

Wakefield

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Comment text:

The attached submission was approved at Wakefield MDC's Full Council meeting on Wednesday 24th January 2024. As the Council's Monitoring Officer and Returning Officer I was asked by Council to forward the submission to you on their behalf. The submission was developed by a cross party working group of Elected Members which subsequently received the support from the wider Council membership.

Attached Documents:

- wmdc-submission-to-lgbce-on-ward-patterns-v2.docx



**Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on
Warding Arrangements as part of the Electoral Review of Wakefield Metropolitan
District Council**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) informed the Council in 2022 of its intention to carry out an Electoral Review of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council focusing on the council size (number of elected councillors to run the council and the number of wards) and its ward boundaries.
- 1.2** This report sets out the Council's preferred future pattern of wards to be submitted as part of public consultation on phase two of its Electoral Review. The proposed warding patterns within this submission adhere to the statutory criteria governing electoral reviews as set out by the LGBCE.
- 1.3** Following a preliminary period where the LGBCE gathered information including detailed mapping and electoral forecasts, the LGBCE sought the Council's views on Council size. Both officer and member working groups were established to consider Council size and, on the 18 October 2023, Council resolved to endorse the recommendation that the submission on Council size should be 63 councillors.
- 1.4** The recommendations in this report therefore reflect the outcome of phase one of Wakefield's Electoral Review (conducted January 2023 – September 2023) following which the LGBCE 'minded to' decision was that the Council should retain its council size of 63 councillors and 21 wards.
- 1.5** The Cross-Party Working Group considered the Commission's 'technical guidance' and the statutory criteria with an overall aim of establishing a pattern of wards that achieves good electoral equality, reflects community identity, and interests and provides for effective and convenient local government. The working group has also sought to use where possible strong easily identifiable boundaries when deciding where ward boundaries should be drawn.

2.0 Statutory Criteria

- 2.1** Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires the LGBCE to have regard to the following statutory criteria:
 - To deliver electoral equality. Each local Councillor should represent roughly the same number of people.

- To reflect community interests and local identities. Establishing electoral arrangements which, as far as possible, maintain local ties where boundaries are easily identifiable.
- To promote effective and convenient local government. Ensuring that new wards can be represented effectively by their elected representatives to conduct its business effectively.

3.0 Equality of Representation

3.1 We have aimed to ensure equality of electoral representation, whilst maintaining community identity.

3.2.1 The proposed ward pattern would result in 21 proposed wards with an electoral forecast within the +/- 10% variance.

3.3 Effective and Convenient Local Government

3.3.1 In creating the new ward patterns consideration has been given to several factors including:

- The geographical size of each proposed ward
- The impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements
- Maintaining the integrity of parish boundaries.

3.4 Community identity

3.4.1 Community identity is hard to define. The LGBCE and Communities and Local Government Guidance on Community Governance Reviews' states that "Community cohesion is about recognising the impact of change and responding to it". Community identity could be the location of public facilities such as doctor's surgeries, hospitals, residents' associations, libraries, and schools. Major roads could be seen to be the focus of an area if they are the location of shops or community facilities. Some areas may be subject to development and population dispersal. For other people the history and tradition of an area may be the basis of its sense of community. Major roads, rivers and railway lines are physical barriers marking the boundary between different communities.

3.4.2 Current ward names have been retained. Several of the ward names have long standing association with the district and others were introduced as part of the previous electoral review and are now embedded names in the fabric of the district.

3.5 Parishes

3.5.1 Parish Councils represent democracy at its most local level. Careful consideration has been given to Parish Councils in the District when deciding on ward patterns and boundaries. It is likely that parishes would be largely unaffected by the proposed wards as people still associate with their parish regardless of which ward they live in.

4.0 Proposed Warding Arrangements for Wakefield MDC

4.1 The Working Group identified the main communities within the district, considering any main roads or natural barriers, such as major roads and any railway lines that act as boundaries between communities. Using their local knowledge of the communities within the district it then proposed warding arrangements that would reflect the community interests, whilst ensuring that the proposals would deliver electoral equality.

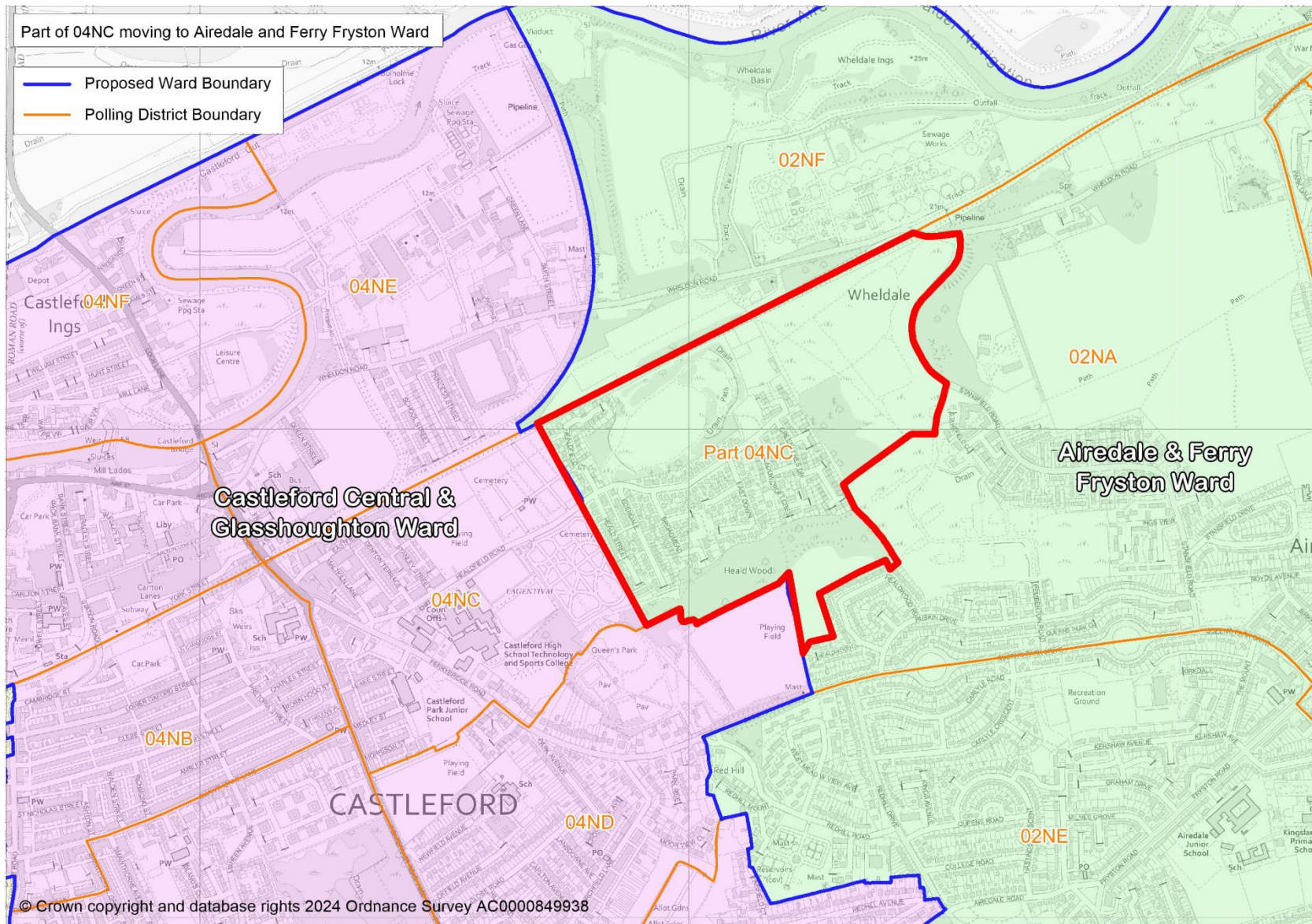
The following section provides details of a proposed warding pattern including:-

