

**PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Functions related to community governance – Non-Executive function.  
(Electoral Services: Governance)

COUNCIL PRIORITY: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / ACCESSIBLE SERVICES /  
SUSTAINABILITY

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To consider the responses to the Community Governance Review (CGR), which closed on 9 May 2025.
- 1.2 To agree the Final Recommendations to the CGR, based upon those responses.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That the outcome of the consultation be noted.
- 2.2. That Council agree the **Final Recommendations** for the Community Governance Review (as detailed under para 8.10 of the report – R1 – 41).
- 2.3. That Council note, that following decision 2.2, a Community Governance Order will be prepared, to implement the agreed recommendations, subject to consent by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (where required).

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. The Council is required to keep parish electoral arrangements under review. Following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review of district electoral arrangements (Council size and warding patterns), it is necessary to review parish arrangements across the district to bring them into alignment, ensure they remain fit for purpose, and to ensure they continue to reflect local needs. This report provides the Final Recommendations that have been developed taking into account the responses to the public consultation on the Draft Proposals.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1. None considered appropriate. The Council committed to commence a CGR at its meeting on 11 July 2024. Therefore, following the further consultation authorised at its meeting on 28 February 2025, the Council is required to take into account the responses received and consider the community governance recommendations.

#### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. A Consultant from the Association of Electoral Administrators has been instructed to be the day-to-day lead for organising and co-ordinating the CGR. The Consultant is able to provide specialist, experienced knowledge to assist in the delivery of the review at this time. Budget was agreed by Council in July 2024.
- 5.2. A Community Governance Review Working Group has been established where relevant officers and the Consultant meet on a regular basis with the Group Leaders.
- 5.3. The Working Group met on 14 May 2025 and again on 18 June 2025 to discuss the outcome of the consultation and development of the Final Recommendations, as included within this report.

#### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

#### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. Council agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR), with the publication of the Terms of Reference and formal consultation commencing on 19 July 2024 in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 7.2. References in legislation to a 'parish' also include a parish which has an alternative style (such as 'town', 'village' or 'community' council) and parish meetings.
- 7.3. The Terms of Reference for the CGR were broad, allowing for a review of all aspects of community governance within the council area. This includes, for example, the creation or naming of a parish, the establishment of a separate parish from an existing parish, alteration of parish boundaries, abolition or dissolution of a parish, change to parish electoral arrangements or parish grouping.
- 7.4. The overall timescales for the CGR are as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
11 July 2024	Full Council approves the Terms of Reference, signifying the start of the CGR.
19 July to 7 October 2024	First public consultation, lasting 11 weeks. Longer than usual to accommodate consulting over school holidays and to allow Parishes to meet in September to feed into the consultation.

November 2024 to December 2024	Review by Officers and development of Draft Proposals. CGR Working Group meetings held as appropriate to discuss, prior to consideration by Council.
28 February 2025	Draft Proposals considered by Council and approved for second round of consultation.
14 March 2025 to 9 May 2025	Second public consultation, on Draft Proposals.
	Review by Officers and development of Final Recommendations. CGR Working Group meetings held as appropriate to discuss, prior to consideration by Council.
10 July 2025	Full Council discuss and agree Final Recommendations.
TBC - July 2025	Reorganisation Order made.

- 7.5. Once approved, the final outcome of the CGR will be implemented ahead of the 2026 local elections. This means that new parish council areas (if any), changes to parish council areas (if any), changes in the number of parish councillors (if any), and any resulting changes in council tax arrangements for households all change at that time. Ahead of those changes, a review of polling districts and polling places will be carried out, to take account of changes to electoral areas.

#### **Decision-making process and statutory criteria**

- 7.6. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out two statutory criteria. The Council must, by law, have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area under review:
- a. reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
  - b. is effective and convenient.
- 7.7. In addition, the Council must take into account the 2010 government guidance ([published by the Department for Communities and Local Government \(DCLG\)](#)). The Council must also have due regard for responses submitted during the consultations and be open and transparent such that local stakeholders are made aware of the outcome of the decisions and the reasons behind those decisions.
- 7.8. Whilst Members are advised to read the DCLG guidance in its entirety, some key extracts are included below. Essentially, the guidance supports the 2007 Act requiring that local people are consulted, and that their views are taken into account during the CGR. Whilst North Herts Councillors are the decision-makers, those decisions must be based on evidence submitted through the CGR consultation process. *Numbers refer to paragraph numbers in the DCLG guidance; emphasis added for clarity:*

7. The guidance supports and helps to implement key aspects of the 2006 white paper. The 2007 Act **requires that local people are consulted during a community governance review, that representations received in connection with the review are taken into account** and that steps are taken to notify them of the outcomes of such reviews including any decisions.

58. **It is clear that how people perceive where they live** - their neighbourhoods - is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities and depends on a range of circumstances, often best defined by local residents. Some of the factors

which help define neighbourhoods are the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, sense of identity, and whether people live in a rural, suburban, or urban area.

59. Parishes in many cases may be able to meet the concept of neighbourhoods in an area. Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity. Like neighbourhoods, **the feeling of local community and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations.**

95. The recommendations **must take account of any representations received and should be supported by evidence which demonstrates that the recommended community governance arrangements would meet the criteria set out in the 2007 Act.** Where a principal council has conducted a review following the receipt of a petition, it will remain open to the council to make a recommendation which is different to the recommendation the petitioners wished the review to make. This will particularly be the case where the recommendation is not in the interests of the wider local community, such as where giving effect to it would be likely to damage community relations by dividing communities along ethnic, religious or cultural lines.

97. The aim of the 2007 Act is to open up a wider choice of governance to communities at the most local level. However, the Government considers that there is sufficient flexibility for principal councils not to feel 'forced' to recommend that the matters included in every petition must be implemented.

- 7.9. It is important to note that it is North Herts Council who decide community governance arrangements. Therefore, where difficult decisions must be made, consideration must be given to opposing and differing views in light of legislation, best practice, and official guidance. Best practice guidance includes, for example, not having 'island' or 'donut' parishes or parish wards which are wholly surrounded by one other parish or parish ward, and using identifiable markers for boundaries (such as rivers, railways, roads and the edges of properties).
- 7.10. Essentially proposals for change should first identify the identities and interests of the communities, and then consider the governance arrangements for that area.
- 7.11. Members are invited to note that the course of appeal is by way of Judicial Review, a potentially expensive and damaging mechanism open to local stakeholders if there is a failure in the decision-making process. For example, a failure to consult properly, or a failure not to take into account relevant consideration, or conversely irrelevant issues are taken into account in reaching a decision. In other words, it is important to ensure that community governance decisions can be justified both evidentially and procedurally to avoid potential legal challenge.
- 7.12. It is also important to recognise that the number of responses received is not necessarily strong evidence on the strength of feeling either for or against any particular viewpoint. It is true that stakeholders preferring the status quo may not make representations until and unless there is a suggestion of significant change that they would otherwise oppose. Therefore, where little response was received, it cannot be assumed that local people are in favour of supporting the change proposed by a few submissions; they may well currently be unaware of those suggestions and happy with no change.

- 7.13. The aim of a CGR is to ensure community governance arrangements are appropriate at a local level. It is therefore not appropriate to use Ward or Division boundaries to determine parish boundaries, although changes made through the recent LGBCE review of wards is taken into account.
- 7.14. Members are reminded that the scope of the CGR is defined in law. Whilst some responses have been received that are outside of the scope of the CGR, this Council has no authority to make decisions or recommendations on those matters and so cannot engage in meaningful discussion about them. Specifically, the CGR cannot consider or determine:
- a. Parliamentary constituency boundaries
  - b. County Divisions, other than requesting consequential amendments are made to align with any changes to parish boundaries
  - c. District Wards, other than requesting consequential amendments are made to align with any changes to parish boundaries
  - d. The number of County or District councillors
  - e. The powers and authority of different tiers of government (for example, a CGR cannot recommend granting planning determination powers to parish councils)

