

Gloucestershire

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Organisation Name: Gloucestershire County Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Dear Boundary Commission,

I would like to endorse the attached submission by the Gloucestershire Conservative Group to the proposed division boundary proposals in Gloucestershire.

In addition, I would like to submit my own additional submission attached from my perspective as County Councillor for Pittville & Prestbury, Borough Councillor for Pittville and Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group in the Cheltenham Borough Council.

Best wishes

Cllr Stephan Fifield

Attached Documents:

- Councillor Fifield submission.docx
- Gloucestershire County Council Conservatives Submission Final.docx

Dear Boundary Commision

I am the County Councillor for Pittville & Prestbury, Borough Councillor for Pittville and Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group in Cheltenham Borough Council. I live in the Pittville ward and have done for 8 years and have previously lived in the St Paul's ward for 2 years.

I appreciate that the Boundary Commision has a difficult job, and sometimes must make decisions that please no one. I also acknowledge the commission visited the area before putting this proposal forward.

But I believe that this proposal: to create two new divisions of St Paul's & Pittville and Swindon Village & Prestbury, at closer inspection, fails by its own criteria for electoral equality, local governance and respecting local communities.

It would also result in big damage to local democracy, all at substantial cost, when a clear and simple alternative that would achieve the commission's objectives is easily available.

The Conservative Groups Counter Proposal that has been suggested, to move the Winterborne Estate from one division to the next, is a simple change to the boundaries that solves the issue of Electoral Quality with better results of the Boundary Commision's own proposal with hardly any cost due to its remoteness, it's self-containment and by the fact the estate is not adopted by the Highways network. As someone who has spoken to residents of that estate, they generally feel no attachment to the current division of Pittville & Prestbury, and many would welcome the change as they are on the west side of Tommy Taylors Lane which is natural border for the St Paul's & Swindon Village.

Reason 1: Effect on Local Government

My main concern with the proposal is that these new boundaries would create major disruption for no tangible benefits.

It would disrupt the management of the Highways network that runs around Evesham Road, Prestbury Road and New Barn Lane, that is a literal circuit, and would sever it on all these majors' roads mixing responsibility between divisions, making highways issues harder to deal. As the County Councillor, having a clearly defined highways network under my purview has always made my job working for the benefit of residents much more effective.

This proposal would also disrupt the management of public festivals such as the Racecourse and the Pittville Park Festival that currently sit clearly within one division, these news proposals would put the Racecourse in one division, while externalising all the costs (such as highways and parking management) into another division closer into the town centre – mudding the waters between representation and residents' ability to express their views. In addition, if 2 councillors had different views in these new divisions as to the approach to take in managing the Gold Cup, it could cause even more disruption and blockages.

Reason 2: The new Swindon Village & Prestbury division

Secondly, from my perspective, the new Swindon Village & Prestbury division is problematic. It will bind two completely separate population centers of residents with distinctly different interests. While some divisions are larger than this hypothetical one, rural communities are often pulled together by a few specific main roads that stitch them together giving them a shared interest.

In contrast, the Highways interests of Swindon Village proper and Prestbury Village proper are on different sides of Cheltenham, access the Highways network in different ways, and are only connected by Swindon Lane several miles apart, which is split in-between by the new St Pauls & Pittville division again highlighting the distance between the two areas. This distance would also affect the creation of new institutions that help residents come together such as voluntary groups and people hubs.

In addition, I am surprised by the Commissions suggestion that there is demand for a “Outer” Cheltenham division. I’ve never had a single resident suggest this was something they think would make their services any better or make them feel better represented. In fact, to residents I have spoken to about this, their response has been a feeling of being more and more disconnected from Cheltenham’s political community and making them feel that their vote will be worth less than it is now.

Reason 3: Pittville & Prestbury should be protected

Thirdly, it should also be highlighted that Pittville & Prestbury is a well-established community, with shared institutions, and historical connections. In fact, Cheltenham’s first ever Spa waters were in fact in Prestbury, and moved over to Pittville in the 18th Century, again binding the areas historically.

As the Conservative Counter proposal makes clear. Pittville & Prestbury is a clear political community who have the same local services and experience the same local political issues such as road and pavement maintenance and how to manage the Cheltenham Gold Cup. This close-knit community has created community hubs and institutions such as the Pittville Park, Prestbury Playing Fields, the Pittville Student Village, the Pittville Pump Room and how to deal with the Cheltenham Racecourse. All these institutions currently have clear political leadership that can take responsibility for representing residents. This has only been possible due to the closeness of the population centres that Pittville & Prestbury contain.

Reason 4: Many residents see these plans as mischief making

Finally, on a more political note, may I say that it has also come as a surprise to many local people that the provenance of this proposal is the Cheltenham Labour Party. The CLP has a local reputation for making random and unreasoned proposals that do not support the interests of residents, they farcically attempted to remove Pittville from the Cheltenham parliamentary constituency as part of that review. It should be remembered that the Labour party have no representation in the whole of Cheltenham at any level of government, and in the last round of Borough Council elections did not even run candidates. It is fair to say that they have no local knowledge of the communities that they have proposed to destroy. It is therefore not surprising that local Liberal Democrats, who do have representation in this area at both Borough and County Council level, are also against this change as they are aware of the damage this could cause to local democracy. Democracy is based on a sense of fairness and trust. It is my fear that if these proposals were kept and implemented that they will be known by many residents as Labour Party troublemaking and gerrymandering.