- The evidence and rationale behind the determination of each proposed ward.
- The forecast electorate and forecast electorate variance at 2029.
- The proposed ward name; and
- An individual map of each proposed ward arrangement

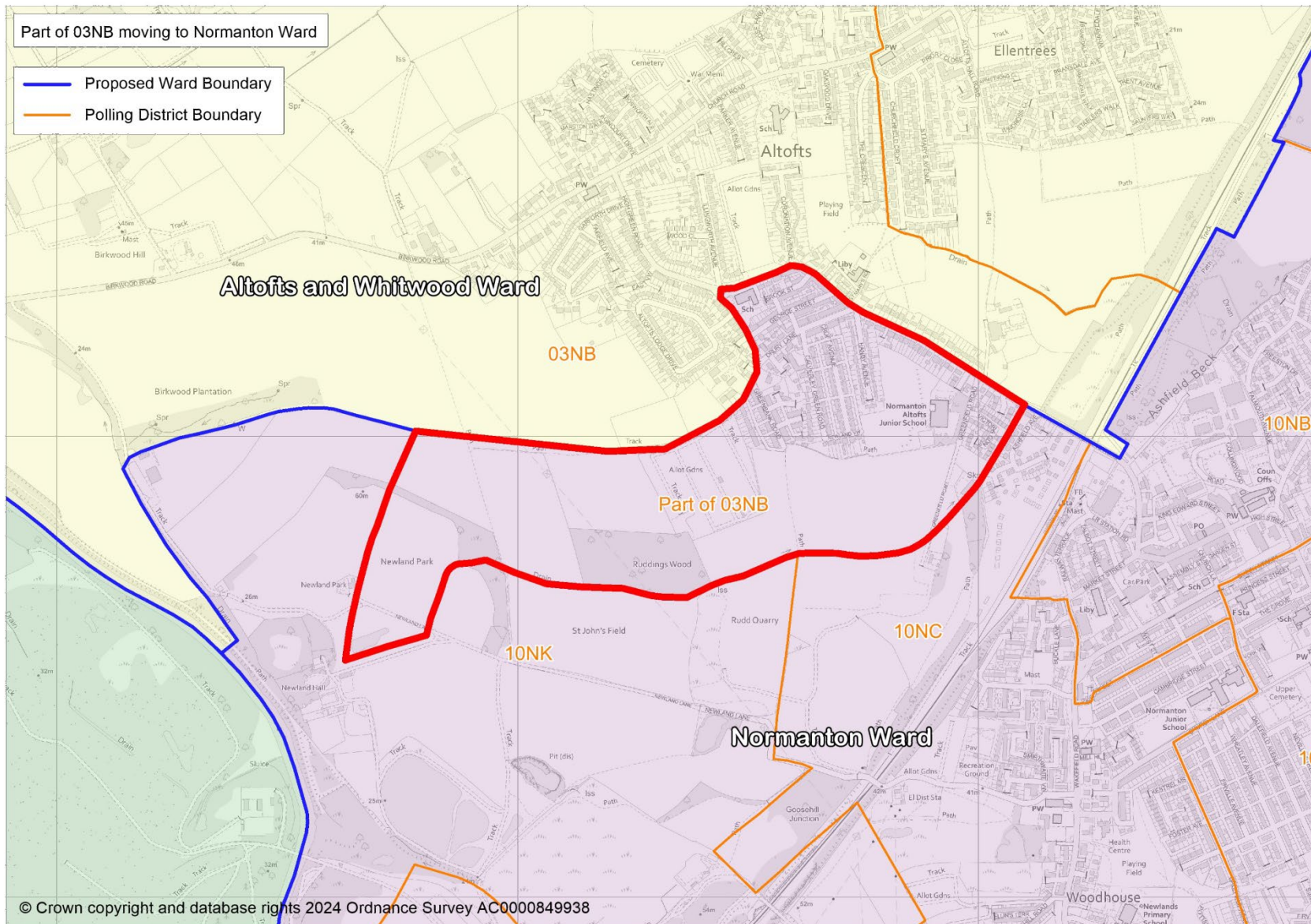
Based on the recommendations below, the predicted electorate for the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council in 2029 which includes projected housing development is as follows:-

Electoral Ward	Predicted Electorate in 2029	% Variance from the District Average
Ward 1 - Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton	14,404	4.45%
Ward 2 - Airedale and Ferry Fryston	13,402	-2.81%
Ward 3 - Altofts and Whitwood	15,063	9.23%
Ward 4 - Castleford Central & Glasshoughton	12,969	-5.96%
Ward 5 - Crofton, Ryhill and Walton	12,739	-7.63%
Ward 6 - Featherstone	14,307	3.75%
Ward 7 - Hemsworth	13,341	-3.26%
Ward 8 - Horbury and South Ossett	12,701	-7.90%
Ward 9 - Knottingley	12,506	-9.31%
Ward 10 - Normanton	14,874	7.86%
Ward 11 - Ossett	13,535	-1.85%
Ward 12 - Pontefract North	14,508	5.20%
Ward 13 - Pontefract South	14,835	7.57%
Ward 14 - South Elmsall and South Kirkby	14,872	7.84%
Ward 15 - Stanley and Outwood East	14,607	5.92%
Ward 16 - Wakefield East	12,975	-5.91%
Ward 17 - Wakefield North	13,107	-4.96%
Ward 18 - Wakefield Rural	14,898	8.03%
Ward 19 - Wakefield South	13,030	-5.52%
Ward 20 - Wakefield West	12,704	-7.88%
Ward 21 - Wrenthorpe and Outwood West	14,221	3.12%
Total Predicted Electorate in 2029	289,598	
Ward Average	13,790	

Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 2 – Airedale and Ferry Fryston</p> <p>Ward 4 – Castleford Central and Glasshoughton</p>	<p>13,402</p> <p>12,969</p>	<p>-2.81%</p> <p>-5.96%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The Airedale and Ferry Fryston Ward has a current electorate of 11,611 which has a -7% variance from the district average. In 2029, the electorate is projected to grow to 12,397 a slower growth rate than other parts of the district resulting in a -8.8% variance from the Council average. Castleford Central and Glasshoughton has a current and projected electorate in line with the Council average.</p> <p>To grow the electorate in Ward 2 it is proposed to move part of polling district 04NC (829 electors) from the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward to the Airedale and Ferry Fryston Ward.</p> <p>Whilst being mindful that the projected electorate in the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward would move away from the District average, the projected electorates in 2029 in both Wards would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The proposal is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed.</p> <p>Community identity: A new boundary is proposed at the cemetery which currently sits in the middle of the existing polling district. Castleford Academy will remain within the Castleford Central and Glasshoughton Ward which protects existing community identity.</p>

