

New electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council Further Draft Recommendations

February 2023

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Analysis and further draft recommendations in the south-east of Buckinghamshire

1 Following our consultation on the draft recommendations for Buckinghamshire Council, the Commission has decided to hold a period of consultation on further draft recommendations in the south-east of Buckinghamshire, specifically our proposed wards of Chalfont St Peter, Farnhams & Stoke Poges, Gerrards Cross & Denham and Iver, prior to publication of its final recommendations. The Commission believes it has received sufficient evidence relating to the rest of Buckinghamshire to finalise its recommendations, so this consultation is focused on above-mentioned wards only.

2 During consultation on the draft recommendations, that were published on 2 August 2022, we received 558 representations, most of which commented on our proposed Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross & Denham wards. A significant majority of these submissions expressed opposition. Many respondents provided a great deal of evidence describing their community to substantiate their opposition to our proposals.

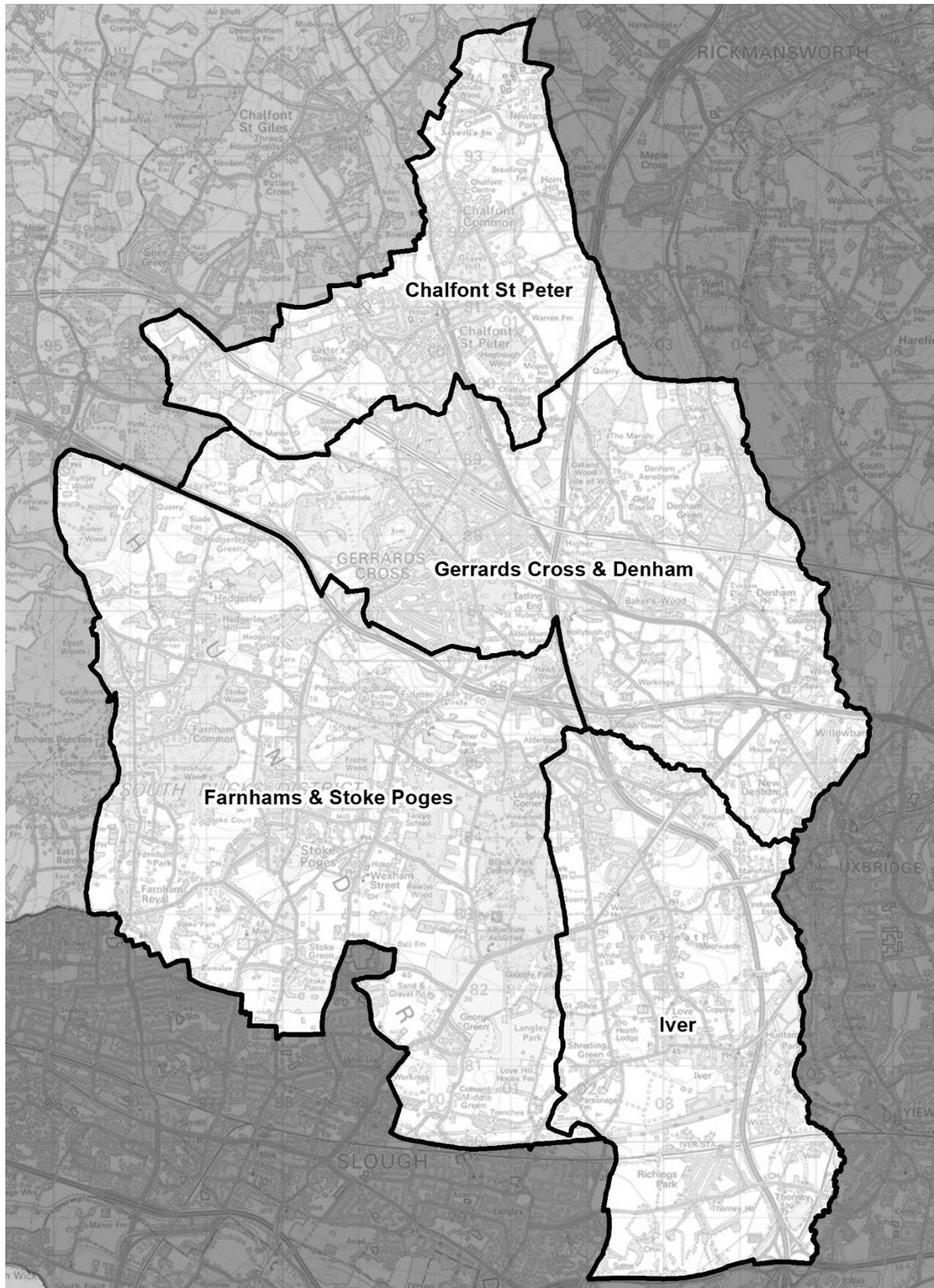
3 Accordingly, we have been persuaded to considerably amend our proposals and thus publish further draft recommendations for Chalfont St Peter, Farnhams & Stoke Poges, Gerrards Cross & Denham and Iver wards. These modifications also include a reduction of one councillor for the authority. We consider that a 97-councillor pattern would allow us to create wards in the south-east of the authority which will better reflect community identity than a 98-member council, based on the evidence received.

