

New electoral arrangements for Bury Council

Final Recommendations

November 2021

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

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

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

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

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why Bury?

7 We are conducting a review of Bury Council ('the Council') as the last review was completed in 2002 and we are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council area in England 'from time to time'. In addition, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors is as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

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

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

Our proposals for Bury

9 Bury should be represented by 51 councillors, the same number as there are now.

10 Bury should have 17 wards, the same number as there are now.

11 The boundaries of most wards should change; one will stay the same.

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

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward, and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the borough or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

15 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Bury. We then held two periods of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our final recommendations.

16 The review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
14 December 2020	Number of councillors decided
6 January 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
16 March 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
1 June 2021	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
9 August 2021	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
2 November 2021	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

18 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

19 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2020	2026
Electorate of Bury	148,595	148,270
Number of councillors	51	51
Average number of electors per councillor	2,914	2,907

20 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All but one of our proposed wards for Bury will have good electoral equality by 2026. We believe that the ward we are recommending with a forecast variance greater than 10% from the average is justified because this provides for a better reflection of community identity.

Submissions received

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

22 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2026, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2021. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted a decrease of less than 1% by 2026.

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

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

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

Number of councillors

24 Bury Council currently has 51 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that keeping this number the same will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

25 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 51 councillors.

26 As the Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) there is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Council have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We will only move away from this pattern of wards if we are of the view that our statutory criteria would not be reflected in a uniform warding pattern.

27 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. One submission argued for a reduction in councillors to 46, with the other also making a case for a reduction but did not argue for a specific number of councillors to represent the Council. Neither of these alternative proposals outlined how the reductions would be achieved in terms of the decision-making responsibilities of the Council or made reference to our key criteria. We have therefore not adopted any of these proposals as part of our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

28 We received 101 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two borough-wide proposals from Bury Council and the Conservative Group. We also received a partial scheme from the Liberal Democrat Group. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

29 The two borough-wide schemes proposed uniform patterns of three-councillor wards for Bury. We carefully considered the proposals and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

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

30 Our draft recommendations also took into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

31 Given the travel restrictions, and the social distancing, arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Bury. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the proposed draft boundary recommendations.

32 Our draft recommendations were for 17 three-councillor wards. We considered that our draft recommendations would provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

Draft recommendations consultation

33 We received 20 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included comments on our proposals from Bury Council and Bury Labour Party. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

34 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to the ward names in the town centre and Radcliffe, based on the submissions received.

Final recommendations

35 Our final recommendations are for 17 three-councillor [wards](#). We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

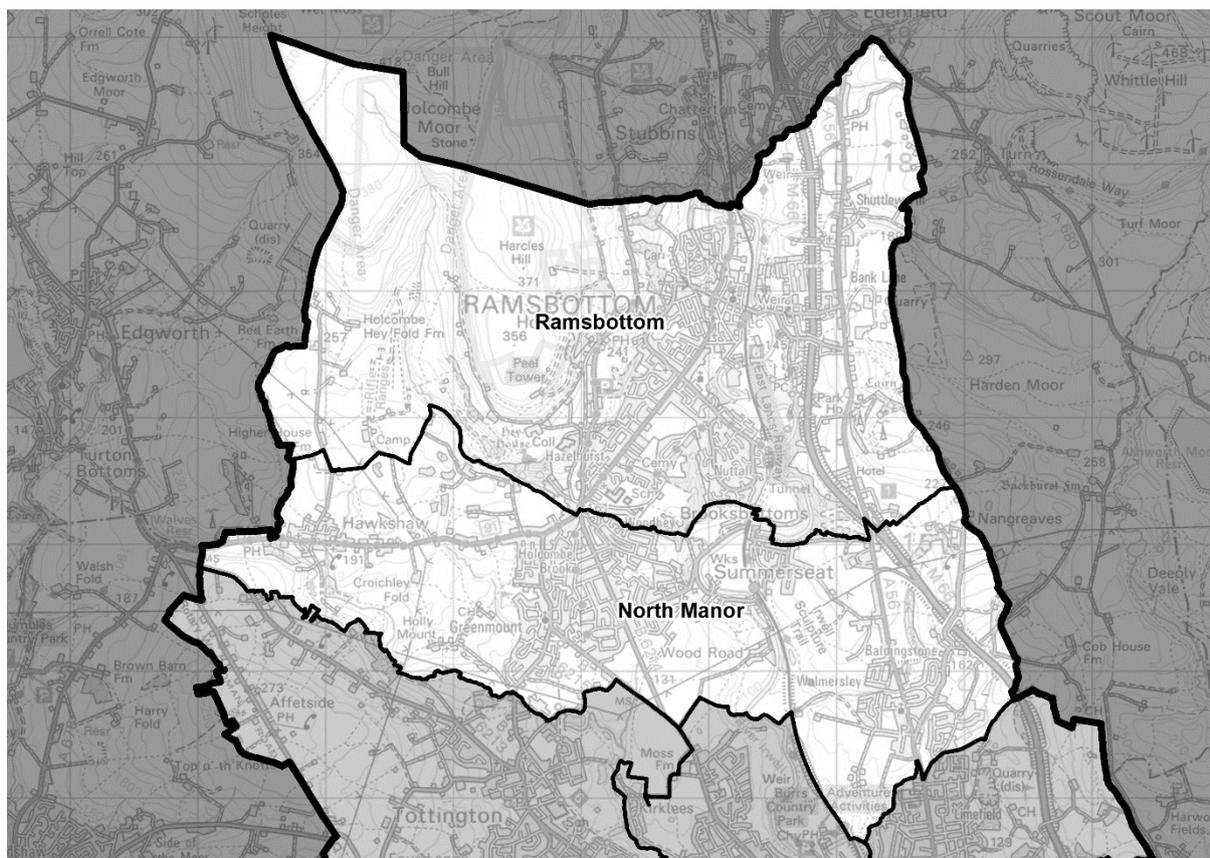
36 The tables and maps on pages 9–21 detail our final recommendations for each area of Bury. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