#### **Consultation**

- 7.15. The final consultation took place from 14 March 2025 to 9 May 2025, inviting respondents to give their views on community governance arrangements in their local area and across the district. The following were consulted by sending details of the CGR and a link to the online feedback form:
- a. all householders, via the authority-held mailing lists and links from the home page of the website
  - b. householders in areas where a substantial change was proposed (external parish boundaries, change in parish council, creation of a parish council, or creation of a new parish ward)
  - c. all parish councils
  - d. all District Councillors
  - e. relevant County Councillors
  - f. local political parties
  - g. Members of Parliament
  - h. Police & Crime Commissioner
  - i. In addition to the above, those that responded to the first consultation, who provided contact details, were sent the details of the second consultation.
- 7.16. The second public consultation again encouraged online responses. However, as with the first public consultation anyone that did not have access or confident responding online were able to visit the council offices and use the computers in the main reception with assistance by members of staff or they were able to make contact either on the phone, letter, in person, email, and a paper version was supplied. Paper versions were also made available at the monthly Councillor Surgeries in the four market towns

- 7.17. The consultation was promoted through a press release, the Members Information Service, emails were sent directly from the dedicated email address to those listed in paragraph 7.15. There was a banner on the front page of the Council's website advertising the consultation, linking through to the dedicated webpage with the survey link. The consultation was promoted via the Council's social media channels. The Chairs of the various Community Forums also announced the consultation at their respective meetings. A promotional slide was displayed within the main reception at the council offices. Posters were made available to District Councillors and Parishes for display.
- 7.18. A total of 2253 responses were received. This is a very significant response to a consultation. These have been weighed against the statutory criteria and used to form the Recommendations that follow at section 8.11.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Introduction**

- 8.1. Members of the Working Group agreed the principle that any proposal must be both clear (easy to understand what the proposal is) and definite (making a recommendation, rather than leaving an area with no Draft Proposal and leaving a 'blank sheet' for consultation. This allowed residents and elected bodies to respond effectively and makes clear the proposed outcome of the CGR. This supports open consultation and democracy, encouraging responses to definite proposals.
- 8.2. Sections 8.3 – 8.8 provide the general rationale for the Final Recommendations under 8.11, which together with the consultation responses specifically detailed under the individual area/ Parish or Town Council, evidence the basis for those Recommendations.
- 8.3. The Council is required to publish the reasons for making its decisions as a result of a CGR. As such, a summary of the responses to the consultation are included at the appropriate section of the report, with all submissions included in the Appendix to the report, with personal information redacted or removed.
- 8.4. The sections of the report that follow show each area in turn, with consideration given for the boundary and geographical area, the name, and then the governance arrangements (such as numbers of councillors). Areas are shown in alphabetical order but note that some changes in boundary arrangements are listed in both affected areas. The Recommendations included within the report for approval have been considered by the Community Governance Review Working Group.
- 8.5. Members are invited to note that, based on the underpinning legislation and guidance, which set out the statutory criteria for a CGR as well as the need to take into account local representations made through the consultation processes, that anything not consulted upon cannot subsequently be included in the final recommendations.
- 8.6. It is noted that the Council is required to continue to monitor community governance arrangements on an on-going basis, and a future CGR may be required in specific areas as further residential development takes place.
- 8.7. Note that maps are included where following the consultation there is a Recommendation to change an existing boundary or creation of a new boundary.

- 8.8. As indicated in paragraph 8.2 the views of local electors and representatives have been taken into account in developing the Final Recommendations and, as a result, a number of the draft proposals have been updated or removed to reflect the responses to the consultation.
- 8.9. Following this CGR, in light of local government reorganisation, it is recognised that there may be a change in public opinion regarding the need for parish and town councils that was not reflected in this Review. However, it is worth noting that in recent feedback from central government on the interim proposal for local government reorganisation and devolution in Hertfordshire, whilst the value that parish councils offer to their local communities and the work they do was recognised, it was noted that they are not a replacement for local authorities hardwiring local community engagement into their own structures, preferably through neighbourhood engagement. Areas considering new parish councils were required to think carefully about the distinct role of parishes and how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer.
- 8.10. That said there remains the opportunity for future CGRs to consider the question of implementing and updating community governance matters, in liaison with the principal authority (North Herts Council or, in future should local government reorganisation continue, a new unitary authority) or by way of a petition to that relevant authority. A petition on any of the matters raised in this CGR can be submitted when a period of 2 years following completion of this review has passed.

### **Final Recommendations**

- 8.11. This section of the report is listed in alphabetical order of parish or area. The Final Recommendations follow sequentially and are denoted as 'R' 1-41.

## Ashwell

<b>Electorate</b>	1620	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 12	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 4</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i></p> <p>Responses in support: 2</p> <p>Responses against: 2</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p>Of those opposed to the change, one felt a five year term of office was too long, the other felt 'at least one council should have experience'. Those supporting the proposal felt it would be 'sensible' to align with other election dates.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i></p> <p>Responses in support: 3</p> <p>Responses against: 1</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p>The respondent opposed to the proposal pointed that the growth in the number of electors should necessitate a higher number of councillors. However, two respondents supporting the reduction noted how it has been difficult to recruit councillors in recent years, and pointed out that other local residents can join projects and activities without the additional role of being a parish councillor.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p>Whilst not all respondents support a change in election date, it would be prudent to ensure all parish election dates across the area align. Given many parish councillors stand for more than one term, a five year term is unlikely to be a strong disincentive to stand. Taking the balance of views expressed into account, the final recommendations are:</p> <p><b>R1: Reduce the number of parish Councillors for Ashwell parish council from 12 to 7.</b></p> <p><b>R2: Change the electoral cycle for Ashwell, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p>	



## Baldock

<b>Electorate</b>	8134 Baldock East: 2327 Baldock West: 5807
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Not currently parished
<b>Next elections</b>	Not applicable
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.</p> <p>(2) Create a parish for Baldock, served by a new Town Council with 9 Councillors, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation. The Town Council will have two wards, following the district wards: Baldock East: 3 Cllrs Baldock West: 6 Cllrs</p>
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 201 Parish council response: Not applicable</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i> Responses in support: 77 <b>Responses against: 149</b> Respondents in favour of the boundary changes felt it was a logical change, given the new developments were more logically Baldock than the more rural communities. The majority of comments against the boundary change were actually comments against the proposed Town Council, with no discussion of the boundaries. Of those mentioning the boundaries, most wrongly felt there would be an increase in council tax as a result of the boundary change. There were comments from individuals in support of the boundary change, explaining how the areas concerned are more closely aligned to Baldock, particularly given the ongoing development. Overall, there are a number of respondents in favour of the boundary change, with few against the boundary change <i>per se</i>.</p> <p>In addition, 1 respondent in relation to Bygrave supported the boundary change, and 2 opposed.</p> <p>In addition, 4 respondents in relation to Clothall were opposed to the boundary change, with one stating it is “to accommodate future new housing” and will not meet current requirements.</p> <p><i>Proposed Town Council</i> Responses in support: 39 <b>Responses against: 186</b></p>

	<p>Supporters of a new Town Council indicated that they felt Baldock was an anomaly, given neighbouring much smaller communities had local representation but Baldock did not. However, there was a lack of enthusiasm for a Town Council even amongst some of the positive responses, with several opposed to increased council tax, some indicating they wished for local elected representatives to lose their seats, and some preferring to have a Town Council only if local government reorganisation takes place.</p> <p>Those opposed to a new Town Council expressed concern about costs and could not identify any benefits to local people. Many felt an additional layer of representation was unnecessary, as evidenced by 50 years of no parish or town council for the town. One respondent identified previous experience of the Letchworth Town Council as an example why Baldock should not have one.</p> <p>One respondent, living some 70miles outside of the district, responded in favour of introducing parish/town councils across all three towns in this CGR on a matter of principle, rather than taking the views of local residents into account.</p> <p><u>The majority of those responding did not support the creation of a Town Council for Baldock.</u></p>
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R3: Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report. This change ensures residents in the new developments, broadly seen as extensions of Baldock, are included in the community of Baldock and not neighbouring parish areas.</b></p> <p><b>R4: No changes - insufficient support to create a Town Council for Baldock.</b></p>

## Barkway

<b>Electorate</b>	716	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 7	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	Number of responses: <b>0</b> Parish council response: <b>None</b>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	Whilst no response was received for Barkway, it would be prudent to ensure all parish election dates across the area align. <b>R5: Change the electoral cycle for Barkway, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Barley