4 We welcome all comments on these proposals, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries and the names of our proposed wards. This stage of consultation begins on 28 February 2023 and closes on 11 April 2023. Please see page 9 for more information on how to send us your response.

5 The table, map and text on pages 2–6 detail our further draft recommendations for south-east Buckinghamshire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory criteria:

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

Chalfont St Peter, Farnhams & Stoke Poges, Gerrards Cross & Denham and Iver



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2028
Chalfont St Peter	2	10%
Farnhams & Stoke Poges	3	-12%
Gerrards Cross & Denham	3	4%
Iver	2	2%

Chalfont St Peter, Farnhams & Stoke Poges, Gerrards Cross & Denham and Iver

6 We received 210 submissions which largely opposed our recommendations for Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross & Denham wards. Around half of these disagreed with our decision to incorporate part of Gerrards Cross parish in our three-councillor Chalfont St Peter ward.

7 We received strong community-based evidence from Buckinghamshire Council ('the Council'), Gerrards Cross Town Council, Councillor Broom and over 100 local residents that by extending our Chalfont St Peter ward southwards into Gerrards Cross parish, we had excluded an integral part of the Gerrards Cross community from our Gerrards Cross & Denham ward, which would thus be harmful to community identities and interests in the area. Although we received support from Chalfont St Peter Parish Council, Councillor Smith and Councillor Shinner for this proposal, we consider that, based on the balance of evidence received, we should identify an alternative warding pattern for this area that would better reflect our statutory criteria.

8 A handful of submissions stated that we should use the parish boundary between Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross parish as the boundary between the two wards. However, as outlined in the draft recommendations, a three-councillor ward that would contain the entirety of Chalfont St Peter parish would be over-represented, with a forecast electoral variance of -17% by 2028. We could therefore not adopt this proposal, as we consider this variance too high to accept.

9 However, several submissions stated that the boundary between the two wards could broadly follow Austenwood Common and Kingsway, providing evidence that highlighted many community facilities south of here that carry the Gerrards Cross name. This included the tennis club and bowls club which are largely used by the Gerrards Cross community. We also note that two local residents stated that the road sign that welcomes people to Gerrards Cross is at the junction of these two roads.

10 We were persuaded by the evidence received that the boundary between our Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross & Denham wards should broadly follow Austenwood Common and Kingsway. As a result of moving the boundary between these two wards and reducing the size of the three-councillor Chalfont St Peter ward, the anticipated electoral variance of the ward would be -27%. However, if we reduce

the number of councillors for the ward to two, as suggested by a local resident, the ward would have an anticipated electoral variance of 10%, which would result in a much better level of electoral equality.

11 We therefore consider it appropriate to reduce the number of councillors for our Chalfont St Peter ward, and thereby the entire authority, by one. This would allow us to create a five-councillor warding pattern for these two wards that, in our view, will better represent community identities and provide for good electoral equality – more so than the six-councillor warding pattern adopted as part of our draft recommendations. However, as this proposal has not previously been the subject of public consultation, we are particularly eager to hear the views of the local residents and the two parishes that will be directly affected by these changes to the proposed wards.

12 One local resident opposed our decision to link Gerrards Cross parish with Denham parish. However, as outlined in our draft recommendations, Denham parish alone would have too many electors to achieve good electoral equality as a single-councillor ward, but also too few electors to accommodate a two-councillor ward. We remain of the view that linking these two parishes together in a single ward remains the most effective way to ensure eligible electors have a vote of broadly equal weight with other communities in Buckinghamshire.