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

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

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

North Manor and Ramsbottom



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
North Manor	3	-8%
Ramsbottom	3	7%

North Manor and Ramsbottom

38 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the existing wards, with the exception of some minor amendments to follow ground details as proposed by the Council. We received two responses to our draft proposals for this area during consultation, from Bury Labour Party and a local resident.

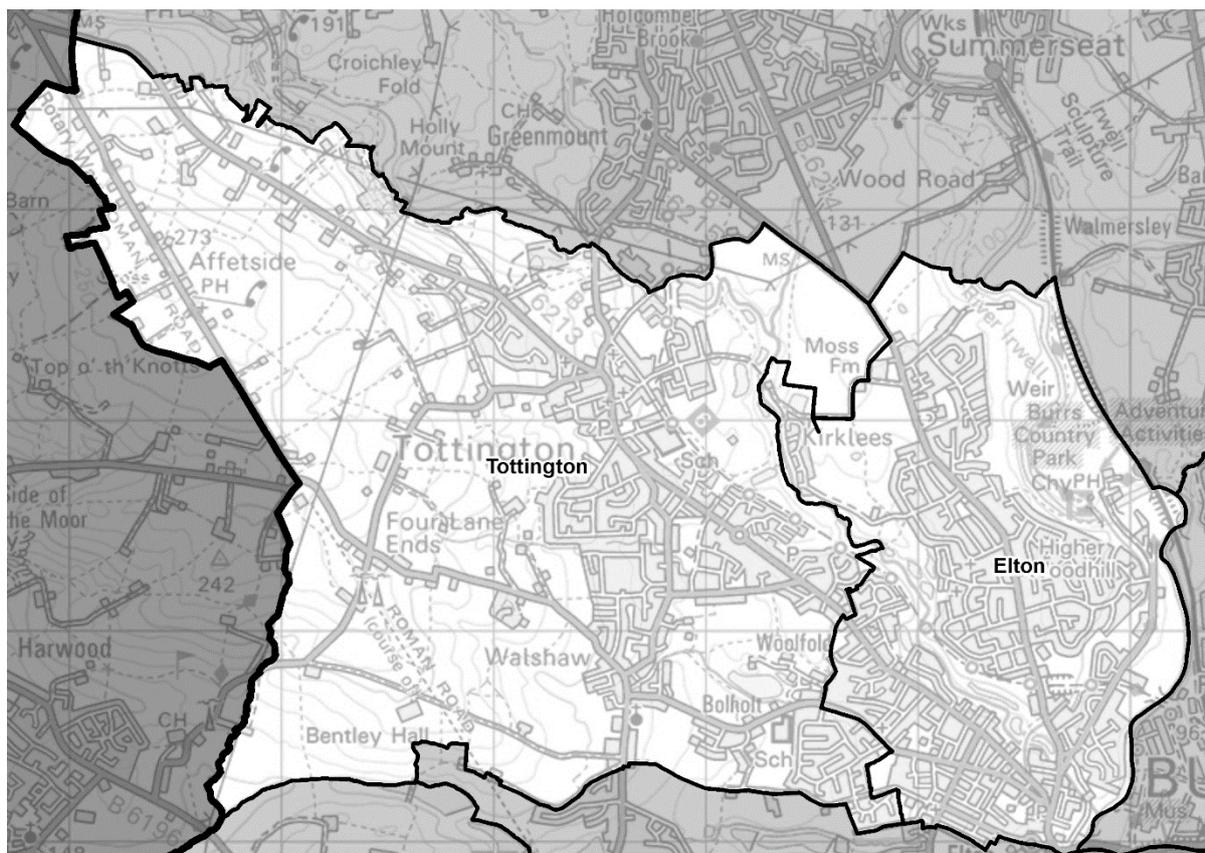
39 Bury Labour Party argued that the Council's proposals at a previous stage of consultation, which would have included Shuttleworth in North Manor ward, would provide improved levels of electoral equality and should therefore be adopted. While we acknowledge this potential improvement in electoral equality, we are of the view that our proposals provide for the best balance of our three statutory criteria based on the strong community evidence received during the first stage of consultation.

