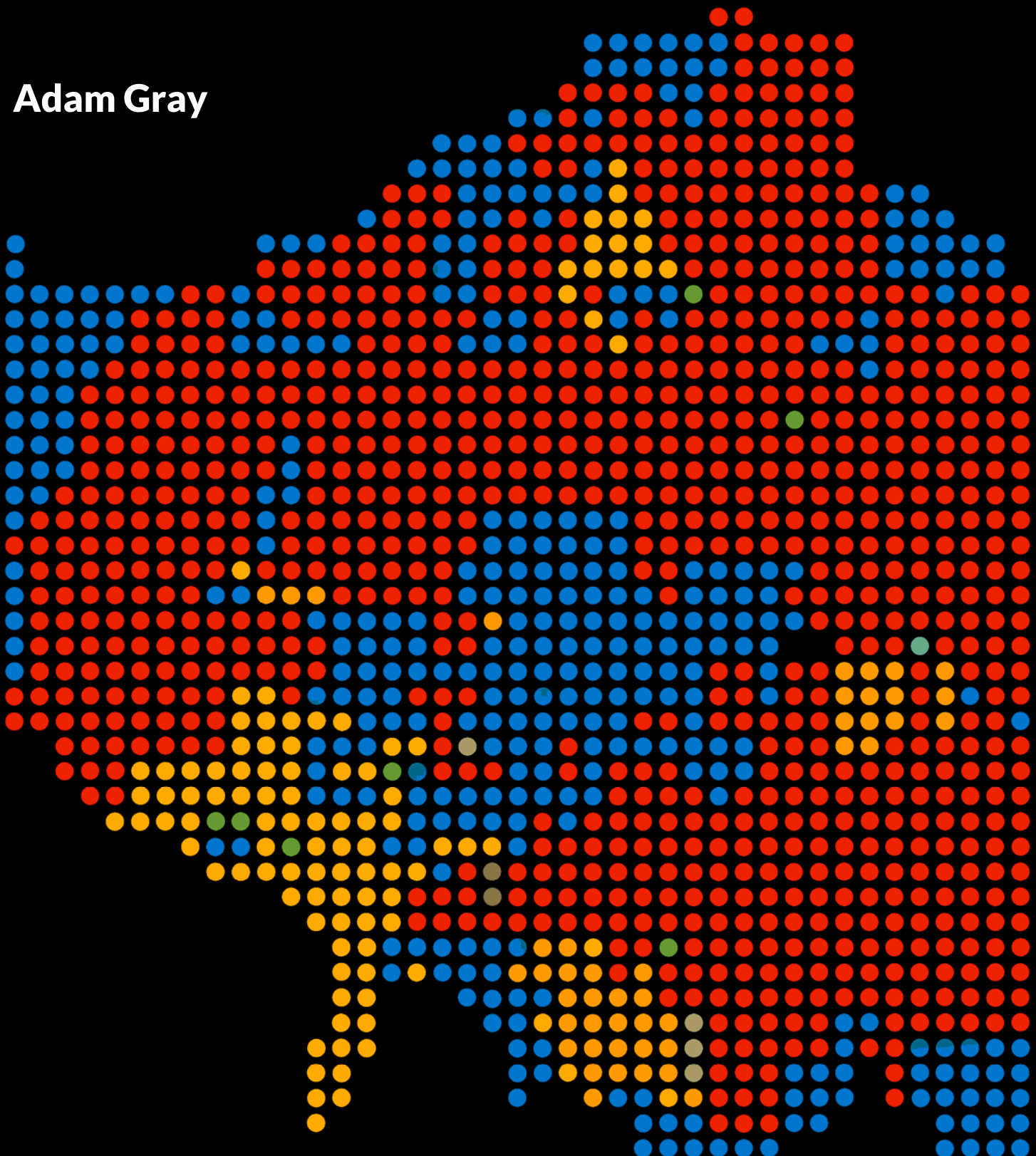


The 2022 battleground

London's new wards

Adam Gray



Contents

Introduction	3
Summary of boundary changes	5
Barking and Dagenham	7
Barnet	11
Brent	15
Bromley	19
Camden	23
Ealing	27
Enfield	31
Greenwich	35
Hammersmith and Fulham	39
Haringey	43
Harrow	47
Havering	51
Hillingdon	55
Hounslow	59
Islington	63
Kingston-upon-Thames	67
Lambeth	71
Lewisham	75
Merton	78
Newham	82
Richmond-upon-Thames	86
Sutton	90
Waltham Forest	94
Wandsworth	98
Westminster	102

Boroughs without boundary changes:

Bexley	109
Croydon	110
Hackney	111
Kensington and Chelsea	112
Redbridge	113
Southwark	114
Tower Hamlets	115

Introduction

Changes to the boundaries of wards have occurred in all but seven of the 32 boroughs (Bexley, Croydon, Hackney, Kensington & Chelsea, Redbridge, Southwark and Tower Hamlets underwent boundary reviews in the previous two terms).

These reviews considered three factors: the overall size of the council; the boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors for each.

