

Electoral Review

Wiltshire Council Submission to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

Preliminary Stage - Council Size - March 2018

Summary

1. That a council size of 99 members be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (“The Commission”). This number is considered to be the most appropriate to enable Wiltshire Council (“The Council”) to provide effective and convenient local government within Wiltshire, taking into account the Council’s governance arrangements, its regulatory and scrutiny functions and the representational role of councillors, in particular in relation to the community area system and the increasing devolution of executive decision making to Area Boards.

Introduction

2. On 15 September 2017 the Commission informed the Council of its intention to carry out an electoral review in its 2018/19 work programme.
3. This was because, as of 1 December 2016, 25 of the 98 electoral divisions in Wiltshire had a variance from the average division greater than 10% and 2 had a variance of more than 30%. The last review of Wiltshire Council by the Commission was in 2008 in preparation for the first unitary elections in 2009.
4. The aim of the preliminary stage of the electoral review is to determine the total number of councillors to be elected to the Council from the next elections in 2021. The figure will be determined after considering the governance arrangements of the Council, its scrutiny function, and the representational role of councillors in the local community, and consideration of the total number of councillors needed to most effectively take decisions, hold decision makers to account, discharge responsibilities and effectively represent local groups and people.
5. Additionally, a series of community governance reviews were conducted, between 1 April 2014 and 18 October 2016, of a number of town and parish council boundaries and warding arrangements within parishes. A small number of reviews were not completed in advance of the May 2017 Local Elections and have been deferred for consideration while the electoral review of Wiltshire Council is ongoing.



Background

Local Authority Profile

6. Wiltshire Council's administrative area covers 3255km² of the Ceremonial County of Wiltshire, with a population of 488,409¹. The rest of the county is administered by Swindon Borough Council, who do not form part of this electoral review.
7. Wiltshire Council was formed in 2009 with the merger of Wiltshire County Council and four district councils: West Wiltshire, North Wiltshire, Kennet and Salisbury. The Council operates a strong Leader and Cabinet model of governance, along with a system of community areas for local engagement and decision making. This was a reduction from 244 councillors across the five councils to 98, and over £120m in savings and efficiencies have been achieved since 2010. As noted in the 2017 LGA Peer Review:

"Wiltshire Council used the opportunity of becoming a unitary council in 2009 to establish a strong and steadfast focus on establishing a modern council and delivering better outcomes for its communities. The creation of one council offered significant opportunities to rationalise assets, including the programme to reduce from 98 offices into 3 main administrative hubs, creating significant savings and headroom to invest in its community infrastructure plans and ambitions"

8. Elections are held on a four-yearly cycle to 98 single-member divisions. The most recent election was on 2 May 2017, and the current political composition of the Council is as follows:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservative:	68
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liberal Democrat:	20
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent:	7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labour:	3

9. Figures on the number of candidates at each election are as follows:

2009: 353 candidates stood for election to 98 divisions.

2013: 308 candidates stood for election and 6 divisions were uncontested. 70 councillors were the same as those elected in 2009.

2017: 322 candidates stood for election and 1 division was uncontested. 69 councillors were the same as those elected in 2013.

10. There are 252 parishes within the Wiltshire Council area, the second highest number in the country. With most major urban areas around the edge of the council area, separated by Salisbury Plain in the centre and south, many parishes and communities are distant from the major hub towns and each other, emphasising the need for a strong community focus for representation and decision making. Part of the Authority area sits within the New Forest National Park Authority.
11. There are 5 parliamentary constituencies within the Wiltshire Council area: Chippenham, Salisbury, Devizes, North Wiltshire and South West Wiltshire.
12. Wiltshire Council is the 8th largest local authority in England by population and the 3rd largest planning authority by applications processed. It is home to the 3rd highest number of people aged 65+ and as a consequence adult social care is a particular challenge moving forward. The Council has nearly 4,500kms of road across the Council area.
13. Wiltshire is home to a significant military presence, and as part of the army rebasing programme an additional 4000 troops and their families stationed in Germany are due to move to Wiltshire by 2019, requiring significant development of housing, infrastructure and amenities in several areas and impacting on electoral division arrangements. Approximately 30,000 military personnel live and serve in Wiltshire, 6.4% of the population. Military-Civilian Integration is a key part of the Council's plans for the inclusion of newly arriving military personnel into our communities.
14. Employment levels in Wiltshire are above average, however, significant pockets of urban and rural deprivation exist. Wiltshire is typified by the number of global innovators who have invested and prospered in the Swindon and Wiltshire area such as Honda, Intel and Dyson as well as the presence of a number of innovation-driven sectors including health and life sciences, pharmaceuticals, mobile telecommunications, digital and high value manufacturing in addition to the more established agricultural and tourism sectors. Wiltshire is home to some of the most ancient monuments in the United Kingdom with the World Heritage Sites at Stonehenge and Avebury as well as other Neolithic sites. There are also three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, over 240 conservation areas and over 16,000 listed buildings in the Council area.

Electoral Review Committee

15. On 17 October 2017 the Council established an Electoral Review Committee (“The Committee”) to progress the review on its behalf, and to formulate recommendations on any submissions to be made to the Commission during the review process. The Committee’s terms of reference are attached at Appendix A.
16. The Committee is comprised of 10 elected members appointed in accordance with the rules of political proportionality as follows:
 - Conservative:** **6**
 - Liberal Democrat:** **2**
 - Independent:** **1**
 - Labour:** **1**
17. The Committee is supported by an officer project board headed by one of the Council’s four Corporate Directors.
18. The Committee met on the following occasions: 12 December 2017, 11 January, 25 January and 7 February 2018. Committee workshops were also held on 20 December 2017 and 3 January 2018. Previously all elected members were invited to a briefing on the review from the Commission, which was held on 28 November 2017. The Committee’s report and recommendations were endorsed by Full Council on 20 February 2018.

Main Considerations

19. Upon notification of the review, the Council set up a Committee as described above. The Committee worked with officers to look at the operation and governance of the county as well as the specific local issues which were felt to be critical to the function of Wiltshire Council and its interaction with the residents of Wiltshire. It rapidly became clear that there were two different ways to look at this. Firstly, through the Cabinet and committee operations of the Council and secondly, and more importantly, through the Community Area Boards.
20. The Committee looked at the evidence around the function of the Council and the number of Councillors required to provide that through both the lenses of the cabinet/committee operations and our area boards. These came up with slightly different suggestions about the number of Councillors required to successfully operate the Council and the Committee determined that the evidence around area boards to be the most significant and used this to arrive at the suggested number of Councillors. The evidence and information around this has been split into two sections below.

Community Areas and Area Boards

21. The Wiltshire Council area incorporates 20 community areas as shown in the map at Appendix B, focused on natural, long standing communities (many with their roots in the Anglo Saxon Hundreds system) with strong senses of local identity. This community area system has, with minor variations, been employed since 1997 by county and district councils following historical analysis as summarised in Appendix C (from the 2008 submission). As noted by the Commission in its July 2008 recommendations, it has “been used as the basis of all community and service delivery planning work” as well as the focus for local engagement with town and parish councils, public bodies and the role of councillors as leaders of their local communities.
22. On the creation of Wiltshire Council it was decided that three community areas, owing to their low populations and lack of a significant centre for South West Wiltshire, should be combined into a single community area board. This provides a total of 18 Area Boards across the council area which range from 3-10 members.
23. Community Area Boards are an executive branch of the Council. All Councillors sit on the Area Board covering the Division they represent and are involved in delegated executive decision-making on highways expenditure, community grants and the provision of local youth services and other areas. It is intended that this delegation will be expanded over time.
24. The Executive function of Community Area Boards is critical. While they may appear similar to area committees run by other Local Authorities they differ in being part of the Executive and the formal decision-making process for the delivery of services in Wiltshire.
25. Community Area Boards also serve as a forum where the other public-sector services in Wiltshire engage with the public. They regularly attend meetings and use them to provide information on their services and receive feedback as well as looking for ways to improve delivery to the public. Many have aligned their service delivery to Area Boards providing local reporting based around Area Board geography, assigning staff to cover area boards and using them as their primary means to regularly engage with those communities including budget consultations. Parish Councils, the Business Community, the Military (where appropriate) and other bodies such as Wiltshire Wildlife are also normal attendees at Area Boards. On that basis any significant changes to area boards would result in those services needing to completely overhaul their channels for community engagement which would not be effective or efficient for them or for the public.
26. The clearest recent example of this was the launch of the first stage of the Salisbury City recovery plan following the recent use of chemical weapons in the City, which was carried out as part of a normal meeting of the Salisbury Area Board. The key partners involved in the recovery plan had already been engaging with the community through the last 8 years making it the logical forum to engage through on this international incident.
27. The only area of Council operation which is not discussed, engaged with or delivered through Area Boards is the consideration of planning applications (due to the quasi-judicial nature of planning) and even then, consultation on possible large applications or developments, which would have an impact on a community area, have been presented to Area Boards as part of the initial consultation process.
28. Wiltshire is a large rural county with Salisbury Plain separating the larger urban areas in the North West from the rest of the County. There was serious concern when Wiltshire Council was created that parts of the county felt isolated from Trowbridge and would not have a proper role in the decision-making process. Community Area Boards have been critical in bridging the gap created through those concerns, and without them large parts of the County would not feel they had a stake in the operations of Wiltshire Council.
29. Given the critical way in which Community Area Boards work and the importance of maintaining community identities of the different areas in Wiltshire, we believe that it is of vital importance for the effective governance of the Wiltshire Council area that the current system of 18 area boards be retained. They have bedded in over the last 8 years and all the evidence is that they will continue to develop as an effective mechanism for local decision making and service delivery in the future.

