

**New electoral arrangements for  
Medway Council  
Further Limited Draft  
Recommendations  
December 2020**

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### **A note on our mapping:**

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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# Analysis and further draft recommendations in the areas of Darland, Hale, Hempstead, Rainham, Twydall, Watling and Wigmore

1 Following our consultation on the draft recommendations for Medway Council, the Commission has decided to hold a period of consultation on further draft recommendations in Darland, Hale, Hempstead, Rainham, Twydall, Watling and Wigmore prior to publication of its final recommendations. The Commission believes it has received sufficient evidence relating to the rest of the borough to finalise its recommendations and is not asking for more views in these areas.

2 During consultation on the draft recommendations, which were published on 30 June 2020, we received 327 representations. These included borough-wide comments from the Council's political groups and the Medway Liberal Democrats. Many submissions focused on specific areas across the borough. We received a large number of objections to our draft recommendations for our proposed Twydall ward, which is identical to the existing ward of the same name. We also received significant comments on our draft recommendations for Hempstead and Wigmore. A number of respondents provided evidence describing their community to substantiate their opposition to our proposals.

3 Accordingly, we have been persuaded to amend our proposals and publish further draft recommendations for Darland, Hale, Hempstead, Rainham, Twydall, Watling and Wigmore areas. We are now inviting further views in these areas.

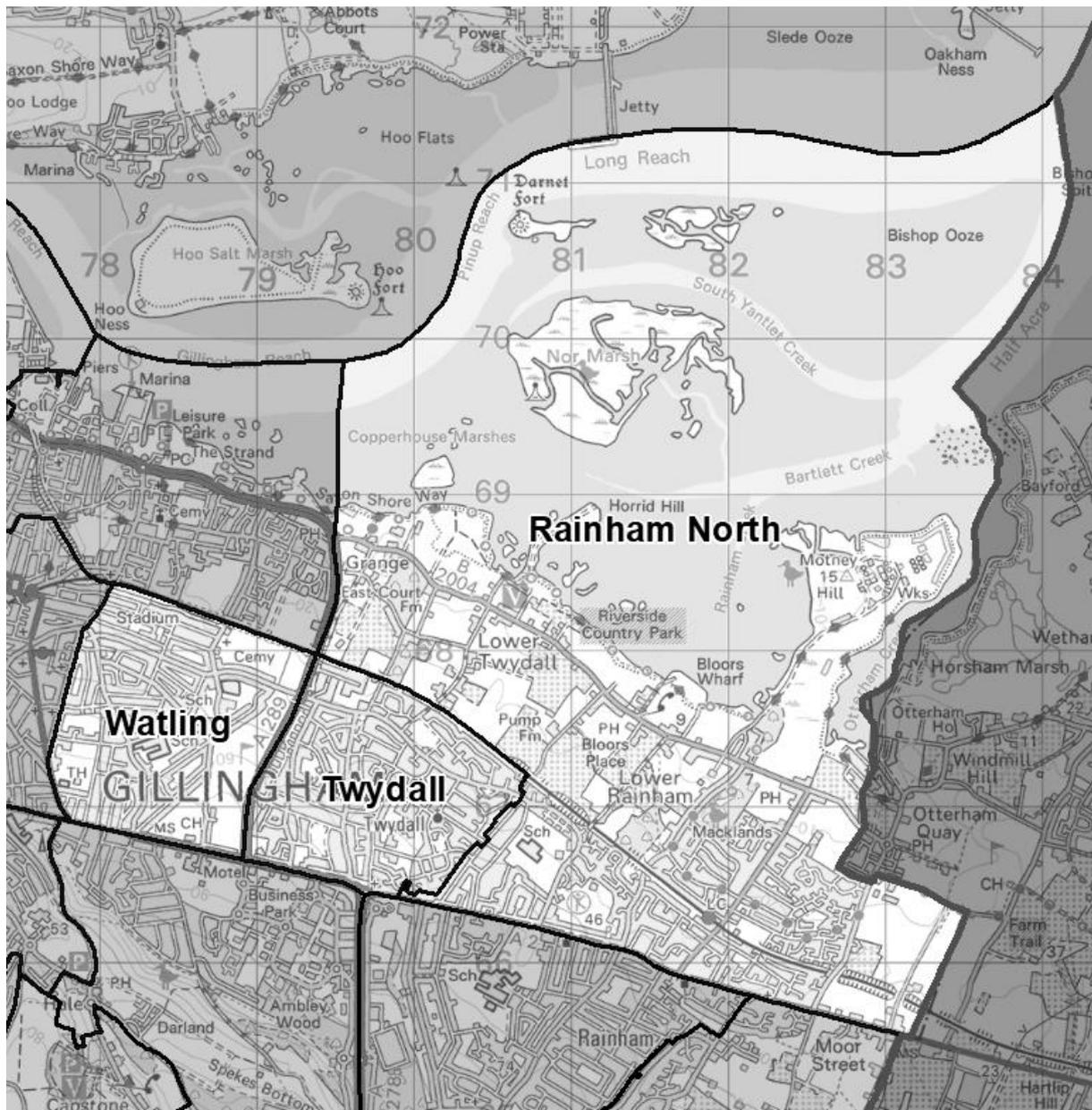
4 We have adopted the revised proposals put forward for these areas. These proposals address the issues raised by a significant number of residents. However, they reduce the number of councillors who will represent Medway Council in future from 60 – the figure identified in our draft recommendations – to 59. We note that this was the original council size that we agreed for Medway and are therefore content that 59 is a sufficient number of councillors for the Council to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