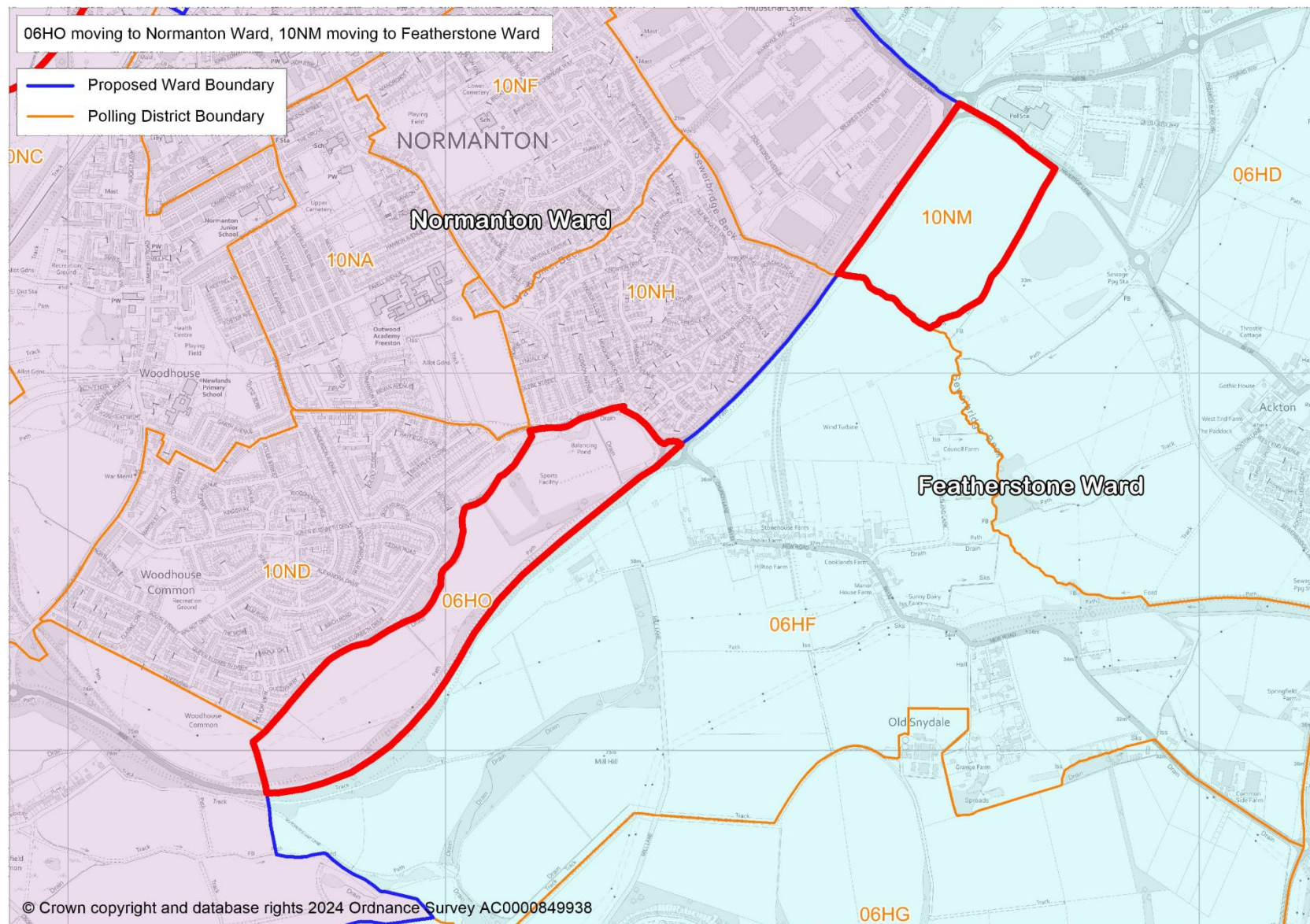


Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 3 – Altofts and Whitwood</p> <p>Ward - 10 Normanton</p>	<p>15,063</p> <p>14,874</p>	<p>9.23%</p> <p>7.86%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The Altofts and Whitwood Ward has seen significant growth since the last electoral review. The current electorate of 14,392 is a variance of 15.3% from the district average. Further housing development in the Ward will see the electorate rise to 15,841 in 2029.</p> <p>To reduce the electorate in the Altofts and Whitwood Ward, it is proposed to redraw the Ward boundary within the 03NB polling district which would see 777 electors transferring to the Normanton Ward.</p> <p>Whilst electorate numbers in the Altofts and Whitwood Ward would remain high, the projected electorate in 2029 would be brought back within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%. This would also be the case for the Normanton Ward.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The proposal is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed.</p> <p>Community identity: The proposal moves part of the existing polling district which adjoins 10NC and 10NK. The proposed transferred area includes Normanton Altofts Junior School which by its very name serves families living in the Normanton and Altofts areas. The Working Group are of the view that the proposed change would not have a detrimental impact on community identity.</p>