Community Areas and Area Boards

30. It is appreciated that the boundaries of divisions will change no matter what decision is made over Councillor numbers and that as a result the boundaries of Area Boards will also change. There will also need to be changes made to adapt to the growth of our towns and city through housing development. The Committee strongly felt, however, that the 18 Area Boards need to continue with as little disruption as electoral equality will allow in order to ensure that our communities continue to have a local mechanism for engaging with Wiltshire Council.
31. The community area system was described as a “fundamental building block” in the successful bid for unitary status and the 2017 LGA Peer Review noted:
- “The council has a well-established and respected community area model with 18 Area Boards which reinforces their ‘strong communities’ mantra. Led by Wiltshire councillors, but managed in partnership with the local key public services partners they are active forums which meet 8 weekly and focus on tackling local issues and delivering local solutions.
- Each community area is furnished with a subset of the joint strategic needs assessment providing a detailed evidence base on which each area consults and sets local priorities. This then helps focus activity on those things that matter most to local communities based on robust facts...
- It was the team’s view that this sound basis of an area model could be used to influence still further activities to support ‘place based’ delivery of services so that co-ordination of activities between communities, parishes and towns across a larger geographical footprint can be exploited to the full”.
32. It is argued that this endorsement of the area board structure from an independent review conducted so recently, is a clear indication of the efficient and effective nature of that structure. In particular, the effectiveness of a democratic body requires appropriate representational arrangements.
33. Area Boards comprising local unitary councillors within a community area have delegated executive authority to determine funding, and in 2016 this amounted to £1.3m. This funding includes community grants, local highways, youth services, health and wellbeing, older peoples’ services, digital inclusion and Voluntary Community Sector. It is also a strategic priority of the business plan to devolve further powers and responsibilities to local areas, thereby increasing the workload and responsibility of local members as well as increasing the significance of the community area.
34. Additionally, the areas boards influence the current net council spend of £327m through local consultation on major issues, for example:
- Salisbury area board managed the £3.1m improvements to Salisbury Market Place, working alongside its contractor. Following a plan which met widespread public opposition the area board took over the project and asked for local people to provide their input into re-shaping this important area in the city. The improvements were developed in consultation with a Market Place working group, shaped by more than 1,500 responses to the proposals.
 - Corsham area board managed the design and construction of the £14m Springfield Campus. The board worked alongside key stakeholders, users and Midas Construction to develop a scheme that best reflected the wishes of local people. The new facility has been highly acclaimed with visits from other local authorities and government ministers. Many other Area Boards have also been involved in similar projects as their campuses have been designed and built around community needs.
 - In 2014, the Council devolved responsibility for the provision of positive leisure time activities for young people to the area boards. Since that time, the area boards have supported nearly three times the number of young people each year than had previously engaged with the Council’s youth centres and at the same time facilitated savings of £800k per annum. As an example, Salisbury area board has worked with Salisbury Rocks CIC to provide a new £100k music facility in an underground WW2 bunker in the City.

35. The Council absolutely agrees that electoral equality is the most significant factor in an electoral review and recognises that significant changes will occur to electoral divisions no matter the council size that is ultimately determined. Nevertheless, recognising the continuing and increasing significance of the community area structure to council governance, service delivery and engagement with partners and public, and that the historic basis of the communities remains important and should not be discarded, the Council is strongly of the view that any new divisions should be contained as far as possible within the existing community area boundaries. Furthermore, the Council also believes that the evidence demonstrates that electoral equality can be achieved with only comparatively small changes to area board geography, thus achieving the primary aim of the review without sacrificing the appropriate representation of historic communities.
36. In the Council's 2008 submission, which was broadly accepted by the Commission, it was argued that the most effective and democratic arrangement would be for a minimum of 4 unitary councillors per Area Board. In recognition of the need for overall electoral equality it was accepted that 2 of the 18 Area Boards would only be able to have 3 members, and substitution arrangements were put in place in the interests of administrative efficiency of decision making. These are the neighbouring boards of Pewsey and Tidworth, who share many characteristics, including being large areas with many parish councils, with similar population sizes. They are, however, distinct areas and the military community around Tidworth has a very different community feel to the more traditionally rural Pewsey. If, as a result of a reduced council size, other area boards needed to join or make similar substitution arrangements, there is a risk that these would lack the necessary characteristics to make sense to local communities. By implication this would inevitably harm community cohesion and unacceptably impact on the effectiveness of decision making in those areas.
37. Given the increasing devolved powers granted to community areas via the Area Boards, and their continued focus as the hub of local decisions and engagement for individual councillors, the Committee considered that any overall council size which increased the number of 3-member area boards would unacceptably impact on the integrity of the community area system as voices of self-defined community areas and increase the risk of boards not being quorate for determination of executive allocated funding. With the intended increase in decision making powers it is essential that no boards are left vulnerable to this in the future. While overall area board geography can and will be adjusted as a result of this review, it would be unacceptable from a representational point of view to unnecessarily split or merge communities, without the justification of it being for the sake of electoral equality.
38. If a reduction in councillor numbers made the retention of the 18 Community Area Boards on broadly current boundaries not viable, then while the Council would still try to operate the Area Boards it may not be able to continue to use them as committees of the Council with an Executive function to the same degree. which could significantly reduce their value. At the same time, this would severely hamper community and electoral involvement with the day to day operations of the Council.
39. The Committee, after initial consideration of the evidence, examined the impact on community area boards for various council sizes as well as whether electoral equality could be acceptably achieved within those community areas at various council sizes².
40. The evidence demonstrated that by distributing Area Board councillor numbers based on the average council electorate as projected to 2024 per community area a number of key potential council sizes caused specific problems. The tabular data to support this is included in Appendix E. An initial range of between 93 and 99 Councillors was adopted by the committee based on this evidence as explained below.

²After initial consideration of the evidence the Committee directed the Project team to work within a council size range of 93-99, before determining the optimum size of 99. This was because it was considered the evidence demonstrated that the Council's operations were effective and efficient, with no evidence a significant reduction would improve that efficiency. Therefore, it was necessary to explore the effect on the representation element, and the effectiveness of area boards, in as broad a range as it was felt could be assessed before overall council operations would be negatively affected.

Community Areas and Area Boards

41. If the number of Councillors were reduced below 87 then one Community Area Board, Pewsey, would definitely drop to only 2 councillors therefore requiring its absorption or abolition as it would be unable to meet the requirements of quoracy for decision making. It is probable that, depending on specific division boundaries, that this would also happen at any reduction below 94 Councillors as the Pewsey Area Board Divisions would all be more than 10% below the electorally equivalent average division size.
42. At 92 councillors, Bradford on Avon Community Area Board would drop to 3 councillors. There are no adjoining community areas with which Bradford on Avon shares characteristics to create appropriate neighbouring arrangements such as exists with Pewsey and Tidworth. Trowbridge is a large settlement and very different to the older and smaller nature of Bradford on Avon, the two communities feel very different despite their geographic proximity and Bradford on Avon fights to retain its identity. Both Corsham and Melksham Area Boards (which could be other options) are focused around different community centres removed from Bradford on Avon. Any change of this type would significantly reduce the ability of Bradford on Avon to engage with Wiltshire Council as a distinct community area, which would not be fair to its residents.
43. Any number below 99 would result in Marlborough Area Board dropping to 3 Councillors (see Appendix F for the impact of these numbers on Area Boards). The only neighbouring Community Area which could be used to provide a substitute for Marlborough would be Pewsey (which already has its own substitute arrangement with Tidworth). This would make the function of Pewsey Area Board difficult and risk it being split between Marlborough and Tidworth, neither of which it really fits.
44. At 102 councillors Tidworth would obtain another councillor, as would Pewsey at 122. While this would raise them to the preferred four councillors, the Council did not feel other evidence in relation to council governance suggested such an increase was justified or necessary.
45. At 99 councillors it is possible for all divisions across all area boards to be within 10-15% of the electoral average using projected electorate for 2024. In three Area Boards, it is acknowledged it could result in up to 11 divisions with such variations even if perfect equality is achieved within that area. By comparison, the divisions created by the Commission in 2009 included 1 division at 17% from the average, and 14 divisions between 10-15%. Minor changes to community areas could also reduce the level of variance further. It was therefore the case that since electoral equality could be achieved, with some variations to area board geography, at 99, the key factor was what number was the most efficient and effective for the Council, as well as representationally appropriate for community areas to be as effective as they could be given their increasing prominence. The data to support this is shown in Appendix D.
46. Having reached a recommended number of 99 Councillors based on the operation of the Community Area Boards, the committee then looked at the issue of effective representation based around the Governance Arrangements of the Executive and Committee functions of the Council.