40 The local resident suggested that the ward be renamed 'Greenmount & Summerseat'. However, in our view this proposal was not supported by

persuasive evidence.

41 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for North Manor and Ramsbottom wards as final. Our final recommendation Ramsbottom and North Manor wards will have electoral variances of 7% more and 8% fewer electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Elton and Tottington



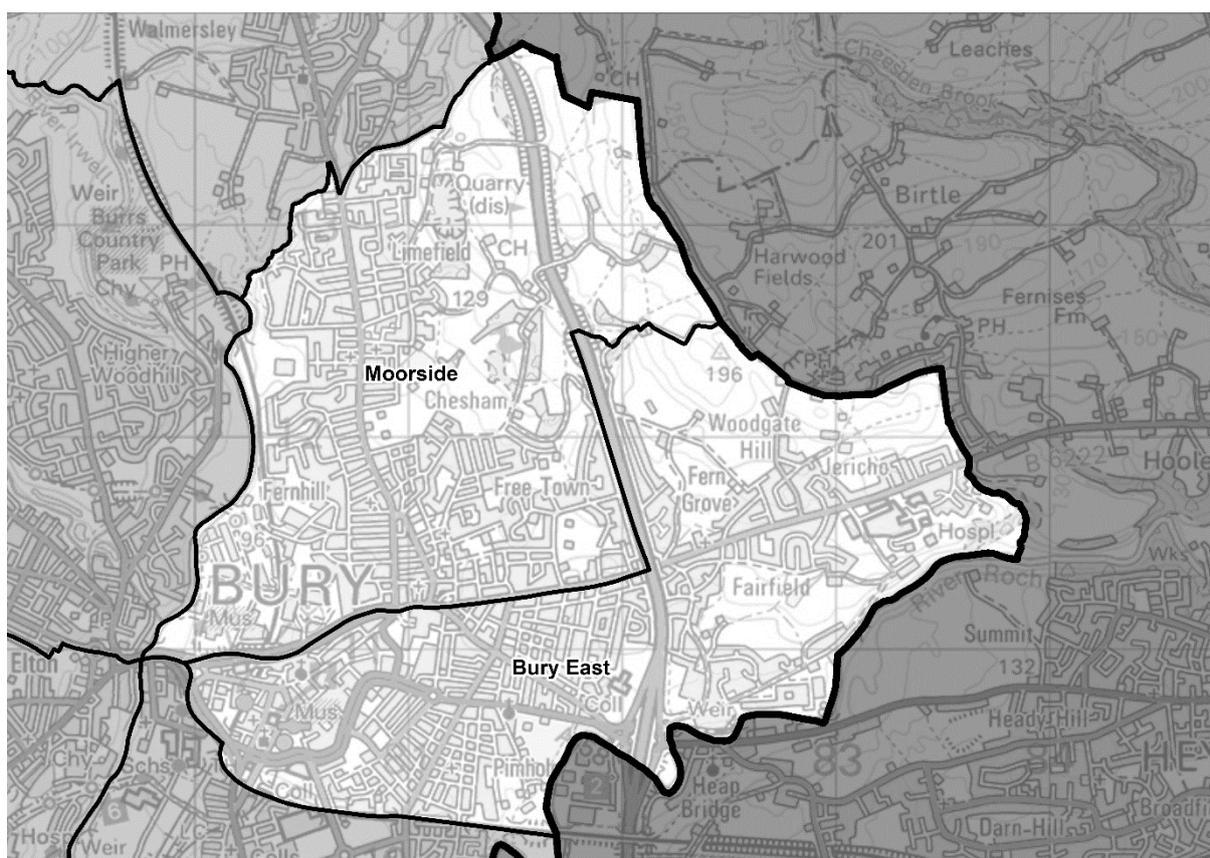
Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Elton	3	4%
Tottington	3	0%

