

6. Gosport

6.1 About Gosport

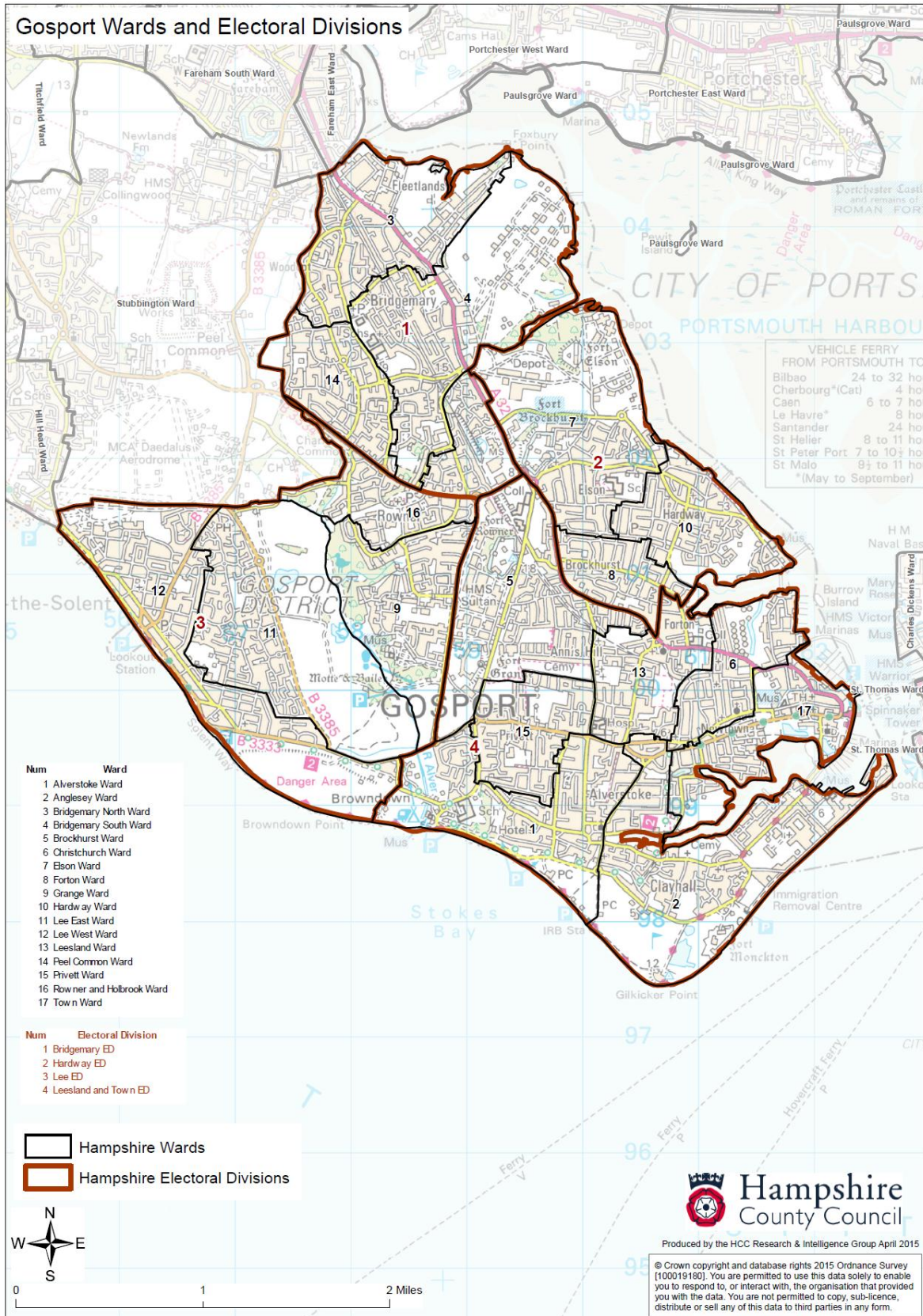
Gosport Borough is the smallest district in Hampshire and unique in being a peninsula. Gosport has a long and continuing association with the Armed Forces and its strategic position at the mouth of Portsmouth Harbour means that it has for centuries been associated with marine activity, particularly Portsmouth's Naval Base. HMS Dolphin at Fort Blockhouse was an active submarine base between 1904 and 1998. The activity associated with the Navy has declined over a long period and many naval installations, such as Fort Brockhurst, have been opened to the public as tourism and heritage sites. The harbour area has been redeveloped as a marina.

