

## **12. Winchester**

### **12.1 About Winchester**

Winchester district is formally known as Winchester City but its boundaries encompass a huge area of rural central Hampshire as well as the city of Winchester itself. It is the second-largest district in the county and extends from the A303 near Andover to the M27 near Portsmouth, adjoining more district and unitary councils than any other in Hampshire (seven). Much of the central part of the district is within the South Downs National Park. Winchester is renowned for its many footpaths including the South Downs Way, and two chalk rivers (Itchen and Meon) flow south through the district.

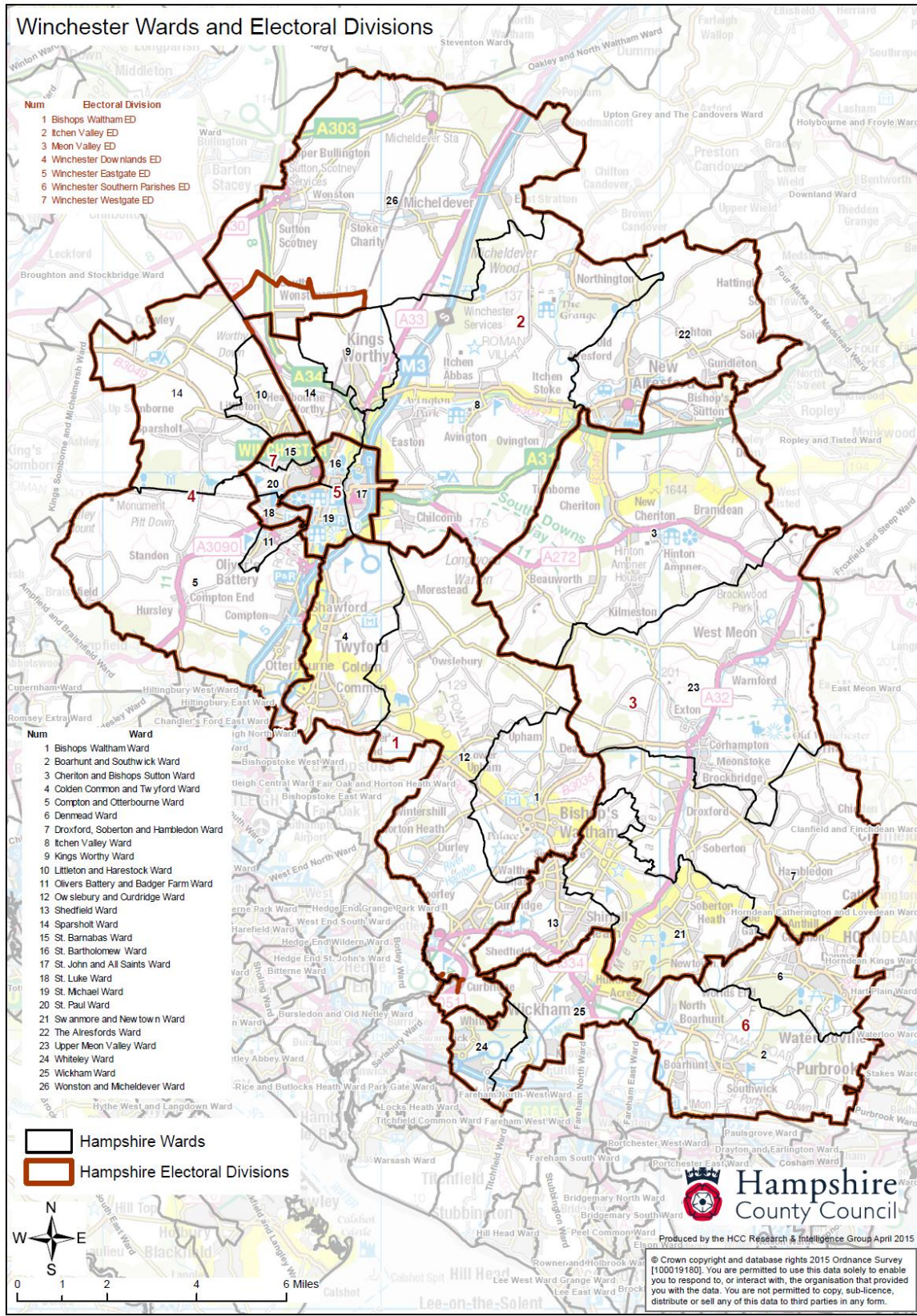
The dominant northeast-southwest travel corridor in Hampshire flows through the northern part of the district, along both the South West Main Line and the M3. A second railway links the city to Portsmouth while the A34, which meets the M3 just outside Winchester, is the key strategic route between the South Coast and the Midlands. The A31 runs east from Winchester to Alton and Farnham. All of these major roads intersect at Winchester and traffic congestion is frequently a problem.