Elton and Tottington

42 Our draft recommendations for this area adopted a combination of the submissions we received. Our proposals extended the existing boundary of Elton ward south to include properties from Scholes Street and Melrose Avenue, and included all properties from Kingsbury Close in Elton ward. We did not receive any responses to our draft proposals for this area during consultation.

43 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Tottington and Elton wards as final. Our proposed Elton ward will have an electoral variance of 4% more electors than the borough average by 2026. Our proposed Tottington ward will have an electoral variance equal to the average (0%) for the borough by 2026.

Bury East and Moorside



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Bury East	3	2%
Moorside	3	-1%

Bury East and Moorside

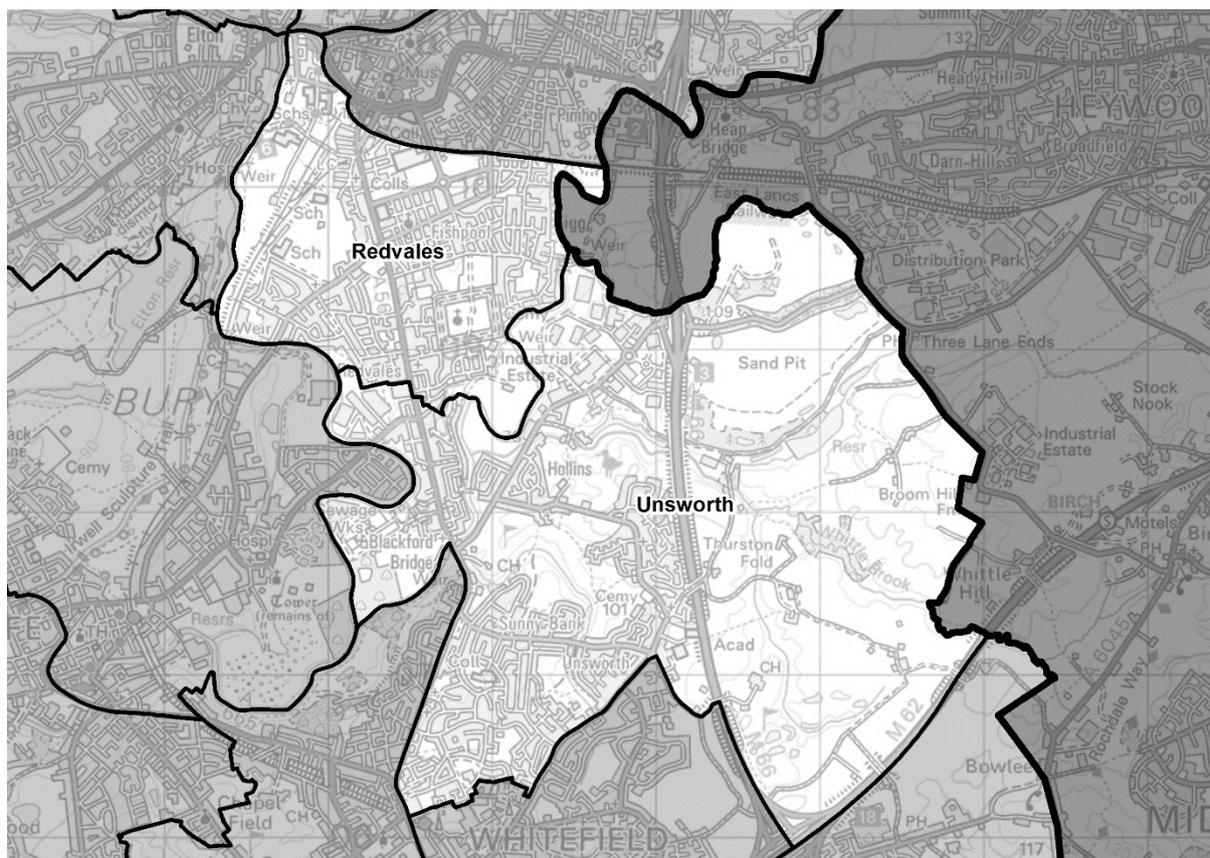
44 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposal for the M66 to form the boundary between East and Moorside wards. In response to our draft recommendations we received two responses to our proposals, from local residents.