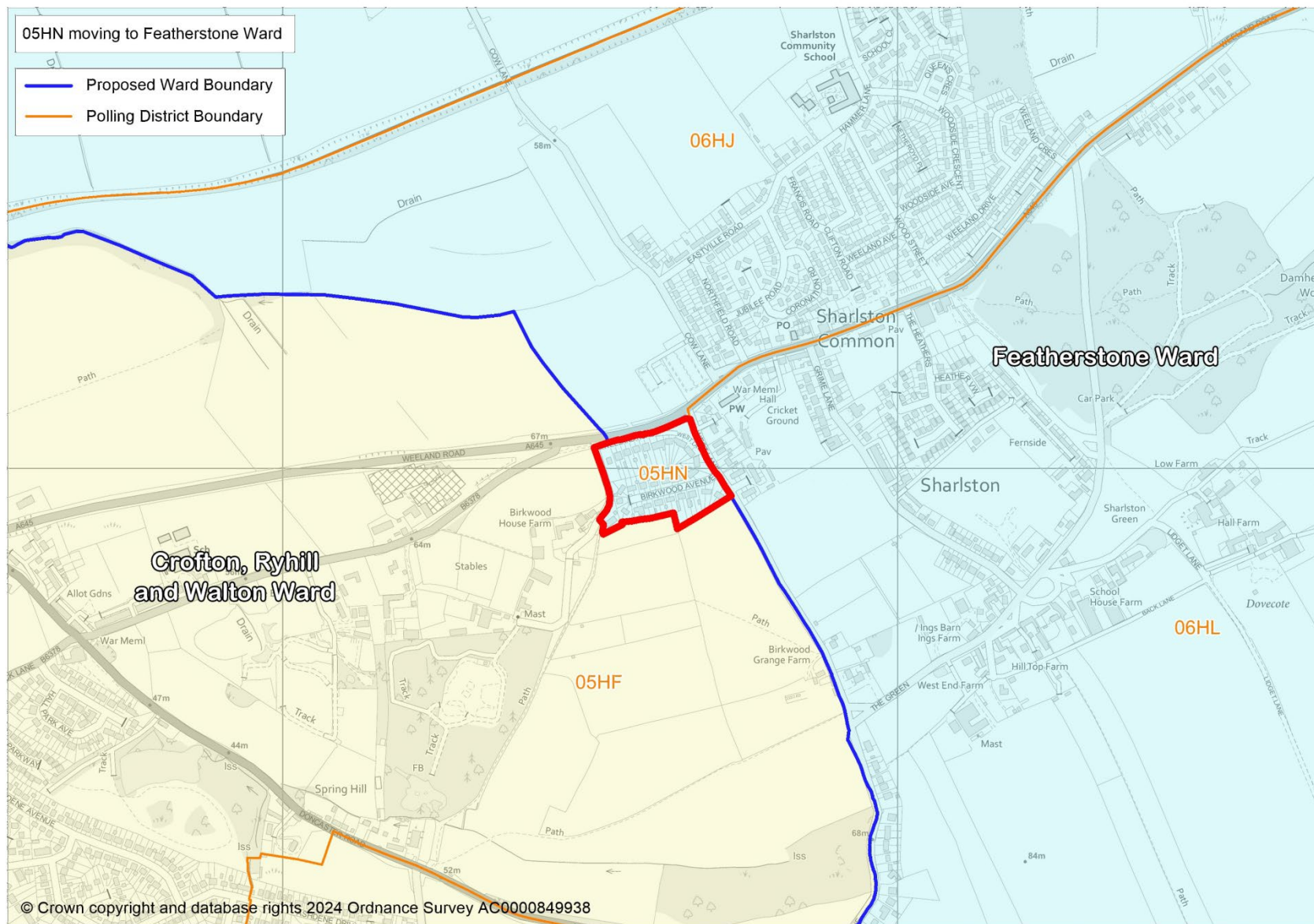


Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward - 10 Normanton</p> <p>Ward – 19 Wakefield South</p>	<p>14,874</p> <p>13,030</p>	<p>7.86%</p> <p>-5.52%</p>	<p>Equality of representation:</p> <p>Since the previous electoral review, the creation of the Wakefield Eastern Relief Road (Neil Fox Way) opened in 2017 running north to south on the eastern edge of Wakefield linking the A638 near Heath Common to the A642 at Stanley. The opening of the road has supported the development of 2,500 new homes at the City Fields development, an urban development to the east of the city. The road forms a distinct boundary between the Normanton and Wakefield South and as such it is proposed that part of polling district 19HE to the east of the road encompassing the existing settled gypsy and traveller site be moved from Wakefield South to Normanton.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government:</p> <p>The proposal is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed.</p> <p>Community identity:</p> <p>The Council run gypsy and traveller site at Heath Common provides permanent accommodation providing 38 family pitches for approximately 250 gypsies and travellers. Normanton Councillors have developed positive links with the community over the years.</p>

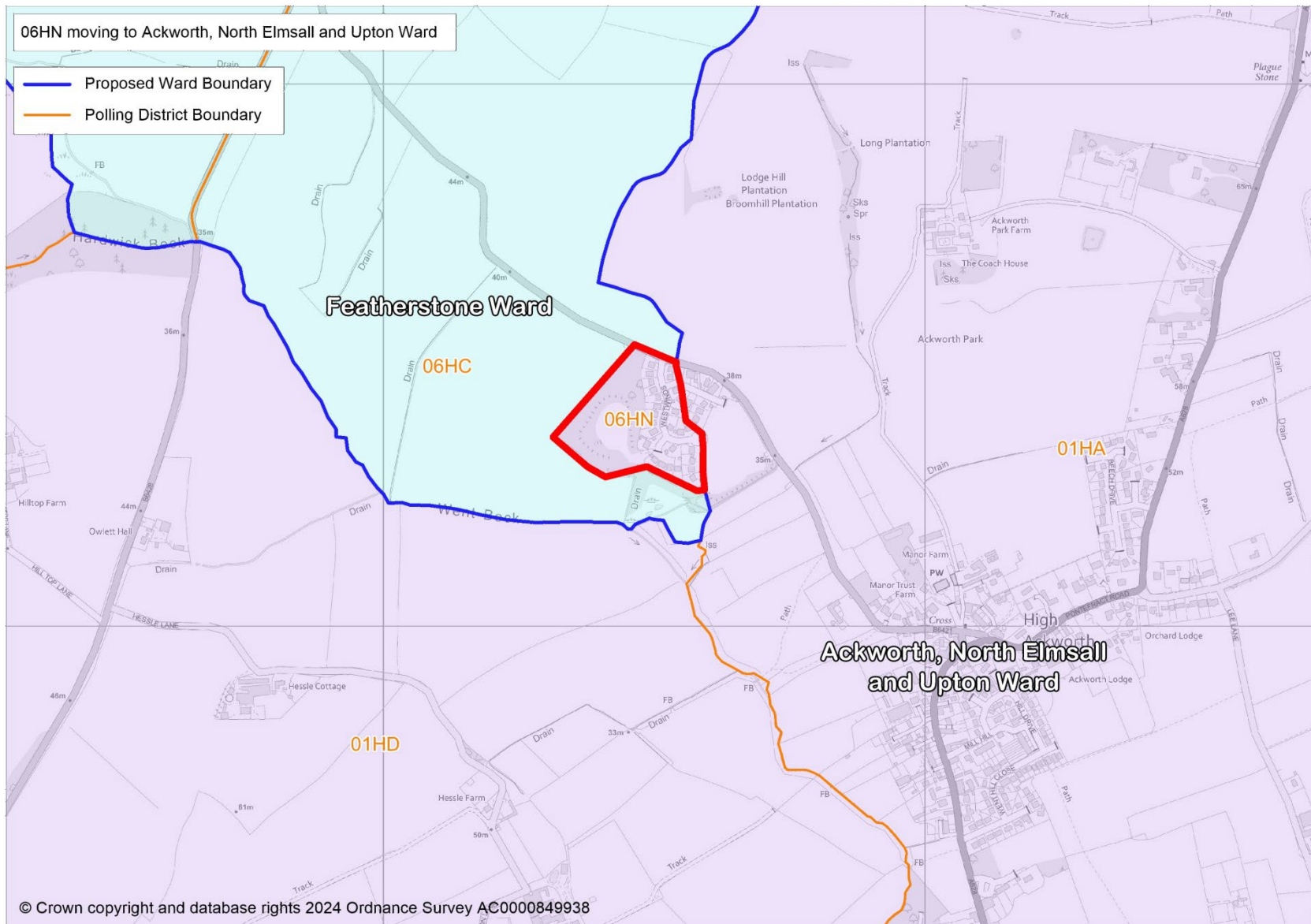
Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward - 10 Normanton</p> <p>Ward – 06 Featherstone</p>	<p>14,874</p> <p>14,307</p>	<p>7.86%</p> <p>3.75%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The proposed changes would see polling district 10NM which currently has zero electors moving from Normanton into the Featherstone Ward. The 10NM polling district falls within the new Featherstone Town Council boundary.</p> <p>Conversely, polling district 06HN (60 electors) falls within the new boundary of Normanton Town Council and as such it is proposed to move this polling district from Featherstone to Normanton.</p> <p>The projected electorates for the two Wards in 2029 would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: Minor changes are proposed to the adjoining boundaries of the Featherstone and Normanton Wards to bring boundaries in line with Town Council boundaries following the recent Community Governance Review.</p> <p>Community identity: Electors in the 06HN polling district have much stronger community links to the Normanton area and the proposal would therefore reinforce existing links.</p>