<b>Electorate</b>	574	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 6	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Increase the number of parish Councillors from 6 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 1</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  Responses in support: 1  Responses against: 0  Parish council response: Support  The parish council noted they have no objection to this proposal</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i>  Responses in support: 0  Responses against: 1  Parish council response: <b>Oppose</b>  The parish council noted "Barley Parish Council do not support the proposed increase from 6 to 7. Barley has 574 electorates, a ratio of Councillors to electorates of 1:95. Increasing the number of Parish Councillors to 7 would produce a ratio of 1:82. This is only a marginal increase. However, it would cause practicalities for the running of the Parish Council, for example, the difficulty of achieving a quorum and the reluctance of residents to put themselves forward to become Councillors. Barley Parish Council is of the view that the practical difficulties totally outweigh the very marginal increase in representation for villagers; the number of Councillors should remain at 6."  On the basis that local views are essential, particularly those from existing parish councils regarding the number of councillors needed to serve their community, the proposal to increase the number of parish councillors is not taken forward.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R6: Change the electoral cycle for Barley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p>	

## Bygrave

<b>Electorate</b>	208	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Adjust the boundary, such that the Bygrave parish boundary does not include any of the district ward of Baldock East. Area BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 3 Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i> <b>Responses in support: 3</b> Responses against: 0</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i> Responses in support: 1 <b>Responses against: 2</b> One respondent opposed to the boundary change advised they could “see no reason to change any boundaries.” The other felt it would be an additional layer of bureaucracy, suggesting they were opposed to the new parish council rather than the boundary change itself.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R7: Change the electoral cycle for Bygrave, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p> <p><b>R3: Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report. This change ensures residents in the new developments, broadly seen as extensions of Baldock, are included in the community of Baldock and not neighbouring parish areas.</b></p>	

## Caldecote and Newnham

<b>Electorate</b>	87: Caldecote: 14 (2 Cllrs) Newnham: 73 (4 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 6	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Decrease the number of parish Councillors from 6 to 5: Caldecote: 1 Cllrs Newnham: 4 Cllrs</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 3 Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i> Responses in support: 3 Responses against: 0</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i> <b>Responses in support: 1</b> <b>Responses against: 1</b> The respondent opposed to the change in the number of councillors felt it should remain unchanged at 6 as not every parish councillor can attend every meeting. The respondent supporting the change did not give reasons. As the number of parish councillors should reflect local interests and concerns, no change is proposed.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R8: Change the electoral cycle for Caldecote and Newnham, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Clothall

<b>Electorate</b>	126	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Adjust the boundary, such that the Clothall parish does not include any of the district wards of Baldock East or Baldock West. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 5</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i>  Responses in support: 1  <b>Responses against: 4</b>  Parish meeting response: <b>Support</b>  One respondent opposed to the boundary change advised stated it is “to accommodate future new housing” and will not meet current requirements. Another felt it would be an additional layer of bureaucracy, suggesting they were opposed to the new parish council rather than the boundary change itself. The response from the parish meeting was supportive of the proposal.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R3: Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report. This change ensures residents in the new developments, broadly seen as extensions of Baldock, are included in the community of Baldock and not neighbouring parish areas.</b></p>	

## Codicote

<b>Electorate</b>	2762: Codicote Village: 2123 (8 Cllrs) Codicote East: 639 (2 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 10	Proposal: 9 total
<b>Next elections</b>	2026	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Decrease the number of parish Councillors from 10 to 9: Codicote Village: 6 Codicote East: 3</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 4 Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i> Responses in support: 2 Responses against: 2 Those supporting the proposed change did not give a reason why. Of those against, one felt a five year term was too long given the responsibility involved; the other felt the parish council was ineffective and needs changing and that a shorter term of office so elected representatives can prove themselves was needed. On balance, a one-off five year term is unlikely to dissuade individuals from standing as a parish councillor. There is a strong argument to align parish election dates to those of North Herts Council to avoid confusion for electors whilst also minimising costs. The alternative, of having a much shorter term of office, would increase costs and uncertainty and leave Councillors in post for too short a term to support effective and convenient local governance.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i> <b>Responses in support: 3</b> Responses against: 1 The one response against felt the parish was growing and would need more, not fewer, councillors. This same respondent felt the council was ineffective and needed changing. On balance, changing the number of Councillors appears to be broadly supported.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R9: Change the electoral cycle for Codicote, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p> <p><b>R10: Decrease the number of parish Councillors from</b></p>	



	<b>10 to 9:</b> <b>Codicote Village: 6</b> <b>Codicote East: 3</b>
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## Graveley

<b>Electorate</b>	356	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 4</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i></p> <p><b>Responses in support: 2</b></p> <p><b>Responses against: 2</b></p> <p>One submission opposing the proposal stated “we need to have more say in elections/agreements”, which neither supports nor opposes the proposal. The other opposed felt a term of office of five years was “far too long”, although can be the term of office of other elected bodies and is not unusual during local government reorganisation.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R11: Change the electoral cycle for Graveley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Great Ashby

<b>Electorate</b>	4130	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 12	Proposal: 9
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 9.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 5</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i></p> <p><b>Responses in support: 3</b></p> <p>Responses against: 2</p> <p>One opposed felt five years was too long for a term of office, the other felt the electorate were currently 'being ignored', although it is not clear how that relates to a one-off change in a term of office. The parish council currently has 4 vacancies, suggesting there remains capacity for other residents to have their say directly on the workings of the council.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i></p> <p>Responses in support: 2</p> <p><b>Responses against: 3</b></p> <p>One respondent felt there were "too many parish councillors". However, the three opposed to the proposal felt that Great Ashby should continue to have 12 councillors, noting the growth in electorate and that the parish covers distinct communities, all served by the parish council. On the basis that the views of local people are essential to the development of a CGR, the proposal to reduce the number of parish councillors is not taken forward.</p> <p>One respondent, living in another town, felt the boundaries of Great Ashby should be adjusted. This was not included in the original consultation, and not raised by local communities, so is not taken forward at this time.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R12: Change the electoral cycle for Great Ashby, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p>	

## Hexton

<b>Electorate</b>	89	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	No changes required.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 2  Parish council response: Not applicable</p> <p><b>Responses in support of no change: 1</b>  <b>Responses against: 1</b>  One respondent, from Letchworth, felt that Hexton and Lilley should have a grouped parish council. However, the respondent from Hexton felt no change was necessary and, given the suggestion to create a parish council for Hexton was not included in the original consultation and not requested by local residents, this is not supported as a final recommendation.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R13: No changes.</b>	

## Hinxworth

<b>Electorate</b>	250	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	Number of responses: 2 Parish council response: <b>None</b>  <i>Proposed election date change</i> <b>Responses in support: 2</b> Responses against: 0	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R14: Change the electoral cycle for Hinxworth, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Hitchin

<b>Electorate</b>	27088 Bearton: 6941 Highbury: 4926 Oughton: 4153 Priory: 4615 Walsworth: 6453	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Unparished	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	N/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Move St Ippolyts North parish ward from St Ippolyts to Hitchin. Area INH moves St Ippolyt's North to Hitchin Priory parish ward.</p> <p>(2) Create a new parish for Hitchin, served by a new Town Council, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation, with wards that align to the district wards:  Hitchin Priory (includes St Ippolyts North): 3  Hitchin Oughton: 2  Hitchin Bearton: 3  Hitchin Walsworth: 3  Hitchin Highbury: 2  [If St Ippolyts North does not move to Hitchin, the total number of councillors would still be 13, split thus: Priory 2, Oughton 2, Bearton 3, Walsworth 3, Highbury 3]</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: <b>674</b>  Parish council response: Not applicable</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i>  Responses in support: 277  <b>Responses against: 415</b></p> <p>Respondents supporting the boundary change highlighted the geography, how this area is continuous from the rest of Hitchin, and how the A602 creates a natural boundary. Residents from the Newlands Lane area advised they do not travel to St Ippolyts but consider themselves part of the broader Hitchin community. The majority of those opposed to the proposal commented about not wanting a Town Council, and not in response to the boundary change. One response, however, highlighted "The people [of St Ippolyts] have a strong identity as a village and the surrounds and those people who live in St Ippolyts North especially those on the Broadmeadow estate form part of the active community there. I would be concerned that the St Ippolyts community would in some way be depleted. I can see an advantage though, in that the community would have representation in a number of wards so if an issue came up about which they felt strongly there is potential for greater influence." A small number of respondents felt St Ippolyts is a distinct community and should remain separate and were opposed to any changes to the parish boundary.</p>	

In addition, 182 views from St Ippolyts opposed the proposal, citing how they feel strongly to be part of St Ippolyts summarised by one respondent thus "St Ippolyts North ward has been part of St Ippolyts as long as I have lived here (over 30 years), like many local residents I regard myself as a village person and have chosen to live as part of a village and not part of a town. I value the chance to have my voice heard in all matters that pertain to my village, if I was represented by a town council (or just the county) I do not feel that my voice would have such impact I would be a much smaller piece in a very much larger entity. I also feel that to remove the north ward from St Ippolyts Parish would be a disaster for St Ippolyts, by reducing its size, and therefore it's precept it would be next to impossible for the Parish Council to achieve anything other than bin emptying and grass cutting."