In conclusion, I hope the Boundary Commission will withdraw this Labour Party proposal and will consider the Conservative Groups counter proposal. This proposal will solve the issue of electoral equality and keep together 2 well defined and effective divisions. This is the best result for the Commission and local residents.

Gloucestershire County Council
Conservatives
Boundary review consultation submission

Cheltenham

Supported proposals

- All Saints & Oakley
- Battledown & Charlton Kings
- Benhall & Up Hatherly
- Charlton Park & College
- Hesters Way & Springbank
- Lansdown & Park
- Leckhampton & warden Hill
- St Mark's & St Peter's

Suggested counter proposals

Replace

- Swindon Village & Prestbury
- St Paul's & Pittville

With

- Swindon Village & St Paul's
- Pittville & Prestbury

Details of which polling districts we propose to move as below. Changes from the Boundary Commission's published draft proposals are highlighted.

Comparison of Boundary Commission Proposal with Counter Proposal (Current Divisions with Improvements)

Boundary Commission Divisions	Total Electors	Comparison to 2029 Average (9504 electors)	2029 Variance
Pittville & St Pauls	8973	-531	-6%
Swindon Village & Prestbury	8821	-683	-7%
Counter Proposal Divisions	Total Electors	Comparison to 2029 Average (9504 electors)	2029 Variance
Pittville & Prestbury	9319	-185	-2%
Swindon Village & St Pauls	9142	-298	-4%

Details of which polling districts we propose to move from current division boundaries are below.

Division	Polling District	Current 2023 Boundary Electors	Counter Proposal Electors	Comments
Pittville & Prestbury	LA	3250	2952	Proposed Change: Removal of Winterborne Estate (Denman Avenue, Jodami Crescent, Fort Leney Walk, Kauto Star Gardens, Little Owl Walk, Pas Seul Street, Prince Regent Avenue) into St Pauls PB Division. 298 electors
	LB	1458	1458	
	LC	98	98	
	MA	4319	4319	
	MB	492	492	
Total		9617	9319	
Variance	9504 (2029 Average)	+113	-185	
Swindon Village & St Pauls	RA	1496	1496	Proposed Change: Addition of Winterborne Estate (Denman Avenue, Jodami Crescent, Fort Leney Walk, Kauto Star Gardens, Little Owl Walk, Pas Seul Street, Prince Regent Avenue) into St Pauls PB Division. 298 electors
	RB	975	975	
	RC	1943	1943	
	PA	3424	3424	
	PB	1006	1304	
Total		8844	9142	
Variance	9504 (2029 Average)	-660	-298	

Supporting information

We are opposed to the destruction of the existing Pittville and Prestbury division to split it unnaturally into the above proposal.

The Boundary Commission has stated three main considerations when proposing changes:

1. Electoral equality
2. Local communities and identities
3. The provision of good effective local government.

The proposed changes, while well-meaning for electoral equality, clearly fail on count 2 and 3. There are also better ways to tackle electoral equality that do not destroy a well-established local and political community.

Pittville & Prestbury is a well-knit and well-established community

Pittville and Prestbury wards are a well-established ward couple and have been together for over 20 years. They have similar issues and interests due to their closeness, highways network, close population centres and institutions.

They share many major roads such as Albert Road, Evesham Road, Tommy Taylors Lane and Prestbury Road that egress and ingress road traffic through Northeast Cheltenham. They also share close population centres that orientate around the highways network. This has created a clear political community who receive the same local services (such as public transport) and experience the same local political issues such as road and pavement maintenance and how to manage the Cheltenham Gold Cup. This close-knit community has created and uses community hubs and institutions such as the Pittville Park, Prestbury Playing Fields, the Pittville Student Village, and the Pittville Pump Room as well as event hubs such as the Cheltenham Racecourse. All these institutions and event centres currently have clear political representation that can take responsibility for representing residents.

These new boundaries would damage local governance

An example of how this works in action is Race week. The biggest local issue in Pittville & Prestbury is Cheltenham Gold Cup (supported by other race weeks during the year). It gathers national press coverage, attracts millions of tourists a year, and has a major impact on the local community. Currently, challenges such as footfall, parking and traffic all come under one clear division councillor with a close-knit highway network team, giving residents a clear representative to communicate their concerns and needs and allowing them vote for or against their representatives if they are doing a bad job or have the wrong plan.

The Boundary Commission proposal to sever Pittville & Prestbury would cut the area down Evesham Road, this would make the governance of managing this event much harder to orchestrate as Pittville and Prestbury (the most affected wards) would no longer be under the same representation and clear leadership. It would also destroy local community hubs that have evolved to solve problems around the race course such as voluntary groups that try and capture residents views. With the new Boundary Commission proposals, you would create two separate divisions with the communities split across two separate divisions (Swindon Village and St Pauls are not affected by Race week to the same degree). This would also mean that the voice of residents to express concerns or approval with ways to deal with the Racecourse would be watered down and muddy the relationship between the people and their representatives. This example could be applied to events such as the Prestbury Festival or festival events in Pittville Park.