5 We welcome all comments on these proposals, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries and the names of our proposed wards. This stage of consultation begins on 1 December 2020 and closes on 11 January 2021. Once we have received these views, we intend to publish our final recommendations for the whole borough in March 2021. Please see page 11 for more information on how to send us your response.

6 The tables and maps on pages 3–9 detail our further draft recommendations. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

## Rainham North, Twydall and Watling



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Rainham North	3	5%
Twydall	2	5%
Watling	2	7%

### *Rainham North and Twydall*

7 We received more than 160 submissions about the boundary between our draft recommendations Rainham Central and Twydall wards. The Medway Labour & Co-operative Group and parties ('Labour & Co-operatives') and Liberal Democrats supported our proposals for these two wards, but the Conservatives put forward new

proposals for this area as well as the rest of Rainham, Watling and an area south of the A2 from Darland to Hempstead and Wigmore.

8 The Conservatives proposed moving residents north of the A2 between Bloors Lane and Ivy Street from our draft recommendations Twydall ward into an enlarged Rainham North ward. Residents of Hawthorne Avenue and the roads to its east would also be included in Rainham North ward. Under these proposals, Rainham North would become a three-councillor ward while Twydall ward would be represented by two councillors. They proposed that the Twydall ward boundary with Watling ward also moves east to run along the A289 (Ito Way).

9 The Conservatives argued that the area east of Hawthorne Avenue is 'unambiguously Rainham' and that this change would transfer the Rainham community currently in Twydall into a Rainham ward. They pointed to shared community interests and facilities including the shops in Rainham Shopping Precinct and on the High Street, the Rainham Healthy Living Centre, the parish church and community centre. In describing the suitability of their proposed boundary, they pointed out that as the A2 becomes London Road to the west, 'its northern side becomes a treelined boulevard with double-width pavements, cycle-ways and high hedges' and that 'the houses on the north side of the road are set back from the road in separate roads'.

10 Councillors Carr and Potter, who represent the existing Rainham North ward, expressed support for these new proposals.

11 The vast majority of residents in the east of the existing Twydall ward who wrote to us in similar terms objected to being included in our draft recommendations Twydall ward explaining that they considered themselves residents of Rainham and that their community was in Rainham and not Twydall. We heard that residents in the immediate vicinity of Rainham Mark Grammar School considered that the facilities they used were all located in Rainham and not Twydall.

12 Some residents, although in the existing Twydall ward, cited the current Rainham North councillors as their councillors. Our draft recommendations Twydall ward was identical in every respect to the existing ward. Nevertheless, we note that residents in the east of the existing Twydall ward have a strong community identity with Rainham. We note that the Conservatives' proposed southern boundary for these three wards along the A2 is strong and identifiable. And we have been persuaded on community identity grounds to adopt these proposals as part of our further draft recommendations.

13 We recognise that there was some support for our draft recommendations Rainham Central ward because it included the whole of the High Street and we also note that a resident cited the shared issue of heavy traffic and development on either side of the A2 as a good reason to unite both sides in a single ward. While we

acknowledge these considerations, we were persuaded that the community identity evidence in support of moving electors from the east of our draft recommendations Twydall ward into a Rainham ward, as well as the strength of the A2 as a boundary, justifies the changes.

14 Our further draft recommendations are for a three councillor Rainham North ward and a two-councillor Twydall ward both of which are forecast to have 5% more electors than the borough average by 2025.

