

Swindon

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Comment text:

Dear LGBC

Please see attached response on behalf of the parish council, thank you.

Attached Documents:

- agenda-item-8---boundary-review.pdf

Agenda Item 8 – Swindon Borough – Local Government Boundary Commission

Ward Boundaries – Swindon

Recently there has been a 10-week public consultation inviting proposals for new council ward and ward boundaries for Swindon Borough Council. The consultation began on 02nd January 2024 will close on 18 March 2024.

This follows a decision by Swindon Borough Council last year to run four-yearly all-out elections rather than the ‘thirds’ cycle that had previously taken place.

Wroughton Parish Council is now aware that the LGBC has said to the Borough Council that they would like the Ward Boundaries to align with existing Parish Boundaries. Once the Swindon Ward Boundary Review is completed it is likely a Community Governance Review will follow to determine any changes to Parish Boundaries.

After considerations have been discussed further the Boundary Commission will intend to publish draft recommendations in June 2024. There will then be a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations. Final recommendations are expected to be published in December 2024.

The new electoral arrangements will come into effect at the local elections in 2026.

LGBCE Timeline:	<i>December 2023</i>	<i>We decide how many councillors there should be</i>
	<i>9 January - 18 March 2024</i>	<i>We carry out an initial public consultation on communities</i>
	<i>4 June - 12 August 2024</i>	<i>We carry out a public consultation on our proposals</i>
	<i>3 December 2024</i>	<i>We publish our recommendations</i>
	<i>Winter 2024</i>	<i>We ask Parliament to approve our recommendations</i>
	<i>May 2026</i>	<i>New arrangements apply to local elections</i>

What is an electoral review?

Our electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Swindon. Propose:

- the total number of councillors elected to the council in the future;
- the number of wards;
- the number of councillors representing each ward;
- ward boundaries; and
- the names of wards.

The LGBC Ward boundary review may impact Wroughton Parish Council by potentially changing the boundaries of the wards within which the council operates. This could lead to adjustments in representation, voting patterns, and overall governance structure within the parish.

Wroughton, along with Wanborough and Chiseldon, will be moved from the current South Swindon constituency into a new area called East Wiltshire. This means that residents of Wroughton will no longer vote in South Swindon but will be part of the newly formed East Wiltshire constituency.

The original boundaries were set in 2011, at which point the development of East, Middle and West Wichesltowe were non-existent. Over the years as the buildout has taken place Middle and West Wichelstowe now sit within Wroughton’s boundary whereas East Wichelstowe remains within South Swindon Parish Council.

From a maintenance perspective and service provision, it is becoming increasingly confusing for residents to understand the local authorities responsibilities as the electorate in this area continues to grow. Wroughton Parish Council believe that Middle and West Wichelstowe should remain within the Wroughton and Wichelstowe Boundary and that consideration should also be given for the inclusion of East Wichelstowe, which would allow the area to be considered as a whole.

There is also the potential for inclusion of Burderop Park in Chiseldon, to be considered as located within the Wroughton and Wichelstowe boundary, this would ultimately depend on the outcome of the LGBC Ward boundary review.

Although Burderop Park is currently within the Chiseldon Boundary, its main road access is via Wroughton and the B4005. New residents in the area have shown interest and willingness to be involved with the Wroughton Community and have visited the Wroughton Parish Office on a regular basis.

Increasing the Wroughton and Wichelstowe Boundary Ward would allow for enhanced collaborative working. A larger boundary could create a sense of unity and shared identity among residents of Wroughton and Wichelstowe, providing stronger community relationships.

There would also be the benefit of streamlining service delivery for residents. By consolidating boundaries, it could streamline administrative processes and services leading to more efficient and effective governance for the benefit of residents in Wroughton and Wichelstowe.

A larger boundary including all of Wichelstowe (Middle, West and East) would allow for a more diverse participation in local governance, allowing for a broader range of voices to be heard in decision-making processes. The boundary review process aims to address issues such as population size, geographical considerations, and community interests which should be reflected by fair and effective electoral boundaries. Some wards and parish councils are already largely oversized compared to others and it would not necessarily be practical to make them even larger.

Wroughton Parish council believe that maintaining the existing Ward Boundary Review could pave the way forward for maintaining the existing Parish Boundaries, as it is possible that a parish boundary review will follow in 2026.