In addition, the new proposed Swindon Village and Prestbury division is not linked by any shared road or institutions except Swindon Lane, which is split by the north border of St Pauls (highlighting the long distance between the two wards). The new division would again also split the main roads that go in and out of Cheltenham making local governance harder and the voice of residents devalued. The population centres of the two wards are also vastly apart with one being clearly in the west of Cheltenham and the other in the east with completely different common highways network interests.

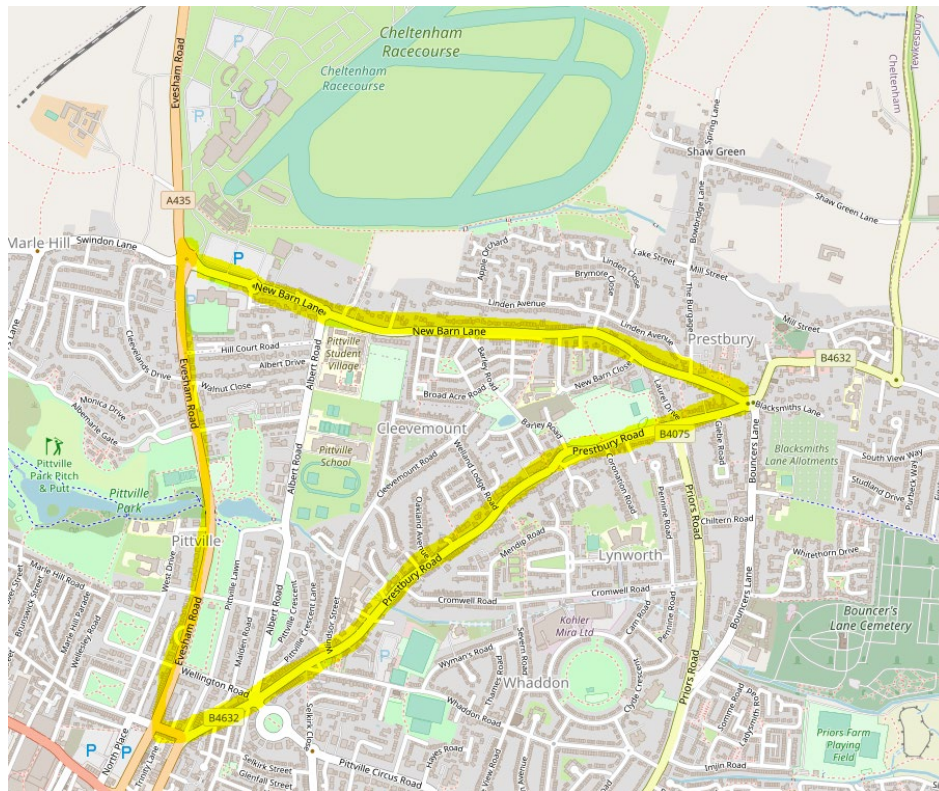


Image 1. Pittville & Prestbury is clearly defined by New Barn Lane, Prestbury Road and Evesham Road (highlighted in yellow). This has created a shared local and political identity when dealing with roads, pavements and institutions like the Racecourse, Student Village and Pittville Pump Rooms, as well as creating a clearly defined population centre.