At the last review, before the 2002 borough elections, the then Labour government had plans to introduce annual elections, directing the boundary commission to create patterns of uniform three-councillor wards. This was relatively uncontroversial in the larger, outer London boroughs which were typically warded in this way. But it created radical change in geographically smaller inner London, where there were very many more two-member wards.

This time the requirement for 3-member wards was removed; indeed in those seven boroughs reviewed earlier a considerable number of 2- and even single-member wards were created.

The other significant change this time compared to last was the decoupling of the decision on council size from that of ward boundaries. In the 1999/2000 review those submitting warding plans had to argue for their council size at the same time as drawing boundaries - with the consequence that if the commission arrived at a different decision on size suggestions on ward boundaries, however commonsensical, fell by the wayside. This time council size had its own consultation; once size was decided warding patterns were submitted. A clear improvement,

While most councils were broadly content with their size, there were some radical changes. Eight increased their number of councillors, with Newham gaining the most (six seats); whilst seven reduced their council size - Hillingdon the most dramatic of these, culling twelve (or 18%) of their councillors. Harrow, Brent and Westminster also reduced by more than one or two seats. Overall, London loses sixteen councillors.

Sometimes there are partisan reasons for seeking a larger or smaller council. Sometimes administrations genuinely believe that the size of their current council does not deliver the most effective means of delivering for their residents. Sometimes councils feel the need to correct changes made at the last review which maybe haven't worked out as well as hoped.

Why do council wards need redrawing from time to time? Simply put: because populations are not stable and because new developments get built, older ones get pulled down. In London, with its rapid population gain and unique pressures on housing very few wards are shrinking: that is only so in the ultra-affluent parts of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster where plenty of homes have been purchased by people ineligible to vote in our elections.

But even areas that are growing may become over-represented simply by failing to keep up with faster growth and new development elsewhere in their borough. To take arguably the most famous example, the ward in which the 2012 Olympic stadium and athletes village was constructed now has double the electorate it should have if each councillor were to represent the same number of electors. If the size of Newham council had remained the same then the rest of the borough would have lost three councillors to offset the three gained in Stratford.

Generally, significant development areas will benefit Labour. This is in part because London's is, today, so much more heavily Labour an electorate than the wider country, but it is also because large development sites tend to be located on brown-field sites, which are much more likely to be in more working class districts than in fashionable, exclusive residential districts (though plenty of those elect Labour councillors too nowadays).

For example, four of the new seats being created in Hammersmith and Fulham are in the overwhelmingly Labour north, creating one entirely new ward (White City) which they will win easily, and an additional seat in their second-safest ward, College Park and Old Oak - the areas surrounding Wormwood Scrubs.

The potential for further development across Park Royal in future decades will almost certainly create even more seats there, though at some point a ward will become so essentially new that its long-term political allegiances may well change. But in most cases, the new developments are bolted on to areas where the voting intentions of the longer-term residents predominate.

Finally there was the question of the number of councillors representing each ward to resolve.

Because the norm for the past twenty years (and in many boroughs long before that) has been 3-member wards, the majority of wards drawn in this review have been 3-councillor entities. But a 3-member ward in a geographically small inner borough can mean communities being lumped together in divisions that poorly represent them.

Councillors tend to prefer 3-member wards because they give them two other colleagues to share the workload with. But that does not necessarily square with the Commission's criterion of providing convenient and effective local representation.

Of the boroughs reviewed this time, only Hammersmith and Fulham has returned to a majority 2-member pattern. Enfield, Harrow and Kingston have approximate parity between 2- and 3-member wards.

There is also strong dislike for single member wards, despite these being common - often the norm - beyond the capital. Just two were created in this review; one retained in Bromley, one

new in Hillingdon. There was a furore when the Conservatives proposed a single member ward at in East Finchley in Barnet - that got abandoned; and in the Hillingdon village of Harefield - where it survived as there was no less bad alternative.

Electoral reviews are often charades where political power-grabs are presented as coherent maps of how the communities they cover are organised. They can be critical in marginal boroughs (of which there are increasingly few in London) and the consequence of the skew they produce can last two decades: until the parties - and a few interested residents - get another chance to rearrange the seats on their council.

Two notes on the profiles that follow. The most important one is: these are not forecasts of how the next election will go: they are my estimates of how the new wards would have voted if they had been in place in 2018. They are backward looking, not forward looking.

Secondly, there are tables at the end of each borough's profile that align the new wards by party strength: safe Conservative to safe Labour in most cases. There are also columns for wards that will be marginals, but sometimes I've added to this column wards that aren't necessarily marginal (defined as majorities of 10% or less) but aren't rock solid either.

If you're in a ward that you regard as pretty safe but I've put it in a different category please don't hate! It doesn't mean I'm predicting you'll lose - again, I'm not forecasting but retrofitting - it just means that there is potential if there's a bigger than expected swing for your ward to become competitive in those circumstances.

I have also put some of the genuinely new wards - that is wards that have been created largely due to huge new housing development, and which therefore may not have the same voting allegiances as the wards they've emerged from, in this "competitive" column. They may well turn out not to be marginal but until they have cast votes we cannot honestly say how they might have gone in 2018.

