



# Electoral Matters Committee

Thu 29 Feb  
2024  
6.30 pm

Council Chamber  
Redditch Town Hall  
Walter Stranz Square  
Redditch  
B98 8AH

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

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[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Jo Gresham

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## **GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS**

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If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers, please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

### **GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON**

Meeting attendees are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Members of the public are encouraged not to attend a Committee if they have any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

### **Notes:**

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.



# Electoral Matters

Thursday, 29th February, 2024

6.30 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Matthew Dormer	Luke Court
	(Chair)	Monica Stringfellow
	Peter Fleming (Vice-Chair)	
	Juliet Barker Smith	

### 1. Apologies for absence and named substitutes

### 2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

### 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)

### 4. Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) - Worcestershire County Divisions Review (Pages 9 - 18)

### 5. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

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# Electoral Matters Committee

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Wednesday, 13th  
December, 2023

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Peter Fleming (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith and Monica Stringfellow

**Officers:** Darren Witney and Melissa Bassett

### 10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Luke Court.

### 11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 12. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

#### RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### 13. STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023

The Committee considered a report setting out submissions received during the consultation on the review of polling districts and polling places, which had been carried out between 2 October and 13 November, as well as the views of the electoral services team.

Four responses had been received to the consultation. Whilst most were in favour of the current or proposed changes to the polling

Chair

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places, a suggestion had been made that St Stephen's polling district should be renamed 'Town Centre'.

During consideration of the report, members of the Committee supported the actions taken by officers in relation to Polling districts HOC, NRB, NRC and WCD which were split by County Council electoral division boundaries. Officers had split these into two sections, and they would have the suffix 2 added after the second section. This allowed for administration of a County Council by-election if one was called in the near future.

It was noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England was due to make its recommendations on revised County Council electoral divisions on 9 January and the implications of this could be considered by the Committee in due course.

Officers updated the Committee on the current situation regarding polling station sites in potential polling place HOD, Wirehill. Of the three sites suggested, the contractor who provided temporary buildings for elections had discounted Woodrow Drive as it would present practical obstacles to installation. Whilst officers had approached the owners of the other two sites, and had provided further details to both, they had not received positive responses from either. Members agreed that of the two remaining sites, Atwood Close would be their preferred option. This site was currently owned by Homes England, and it was suggested it might be part of current discussions between them and the Borough Council about potential land transfers. Officers would check this point. If Officers were unable to reach agreement on the use of Atwood Close, then the polling place would remain within Oakenshaw South Polling District.

Councillor Peter Fleming expressed the view that the name of Polling District CEA, St Stephen's, should not be changed. The name featured in the electoral history of the Borough and to change it would be inconsistent with the usual convention for naming polling districts. This was agreed.

Members noted details about the publication of the register of electors which had been published on 1 December using current boundaries. The version to be published on 2 January would

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feature the new ward boundaries and would be used to prepare for the elections. Copies of the January register would be supplied to local political parties on request and automatically if they had requested a copy of the register published on 1 December. Individual members would not be able to have a copy of the January register due to the changes to the ward boundaries. However, the elections team could assist councillors with any individual queries.

## **RESOLVED that**

1. that the final proposals in respect of Polling Districts and Polling Places, as contained in Appendix 1 (as amended), be approved; and
2. that the decisions of the Committee in respect of 1 above take effect from the date of poll any election/referendum held or on publication of the revised Register of Electors.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 6.52 pm

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE  
2024**

29 February

**Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) –  
Worcestershire County Divisions Review**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors Dormer, Leader, and Court, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Report Author	Job Title: Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager Contact email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881650
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RESOLUTIONS**

- 1.1 **Members of the Committee are asked to note the contents of the report; and**
- 1.2 **decide if a submission to the LGBCE be made from the Authority regarding the proposed changes within this report.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The report highlights the progress of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) review for Worcestershire County Council Divisions.
- 2.2 It highlights where boundary changes to the proposed county divisions would fit better within the polling districts created as part of the 2023 polling districts and places reviews.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 No direct costs from this report.

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**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The LGBCE is a statutory body accountable to Parliament that conducts reviews of local authority electoral arrangements in England. Its statutory obligations are set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 4.2 One of the objectives of the LGBCE is to provide electoral arrangements for English principal local authorities that are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters.

**5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS****Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 This report deals with statutory functions but relates to the strategic purpose of an effective and sustainable council.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 It is preferable that choice of boundaries can help minimise unnecessary additional journeys by motorised vehicles.
- 5.3 Emissions and carbon footprint should be reduced as far as possible.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS****Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 None for this report.

**Operational Implications**

- 6.2 The LGBCE have published it's draft proposals for the new electoral county divisions in Worcestershire, consultation on these is open until 18 March 2024.
- 6.3 Details of the review can be found on the LGBCE website:.  
<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/worcestershire>
- 6.4 For the Redditch Borough area the LGBCE are recommending four divisions, all of which will have two members.