45 Both submissions offered alternative ward names for East ward. One proposed renaming the ward to 'Bury Central'. However, in our view this proposal was not supported by persuasive evidence. The other submission recommended the ward be renamed 'Bury East' as 'East alone is ambiguous'. We agree that the existing ward name does not fully reflect the geography of the area and therefore have adopted this proposal as part of our final recommendations.

46 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Bury East and Moorside as final, with the exception of the name change described above. Our proposed Bury

East and Moorside wards will have electoral variances of 2% more and 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Redvales and Unsworth



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Redvales	3	0%
Unsworth	3	0%

Redvales and Unsworth

47 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposal to include all electors from Barlow Fold and Blackford Bridge in Unsworth ward. In response to our draft recommendations we received two responses to our proposals, from Bury Conservative Group and a local resident.

48 Bury Conservative Group contended that the area surrounding Unsworth Cricket Club should be moved into Unsworth ward. However, they did not propose an alternative boundary. Furthermore, we believe that our proposals here provide for a clear and identifiable boundary which reflects the access points and facilities within the area.

49 The resident's submission argued that Unsworth ward be renamed 'Unsworth & Hollins'. We have not been persuaded that this name would better reflect the geographical spread of communities in the area.

50 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Redvales and Unsworth wards as final. Our proposed Redvales and Unsworth wards will both have electoral variances equal to the average (0%) for the borough by 2026.

Bury West, Radcliffe North & Ainsworth and Radcliffe East



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Bury West	3	-1%
Radcliffe East	3	-2%
Radcliffe North & Ainsworth	3	10%

Bury West

51 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on a combination of proposals from the Council and the Conservative Group. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed including the properties on the western side of Lowercroft Road at Starling in a Church ward, as well as the recent Tudor Grange development at Spen Moor. We received five submissions in response to our draft recommendations, from the Council, the Conservative Group and three local residents.

52 Bury Council supported our draft recommendation proposals for this area. However, the Council also stated that, if responses to consultation were in agreement, Church ward should be renamed to 'Seddons Farm'.

53 The Conservative Group disagreed with our proposal to include properties on the western side of Lowercroft Road at Starling in Church ward, arguing for the

retention of the existing boundary in the area. While we acknowledge this proposal, we were not persuaded that we received compelling evidence to adopt this as part of our final recommendations.

54 Two local residents offered alternative ward names for Church ward. Both argued that this name is 'ambiguous' and therefore does not accurately reflect communities in the area. The submissions each proposed the name of 'Bury West', which mirrors the existing Bury East ward. One submission also proposed a second alternative of 'Elton Vale'.

55 Having carefully considered the evidence provided, we agree that the existing ward name is no longer representative of communities in the area. We therefore propose that the ward is renamed Bury West as part of our final recommendations.

56 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Bury West as final, with the exception of the name change described above. Our proposed Bury West ward will have an electoral variance of 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2026.

Radcliffe East and Radcliffe North & Ainsworth

57 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on a combination of the Council's proposals and the existing boundaries in this area. This included adopting the Council's proposals for Lowercroft Road (as described in paragraph 51), the inclusion of Starling Road and Grindsbrook Road in Radcliffe North ward, and our decision to retain the existing southern boundary between Radcliffe North and Pilkington Park wards. In response to our draft recommendations we received three responses to our proposals, from Bury Conservative Group and two local residents.