Governance Arrangements

Cabinet

47. As noted in paragraph 7 the Council operates a Leader and Cabinet style of governance with a Leader plus up to 9 Cabinet Members comprising the Executive of the council, with the areas of Cabinet responsibility currently as follows:
- Leader (also covering Economic Development)
 - Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection
 - Children, Education and Skills
 - Communities, Leisure and Libraries, Communications
 - Corporate Services, Housing, Arts, Heritage and Tourism
 - Finance, Procurement, ICT and Operational Assets
 - Highways, Transport and Waste
 - Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property
48. Cabinet meets at least 11 times per year and, alongside two former Cabinet committees, met for 99 hours across 73 meetings in the council term 2013-17. A survey of councillors showed that Cabinet Members worked an additional 27 hours per week on average on top of the hours for the basic role of a councillor. There is no anticipation within the Council's 10-year business plan that there will be a change from a Leader and Cabinet model.
49. Cabinet Members give political direction to officers working within their areas of responsibility and support them in the implementation of policy. They are accountable for individual delegated decisions and performance within their areas both internally and to partners and the community. Approximately 40 delegated decisions are taken per year in total by Cabinet Members. As part of the business plan commitment for flexible and efficient decision making at the right level, it is expected that the number of officer and Cabinet Member delegated decisions will increase in future years.
50. On the creation of Wiltshire Council an additional role of Portfolio Holder was created. This role is designed to give support and resource to Cabinet Members in delivering the diverse range of services provided by a Unitary Authority covering a large, mostly rural area. The role also allows members to gain a better detailed understanding of areas of the Council's operation and helps in succession planning.
51. The number of Portfolio Holders is not fixed but has ranged from 11-16 councillors. The principal impact on other council governance is that Portfolio Holders, like Cabinet Members, being part of the executive cannot serve on scrutiny committees, and this therefore reduced the number of non-executive councillors available to undertake scrutiny activities.

Governance Arrangements

Cabinet

52. There are currently 16 Portfolio Holders covering the positions set out below. The roles have changed and will continue to change over time in response to any revisions to council priorities.
- Leisure and Sport
 - Communities and Youth
 - Libraries, Campuses and Hubs
 - Education and Skills
 - Children’s Safeguarding
 - Disabled Children and Adults
 - Flooding and Military Covenant
 - Heritage, Arts and Tourism
 - Adult Social Care Transformation
 - Public Health and Public Protection
 - IT and Digitisation
 - Housing Stock
 - Transport
 - Streetscene
 - Waste
 - Strategic Highways, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, European Structural Investment Fund, Canals and Military-Civilian Integration
53. To give some examples of the work covered by Portfolio Holders: In Flooding, the Portfolio Holder is responsible for the direction of the 3 operational flood working groups (bringing Parish Councils together with the Council, the Environment Agency and other partners) as well as central co-ordination. In Housing, the Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Council owned social housing and chairs the Housing Board. In Disabled Children and Adults the Portfolio Holder is responsible for the oversight of all services to disabled residents in Wiltshire as well as the particularly difficult transition from Children’s to Adult’ services. All of these involve detailed work across a wide geographic area that Cabinet Members would not be able to address in the same detail given the other corporate requirements on their time.
54. The Council sees the non decision-making Portfolio Holders as an essential part of ensuring member leadership in a large rural unitary authority. Their role includes working with services and external partners and other activities such as press communication and public representation. A councillor survey indicated that this represents an average of at least 12 hours per week on top of the basic role of a councillor, and significantly more than would be expected per week for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee member even with substantial work programmes. A committee by its nature cannot liaise as closely with a service area as a single portfolio holder to support and monitor the delivery of the Business Plan.
55. The Independent Remuneration Panel on Members’ Allowances noted in 2013 during a review that they were “an additional resource providing extra capacity to Cabinet Members’ work, undertaking in-depth work with Service Directors and also functioning as an extra contact point for non-executive Councillors” and considered that the role was “a sensible addition to the structure”. A review by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2017 maintained the level of special responsibility allowance for the role, recognising their importance to the structure, with the remuneration for Portfolio Holders exceeded only by that for the roles of Cabinet Members, the Chairman of the Council, and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
56. The Council is heavily member led, with a Local Government Association Peer Review in 2017 commenting on the political leadership as strong, visible and accessible to partners, public and staff, and setting a clear direction for the Council. The Council maintains this is in part a result of the presence of Portfolio Holders assisting the formal executive membership, with the LGA Peer Review commenting:
- “There is great strength in the people and processes underpinning the political leadership of the council. We were particularly impressed with the Cabinet and portfolio holders’ structure which is strong, inclusive, increases capacity and provides opportunity for succession planning”.
57. Given this clear endorsement for the current operating structure from independent reviewers, as well as the time commitment necessary for the role, the Council believes there is sufficient evidence to show that the current structure is both efficient and effective, and should be maintained.

Council and Committee Overview

58. Full Council has 4-5 scheduled meetings per year and has met for 110 hours across 20 meetings in the council term 2013-17.
59. At its first meeting in 2009 the Council allocated 172 committee places, including joint committees with Swindon Borough Council and others. As of the end of 2017, the Council has allocated 174 committee places, demonstrating stability and robustness of council governance during this period. The schedule of committees based on current political proportionality is detailed below:

Table 1 - Schedule of Committee Places

Council Committee	Total Number of Places for Elected Members	Conservative Group Allocation (68 seats)	Liberal Democrat Group Allocation (20 seats)	Labour Group Allocation (3 seats)	Independent Group Allocation (7 seats)
Northern Area Planning	11	8	3	0	0
Southern Area Planning	11	7	1	1	2
Eastern Area Planning	8	7	0	0	1
Western Area Planning	11	7	3	0	1
Licensing	12	8	3	0	1
OS Management	15	10	3	1	1
Children's Select	13	9	3	0	1
Environment Select	13	8	3	1	1
Health Select	13	9	3	0	1
Standards	11	8	2	0	1
Police and Crime Panel	7	5	2	0	0
Audit	11	8	2	1	0
Appeals	8	5	2	0	1
Staffing Policy	9	6	2	1	0
Officer Appointments	5	4	1	0	0
Pension Fund	5	4	1	0	0

60. Committee places are appointed in accordance with the principles of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, being to prevent domination by a single group, to ensure a majority group has a majority on all committees, aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares, and ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee.
61. Chairmanship of committees is determined by Full Council at its annual meeting, with the exception of the scrutiny committees, police and crime panel and area boards, who appoint their chairs at their first meeting after the annual meeting of Council.
62. Excluding members from the calculation who cannot serve on some committees, such as scrutiny committees, each councillor is appointed, on average, to 3.1 committees as a full member and 1.9 committees as a substitute. Data collected for the review indicated councillors were expected to attend on average over 23 formal committee meetings per year.
63. Details of the operation and structure of each committee is provided in the following sections, but the table overleaf indicates the Council's recommended view on minimum number of councillors required to fulfil roles on these committees.
64. The calculation has been made by identifying unique roles that are required such as Leader, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council, Cabinet Members and Portfolio Holders, before moving on to the consideration of committee places. A factoring element is applied to allow for these unique roles and to take into account that each councillor will fill several roles. Peer reviews have indicated the Council has been operating effectively, and most committees cancel infrequently, demonstrating that the current structure is needed to conduct the statutory business of a large, member-led unitary authority.

65. The calculation also recognises that as detailed in paras 64-71 the current scrutiny function has been operating effectively and therefore at least 48 councillors are required to fulfill that function. At least 24 members are then required to operate regulatory functions, particularly planning due to its significant and highly visible activities. It is of great interest to the public and councillors and requires sufficient distribution of members to ensure decisions are taken at the appropriately local level. The remaining committee places can then be filled by those already involved in other committees.
66. It was noted that the Council has in place a structure whereby committees with smaller workloads have smaller numbers of councillors to recognise the need for committees to be efficiently operated, but has received no evidence to suggest that the current operation is inefficient or ineffective; it cannot simply be assumed that a reduction would make a committee more efficient in its operation, as this would require a full-scale governance review to determine. As reviews of scrutiny and planning, as the most populated committees, have not indicated such inefficiency exists, it was considered that a similar to the present operation was likely to be appropriate. However, to ensure that each councillor sits on multiple committees to undertake an appropriate level of work for each elected councillor, the number of unique roles was assessed by the committee applying the following table.

Table 2 - Council Elected Member Numbers (to operate a functional council)

	a	b	c = a x b	d
	Committee Places and roles	Factor %	Calculated Members (rounded)	Cumulative Total
Leader	1	1	1	1
Chairman	1	1	1	2
Vice-Chairman	1	1	1	3
Cabinet	9	1	9	12
Portfolio Holders	12	1	12	24
Overview & Scrutiny Management	15	1	15	39
Children's select	13	0.9	12	51
Environment select	13	0.8	10	61
Health select	13	0.8	10	72
Strategic planning	11	0.8	9	80
North area planning	11	0.3	3	84
Southern area planning	11	0.3	3	87
Eastern area planning	8	0.3	2	89
Western area planning	11	0.3	3	93
Licensing	12	0.3	4	96
Audit	11	0.1	1	97
Standards	11	0	0	97
Appeals	8	0	0	97
Pensions	5	0	0	97
Staffing policy	9	0	0	97
Officer appointments	5	0	0	97
Police & Crime	7	0	0	97
Area Boards	97	0	0	97
Total roles	295			
Minimum Total elected members required (to operate a functional council)				97
				Approx. 3 roles per councillor

67. Building from a base of 0 this calculation arrives at a minimum number of councillors for effective delivery of engaged local government of 97. The Committee and Full Council, however, felt that the arguments around Community Area Boards (Paragraphs 21 to 46) were of greater relevance in determining the number of Councillors required to deliver effective and engaged governance to the people of Wiltshire. It was therefore decided that the number of 99 Councillors should be put forward as the Council submission to the Commission.

