

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND (LGBCE)
– SLOUGH ELECTORAL REVIEW**

DRAFT SBC RESPONSE TO SECOND CONSULTATION

Councillor Numbers

Slough Borough Council notes that the LGBCE has agreed with Slough Borough Council's already-stated view that the overall number of Councillors on Slough Unitary Authority should be confirmed as 42, reflecting the current size of the elected Council. Slough Council supported the LGBCE proposal for 42 Councillors when set out in January 2022. We confirm our support for the proposition that the Council should continue to consist of 42 elected members.

Ward Pattern: 21 x 2-member wards

We note that in its proposals on a new pattern of wards published on 5th July 2022, the LGBCE has supported the Council's proposition of a uniform pattern of 21 x 2-member wards, rather than a mixed pattern of wards with variable numbers of Councillors. The Council is pleased that our submission in this regard carried weight and we reaffirm our support for the proposal of 21 x 2-member wards.

Proposed Boundaries of Individual Wards

The Council notes that in the ward pattern as set out in the LGBCE's published proposals, 16 of the wards reflect the boundaries as tabled in Slough Borough Council's submission (including the cross-party amendments agreed at our full Council meeting on 11th April 2022).

We note that the Boundary Commission found the submission made by Slough Borough Council to the LGBCE's consultation on ward boundaries to be, overall, a "strong and well-thought-through scheme which required very few changes" and we support the boundaries for those 16 wards, as set out in the LGBCE's published proposals.

The consultation document containing the draft recommendations groups the proposed new wards into sections based on geography. We support in full the proposals for 'West Slough' (the proposed wards of Britwell, Northborough & Lynch Hill Valley, Farnham, Haymill, Cippenham Green, and Cippenham Meadows).

We also support in full the proposal for West-Central Slough (the proposed wards of Manor Park & Stoke, Baylis & Salt Hill, Elliman, Chalvey Grove and Chalvey wards).

Wexham Court ward

The LGBCE has moved Grasmere Avenue, Kendal Drive and Kendal Close from the proposed Upton Lea ward, to join Shaggy Calf Lane in the Wexham Court ward.

This adds to the upward variance of Wexham Court ward from the electoral average by 2027 (at 8% on the LGBCE proposal), but keeps this variance within 10%. The Council is therefore content to support the LGBCE proposal for this ward.

Upton Lea ward and Central ward

As the area of/around Slough town centre is to accommodate a large amount of the residential development planned for Slough, the new 'Slough Central' ward sees its population rise dramatically between 2023 and 2027. This leads to a variance well above the electoral average in the proposed ward boundary submitted by the Council on 11th April 2022. To minimise/reduce this, the LGBCE has proposed adding the Goodman Park estate to Upton Lea ward.

The Council understands the reasoning behind the LGBCE's proposed change, but believes that aspects of this change now fracture/fail to recognise other community links that exist, as well as creating a rather cumbersome/incoherent boundary along the southern 'middle' of Upton Lea ward as two significant 'dog-legs' run around the Akzo-Nobel/Panattoni site, excluding it from the Upton Lea ward (with a boundary running north up Wexham Road, just north-east of Petersfield Avenue, then running west to east along the canal before running south down Uxbridge Road).

We believe the boundaries for this ward as now proposed, have negative impacts on established community links; are less convenient for some of the electorate that now form the population of the ward in the LGBCE proposal; and exaggerate the dividing effect of Slough canal by running round the Panattoni site, rather than using the canal differently as a feature to reflect the canal-side community of this geographical area.

As a result, the Council's working party re-considered the neighbourhoods here, returned to first principles and re-examined the arterial routes, geographical and other neighbourhood features of the area contained within Slough Central and Upton Lea wards, before working with local ward members to draft an alternative configuration for the new Slough Central and new Upton Lea wards.

This re-crafted proposal does not impact the boundaries beyond these two wards.

The Council's new proposal uses the strong boundary up the mid-line of Wexham Road (an existing Polling District boundary) to separate the two wards into a more coherent formation (map attached at Appendix C).

