

7. Hart

7.1 About Hart

Hart is a medium-sized district in the north-east of Hampshire. It is classified by the Government as rural but features some sizeable settlements including Fleet, Hook and Yateley. The district is split by two very busy strategic travel corridors connecting the South West to London: the M3 and the South West Main Line. To the north and south, however, most of the district is forested or farmed, and has much in common with other rural districts in Hampshire.

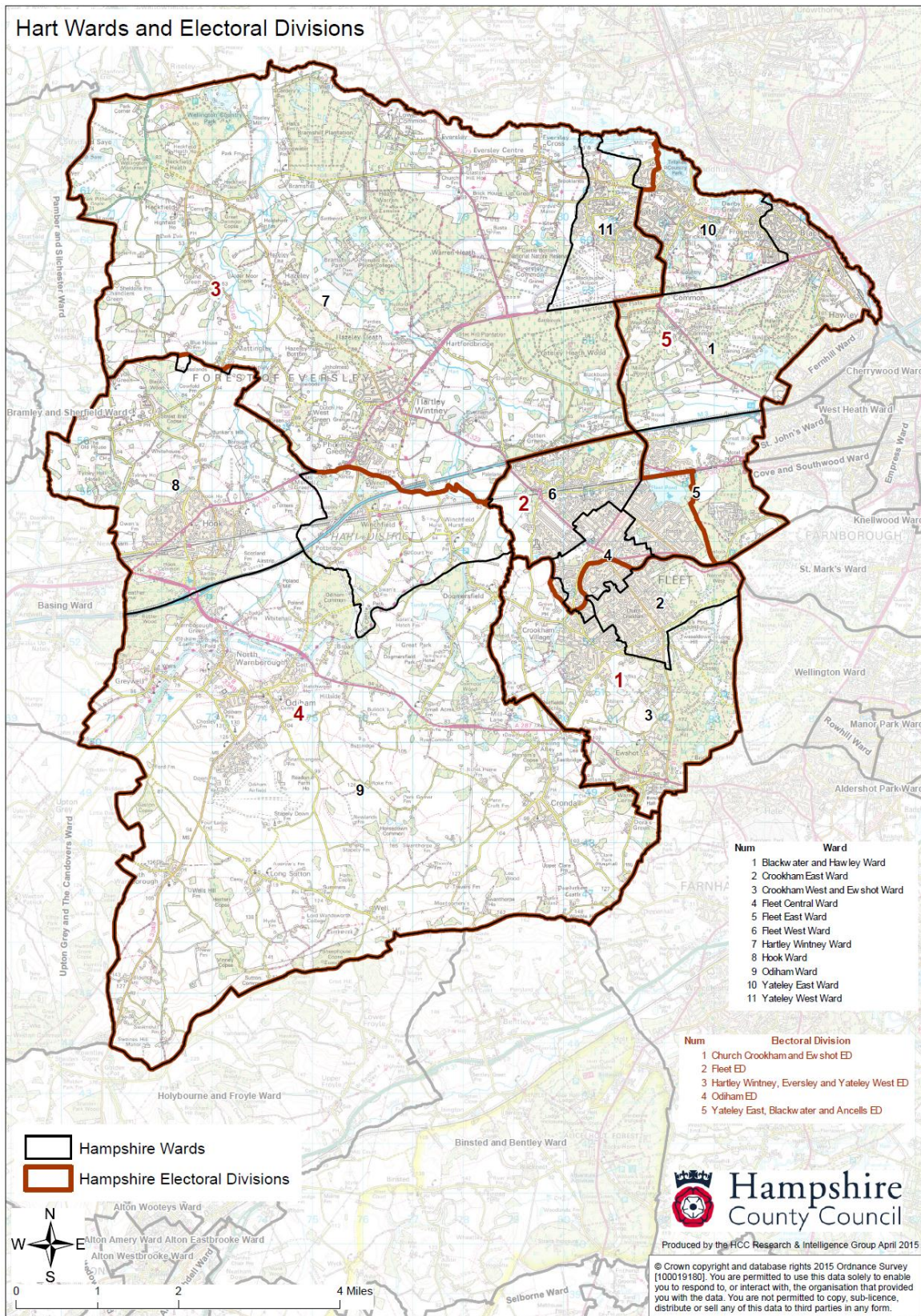
In economic and travel terms Hart 'faces' as much east towards Farnborough, Surrey and London as west and south towards Hampshire. The Blackwater Valley is a local micro-economy that encompasses several towns from the Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire borders, including Yateley. Historically residential development was mainly focused on the east-west travel corridor. Winchfield was the original terminus of the South West Main Line and Fleet Pond was promoted by the railway company as a destination for day excursions from London, which then attracted many people to live in the area. The M3 through Hart opened in the 1970s and this attracted further development along the corridor, particularly in Fleet and Hook.