Regulatory - Planning and Licensing

68. The Council has five planning committees: A strategic planning committee covering applications defined as significant countywide, and four area planning committees to enable more localised decision making. For the council term 2013-2017 the planning committees met for a combined total of 489 hours across 225 meetings.
69. All the committees are presently scheduled to meet 12-13 times per year. 52 committee places are allocated to the planning committees out of the total of 174, in recognition of the importance of the planning function to residents and the challenges involved in supporting appropriate development whilst protecting the rich natural and historical environment of the county.
70. Planning is a particularly important part of the function of Wiltshire Council in the eyes of our residents. Even those who do not engage with the Council over other services tend to become highly involved when planning issues occur. Planning can be one of the most emotive topics dealt with by the Council. Wiltshire deals with a high number of planning applications and while most (96% from the latest figures) are resolved through officer delegated powers, the remaining 4% (over 150 applications a year) are considered by planning committees.
71. To reach a planning committee most applications will be both contentious and of great interest to residents. Individual applications can take considerable time to address at committee meetings with significant public engagement. All members need to understand the planning process and be able to deal with difficult applications including attending committees where they are discussed. Councillors are notified of all planning applications within their divisions and must undertake enquiry work in to them to determine if they should be called-in to committee for determination, a power reserved to councillors. For many Councillors planning is the most important issue they address with individual members of the public.
72. Given the importance of the planning function it is vital that the public can be satisfied that local councillors are determining matters within their areas, requiring divisions not to be excessively large so as to introduce remoteness. The number and length of planning meetings show their importance to council operations and public confidence. It was also noted that comparator authorities varied in how many planning committees existed on their authorities, and how many places were on those committees. Wiltshire's arrangements were not out of keeping with several of those authorities, particularly considering Wiltshire was larger in extent and in planning applications processed than most other authorities.
73. A scrutiny task group was set up in November 2017 to examine aspects of the planning committee system, including the number and size of committees. This task group was a forward plan item before the announcement of the electoral review and has recently reported conclusions which are attached as a background paper. In summary, the evidence from stakeholders very much supported the Council's current system.
74. The Licensing Committee, comprised of 12 members, meets quarterly to oversee all licensing functions that are the responsibility of the Council. Sub-Committees of three members are arranged on an ad hoc basis to determine applications and reviews. For the Council term 2013-2017 there were 45 sub-committee hearings in addition to 12 hours of the full committee.

Governance Committees

75. The Council maintains Audit and Standards Committees to oversee various aspects of its governance. Each is scheduled to meet quarterly and has 11 members.
76. In addition to meeting for 43 hours across 31 meetings for Audit and Standards for the council term 2013-2017, 30 Standards Review Sub-Committee meetings and 1 Standards Hearing Sub-Committee were held to consider matters relating to Code of Conduct complaints under the Localism Act 2011.

Other Committees

77. The Staffing Policy Committee, which has 9 councillors and meets six times per year to consider council staffing matters. It met 23 times for 26 hours across the council term 2013-2017.
78. Other committees include the Officer Appointments Committee contains 5 councillors and interviews and selects council directors, and the Appeals Committee of 8 councillors, which is responsible for rates relief and school transport appeals, both of which meet on an ad hoc basis, 32 times for the council term 2013-2017.
79. Additionally, 8 places each are allocated to the standing working groups of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel.

Joint Arrangements

80. The Council operates a number of different arrangements with other authorities and bodies. The Joint Strategic Economic Committee was established in 2015 and meets 4-5 times per year and consists of representatives from the executives of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council to monitor the work of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP). Additionally, joint scrutiny of the SWLEP is included in the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements of both Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, and is recognised as among the more advanced in the country in respect of Local Enterprise Partnerships³.
81. The Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee meets 5-6 times per year and consists of 5 representatives from Wiltshire Council, 2 from Swindon Borough Council, as well as other voting representatives from employers invested in the Fund, and union observers. The Local Pension Board monitors the management of the Fund.
82. The Health and Wellbeing Board brings together health and social care system leaders to agree the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (shared evidence base), a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (shared priorities) and encourage integrated commissioning and provision of health and social care. It is currently chaired by the Leader of the Council and includes cabinet member and opposition councillors, as well as Clinical Commissioning Group and other health partners and meets 4-5 times per year. In the council term 2013-2017 it met 21 times for over 33 hours.
83. The Police and Crime Panel meets 6 times per year and includes 6 Wiltshire Councillors as well as 4 Swindon Borough Councillors to review and scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner. In the Council term 2013-2017 it met 26 times for over 66 hours.

Shared Services

84. The Council shares many services with external partners, including IT, Systems Thinking and a Programme Office with Wiltshire Police. Children's commissioning is shared with the Clinical Commissioning Group, with a new senior officer structure being negotiated with the Secretary of State to include a joint Corporate Director of the Council and the CCG. Others include the shared history centre and archiving service with Swindon Borough Council. In relation to partnership working, the LGA Peer Review in 2017 stated Wiltshire in several instances such as the One Public Estate Programme was the "go to exemplar site for effective partnership and implementation".

³<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcomloc/369/369.pdf>

Scrutiny Arrangements

85. Since a major review in 2012 Wiltshire Council's Overview and Scrutiny Structure has comprised a Management Committee and three service focused Select Committees: Children's Select, Health Select and Environment Select. The Management Committee comprises 15 members and meets approximately 8 times per year, with the Select Committees comprising 13 members and meeting approximately 6 times per year. Across the council term 2013-2017 they met for a combined 107 meetings and 219 hours.
86. The Committees consider an average of 5 substantive agenda items per meeting. More in-depth work is undertaken in task groups, rapid scrutiny exercises, and by appointing representatives to corporate programme boards at the invitation of the executive.
87. There are currently 11 active task groups with an average of 5 members on each, including 3 standing task groups and a mixture of medium to long term groups lasting between 6-12 months. There have been 3 rapid scrutiny exercises since May 2017 with a further 2 planned, and three representatives sit on programme boards.
88. Scrutiny forward planning is extensive and involves significant coordination with the Executive, including close work with the portfolio holders, to identify suitable topics for scrutiny engagement. These focus significantly on developing policy and the delivery of the Business Plan. This also includes annual consideration of the Administration Budget, and any opposition amendments ahead of Council. Call-ins of executive decisions are rare, with only 3 in the past 4 years due to the extent of open dialogue and constructive reporting that takes place between Cabinet Members, Portfolio Holders, Directors and leading Overview and Scrutiny councillors.
89. In 2015 the Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a peer review of the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, which was the first in the country. In addition to noting the "mature approach" in respect of Call-ins, the overall outcomes of the review were positive, with the alignment of its work programme with the Council's business plan, positive relationship between executive and scrutiny, work with partners, and clear understanding of the role of scrutiny among councillors and officers, as well as "good opportunities for opposition members to provide leadership to the function" were highlighted.
90. Around 100 recommendations are made by task groups per year, and committees had involvement with 59% of cabinet decisions. In order to continue to have meaningful, long term involvement in the development of council policies and scrutinise decisions, the Council argues that there needs to be sufficient numbers of non-executive councillors to perform this key function.
91. In 2016/17 88% of non-executive councillors had involvement with the scrutiny process. However, many of those will not have been involved with more than one activity, so should the number of councillors be reduced it would be difficult to maintain the present level of effective scrutiny activities, particularly in light of other committee requirements.
92. There are no plans at this stage to further review the scrutiny arrangements apart from any necessary response to the findings from the Department of Communities and Local Government's recent review of scrutiny.