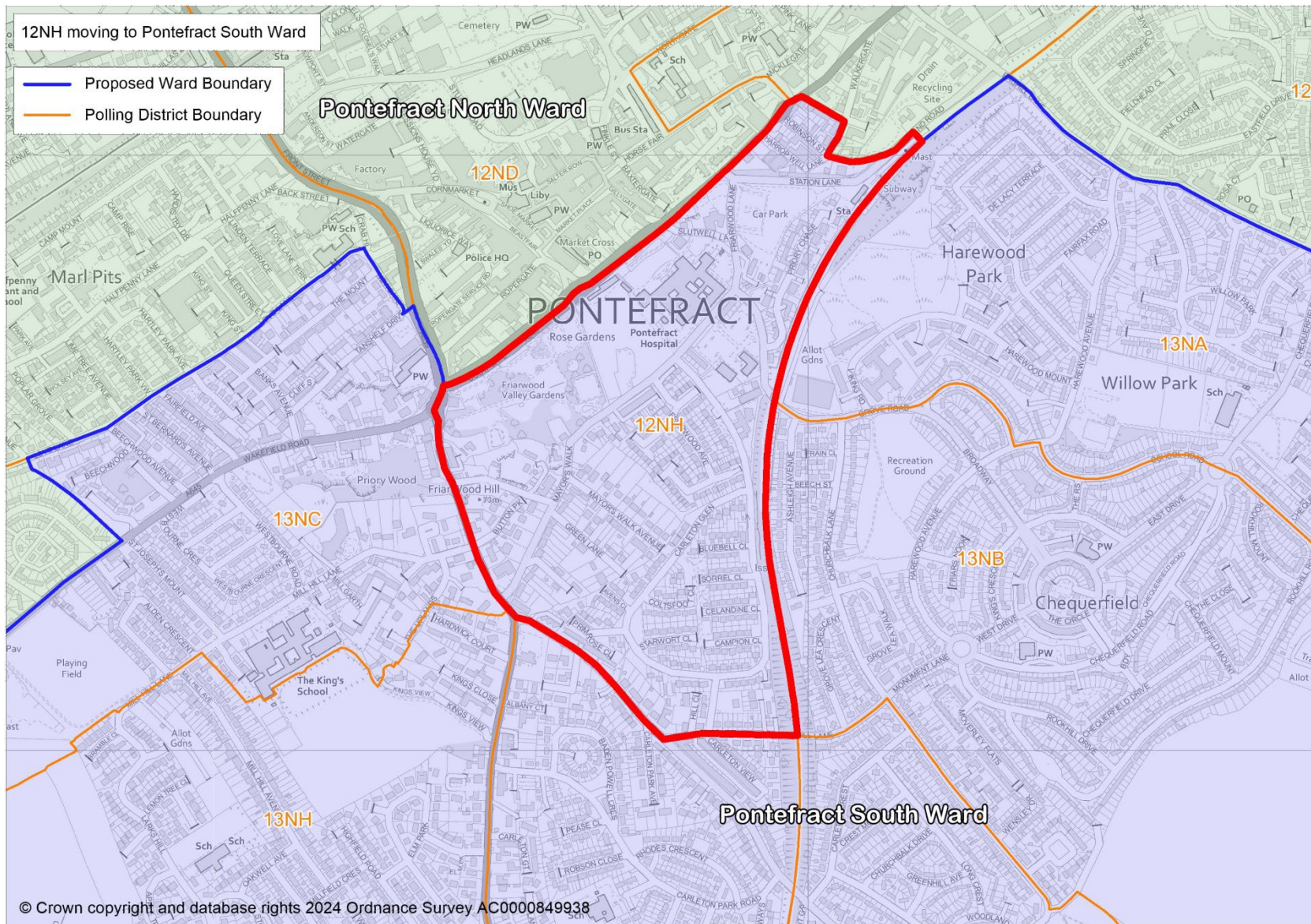
Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward – 06 Featherstone</p> <p>Ward 05 - Crofton, Ryhill and Walton</p>	<p>14,307</p> <p>12,739</p>	<p>3.75%</p> <p>-7.63%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The proposed change would see part of polling district 05HN transferring from the Crofton, Ryhill and Walton Ward to the Featherstone Ward.</p> <p>The small area encompassing Birkwood Avenue and West Lane was incorporated in the new Sharlston Parish Council boundary following the recent Community Governance Review. It is therefore proposed to realign the boundary to the west of the Ward to incorporate the entirety of the new Sharlston Parish Boundary within the Featherstone Ward.</p> <p>The projected electorates for the two Wards in 2029 would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: Minor changes are proposed to align the Featherstone Ward Boundary with the recent Community Governance Review.</p> <p>Community identity: The area of Birkwood Avenue and West Lane have strong community links to Sharlston which was strengthened by the Community Governance Review.</p>

