

16 JUNE 2026

Report No. MD2602

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION INTERIM WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report explains the proposed interim ward arrangements for the new North Hampshire council. The aim is to make sure local communities are properly reflected in the election arrangements for the future unitary council.

The Committee is asked to recommend that the Council:

- approves the proposed distribution of councillors across the North Hampshire districts
- submits a proposal for an 85-councillor and an 88-councillor interim ward arrangement
- indicates a preference for an 88-councillor interim ward arrangement

The Committee is asked to consider the 85-councillor and 88-councillor interim warding options and recommend a preferred option to the Council.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report explains how the Council plans to support local government reorganisation in North Hampshire. The aim is to help achieve the best outcome for residents and businesses.
- 1.2. It explains the Government's decision to create a new North Hampshire Unitary Council, what legal steps are needed, and what the Council now needs to do.
- 1.3. The report asks for agreement to send proposed interim ward arrangements to the Government. This will help the Council play an active part in setting up the new authority and how it will be run.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The [Council Delivery Plan](#) says the Council will work to get the best outcome from devolution and local government reorganisation for Rushmoor residents and businesses.

- 2.2. In September 2025, the [Council approved](#) sending its local government reorganisation proposal to the Government. This included the Council's preferred option.
- 2.3. In March 2026, the [Secretary of State announced](#) that the Government had decided to go ahead with the five-unitary-authority option supported by the Council. This means Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, Rushmoor, and Hampshire councils will be replaced by a new North Hampshire Unitary Council.
- 2.4. In a [follow-up letter to chief executives](#), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said it plans to prepare a Structural Change Order for Parliament to approve. This order would create the new councils and close the current ones.
- 2.5. The Structural Change Order will provide the legal basis for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and the Solent. Both Houses of Parliament must approve it. It will cover things such as setting up the new councils, shadow arrangements, elections, and the responsibilities of the current and new councils. Approval is expected in autumn 2026.
- 2.6. The letter also asked for suggested interim ward arrangements for each new council. For North Hampshire, this was based on a proposed total of 85 councillors using current ward, division or parish boundaries.

### **3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1. The Structural Change Order will replace the scheduled local elections in May 2027 with full elections to the new shadow unitary councils. Councillors will first be elected for five years. The next election will then be in 2032, after which normal four-year terms will apply.
- 3.2. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England will carry out a full review to decide the long-term electoral and ward arrangements for the new council's election in 2032.
- 3.3. Interim ward arrangements are needed for next year's shadow elections. The approved proposal suggested 85 councillors for the new North Hampshire Council.
- 3.4. Following advice from MHCLG and the Boundary Commission, the suggested arrangements should meet these main points:
  - North Hampshire should have 85 councillors in total, unless there is a strong reason for a different number.
  - The arrangements must use current legal boundaries, such as district wards, county divisions or parish areas. These can be joined together to make larger areas.
  - Different parts of Hampshire can use different approaches if this better reflects local circumstances.
  - Ideally, each ward, division or parish should have no more than three councillors.

- The number of electors per councillor should be as even as possible across the new council area. Some variation is expected because the arrangements must use existing boundaries.
  - The arrangements should support effective local leadership and neighbourhood working, with flexibility where needed.
- 3.5. Using this advice, officers from the three district councils in North Hampshire and Hampshire County Council worked together to develop an interim distribution of councillors and ward arrangements.
- 3.6. These principles were used to develop the interim ward arrangements for Rushmoor, which the Committee may wish to use in coming to their recommendations where appropriate:
- Electoral equality (similar electors per councillor across future unitary authority)
  - Use of existing geographies and recognition of community identity
  - Simple, clear, and pragmatic
- 3.7. Members may wish to use the [Council's ward facts and figures pages](#) for local information about each ward when making their recommendations.
- 3.8. This approach follows the place-based model used in the wider reorganisation proposal. It aims to create wards that make sense locally and support effective representation, while balancing existing boundaries, community identity and fair representation.
- 3.9. These are recommendations only. The Government will make the final decision when it prepares the Structural Change Order.

### **Councillor distribution across North Hampshire**

- 3.10. MHCLG asked for interim ward arrangements based on 85 councillors across North Hampshire. The proposed split is:
- Basingstoke and Deane – 42 councillors
  - Hart – 23 councillors
  - Rushmoor – 20 councillors
- 3.11. The Council is also asked to submit an option based on 88 councillors across North Hampshire, with this split:
- Basingstoke and Deane – 44 councillors
  - Hart – 23 councillors
  - Rushmoor – 21 councillors
- 3.12. The annexes show that the 88-councillor model gives fairer representation across North Hampshire because the number of electors per councillor is more even. For this reason, the 88-councillor model is the preferred option.

## **85 councillor interim warding arrangements**

- 3.13. Several options, 85a to 85f, have been developed for interim ward arrangements under an 85-councillor model (maps for options 85c to 85f are attached).
- 3.14. Option 85a gives councillors to existing district wards based on the number of electors. Wards with the largest electorates would have two councillors and the rest would have one. This would create a wide range in representation, from -20% to +55%, so the LGR Cabinet Working Group rejected it because it does not provide fair enough representation.
- 3.15. Option 85f gives four councillors to each existing county division. Although this gives the most even representation, it goes against MHCLG and Boundary Commission advice to avoid areas with more than three councillors.
- 3.16. The remaining options (85b to 85e) combine existing district wards and assign councillors based on electorate or population. This creates a mainly simple pattern of three-member wards, using recognisable local areas while keeping representation broadly even. In all of these options, Aldershot Park and North Town are combined, and Manor Park and Rowhill are combined, with three councillors for each combined ward. Single wards having two councillors.
- 3.17. In some options, Wellington stays as a separate two-member ward because of its electoral profile. Although it has a relatively high population, it has fewer electors than nearby areas, so this gives suitable representation without forcing it to be combined with another area.
- 3.18. These options combine the Farnborough wards in different ways. This reflects different views about local geography, community identity and the need for fair representation. Option 85b was rejected by the LGR Cabinet Working Group because it did not reflect local geography and community identity.
- 3.19. The Committee is asked to review the options in this report and decide which one to recommend to the Council.

