

# NHDC: Electorate projections methodology

## Introduction

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently reviewing the warding arrangements for North Herts District Council (NHDC). The intention of the review is to deliver electoral equality, whilst reflecting community interests and identities and promoting effective and convenient local government across the district.

This document provides details of the methodology used to estimate electorate projections. These are shown at a District, Ward and Polling District level. The exact location of many of the new developments is known, and that information can be used in future stages of the review in determining ward boundaries.

## Definitions and terms

**Polling district** A geographical area, used in the administration of elections. These are the smallest building blocks of the register of electors, and hold details of all residential dwellings and all registered electors in that area.

**Electors** Registered electors are individuals who are entitled to register to vote and who have registered to vote within the district. Their registration is linked to their address. For the purposes of this review, no names or personal identifiable information is used – only aggregated anonymous counts of electors in a given area.

## Methodology

The separate steps followed to generate the electorate projections are below. Within each step is an extract of the data to show how it is created and used.

<b>Step 1.</b>	Details from the Register of Electors is extracted, using the 1 August 2021 register. This includes the number of residential properties and the number of electors in each polling district. The information held also records the ward, parish ward, parish, county division and parliamentary constituency.
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Polling District	Property	Elector	Parish Ward	Parish	District ward	County division	Parliamentary
AAA - Baldock Town	680	1,290	<None>	<None>	Baldock Town	Baldock and Letchworth East	North East Hertfordshire
AAB - Baldock Town	2,780	4,364	<None>	<None>	Baldock Town	Baldock and Letchworth East	North East Hertfordshire
ABA - Baldock East	1,142	1,971	<None>	<None>	Baldock East	Baldock and Letchworth East	North East Hertfordshire
ABB - Baldock East	183	333	<None>	<None>	Baldock East	Baldock and Letchworth East	North East Hertfordshire
BAA - Hitchin Oughton	2,267	3,636	<None>	<None>	Hitchin Oughton	Hitchin Rural	Hitchin and Harpenden
BRA - Hitchin Reardon	1,080	2,006	<None>	<None>	Hitchin Reardon	Hitchin North	Hitchin and Harpenden

<b>Step 2.</b>	<p>The current electorate by ward is presented. The number of electors to councillors overall is calculated (2016 electors per councillor), and from that the variance in each ward can be calculated.</p> <p><i>Variance measures how different the ratio of electors per councillor is in each ward compared to the district average.</i></p> <p>As of 1 August 2021, six of the twenty-four wards have a variance of at least 10%; the greatest variance is 28%.</p>
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District	Elector	N Cllrs	Variance	
Arbury	2,191	1	9%	Note: These differ from the LGBCE initial report, as these are based on the August 2021 register and not the December 2019 register of electors.
Baldock East	2,304	1	14%	
Baldock Town	5,654	3	-7%	
Cadwell	1,845	1	-8%	
Chesfield	5,164	2	28%	
Codicote	2,074	1	3%	
Ermine	2,120	1	5%	
Hitchin Bearton	6,300	3	4%	
Hitchin Highbury	6,190	3	2%	
Hitchin Oughton	3,636	2	-10%	
Hitchin Priory	3,753	2	-7%	
Hitchin Walsworth	6,171	3	2%	
Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo	5,866	3	-3%	
Kimpton	1,795	1	-11%	
Knebworth	4,132	2	2%	
Letchworth East	4,360	2	8%	
Letchworth Grange	5,532	3	-9%	
Letchworth South East	5,284	3	-13%	
Letchworth South West	5,957	3	-2%	
Letchworth Wilbury	3,949	2	-2%	
Royston Heath	4,413	2	9%	
Royston Meridian	4,187	2	4%	
Royston Palace	4,281	2	6%	
Weston and Sandon	1,666	1	-17%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,824</b>	<b>49</b>		
Total (previous step)	98,824			
<i>Difference</i>	0			
Cllr : Elector ratio		<b>2016</b>		

<b>Step 3.</b>	Using the number of residential properties and number of electors per polling district, the number of electors per property for each polling district can be calculated. This is because we assume new dwellings in an area will have broadly the same average number of electors per property as existing properties, and different polling districts will have different ratios. <i>Number of electors per property = number of properties / number of electors.</i>
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PD Code	Polling District	District ward	Property	Elector	Electors/Property
AAA	AAA - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	680	1,290	1.897
AAB	AAB - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	2,780	4,364	1.570
ABA	ABA - Baldock East	Baldock East	1,142	1,971	1.726
ABB	ABB - Baldock East	Baldock East	183	333	1.820
BAA	BAA - Hitchin Oughton	Hitchin Oughton	2,267	3,636	1.604
BRA	BRA - Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton	1,989	2,906	1.461