Representational Role of Councillors

93. The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities is a key factor in any review, and the ability of councillors to represent those communities is essential.
94. The Council's arrangements prioritise the role of councillors as community leaders. Area Boards are an integral part in providing a focus for community leadership, local influence and delegated decision-making, through the democratic mandate of elected councillors. The Boards provide formalised engagement with the local community, local groups, public bodies and parish council's formal partners within a community area. Formal partners are listed in Part 3B of the constitution and include the police, fire service, clinical commission group (CCG), housing associations, local youth networks, the military, local businesses and more. The police, CCG and others use the area board as their main forum to interact with local communities.
95. The councillors on area boards are supported by a team of Community Engagement Managers to coordinate work with local bodies and groups to enhance their leadership of their communities through public and other meetings, as well as setting strategic priorities, collaboration with partners and examining local issues.
96. For the council term 2013-2017, the area boards met on 450 occasions for 918 hours, an average 25 times each for a total of 51 hours per area board, not including associated meetings such as Local Youth Network and Community Area Transport Group meetings to meet with local groups to involve them with grant funding decisions. Area Board attendance varies but is generally much higher than other council meetings, and as the central focus for the community with matters of great importance such as development of local campuses can be as high as 180 (Melksham 24 Feb 2016), 112 (South West Wiltshire 8 Oct 2014) and 148 (Pewsey 21 Dec 2015).
97. The Committee undertook surveys to determine both the type of activity undertaken by councillors in their representational role, and the amount of time allocated to specific activities. The questions on the representational role were taken from the Commission's technical guidance and collated as part of the papers for the meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2018.
98. In summary, from the responses received it was clear councillors carry out their representational role in a variety of ways. Some held regular surgeries and public meetings whilst others did so as and when needed on major issues, particularly in larger, rural divisions. While referral to officers and other agencies often form part of their casework process, responses indicated many councillors undertake extensive work to attempt resolution in the first instance. While training and information updates are provided, no dedicated administrative support is given for casework beyond the wider Community Engagement Manager at Area Board level.
99. On overall workloads, councillors indicated on average 24 hours per week were spent on council business, an increase of 3 hours since the last survey in 2013. From the responses, it was indicated 5.1 per week was taken up with committee work (from a range of 0-14), 5.6 hours on casework (from 1-15), 2.9 hours on parish council engagement and other work (from 0-10), 7.3 hours working via email or social media (from 0.5-16 for emails and 0-7 for social media), and 3.7 hours travelling on council business (from 0-8.8). All these figures were for the basic role of a councillor only, therefore those with additional responsibilities such as Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs would be expected to have significantly more time spent on committee preparation and other council work, emails and travel on council business.
100. There are presently approximately 150 outside bodies on which councillors are represented. Some of these bodies are locally based with an expectation that the local member be involved. Others are county wide, whilst some are appointed by areas boards, and some allocated by political group leaders. Of those around half involve formal voting rights on decision making. The amount of involvement by councillors on these outside bodies varies, but in some cases, this can lead to a significant additional workload. Some councillors may be on as many as 6 or more outside bodies, and meet quarterly or more frequently.

Population and Electorate Data

101. The Committee considered several approaches to calculate a projected electorate for 2024. The impact of that projection under the current division boundaries is shown at Appendix E. The data will be provided subsequently to the Commission at polling district level in time for Stage 1 of the review.
102. The calculation method that has been used applies both the Office for National Statistics (ONS) population projection increase (3.8% for Wiltshire) and the proposed growth in housing numbers from April 2017 to March 2024. This is likely to include a certain element of 'double-counting' as a proportion of the population increase will also reside in the new housing.
103. Proposed new housing figures used in the calculation by the committee included:
- Planning permissions granted and resolutions to grant planning permission up to 31 March 2016 (Source: Wiltshire Council, Housing Land Supply Statement Update, March 2017)
 - Additional large sites (>10 units) identified beyond 1 April 2016 (Table 3, Wiltshire Council, Housing Land Supply Statement Update, March 2017)
 - Outstanding allocations (Wiltshire Core Strategy, Chippenham Site Allocation Plan, emerging Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan and former district council saved policies)
 - 'Made' and post-examination Neighbourhood Plan allocations (as at 31 March 2016)
 - Army Basing Service Family Accommodation with planning permission
 - An allowance has been included for 'windfall' housing development in Wiltshire
- It is also known that there will be additional growth in some areas post 2024, particularly in Chippenham, and that the figures would be updated for 2024 as further sites are identified.
104. A ratio of number of electors per dwelling to convert the additional housing numbers into a projected electorate was then calculated as follows, though it remains a priority for the council to improve its electoral registration and so for the ratio to potentially increase:

Table 3 - Elector ratio

Total dwellings in Wiltshire (1 April 2016 Source: DCLG – Live tables on dwelling stock: "Table 100: number of dwellings by tenure and district, England")	211,580
Total Electorate (December 2016)	364,167
Average number of electorate per dwelling	1.72

The table below shows the total projected electorate, and the average of electors per Councillor as the council currently stands.

Table 4 - Projected Electorate Total

	Electorate Dec 2017 (a)	Electorate 2024 applying ONS population projection only (3.8%) (b)	Planned new residential units 2017 – 2024 (c)	Estimated additional electorate from planned residential units and including windfall (d) = (c) x 1.72	Total Electorate Estimate 2024 (e) = (b) + (d)
Wiltshire Total	367686	381658	22611	38890	420549 ⁴
	2017 Average Electors per Councillor (98)	3752	2024 Average Electors per Councillor (98)	4291	

⁴This total includes windfall figures, which could not be included in the community area model as it would be unknown where the windfall may occur. During the course of the review the projected electorate calculation will be refined further.

The table below shows the present figures as compared to the council's statistical neighbours, derived from the CIPFA family group⁵.

Table 5 - Statistical neighbours

Unitary Authority	Population (ONS mid 2016 estimates)	Geographic Area (square km) ONS	People per square km	Number of Councillors	Number of Wards	Electors (1 Dec 2016)	Average electors per councillor (current)	Average electors following implementation of recent boundary reviews
Cheshire East	376,695	1166	323	82	52	296,368	3614	na
Central Bedfordshire	278,937	716	390	59	31	205,961	3491	na
Shropshire Council	313,373	3197	98	74	63	240,412	2245	na
Cheshire West and Chester	335,680	917	366	75	46	264,798	3531	4027 (2023)
Herefordshire Council	189,309	2180	87	53	53	138,719	2617	na
Bath and North East Somerset	187,751	345.9	543	65	37	134,037	2062	2367 (2023)
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	337,696	2405	140	67	26	260,403	3887	na
North Somerset	211,681	374	566	50	35	161,880	3238	na
Cornwall Council	553,687	3546	156	123	122	408,453	3321	5163 (2023)
Bedford	168,751	476	355	40	27	128,199	3205	na
South Gloucestershire	277,623	497	559	70	35	210,251	3004	3773 (2023)
Northumberland County Council	316,002	5014	63	67	66	235,556	3516	na
West Berkshire Council	156,837	704.2	223	52	30	120,464	2317	3100 (2023)
City of York	208,367	271.9	766.3	47	21	147,099	3130	na
Average	279,456	1557.9	331	66	46	210,900	3084	na
Wiltshire Council	488,409	3255	150	98	98	361,567	3689	na

107. It was noted that the Council's present electorate to Councillor ratio was exceeded by only 1 of its statistical neighbours, and that would still be the case on the projected ratio of 4203+ per councillor if a council size of 99 was adopted and taking into account the reduction in other council sizes following reviews.

⁵Nearest neighbours as identified at <http://www.cipfastats.net/resources/nearestneighbours/profile.asp?view=select&dataset=england>. Although that table listed Rutland Council as the 15th statistical neighbor it has not been included due to its far smaller scale to all others listed.

Conclusion

108. The Electoral Review Committee undertook a review of council size based on the briefing and guidance given by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. It considered evidence as detailed in this submission over a 2-month period for the preliminary stage of the electoral review.
109. The evidence clearly demonstrates the central importance of the community area system to council governance, and the need to maintain an optimum council size of 99 to provide enough councillors to operate effectively at area boards.
110. Area boards also serve as hubs for meetings between parish council representatives and division members. Councillors are central to the Council's operating structure and with the reduction in council staff they now often act as the primary liaison between residents and particularly Parish Councils on many operational matters as well as providing advice and support on many more. As more services are delegated to parish councils this role will increase and develop over time.
111. In respect of governance arrangements, the Council's committee structure is arranged to meet its statutory and other obligations. The evidence provided suggested a reduction in the number of councillors below 97 would have an adverse effect on the operation of those committees.
112. In relation to scrutiny arrangements, the evidence demonstrated an effective scrutiny function with substantial levels of activity and positive outcomes, and that to enable this to continue it is important to retain sufficient numbers of non-executive councillors to perform this valuable task.
113. Travel time is a significant factor for councillors in a large rural county such as Wiltshire and has an impact on their representational role. In order to fulfill their governance roles councillors are required to travel to the council's main administrative hubs, but to devote appropriate attention to their representational role, divisions should not become too geographically large to impact on their ability to engage locally. It is highlighted that one division already currently has 11 parish councils within it, and as liaising with parishes is regarded by the Council as an important function of the community leader role, it would risk diminishing this relationship if more divisions were to contain a higher number of parishes.

Recommendation

114. On the basis of the deliberations and evidence, the Council recommends a council size of 99 in order to maintain and secure effective and convenient local government in terms of both its central governance function and community area delivery and engagement model.
115. The Council also expresses a requirement to retain the Council's present single member division structure, with no multi-member divisions, as this arrangement provides clearer, more accountable and focused representation.