It's also entirely possible - especially based on the 2021 local elections - that some very big swings can occur in specific wards without a borough-wide trend towards that party. In 2021 the Green Party won dozens of seats, often on huge vote increases, in wards anyone would reasonably have classified as safe at the preceding election. This may well happen in London in 2022.

Finally, I'm not an expert on the political geography of every ward in London. There may have been a dastardly sleight of hand that has made a new ward a better or worse prospect than I am expecting because a council estate or exclusive development has been added or removed that I am unaware of, for example.

If I've made a wrong call I apologise: where my confidence in calling how a new set of boundaries may have voted is low I usually admit it. These estimates are based on being a life-long Londoner, being interested in the city and its localities, having been involved in politics since 1986 and having observed and analysed London's electoral geography for almost as long.

Adam Gray

September 2021

Summary of boundary changes

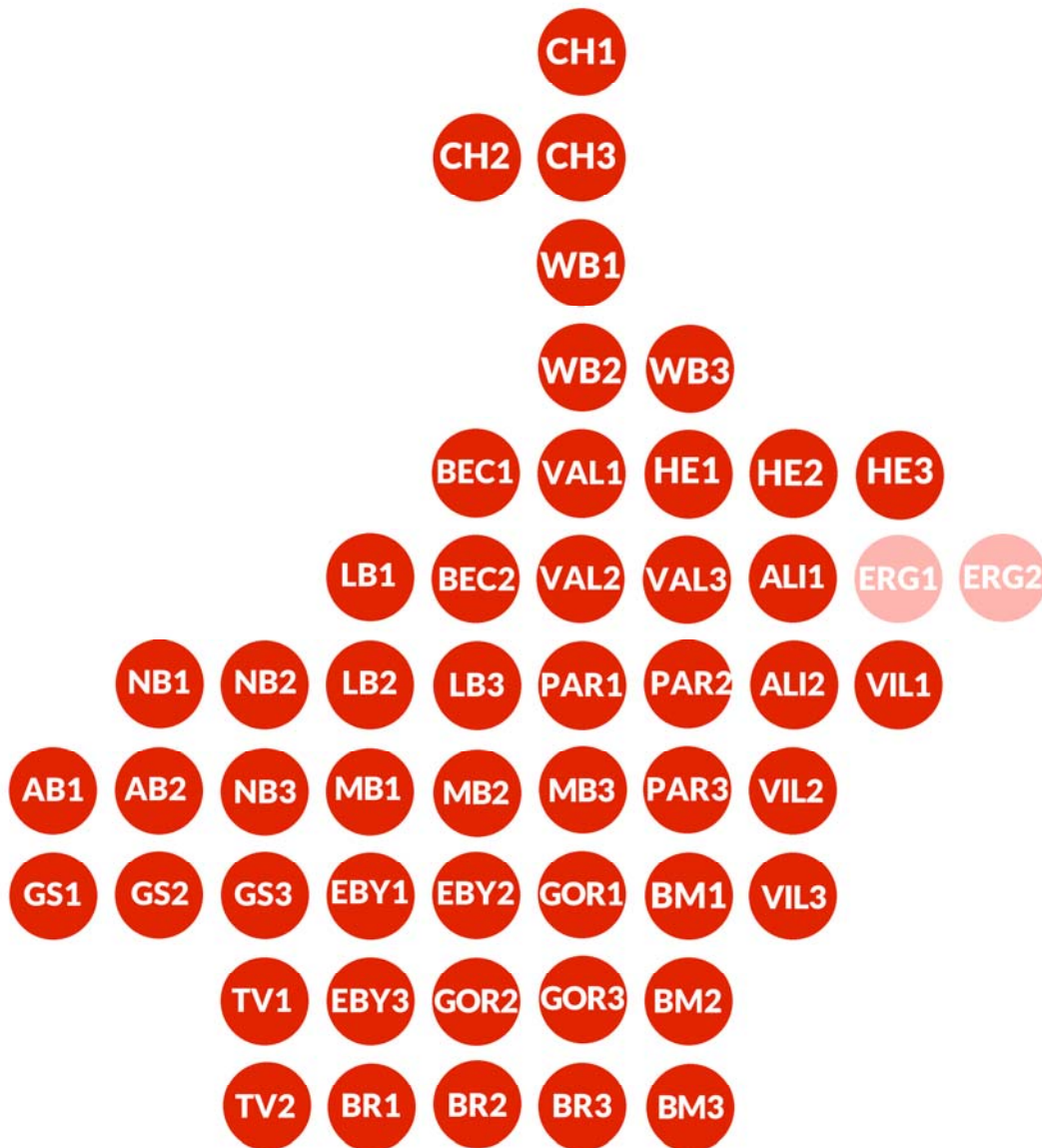
Column 1: council size; column 2 - change in cllrs; columns 3,4 and 5: number of 1, 2 and 3 member wards; columns 6-9 number of councillors for Con, Lab, LD and others currently and as I forecast the wards would have gone if they had been fought on the new boundaries in 2018. Note: this is not a prediction of the 2022 results - it is how the 2018 elections may have gone on these new boundaries.