The population of Hart in 2015 is around 94,000. Residents of Hart are regularly listed as being among the most healthy and prosperous in the country on a range of indicators. Quality of life indicators including employment, income, access to leisure facilities and physical health are high in Hart. With easy commuting to London, average house prices are the highest in Hampshire and over 26,000 people commute out of Hart daily.

Demand for housing in Hart is strong and developers have brought forward a number of major developments in recent years including Elvetham Heath, Queen Elizabeth Barracks and proposals for a new Garden Community around Winchfield. Partly due to this, County Council divisions in Hart have a high average forecast electorate compared to other districts in Hampshire.

Hart has long-standing and thriving connections with both the Army and the Royal Air Force. The district includes a number of current and former military establishments including RAF Odiham, the RAF's Chinook helicopter base, and Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Church Crookham. Proximity to other major military establishments outside its boundaries, such as Camberley, Sandhurst and Aldershot, means that Hart is also home to many servicemen and women and companies supplying products and services to the military.

Map of Existing County Council Divisions in Hart



7.2 County Council Divisions in Hart

There are currently five County Councillors from Hart, each representing one division, and it is proposed that this continues to be the case.

Existing divisions – registered and forecast electorate

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate Forecast	2021 Variance
Church Crookham & Ewshot	1	13,655	4.4%	15,162	+9.5%
Fleet	1	15,807	+20.8%	16,703	+20.6%
Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West	1	13,858	+5.9%	13,984	+1.0%
Odiham	1	13,605	+4.0%	15,717	+13.5%
Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells	1	13,764	+5.2%	13,684	-1.2%
Total	5	70,689		75,250	

The average electorate in Hart is 15,050, only 180 voters below the +10% variance threshold, so there are tight constraints on any proposals for a new pattern of divisions. The County Council's proposals do not radically redraw the map as we found that this approach caused greater division of communities than exists at present; instead it is proposed to adjust the boundaries of existing divisions sufficiently to bring all the electorates within the +10% threshold except Fleet (marginally over at +10.1%). The County Council has tried to match as best we can the natural communities in the district, and in fact a number of the changes reunite parishes or wards that were split in previous boundary reviews. There are two options for achieving the transfer of voters from Fleet to Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells, and these are explained below, including the County Council's preferred option.

It is proposed that the names of two divisions (Odiham and Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells) be changed to reflect the changed boundaries.

The proposals for Hart were co-ordinated by Councillor Adrian Collett, the Member for Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells, and were discussed with and agreed by all current Hart County Councillors.

7.3 Church Crookham & Ewshot

2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,162 (+9.5% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers the southern part of the built-up area of Fleet town, Crookham village in the west and wooded areas separating Fleet and Aldershot in the east. In the middle of the division lies Queen Elizabeth Barracks which is a major development area. The A287 Farnham-Basingstoke road runs through the lower part of Church Crookham & Ewshot. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Crookham East
- Crookham West & Ewshot (94%)
- Fleet Central (22%)

Church Crookham & Ewshot has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is well above the Hampshire average and only just within the +10% threshold. Although this division contains part of Fleet (which is too large for one division) the boundary between the two divisions in the built-up area is the Basingstoke Canal, which is well recognised and understood locally. The more rural parishes of Crookham Village and Ewshot both look naturally towards Church Crookham. For these reasons together with the pressures elsewhere in the district and the recognised communities that exist within Church Crookham & Ewshot, it is proposed that no changes be made to the boundaries of this division.