Appendices

Appendix A - Terms of Reference of the Electoral Review Committee

Appendix B - Area Board Map

Appendix C - Extract from 2008 Submission - Community Areas

Appendix D - Area Board Variance

Appendix E - Electorate Projection by Division including variance

Background Papers

LGA Peer Review 2017

Wiltshire Council Business Plan 2017-2027

Overview and Scrutiny Peer Challenge 2015

2008 Submission to the Boundary Commission for England

BCE 2008 Final Recommendations

Independent Remuneration Panel Reports 2013 and 2017

Planning Committee Task Group Report

Appendix A

Electoral Review Committee Terms of Reference

1) Composition

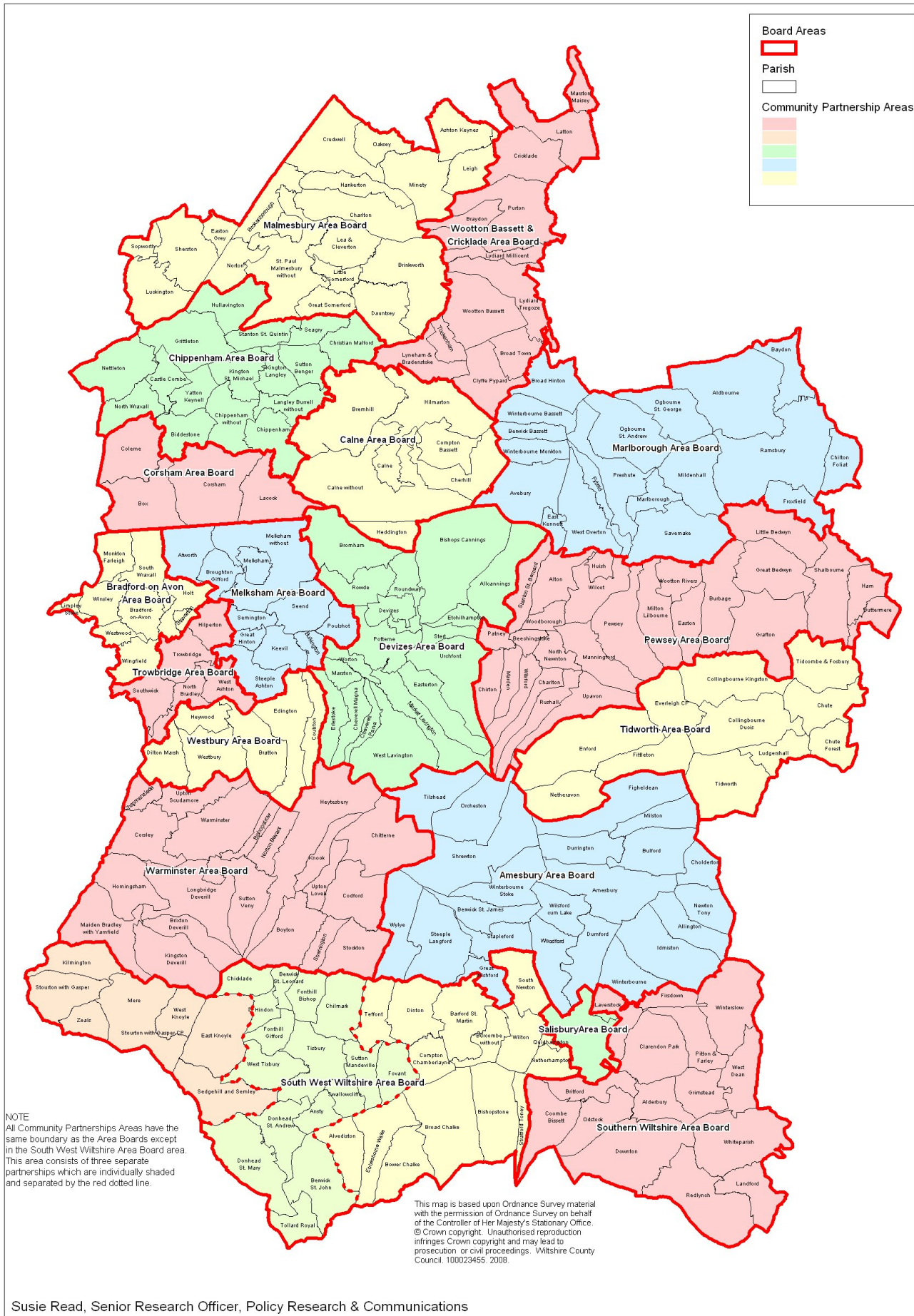
- a) The Committee shall consist of 10 members appointed in accordance with the rules on political proportionality.
- b) The Committee shall appoint a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.

2) Responsibilities

- a) To oversee the provision of information required by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in carrying out its Electoral Review of Wiltshire, including any consultation arrangements with electors or other stakeholders;
- b) To update full Council on the progress of the Electoral Review;
- c) To make recommendations to full Council on proposed submissions to the LGBCE relating to:
 - i) The total number of councillors on Wiltshire Council;
 - ii) The number and boundaries of electoral divisions within Wiltshire Council;
 - iii) The number of councillors to be returned by any electoral division;
 - iv) The name of any electoral division;
- d) To determine on a case by case basis whether any requests for community governance reviews should be progressed during the Electoral Review and if so:
 - i) to make recommendations to Council accordingly
 - ii) to oversee any community governance reviews that are to proceed and to make recommendations to Council on the outcomes of such reviews.
- e) To provide such further advice and support as may be requested by the Council related to or impacted upon by the Electoral Review.

Appendix B

Wiltshire Area Boards and Community Partnership Areas 2009



Appendix C

Extract from the 2008 submission to the Boundary Commission for England

4. COMMUNITY IDENTITY: Wiltshire's 20 Community Areas

4.1 Origin and Concept

4.1.1 In the mid 1990's there was an interest in defining 'natural communities' ie. areas that reflected local patterns of life, not the administrative needs of local service providers. The objective in Wiltshire was to define a manageable number of such areas, which would be intermediate in size between the district and the individual parish levels.

4.2 Defining the Community Areas

4.2.1 To begin to define the areas an initial map was produced based on the best fit between a number of factors. These factors were:-

- Secondary school catchment areas
- Pre-1974 urban and rural district council areas
- Postcode towns
- Local convenience shopping catchment areas
- Travel-to-Work Areas
- Public transport links and car journey times
- Geology and topography ie. landscape types

4.3 Initial Testing

4.3.1 The resulting map was subsequently tested in a variety of ways:

- Through consultation with the 256 town and parish councils, which led to a handful of parishes changing area to retain community links
- Consultation with County Councillors
- By commissioning a study from an eminent local historian, Dr. John Chandler, on the historical validity of the areas. This study was subsequently published as the book, 'A Sense of Belonging' (1998). The book examined a wide range of evidence, including historical local authority administrative boundaries; rural deaneries; hundreds; religious allegiance and attendance patterns; railway, canal and stagecoach links; patterns of local life from the geographer, Bracey's Social Provision in Wiltshire (1952); population trends; and the growth of market towns, etc.
- One district council requested that Mere and Tisbury community area be divided into two, as a condition for using the areas for the production of community area plans. This resulted in the current 20 community areas.

4.4 Community Areas in Practise

4.4.1 The Community Areas have been used for a wide variety of work in the County Council, Districts Councils and other Public Sector partners. For example:

- As a basis for defining local service team boundaries (many such service areas cover two, and in some cases, three community areas)
- As a basis for some district council area committee boundaries
- As areas for crime recording and reporting by the Police, and as the framework within which neighbourhood policing areas nest. Neighbourhood tasking teams use community area partnerships as their contact groups for engaging with local communities
- Analytical work to support strategic land use planning, including population forecasting, rural facilities monitoring, etc.
- Production of 20 community area statistical profiles
- Production of 20 community area plans
- As a basis for consultations with communities, eg. on waste, the Local Transport Plan, and for the County's People's Voice panel
- As the geographical basis for the formation of community area partnerships in all districts, except Salisbury which has a preference for parish planning
- Local Transport Plan – contains (community) area transport strategies
- Market town regeneration projects eg. the RDA's Coastal and Market Towns Initiative

4.5 Retaining a Common Map

- 4.5.1 It should not be underestimated what an achievement it is to have defined areas which have been adopted by all key organisations in the County, and which have become part of the everyday language of local governance. The current situation is the result of 15 years of joint working and development. The community areas are considered best practice nationally, and were a factor in the County Council receiving Beacon Status for 'Getting Closer to Communities' in 2005.
- 4.5.2 Nor should it be underestimated how easily this vital common resource could be lost. Any changes to the areas need to be rigorously argued, as every change, even minor ones, have costs attached to them eg. the police would have to change all their crime reporting areas, and recalculate time series and trends, as would the County Council for population estimates, and rural facilities, etc.
- 4.5.3 This is not to say that there are not pressures on the system. For example, Salisbury district area committees have diverged from the community areas due to the need to contain enough members to run an area committee, and the wish to avoid splitting district wards. This led to the area committee boundary being a rival to the community area as a basis for local governance, and this can be confusing for the public.
- 4.5.4 Some community areas which contain more than one large settlement also periodically express a wish to subdivide their area. Some rural parishes also want to underplay their interaction with and use of local towns, and so question the underlying functionality of the community areas.
- 4.5.5 Finally, the previous Boundary Committee review of electoral areas took little note of the importance of community areas in Wiltshire, with the result that the number of county council divisions which crossed community area boundaries was actually increased over the previous electoral arrangements, and one division actually extended into three community areas. This was not helpful in reinforcing the shared community areas map as a common basis for organising the county.

4.6 The Continuing Validity of Community Areas

- 4.6.1 Many of the factors that informed the original definition of the community areas are tied to the basic characteristics of Wiltshire. For instance, geological and topological factors still underlie differences in landscape character, the historical routing of roads (eg. along river valleys) and settlement distribution - with the County's population being particularly concentrated along the Bristol Avon, which flows through the clay vales to the west of the County, whereas the chalk downlands are characterised by small, widely dispersed villages.