Wexham Road forms an established Polling District boundary from the High Street northwards as far as the canal (the electors in Diamond Road and its side roads east of Wexham Road vote in the same polling place as Goodman Park and have strong links, and this connection can be maintained with Wexham Road being used as the north-south boundary between the two wards). The Council's new scheme for the Upton Lea ward unites the Upton Lea, estate, Rochfords Gardens estate, Diamond Road and the Goodman Park estate with the community amenities for this area – such as Upton Lea Community Centre and Iqra and Willow Schools, but without the divisive boundary running round and excluding the Akzo Research/Panattoni site. We believe this new proposal preserves key community links, and the coherence of

the estates drawn together to form the new ward. We offer this to the LGBCE as an alternative for these two wards (as shown geographically through the 'split' map in Appendix C) and with details of the electorate numbers attached in Appendix D.

Using Wexham Road as the north-south boundary between Upton Lea ward and Slough Central ward (from Slough High Street to the canal), before then using the north side of the canal as the northern boundary (running west almost to Stoke Road), and drawing in the land that forms the surround to the canal basin before reaching Stoke Road, the Council's new proposal creates a strongly coherent Slough Central ward that now consists of the St Paul's and St John's Road area (currently in Central), all the major apartment developments around Slough Station and the Richmond Crescent/Wellesley Road area, as well as the future residential communities at the former Thames Valley University site, north of Slough High Street and around Petersfield Avenue.

We believe the Slough Central ward in this proposal preserves community identity, reflects the technical specifics of the 'Slough Central' ward identity and maintains electoral convenience of the current area grouped within this existing polling district as the heart of this new ward as its population rapidly expands.

The Council proposed and strongly recommends to the LGBCE the boundaries for Slough Central and Upton Lea wards as set out in Appendix C in response to the consultation proposal for the pattern of these two wards.

If the Boundary Commission isn't able to accept the submission in Appendix C, then as a minimum, the Council would suggest using the newly constructed access road that separates the northern half of the former Akzo Nobel research yard site (currently referred to frequently as the 'Panattoni site') from the southern half as a more coherent southern boundary for the LGBCE's currently proposed Upton Lea ward.

The northern half of the Panattoni site is already substantially re-developed for data centres and other warehousing/logistics/distribution uses, that have included a west to east new road running through the middle of the site, the Council feels that the centre line of this road forms a cleaner boundary than the dog-legs up and down to exclude the entire Panattoni site, though we identify to the LGBCE, propose and support our rival and favoured proposition in Appendix C. However the boundary we show in Appendix E is preferable to that displayed in the LGBCE's southern boundary within their own proposal if the formation of that ward is broadly to be retained as they have set out in their consultation.

This would not affect the population figures set out by LGBCE in their proposal, as the development currently underway on the whole of the northern 40% of this site is for employment/industrial uses, but the effect of using the new access road constructed to the south of that new development area, would be to create a better ward boundary between Slough Central ward and Upton Lea ward in this 'middle section' of the boundary between the two wards as proposed in the LGBCE consultation. It has the effect of moving the whole length of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union canal that is in Slough Borough into Upton Lea ward, reinforcing it as a

key amenity and focal point of this ward. It also reduces the 'crescent moon' effect of the staggered boundary in the LGBCE proposal.

If this amendment to the northern boundary of Slough Central ward (and southern middle boundary of Upton Lea ward were to be made (as shown in the attached map), the Council feels that this would be an improvement on the scheme for Upton Lea ward that the LGBCE currently shows in their consultation. However the Council's wish is for LGBCE to adopt the Council's alternative proposal now tabled for this ward and Slough Central ward, which we submit in Appendix C as our preferred solution to go forward.

Proposals for Langley wards and Colnbrook & Poyle ward

As stated earlier, the Council supports the proposals tabled by the LGBCE for the Langley Meads ward, the Langley Foxborough ward and the Colnbrook & Poyle ward – as these reflect the submission previously made by Slough Borough Council for this area.

In its proposals for **Langley St Mary's** and **Langley Marish** wards, the LGBCE has made amendments to the Council's submission to produce wards closer to the electoral average. The Council had sought in its submission to preserve the 'shell' or external boundaries of the area moving to Windsor Constituency from Slough Constituency for parliamentary elections, for ease of administration of combined elections, as this is a pertinent operational consideration. We recognise that this was not a factor or key criterion that is formally considered by LGBCE, but are disappointed that the amendments have not allowed the edge boundaries of the affected area to be kept intact. That said, we recognise that the ward boundaries as proposed by the LGBCE for this pair of wards are clear and coherent, and ensure that all the wards in the Langley area remain within 10% of the electoral average through to 2027, which one ward did not in the SBC proposition. The Council is therefore prepared to accept the proposals for these two wards as set out by the LGBCE in their consultation papers issued on 5th July and to support the LGBCE proposals for Langley St Mary's and Langley Marish wards.