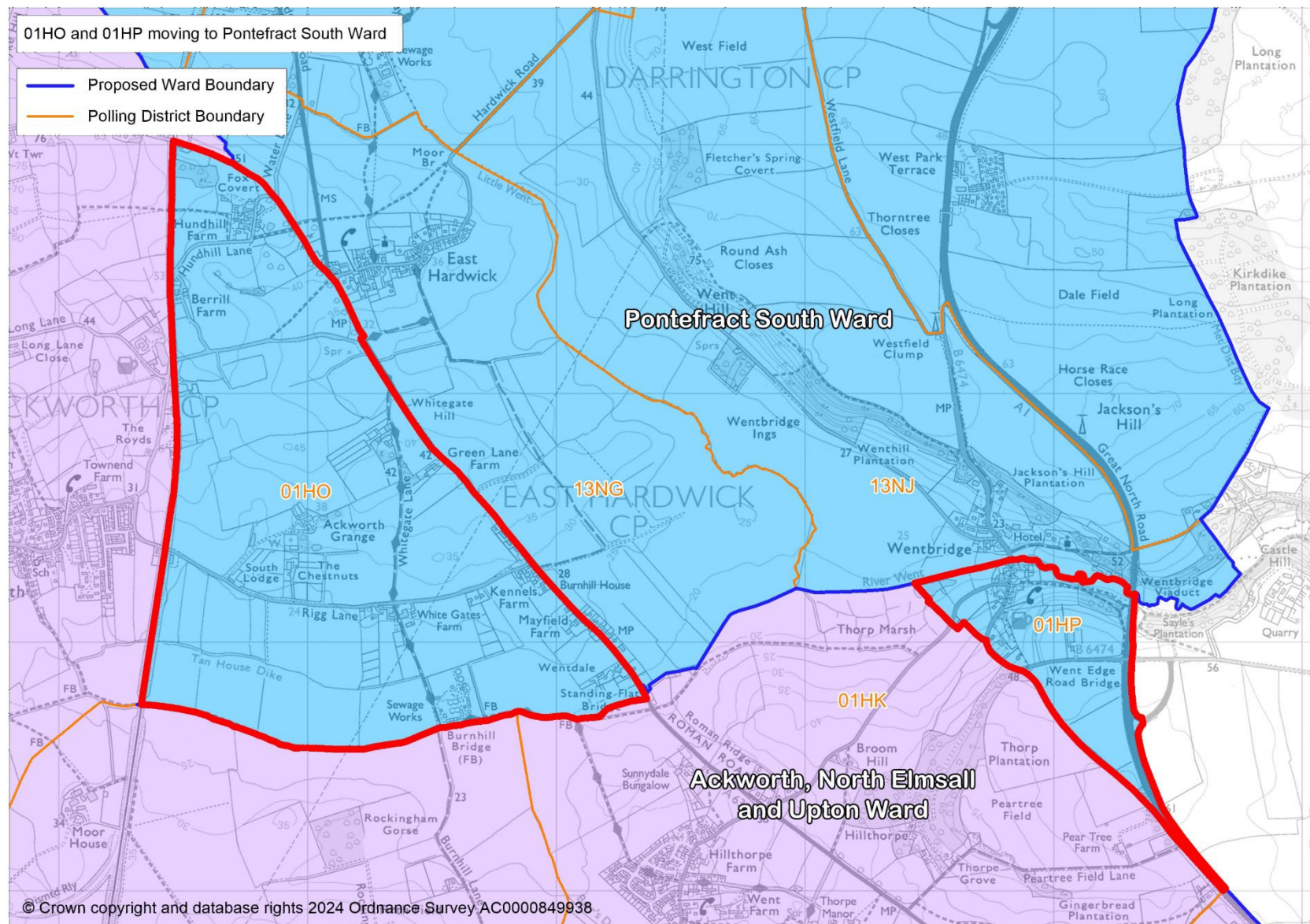


Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 1 – Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton</p> <p>Ward 6 – Featherstone</p>	<p>14,404</p> <p>14,307</p>	<p>4.45%</p> <p>3.75%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The proposed change would see polling district 06HN transferring from Featherstone to the Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton Ward.</p> <p>The small polling district encompassing West Winds was incorporated into the new Ackworth Parish Council boundary following the recent Community Governance Review. It is therefore proposed to realign the boundary of the Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton Ward to incorporate the 06HN polling district (135 electors).</p> <p>The projected electorates for the two Wards in 2029 would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: Minor changes are proposed to align the Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton Ward Boundary with the recent Community Governance Review.</p> <p>Community identity: West Winds sits geographically closer to Ackworth and its local services and amenities. These community links were strengthened by the changes approved through the Community Governance Review and would be further strengthened by this proposal.</p>