58 The Conservative Group proposed that Radcliffe North ward be renamed 'Radcliffe North & Ainsworth', as this more accurately reflects the geographical makeup of the ward.

59 A resident's submission argued that Starling Road and Grindsbrook Road should remain in Radcliffe East, as communities here do not share an identity with those in Ainsworth, who 'don't fully support the community of the town [Radcliffe]'. They also suggested that the area should be represented by four two-councillor wards, rather than the current three three-councillor wards. While we acknowledge these proposals, we are of the view that it is preferable to place distinct communities together in the same ward rather than to split either of the communities between wards, in order to provide for the best balance of our criteria. Furthermore, Bury Council elects by thirds (meaning it has elections in three out of every four years) and there is a presumption in legislation that the Council should have a uniform pattern of three-councillor wards. We have not been persuaded that our statutory criteria would be compromised by a uniform pattern and will therefore not be

adopting these proposals as part of our final recommendations.

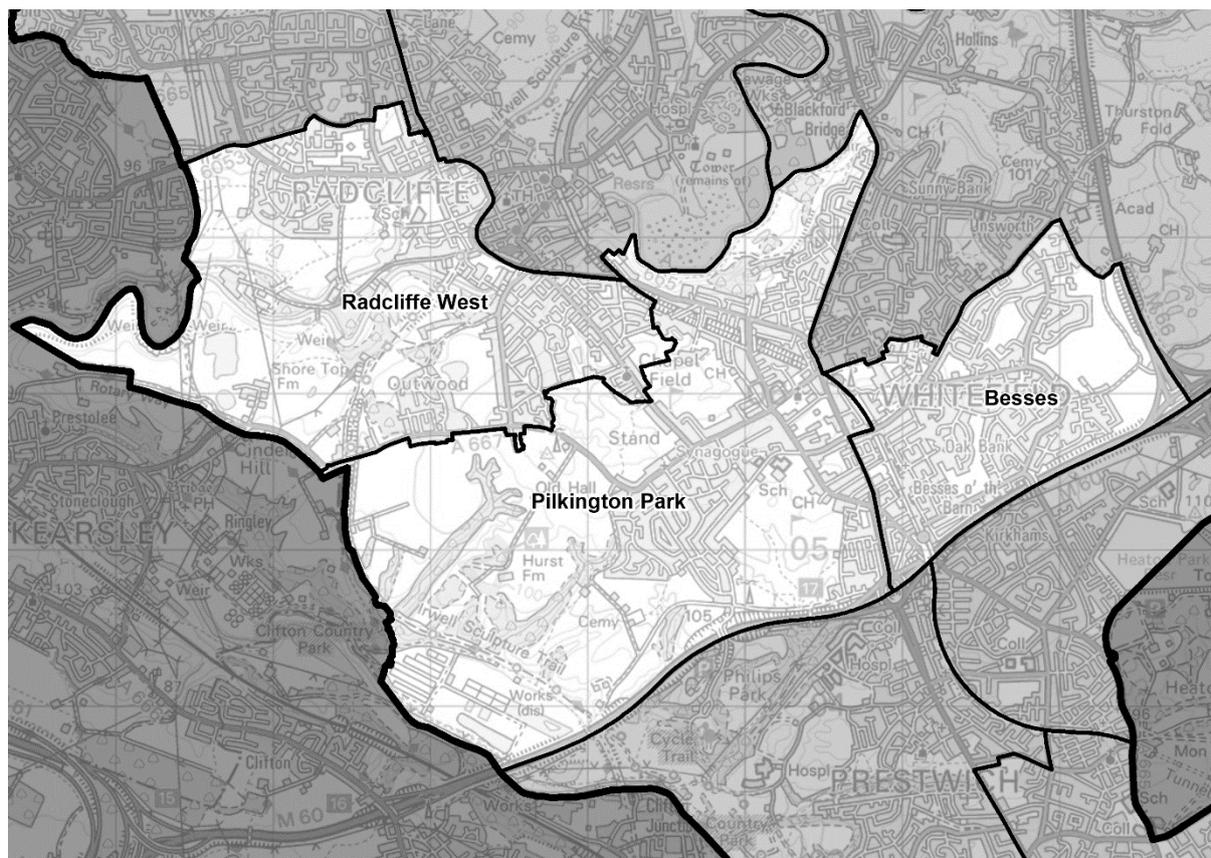
60 A further resident's submission stressed that Ainsworth is not recognised as being part of Radcliffe and 'as such Radcliffe North is biased towards the Conservatives whilst the remaining constituents are not'. The resident argued that Ainsworth should be removed from the ward in order to 'give a fair representation'. While we recognise that our recommendations may have local political implications, we are an independent organisation and do not consider the political consequences of our proposals.