Proposal for Church Crookham & Ewshot

- Retain whole of current division

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 15,162 (+9.5% against forecast Hampshire average)

7.4 Fleet

2021 Electorate Forecast: 16,703 (+20.6% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers Fleet town centre including the main shopping area, district council offices and train station, and also the modern settlement of Elvetham Heath between the railway and the M3, which forms a hard

northern boundary. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Crookham West & Ewshot (6%)
- Fleet Central (78%)
- Fleet East (68%)
- Fleet West

Fleet has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is very significantly above the Hampshire average and it is necessary to reduce the geographical size of the division to bring it within or near to the +10% threshold. Two options for transferring some voters from Fleet into Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells, which has a forecast electorate just below the Hampshire average, have been examined. Both options involve a similar number of voters and there are arguments for and against each one.

Option A envisages moving 1,457 voters from the eastern half of Elvetham Heath parish.

In favour of Option A is the argument that it reflects the centre of historic Fleet, with the Basingstoke Canal for the southern boundary and the railway line for most of the northern boundary. Elvetham Heath and Ancells are both relatively new developments and have a natural connection at a roundabout to the East with Yateley and to the West with Fleet. Both Ancells and Elvetham Heath have their own shops, community centres and pubs. Against Option A is the fact that Elvetham Heath parish and Fleet West Ward would both have to be split.

Option A is supported by the Member for Fleet, Councillor Sharyn Wheale, and Fleet Town Council.

Option B envisages moving 1,453 voters from the northern half of Pondtail ward.

In favour of Option B is the argument that Pondtail is part of the same Fleet East Ward as Ancells, unlike Elvetham Heath which is in Fleet West, and Fleet parish is already divided into polling districts. Against Option B is the fact that Pondtail has a strong urban identity within Fleet, both historically and today. Pondtail is convenient and closely accessible to the town centre by a good network of roads, and is aligned with all the facilities within close walking distance to Fleet town centre. Elvetham Heath and Ancells are both separated from Fleet by a busy railway line and Ancells is also separated from Pondtail by Fleet Pond, a natural lake. There is no obvious division between the remaining part of Pondtail or between Pondtail and Fleet.

Option B is supported by Elvetham Heath Parish Council.

On balance the County Council recommends Option A as being the most logical but, if the Commission should be reluctant to split Elvetham Heath parish, Option B is considered acceptable as the fall back position.

Proposal for Fleet

- Transfer the eastern half of Elvetham Heath parish into Yateley East Blackwater & Ancells (-1,457)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 15,246 (+10.1% against forecast Hampshire average)

7.5 **Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West**

2021 Electorate Forecast: 13,984 (+1.0% against forecast Hampshire average)

This large rural division covers the northern part of Hart, bordering Berkshire. There are two main settlements: the large village of Hartley Wintney and the western half of the town of Yateley, which is split into two wards. The M3 forms a good part of the southern boundary and the A30 runs through the centre of the division. This division currently includes the following wards:

- Hartley Wintney (92%)
- Yateley East (11%)
- Yateley West

Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is only just above the Hampshire average and no change is necessary to achieve electoral equality in this division, but there are pressures arising elsewhere in the district that need addressing. It is therefore proposed that the whole of Winchfield parish, which is the 8% of the Hartley Wintney District Ward currently within the Odiham Division, be added, to unite it with the rest of the Hartley Wintney Ward. This proposal has unanimous local support.

It is also proposed that the boundary between the Yateley Lakes and Yateley Centre polling districts be moved back to the historic Mill Lane boundary. These are polling districts within the same parish and the move will have little impact on community identity.

Adding Winchfield parish unites the whole of the largely rural Hartley Wintney District Ward into the same county division, whilst changing the eastern boundary of the Yateley Lakes polling district in Yateley to Mill Lane

goes back to a long-established boundary, which existed for many years, instead of dividing the Firglen Drive estate down the middle. As the north-western division of Hart, the Hartley Wintney, Eversley and Yateley parishes all share connections via the A30.

Finally it is proposed to make a minor amendment to the south-western boundary with Odiham Division to reflect recently changed parish boundaries.