## **88 councillor interim warding arrangements**

- 3.20. Several options, 88a to 88e, have been developed for interim ward arrangements under an 88-councillor model (maps for options 88c to 88e are attached).
- 3.21. Option 88a gives councillors to existing district wards based on the number of electors. Wards with the largest electorates would have two councillors and the rest would have one. This would create a wide range in representation, from -21% to +57%, so the LGR Cabinet Working Group rejected it because it does not provide fair enough representation.
- 3.22. Option 88e gives four councillors to each existing county division, plus one extra councillor for Farnborough South because it has the largest electorate.

Although this gives the most even representation, it goes against MHCLG and Boundary Commission advice to avoid areas with more than three councillors.

- 3.23. The remaining options (88b to 88d) combine existing district wards and assign councillors based on electorate or population. This creates a mainly simple pattern of three-member wards, using recognisable local areas while keeping representation broadly even.
- 3.24. In all options, Aldershot Park and North Town are combined, and Manor Park and Rowhill are combined, with three councillors for each combined ward. Three standalone wards are also proposed. Wellington remains a two-member ward because it has fewer electors than its population size might suggest. St Mark's and Knellwood would also be two-member wards because they have large electorates.
- 3.25. These options combine the Farnborough wards in different ways. This reflects different views about local geography, community identity and the need for fair representation. Option 88b was rejected by the LGR Cabinet Working Group because it did not reflect local geography and community identity.
- 3.26. The Committee is asked to review the options in this report and decide which one to recommend to the Council.

### **Alternative Options**

- 3.27. Various options have been proposed as part of the body of the report.
- 3.28. The Council could choose not to send any suggested interim ward arrangements. However, this would mean it would have less influence over the Secretary of State's decisions, so this option is not recommended.

### **Consultation**

- 3.29. Council Leaders and Chief Executives from the councils that will be replaced by the North Hampshire Unitary Authority were consulted on the proposals for interim ward arrangements. They were advised by the Local Government Boundary Commission and MHCLG.
- 3.30. The LGR Cabinet Working Group was consulted on the proposed interim ward arrangements and contributed to the recommendations to this Committee.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)**

### **Risks**

- 4.7. There are risks in delivering these proposals, including the legal timetable, involvement from interested parties, and how much influence the Council has over the final outcome.

- 4.8. The Structural Change Order and related arrangements could still change during the parliamentary process. This may affect the proposed approach and timescales.
- 4.9. If the Council does not take part in sending interim ward proposals, it may have less influence over important decisions about future governance and election arrangements in North Hampshire.
- 4.10. Overall, the recommended approach aims to reduce these risks by making sure local views are taken into account.

#### **Legal Implications**

- 4.11. The legal implications are contained in the body of the report.

#### **Financial Implications**

- 4.12. This report does not create any direct extra costs. The work needed to carry out the recommendations will be met from existing budgets and staff resources.

#### **Resource Implications**

- 4.13. The work needed to support these recommendations is expected to be covered by existing budgets and staff resources.
- 4.14. Any extra costs linked to transition arrangements will be considered as part of the wider local government reorganisation programme when more details are available.

#### **Equalities Impact Implications**

- 4.15. A screening assessment was undertaken, and it determined that a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the impacts are positive or neutral. See Annex 5.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 This report explains why the Council is being asked to send proposed interim ward arrangements to the Government.
- 5.2 The proposals are based on joint work with partner councils and discussions with Group Leaders and the working group. They are also in line with the Council Delivery Plan.
- 5.3 The recommended actions will help the transition to the new council and make sure the interests of Rushmoor residents and businesses are represented in future local governance.

**LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:**

- Annex 1 - 85 councillor models
- Annex 2 - 85 councillor models maps
- Annex 3 - 88 councillor models
- Annex 4 - 88 councillor models maps
- Annex 5 – Equality Impact assessment

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

- [Council Delivery Plan](#)
- [Report to Council – Local Government Reorganisation – 25 September 2025](#)
- [Letter to Hampshire Leaders from the Secretary of State – 25 March 2026](#)
- [Letter to Hampshire Chief Executives from MHCLG – 26 March 2026](#)