61 Having carefully considered the evidence provided, we recommend that Radcliffe North should be renamed Radcliffe North & Ainsworth. Given the evidence received from both the Conservative Group and local residents, we agree that this ward name will better represent the distinct communities which exist in the ward.

62 During the formulation of our final recommendations, we noted a small discrepancy in our draft recommendation electoral figures for Radcliffe North & Ainsworth. Consequentially, this has altered the projected electoral variance for the ward by 1%.

63 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Radcliffe East and Radcliffe North & Ainsworth wards as final, with the exception of the name change described above. Our proposed Radcliffe East and Radcliffe North & Ainsworth wards will have electoral variances of 2% fewer and 10% more electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Besses, Pilkington Park and Radcliffe West



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Besses	3	-3%
Pilkington Park	3	-11%
Radcliffe West	3	-2%

Besses, Pilkington Park and Radcliffe West

64 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the existing warding arrangements in all three wards, with the exception of some minor amendments to follow ground details. In response to our draft recommendations we received six responses to our proposals, from Bury Labour Party and five local residents.

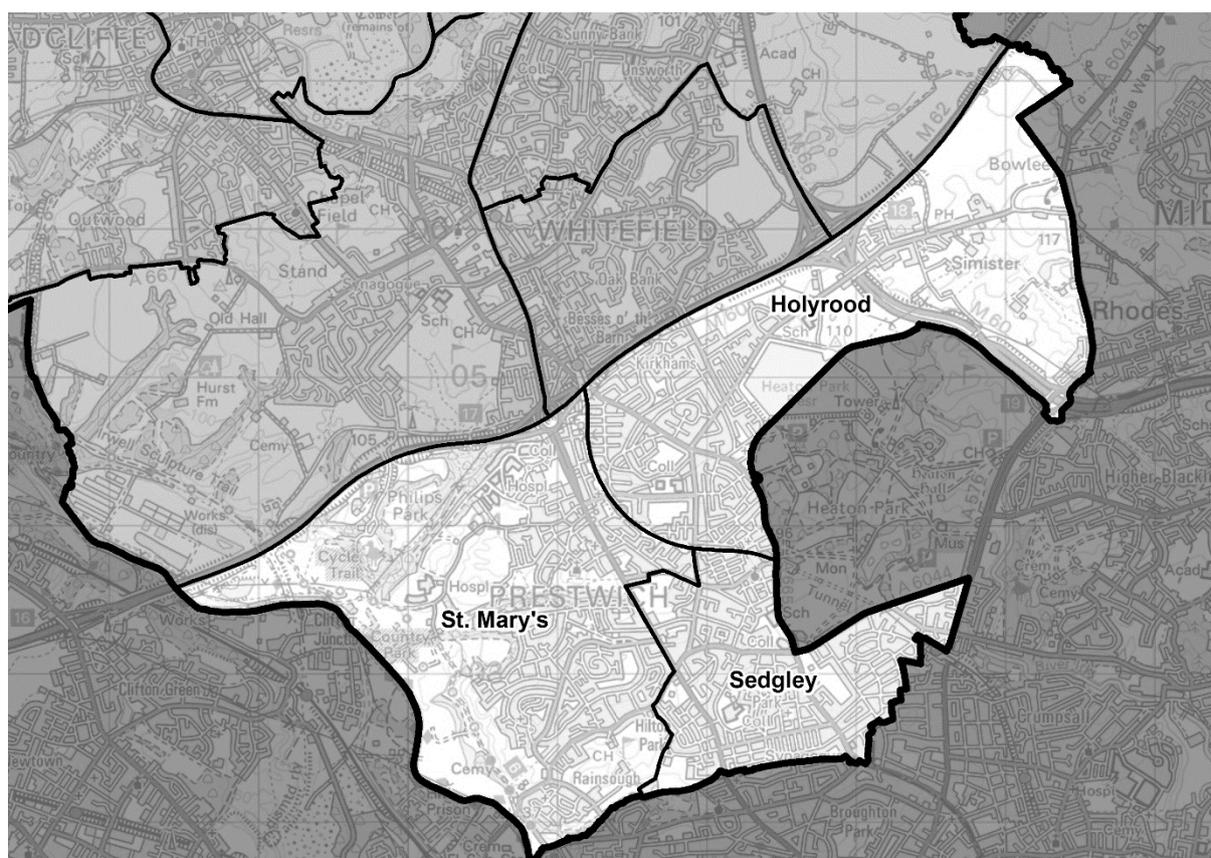
65 Bury Labour Party argued that the Council's proposals at a previous stage of consultation, which would have included Outwood in Pilkington Park ward, provide improved levels of electoral equality and should therefore be adopted. While we acknowledge that our proposals will lead to Pilkington Park ward having 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2026, we have been persuaded by the strength of community evidence from local residents and are of the view that this proposal provides for the best balance of our statutory criteria.