Summary of Slough Borough Council's Response to the Consultation

Slough Borough Council Supports the proposals, set out by the LGBCE in their current consultation document, for the wards of - Britwell, Northborough & Lynch Hill Valley, Haymill, Cippenham Green, Cippenham Meadows, Chalvey Grove, Chalvey, Farnham, Baylis & Salt Hill, Manor Park & Stoke, Elliman, Wexham Court, Herschel Park, Upton, Langley St Mary's, Langley Marish, Langley Meads, Langley Foxborough, Colnbrook & Poyle (19 wards).

Slough Borough Council moves an alternative scheme for Slough Central ward and Upton Lea ward, as set out in Appendix C below, accompanied by the electorate and residential development data set out in Appendix D. The Council also identifies an improved southern boundary for the LGBCE's currently proposed Upton Lea ward (though our favoured proposition is that in Appendix C) as the amended boundary (E) would be a more logical one than that currently used in the LGBCE's proposal for this ward.

Map of revised SBC proposal for Slough Central and Upton Lea



APPENDIX D

Upton Lea (new ward) as proposed by Slough Borough Council, 21st July 2022

Existing Polling District WLC	1,920
Existing Polling District WLD	1,184
Existing Polling District CEB	1,827
TOTAL	4,931

The population of this ward sits marginally above the electoral average for a two-member ward on the May 2022 electorate (the average is 4,736). At 2027, the electoral average is predicted as 5,228, and good electoral equality is considered to have been achieved at 10% above or below this number. With the southern part of the 'Panattoni' site now highly unlikely to come forward for residential redevelopment, the ward as proposed on these boundaries sits comfortably within the 10% range but there is nonetheless reasonable headroom for some new development.

The situation in relation to the 'Panattoni' (for Akzo-Nobel research yard) site has moved forward considerably since April.

The Council is currently marketing the land that it owns at the 'Panattoni' site. A significant number of expressions of interest have been received, including from data centres and house builders, and 9 site visits taking place during July 2022. In current market conditions the Council's view is that bids are most likely from data centre and industrial interests and that the value of such offers will be significantly in excess of those received from house builders. Since the Council must achieve "best consideration" from the sale of its assets it now appears highly unlikely that the site will be used for the 1,000 units of residential accommodation previously anticipated should the Council have developed the site itself.

In light of the how the situation has evolved, the Council believes there isn't a need to provide the significant headroom for 1,000 units on the site due to the fact the Council will not dispose of the site within the next few months; the outline permission for the 1,000 units on the site does not have detailed plans or agreed phases; and it is almost certain now to be used for employment purposes.

Slough Central (new ward) as proposed by Slough Borough Council, 21st July 2022

Existing Polling District CEA	3,331*
TOTAL	3,331*

* Major residential development on several key town centre sites is proposed, with some scheme already lodged in the planning system. The electorate as at May 2022 is well below the electoral average, to ensure adequate headroom remains for the large town centre redevelopment sites coming forward including the former

Thames Valley University site, Queensmere Centre redevelopment etc.). Forecasts estimate an additional 925 units and 1,850 additional electors by 2027 bringing the total to 5,181 electors at 2027.

Potential additional dwelling/electorates used for purposes of electorate forecasts to 2027 as submitted in April 2022.

Site	Planning status as per spreadshee	Units Completions expected by March 2028	Assumed additional electors
Canal Basin, Stoke Road	Undecided planning application	288	576
23-25 Mill Street	Planning permission	55	110
Former TVU / North West Quadrant site	Site allocation	390	780
Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres	Site allocation	0	0
Grace House, Petersfield Avenue	Pre-application	56	112
Thomas House, Petersfield Avenue	Undecided planning application	18	36
Beacon House, 50 Stoke Road	Planning application	118	236
TOTAL		925	1,850

Alternative Council's proposal to LGBCE draft proposal for Upton Lea and Central ward boundary if the preferred option as per the map in Appendix C is not accepted