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6.5 Individuals and political parties and the authority can make submissions to the consultation.

6.6 Officers have identified two proposed divisional boundaries where it would be useful to amend them to make them coterminous with the agreed polling districts from the recent reviews.

6.7 Redditch Central/Redditch East Proposed Divisions

This relates to the new North Ward of the Borough and would involve moving electors both from and to the Redditch Central and Redditch East proposed divisions.

In appendix 1 the blue line is the current county division boundary and the red is the LGBCE proposed boundary line.

Officers propose the yellow boundary line which would make the following changes:

The boundary is moved so that the whole of polling district NRC – Church Hill North is within the proposed Redditch East division. This is currently 1,271 electors.

The boundary is moved so that the whole of polling district NRB – Papermill is within the proposed Redditch Central division. This is currently 791 electors.

The combined effect means that Redditch East division increases by 480 electors and Redditch Central is reduced by the same amount. In percentage terms this means the electoral variance from the average will move from -4% to -6.5% for Redditch Central and from -8% to -5.5% for Redditch East.

If members decide not to recommend this change a review of both polling districts NRB and NRC will be required.

6.8 Redditch West/Redditch South Proposed Divisions

This relates to moving boundary between the Redditch West and Redditch South Divisions within the Webheath & Callow Hill Ward.

If the boundary is moved north to encompass Morton Stanley Park and Redditch Golf Course it then makes the boundary of polling district WCD – Callow Hill co-terminus with the division boundary. This is shown as the yellow line in appendix 2.

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There are currently 27 electors in the area all on Lower Grinsty Lane and they would move from Redditch West Division to Redditch South Division.

If members decide not to recommend this change; rather than make this a separate polling district it would be better to adjoin this part of WCD to either polling district WCA or WCB.

- 6.9 The LGBCE will publish their final recommendations on 2 July 2024 and the new arrangements will be in place for the County Elections in May 2025.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 If proposals are not sent to the LGBCE polling districts will need to be reviewed again which could lead to new polling places being required.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Map of boundaries relating to polling districts NRB and NRC

Appendix 2 – Map of boundaries relating to WCD

LGBCE Website: <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/worcestershire>

Relevant Statutory provisions

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202429 February

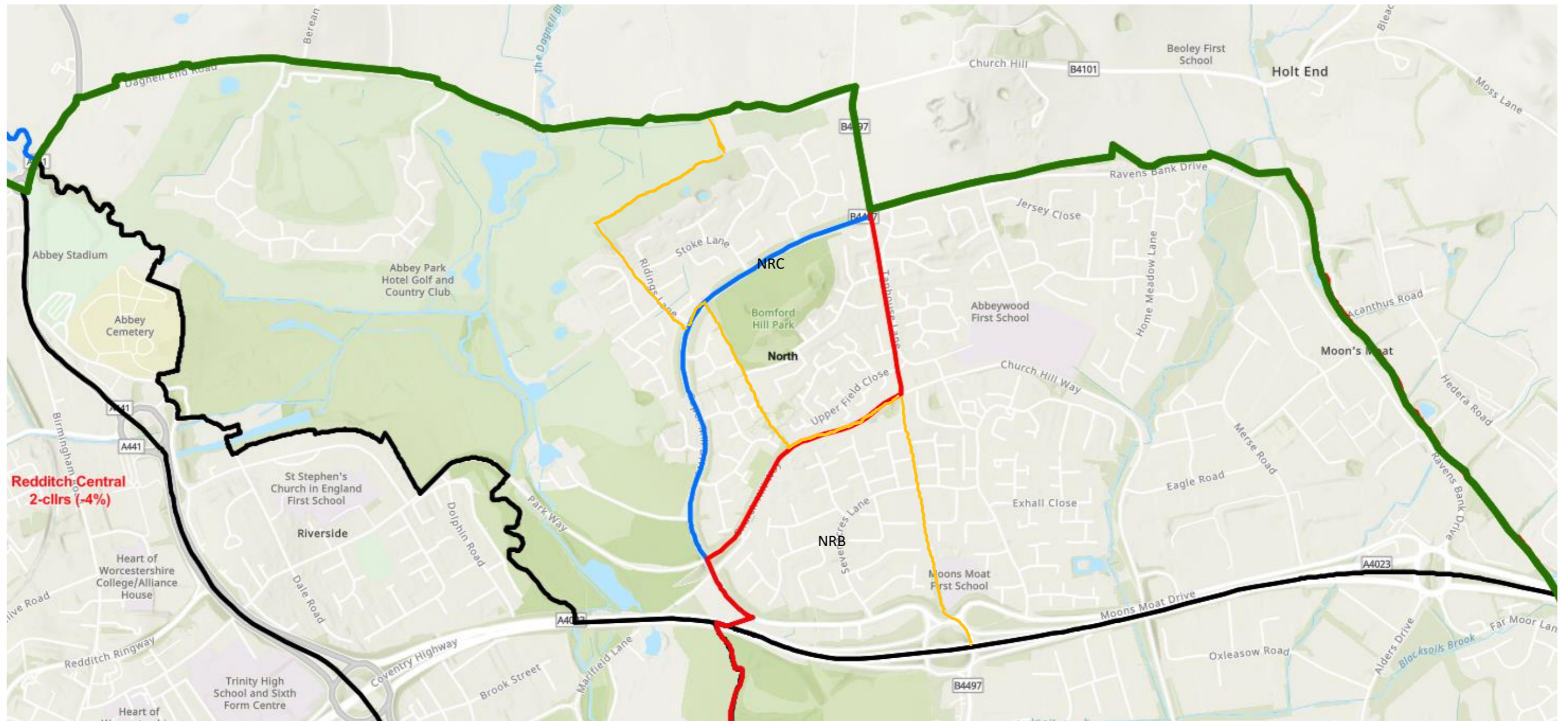
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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder		
Head of Service		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		