Lying right in the centre of Hampshire, Winchester is the historic county town and was both a Roman settlement (Venta Belgarum) and the ancient capital of Wessex. Historically it has been famous for its Cathedral, College and Castle, in whose Great Hall King Arthur's Round Table still hangs. In modern times the city plays a crucial role as the administrative centre for the county. In addition to County and City Council headquarters, the Royal County Hospital, the County Court, Winchester Prison and Hampshire Constabulary are all located in Winchester. There are also four market towns in Winchester: Bishops Waltham, Wickham, Denmead and Alresford.

The National Park occupies a significant portion of Winchester district, restricting new development and thereby creating development pressure on other areas. North of the city there has long been a strategic gap, so most recent development has taken place in the south around Whiteley and Newlands (west of Waterlooville). Barton Farm, a large development in the northern part of Winchester city, has recently begun construction.

The population of Winchester in 2015 is just under 120,000 and is notable for having on average the most highly-qualified residents in Hampshire. With good links to London and elsewhere, house prices in Winchester are among the highest in the South East. Many of the people who work in the city live in more affordable areas such as Eastleigh or Southampton.

Map of Existing County Council Divisions in Winchester



Map shows ward boundaries prior to the 2015 Winchester City Council boundary review

## 12.2 County Council divisions in Winchester

There are currently seven County Councillors from Winchester, each representing one division, and the County Council's proposal is that this should remain the case.

### Existing divisions – registered, forecast and reappportioned electorate

Division name	Members	2014 Electorate	2014 Variance	2021 Electorate Forecast	2021 Reappportioned Forecast (see below ***)	2021 Variance
Bishops Waltham	1	13,071	-0.1%	15,415		+11.3%
Itchen Valley	1	12,905	-1.3%	13,432	14,615	+5.6%
Meon Valley	1	11,805	-9.7%	11,553		-16.6%
Winchester Downlands	1	12,820	-2.0%	13,620	12,437	-10.2%
Winchester Eastgate	1	14,686	+12.3%	15,811		+14.2%
Winchester Southern Parishes	1	12,486	-4.5%	15,747		+13.7%
Winchester Westgate	1	13,268	+1.4%	15,737		+13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>91,041</b>		<b>101,315</b>	<b>101,315</b>	

(It should be noted that the electorate forecasts for Winchester, which apply ward-level growth assumptions, used the pattern of district wards that was in place before the 2015 City Council boundary review – see below.)

Six of the seven divisions in Winchester are forecast to have an electorate that is outside the +/-10% variance threshold by 2021, so the County Council's starting position was that it should examine options for changing divisional boundaries.

The task was complicated by the fact that Winchester City Council has also been undergoing a boundary review. The final revised Winchester ward boundaries were only published at the start of July 2015, by which time the proposals for County Council divisions were well developed. However, the County Council's initial assessment is that the new district ward boundaries reinforce the proposed County Council division boundaries, particularly in the case of Winchester city, where the Commission made almost no change to

the city's external boundaries and in particular decided against moving any rural wards into the city. The proposed divisions are mostly coterminous with the new City Council wards, and where they are not they follow the previous ward and division boundaries.

The County Council has tried, where possible, not to split communities and to come up with proposals which make both geographic and community sense. In one case it has been necessary to split one parish (Soberton) although as previously stated this follows the line of the district ward prior to 2015.

Beyond the City Council boundary review, there have been two main challenges to successfully completing this exercise. The lead Member for Winchester, Councillor Rob Humby, produced 32 different models with a variety of configurations and connotations. The model proposed below represents the best balance between the Commission's three criteria.

For the non-city areas, the challenge has been the size of the divisions. The Winchester Councillors have tried to divide the Southern Parishes, Meon Valley and Bishops Waltham divisions to fit within the required electorate variance while taking into account the priorities of communities, divisional size and geographic realities (such as not splitting communities). A particular issue in the rural divisions is the restrictive policies of the South Downs National Park regarding new housing development, which means that the electorate in these areas increases more slowly than in the urban areas.

After discussion with Members, it has been agreed that no changes should be proposed to the Downlands and Itchen Valley Divisions (but see note<sup>\*\*\*</sup> about Barton Farm in the current Sparsholt ward, which is split between these two divisions, below).