In contrast, 22 respondents from the St Ippolyts area felt the boundary should be adjusted, feeling the area is closer to Hitchin geographically.

Overall, the majority of respondents who live in the St Ippolyts North area were opposed to the proposed boundary change.

There are a range of competing and differing views. On balance, the majority of responses that support the change are focused on the physical location of St Ippolyts North in relation to Hitchin, and not the community identity aspects. Those opposing the boundary change have focused on community aspects and the overall parish of St Ippolyts. Overall, therefore, it appears there is insufficient support for the boundary change, particularly from those residents who would be most affected by it. Some of the responses felt any change would predicate a new Town Council for Hitchin, and would be unnecessary otherwise as it would result in a reduction in representation for people in St Ippolyts North if they moved to an unparished Hitchin.

#### *Proposal to create a new Town Council*

Responses in support: 182

#### **Responses against: 563**

Respondents in favour of a Town Council felt it was long overdue, and would remove a perceived democratic deficit. They felt local Town Councillors would be able to represent the needs of the town more effectively than a district council. However, several of those supporting the proposal added a caveat that it would be needed only if/when local government reorganisation takes place.

Those opposed to the proposed Town Council explained that they felt a third tier of local government was unnecessary and could not see a benefit. They felt an increased council tax would be a problem for many, and one respondent advised that council tax precepts for parish and town councils are unregulated and

	<p>could increase significantly. Respondents felt it would add costs but with no benefits, that they would have a reduced say in local decision making, and it would increase duplication and uncertainty between tiers of local government. Residents who have previously lived in parished areas opposed the proposal based on past experience. Numerous comments state that there is no grassroots demand for a town council, and that most residents are satisfied with the current arrangements.</p> <p>Supporters of a Hitchin Town Council believe it would give the town a stronger, more democratic voice; protect its interests during local government reorganisation; enable more effective and responsive handling of local issues; and preserve Hitchin's unique identity through dedicated, accountable governance. However, overall, residents appear to be overwhelmingly opposed to the creation of a town council for Hitchin, primarily due to concerns about increased council tax, unnecessary bureaucracy, and a lack of clear benefits. They urge the council to focus on improving existing services and to avoid adding complexity and cost to local governance, especially during a cost of living crisis.</p> <p>The majority of consultation responses did not support a boundary change (significantly from those who would be affected) nor the creation of a Town Council for Hitchin.</p>
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b><i>R15: No changes are proposed.</i></b>

## Holwell

<b>Electorate</b>	334	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 23</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i></p> <p><b>Responses in support: 12</b></p> <p>Responses against: 11</p> <p>Parish council response: Support</p> <p>The response in support of the change felt it made sense, may save funds and was a sensible approach. One response opposing the change made comments about individuals and the parish council as a whole; whilst this review makes no comment on the legitimacy of their concerns, a CGR cannot take those concerns into account in determining the outcome of the consultation. The remaining opposing responses were from residents living in an unparished town in the district, and not from local people.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R16: Change the electoral cycle for Holwell, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	



## Ickleford

<b>Electorate</b>	1704	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 8	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Create a parish ward for the Lavender Grange community, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation (Area ILG; see maps at the end of this report):  Ickleford parish ward: 5 councillors  Lavender Grange: 2 councillors</p> <p>(3) Ensure local people in Lavender Grange are aware of this proposal, and invite them to respond, via a hard-copy distribution in the affected area.</p> <p>(4) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 16</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  Responses in support: 13  Responses against: 3  Parish council response: Supports proposal  Those in favour outlined how aligning with the district elections makes sense. Those opposed felt Ickleford was not in the district, or did not think there was a clear argument for the change.</p> <p><i>Number of parish councillors</i>  <b>Responses in support: 9</b>  Responses against: 7  Parish council response: <b>Opposes proposal</b>  There were no strong views in support of the proposal. The parish council felt the number of councillors should not be reduced, and a number of residents agreed there was no need for a change to a system that is currently working, given the workload of the parish council. On balance, given it is the voice of local people – and the parish council in particular – who can express whether the number of councillors is appropriate or not, no change is proposed.</p> <p><i>Creating a new ward for Lavender Grange</i>  Responses in support: 8  Responses against: 5  Parish council response: <b>Partially supports/opposes proposal</b>  Those in support of the proposal to create a new Lavender Grange parish ward felt it would lead to better representation, and help address local issues. Respondents were 'proud' to be part of Ickleford, but felt the geographic distance from the</p>	

	<p>historic community means a different ward would be more effective. Those opposed felt Lavender Grange should be part of the neighbouring parish of Lower Stondon (outside of the district), or that it was not large enough to justify a separate ward.</p> <p>The parish council outlined their case, summarised thus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There has not been a Lavender Grange representative on the parish council previously, although they have tried to encourage applications.</li> <li>2. Engagement with the community has been difficult.</li> <li>3. Having 2 councillors for Lavender Grange and 5 for the remainder would lead, they felt, to 2 long-term vacancies which would lead to ineffective and inquorate meetings.</li> </ol> <p>The primary aim of a CGR is to ensure local government is effective and convenient, and represent the interests and identities of the communities. From responses received, it appears the community in Lavender Grange do feel separate and distinct from the rest of the parish given their geography, and have identified specific issues they feel local representation could help with. It <i>is</i> possible to create a parish ward with one councillor, which prevents “over-representation” of local communities; however, this can have a significantly detrimental impact if a sole councillor has a number of specific local issues to address, particularly during times of leave. As noted above, the proposal to reduce the number of parish councillors overall for Ickleford is not being taken forward; therefore, having 2 councillors for Lavender Grange ward would ensure local representation without the risk the parish council raised of becoming inquorate.</p>
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R17: Change the electoral cycle for Ickleford, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p> <p><b>R18: Create a parish ward for the Lavender Grange community:</b>  <b>Ickleford parish ward: 6 councillors</b>  <b>Lavender Grange: 2 councillors</b></p>

**Kelshall**

<b>Electorate</b>	128	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	No changes.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<b>Number of responses: 0</b> <b>Parish council response: 0</b>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R19: No changes.</b>	

## Kimpton

<b>Electorate</b>	1835	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 8	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2026	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 4</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 4</b>  Responses against: 0  Parish council response: <b>Supports the proposal</b>  All four responses support the proposal, although in their text answer to explain their reason one respondent expressed opposition to the idea as they felt too much change on one election date would be a bad thing.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i>  <b>Responses in support: 2</b>  <b>Responses against: 2</b>  Parish council response: <b>Oppose the proposal</b>  The two responses in support of the change gave a reason for doing so. Those opposed felt there was no benefit to reducing the number of councillors. The parish council set out a number of reasons why they did not wish to have fewer councillors, which clearly show that a reduction would have a negative impact on the effectiveness of local government in the parish. The voice of local people – and the parish council in particular – is essential in determining these matters and therefore, taking the representations into account, no change is proposed.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R20: Change the electoral cycle for Kimpton, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Kings Walden

<b>Electorate</b>	814: Kings Walden: 181 (2 Cllrs) Breachwood Green: 633 (6 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 8	Proposal: 7 total
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7: Kings Walden: 2 Breachwood Green: 5</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 3</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 3</b>  Responses against: 0  Parish council response: <b>Supports</b>  There were no comments regarding this question, but all three responses support the change.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  Responses in support: 0  <b>Responses against: 3</b>  Parish council response: <b>Oppose</b>  Respondents felt that a smaller parish council would lead to inquorate meetings, and noted that the parish council covers a broad area containing different hamlets and a larger council allows for good representation. The views of local communities is important, and given all are opposed to this change it is not proposed to go forward.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R21: Change the electoral cycle for Kings Walden, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Knebworth