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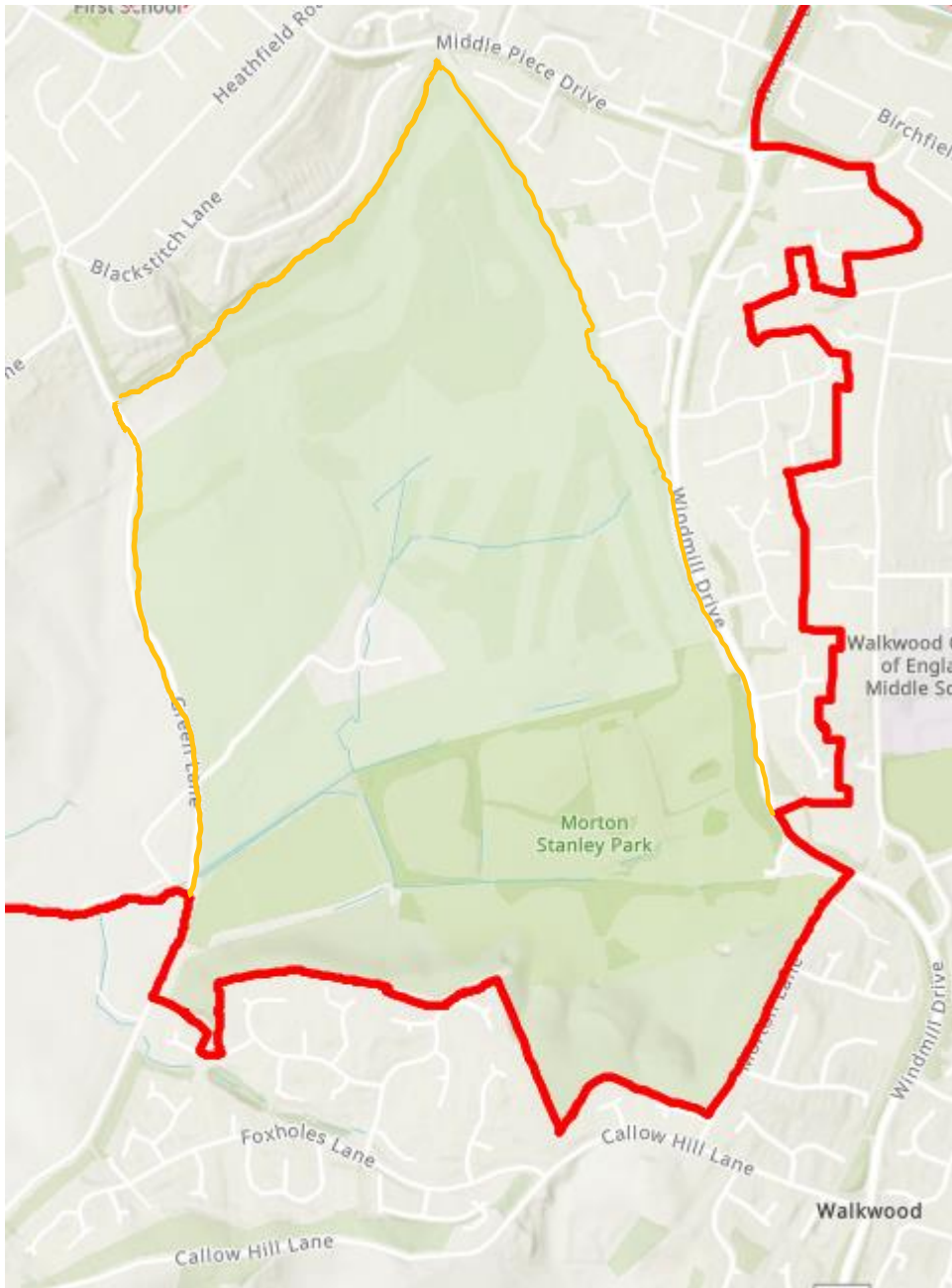
Appendix 1 - Map of boundaries relating to polling districts NRB and NRC



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Appendix 2 – Map of boundaries relating to WCD



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