The City of Winchester has proved to be an entirely different challenge. Here, there is no configuration which is satisfactory to satisfy both electorate variance requirements and community cohesion. After consultation with Members and with an eye to the three criteria and the final recommendations of the City Council ward boundary review, it is proposed to prioritise community cohesion. The result is that our proposal, which represents the only workable model, leaves both the Eastgate and Westgate divisions above 10% variance. The Winchester Members would therefore wish to state their strong view that the priority of any future boundary review must be to consider giving the city of Winchester a third Member.

There are two wards in Winchester where the polling district electoral forecasts have been recalculated and reapportioned to take account of

planned major development, i.e. Barton Farm in the current Sparsholt ward and North Whiteley in the current Owslebury & Curdridge ward.

In each case, instead of applying the ward-level growth (which already takes account of the planned development) across all the constituent polling districts equally, a specific forecast has been calculated for the polling district in which the major development is planned to take place and then the ward-level remainder has been re-distributed to the remaining polling districts. Thus the ward-level electorate forecast remains the same, but is distributed differently, and more accurately, between its constituent polling districts.

\*\*\* The current Sparsholt ward is additionally complicated in that it is already split between two electoral divisions with the planned major development taking place on the Itchen Valley side of the boundary, leading to an increase in the original electorate forecasts on that side (WW Headbourne Worthy) and a reduction from the original forecasts on the Winchester Downlands side of the boundary (WP Crawley and XX Sparsholt). The electorate forecasts between the two divisions have been reapportioned on a more accurate basis and these are highlighted in yellow in the tables.

The proposals for Winchester were co-ordinated by Councillor Rob Humby, the Member for Bishops Waltham, and were discussed with and agreed by all current Winchester County Councillors.

### 12.3 **Bishops Waltham**

#### **2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,415 (+11.3% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers the area stretching southwest from the city of Winchester. The main settlements are Twyford, Colden Common and Bishops Waltham. The division is a relatively long one from north to south, but does not have a main route running through it. The northern half of Bishops Waltham division is within the National Park and the area is also known for Bishops Waltham Palace and Marwell Zoo. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- Bishops Waltham
- Colden Common & Twyford
- Owslebury & Curdridge

Bishops Waltham has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is above the Hampshire average and in excess of the +10% threshold, so it is necessary to take action to achieve greater electoral equality. With Meon Valley needing to increase and Southern Parishes needing to reduce their respective electorates, a balanced realignment across the three is proposed

that sees an exchange of polling districts between Meon Valley and Bishops Waltham to reduce Meon Valley's physical size and focus it more in the south, with Bishops Waltham more in the centre of the district. Less extensive exchanges of polling districts with Southern Parishes are also proposed.

### **Proposal for Bishops Waltham**

- Add WB, WD, WH, WI, XC and XZ from Meon Valley (+1,709)
- Transfer WQ to Meon Valley (-3,285)

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 13,839 (-0.1% against forecast Hampshire average)**

## 12.4 **Itchen Valley**

**2021 Reapportioned Electorate Forecast: 14,615 (+5.6% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers a large area north and north-east of the city of Winchester and borders Test Valley, Basingstoke & Deane and East Hampshire districts. The division has strong links in all directions as it is crossed by three busy trunk roads that meet at Winchester: the A34, M3 and A31. The South West Main Line runs through the division and there is a station at Micheldever. The upper reaches of the River Itchen flow through this division and its lower half is within the South Downs National Park. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- Itchen Valley
- Kings Worthy
- Sparsholt (27%)
- The Alresfords
- Wonston & Micheldever (51%)

Itchen Valley has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is slightly below the Hampshire average. However, as described above we have more precisely recalculated the distribution of voters in the current Sparsholt ward in order to better reflect the real impact of the Barton Farm development. The effect of this is to increase the electorate in this division without any change to the boundaries, but to a level that is still well within the +10% threshold.

The lack of an obvious discrete community to move into the Itchen Valley Division from the city makes it impossible to make changes without splitting communities in a way that would not be compliant with the Commission's criteria. Additionally, the added complication of the in-progress major development at Barton Farm makes justifying moving city wards into rural

divisions even more difficult as this would be inconsistent with district ward boundaries and split the new district ward of The Worthys.

For these reasons we propose no changes to Itchen Valley.