Proposal for Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West

- Add Hartley Wintney (8%) from Odiham (+539)
- Move the boundary between the Yateley Lakes and Yateley Centre polling districts within the Yateley Village Ward to Mill Lane (+236)
- Realign the divisional boundary to the new Rotherwick/Mattingley parish boundary following the recent parish review (+15)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 14,774 (+6.7% against forecast Hampshire average)

7.6 Odiham

2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,717 (+13.5% against forecast Hampshire average)

This is another large rural division with only two main settlements: the village of Odiham, which adjoins the RAF Chinook base, and the town of Hook, which has a station on the South West Main Line and is the UK headquarters for large employers including Virgin Media and Hewlett-Packard. A substantial new 'garden community' development around Winchfield is now being proposed. The A287 provides a good connection between Hook, Odiham and Crondall. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Hartley Wintney (8%)
- Hook
- Odiham

Odiham has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is significantly above the Hampshire average and it is necessary to reduce the geographical size of the division to bring it within or near to the +10% threshold.

With the proposed transfer of Winchfield parish to the Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West Division (described above), this division will neatly

comprise the two district wards of Odiham and Hook. It therefore makes sense to rename the division Odiham & Hook to reflect that the division is centred on Odiham, but also that a significant proportion of the population of the division live in Hook, and to reflect the two district council wards.

As described above, it is also proposed to make a minor amendment to the south-western boundary with Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West division to reflect recently changed parish boundaries.

Proposal for Odiham & Hook

- Winchfield parish to Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West (-539)
- Realign the divisional boundary to the new Rotherwick/Mattingley parish boundary following the recent parish review (-15)
- Rename division Odiham & Hook

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 15,163 (+9.5% against forecast Hampshire average)

7.7 Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells

2021 Electorate Forecast: 13,684 (-1.2% against forecast Hampshire average)

This division covers the north-eastern tip of Hart district and has a mixed geography and settlement pattern. North of the A30 and along the eastern edge it is built up and merges into the Blackwater Valley shared with Berkshire and Surrey. The central section is rural while south of the M3 the division includes a part of the Fleet area and the Pyestock military research centre. The division currently includes the following wards:

- Blackwater & Hawley
- Fleet East (32%)
- Yateley East (89%)

Yateley East, Blackwater & Ancells has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is just under the Hampshire average and no change to its boundary is strictly necessary. However, as described above, it is proposed that i) the eastern half of Elvetham Heath be moved into this division to create a more equal balance with Fleet division and ii) that the boundary between the Yateley Lakes and Yateley Centre polling districts be moved back to the historic Mill Lane boundary. To reflect these changes it is proposed that this division be renamed Yateley East, Blackwater & North East Fleet.

These changes would benefit this division as follows: Fleet Railway Station is the closest station to Yateley, which is the second largest town in Hampshire (after Gosport) without a functioning railway station. Fleet is also the main shopping town for Hart District and is where the District Council Offices are located. The proposed new boundaries of this north-eastern division of Hart therefore reflect well established connections. Ancells has long established links with Blackwater & Hawley parish, with half of the estate having been in the parish until a boundary change a few years ago. On the existing boundary Ancells is the only part of Hart within this division, but these proposals will mean that it would no longer be alone, with everything north of the railway line and east of Turner's Wood united into one division.

Proposal for Yateley East, Blackwater & North East Fleet

- Add the eastern half of Elvetham Heath parish (+1,457)
- Move the boundary between the Yateley Lakes and Yateley Centre polling districts within the Yateley Village ward to Mill Lane (-236)

Proposed 2021 Electorate: 14,905 (+7.6% against forecast Hampshire average)

7.8 **Proposals for Hart**

Division name	Members	2021 Electorate (Existing Forecast)	2021 Variance (Existing Forecast)	2021 Electorate (Proposed)	2021 Variance (Proposed)
Church Crookham & Ewshot	1	15,162	+9.5%	15,162	+9.5%
Fleet	1	16,703	+20.6%	15,246	+10.1%
Hartley Wintney, Eversley & Yateley West	1	13,984	+1.0%	14,774	+6.7%
Odiham & Hook	1	15,717	+13.5%	15,163	+9.5%
Yateley East, Blackwater & North East Fleet	1	13,684	-1.2%	14,905	+7.6%
Total	5	75,250		75,250	

Map of Proposed County Council Divisions in Hart