### *Watling*

15 Our draft recommendations for Watling ward extended north and south across the A2 (Sovereign Boulevard), much like the existing ward. Labour & Co-operatives and the Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations for this ward but the Conservatives proposed different boundaries. Under their proposals the size of the ward is reduced so that it is represented by two, rather than three, councillors and they proposed that it does not extend south of the A2. The ward's boundary with Twydall is the A289 (Ito Way). Their proposed northern and western boundaries are identical to those of our draft recommendations ward.

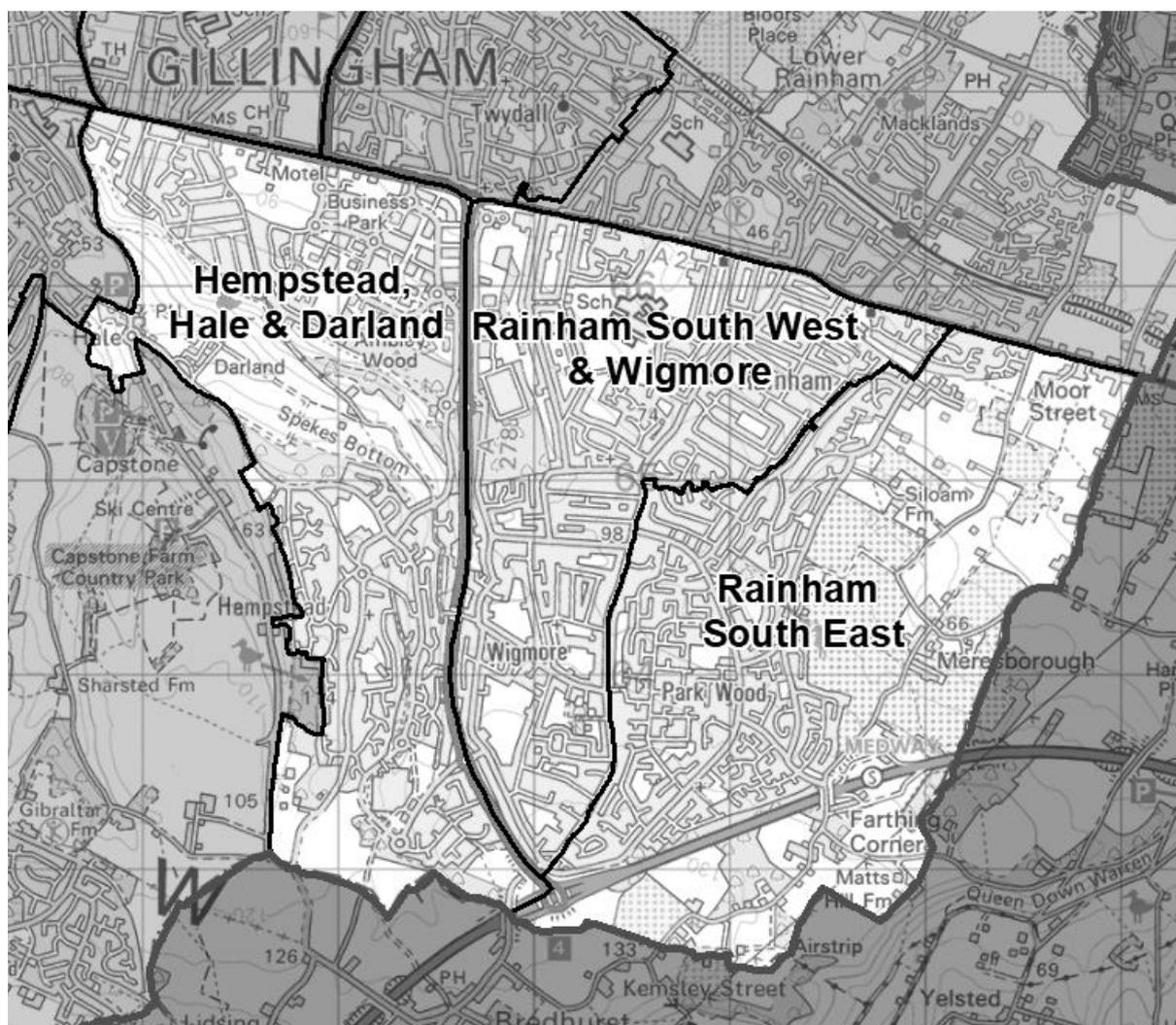
16 Councillor Browne expressed support for the boundaries of our draft recommendations Watling ward as did three residents. Councillor Browne stated that a three-councillor Watling ward 'would result in better local representation'. The residents appeared to support the northern boundary of our draft recommendations ward, with one resident supporting the inclusion the residents north of Sturdee Avenue up to the railway in this ward on the grounds that it reflected the local community. Another one specified their support for the inclusion of Priestfield Stadium (north of Sturdee Avenue) in the ward.