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

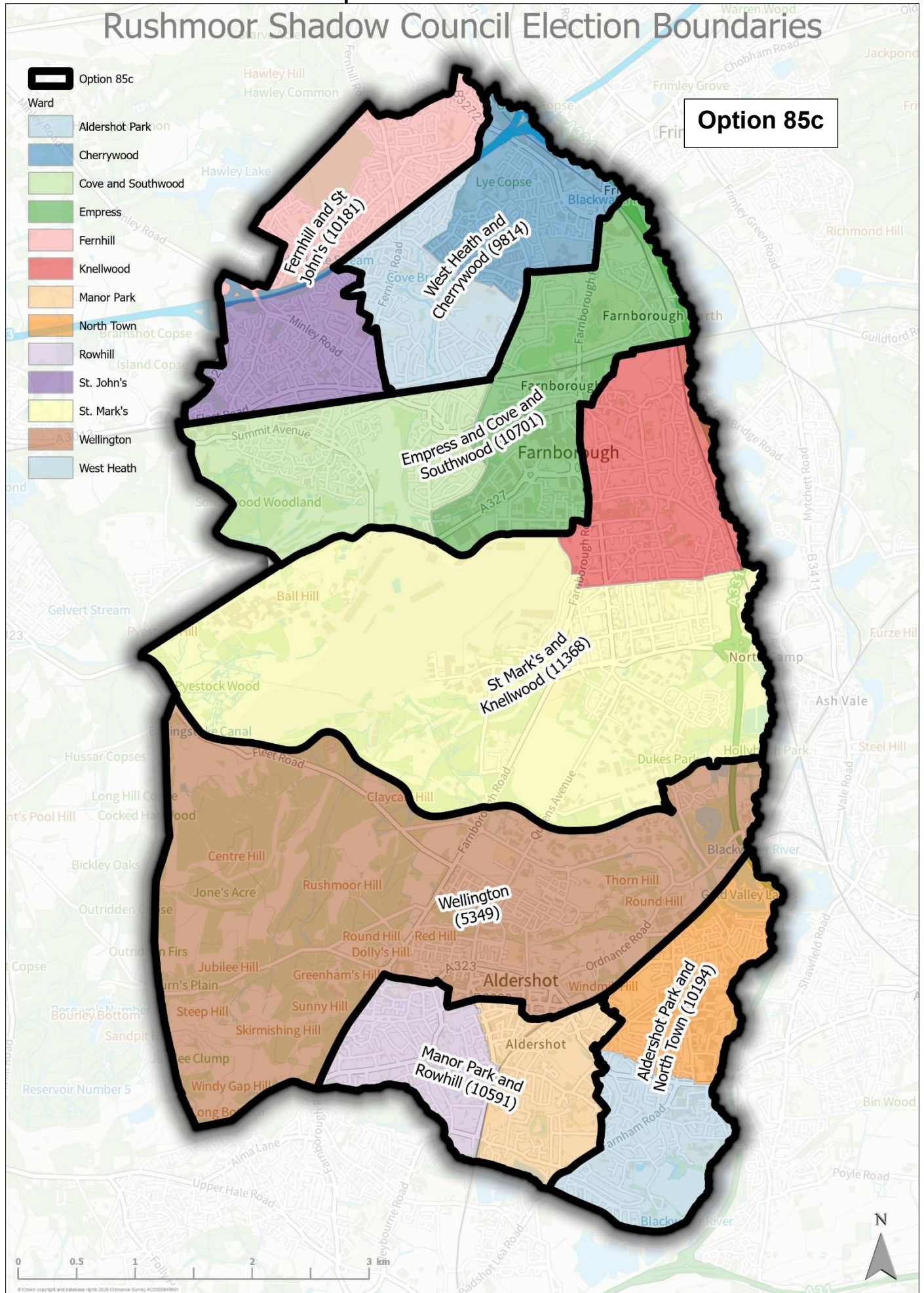
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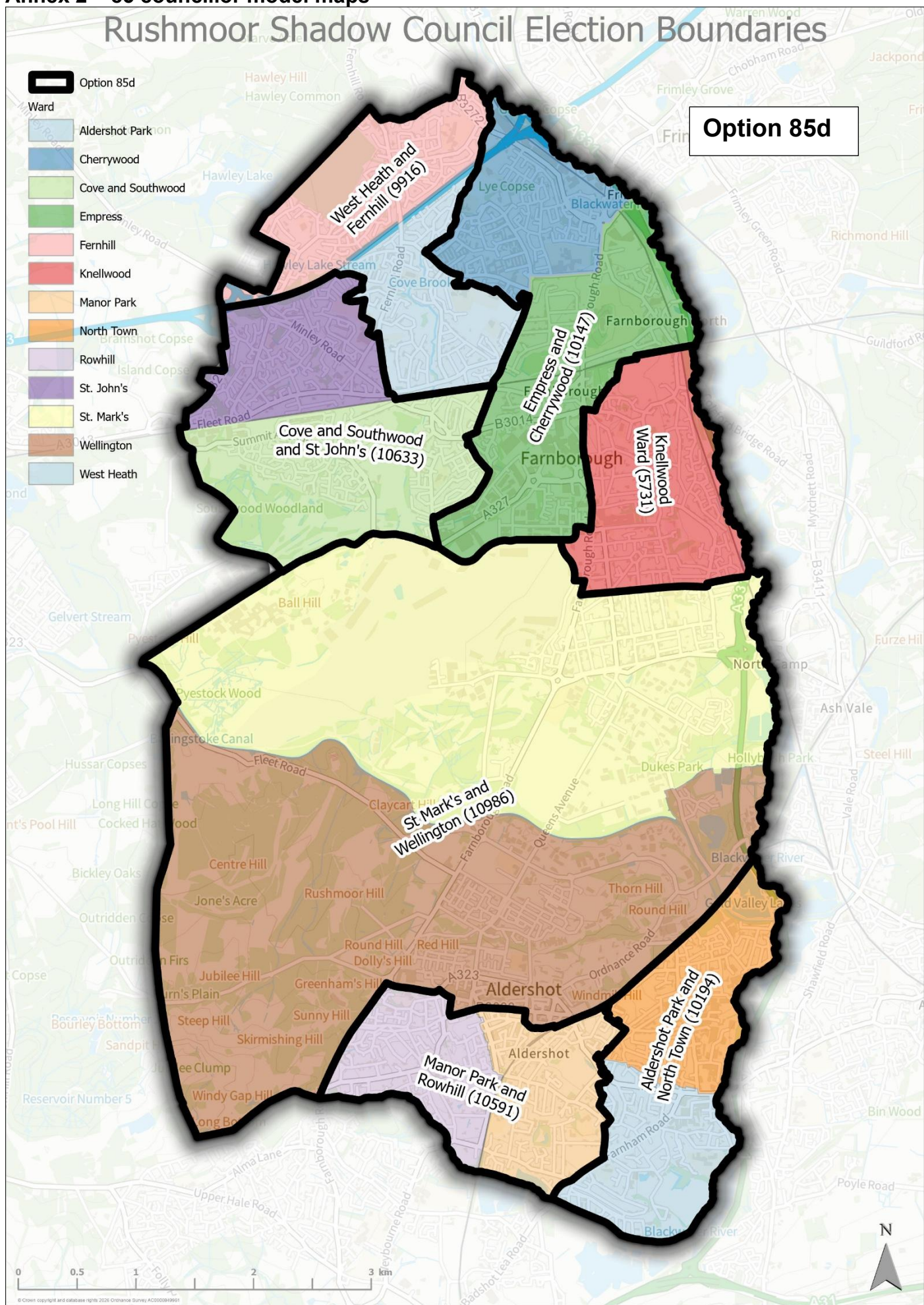
Annex 2 – 85 councillor model maps