<b>Electorate</b>	3578	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 12	Proposal: 9
<b>Next elections</b>	2026	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 9.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 23</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 19</b>  Responses against: 4  Parish council response: <b>Support</b>  One response against felt a new additional parish council was not needed; this was not part of the proposal. One felt that keeping the parish election dates separate from the district elections would enable electors to focus only on issues relating to that tier of government. The 2022 election was uncontested, so this point may not see any benefit to the community. Those in favour felt a change in election dates was a benefit.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  Responses in support: 4  <b>Responses against: 18</b>  Parish council response: <b>Opposed</b>  One of those in favour of this proposal suggested that fewer councillors would lead to contested polls. Those against explained they felt this would have a detrimental impact on the work of the councillors and reduce diversity in representation. On balance, therefore, the final recommendation takes these views from local people into account and no change is proposed.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R22: Change the electoral cycle for Knebworth, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Langley

<b>Electorate</b>	152	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	None.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 1</p> <p>Parish council response: Not applicable</p> <p>One respondent felt that Langley should be merged with neighbouring parishes, stating this would increase democracy and reduce precept costs. However, it is not possible to put this as a final recommendation given local people have not been consulted upon it, and only 1 of the 152 electors made a submission at this second round. Therefore, the final recommendation remains for no changes. There remains the opportunity for future review, should local residents collectively agree that joining a neighbouring parish would be beneficial.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R23: No changes.</b>	

## Letchworth

<b>Electorate</b>	25617	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Not parished	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>Create a new parish for Letchworth, served by a new Town Council, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation, with wards to align to the district wards:</p> <p>Grange: 3  Norton: 2  South East: 3  South West: 3  Wilbury: 2</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: <b>925</b></p> <p>Responses in support: 88  Responses against: <b>837</b></p> <p>Those in support expressed a desire for local representation and a democratic voice at a local community level; some felt that having a parish council would empower the community to take action on local issues, manage local amenities (such as village halls, churchyards, and allotments), and respond more effectively to residents' needs. They wanted control over local services and facilities, and an opportunity to shape local governance.</p> <p>However, those supporting a new town council were vastly outnumbered by those against the proposal. Those against outlined not only the general opposition seen in other parts of this review (costs, unnecessary layer of bureaucracy and unclear benefit or purpose) but also specific issues affecting Letchworth – most particularly the previous experience of having a Town Council for the town.</p> <p>One respondent provided detailed arguments against creating a new parish council, including details of the history of the former Letchworth council.</p> <p>On balance, given the strong opposition and lack of clear community-led call for a Town Council, the final recommendation is to not create a Town Council for Letchworth.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R24: No change.</b>	



## Lilley

<b>Electorate</b>	314	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 7	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 25</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 13</b>  Responses against: 12  Parish council response: None  Most responses against referred to creating a new parish council, which is not relevant to this proposal. One wanted elections every 4 years, which will happen after the initial longer term of office. The most recent election was uncontested. Those in favour of the change felt it would lead to more accountability and better engagement.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  <b>Responses in support: 17</b>  Responses against: 8  Parish council response: <b>None</b>  Those in favour of the reduction felt it would reduce costs (as parish councillors are unpaid, this would not be the case). Those against felt a greater number of parish councillors leads to better representation and diversity. Although there are differing views, it appears many of those supporting the change are not responding about Lilley directly (indeed, they all live in an unparished town in the district). Therefore, views from local residents favour keeping the number of parish councillors unchanged.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R25: Change the electoral cycle for Lilley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Nuthampstead

<b>Electorate</b>	115	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	None.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: <b>1</b></p> <p>The respondent (living in an unparished town outside of Nuthampstead itself) felt Nuthampstead should be merged back into Barkway parish, or to create a grouped parish for the two communities. Neither proposal was raised by local people, nor consulted upon. There is no apparent desire to create a parish council for Nuthampstead from local people.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R26: No changes.</b>	

## Offley

<b>Electorate</b>	1268: Offley: 860 (5 Cllrs) Cockernhoe: 408 (4 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 9	Proposal: 7 total
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 9 to 7: Offley: 5 Cockernhoe: 2</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 11</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i> Responses in support: 5 <b>Responses against: 6</b> Parish council response: <b>None</b> All of the responses against changing the electoral cycle commented about the number of councillors. One respondent felt a 5 year term of office was too long. However, this proposal is broadly supported.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i> Responses in support: 2 <b>Responses against: 9</b> Parish council response: <b>None</b> The proposed reduction in the number of councillors was broadly opposed, with respondents explaining the current arrangements work well and allow the parish to work effectively in meetings, projects and supporting residents. The final recommendation takes the local views into account, and no reduction is proposed going forward.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R27: Change the electoral cycle for Offley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Pirton

<b>Electorate</b>	1245	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 9	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 9 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 9</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 8</b>  Responses against: 1  Parish council response: <b>Support</b>  The one response against the election date change mentioned the number of councillors, so did not oppose the date change itself.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  Responses in support: 3  Responses against: 6  Parish council response: Oppose  Two existing parish councillors opposed the proposed reduction in the number of councillors, citing how well the council currently works and the need for sufficient numbers to support ongoing projects. One comment supporting the reduction felt the current numbers led to uncontested elections. The parish council oppose a reduction, and set out their rationale for this, including noting that despite new technology, workloads for councillors have increased (indeed the use of technology may have increased their workload).  On balance, there is insufficient support for a reduction given local experience into account.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R28: Change the electoral cycle for Pirton, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Preston

<b>Electorate</b>	352	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 7	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 22</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 21</b>  Responses against: 1  Parish council response: <b>Support</b>  There is broad support for this proposal.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  Responses in support: 3  <b>Responses against: 19</b>  Parish council response: <b>Oppose</b>  Those supporting a reduction felt that '5 should be sufficient'. Those opposing it felt that the breadth of knowledge and experience, and the need for diversity, required the current number of councillors.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R29: Change the electoral cycle for Preston, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Radwell

<b>Electorate</b>	113	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Parish meeting	Proposal: n/a
<b>Next elections</b>	n/a	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	None.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	Number of responses: 1 One response stated that they felt the proposal (for 'no change') would lead to an increase in fly-tipping.	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R30: No changes.</b>	

## Reed

<b>Electorate</b>	265	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<i>Proposed election date change</i> <b>Responses in support: 2</b> Responses against: 0 Parish council response: <b>None</b> Both respondents support this proposed change.	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R31: Change the electoral cycle for Reed, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Royston Town

<b>Electorate</b>	13544 District ward Heath: 3885 District ward Meridian: 5357 District ward Palace: 4302	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 15 If no changes are made, the following will take effect from 2026: Garden Lane: 1 Cllr Meridian: 5 Cllrs Palace: 4 Cllrs South: 1 Cllrs West: 3 Cllrs Willowside: 1 Cllr	Proposal: 13 in total
<b>Next elections</b>	2026	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	(1) Abolish the current Town wards and replace with wards that align completely with the district wards. (2) Reduce the number of Town Councillors from 15 to 13: Heath: 4 Meridian: 5 Palace: 4 (3) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	Number of responses: 24  <i>Proposed election date change</i> <b>Responses in support: 21</b> Responses against: 3 Parish council response: <b>Support</b> One comment opposing the election date changed was from a resident wanting elections every year. Those supportive outlined the financial savings and reduced confusion and uncertainty that the proposal brings.  <i>Proposed new Town Council wards</i> <b>Responses in support: 17</b> Responses against: 7 Parish council response: <b>Opposed</b> The majority of respondents supported the change in wards, noting they reflect the communities and that having small disparate wards is neither convenient nor representative of local community boundaries. All of those opposed (including that of the Town Council itself) refer to a reduction in the number of councillors, not the ward boundaries. On balance, there is broad support for the new warding boundaries to align with the new district boundaries in Royston, with no substantive arguments against.	