17 A resident of the Darland area objected to our draft recommendations on the grounds that those who lived in Darland, south of the A2, had little in common with those to the north of the existing and draft recommendations ward and that they were a separate community with different issues.

18 We have considered the evidence submitted to us, including in relation to the wards in the Darland, Hempstead and Wigmore areas and those in Rainham, south of the A2 (see paragraphs 20–28). We note the strength of the A2 (Sovereign Boulevard) as a boundary and that the A289 (Ito Way) is also strong and identifiable. We also note that the Conservatives' proposal retains the railway line as its northern boundary, one which respondents expressed specific support for.

19 Therefore, we have been persuaded to adopt these revised boundaries as part of our further draft recommendations. Our two-councillor Watling ward is forecast to have 7% more electors than the average of the borough by 2025.

## Darland, Hale, Hempstead, Rainham South and Wigmore



Ward	Number of councillors	Variance 2025
Hempstead, Hale & Darland	2	6%
Rainham South East	3	2%
Rainham South West & Wigmore	3	1%

### *Hempstead, Hale & Darland and Rainham South West & Wigmore*

20 In addition to the borough-wide submissions from the political parties we received representations from an MP, councillors, Hempstead Residents' Association and residents.

21 Labour & Co-operatives and the Liberal Democrats both supported our draft recommendations for a Hempstead & Wigmore ward and a Rainham Central ward. Both wards were not too different from the Conservatives' proposals in response to our warding pattern consultation. Nevertheless, the Conservatives submitted a significantly different proposal in response to our draft recommendations.

22 The Conservatives stated that Wigmore is a 'suburb of Rainham' and shared some community and social facilities with the area within the existing Rainham Central ward. Therefore, they proposed that the areas ought to be included in a single ward. Furthermore, they pointed out that this residential community has nothing in common with Hempstead from which it is separated by the A278 (Hoath Way). The Conservatives also proposed uniting Hempstead with Darland and Hale in a ward to the west of Rainham and Wigmore. In support of their proposed Hempstead, Hale & Darland ward, they argued that these communities were united by the countryside between them and that in the past have come together on a number of occasions to 'fight unwanted and unnecessary housing development ...'.

23 Rehman Chishti MP also expressed support for the unification of the Wigmore community within the existing Rainham Central ward, as did the current councillors for this ward. The councillors pointed out that two sets of councillors – for Hempstead & Wigmore and Rainham Central wards – attended meetings of the Wigmore Residents' Association to ensure that issues relating to residents were not missed.

24 The councillors for the existing Hempstead & Wigmore ward also supported these proposals and explained that the division of Wigmore ward across two electoral wards has led to confusion among residents as to which councillors they needed to contact.

25 Two residents indicated that Wigmore extended further north than the boundary of the existing ward and our draft recommendations Hempstead & Wigmore ward. One specified Woodside as the boundary, while the other resident indicated that the boundary between Wigmore and Rainham Central ought to be even further north along Durham Road.

26 Most of the other submissions expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. The Hempstead Residents' Association stated that it supported the proposals as put forward by the Conservatives as it related to Hempstead. One resident explained that the Hempstead, Hale & Darland ward proposed by the Conservatives was aligned with natural boundaries presented by Darland Banks, Capstone Way, the A2 and the A278. Others said it made sense because these communities shared and bordered the rural land around Darland Banks and opposite Capstone.

27 We have noted that our draft recommendations retain the existing split of the Wigmore community across two wards and have been persuaded that it is desirable to unite them in a single ward. By simply moving the boundary between our draft recommendations Rainham Central and Hempstead & Wigmore wards to Durham Road produces variances of 20% and -15% for these wards.

28 We have therefore based our further draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposal. This unites Wigmore in a single ward together with our draft recommendations Rainham Central ward south of the A2. We are content to rename it Rainham South West & Wigmore to more accurately reflect its geographical position. We note that this facilitates the creation of a two-councillor Hempstead, Hale & Darland ward, which has good community identity and strong and identifiable boundaries. Hempstead, Hale & Darland ward is forecast to have 6% more electors than the borough average. Rainham South West & Wigmore ward is forecast to have 1% more electors.