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



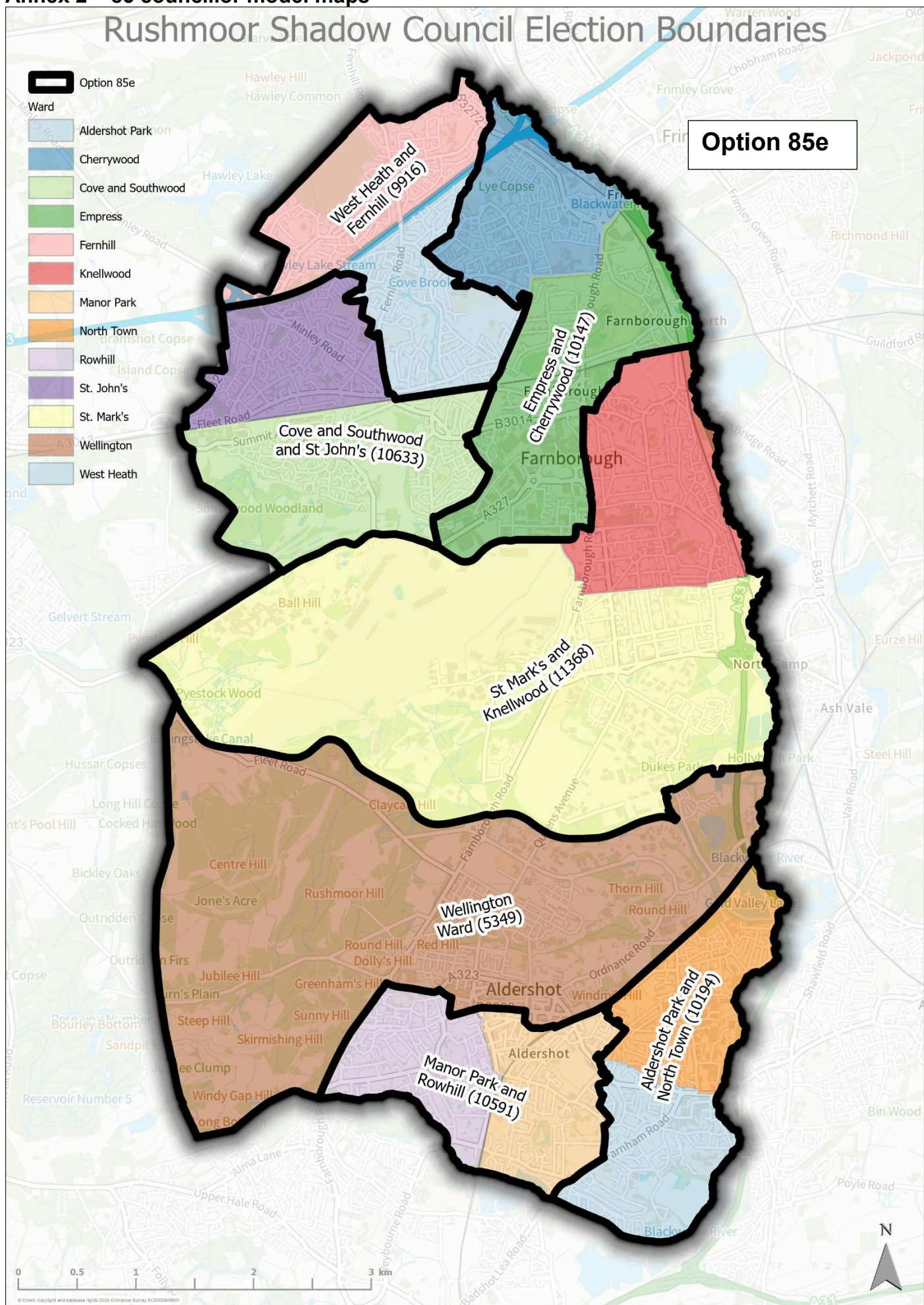
**Annex 2 – 85 councillor model maps**

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



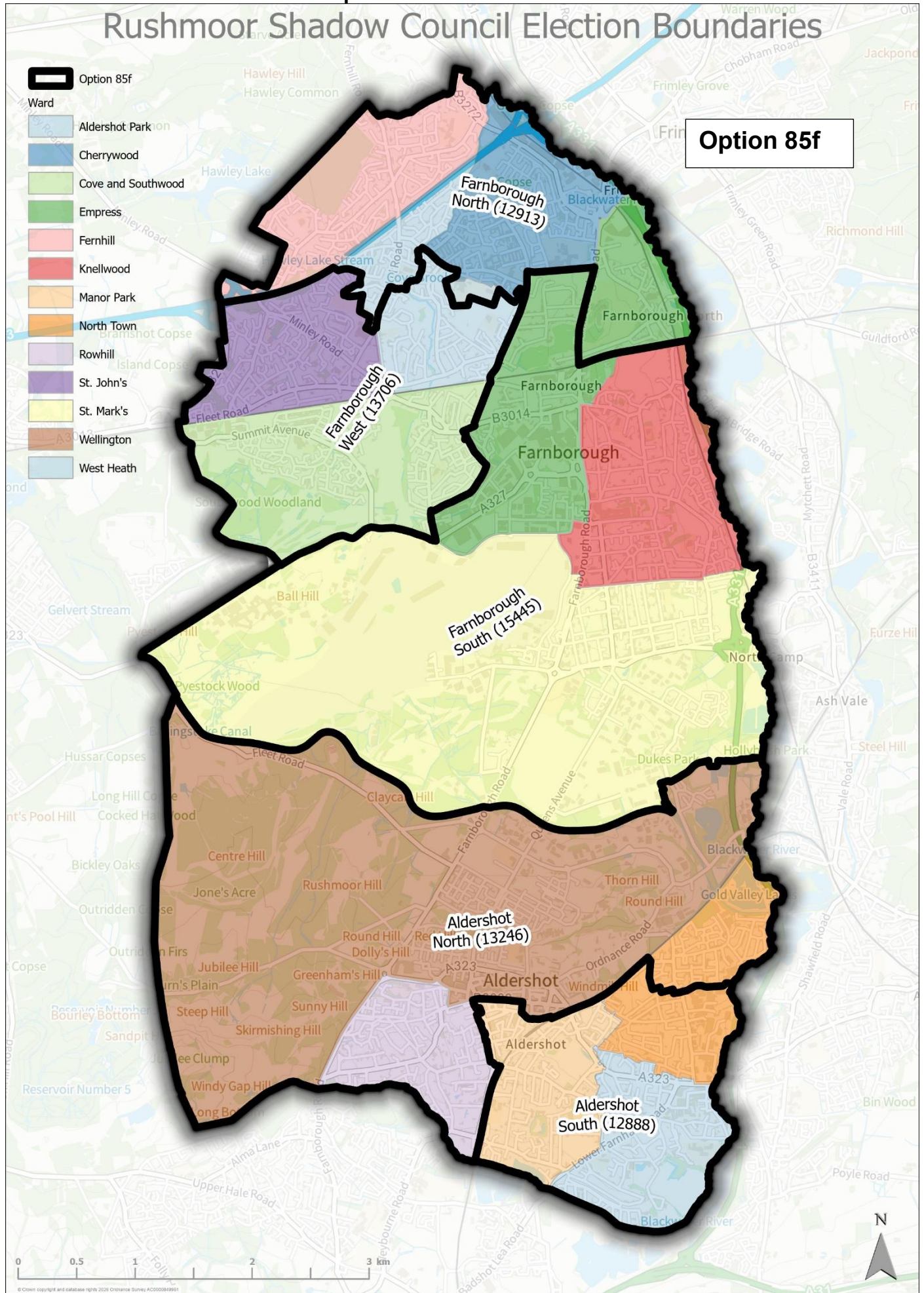