	<p><i>Proposed number of Town Councillors</i></p> <p><b>Responses in support: 15</b></p> <p>Responses against: 8</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>Opposed</b></p> <p>Those opposed felt that reducing the number of councillors would limit diversity and make representation more difficult. Those supporting the proposal (including three Town Councillors) outlined how challenging it is to fill seats with dedicated individuals, resulting in much of the work being done by a few people. Previously, some ward elections have been uncontested, some meetings have been inquorate, and a small number of councillors reportedly attend meetings infrequently. Some respondent suggested 13 was still too many. Overall there are differing views, including on the Town Council itself. On balance reducing the number of town councillors appears to be beneficial to local communities.</p>
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R32: Abolish the current Town wards and replace with wards that align completely with the district wards.</b></p> <p><b>R33: Reduce the number of Town Councillors from 15 to 13:</b>  <b>Heath: 4</b>  <b>Meridian: 5</b>  <b>Palace: 4</b></p> <p><b>R34: Change the electoral cycle for Royston, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p>

## Rushden and Wallington

<b>Electorate</b>	335 Rushden: 214 (3 Cllrs) Wallington: 121 (2 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 5	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Move the boundary such that the whole of Redhill village is in Wallington parish (moving some from Rushden, and some from Sandon). Area SW moves from Sandon to Wallington; RW from Rushden to Wallington.</p> <p>(2) Deliver hard-copy information to all residents in Redhill parish regarding this Draft Proposal.</p> <p>(3) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 6</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change (Redhill village)</i> Responses in support: 2 <b>Responses against: 4</b> Parish council response: <b>None</b> One of those in favour is already in Wallington, so unaffected by the proposal; the other said it “made sense” but did not understand the rationale. Those opposing the proposal felt the community was more aligned to Sandon and already better represented by them. Some responded to the consultation saying they had “not been consulted” about the proposal. All felt it was not necessary. On the basis that local people have expressed their views, and largely oppose a change in boundary, this proposal is not taken forward.</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i> <b>Responses in support: 5</b> Responses against: 1 Parish council response: None The comments requested electronic elections (which is neither possible under current legislation, not part of a CGR).</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R35: Change the electoral cycle for Rushden and Wallington, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Sandon

<b>Electorate</b>	404	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 6	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) As noted above, move the boundary such that the whole of Redhill village is in Wallington parish (moving some from Rushden, and some from Sandon). Area SW moves from Sandon to Wallington. See maps at the end of this report.</p> <p>(2) Reduce the number of Councillors from 6 to 5.</p> <p>(3) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 5</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i>  Responses in support: 0  <b>Responses against: 5</b>  Parish council response: <b>None</b>  None of the responses supported the change, which concurs with the submissions relating to Wallington. This proposal is therefore not taken forward.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of Councillors</i>  Responses in support: 0  <b>Responses against: 5</b>  Parish council response: <b>None</b>  Respondents felt having 6 councillors enabled them to better represent the community. On the basis that the views of local people are vital in these reviews, no change is proposed.</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 5</b>  Responses against: 0  Parish council response: <b>None</b>  Respondents noted that aligning the parish election dates with the district was beneficial.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R36: Change the electoral cycle for Sandon, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## St. Ippolyts

<b>Electorate</b>	1644: South: 907 (5 Cllrs) North: 737 (3 Cllrs)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 8	Proposal: 7 total
<b>Next elections</b>	2028	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) As noted above, move St Ippolyts North parish ward from St Ippolyts to Hitchin following consultation with local residents. Area INH moves St Ippolyts North to Hitchin Priory parish ward. See maps at the end of this report.</p> <p>(2) Either:</p> <p>a. If the move of St Ippolyts North to Hitchin <u>does</u> go ahead, then reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7.</p> <p>or:</p> <p>b. If the move of St Ippolyts North to Hitchin <u>does not</u> go ahead, then reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">South: 4 North: 3</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 204</p> <p><i>Proposed boundary change</i> This is discussed in the <i>Hitchin</i> section above.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i> Responses in support: 45 <b>Responses against: 164</b> Parish council response: <b>None</b> Amongst those supporting a reduction were a few calling for more drastic reductions (in some cases to zero). Some felt this would aid decision making. Those opposed felt that more councillors are beneficial, allowing for a diverse range of views to be represented and work to be divided between representatives. On balance, there is insufficient support for reducing the number of councillors.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R37: No changes.</b>	

## St. Paul`s Walden

<b>Electorate</b>	1081	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 7	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2028	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	No changes.	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 6</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p><b>Responses in support of no change: 3</b></p> <p><b>Responses against: 3</b></p> <p>One response against commented on other areas, not this parish. No other comments of note.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R38: No changes.</b>	

## Therfield

<b>Electorate</b>	451	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 7	Proposal: 5
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 8</p> <p><i>Proposed election date change</i>  <b>Responses in support: 5</b>  Responses against: 3  Parish council response: <b>Support / No comments</b>  Two respondents gave comments for their reason for not supporting the proposal – one said there was “no reason” for the election dates to be aligned; the other felt they “should be kept separate” to highlight that parish councils are not political. It should be noted that previously parish and district election dates aligned to some extent, and it is only since the decision to move to all-out district elections (from elections by thirds) that this has not been the case. Some parish elections are party political. Across the authority area, there is broad support for aligning parish election dates, and it would be impractical, prohibitively expensive, and confusing for electors for only one area to be out of alignment.</p> <p><i>Proposed change in number of councillors</i>  Responses in support: 1  <b>Responses against: 6</b>  Parish council response: <b>Support / No comments</b>  The one response in support of a reduction gave no comment. Those opposing the reduction set out that 5 is too few, and would result in a situation where the work of the parish cannot be carried out. They supported retaining the status quo. As with other parishes, the views of local people and parish councillors are vital; as a result, no reduction is proposed.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R39: Change the electoral cycle for Therfield, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	

## Weston

<b>Electorate</b>	813	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 9	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of Councillors from 9 to 7.</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 3</p> <p>Parish council response: <b>Opposed</b></p> <p>All three respondents were opposed to both changes. The view from the parish council was that it would be better to have parish election dates separate from those of the district to prevent politicisation of the parish council (although in the past the parish election date aligned with at least some of the district polling dates); the election to Weston parish has been uncontested for at least the past three scheduled elections. On balance, following the same approach as for other parishes, the election cycle cannot be left unchanged for only one parish so the final recommendation is that it is changed; similarly, any opposition from local residents about the reduction in the number of councillors is taken to reflect a local view that the number should not be changed.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<p><b>R40: Change the electoral cycle for Weston, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b></p>	

## Wymondley

<b>Electorate</b>	902: Gt Wymondley: 137 (2 Cllrs) Lt Wymondley: 642 (5 Cllrs) Todds Green: 123 (1 Cllr)	
<b>Number of councillors</b>	Current: 8 total	Proposal: 7
<b>Next elections</b>	2027	
<b>Draft Proposals</b>	<p>(1) Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7: Gt Wymondley: 1 Cllr Lt Wymondley: 5 Cllrs Todds Green: 1 Cllr</p> <p>(2) Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</p>	
<b>Consultation responses</b>	<p>Number of responses: 2 Parish council response: <b>None</b></p> <p>Both respondents supported the change in election dates. One supported a reduction in the number of councillors; however the other (a serving parish councillor) opposed this saying they needed sufficient parish councillors to deliver the work of the council.</p>	
<b>Final Recommendations</b>	<b>R41: Change the electoral cycle for Wymondley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.</b>	



## Summary

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Ashwell</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 7.	<b>R1:</b> Reduce the number of parish Councillors for Ashwell Parish Council from 12 to 7.
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R2:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Ashwell, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Baldock</b>	1. Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.	<b>R3:</b> Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East.
	2. Create a parish for Baldock, served by a new Town Council with 9 Councillors, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation. The Town Council will have two wards, following the district wards: Baldock East: 3 Cllrs Baldock West: 6 Cllrs	<b>R4:</b> <i>No changes - there is insufficient support to create a Town Council for Baldock.</i>
<b>Barkway</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R5:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Barkway, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Barley</b>	1. Increase the number of parish Councillors from 6 to 7.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Barley.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R6:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Barley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Bygrave</b>	1. Adjust the boundary, such that the Bygrave parish boundary does not include any of the district ward of Baldock East. Area BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.	<b>R3:</b> Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East.
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R7:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Bygrave, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Caldecote and Newnham</b>	1. Decrease the number of parish Councillors from 6 to 5: Caldecote: 1 Cllrs Newnham: 4 Cllrs	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Caldecote and Newnham.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R8:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Caldecote and Newnham, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Clothall</b>	1. Adjust the boundary, such that the Clothall parish does not include any of the district wards of Baldock East or Baldock West. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East. See maps at the end of this report.	<b>R3:</b> Adjust the external boundaries of Clothall and Bygrave parishes such that the town of Baldock is excluded from them; the new parish boundaries should follow the new district ward boundaries. Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East.
<b>Codicote</b>	1. Decrease the number of parish Councillors from 10 to 9: Codicote Village: 6 Codicote East: 3	<b>R9:</b> Decrease the number of parish Councillors from 10 to 9: Codicote Village: 6 Codicote East: 3
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office	<b>R10:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Codicote, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
	ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Graveley</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R11:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Graveley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Great Ashby</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 9.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Great Ashby.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R12:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Great Ashby, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Hexton</b>	No changes.	<b>R13:</b> No changes.
<b>Hinxworth</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R14:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Hinxworth, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Hitchin</b>	1. Move St Ippolyts North parish ward from St Ippolyts to Hitchin. Area INH moves St Ippolyt's North to Hitchin Priory parish ward.	<i>There is insufficient support for the boundary change, particularly from those residents who would be most affected by it.</i>
	2. Create a new parish for Hitchin, served by a new Town Council, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation, with wards that align to the district wards:	<b>R15:</b> No changes - Insufficient support to create a Town Council for Hitchin.
<b>Holwell</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R16:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Holwell, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Ickleford</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R17:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Ickleford, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
	2. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Ickleford.</i>
	3. Create a parish ward for the Lavender Grange community (Area ILG; see maps at the end of this report):  Ickleford parish ward: 5 councillors Lavender Grange: 2 councillors	<b>R18:</b> Create a parish ward for the Lavender Grange community: Ickleford parish ward: 6 councillors Lavender Grange: 2 councillors
<b>Kelshall</b>	No changes.	<b>R19:</b> No changes.
<b>Kimpton</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Kimpton.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R20:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Kimpton, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Kings Walden</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7: Kings Walden: 2 Breachwood Green: 5	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Kings Walden.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R21:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Kings Walden, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Knebworth</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 12 to 9.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Knebworth.</i>