### *Rainham South East*

29 The borough-wide submissions we received in response to our draft recommendations Rainham South ward were all supportive of the ward's boundaries. The Conservatives proposed changing its name to Rainham South East to reflect its geographical location. Councillor Hackwell and most of the residents who commented on this ward expressed support for this proposed name change.

30 Councillor Hackwell supported our inclusion of the area between Deanwood, Kenilworth and Lonsdale drives in this ward. He stated that some residents in this area feel more associated with Parkwood in the existing Rainham South ward and therefore contact him. He also supported the uniting of the whole of Lonsdale Drive in a single ward rather than the status quo where it is split across two wards.

31 He and a resident pointed out that there are some properties on Mierscourt Road in our draft recommendations Rainham Central ward that ought to be included in this ward. The resident argued that those eight properties were separated from the rest of Rainham Central ward by a playing field and that they were isolated in this ward. We have been persuaded by this and have modified the boundary accordingly. We note the support for our draft recommendations in this area and are confirming it as part of our further draft recommendations subject to the minor change described above.

32 We have also been persuaded to rename this ward Rainham South East to reflect its position in the borough. It is a three-councillor ward forecast to have 2% more electors than the average for Medway Council.



## Have your say

33 The Commission has an open mind about its further draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

34 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Medway, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

35 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps and draw your own proposed boundaries. You can find it at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

36 Submissions can also be made by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or by writing to:

**Review Officer (Medway)**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**PO Box 133**  
**Blyth**  
**NE24 9FE**

37 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Medway Council which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

38 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

39 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in Medway?

40 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

41 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

42 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in Westminster (London) and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

43 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

44 In the light of representations received, we will review our further draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the further draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

45 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Medway Council in 2023.



## Equalities

46 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.



# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Further draft recommendations for wards in Medway Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2025)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Hempstead, Hale & Darland	2	7,479	3,740	10%	7,929	3,965	6%
2	Rainham North	3	10,401	3,467	2%	11,731	3,910	5%
3	Rainham South East	3	10,666	3,555	5%	11,364	3,788	2%
4	Rainham South West & Wigmore	3	10,753	3,584	6%	11,344	3,781	1%
5	Twydall	2	7,479	3,740	10%	7,846	3,923	5%
6	Watling	2	7,481	3,741	10%	7,936	3,968	7%

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Medway Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Appendix B

### Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:

[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/medway](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/kent/medway)

#### *Political Groups*

- Medway Conservatives
- Medway Independents
- Medway Labour & Co-operative Group, Medway Constituency Labour Parties and Medway Co-operative Party
- Medway Liberal Democrats

#### *Councillors*

- Councillor N. Ahmed (Medway Council)
- Councillor N. Ahmed, Councillor J. Aldous & Councillor B. Kemp (Medway Council)
- Councillor N. Bowler (Medway Council)
- Councillor H. Browne (Medway Council)
- Councillor C. Buckwell (2) (Halling Parish Council & Medway Council)
- Councillor K. Carr (Medway Council)
- Councillor K. Carr & Councillor M. Potter (Medway Council)
- Councillor G. Chalker (Halling Parish Council)
- Councillor S. Chamberlain (Halling Parish Council)
- Councillor D. Chambers & Councillor R. Chambers (Medway Council)
- Councillor P. Cooper (Medway Council)
- Councillor T. Dolby (Halling Parish Council)
- Councillor G. Hackwell (Medway Council)
- Councillor S. Hubbard (Medway Council)
- Councillor N. Khan (Medway Council)
- Councillor V. Maple (Medway Council)
- Councillor T. Murray (Medway Council)
- Councillor A. Price Medway Council
- Councillor A. Stamp (Medway Council)
- Councillor C. Stamp (Medway Council)
- Councillor H. Tejan (Medway Council)
- Councillor P. Thompson (Medway Council)
- Councillor R. Thorne (Medway Council)
- Councillor S. Tranter (Medway Council)
- Councillor R. Turpin (Medway Council)

### *Members of Parliament*

- Rehman Chishti MP
- Tracey Crouch MP
- Kelly Tolhurst MP

### *Local Organisations*

- Chatham Maritime Trust
- City of Rochester Society
- Hempstead Residents' Association
- St Philip & St James Church

### *Parish and Town Councils*

- Cuxton Parish Council
- Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council

### *Local Residents*

- 288 local residents



The  
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Boundary Commission  
for England

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