**Annex 2 – 85 councillor model maps**

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



Annex 2 – 85 councillor model maps

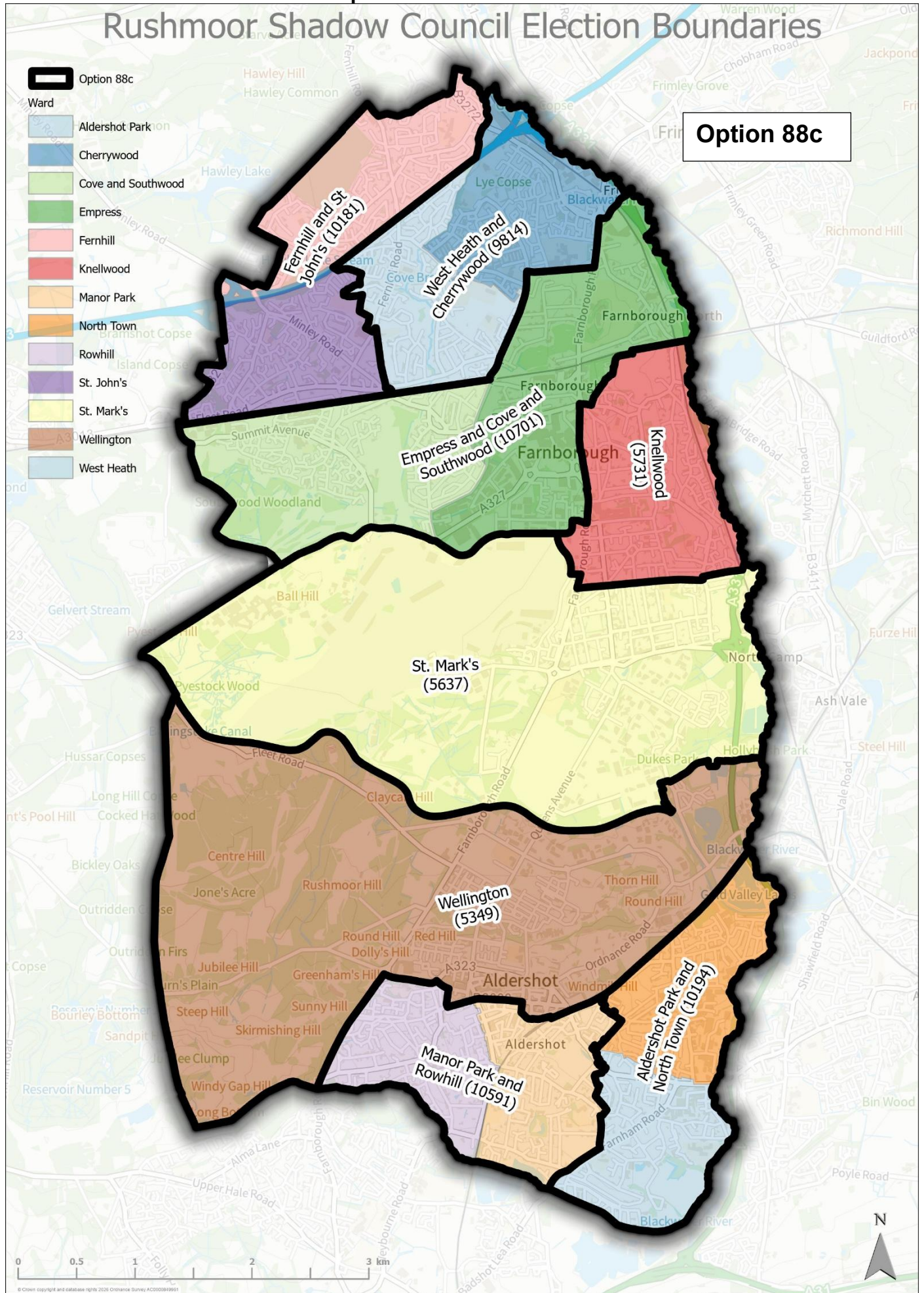
# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries





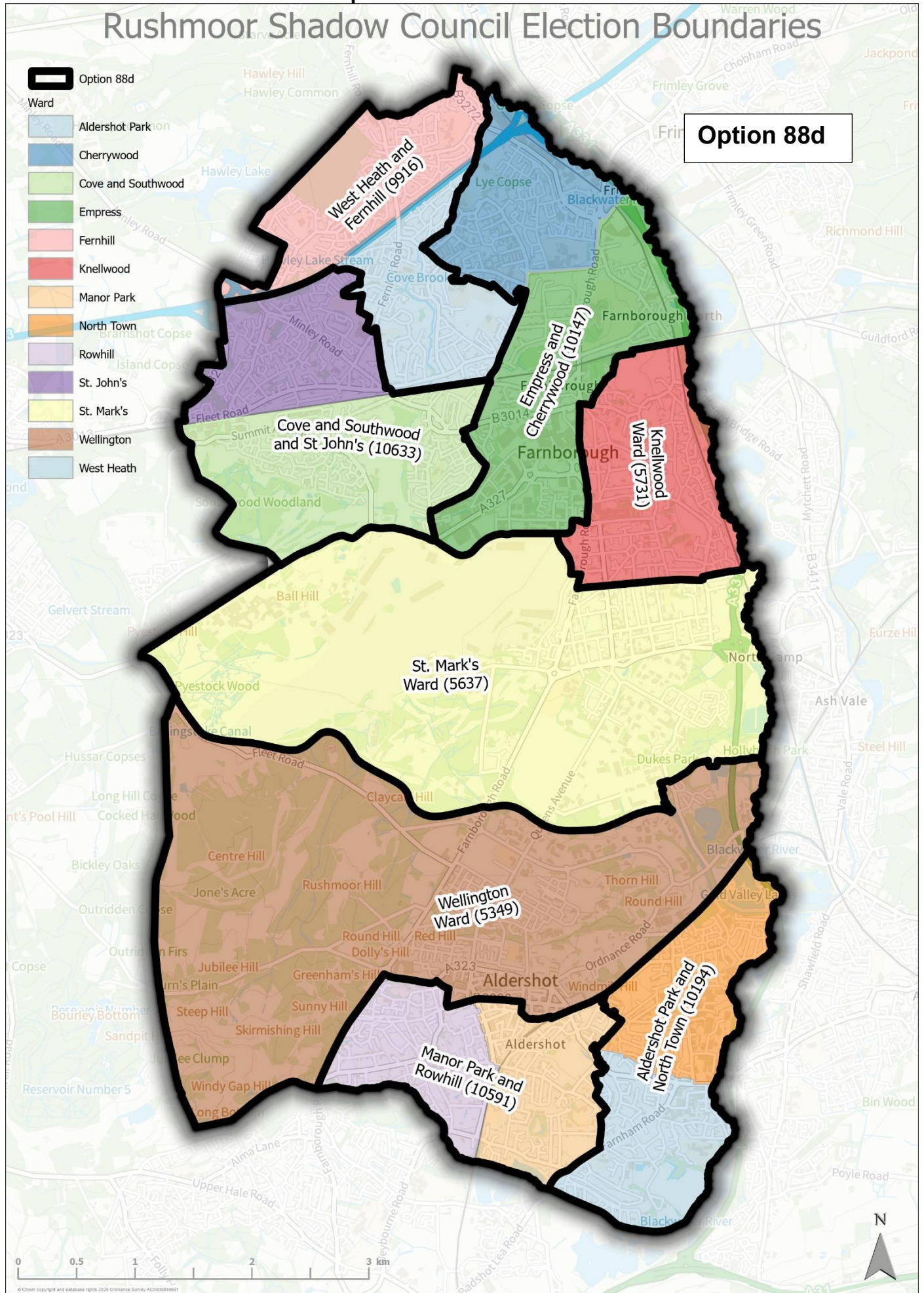
**Annex 5 - 88 councillor models maps**

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



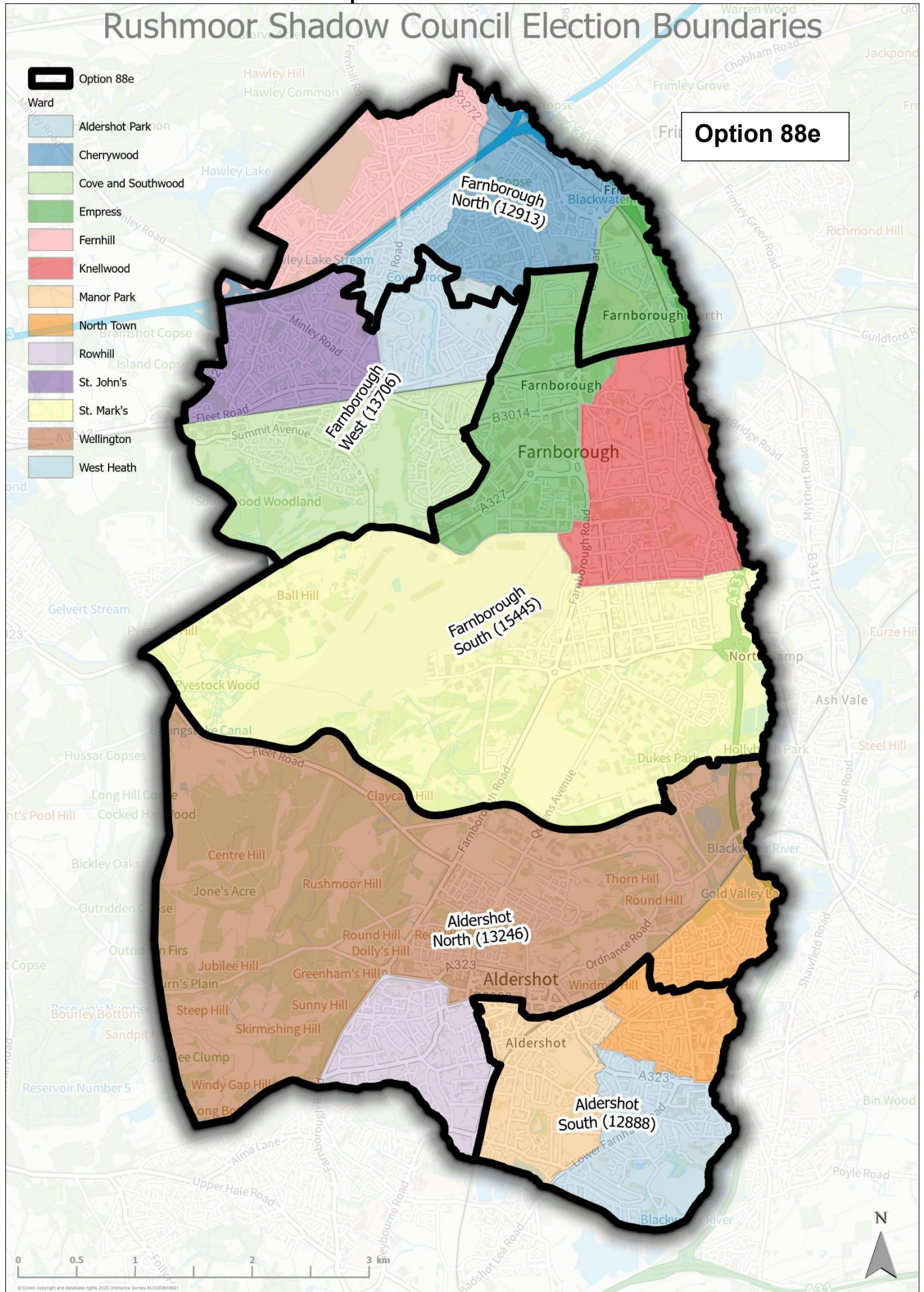
**Annex 5 - 88 councillor models maps**

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



**Annex 5 - 88 councillor models maps**

# Rushmoor Shadow Council Election Boundaries



**Option 88e**

# Equality Impact Assessment: Screening Tool

The **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool** should be completed for any new proposal, plan or project. It helps staff check if their proposal will positively, neutrally, or negatively affect residents, staff, or service users. If the impact is positive or neutral, a full EIA isn't needed.

A **full EIA** is required if the screening shows a negative impact on specific groups. We also advise that a full EIA should be completed when a [key decision](#) is being made. Key decisions are executive actions likely to:

- Significantly affect Council tax, budget balances, or contingencies.
- Have a major impact on communities across two or more Borough wards.
- Expenditure or savings over £100,000 qualify as significant, with a £250,000 threshold for property transactions.

Furthermore, for staff, we generally consider the impact on more than 25 people as significant, which would require a full EIA. If you're unsure, you can seek guidance from the Policy Team.

**\*After screening, if you identify the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment, you can use your existing answers as a foundation for the full assessment.**

Name of Project	Local Government Reorganisation – Interim Warding Arrangements
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Policy, Strategy and Transformation
Date screening completed	08/06/26
Screening author name	Martin Iyawe
Policy Team sign off	Alex Shiell
Authorising Director/Head of Service name	Karen Edwards

## 1. Please provide a summary of the proposal

The proposal is to submit interim warding arrangements for the new North Hampshire Unitary Council for the 2027 shadow elections.

