore Vale ward) and retain Buckland Newton and Minterne Magna parishes Remove Dewlish (to be included in Milborne & The Winterbornes), Hazlebury Bryan and Woolland (to be included in Blackmore Vale ward)	Accept
11	Charminster St Marys	No change to Council's proposal	
19	Dorchester East	No change to Council's proposal	
20	Dorchester Poundbury	No change to Council's proposal	
21	Dorchester West	No change to Council's proposal	
32	Milborne & The Winterbornes	Include Turnworth and Dewlish parishes	Accept

49	Upper Frome & Asker	Include Askerswell and Loders parishes	Accept
38	Sherborne East	No change to Council's proposal	
39	Sherborne Rural	Include Bishop's Caundle and Purse Caundle and parishes in Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council into the existing Sherborne Rural Ward	Accept
40	Sherborne West	No change to Council's proposal	
59	Yetminster & Yeo Valley	Reconfigure the existing ward by including Bradford Abbas, Clifton Maybank and Thornhackett Grouped Parish Council and transferring Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council to Sherborne Rural ward and Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council to a new Broadwindsor ward. Also include Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Sampford and Stockwood parishes.	Accept
1	Beacon	Excluding the area to the south of the A30	The Council ask that the Commission reconsiders the original submission to include the dwellings south of the A30 as this provides a clear and natural boundary providing greater clarity and avoiding confusion for residents.
3	Blackmore Vale	Remove Lydlinch parish (to be included in Stalbridge) and Hammoon and Manston (to be included in Sturminster Newton) and	Accept

		Turnworth (to be included in Milborne & The Winterbornes) Include Hazelbury Bryan and Woolland parishes.	
24	Gillingham	No change to Council's proposal	
29	Marnhull	No change to Council's proposal	
37	Shaftesbury	Retaining the existing town ward	Object - The reason to move part of the current ward into the proposed Beacon ward is due to the development in the village area and is the same reasoning as the Commission have used for the creation of the warding in Symondsbury for Foundry Lea. The Council therefore ask that the Commission reinstate this as in original submission.
43	Stalbridge	To include Lydlinch parish (Bishop's Caundle and Purse Caundle removed as referenced above).	Accept
45	Sturminster Newton	Include Hammoon and Manston parishes	Accept. The Council did consider whether Hinton St Mary should be included in this ward but this would adversely impact on electoral equality.

4	Blandford	Three member Blandford ward comprising Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary, Bryanston and Charlton Marshall.	The Council considers that this proposal works well for neighbourhood planning. However, the Council ask that the Commission consider the inclusion of Spetisbury (507 electors). Although this will bring the electoral variance to +10.7% (with 4246 electors per councillor) this would support community identity, and cohesion would be far better. Spetisbury looks to Blandford for education, health, shopping etc and has closer community links with the town and generally has much closer everyday cohesion with Blandford and its community.
16	Cranborne & Alderholt	Remove Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes (transfer to Cranborne Chase with other parish in the Knowlton Grouped Parish Council)	Accept
17	Cranborne Chase	Include Wimborne St Giles, Woodlands and Hinton parishes. Remove Tarrant's Crawford, Keyneston, Rawston and Rushton parishes (into Pimperne & The Tarrant's)	The Council believes that Hinton should be moved to the current Stour and Allen Vale ward but the parish of Chettle should be included. This will result in electoral equality of -4% (3689 electors)
47 & 17	Pimperne & The Tarrant's	Include parishes of Tarrant's Crawford, Keyneston, Rawston and Rushton.	The Council submit that the parish of Chettle (74 residents) should be moved to the Cranborne Chase

			ward. They have a strong connection to the parish of Farnham and this would be a better fit. This would not adversely affect electoral equality with a variation of +6% (4050 electors)
44	Stour & Holt	Proposed change of name from Stour & Allen Vale ward. Include Spetisbury and Hinton parishes. The area of Furzehill will also move into Stour & Holt so it is included with the rest of the Holt parish.	The Council does not agree that Spetisbury has close links with the other parishes in this ward and better aligns to the Blandford ward as referenced above. It is also considered more appropriate to include Hinton into this ward (359 electors) resulting in electoral equality of -2% (3764 electors). The Council also submits that the current name of Stour and Allen Vale should be retained as it better reflects the landscape and community's identity.
14	Colehill & Wimborne Minster East	No change to Council's proposal	
22	Ferndown North	No change to Council's proposal	
23	Ferndown South	No change to Council's proposal	
42	St Leonards & St Ives	No change to Council's proposal	