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R22:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Knebworth, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Langley</b>	No changes.	<b>R23:</b> No changes.
<b>Letchworth</b>	Create a new parish for Letchworth, served by a new Town Council, subject to engagement from local residents through the consultation, with wards to align to the district wards.	<b>R24:</b> No changes. There is insufficient support to create a Town Council for Letchworth.
<b>Lilley</b>	1. Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Lilley.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R25:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Lilley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Nuthampstead</b>	No changes.	<b>R26:</b> No changes.
<b>Offley</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 9 to 7: Offley: 5 Cockernhoe: 2	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Offley.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R27:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Offley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Pirton</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 9 to 7.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Pirton.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R28:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Pirton, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Preston</b>	1. Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of parish councillors for Preston.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R29:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Preston, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Radwell</b>	No changes.	<b>R30:</b> <i>No changes.</i>
<b>Reed</b>	Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R31:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Reed, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Royston</b>	1. Abolish the current Town wards and replace with wards that align completely with the district wards.	<b>R32:</b> Abolish the current Town wards and replace with wards that align completely with the district wards.
	2. Reduce the number of Town Councillors from 15 to 13: Heath: 4 Meridian: 5 Palace: 4	<b>R33:</b> Reduce the number of Town Councillors from 15 to 13: Heath: 4 Meridian: 5 Palace: 4
	3. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R34:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Royston, such that the elections in 2026 result in a 2-year term of office ending in 2028; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Rushden and Wallington</b>	1. Move the boundary such that the whole of Redhill village is in Wallington parish (moving some from Rushden, and some from Sandon).	<i>There is insufficient support to change the boundary around Redhill village.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R35:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Rushden and Wallington, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.

Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Sandon</b>	1. Move the boundary such that the whole of Redhill village is in Wallington parish (moving some from Rushden, and some from Sandon).	<i>There is insufficient support to change the boundary around Redhill village.</i>
	2. Reduce the number of Councillors from 6 to 5.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of councillors for Sandon.</i>
	3. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R36:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Sandon, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>St. Ippolyts</b>	As noted above, move St Ippolyt's North parish ward from St Ippolyt's to Hitchin following consultation with local residents.	<b>R37:</b> <i>There is insufficient support for the boundary change, particularly from those residents who would be most affected by it.</i>
	Either: a. If the move of St Ippolyts North to Hitchin <u>does</u> go ahead, then reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7. or: b. If the move of St Ippolyts North to Hitchin <u>does not</u> go ahead, then reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7: South: 4 North: 3	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of councillors for St Ippolyts.</i>
<b>St. Paul's Walden</b>	No changes.	<b>R38:</b> <i>No changes.</i>
<b>Therfield</b>	1. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R39:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Therfield, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
	2. Reduce the number of Councillors from 7 to 5.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of councillors for Therfield.</i>

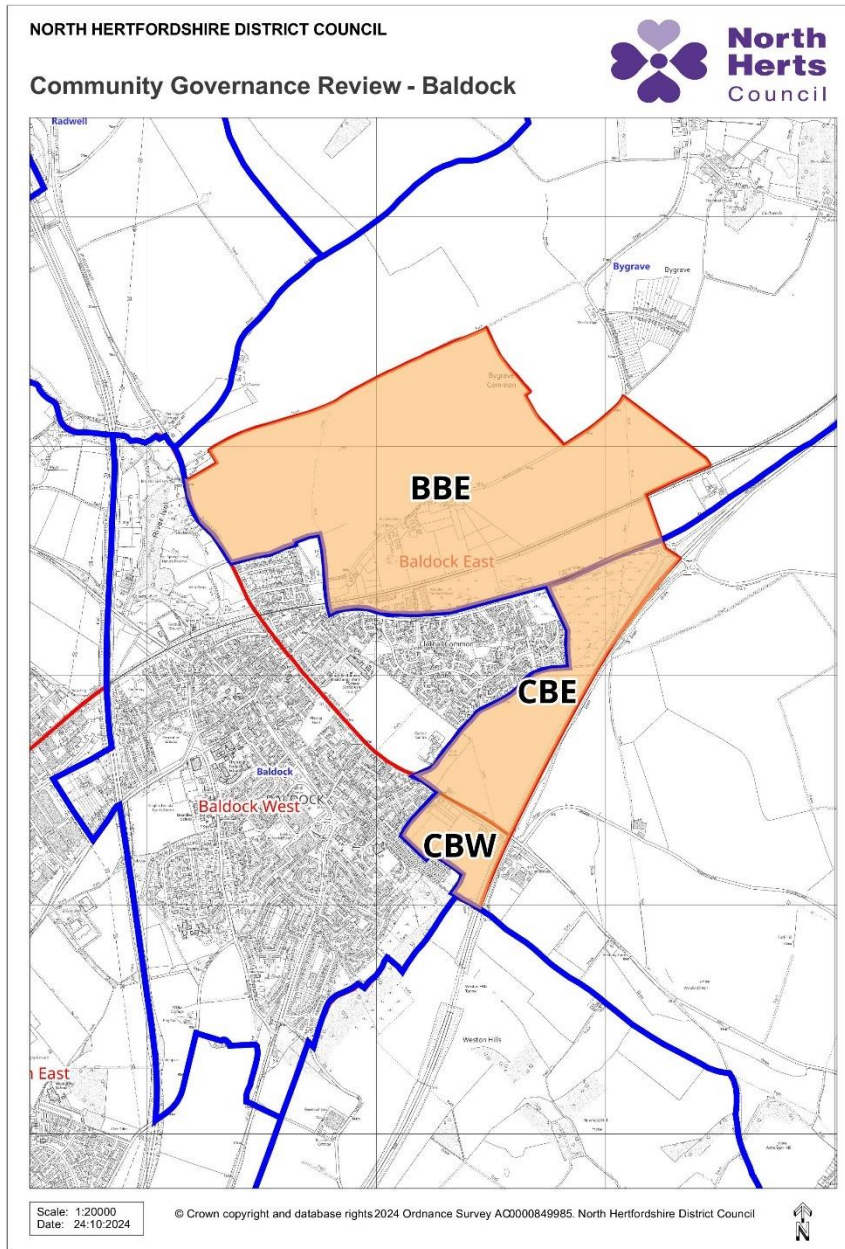
Parish	Draft proposal	Final Recommendation
<b>Weston</b>	1. Reduce the number of Councillors from 9 to 7.	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of councillors for Weston.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R40:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Weston, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.
<b>Wymondley</b>	1. Reduce the number of parish Councillors from 8 to 7:  Gt Wymondley: 1 Cllr Lt Wymondley: 5 Cllrs Todds Green: 1 Cllr	<i>There is insufficient support to change the number of councillors for Wymondley.</i>
	2. Change the electoral cycle, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.	<b>R41:</b> Change the electoral cycle for Wymondley, such that the elections in 2027 result in a 5-year term of office ending in 2032; thereafter revert to 4-yearly terms in line with North Herts District elections.