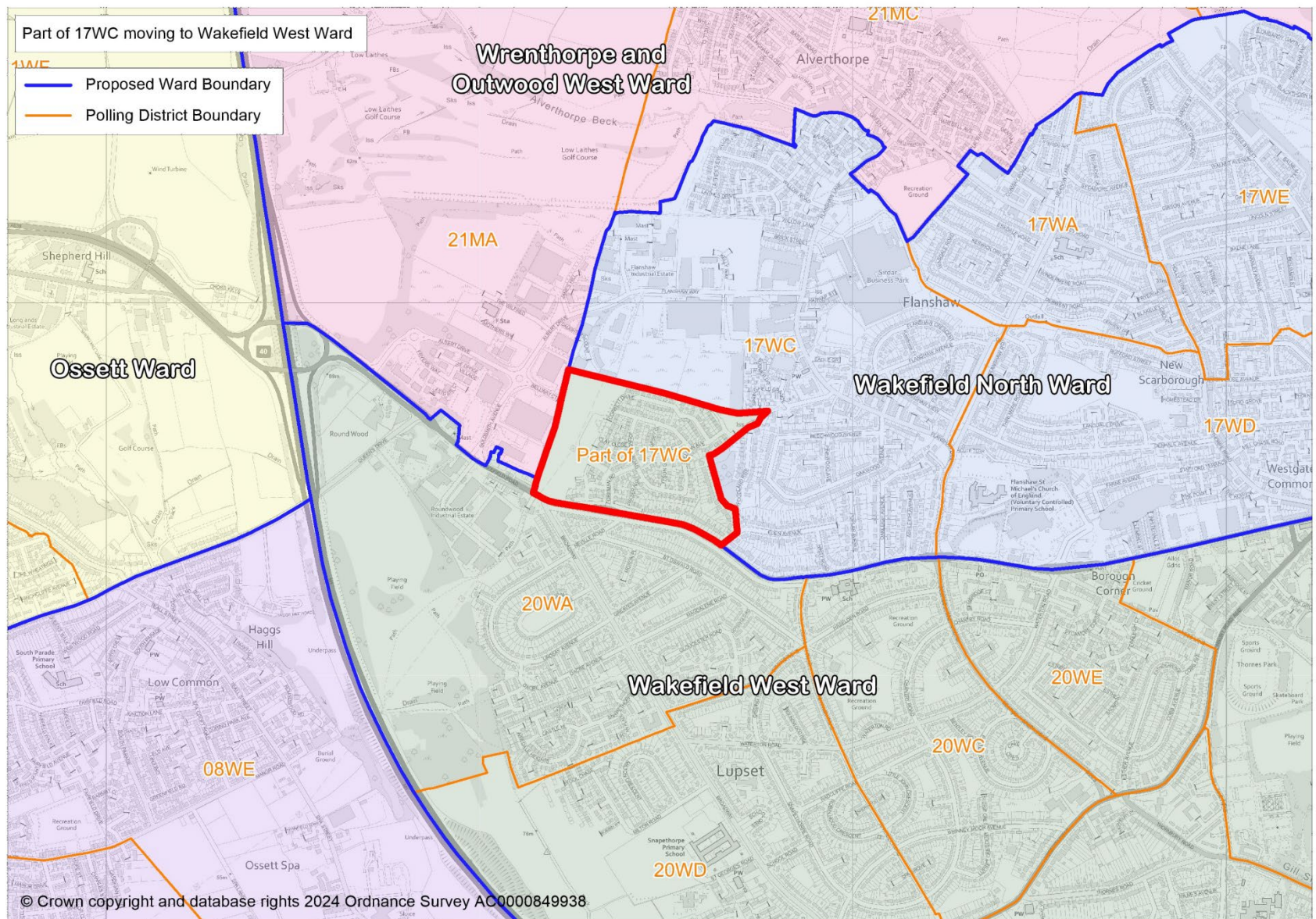


Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029))	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 12 – Pontefract North</p> <p>Ward 13 – Pontefract South</p> <p>Ward 1 – Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton</p>	<p>14,508</p> <p>14,835</p> <p>14,404</p>	<p>5.20%</p> <p>7.57%</p> <p>4.45%</p>	<p>Equality of representation and Community Identity: The Pontefract North Ward has seen significant growth since the last electoral review. Further housing development in the Ward will see the electorate rise to 15,841 in 2029 which would equate to a 14.6% variance from the district average. On the other hand, the electorate for Pontefract South Ward is projected to grow to 13,346 a variance of -3.2% from the Council average. To address electorate inequality in this part of the district, the Pontefract Wards were considered together alongside Pontefract South's boundary with the Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton Ward.</p> <p>The first recommendation is to move polling district 12NH (1,293 electors) from Pontefract North to Pontefract South. This will help balance equality of representation between the two Pontefract Wards whilst protecting the overall identity of Pontefract.</p> <p>The recent Community Governance Review agreed to the formation of Wentbridge as Parish of its own rather than being in the three Parishes of Darrington, North Elmsall and Thorpe Audlin. Wentbridge has a clear geographical and practical identity of its own and since its formation has held several Parish Meetings. Currently polling district 13NG (167 electors) sits in Pontefract South with polling districts 01HO (115 electors) and 01HP (80 electors) in the Ackworth, North Elmsall and Upton Ward. It is proposed to move both polling districts to the Pontefract South Ward to reflect community interests and identities.</p> <p>As a result of the proposed changes the projected electorates in 2029 alongside forecast electoral variance are set out in column two and three. The projected electorates in 2029 would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The proposal strengthens effective and convenient local government by bringing the three polling districts which form the Wentbridge Parish together under one Ward. The proposal to the north of the Pontefract South Ward is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed.</p>