13 We also received representations from the Council, Denham Parish Council, The Ivers Parish Council, Councillor Griffin, Councillor Matthews and 80 local residents which opposed our decision to divide Denham parish and place the New Denham area in Iver ward. It was argued that the New Denham area did not have strong community or geographic links with Iver parish and that the division of Denham parish between wards here would not contribute to effective and convenient local government.

14 Although we received three submissions in support of this proposal, we were persuaded by the evidence received that our proposals here did not provide the best reflection of our statutory criteria, so we endeavoured to develop an alternative warding pattern for this area which avoided the division of Denham parish between wards.

15 If we exclude Hedgerley and Fulmer parishes from our proposed Gerrards Cross & Denham ward, we can include the entirety of Denham parish in a ward with the entirety of Gerrards Cross parish and achieve good electoral equality. We determined that this ward would provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria and are recommending a three-councillor Gerrards Cross & Denham ward, which includes part of Chalfont St Peter parish (as detailed in paragraphs 9–11) as part of our further draft recommendations. However, the consequence of such a decision

means that our three-councillor Iver ward would be under-represented, with a forecast electoral variance of -18% by 2028.

16 To reduce this level of electoral variance, we determined that a two-councillor Iver ward that follows the Iver parish boundary, as suggested by the Council in the first round of consultation, would be the most appropriate solution. This ward would have a forecast electoral variance of 2% by 2028. We consider that a two-councillor Iver ward coterminous with the Iver parish boundary will reflect the identities and interests of the Iver community and aid effective and convenient local government.

17 Our decision to transfer Hedgerley and Fulmer parishes from a Gerrards Cross & Denham ward means they must be placed in a different ward as part of our further draft recommendations. While we received support for our two-councillor Farnham & Stoke Poges ward, we consider it necessary to expand this ward into a three-councillor ward that also includes Hedgerley and Fulmer parishes, in addition to Wexham parish, if we are to achieve a warding pattern for this area of Buckinghamshire that balances our statutory criteria.

18 We are therefore recommending a three-councillor Farnhams & Stoke Poges ward that includes parishes of Farnham Royal, Stoke Poges, Hedgerley, Fulmer and Wexham. While this ward would have a forecast electoral variance of -12%, which is slightly higher than we would usually accept, we consider that this ward represents a satisfactory reflection of statutory criteria and will ensure a more effective warding pattern for the wider area.

19 Although Fulmer Parish Council stated that it has stronger links with Gerrards Cross and Denham parishes than with Farnham Royal, Hedgerley, Stoke Poges and Wexham, we consider it a necessity to ward Fulmer parish with these parishes if we are to achieve even a reasonable level of electoral equality for wards across the south-east of Buckinghamshire. We note the evidence provided by Fulmer Parish Council that, while the parish's links to Farnham Royal, Hedgerley, Stoke Poges and Wexham parish are not particularly strong, they are by no means weak and good relations exist between the parishes. We are therefore content that our proposed ward will adequately reflect community identities. We have also avoided the division of Fulmer parish between wards, which was strongly opposed by Fulmer Parish Council and three local residents.

20 We propose to name this ward Farnhams & Stoke Poges, based on evidence from two local residents who stated that we should pluralise Farnham to demonstrate that both Farnham Royal and Farnham Common are included in the ward. However, with the inclusion of Hedgerley, Fulmer and Wexham parishes, we welcome further comments during consultation on whether this ward name is appropriate.

21 A local resident requested that a property, which is located on the very edge of the Wexham and Fulmer parish boundary, be incorporated into Fulmer parish. We have no power to change external parish boundaries as part of our review. A community governance review conducted by the Council would be the most appropriate starting point for addressing this issue.

22 In developing our further draft recommendations in this area of the authority, we have attempted to respect the boundaries of each parish by not dividing them between wards as much as possible, mindful that doing so may be harmful to local community identities and interests. We have only done so in the instance of Chalfont St Peter parish, as we consider the evidence received during consultation indicated that doing so will better reflect community identities and interests. It will also allow us to create wards with improved levels of electoral equality. Overall, we consider that our further draft recommendations for these wards represent an improvement on our draft recommendations, but we strongly welcome comments, whether in support or in opposition, to our proposals during the current consultation.