## MAPS

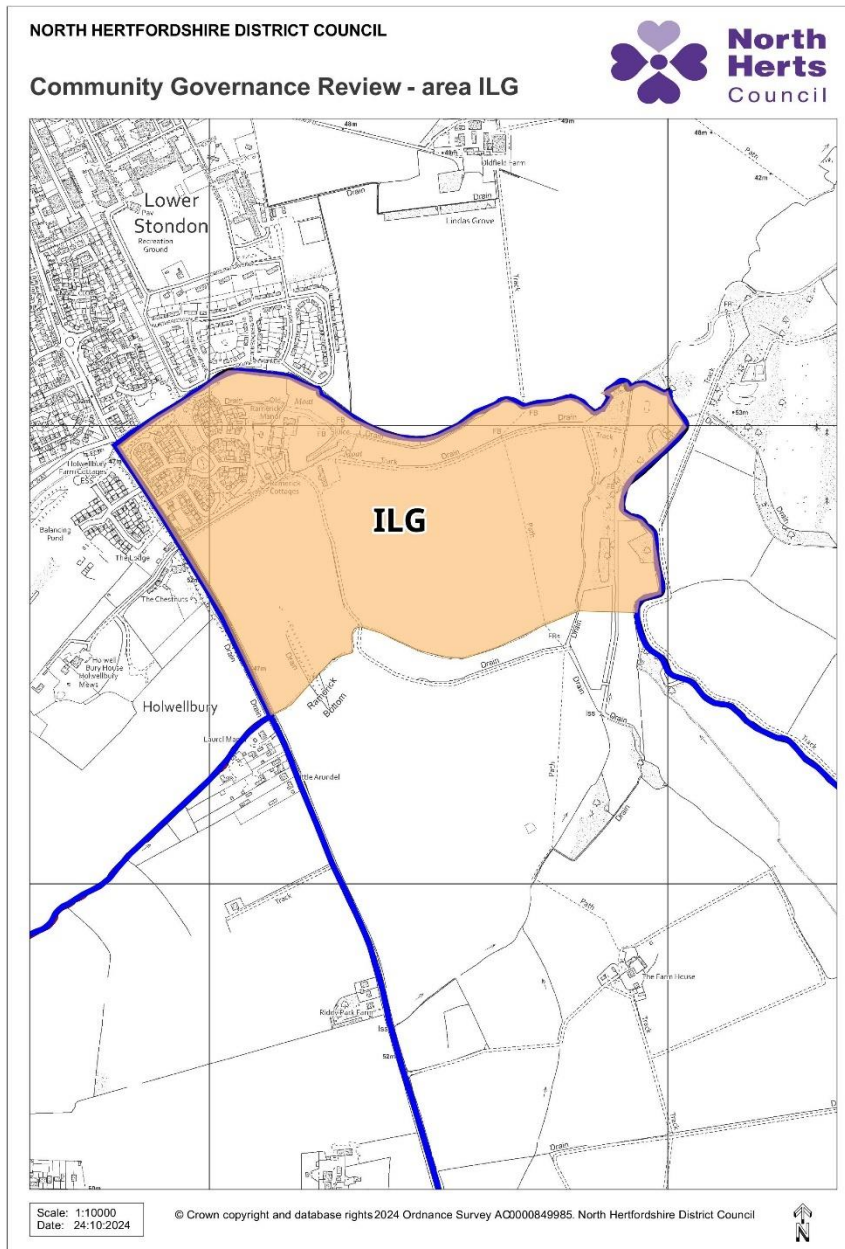
*Baldock, Bygrave, Clothall.*

Area CBW moves from Clothall to Baldock West; CBE from Clothall to Baldock East; BBE from Bygrave to Baldock East.



*Ickleford*

Create a parish ward for the Lavender Grange community (Area ILG).



## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The Council, as principal council, has authority to take decisions about parish electoral governance arrangements under Sections 79 and 102(2) the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 9.2. A District Council that is undertaking a review, must notify the County Council that the review for its area is to be undertaken and the terms of reference (including any modifications to those Terms), as per section 79(3).
- 9.3. Sections 81 – 84 of the said Act cover relevant aspect of the Terms of Reference for the review. These are Terms under which the review is to be undertaken and specify the area under review, which were approved by Full Council at its meeting on 11 July 2024. As soon as practicable after deciding the Terms, they must be published. They were published on the Council's dedicated [Community Governance Review webpage](#) as well as part of the first stage of consultation.
- 9.4. 14.5.1 Council Functions states that functions relating to Community governance are reserved to Council as referred in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000.
- 9.5. If changes to external parish boundaries are agreed and implemented, there may be consequential changes required in terms of asset transfer between parish councils. The district Legal Services team will be responsible for ensuring this takes place in an appropriate and legally compliant manner following completion of the CGR. Whilst none is Recommended following the consultation responses, the creation of any new parish council may require an interim arrangement, such as for setting the initial Council Tax precept; Legal Services will be responsible for implementing these interim arrangements, typically through the appointment of local elected District Councillors to undertake those duties suitably supported by officers.
- 9.6. If as part of the CGR the council wishes to alter the electoral arrangements for a parish whose existing arrangements were put into place within the previous five years the consent of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is required. Following the LGBCE review of district electoral arrangements, as part of the North Hertfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2023, the parish wards and number of councillors were changed for Royston and Bygrave, therefore the council must write to the LGBCE detailing its proposal and requesting consent before the Order is made, if the final recommendations are approved as detailed within this report.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council is required to undertake regular reviews of community governance at its own cost. The costs or savings associated with the outcome of a CGR are met by parish councils and where an election is contested alongside a district council election the costs can be shared.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and

effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

- 11.2. Government guidance states that it is good practice to conduct a full review at least every 10 – 15 years and keep the area under review in the interim. Given the level of development and residential growth, and the recent review of District Wards since the last review, it is now timely to formally review the parish governance arrangements throughout the area.
- 11.3. As per paragraph 9.6, if the LGBCE declines to give consent no local order can be made until 5 years have expired from when the LGBCE made the North Hertfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2023 (19 September 2023). Given that the final recommendations do not impact the district boundaries they imposed – the changes relate to aligning the parishes with the district ward boundaries that they created, and changes within Royston and Bygrave parish ward boundaries, it is not expected to be a contentious issue provided it is well supported by the evidence base for the decisions.
- 11.4. Failure to properly conduct, take into account consultation responses and/ or implement a CGR may result in a Judicial Review. The approach we have taken aims to eliminate the risk of this happening.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. A review of community governance will not impact on the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 12.3. Parish and Town Councils are the most local tier of government in England and play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level. A CGR offers an opportunity for both existing parishes and local people to feed into this process and offer proposals for any changes. The consultation was available via non-digital means for those without access to online technology as referenced in paragraph 7.16.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report as this is not a procurement exercise or contract.

## **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

## **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 The appointment of the consultant to assist with the CGR has alleviated some of the pressure within the service and ensured the service continues to run effectively (given the significant demands the Democratic Services Team has experienced last year).

## **16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix A – Redacted consultation responses.

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 17.1 Melanie Stimpson, Democratic Services Manager/Returning Officer  
[melanie.stimpson@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.stimpson@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 17.2 Jeanette Thompson, Director Governance /Deputy Returning Officer  
[Jeanette.thompson@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Jeanette.thompson@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 17.3 Tim Everitt, Performance and Risk Officer  
[Tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 17.4 Ellie Hollingsworth, Policy and Strategy Officer  
[Ellie.hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Ellie.hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk)

## **18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Guidance on Community Governance Reviews  
[Guidance on community governance reviews \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 18.2 Council – 23 September 2021 – Electoral Cycle Consultation – Minute No. 52 refers  
<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=2614>
- 18.3 Council - 7 December 2021 - [Agenda for Council on Tuesday, 7th December, 2021, 7.30 pm - North Hertfordshire District Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)
- 18.4 Council – [20 January 2022 – Council Size Submission to Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(LBGCE\) – Minute No.78 refers](#)
- 18.5 Council – 14 July 2022 – [Warding Arrangement Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England \(LGBCE\) - Minute No.134 refers](#)
- 18.6 [Council – 19 December 2022 – Electoral Review – Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Proposed Warding Arrangements – Minute No. 162 refers](#)
- 18.7 [Council – 11 July 2024 – Community Governance Review – Terms of Reference – Minute No. 27 refers](#)
- 18.8 [Council – 27 February 2025 – Community Governance Review – Draft proposals for public consultation – Minute No. 94 refers](#)