Gosport has long suffered from inward access problems dictated by its peninsular geography. Following the loss of many naval jobs, there is now significant car-based commuting out of Gosport, causing congestion particularly along the A32 and Newgate Lane. A branch railway for passengers ran from Fareham to central Gosport until 1953 but this line was downgraded to a freight line and then closed in 1969. Part of the route is now being developed as an express bus corridor. Gosport is now the largest town in Britain without an operational railway station but the town benefits from a frequent ferry link to Portsmouth city, Portsmouth Harbour station and the Gunwharf Quays retail centre. It is expected that the redevelopment of HMS Daedalus, whose southern part is in Gosport, as an Enterprise Zone will bring much-needed local employment.

There are no parishes in Gosport but each division has community associations that readily identify with their areas and promote activity. Gosport offers many marine-related leisure activities and as a low-lying peninsula is extremely popular among cyclists and walkers, with fine views towards the Solent. The borough has one of the highest rates of cycle commuting in the country.

Gosport has a population of 83,000 in 2015. Some areas in the borough are among the most deprived in Hampshire, featuring relatively high unemployment, lower educational attainment and poorer health. New development is constrained by a number of physical factors, principally lack of supply of suitable land. During the last 50 years there has been considerable expansion of the urban area; but the remaining open space, much of it still in Ministry of Defence ownership, is a finite resource that is highly valued by local residents and visitors.

Map of Existing County Council Divisions in Gosport



6.2 County Council Divisions in Gosport

There are currently five County Councillors from Gosport, three representing single-Member divisions and two representing a joint division. Gosport's physical constraints mean that development has been limited in recent years, and the average division electorate is therefore smaller in Gosport than in other districts.

Existing divisions – registered and forecast electorate

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate Forecast	2021 Variance
Bridgemary	1	12,473	-4.6%	12,092	-12.7%
Hardway	1	11,232	-14.1%	11,215	-19.0%
Lee	1	13,556	+3.6%	14,404	+4.0%
Leesland & Town	2	25,115	-4.0%	27,316	-1.4%
Total	5	62,376		65,027	

The County Council's proposals for Gosport are driven by the need to bring Bridgemary and Hardway divisions up to an acceptable size in terms of electoral equality. Relatively simple transfers of polling districts from the other two divisions bring all four forecast electorates within 10% of the county average – although all four are below the Hampshire average of 13,846 voters per Councillor. No changes to division names or the two-member arrangement in Leesland & Town are proposed.

The proposals for Gosport were co-ordinated by Councillor Chris Carter, one of the two Members for Leesland & Town, and were discussed with and agreed by all current Gosport County Councillors other than Councillor Peter Chegwyn, the Member for Hardway, who stated that he believes Leesland & Town should no longer be a two-Member division.

6.3 Bridgemary

2021 Electorate Forecast: 12,092 (-12.7% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers the northern part of the borough and adjoins Portsmouth Harbour and Fareham borough. The busy A32 runs through the centre of Bridgemary, separating residential areas in the west from commercial land in the east. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Bridgemary North
- Bridgemary South
- Peel Common
- Rowner and Holbrook (56%)

Bridgemary has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is well below the Hampshire average and it is necessary to add some voters to this division. Bridgemary is bounded by Fareham borough to the north and west and by Ministry of Defence land and commercial development to the east, but a natural solution lies to the south. It is proposed that Rowner & Holbrook ward be unified by transferring the 44% of that ward currently in Lee Division to Bridgemary.