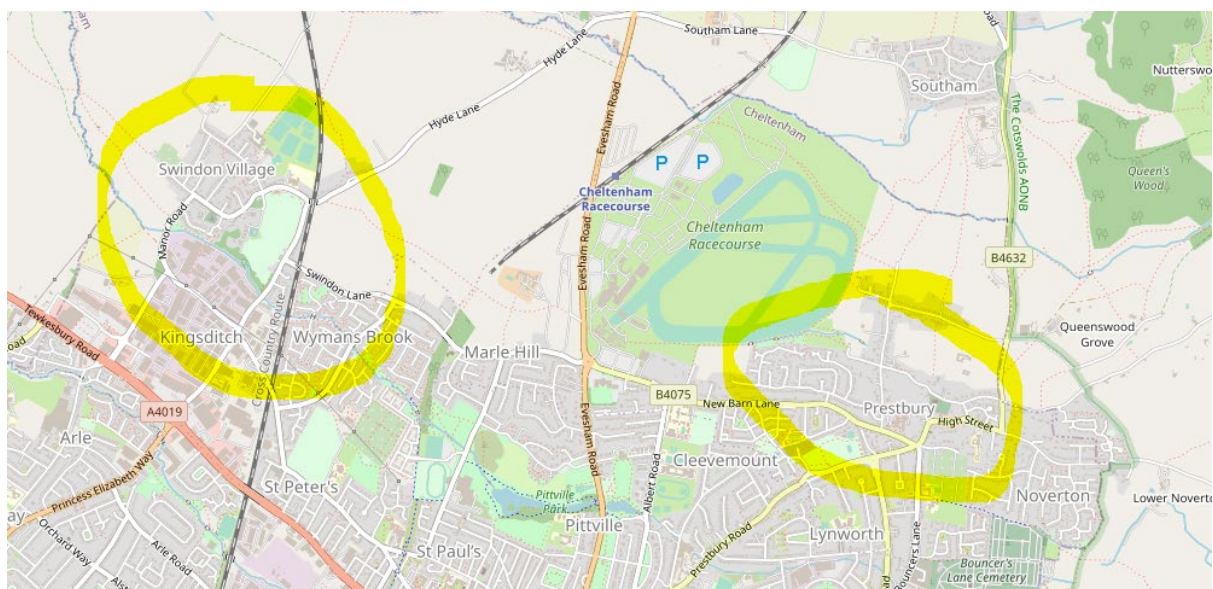


Image 2. The population centres of Swindon Village & Prestbury are incredibly distant from each other. They share only one road that is split by St Paul's and do not share any institutions or a local highways network.

Swindon Village & St Pauls has close population centres and a well-connected highways network

We believe that the current division of Swindon Village & St Pauls also has a clear shared interest in staying coupled. They have close population centres and well-established highways network. Residents have shared focus in the highways network going in and out to the West of town especially around Tewksbury Road and Swindon Road.

Political isolation from Parliamentary Constituency in “Outer Cheltenham”

We are also concerned by the logic of a “Cheltenham Outer” division. Many residents in Swindon Village and Prestbury already feel isolated by political discourse in Cheltenham as they are already excluded by the parliamentary constituency boundary. By being coupled with other wards that sit within that constituency it makes residents feel that they have a greater voice and wider dialogue in Cheltenham's affairs. By removing them entirely from Cheltenham and putting them in their own division, this would increase frustration and a sense of political isolation from the general discourse of politics in Cheltenham. Many residents that I know already feel that if they are not involved in Cheltenham's constituency then why are not just put entirely into Tewksbury to make things clearer.

Initial Conclusion

In conclusion, Pittville & Prestbury and Swindon Village & St Pauls both have a clear and unique local identity due to the closeness of their populations, shared institutions, events and highways network and have a clear interest to maintain their couplings for the provision of decent quality local government and representation.

Our Counter Proposal

Our Counter Proposal 1) maintains current divisions, 2) one small alteration to those boundaries, and not only keeps the established divisions maintaining their integrity and governance, but **solves the Boundary Commission objective for Electoral Equality, as well as improving the Commission's target variance.**

- **Move the Winterbourne estate (298 electors) from the LA Polling District (Pittville & Prestbury) to PB Polling District (Swindon Village & St Pauls).**
- The Winterborne Estate consists of Denman Avenue, Jodami Crescent, Fort Leney Walk, Kauto Star Gardens, Little Owl Walk, Pas Seul Street, Prince Regent Avenue, and has 298 electors.
- It is a new building estate that has a strong identity and housing association specific to the estate.
- It is the only community in Pittville & Prestbury completely west of Tommy Talyors Lane. Tommy Taylors Lane is a natural boundary between the 2 divisions and is surrounded by streets in the Swindon Village & St Pauls division also west of Tommy Taylors Lane.
- As shown by the table above, the transfer for 298 electors would establish and improved electoral variance of -2% and -4% in comparison to the Boundary Commission -6% and -7%.
- These changes could be done in a managed way that would maintain a clear political community while also dealing with issues such as population variance and achieve the same outcomes. This is a win-win counter proposal.