Parish electoral arrangements

23 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

24 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Buckinghamshire Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

25 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chalfont St Peter.

26 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chalfont St Peter parish.

Further draft recommendations

Chalfont St Peter Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Austenwood North	1
Austenwood South	2
Central	5
Chalfont Common	5
Gold Hill	2

Have your say

27 The Commission has an open mind about its further draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from.

28 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for south-east Buckinghamshire, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

29 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (Buckinghamshire)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE14 9FE

30 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Buckinghamshire which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively

31 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government

32 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Buckinghamshire?

33 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or another group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

34 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

35 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in London and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us upon request after the end of the consultation period.

36 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

37 In the light of representations received, we will review our further draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the further draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

38 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which

brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Buckinghamshire in 2025.

Equalities

39 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 its 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

Further draft recommendations for wards in the south-east of Buckinghamshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2028)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Chalfont St Peter	2	9,434	4,717	11%	10,069	5,035	10%
2	Farnhams & Stoke Poges	3	11,571	3,857	-9%	11,990	3,997	-12%
3	Gerrards Cross & Denham	3	13,440	4,480	6%	14,304	4,768	4%
4	Iver	2	9,011	4,506	6%	9,308	4,654	2%

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Buckinghamshire 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 Buckinghamshire. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/buckinghamshire/buckinghamshire-council

Local Authority

- Buckinghamshire Council

Political Groups

- Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association
- Buckingham Constituency Conservative Association
- Buckingham Constituency Liberal Democrats
- Chesham & Amersham Conservative Association
- Wycombe Conservative Association
- Wycombe Independents

Councillors

- Councillor G. Baldwin (East Claydon Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Birchley (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor T. Broom (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor M. Chapman (Newton Longville Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Chhokar (Gerrards Cross Town Council)
- Councillor J. Chilver (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor M. Cole (Buckingham Town Council)
- Councillor P. Fleming (Hazlemere Parish Council)
- Councillor J. Gladwin (Great Missenden Parish Council)
- Councillor E. Glover (Burnham Parish Council)
- Councillor P. Gomm (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor D. Goss (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor T. Green (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor P. Griffin (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor J. Harvey (Buckingham Town Council)
- Councillor D. Hayday (Buckinghamshire Council) x2
- Councillor O. Hayday (Buckinghamshire Council) x2
- Councillor I. Hussain (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor D. Johncock (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor S. Kershaw (Little Marlow Parish Council)

- Councillors A. Macpherson, F. Mahon and M. Rand (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor W. Matthews (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor H. Mordue (Buckingham Town Council & Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor A. Pike (Beaconsfield Town Council)
- Councillor S.K. Raja (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor M. Roberts (Amersham Town Council)
- Councillor A. Shinner (Chalfont St Peter Parish Council)
- Councillor L. Smith (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor N. Southworth (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor N. Thomas (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor J. Wassell (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillors J. Waters, M. Dormer and M. Flys (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor D. Watson (Buckinghamshire Council)
- Councillor M. West (Penn Parish Council)
- Councillor I. Whipp (Newton Longville Parish Council)
- Councillor S. Wilson (Buckinghamshire Council)

Members of Parliament

- Steve Baker MP (Wycombe)
- Greg Smith MP (Buckingham)
- Iain Stewart MP (Milton Keynes South)

Local Organisations

- Hitcham & Taplow Society
- Little Marlow Residents' Association
- Penn & Tylers Green Residents' Society
- The Marlow Society
- Winchmore Hill Residents' Association x2

Parish and Town Councils

- Beaconsfield Town Council
- Bierton Parish Council
- Buckingham Town Council
- Calvert Green Parish Council
- Chalfont St Peter Parish Council
- Denham Parish Council
- Dorney Parish Council

- Fulmer Parish Council
- Gerrards Cross Town Council
- Granborough Parish Council
- Great Horwood Parish Council
- Great Marlow Parish Council
- Halton Parish Council
- Lane End Parish Council
- Leckhampstead Parish Council
- Little Marlow Parish Council
- Little Missenden Parish Council
- Penn Parish Council
- Piddington & Wheeler End Parish Council
- Steeple Claydon Parish Council
- Taplow Parish Council
- The Ivers Parish Council
- The Lee Parish Council
- Waddesdon Parish Council
- West Wycombe Parish Council
- Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council

Local Residents

- 478 local residents

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

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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