		size	chg	1 cllr	2 cllr	3 cllr	Con	Lab	LD	Oths
Barking and Dagenham	Existing	51				17		51		
	Future	51	0					51		
Barnet	Existing	63				21	38	25		
	Future	63	0		9	15	36	27		
Bexley	Existing	45			5	11	34	11		
Brent	Existing	63				21	3	60		
	Future	57	-6		9	13	3	54		
Bromley	Existing	60		1	4	17	50	8		2
	Future	58	-2	1	6	15	46	10		2
Camden	Existing	54				18	7	43	3	1
	Future	55	+1		5	15	7	46	1	1
Croydon	Existing	70		1	12	13	29	41		
Ealing	Existing	69				23	8	57	4	
	Future	70	+1		2	21	8	58	4	
Enfield	Existing	63				21	17	46		
	Future	63	0		12	13	17	46		
Greenwich	Existing	51				17	9	42		
	Future	55	+4							
Hackney	Existing	57			6	16	5	52		
Hammersmith and Fulham	Existing	46			2	14	11	35		
	Future	50	+4		13	8	10	40		
Haringey	Existing	57				19		42	15	
	Future	57	0		6	15		44	13	
Harrow	Existing	63				21	28	35		
	Future	55	-8		11	11	23	32		
Havering	Existing	54				18	25	5		24
	Future	55	+1							
Hillingdon	Existing	65			1	21	44	21		
	Future	53	-12	1	8	12	34	19		
Hounslow	Existing	60				20	9	51		
	Future	62	+2		4	18	9	53		
Islington	Existing	48				16		47		1
	Future	51	+3			17		50		1
Kensington and Chelsea	Current	50			4	14	36	13	1	
Kingston Upon Thames	Existing	48				16	9		51	
	Future	48	0		9	10	12		36	
Lambeth	Existing	63			12	13	1	57		5
	Future	63	0				2	56		5
Lewisham	Existing	54				18		54		
	Future	54	0		3	16		54		
Merton	Existing	60				20	17	34	6	3
	Future	57	-3		3	17	15	35	5	2
Newham	Existing	60				20		60		
	Future	66	+6		6	18		66		
Redbridge	Existing	63			3	19	12	51		
Richmond Upon Thames	Existing	54				18	11		39	4
	Future	54	0			18	11		39	4
Southwark	Existing	63			6	17		49	14	
Sutton	Existing	54				18	18		33	3
	Future	55	+1		5	15	19	2	31	3
Tower Hamlets	Existing	45		2	11	7	2	42		1
Waltham Forest	Existing	60				20	14	46		
	Future	60	0		6	16	13	47		
Wandsworth	Existing	60				20	33	26		1
	Future	58	-2		8	14	30	27		1
Westminster	Existing	60				20	41	19		
	Future	54	-6			18	36	18		

Barking and Dagenham

2018 current wards	51	0	0	0
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2018 new wards	51	0	0	0
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If a borough's "safeness" is measured by the percentage vote share of the winning party, Barking and Dagenham is the safest borough in London.

The Labour lead over the Tories was slightly larger in Newham but, because more parties contested seats there, Labour's vote share was quite a bit lower. Nonetheless, Labour won all the seats in both of these adjoining boroughs.

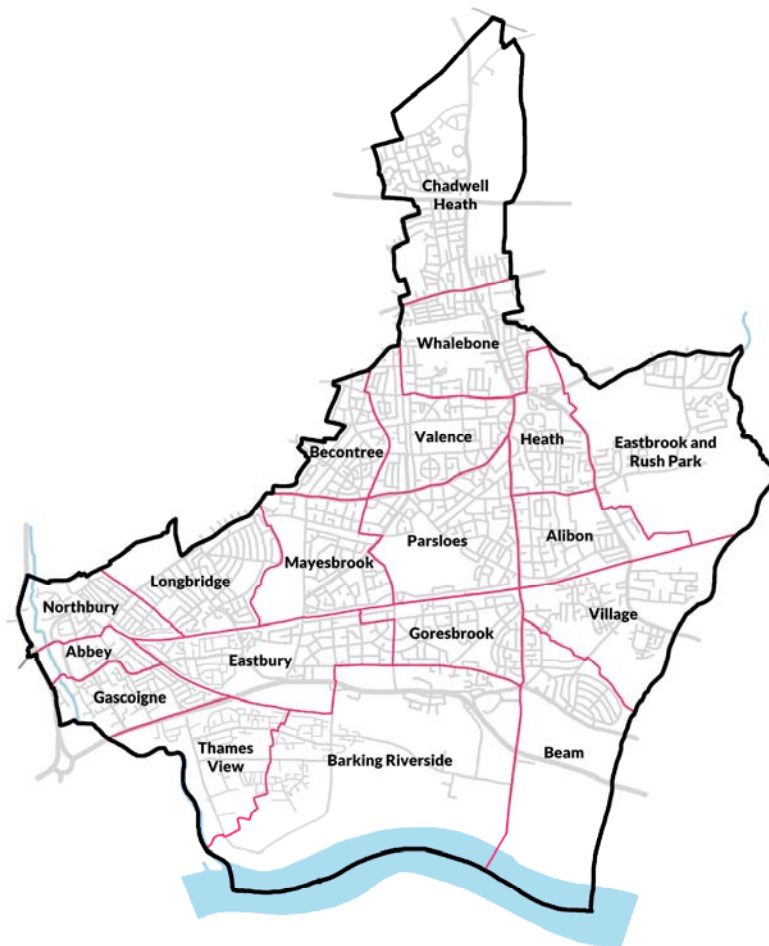
The boundary changes in Barking and Dagenham are not especially radical. There has been - continues to be - massive housing development along the Thames-side and along one of the lesser rivers: the Roding. So, whereas "core" Barking used to comprise three wards represented by nine councillors: Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames, it will now be covered by five wards represented by thirteen councillors.