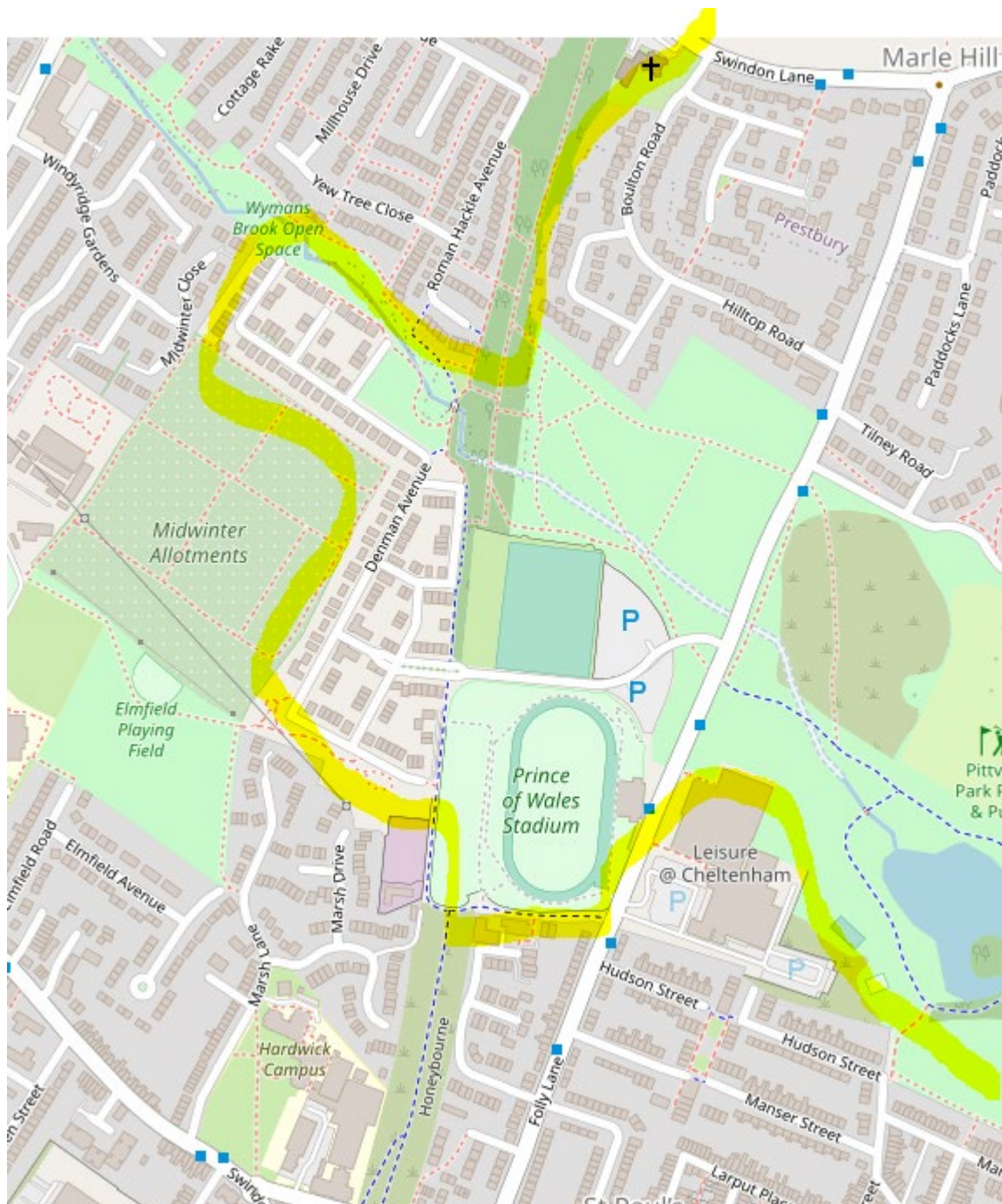


Image 3. The Winterborne Estate lies on the west of Tommy Taylors Lane. It is a new state with a strong local identity focused on it's estate status. This area could easily be move to the St Pauls & Swindon Village division which surrounds it from the north, west and south.

Cotswolds

Supported proposals

- Cirencester Beeches
- Cirencester Park
- Fairford & Lechlade on Thames
- South Cerney
- Tetbury

Suggested counter proposals

- Bourton-on-the-Water
- Campden Vale
- Stow-on-the-Wold

Details of which polling districts we propose to move as below. Changes from the Boundary Commission's published draft proposals are highlighted.

Division	Polling District	Electors
Bourton-on-the-water	AH	624
	BL	754
	BM	2688
	CA	696
	CE	120
	CG	195
	CH	127
	CI	218
	CJ	139
	CM	101
	DD	138
	HA	42
	HD	177
	NC	481
	ND	1597
	NE	50
	RA	182
	SD	306
	SH	324
	TH	53
	WE	100
	WJ	479
	YA	76
	UB	136
	LE	190
Total		9993
Campden Vale	AJ	64
	BD	104

	BI	450
	BJ	1062
	BK	302
	BN	251
	CD	2265
	CN	136
	DC	114
	EB	578
	LD	441
	MC	1916
	SA	98
	SE	82
	TG	244
	WD	365
	CQ	57
	GB	262
	NA	309
	TA	349
Total		10361
Stow-on-the-Wold	AC	61
	BH	392
	BR	296
	EE	122
	GA	317
	IA	91
	LB	234
	MB	147
	MD	2631
	ME	2080
	OA	351
	SO	1531
	SQ	375
	UA	1622
	WB	174
	WK	98
Total		10522

Supporting information

Broadwell Parish (BR) out of Campden-Vale and into Stow-on-the-Wold

By moving Broadwell Parish, a greater electoral equity is achieved between the two divisions as it brings Campden below the 10% variance threshold. More importantly however, in terms of community cohesion, Broadwell has very strong economic links with and fits more naturally with Stow. Geographically it sits on the opposite side of the Fosse Way A429 to the rest of Campden Vale division. Broadwell has worked closely with its neighbouring settlement in developing the Neighbourhood Plan for Stow-on-the-Wold. Inevitably matters of local infrastructure for Broadwell

are much more suited as sitting with a county councillor who also represents Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold.

Slaughters (LE and UB) out of Stow-on-the-Wold and into Bourton and Northleach

The two Slaughter parishes, Lower and Upper both look economically towards Bourton-on-the-Water, rather than towards Stow-on-the-Wold. Bourton being, geographically, the closer Service Centre. Matters of local infrastructure for the Slaughters would, inevitably, have a better fit if served by a county councillor who also represents Bourton-on-the-Water. With the parish of Lower Slaughter adjoining and crossing over the Fosse Way A429, there is the inevitable cross-interest in matters of planning and highways. Moving the Slaughters into Bourton and Northleach division would also help deliver greater electoral equality across not just the two divisions but Campden Vale also.