### **Proposal for Itchen Valley**

- Retain whole of current division

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 14,615 (+5.6% against forecast Hampshire average)**

## 12.5 **Meon Valley**

**2021 Electorate Forecast: 11,553 (-16.6% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division is the largest in Winchester and covers a 75-square mile rural area in the centre of the district. The division is made up entirely of villages and is almost wholly within the South Downs National Park. Meon Valley, as its name suggests, straddles the course of the River Meon and the parallel A32, and features many long-distance footpaths including the South Downs Way. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- Cheriton & Bishops Sutton
- Droxford, Soberton & Hambledon
- Shedfield
- Swanmore & Newtown
- Upper Meon Valley

Meon Valley has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is significantly below the Hampshire average and it is necessary to change its boundaries to achieve better electoral equality. As seen above, an exchange of polling districts with its neighbouring districts is proposed that gives the southern part of Winchester district a better balance. Under these proposals Whiteley and Curdrige are added to Meon Valley as these (with Shedfield, which is already a part of Meon Valley) make up the new district 'Whiteley and Shedfield' ward. This change not only balances the variances but brings the ward into alignment with new district ward boundaries.

The proposed transfer to Meon Valley of polling districts Curdrige WQ and Whiteley YE is supported by the fact that the development of North Whiteley will connect the current Whiteley area with Curbridge, including two new access roads.

### **Proposal for Meon Valley**

- Transfer WB, WD, WH, WI, XC and XZ to Bishops Waltham (-1,709)
- Transfer XU to Southern Parishes (-1,042)
- Add WQ from Bishops Waltham (+3,285)
- Add YE from Southern Parishes (+2,425)

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 14,512 (+4.8% against forecast Hampshire average)**

### 12.6 **Winchester Downlands**

**2021 Reapportioned Electorate Forecast: 12,437 (-10.2% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers all of the area to the east of the city of Winchester. The majority of its residents live on the edges of the city, including the large suburb of Oliver's Battery; other settlements include the villages of South Wonston, Sparsholt, Hursley and Otterbourne. The M3 runs through the south of the division and further east the division is bounded by the River Itchen and the railway. Farley Mount Country Park is located in Winchester Downlands. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- Compton & Otterbourne
- Littleton & Harestock
- Olivers Battery & Badger Farm
- Sparsholt (73%)
- Wonston & Micheldever (49%)

Winchester Downlands has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is just below the Hampshire average. However, as described above the distribution of voters in the current Sparsholt ward has been more precisely recalculated in order to better reflect the real impact of the Barton Farm development. The effect of this is the reverse of the effect for Itchen Valley: the electorate in this division decreases without any change to the boundaries. Although the proposed electorate variance is just below the -10% threshold, as with Itchen Valley the lack of a discrete community to move into the ward from the city makes it impossible to make changes without splitting communities in a way which would not be compliant with the Commission's criteria. For example, polling districts YQ1 and YQ2 are inherently part of Stanmore and could not be split from YR without dividing the Stanmore community against all sense of local identity.

For these reasons no change to the boundaries of Winchester Downlands are proposed.

### **Proposal for Winchester Downlands**

- Retain whole of current division

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 12,437 (-10.2% against forecast Hampshire average)**

### 12.7 **Winchester Eastgate**

**2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,811 (+14.2% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers the centre and eastern parts of the city of Winchester and is bounded by the M3 in the east. It includes all of the central shopping areas, the Cathedral, Winchester College and other well-known landmarks, as well as many residential areas and the Winnall industrial estate. The River Itchen flows through Winchester Eastgate. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- St. Bartholomew
- St. John & All Saints
- St. Michael

Winchester Eastgate has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is some way above the Hampshire average and in normal circumstances we would look to reduce its size to achieve better electoral equality. However, the adjacent Winchester Westgate has the same problem, so this could only be achieved by transferring voters to one of the rural divisions around the city. Despite many attempts we have found that there is no practical way to split off a whole community from this division. Although, on paper, moving a ward into Downlands or Itchen Valley may appear desirable, to do so would split the city community and infringe one of the Commission's three criteria (community identity).

The Commission itself in its recently concluded review of Winchester City Council's ward boundaries has made no change to the Winchester city boundaries that transferred city voters to one of the rural divisions – the only change is to extend a city ward slightly outwards (St Barnabas now incorporating Harestock) rather than a rural ward inwards.

Councillor Fiona Mather, the Member for Winchester Eastgate, comments as follows:

“The unparished area of Winchester City is currently divided between two County Council divisions: Winchester Eastgate and Winchester Westgate. Each division is made up of three of the existing six wards.

Winchester Eastgate, the area east of the railway line with the addition of Sleepers Hill and the Sparkford Road area (YP), contains the communities of St Cross, the Cathedral, Winchester College, the Barracks, Winnall, Highcliffe, Waterside, Hyde, Abbotts Barton, the Courtenay Road area, Northfields estate and the city streets to the north of the High Street.

