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Report To: Full Council Date: 24 January 2025

Contact Officer: Paula Harrison

Subject: Boundary Commission

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## 1. Boundary Commission Review

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It has reviewed Swindon to make sure councillors will represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements help the council work effectively.
- 1.2 The Commission has published final recommendations for changes in Swindon. It says residents should be represented by 57 councillors, the same as now. There will be 25 wards, consisting of 10 three-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards, and 3 single-councillor wards. Most of the existing wards will change, one will stay the same.

### 1.3 Summary of the West Swindon Boundary Changes

The review recommendations are as follows:

West Swindon

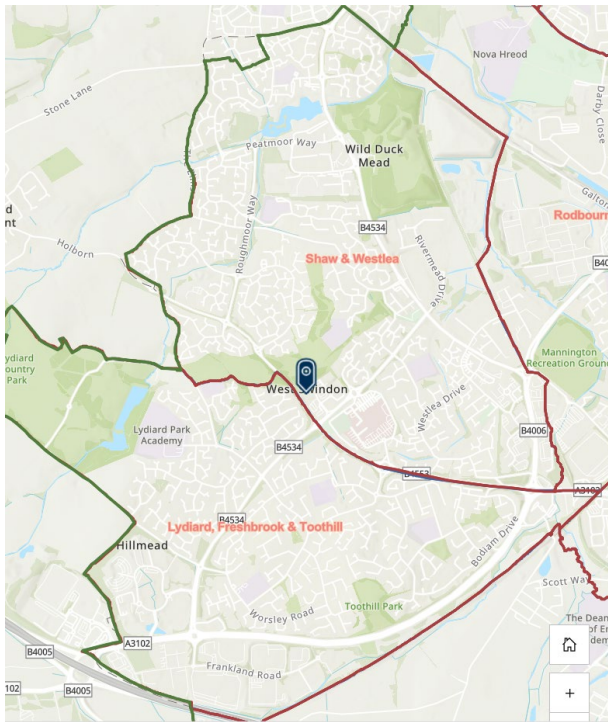
#### ***Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill and Shaw & Westlea***

The Conservatives and the Labour Group both supported the draft recommendation wards in West Swindon, as the proposals there aligned with their respective original submissions. The Labour Group did suggest that Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill should be renamed to the more succinct Lydiard Park, as the ward area covers the whole of Lydiard Park, 'a major Swindon landmark and facility'.

We additionally received five submissions from local residents concerning these wards. Three of these were in support of the draft recommendations, noting that Westlea will now fall entirely within one ward. One submission noted that the proposed wards cover large areas that are not always geographically well-linked, but accepted that in most cases there is not a better alternative. One submission proposed names of West Swindon North and West Swindon South for these two wards, to make them more inclusive and less cumbersome.

We consider that, in light of the degree of support expressed for boundaries here, the draft recommendation boundaries for these wards should be retained in our final recommendations. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to alter the names of the wards; we consider that Lydiard Park is not representative of the various neighbourhoods that comprise Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothill ward. We also consider that West Swindon North and West Swindon South do not provide any more accurate a description of the ward areas than the proposed names.

We therefore recommend retaining Lydiard, Freshbrook & Toothhill and Shaw & Westlea wards as proposed.



## 2. **Financial and Policy Implications**

- 2.1 For West Swindon Parish Council, there should be a benefit to having two wards for the entirety of the Parish and enable better alignment where it is relevant to double up with Swindon Borough Council.
- 2.2 These changes do not impact on the Parish ward boundaries which were already aligned with the Parish.

## 3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Council notes the recommendations.