Electoral Division names

We propose that the current Campden-Vale division be renamed as North Cotswolds to better reflect its proposed geography. The newly added parts are some 12 miles plus distant from the town of Chipping Campden which would not be considered as their Service Centre. The word Vale is also only relevant to a small geographic part of the north of the division - the villages along the B4632. To the south of this road - substantially the larger part of the division - the expression Cotswolds or wolds is more relevant.

We propose that the name of the current Stow-on-the-Wold Division be renamed as Moreton and Stow Division to better reflect the fact that the division incorporates two settlements of town status, particularly with Moreton having the greater population.

Gloucester

Supported proposals

- Abbey
- Barnwood & Hucclecote
- Barton & Tredworth
- Coney Hill & Matson
- Grange & Kingsway
- Kingsholm & Wotton
- Longlevens
- Quedgeley

Suggested counter proposals

- Hempsted & Westgate
- Tuffley

Details of which polling districts we propose to move as below. Changes from the Boundary Commission's published draft proposals are highlighted.

Division	Polling District	Electors
Hempsted & Westgate	P1	1229
	M2	760
	W1	2227
	W2	1989
	W4	2468
Total		8673
Tuffley	P2	1197
	M3	760
	M4	1713
	T1	2566
	T2	2433
Total		8669

Supporting information

P2 out of Hempsted & Westgate and into Tuffley

P2 contains several key locations that are very important to residents represented in the current Tuffley ED including Tuffley Park, the second largest green space in the division, a local school attended by many constituents in the Tuffley ED and sports centres synonymous with the area. Many constituents of P2 also regularly use St. Barnabas Church, just over the boundary in T1. These residents therefore have a strong local identity as part of Tuffley and therefore to divide this division in such an artificial way would negative effect local community cohesion and electoral representation. These residents are best served by a county councillor who represents not just their home, but the locations of fundamental

importance to them that are also are geographically right next door: their schools, green spaces and churches.

We also note that should Tuffley ED lose P2 the division's geography would not be continuous. It would mean that a large chunk in the middle of the division would have a different Councillor, which may lead to confusion for residents and leave them feeling disconnected. This is particularly acute in the east of the polling district where residents in New Dawn view would end up with a different Councillor to those directly across the road from them and immediately over them railway line, despite all using the same community spaces and facing common issues. A Councillor for Hempsted & Westgate would be unlikely to resonate with these constituents' issues and, historically, councillors for this area tend to live in the north of the division meaning they would be geographically far removed from constituents.

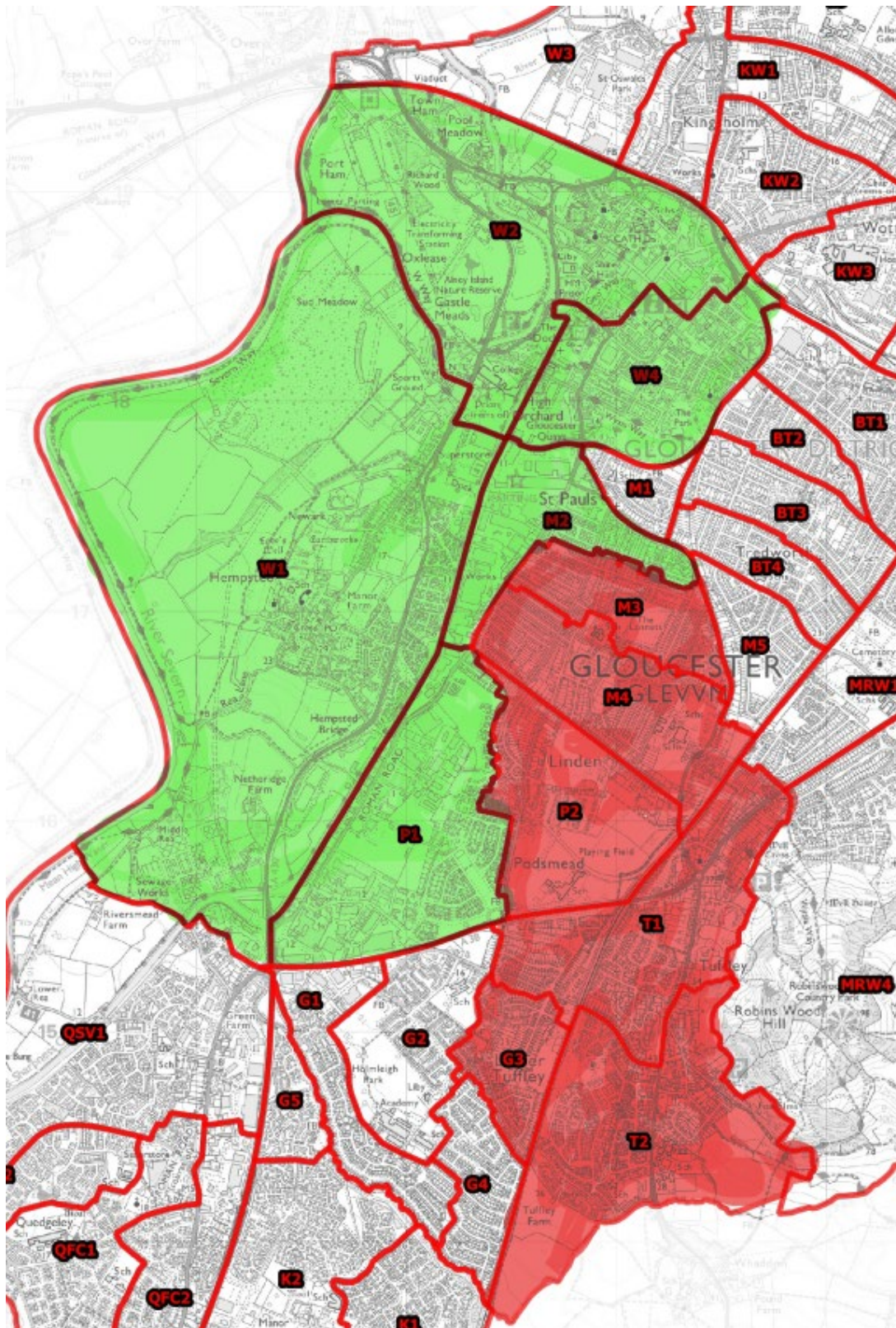
M2 out of Tuffley and into Hempsted & Westgate