66 A local resident suggested that Pilkington Park and Besses wards should be renamed 'Whitefield East' and 'Whitefield West', or 'Whitefield Stand' and 'Whitefield Besses'. They argued that 'there is no such thing as a Pilkington Park and the Pilkington family have long gone'. However, we have not been persuaded that these names would better reflect the geographical spread of communities in the area or that they are locally recognised.

67 Four submissions were supportive of our draft recommendation proposals.

68 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Besses, Pilkington Park and Radcliffe West wards as final. Our proposed Besses, Pilkington Park and Radcliffe West wards will have electoral variances of 3% fewer, 11% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Holyrood, Sedgley and St Mary's



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2026
Holyrood	3	1%
Sedgley	3	3%
St. Mary's	3	3%

Holyrood, Sedgley and St. Mary's

69 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals for all three wards. In response to our draft recommendations we received one response to our proposals, from a local resident.

70 The local resident suggested that the wards be renamed 'Prestwich St. Mary's', 'Prestwich Sedgley' and 'Prestwich Heys and Simister'. However, in our view, this proposal was not supported by persuasive evidence.

71 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Holyrood, Sedgley and St. Mary's wards as final. Our proposed Holyrood, Sedgley and St. Mary's wards will have electoral variances of 1% more, 3% more and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2026, respectively.

Conclusions

72 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality in Bury, referencing the 2020 and 2026 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2020	2026
Number of councillors	51	51
Number of electoral wards	17	17
Average number of electors per councillor	2,914	2,907
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendations

Bury Council should be made up of 51 councillors serving 17 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

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

You can also view our final recommendations for Bury on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

What happens next?

73 We have now completed our review of Bury Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2022.

Equalities

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

Appendices

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Bury Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Besses	3	8,503	2,834	-3%	8,420	2,807	-3%
2	Bury East	3	8,981	2,994	3%	8,923	2,974	2%
3	Bury West	3	8,691	2,897	-1%	8,635	2,878	-1%
4	Elton	3	9,181	3,060	5%	9,102	3,034	4%
5	Holyrood	3	8,919	2,973	2%	8,808	2,936	1%
6	Moorside	3	8,722	2,907	0%	8,593	2,864	-1%
7	North Manor	3	7,709	2,570	-12%	8,009	2,670	-8%
8	Pilkington Park	3	7,828	2,609	-10%	7,722	2,574	-11%
9	Radcliffe East	3	8,366	2,789	-4%	8,520	2,840	-2%
10	Radcliffe North & Ainsworth	3	9,696	3,232	11%	9,620	3,207	10%
11	Radcliffe West	3	8,624	2,875	-1%	8,525	2,842	-2%
12	Ramsbottom	3	9,310	3,103	7%	9,329	3,110	7%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2026)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Redvales	3	8,700	2,900	0%	8,690	2,897	0%
14 Sedgley	3	8,874	2,958	2%	8,942	2,981	3%
15 St Mary's	3	8,887	2,962	2%	9,009	3,003	3%
16 Tottington	3	8,788	2,929	1%	8,731	2,910	0%
17 Unsworth	3	8,816	2,939	1%	8,692	2,897	0%
Totals	51	148,595	-	-	148,270	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,914	-	-	2,907	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bury Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/greater-manchester/bury

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west/greater-manchester/bury

Local Authority

- Bury Council

Political Groups

- Bury Conservative Group
- Bury Labour Party

Local Residents

- 17 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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