Because the overall size of the council hasn't changed, these four extra seats in

Barking mean four seats must be lost elsewhere. No wards have been abolished, but Alibon, Becontree, Eastbrook and Heath become wards represented by two councillors apiece.

Although the new Abbey ward has a small question mark over how safely Labour it will be (because most of it is brand new) the changes shouldn't affect how the borough would have voted in 2018 had these new wards been in place then: still 51 Labour councillors - a clean sweep.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Abbey (2 cllrs)

Although named after an existing ward, Abbey is, in fact, the new ward in the north-west of Barking (the vast majority of Abbey is now in Northbury ward).

Abbey was a vastly strong Labour division but the reason we have an extra ward in this area is that there's been a lot of new development. That means that the historical voting pattern of Abbey won't necessarily transfer to this ward with so many new electors.

Nor does it mean it won't: today's Labour polls very strongly among the sort of young, professional voters who are flocking to relatively affordable Barking and its good transport links into the city.

Alibon (2)

Alibon was one of the BNP wards in the 2006 local elections but by 2018 it was solidly Labour again; the party winning more than three-quarters of the vote.

Right in the centre of the borough the ward has been shunted entirely east of Heathway, the main north-south road in this part of the borough, and loses a councillor, but will maintain that huge Labour allegiance.

Barking Riverside (3)

The major development area in this borough has been Barking Riverside, and Thames ward had gained so much electorate by the time of the boundary review that - give or take - it was entitled to five councillors, not three. This is the bulk of the old Thames ward and contains the bulk of the new housing development.

A by-election on the day of the 2021 London elections saw a big swing to the Conservatives in Thames ward. Labour still held on comfortably but perhaps that by-election demonstrates that new voters cannot automatically be expected to demonstrate an area's traditional voting allegiances.

Beam (3)

This is the renamed River ward, now named after the river Beam. The Thames-side of the ward is industrial and the bulk of the electorate live in the north. It loses a chunk of territory west of Heathway to Goresbrook and, as it voted almost 80% Labour in 2018 it's unlikely to be a top target for the Tories.

Becontree (2)

This ward has been slimmed down a little and loses a councillor. But it's been strongly loyal to Labour since it was formed in 1994 and that's not going to change.

Chadwell Heath (3)

This relatively isolated ward in the far north of the borough gains the corner of Whalebone ward north of the A118 but remains unchanged. There is some history of this ward not voting Labour: it elected Residents' Association councillors until 2002 and a Conservative also that year.

In part, this might be because the ward is less linked to the bulk of the borough to the south than to Ilford and Romford along its main east-west links.

The Tory who won in 2002, Terry Justice, was still trying to get his seat back in 2018 and Chadwell Heath's both one of the less monolithically Labour wards and a tad more volatile. But he was still 700 votes behind the third Labour councillor.

Eastbrook and Rush Green (2)

Eastbrook is the top Conservative target in the borough, immediately south of Romford town. Although the Tories have only ever won seat here, in 2006, they have come somewhat close regularly and in 2018 were about 17% behind.

Electoral Calculus believes that Eastbrook voted Conservative in the 2019 general election and was neck-and-neck in the 2021 London elections. It is relatively white, will have voted strongly for Brexit, will not like Labour's direction and will probably be somewhat sympathetic to Boris Johnson, so if any ward is going to fall to the Tories in 2022 it'll be this one. That may be why the council submission argued, successfully, to reduce it to being represented by just two councillors.

Eastbury (3)

Eastbury was often the best Lib Dem ward in Barking but they collapsed here in 2006 (when the BNP gained a seat) and didn't even contest the ward in 2018. Their absence saw the Labour vote increase massively (the Tories did too, but not by quite as much) and Eastbury, which is shaped like a carving knife, is now as safe a Labour ward as any.

Gascoigne (3)

One of the core Barking wards, Gascoigne loses some territory to Abbey ward but is largely unchanged. Labour won over 80% of the vote here in 2018.

Goresbrook (3)

This almost counts as a marginal given two of its three Labour councillors were elected on less than 70% of the vote in 2018. The new boundaries are much tidier: its southern boundary is now Goresbrook Road; in the east it's Heathway and in the north it remains the District Line. Goresbrook was another BNP ward in 2006; they stood here in 2018 and polled 12%.