We make a similar argument for the continued inclusion of M2 in the Hempsted and Westgate ED. Retaining this polling district is important to the cohesion and identify of Hempstead & Westgate. M2 shares many of the same local issues as the rest of the division (particularly the east of W1) - particularly around environment, facilities used by constituents and employment. These are not issues shared by the rest of Tuffley division.

Dividing the division as we suggest is a much more natural separation in terms of geography, identify, and clarity over electoral accountability.

Renaming Tuffley ED 'Tuffley & Linden ED'

Our final suggestion is that due to these new boundaries, a more appropriate name for Tuffley ED would be one that includes more residents who don't identify as part of Tuffley. Therefore, we propose changing the name to 'Tuffley & Linden ED' which would include residents living in the area around Linden Road.



Key:

Red: Tuffley & Linden ED

Green: Hempsted & Westgate ED

Forest of Dean

Supported proposals

- Blakeney & Bream
- Cinderford
- Coleford
- Drybrook & Lydbrook
- Lydney
- Mitcheldean
- Newent
- Sedbury

Suggested counter proposals

- N/A

Supporting information

- N/A

Stroud

Supported proposals

- Cam Valley
- Dursley
- Hardwicke & Severn
- Haresfield & Upton St Leonards
- Nailsworth
- Rodborough
- Stonehouse
- Wotton-under-Edge

Suggested counter proposals

- Bisley & Painswick
- Minchinhampton
- Stroud Central

Details of which polling districts we propose to move as below. Changes from the Boundary Commission's published draft proposals are highlighted.

Division	Polling District	Electors
Bisley & Painswick	BA	707
	BB	513
	BC	510
	PUA	409
	PUB	393
	PUD	1771
	PUE	386
	PUF	224
	PUG	238
	CHA	1549
	CHB	1438
	CHC	1510
Total		9648
Minchinhampton	CHD	491
	CHE	237
	MAA	260
	MBB	810
	MCC	2041
	MDD	770
	TA	624
	TB	922
	TC	886

	AWA	774
	RC	224
	RD	189
	RG	321
Total		8549
Nailsworth	AWB	983
	MEE	5
	NA	644
	NB	2131
	NC	1371
	ND	961
	TSB	1709
	TSC	391
	CUB	294
	CUC	37
Total		8526
Stroud Central	STCA	750
	STCB	437
	STCC	627
	STFA	1927
	STSA	556
	STSB	1071
	STUA	1585
	STVA	970
	STVB	747
	STTA	1552
Total		10222
Rodborough	CA	1334
	CB	947
	CC	1501
	CD	1839
	CE	369
	RA	1069
	RB	417
	RE	943
	RF	296
	RWRA	310
	RWRB	Split with Haresfield & Upton St Leonards ~ 235
Total		~9260

Supporting information

Stroud Trinity (STTA) out of Bisley & Painswick and into Stroud Central

Stroud Trinity is clearly part of Stroud Town and has more in common with Stroud Town. It 's transport links are into Stroud, and the residents turn to Stroud for shopping and entertainment. Bisley and Painswick have a different feel to Stroud Trinity and look to shop in both Stroud but also in Gloucester and Cheltenham. There is no clear affinity between Stroud Trinity and Bisley & Painswick.