The largest settlement in South Wiltshire, Salisbury, occupies a unique position at the confluence of three river valleys, fed by a further two tributary rivers. Other factors, such as the historical importance of pre-1974 urban and rural district council areas, and postcode areas, remain unchanged.

- 4.6.2 An analysis of the hierarchy of centres within the County which provided services and facilities for their surrounding areas was undertaken as part of the last Structure Plan development. This showed that there was a good fit between the higher level service centres that were identified, and the centres which give their names to the community areas.
- 4.6.3 With a view to considering the continuing validity of the community areas, work has been done on checking the range of services and facilities at each of the local service centres within each community area. This has involved analyses of current school catchments (with the exception of Downton, Mere and Tisbury, secondary schools are located at each of these centres) and travel-to-work patterns. In addition, a mid-point analysis of distances between these same settlements, which can be used as a proxy for journey times, has also been undertaken. There have been some changes to the transport infrastructure of the County in recent years, notably the Chippenham by-pass and Semington diversion. Ideally, one would want to undertake an analysis of bus routes and car journey times, but this has not been possible as part of this exercise, and in any case is variable depending on time of day, and changes in bus services and timetables. Also, it would be useful to reassess local convenience shopping patterns, but this would be a considerable undertaking.

4.6.4 The work undertaken established that, in the context of the surrounding area, each of these service centres continues to have a good range of services and facilities. In consequence, it is likely that each centre will continue to function as the main focus for the surrounding area. (See Appendix 2) (In some of the community areas there are sub-centres, such as Durrington within the Amesbury area, Ludgershall within the Tidworth area, and Cricklade within the Wootton Bassett and Cricklade area, but they have a smaller range of services and facilities, and consequently smaller catchments. Also, the physical proximity of these lower order centres to the named community area service centre makes them of secondary importance within their areas).

4.6.5 In terms of the relationships within each community area, the analysis established that, currently, a significant 83% of all pupils both live and attend school in their own community area, and for many areas this figure is higher. Similarly, in terms of travel-to-work patterns, an analysis of 2001 travel-to-work patterns showed that, on the whole, the areas with the strongest links to each of the local service centres were remarkably similar in pattern and scale to the twenty community areas, although this was less so in the Salisbury area. (See Appendix 3) However, even in this area, the mid-point analysis showed that the spatial pattern that resulted closely reflected the pattern of community areas. In summary, in one way or another, virtually all community areas continue to represent important "on the ground" patterns of community life.

4.6.6 It is important to remember that, in addition to these functional considerations, the purpose of the community map was to describe areas that are small enough in scale to be familiar to local residents, and in which they spend the major part of their daily lives. All available evidence suggests that people identify most strongly with their village and local town ie. their local area. Community areas need to be small enough to be a basis for community engagement, debate and action. The existing map has proved that it is able to produce this sort of engagement and interest.

4.7 Future Prospects

4.7.1 There are a number of developments which make retaining the community area map even more important:

- The amalgamation of the three PCT's into a single Wiltshire PCT creates the opportunity to adopt community areas as a common basis for joint working, and this is already beginning to happen
- The proposals for the new Wiltshire Authority from April 2009 place massive emphasis on community area working, and set great store by a future way of working based on community area boards and area partnerships. Local elected members will be expected to use area boards, in particular, as a key vehicle for exercising their community leadership role
- Creation of single police division for Wiltshire, and neighbourhood policing reinforce the links with community area working

Appendix D

Area Board Numbers and Variance of Divisions

Number of Councillors Per Area Board

Council Size	98	99
Area Boards	Cllrs Area	Per Board
Amesbury	7	7
Bradford on Avon	4	4
Calne	5	5
Chippenham	10	10
Corsham	4	4
Devizes	6	6
Malmesbury	4	4
Marlborough	3	4
Melksham	6	6
Pewsey	3	3
Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade	6	6
Salisbury	9	9
South West	5	5
Southern	5	5
Tidworth	3	3
Trowbridge	9	9
Warminster	5	5
Westbury	4	4
Average Voters Per Division	4246	4203

Area Board Variance (%)

98	99
% Area	per Board Division
-3	-2
-7	-6
-4	-3
-4	-3
11	12
7	8
2	3
16	-12
4	5
-6	-5
2	3
-5	-4
-6	-5
-5	-4
12	13
0	1
2	3
1	3
4246	4203

Appendix E

Projected electorate at 2024 using ONS population projections and anticipated growth in residential dwellings (estimate January 2018)

Electoral Division	Electorate 2017	Electorate 2024 applying ONS population projection only (3.8%)	Planned new residential units 2017 - 2024	Estimated additional electorate from planned residential units (c) x 1.72	Total Electorate Estimate 2024
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
				(d) = (c) x 1.72	(e) = (b) + (d)
Aldbourn and Ramsbury ED	4054	4208	22	37	4245
Alderbury and Whiteparish ED	3389	3518	38	65	3583
Amesbury East ED	4861	5046	859	1478	6523
Amesbury West ED	3709	3850	30	51	3901
Bourne and Woodford Valley ED	3425	3555	23	40	3595
Box and Colerne ED	3852	3998	8	14	4012
Bradford-on-Avon North ED	3856	4003	204	351	4353
Bradford-on-Avon South ED	4091	4246	6	10	4256
Brinkworth ED	3710	3851	39	68	3919
Bromham, Rowde and Potterne ED	3892	4040	25	43	4083
Bulford, Allington and Figheldean ED	4009	4161	252	433	4594
Burbage and The Bedwyns ED	3944	4094	36	61	4155
By Brook ED	3595	3732	85	146	3877
Calne Central ED	3438	3569	223	384	3952
Calne Chilvister and Abberd ED	3936	4086	12	21	4106
Calne North ED	3361	3489	283	487	3975
Calne Rural ED	3621	3759	220	379	4137
Calne South and Cherhill ED	3735	3877	222	382	4259
Chippenham Cepen Park and Derriads ED	3390	3519	1	1	3520
Chippenham Cepen Park and Redlands ED	3554	3689	78	134	3823
Chippenham Hardenhuish ED	3491	3624	29	50	3674
Chippenham Hardens and England ED	3281	3406	53	92	3497
Chippenham Lowden and Rowden ED	3691	3831	592	1019	4850
Chippenham Monkton ED	3045	3161	505	869	4030
Chippenham Pewsham ED	3425	3555	1	1	3556
Chippenham Queens and Sheldon ED	3280	3405	1	1	3406
Corsham Pickwick ED	3767	3910	156	269	4179
Corsham Town ED	3781	3925	385	661	4586
Corsham Without and Box Hill ED	4128	4285	1020	1754	6039
Cricklade and Latton ED	3900	4048	101	174	4222
Devizes and Roundway South ED	3456	3587	54	92	3680
Devizes East ED	3064	3180	25	43	3223
Devizes North ED	3203	3325	199	342	3667
Downton and Ebbles Valley ED	3830	3976	109	188	4163
Durrington and Larkhill ED	4847	5031	786	1352	6383
Ethandune ED	3607	3744	47	81	3825
Fovant and Chalke Valley ED	3423	3553	413	711	4264
Hilperton ED	3925	4074	205	352	4426
Holt and Staverton ED	3491	3624	70	121	3744
Kington ED	4063	4217	1228	2112	6329
Laverstock, Ford and Old Sarum ED	4108	4264	533	917	5181
Ludgershall and Perham Down ED	3739	3881	923	1588	5469
Lyneham ED	3306	3432	30	52	3484
Malmesbury ED	4164	4322	368	634	4956
Marlborough East ED	3269	3393	76	131	3524
Marlborough West ED	2950	3062	230	395	3458
Melksham Central ED	3837	3983	24	41	4024
Melksham North ED	3686	3826	214	367	4194
Melksham South ED	4005	4157	29	50	4207
Melksham Without North ED	4346	4511	120	207	4718