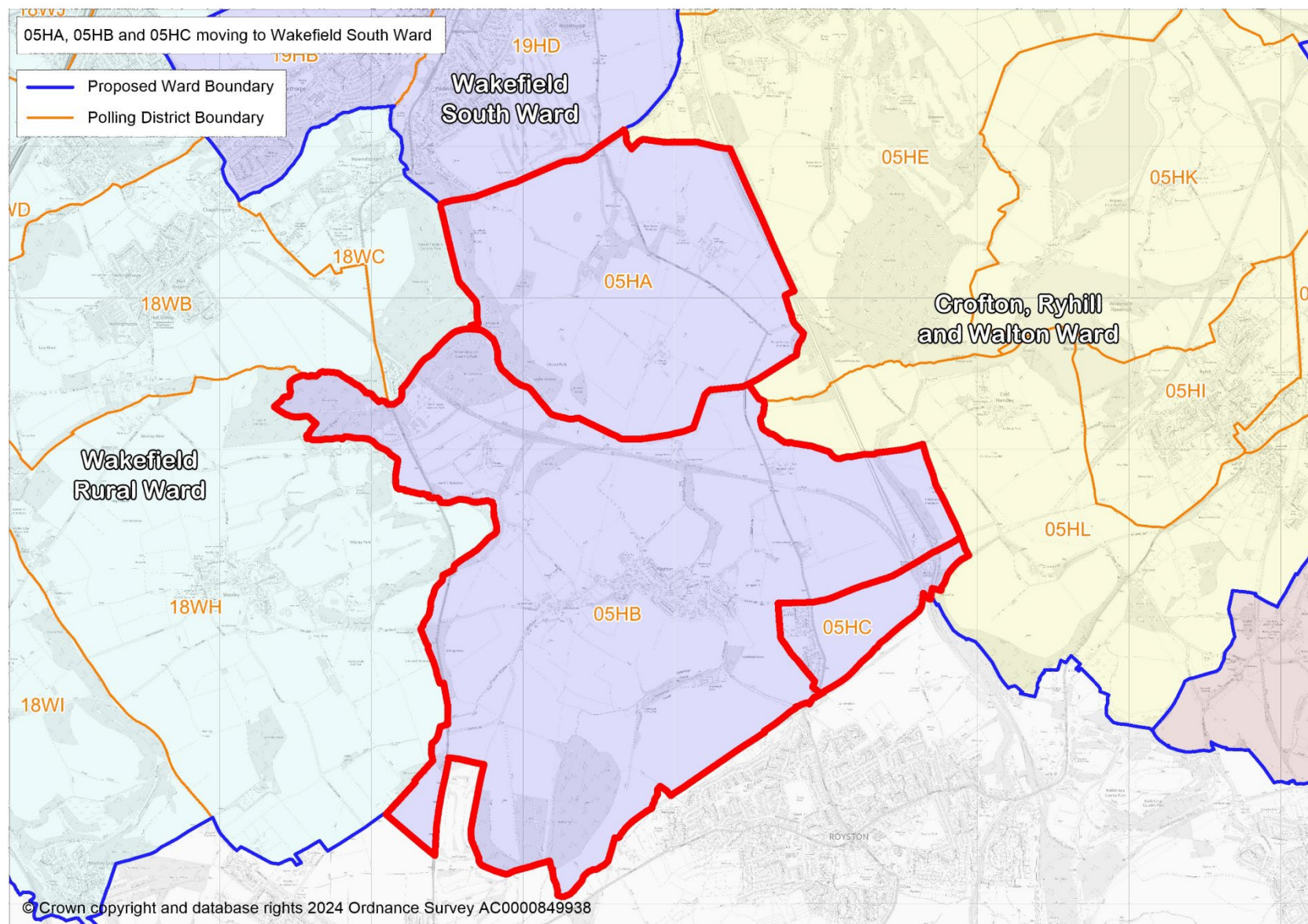




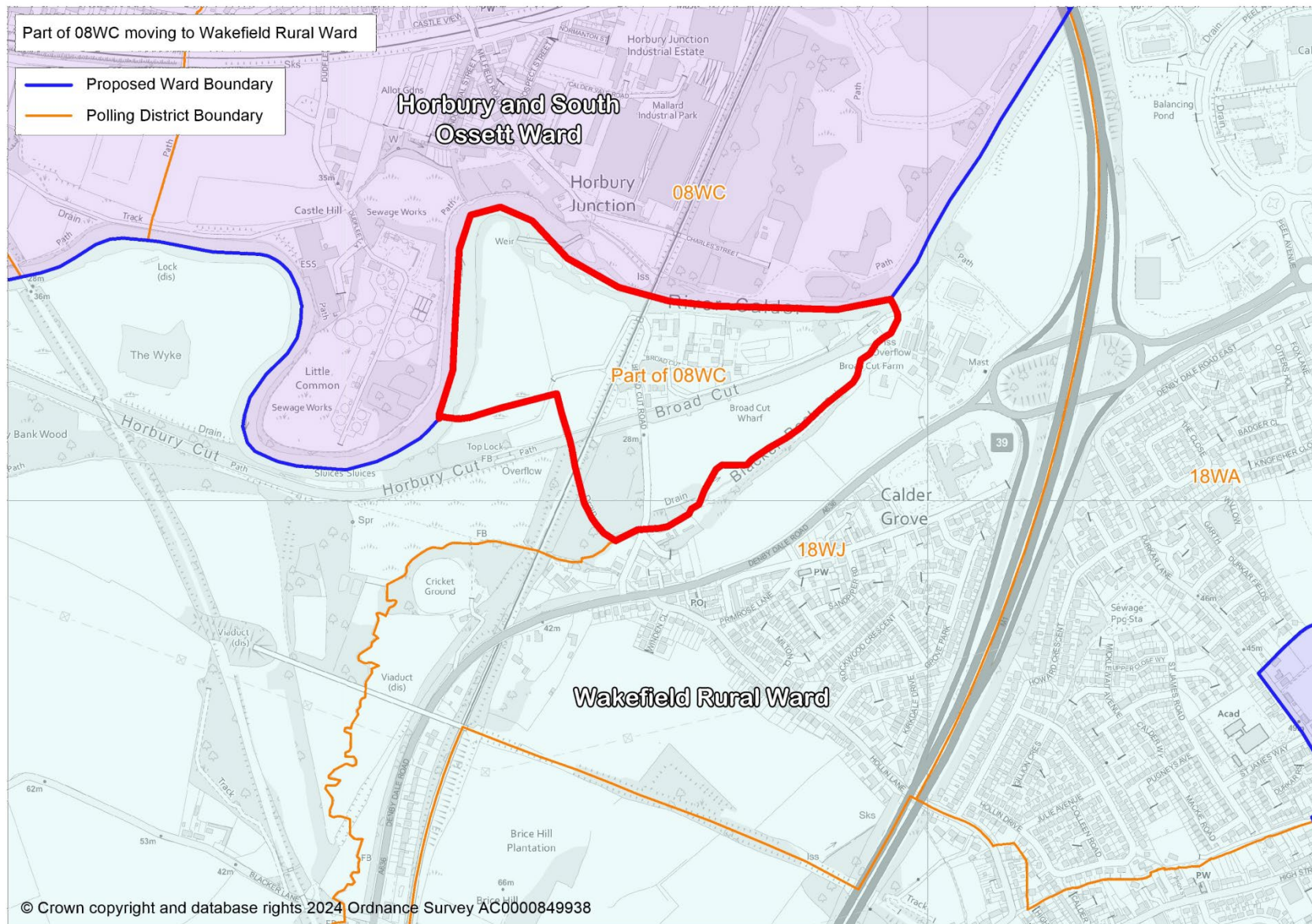
Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 17 – Wakefield North</p> <p>Ward 20 – Wakefield West</p>	<p>13,107</p> <p>12,704</p>	<p>-4.96%</p> <p>-7.88%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: To address electorate inequality in this part of the district, consideration was given to the two Wards of Wakefield West and Wakefield North. The Wakefield West Ward has a current electorate of 11,286 which is -9.6% below the district average. In 2029, the electorate is projected to grow to 12,124 a slower growth rate than other parts of the district resulting in a – 12.1%% variance from the Council average. Wakefield North however is currently much closer to the District average with a current electorate of 12,150 which is -2.7% below the district average.</p> <p>To seek to even equality of representation, it is proposed to transfer part of polling district 17WC (580 electors) into Wakefield West. Whilst being mindful that the projected electorate in Wakefield North would move away from the District average, the projected electorate in Wakefield West would move positively into the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The proposal is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed.</p> <p>Community identity: The proposal brings in its entirety a relatively new housing development into Wakefield West. The Working Group did not feel that this move would disrupt community identity.</p>



Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 5 – Crofton, Ryhill and Walton</p> <p>Ward 19 – Wakefield South</p>	<p>12,739</p> <p>13,030</p>	<p>-7.63%</p> <p>-5.52%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: The Wakefield South Ward has a current electorate of 10,812 which is a variance of -13.4% from the district average. In 2029, the electorate is projected to grow to 12,132 a slower growth rate than other parts of the district resulting in a -12.1% variance from the Council average. The Crofton, Ryhill and Walton Ward has a current electorate of 12,350 which is -1.1% below the district average growing to 13,675 a -0.8% variance.</p> <p>To address equality of representation and grow the electorate in Ward 19 it is proposed that three polling districts 05HA (67 electors), 05HB (509 electors) and 05HC (335 electors), be moved from the Crofton, Ryhill and Walton Ward into a reshaped Wakefield South Ward.</p> <p>Whilst being mindful that the projected electorate in Crofton, Ryhill and Walton would move away from the District average, the projected electorates in 2029 in both Wards would be within the LGBCE tolerance of +/- 10%.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The proposal is broadly similar to the existing arrangements ensuring minimal disruption to residents should it be agreed. The integrity of the Notton Parish Council boundary would be maintained within the proposed arrangements. It should be noted however that the three polling districts will remain within the Normanton and Hemsworth Parliamentary Constituency.</p> <p>Community identity: The proposal protects existing community identity of Notton and the surrounding area within the Wakefield South boundary.</p>



Wards Affected	Predicted Forecast Electorate with Adjustments (2029)	Forecast Electoral Variance	Evidence and rationale that proposals meet the three statutory criteria
<p>Ward 8 - Horbury and South Ossett</p> <p>Ward 18 – Wakefield Rural</p>	<p>12,701</p> <p>14,898</p>	<p>-7.90%</p> <p>8.03%</p>	<p>Equality of representation: A small area south of the River Calder known as Broadcutt currently sits within the 08WC polling district within the Horbury and South Ossett Ward. This is a small area containing 22 electors which has no direct road links to the rest of the Ward. To drive from Broadcutt to Horbury and South Ossett is a 15 minute car journey driving through two Wards to get to the destination. To tidy up this anomaly it is proposed to move the Broadcutt area into Wakefield Rural.</p> <p>Effective and convenient local government: The Working Group were of the view natural identity for the residents of Broadcutt is towards Calder Grove and not across the river to Horbury and South Ossett. They noted however that the area was not currently parished and as such even though it was moving into a parished area, it would not become part of the Crigglestone Parish Council boundary.</p> <p>Community identity: Local amenities are located within Calder Grove and as such community identity would be enhanced with the proposal if supported.</p>



Other minor issues

Wakefield North – Local Members pointed out that one property No 8 Hoult Close which currently falls within the Wakefield North ward should transfer to the Wrenthorpe and Outwood West Ward.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1** The Working Group's submission has (if approved) been considered and approved by Council and individual members have had the opportunity to comment through their representatives on the cross-party member working group and through Member drop-in sessions.
- 5.2** The consultation period ends on the 31st January. Political parties and Elected Members have been advised that they are able to submit their own proposal/s to the LGBCE if they wish to do so.
- 5.3** Publicity has been given to the Electoral Review via the Council's website, social media, and local consultation mechanisms.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1** This submission represents consideration of all the factors highlighted above. In particular, the statutory criteria has been a fundamental basis for decision making and the principles and guidance on these criteria have been extensively reviewed and considered by the Working Group with supportive reasoning and evidence contained within this submission.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1** That the Commission carefully considers the Council's submission on warding arrangements, when forming its recommendations due to be published in May 2024.