Heath (2)

Another of the somewhat less monolithically Labour wards on the edge of Dagenham, this was the only ward the Greens contested in 2018, polling 16%. Their presence is probably why Labour polled only just over 60% of the vote, with the Tories on just over 20%. The ward loses a councillor and it's only boundary changes that can defeat a Labour representative here.

Longbridge (3)

The only ward with completely unchanged boundaries. Historically, Longbridge was the only ward in Barking the Tories could win; they won a seat here as recently as 2002, but like neighbouring Ilford, the area's Asian - Muslim - community has grown rapidly and that has taken it away from marginality. Labour topped 80% of the vote here in 2018, their vote surging by over thirty percentage points. If other parties stood it would become more marginal but while it's a straight fight with the Tories it's utterly impregnable.

Mayesbrook (3)

Mayesbrook is the start of the massive Becontree LCC housing estate, separated from "old" Barking by its eponymous park.

The ward pushes north to take territory up to Longbridge Road from Becontree (the reason that ward loses a seat) while yielding some roads in the north-east to Parsloes.

One of the Tories, Andy McNab, won over 30% here in 2018 leaving his running mates in the dust, but as Labour's three all won well over 70% he was still 700 votes adrift of getting elected.

Northbury (3)

This is the true successor to the old Abbey ward in the far north-west corner of Barking. Abbey was the very safest Labour ward in 2018: their top candidate won 88% of the vote - and there is hardly anywhere in the country that still votes for any political party to that degree nowadays.

Parsloes (3)

Here the chain of knock-on boundary changes that started in Chadwell Heath and went through Whalebone and Valence ends. Parsloes takes a small section of Mayesbrook ward and that large chunk of Alibon ward west of Heathway to retain its allocation of three councillors but costing Alibon one. Similar results in 2018 to all the other wards.

Thames View (2)

This is the new ward carved out of Thames ward. You'll need binoculars and be atop a high rise block to view the Thames from here; there were submissions to call this new ward Creekmouth or Roding as it lies up against this river before it meets the Thames. Stuck south of the A13 it's somewhat isolated and starts with just 3,400 electors. Whether this makes it vulnerable to an insurgent who works hard to get their name known among this small electorate is unlikely but not out of the question.

Valence (3)

Valence shunts southwards in this boundary review, losing its north-western corner to Whalebone ward but taking more territory from Parsloes, including Valence Circus, appropriately enough. Although the ward elected two BNP councillors in 2006 two of its Labour councillors in 2018 won with well over 80% of the vote and the third, Syed Ghani with 74%.

Village (3)

Dagenham Village ward is virtually unaltered and yet another massively Labour ward.

Whalebone (3)

The ward immediately south of Chadwell Heath. Has a history of electing Residents Association councillors - but only if they stand, and they haven't for four elections now. All this borough's wards registered broadly identical results in 2018 and Whalebone (named after Whalebone Lane) is no exception: around three-quarters Labour to a quarter Conservative.

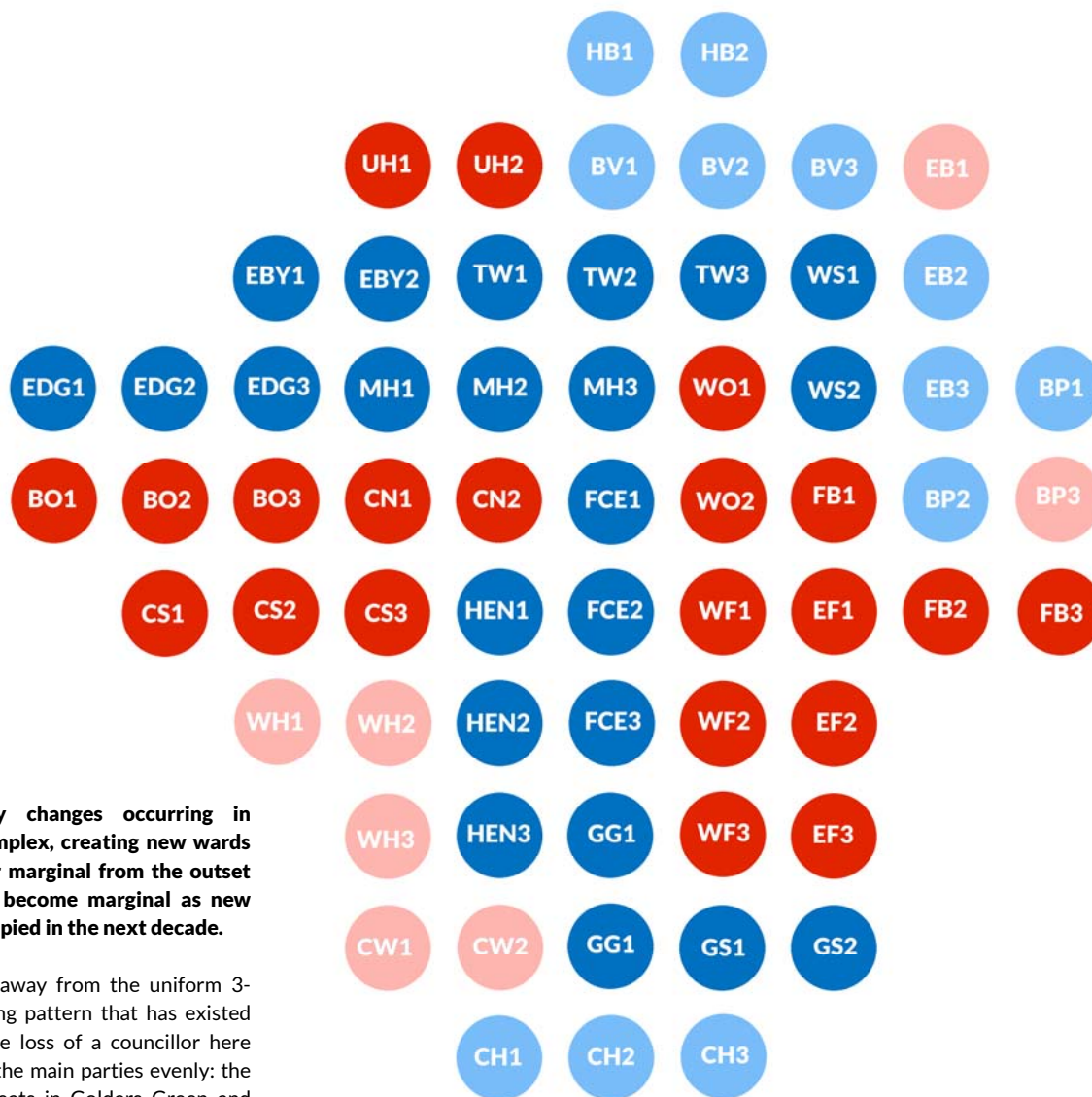
To compensate for the loss of some streets to Chadwell Heath in the north the ward expands into a chunk of Valence in the south-west.