Thrupp (TA, TB, TC) out of Bisley & Painswick and into Minchinhampton

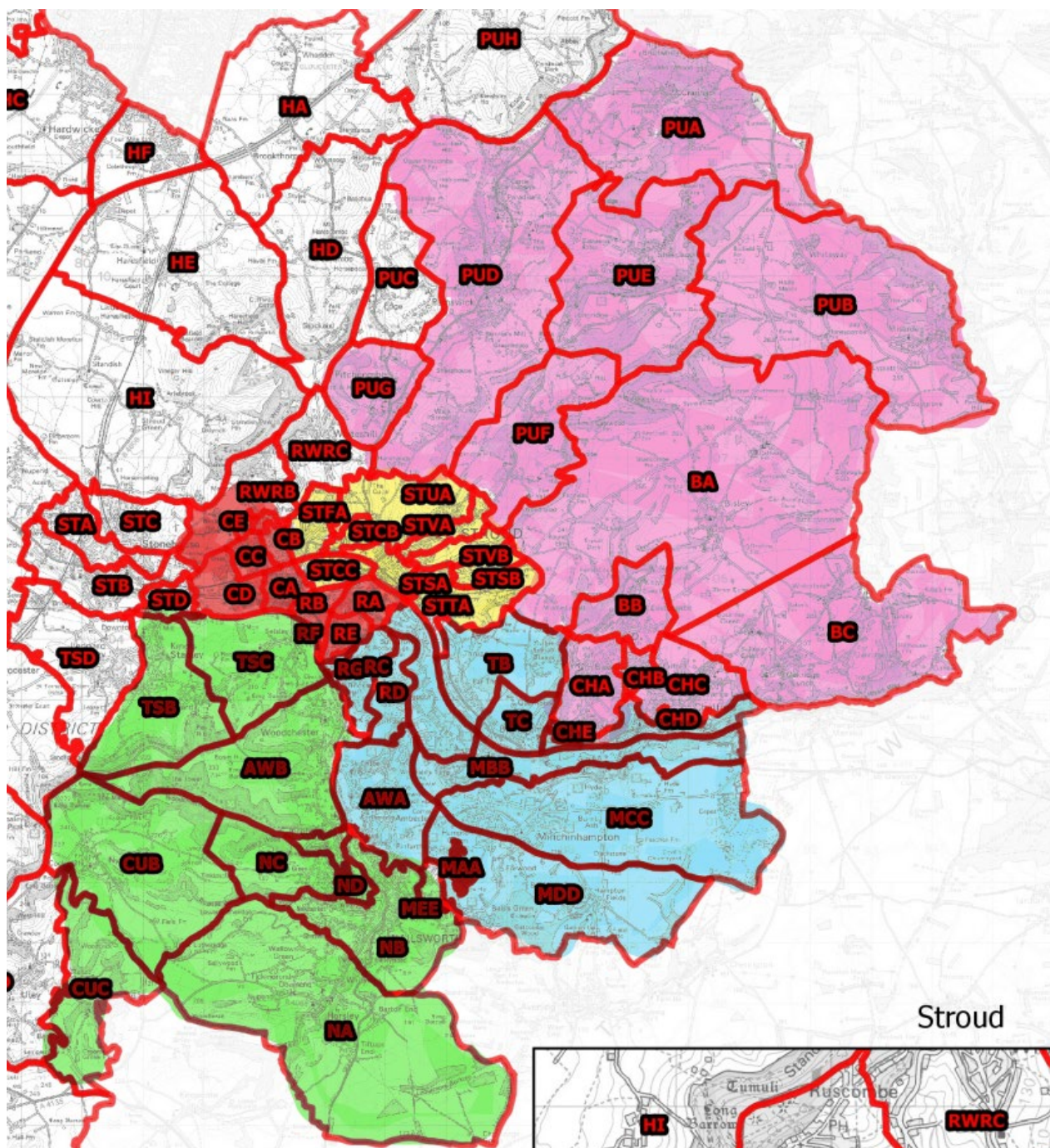
The transport corridor of the road (A419) , Canal (whose restoration is on-going) and Railway acts as a clear border between Bisley and Thrupp, The limited number of crossing points, three make a clear boundary. Thrupp fits better with Minchinhampton at the top of the hill.

Move Chalford (CHA, CHB, CHC) out of Minchinhampton and into Bisley & Painswick

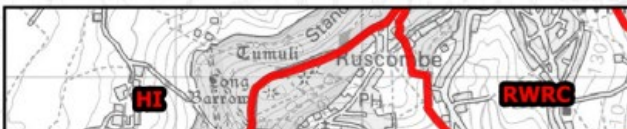
As with the above proposal, Chalford is on the Bisley and Painswick side of the transport corridor. It looks towards Bisley and Painswick and not Minchinhampton.

Move RC, RD and RG out of Rodborough and into Minchinhampton

There is a distinct change in character in the existing Rodborough Ward when you climb the hill out of Rodborough and onto the common. This creates an artificial connection between two disconnected communities. At the bottom of the hill there is a clear and strong association with Stroud, however when you reach the top of the hill the association is clearly with other inhabitants and settlements on the Common. There is a clear more rural and lower density to the area. This is why we propose moving RC, RD and RG into Minchinhampton which is their natural community. Residents in these polling districts have a geographical and physical connection with Minchinhampton.



Red: Rodborough ED



Tewkesbury

Supported proposals

- Bishop's Cleeve
- Brockworth
- Churchdown
- Highnam
- Severn Vale
- Winchcombe & Woodmancote
- Tewkesbury East
- Tewkesbury west

Suggested counter proposals

- N/A

Supporting information

- N/A