This includes:

- Option for 85 councillors based on Government expectation
- Option for 88 councillors with improved electoral equality

The arrangements determine:

- how residents are grouped into wards
- how many councillors represent each area
- the level of electoral equality (electors per councillor)

The preferred 88-member model is recommended because it produces a more even distribution of electors per councillor.

## 2. Who will the proposal impact? Please indicate Yes or No

Group of people	Impacted?
Residents	Yes
Businesses	Yes

## Annex 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

Visitors to Rushmoor	No
Voluntary or community groups	Yes
Council staff	No
Trade unions	No
Other public sector Organisations	Yes
Others	Please specify:

### 3. What impact will this change have on staff? Please complete where relevant:

No impact on staffing structures or roles.  
Work is limited to preparing and submitting proposals within existing resources.

### 4. What consultation or engagement will you be leading (with residents, staff, or other stakeholders) as part of this project?

Developed jointly with partner councils (Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, Hampshire County Council). [LCB Informed by:

- MHCLG guidance
- Engagement via LGR Cabinet Working Group.

No direct public consultation due to statutory process.

### 5. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

#### Direct and indirect impacts

When completing this table, please consider both **direct and indirect impacts**, see helpful guidance.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a **protected characteristic**. This includes:

- **Actual possession** of a protected characteristic.
- **Perceived possession** of a protected characteristic (discrimination by perception).
- **Association** with someone who has a protected characteristic (discrimination by association).

A valid comparison must show that someone without the protected characteristic would have been treated better in similar circumstances. It can still be direct discrimination even if the person treating you unfairly shares the same characteristic.

*Note: Age discrimination may be lawful if it can be objectively justified. For other protected characteristics, direct discrimination is unlawful regardless of intent or justification.*

Indirect discrimination happens when a **policy, rule, or practice** applies to everyone but puts people with a protected characteristic at a **particular disadvantage**. It occurs when:

## Annex 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

- A policy is applied equally to all.
- It disadvantages a group sharing a protected characteristic.
- You are personally disadvantaged by it.
- The organisation cannot justify the policy as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

If the policy can be objectively justified, it is not considered indirect discrimination.

*For example: Closing public toilets may be an example of indirect discrimination, as it affects everyone but disproportionately disadvantages women, due to toilet frequency, alternative options and safety/hygiene factors.*

### Likely impact

For the groups identified earlier, tick the likely impact (both direct and indirect) on people with protected characteristics (e.g., age, disability, race, etc.):

- **Neutral:** No impact.
- **Positive:** Benefits people with protected characteristics.
- **Negative:** Harms people with protected characteristics.
- **Not Sure:** It's unclear how this affects people with protected characteristics, or more information is needed.

Rate the negative impact as **low**, **medium**, or **high**. Also, consider whether the proposal may be seen as controversial or negative by some groups. See the guidance for help.

### Protected characteristic - Age

(for example, young people under 25, older people over 65)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		This proposal does not change services, eligibility, or access.  Any impacts on different age groups will arise later through service design under the new authority.

### Protected characteristic – Disability

(include people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, blind and partially sighted people, Deaf or hard of hearing people, neurodiverse people. This also includes carers.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		The proposal focuses on electoral equality, not accessibility of participation.  People with disabilities may still face barriers to engagement in democratic processes regardless of ward structure.

### Protected characteristic - Gender reassignment and identity

(Include people who identify across the trans\* umbrella, not only those who have undergone gender reassignment surgery. This is inclusive of girls and or/women, men and/or boys, non-binary and genderfluid people and people who are transitioning) \*Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable)
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## Annex 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

				<i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic - Marriage and Civil Partnership

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic – Pregnancy and Maternity

(Include people who are pregnant in or returning to the workplace after pregnancy. Could also include working parents.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic – Race or ethnicity

(include on the basis of colour, nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		The report explicitly combines and reorganises existing wards (e.g. Aldershot Park with North Town, Manor Park with Rowhill). This may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>change how communities are grouped</li> <li>affect how effectively diverse communities are represented</li> </ul> However: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proposal aims to reflect “community identity” alongside electoral equality</li> </ul>

### Protected characteristic – Religion or belief

(include no faith)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic - Sex

(Under the Equality Act 2010 and following the 2025 Supreme Court ruling on 15 April 2025, a person’s legal sex is defined as their biological sex as recorded at birth. Trans individuals are still protected from discrimination under the characteristic of gender reassignment.)

## Annex 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic - Sexual Orientation

(Include people from across the LGBTQ+ umbrella, for example, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage.

### Protected characteristic - Other

(e.g. people on low incomes, people living in poverty, looked after children, people with care experience, people who are homeless, people with mental health problems, people who are prison leavers, people affected by menopause, people affected by menstruation and/or period poverty)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		The report prioritises achieving equal electors per councillor and uses existing geographic boundaries.  This may result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deprived areas being combined with less deprived areas</li> <li>differences in how effectively certain communities are represented</li> </ul>

## 6. Screening Decision

Outcome	Yes or No
Neutral or Positive – no full EIA needed*.	Yes
Negative – Low Impact – full EIA at the service director’s discretion*.	No
Negative – Medium or High Impact – must complete a full EIA.	No
Is a full EIA required? Service decision:	No
Is a full EIA required? [Policy Team] sign off recommendation:	No
Flag for DPIA (will include engagement that collects personal data). [Policy Team]:	No
Flag for ethics (high risk / will involve engagement with vulnerable residents):	No

Once you've completed the screening tool and determined that the proposal is likely to have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, the following can be included in the 'Equality Impact Assessment' part of the report. ***'An equality impact check found that this proposal would have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics. Therefore, a full assessment is not required.'***

Please send this completed EIA Screening Tool to [Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk) for quality checking by the policy team.