Competitive Labour 2		Safe Labour 49	
Eastbrook and Rush Park	Abbey	Eastbury	Northbury
	Alibon	Gascoigne	Parsloes
	Barking Riverside	Goresbrook	Thames View
	Beam	Heath	Valence
	Becontree	Longbridge	Village
	Chadwell Heath	Mayesbrook	Whalebone

Barnet

2018 current wards	38	25	0	0
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2018 new wards	34	29	0	0
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The boundary changes occurring in Barnet are complex, creating new wards that are either marginal from the outset or potentially become marginal as new housing is occupied in the next decade.

Barnet moves away from the uniform 3-member warding pattern that has existed since 1968. The loss of a councillor here and there hits the main parties evenly: the Tories losing seats in Golders Green and Garden Suburb; Labour in Woodhouse and Underhill.

There is also a small redistribution toward Hendon - where huge amounts of housing have been, and continue to be, built - from Finchley. Although the Chipping Barnet wards have been somewhat reorganised they retain the same number of councillors as now.

This review is clearly favourable to Labour. Some, but not all of the redrawn map, inevitably leans that way - there is little the Conservatives can do about there becoming five Colindale seats instead of three for example. But, in Finchley especially, the Conservatives were outfoxed.

Whereas the ideal option for them would have been for their safe wards of Church End and Garden Suburb to encroach into East and West Finchley wards, enabling the abolition of one entire Labour ward (presumably Woodhouse) whilst keeping their vast majorities intact, albeit somewhat smaller; the opposite happened.

Garden Suburb lost a seat, Golders Green - which might have instead contributed to making Childs Hill a bit safer - loses a seat. Church End gains a bit of West Finchley.

Likewise, might Underhill have been able to take in some of the better Labour areas from High Barnet and the new Barnet Vale to better safeguard Tory majorities there?

The only Tory successes are abolishing marginal Hale and - perhaps - the creation of the new Whetstone ward.