Electoral Division	Electorate 2017	Electorate 2024 applying ONS population projection only (3.8%)	Planned new residential units 2017 - 2024	Estimated additional electorate from planned residential units (c) x 1.72	Total Electorate Estimate 2024
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
				(d) = (c) x 1.72	(e) = (b) + (d)
Melksham Without South ED	4043	4197	841	1447	5644
Mere ED	3470	3602	141	242	3844
Minety ED	3844	3990	65	112	4102
Nadder and East Knoyle ED	3505	3638	8	14	3652
Pewsey ED	3837	3983	92	157	4140
Pewsey Vale ED	3502	3635	52	90	3725
Purton ED	4333	4498	424	729	5226
Redlynch and Landford ED	3724	3866	5	9	3875
Roundway ED	3505	3638	82	140	3778
Royal Wootton Bassett East ED	3821	3966	7	12	3978
Royal Wootton Bassett North ED	3642	3780	24	41	3822
Royal Wootton Bassett South ED	4944	5132	134	231	5363
Salisbury Bemerton ED	4408	4576	910	1565	6141
Salisbury Fisherton and Bemerton Village ED	3430	3560	4	6	3567
Salisbury Harnham ED	4154	4312	102	175	4487
Salisbury St. Edmund and Milford ED	3629	3767	290	498	4265
Salisbury St. Francis and Stratford ED	4087	4242	72	124	4366
Salisbury St. Mark's and Bishopdown ED	4119	4276	94	162	4437
Salisbury St. Martin's and Cathedral ED	4177	4336	7	12	4348
Salisbury St. Paul's ED	3770	3913	541	931	4844
Sherston ED	4016	4169	125	215	4384
Southwick ED	3578	3714	1581	2720	6434
Summerham and Seend ED	3462	3594	29	50	3644
The Collingbournes and Netheravon ED	3276	3400	1	2	3402
The Lavingtons and Erlestoke ED	3994	4146	88	152	4298
Tidworth ED	4654	4831	326	560	5391
Till and Wylve Valley ED	3626	3764	11	18	3782
Tisbury ED	3601	3738	6	10	3748
Trowbridge Adcroft ED	3600	3737	16	28	3765
Trowbridge Central ED	3746	3888	35	61	3949
Trowbridge Drynham ED	3176	3297	3	5	3301
Trowbridge Grove ED	3301	3426	67	115	3542
Trowbridge Lambrok ED	3666	3805	1	2	3807
Trowbridge Park ED	3701	3842	38	65	3907
Trowbridge Paxcroft ED	4657	4834	125	215	5049
Urchfont and The Cannings ED	3849	3995	312	537	4532
Warminster Broadway ED	3713	3854	277	477	4331
Warminster Copheap and Wylve ED	3533	3667	5	9	3676
Warminster East ED	4315	4479	172	296	4775
Warminster West ED	4146	4304	477	820	5123
Warminster Without ED	3436	3567	46	78	3645
West Selkley ED	3384	3513	23	40	3552
Westbury East ED	3765	3908	333	574	4482
Westbury North ED	3659	3798	290	499	4297
Westbury West ED	3909	4058	306	527	4584
Wilton and Lower Wylve Valley ED	4003	4155	209	359	4514
Winsley and Westwood ED	3288	3413	1	2	3415
Winterslow ED	3158	3278	27	47	3325
WINDFALL ALLOWANCE	0	0	2595	4463	4463
WILTSHIRE TOTAL	367686	381658	22611	38890	420549

Division Variance				
Name of division	Electorate 2017	Variance 2017	Electoral 2024	Variance 2024
Aldbourn & Ramsbury	4054	8%	4245	0%
Alderbury & Whiteparish	3389	-10%	3583	-16%
Amesbury East	4861	30%	6523	54%
Amesbury West	3709	-1%	3901	-8%
Bourne & Woodford Valley	3425	-9%	3595	-15%
Box & Colerne	3852	3%	4012	-6%
Bradford-On-Avon North	3856	3%	4353	3%
Bradford-On-Avon South	4091	9%	4256	0%
Brinkworth	3710	-1%	3919	-8%
Bromham, Rowde & Potterne	3892	4%	4083	-4%
Bulford, Allington & Figheldean	4009	7%	4594	8%
Burbage & The Bedwys	3944	5%	4155	6%
By Brook	3595	-4%	3877	-9%
Calne Central	3438	-8%	3952	-7%
Calne Chilvester & Abberd	3936	5%	4106	-3%
Calne North	3361	-10%	3975	1%
Calne Rural	3621	-3%	4137	-3%
Calne South & Cherhill	3735	0%	4259	0%
Chippenham Cepen Park & Derriads	3390	-10%	3520	-17%
Chippenham Cepen Park & Redlands	3554	-5%	3823	-10%
Chippenham Hardenhuish	3491	-7%	3674	-13%
Chippenham Hardens & England	3281	-13%	3497	-18%
Chippenham Lowden & Rowden	3691	-2%	4850	14%
Chippenham Monkton	3045	-19%	4030	-5%
Chippenham Pewsham	3425	-9%	3556	-16%
Chippenham Queens & Sheldon	3280	-13%	3406	-20%
Corsham Pickwick	3767	0%	4179	-2%
Corsham Town	3781	1%	4586	8%
Corsham Without & Box Hill	4128	10%	6039	42%
Cricklade & Latton	3900	4%	4222	-1%
Devizes & Roundway South	3456	-8%	3680	-13%
Devizes East	3064	-18%	3223	-24%
Devizes North	3203	-15%	3667	-14%
Downton & Ebbel Valley	3830	2%	4163	-2%
Durrington & Larkhill	4847	29%	6383	50%
Ethandune	3607	-4%	3825	-10%
Fovant & Chalke Valley	3423	-9%	4264	0%
Hilperton	3925	5%	4426	4%
Holt & Staverton	3491	-7%	3744	-12%
Kington	4063	8%	6329	49%
Laverstock, Ford & Old Sarum	4108	9%	5181	22%
Ludgershall & Perham Down	3739	0%	5469	29%
Lyneham	3306	-12%	3484	-18%
Malmesbury	4164	11%	4956	17%
Marlborough East	3269	-13%	3524	-17%
Marlborough West	2950	-21%	3458	-19%
Melksham Central	3837	2%	4024	-5%
Melksham North	3686	-2%	4194	-1%
Melksham South	4005	7%	4207	-1%
Melksham Without North	4346	16%	4718	11%
Melksham Without South	4043	8%	5644	33%
Mere	3470	-8%	3844	-9%
Minety	3844	2%	4102	-3%
Nadder & East Knoyle	3505	-7%	3652	-14%
Pewsey	3837	2%	4140	-2%
Pewsey Vale	3502	-7%	3725	-12%
Purton	4333	15%	5226	23%

Division Variance				
Name of division	Electorate 2017	Variance 2017	Electoral 2024	Variance 2024
Redlynch & Landford	3724	-1%	3875	-9%
Roundway	3505	-7%	3778	-11%
Royal Wootton Bassett East	3821	2%	3978	-6%
Royal Wootton Bassett North	3642	-3%	3822	-10%
Royal Wootton Bassett South	4944	32%	5363	26%
Salisbury Bemerton	4408	17%	6141	45%
Salisbury Fisherton & Bemerton Village	3430	-9%	3567	-16%
Salisbury Harnham	4154	11%	4487	6%
Salisbury St. Edmund & Milford	3629	-3%	4265	0%
Salisbury St. Francis & Stratford	4087	9%	4366	3%
Salisbury St. Mark's & Bishopdown	4119	10%	4437	5%
Salisbury St. Martin's & Cathedral	4177	11%	4348	2%
Salisbury St. Paul's	3770	0%	4844	14%
Sherston	4016	7%	4384	3%
Southwick	3578	-5%	6434	52%
Summerham & Seend	3462	-8%	3644	-14%
The Collingbournes & Netheravon	3276	-13%	3402	-20%
The Lavingtons & Erlestoke	3994	6%	4298	1%
Tidworth	4654	24%	5391	27%
Till & Wylde Valley	3626	-3%	3782	-11%
Tisbury	3601	-4%	3748	-12%
Trowbridge Adcroft	3600	-4%	3765	-11%
Trowbridge Central	3746	0%	3949	-7%
Trowbridge Drynham	3176	-15%	3301	-22%
Trowbridge Grove	3301	-12%	3542	-17%
Trowbridge Lambrok	3666	-2%	3807	-10%
Trowbridge Park	3701	-1%	3907	-8%
Trowbridge Paxcroft	4657	24%	5049	19%
Urchfont & The Cannings	3849	3%	4532	7%
Warminster Broadway	3713	-1%	4331	2%
Warminster Copheap & Wylde	3533	-6%	3676	-13%
Warminster East	4315	15%	4775	12%
Warminster West	4146	11%	5123	21%
Warminster Without	3436	-8%	3645	-14%
West Selkley	3384	-10%	3552	-16%
Westbury East	3765	0%	4482	6%
Westbury North	3659	-2%	4297	1%
Westbury West	3909	4%	4584	8%
Wilton & Lower Wylde Valley	4003	7%	4514	6%
Winsley & Westwood	3288	-12%	3415	-20%
Winterslow	3158	-16%	3325	-22%
Avg.	3752	Avg.	4246	

Appendix F

Area Board	Voters		Total Number of Councillors					
	2017	2024	86	87	92	93	98	99
Amesbury	24,067	28,778	6	6	6	6	7	7
Bradford on Avon	14,626	15,768	3	3	3	4	4	4
Calne	17,750	20,429	4	4	5	5	5	5
Chippenham	34,434	40,562	8	8	9	9	10	10
Corsham	15,388	18,816	4	4	4	4	4	4
Devizes	24,796	27,261	6	6	6	6	6	6
Malmesbury	15,516	17,361	4	4	4	4	4	4
Marlborough	13,632	14,779	3	3	3	3	3	4
Melksham	22,953	26,431	5	6	6	6	6	6
Pewsey	11,155	12,020	2	2/3	2/3	3	3	3
Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade	23,084	26,095	5	5	6	6	6	6
Salisbury	31,162	36,455	8	8	8	8	9	9
South West	17,573	20,022	4	4	4	4	5	5
Southern	17,898	20,789	4	4	5	4	5	5
Tidworth	11,175	14,262	3	3	3	3	3	3
Trowbridge	32,770	38,180	8	8	8	9	9	9
Warminster	18,536	21,389	5	4	5	5	5	5
Westbury	15,035	17,379	4	4	4	4	4	4

Depending on exact boundaries, Pewsey is likely to only have 2 divisions below 92 councillors unless parts of another area board are moved into Pewsey



Electoral Review

Wiltshire Council Submission to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)

Preliminary Stage - Council Size - March 2018