Proposal for Bridgemary

- Add polling districts Rowner and Holbrook GP3 and GP4 (+1,396)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 13,488 (-2.6% against forecast Hampshire average)

6.4 **Hardway**

2021 Electorate Forecast: 11,215 (-19.0% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers the area to the north of Gosport town centre and includes the historic naval forts of Brockhurst and Elson. Hardway including Elson is a very distinct, long-established area of Gosport which has seen development in the waterfront area. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Elson
- Forton
- Hardway

Hardway has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is very significantly below the Hampshire average and it is necessary to add some voters to this division. Hardway is bounded by Ministry of Defence land to the north and Portsmouth Harbour on the eastern side, with Forton Road forming a south-western boundary. Given the need for Bridgemary to expand, there is no option of expanding to the north. However, a natural solution in the south is to add Leesland GM1 and Brockhurst GE1 polling districts from Leesland & Town Division, both of which feature sections of Forton Road as an identifiable boundary. The proposal to bring polling districts south of Forton

Road into Hardway division reflects the fact that there is a natural community on both sides of this road that is brought together, rather than divided, by the road. It is believed that the new arrangement will be more logical for local community groups.

Proposal for Hardway

- Add polling districts Leesland GM1 and Brockhurst GE1 (+2,349)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 13,564 (-2.0% against forecast Hampshire average)

6.5 Lee

2021 Electorate Forecast: 14,404 (+4.0% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers the western part of Gosport borough including the geographically separate town of Lee-on-Solent. Lee features a nature reserve, a long stretch of coast looking out to the Isle of Wight and the southern portion of the Daedalus Enterprise Zone. With adjacent open space there is a natural boundary between Lee and the Privett area of Gosport. The area is well served by community groups who readily identify with activity in the area. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Grange
- Lee East
- Lee West
- Rowner & Holbrook (44%)

Lee has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is slightly above the Hampshire average and it is not necessary to add voters to achieve equality. As seen above, however, there is a need for Bridgemary to expand and it is proposed that polling districts Rowner and Holbrook GP3 and GP4 be transferred to that division.

Proposal for Lee

- Transfer polling districts Rowner and Holbrook GP3 and GP4 to Bridgemary (-1,396)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 13,008 (-6.1% against forecast Hampshire average)

6.6 Leesland & Town

2021 Electorate Forecast: 27,316 (-1.4% against Hampshire average)

This two-Member division covers the western part of Gosport Borough including all of the town centre, the village of Alverstoke, Haslar Creek and the southern coastline. The eastern edges form part of the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour and a busy ferry service crosses the Harbour from Town ward. The division is bounded on three sides by Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent which with the A32 road form effective boundaries. The Town area is readily identified by residents as the focal area of Gosport as this includes the Gosport Borough Council offices, the County Discovery Centre, and many other facilities including a twice-weekly market. There are a variety of community groups across the division including the centrally-located Gosport community centre.

The division currently includes the following wards:

- Alverstoke
- Anglesey
- Brockhurst
- Christchurch
- Leesland
- Privett
- Town

Leesland & Town has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is just above the Hampshire average and it is not necessary to add voters to achieve equality. As seen above, however, there is a need for Hardway to expand and we therefore propose to transfer polling districts Leesland GM1 and Brockhurst GE1 to that division. This leaves Leesland & Town just within the -10% variance, but this is more acceptable than it would be with a normal division as Leesland & Town has two Members covering nearly 25,000 voters.

As part of this process it has been re-examined whether Leesland & Town should continue to be a two-Member division, an arrangement introduced as part of a previous boundary review. A combination of factors – the geography of the Gosport peninsula, the pattern of residential development across Gosport, and the very large sites in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence – mean that it is not possible to split the division without producing a significant negative variance in one of the two divisions of well below -10%. In addition to this consideration, the two relevant Councillors believe that having two Members works well for the division. We therefore propose no

change to this arrangement (although see above regarding Councillor Chegwyn's view).

Proposal for Leesland & Town

- Transfer polling districts polling districts Leesland GM1 and Brockhurst GE1 to Hardway (-2,349)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 24,967 (-9.8% against forecast Hampshire average)

6.7 **Proposals for Gosport**

Division name	Members	2021 Electorate (Existing Forecast)	2021 Variance (Existing Forecast)	2021 Electorate (Proposed)	2021 Variance (Proposed)
Bridgemaury	1	12,092	-12.7%	13,488	-2.6%
Hardway	1	11,215	-19.0%	13,564	-2.0%
Lee	1	14,404	+4.0%	13,008	-6.1%
Leesland & Town	2	27,316	-1.4%	24,967	-9.8%
Total	5	65,027		65,027	

Map of Proposed County Council Divisions in Gosport