Winchester Westgate, the area west of the railway line, contains the communities of Stanmore, the area round Kings School, Fulflood, Orams Arbour, the Poets' Estate, Chilbolton Avenue, Weeke and Teg Down.

None of the distinct communities should be divided between divisions nor would it be appropriate and conducive to effective representation, for example, to add Stanmore, Weeke or Teg Down (edge of city communities) to the Downlands division. Those areas have more in common with neighbouring city communities than they do with the satellite villages.

The Sleepers Hill/West Hill/Sparkford communities (YP) have more in common with the neighbouring communities of St Cross and the Barracks than they do with communities the other side of the Romsey Road eg Orams Arbour, Fulflood and the Poets' Estate so they would be more effectively represented as part of Winchester Eastgate than Winchester Westgate.

We recommend no changes to the existing boundaries of Winchester Eastgate and Westgate divisions.”

For these reasons no change to the boundaries of Winchester Eastgate are proposed. This proposal is strongly supported by both the Members for the city divisions.

#### **Proposal for Winchester Eastgate**

- Retain whole of current division

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 15,811 (+14.2% against forecast Hampshire average)**

#### **12.8 Winchester Southern Parishes**

**2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,747 (+13.7% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers the entire southern stretch of the district, extending from the borders of Havant and East Hampshire in the east almost as far as the

River Hamble in the west. This division is largely rural, but it is almost all outside the National Park and adjoins some built-up areas of south Hampshire. Winchester Southern Parishes is seeing significant growth from the Newlands development just west of Waterlooville. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- Boarhunt & Southwick
- Denmead
- Whiteley
- Wickham

Winchester Southern Parishes has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is well above the Hampshire average and it is necessary to reduce its size to achieve better equality. As seen above, a limited realignment of the southern divisions, of which the consequence for this division is that one polling district (YE Whiteley) is lost to Meon Valley and one gained in return (XU Newtown) is proposed. Soberton parish is split by the addition of XU but this was previously the case with the ward boundary, and the transfer is necessary in order to bring Meon Valley within the +10% threshold. Denmead and Wickham have been retained as complete settlements within the division.

#### **Proposal for Winchester Southern Parishes**

- Add XU (+1,042)
- Transfer YE to Meon Valley (-2,425)

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 14,364 (+3.7% against forecast Hampshire average)**

#### **12.9 Winchester Westgate**

**2021 Electorate Forecast: 15,737 (+13.7% against forecast Hampshire average)**

This division covers the western part of the city of Winchester. It is principally residential, including distinct areas such as Fulflood and Stanmore. The western edge of this division is open countryside and is the starting-point for people walking the Clarendon Way to Salisbury. Prior to the 2015 boundary review the division included the following wards:

- St. Barnabas
- St. Luke
- St. Paul

Like Eastgate, Winchester Westgate has a forecast electorate in 2021 that is some way above the Hampshire average and in normal circumstances we would look to reduce its size to achieve better electoral equality. However, exactly the same objections apply and, for the same reasons quoted in paragraph 12.7 above, it has not been possible to identify a solution that would satisfactorily meet all three of the Commission's criteria. This conclusion is supported by the new city ward boundaries, which in terms of the outer limits of the city are almost exactly as they were with the exception of Harestock now being included in St Barnabas ward.

For these reasons no change to the boundaries of Winchester Westgate is proposed. This proposal is strongly supported by both the Members for the city divisions.

### Proposal for Winchester Westgate

- Retain whole of current division

**Proposed 2021 Electorate: 15,737 (+13.7% against forecast Hampshire average)**

### Proposals for Winchester

Division name	Members	2021 Electorate Forecast	2021 Reapportioned Forecast (see above ***)	2021 Variance	2021 Electorate (Proposed)	2021 Variance (Proposed)
Bishops Waltham	1	15,415		+11.3%	13,839	-0.1%
Itchen Valley	1	13,432	14,615	+5.6%	14,615	+5.6%
Meon Valley	1	11,553		-16.6%	14,512	+4.8%
Winchester Downlands	1	13,620	12,437	-10.2%	12,437	-10.2%
Winchester Eastgate	1	15,811		+14.2%	15,811	+14.2%
Winchester Southern Parishes	1	15,747		+13.7%	14,364	+3.7%
Winchester Westgate	1	15,737		+13.7%	15,737	+13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>101,315</b>	<b>101,315</b>		<b>101,315</b>	

### Map of Proposed County Council Divisions in Winchester