50	Verwood	No change to Council's proposal	
52	West Moors & Three Legged Cross	No change to Council's proposal	
53	West Parley	No change to Council's proposal	
56	Wimborne Minster	No change to Council's proposal	
15	Corfe Mullen	No change to Council's proposal	
18	Crossways & Lower Frome	As proposed. Evidence invited in respect of a suggestion from a local resident that a name of Mid Frome would better reflect the geography of the area.	The Council does not agree with the suggestion of a ward name of Mid Frome. However, the Council would like to submit an alternative name of Crossways and Mid Frome.
28	Lytchett Matravers & Upton	Largely as proposed but the ward boundary to follow parish boundary and not extend to the A350 (although the Commission recognised the logic of this proposal from the Council).	The Council objects to the draft recommendation in respect of this ward as it will be undertaking a Community Governance Review following the electoral review and this could then be brought into alignment for 2029 elections. The Council therefore asks for the original submission to be reconsidered.
33	Piddle & Bere Valley	Remove parishes of East Stoke and East Holme (to be placed in Wool & Bovington ward)	Accept
48	Purbeck	Include Coombe Keynes parish.	Accept

46	Swanage	No change to Council's proposal	
51	Wareham	No change to Council's proposal	
57	Wool & Bovington	Include East Stoke and East Holme parishes	Accept
10	Charlestown & Lanehouse	Single cllr ward including Charlestown, Littlesea and Lanehouse areas (which currently straddles the Chickerell and Weymouth parish boundary) and the Camp Road area (rather than transferring it to a Wyke Regis Ward)	Object – Camp Road area is only accessible from the Wyke Regis ward and the only access to the area from Chickerell is by either swimming or crossing fields.
13	Chickerell	Proposed ward does not follow the edge of the Chickerell Urban Extension.	Accept
25	Littlemoor & Preston	No change to Council's proposal	The Council, having reviewed these draft recommendations, would like to see the area of Bincombe included within this ward which the Commission had proposed to include in the Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale ward as referenced above.
26	Lodmoor	Largely as proposed with some modification to better reflect ground detail and ensure ward boundaries follow clearer and more identifiable features	Accept
31	Melcombe Regis	No change to Council's proposal	On a further review of the Council's original submission, small minor changes are proposed to the ward boundaries to better reflect ground

			features (see map attached). This doesn't not include any residential properties and the proposal doesn't impact on electoral equality but provides a clearer boundary.
34	Portland	No change to Council's proposal	
35	Radipole & Southill	Largely as proposed with some modification to better reflect ground detail and ensure ward boundaries follow clearer and more identifiable features including ensuring the lake is within the ward and that the railway line forms the boundary between this ward and Lodmoor.	Accept
41	South Harbourside	As proposed but view sought on possibly calling it Harbourside	Object - The area is known locally as South Harbourside and this is what is shown on local highway signs so should remain as South Harbourside.
36	Sandsfoot	As proposed but change of name from Rodwell & Wyke	Object – Sandsfoot is not accepted. The Council propose that the ward is named "Rodwell" as this is the traditional name of the heart of this ward and is used for a Rodwell trail, a popular walk along the former railway line, there is the Rodwell WI and the former station is the centre of the ward was Rodwell Station.
55	Upwey & Broadway	As proposed with the exception of Bincombe which has been placed in the Broadmayne &	Object – see comments above re the inclusion of Bincombe into the

		Winterborne Vale ward referenced above and retaining the ward name (Council's proposed name was Weymouth North).	Littlemoor and Preston ward. Accept the Commission's proposed ward name Upwey & Broadway.
54	Westham	No change to Council's proposal	
58	Wyke Regis	No change to Council's proposal	