<b>Step 4.</b>	The number of planned residential dwellings for each expected development site, from 2021 to 2028, has been provided by planning services at NHDC. For sites listed as 'small sites' within the planning forecast, details have been provided by planning services for 'commitments' (developments that have planning permission but are not yet completed).
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Plan ref	Address	Town / parish	Ward	Area (ha)	Homes	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2028	2029	2030	2031	Total to 2031	Total to 2028
	Completions 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2020	Unspecified			2814													2,814	
	Permissions at 1 April 2020																		
RY10	Land south of Newmarket Road	Royston	Royston Meridian		325		20	50	55	55	50	50	45					325	325
RY1	Land west of Royston and north of Baldock Road	Royston	Royston Heath		279	20	55	55	60	55	34							279	279
LS1	Land at Ramerick	Lower Standon (Ickleford)	Cadwell		144	30	50	50	14									144	144

<b>Step 5.</b>	Each of these development sites has then been linked to their polling district, using the forward plan maps and GIS systems.  Note that, based on planning projections, there are a total of 439 properties for which no address or location is yet known. This includes 20 in Letchworth Town Centre, 290 in smaller sites across the district, and 129 in large sites across the district. Using the district average elector-to-property ratio, this equates to 752 new electors spread across the district. However, the approximate location of electors is required in order to achieve electoral equality accurately. Given these electors will be spread throughout the district, it is unlikely that a significant number would be concentrated in one site and therefore they are unlikely to skew electoral equality. For the purposes of electorate projections, these electors are omitted.
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Plan ref	Address	Town / parish	Ward	Total to 2028	PD
RY10	Land south of Newmarket Road	Royston	Royston Meridian	325	DAB
RY1	Land west of Royston and north of Baldock Road	Royston	Royston Heath	279	DBA
LS1	Land at Ramerick	Lower Standon (Ickleford)	Cadwell	144	FK

<b>Step 6.</b>	For each polling district, the total number of new properties is calculated, by adding the figures by polling district in the previous step.
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PD Code	Polling District	District ward	Properties (Current)	New properties
AAA	AAA - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	680	0
AAB	AAB - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	2,780	40
ABA	ABA - Baldock East	Baldock East	1,142	50
ABB	ABB - Baldock East	Baldock East	183	0
BAA	BAA - Hitchin Oughton	Hitchin Oughton	2,267	0

**Step 7.** Using the information from the previous steps, the number of electors per property in each polling district is multiplied by the number of new properties in that polling district to give the expected number of electors by 2028. The integer of this figure is used (as you cannot have only part of an elector). This, added to the number of electors now, gives the total number of electors per polling district projected to 2028. An additional validation step has been included, in which the elector:councillor ratios for all polling districts with large numbers of new residential properties have been checked to ensure they are not dissimilar, and in line with planning expectations.

PD Code	Polling District	District ward	Properties (Current)	Electors	Electors/Property	New properties	Total properties, 2028	Total electors, 2028
AAA	AAA - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	680	1,290	1.897	5	685	1,299
AAB	AAB - Baldock Town	Baldock Town	2,780	4,364	1.570	61	2,841	4,459
ABA	ABA - Baldock East	Baldock East	1,142	1,971	1.726	50	1,192	2,057
ABB	ABB - Baldock East	Baldock East	183	333	1.820	6	189	343
BAA	BAA - Hitchin Oughton	Hitchin Oughton	2,267	3,636	1.604	1	2,268	3,637
BBA	BBA - Hitchin Bearton	Hitchin Bearton	1,080	2,006	1.861	24	1,104	2,041

**Step 8.** The final step is to calculate the ward variances using the projected 2028 electorate. This shows the total electorate by ward, and variance against the district-wide elector:councillor ratio, if no ward changes take place.

District	Electors, 2028	N Cllrs	Variance
Arbury	3,702	1	61%
Baldock East	2,400	1	4%
Baldock Town	5,758	3	-17%
Cadwell	2,390	1	4%
Chesfield	6,803	2	48%
Codicote	2,612	1	14%
Ermine	2,441	1	6%
Hitchin Bearton	6,378	3	-8%
Hitchin Highbury	6,320	3	-8%
Hitchin Oughton	3,637	2	-21%
Hitchin Priory	3,982	2	-13%
Hitchin Walsworth	7,027	3	2%
Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo	8,100	3	17%
Kimpton	1,810	1	-21%
Knebworth	4,835	2	5%
Letchworth East	4,906	2	7%
Letchworth Grange	6,147	3	-11%
Letchworth South East	5,520	3	-20%
Letchworth South West	6,139	3	-11%
Letchworth Wilbury	3,949	2	-14%
Royston Heath	4,901	2	7%
Royston Meridian	5,328	2	16%
Royston Palace	4,535	2	-1%
Weston and Sandon	3,108	1	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,728</b>	<b>49</b>	
Total (previous step)	112,728		
<i>Difference</i>	<i>0</i>		
Cllr : Elector ratio		<b>2300</b>	

## Conclusion

By 2028 the expected number of electors is likely to increase from 98,824 to 112,728; an increase of 14%. This increase will not be spread evenly throughout the district, increasing the variances of some wards.

Due to the number of new residential developments, which are not equally distributed across the district, the number of wards expected to show a variance of at least 10% is likely to increase from 6 to 14; the greatest variance will increase from 28% now to 61% in 2028.

The totals by polling district based on this methodology are provided to the LGBCE as part of the ward review.