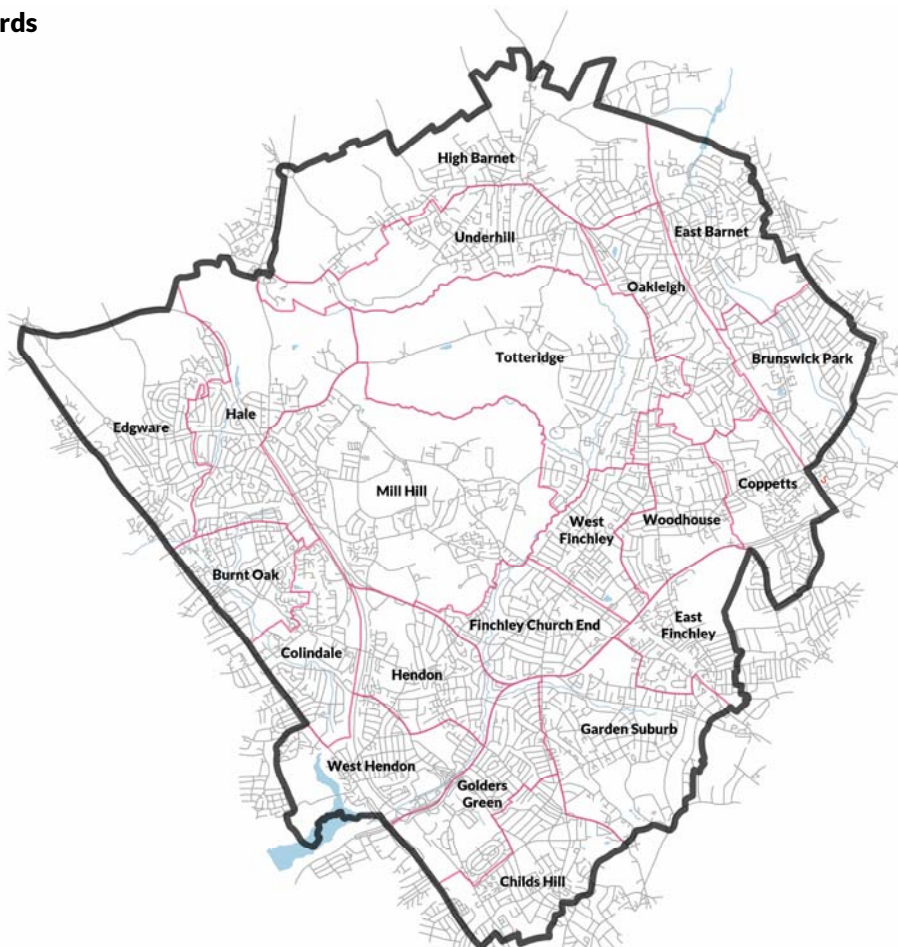
There are easily enough Labour, marginal Labour and marginal Conservative wards in Barnet for Labour to win a comfortable majority in 2022.

On the other side of the equation, this is a borough where, it seems, new development is benefiting the Conservatives (their gain of West Hendon in 2018 was not solely down to anti-Semitism); and we do not know how long the damage from that row will last: Labour only "won" East Finchley and Woodhouse wards in the 2019 general election in that constituency.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Barnet Vale (3 cllrs)

New ward merges the better Labour end of High Barnet (New Barnet: quite deprived and used to form a Labour ward) with the northern end of abolished Oakleigh. Should start as marginal Conservative, but Labour may well win.

Brunswick Park (3)

A typical suburban ward that, like so many outer London suburban wards has swung away from the Conservatives since the 1980s. The Conservatives are still very competitive here but the tide is strongly against them: just look at how the Southgate area just across the border was fallen to Labour.

Brunswick Park has elected 42 councillors since 1968. Just four have been Labour. The Tories' problem is that three of those four have been returned in the last two elections. This is no longer a reliable ward for the Tories - and that's why their majority is tenuous.

Burnt Oak (3)

Essentially unchanged - very safe Labour; gains the best Labour bits of abolished, marginal, Hale. This is mainly the huge LCC Watling Estate built after the First World War as homes fit for heroes, which Edgware residents dubbed "Little Moscow". Labour wins here with over 60% of the vote.

Childs Hill (3)

A small but strongly Labour-leaning section in the west of ward is lost to Cricklewood. This should tip all three seats to the Conservatives, just, given Labour won its first seat since the 1970s here in 2018 by just two votes. Demographically, the ward is inching towards them but that advance may have been stalled by these boundary changes.

Colindale North (2)

Although this is the smaller of the two new Colindale divisions, North is the successor to the old unified Colindale ward simply because most of it is long-term Colindale housing. This will continue to be a very safe Labour ward.

Colindale South (3)

Two Colindale wards is bad news for the Conservatives but they might harbour very, very, very remote medium-term hopes for Colindale South. That's because by the time all the new housing planned for this area has been built, Colindale South will effectively be a brand new ward; less the Burnt Oak overspill of Colindale North. This Colindale of private blocks of flats will have a young, professional demographic that the Tories may appeal to, again, one day.

Cricklewood (2)

A new ward formed mainly from the western end of Golders Green. This is the very much better end for Labour and is pretty deprived. But Golders Green broke 65% Tory to 23% Labour in 2018 so at the very least the parties would have been neck-and-neck in this section of the ward: it's not a done deal for Labour.

East Barnet (3)

This is Cockfosters on the Barnet side of the borough boundary with Enfield, plus New Barnet east of the Great Northern Line. These neighbourhoods are the divide in this ward: Cockfosters - affluent and suburban vs. New Barnet - working class, fairly deprived and with a large Labour vote. The only boundary changes are slight, with neighbouring Brunswick Park. Labour need all three seats here and in Brunswick Park to win a majority.

East Finchley (3)

There are few better examples in London of a phenomenally safe Tory ward (Garden Suburb: Con 64%, Lab 16%) being slap bang up against a very safe Labour ward (East Finchley: Lab 62%, Con 23%).

The dividing line is the East End Road, though it's a little more: East Finchley Cemetery and, to a lesser extent, Mutton Brook create a buffer zone between the sedate, wide avenues north of Hampstead Heath and the much more tightly packed, urban East Finchley. Labour was 40% clear in 2018 and the only change is a very slight one moving a handful of properties that face Garden Suburb ward into it.

Edgware (3)

Somewhat confusingly, new Edgware is less the old Edgware and more the abolished Hale. It will be relatively secure for the Conservatives but less so than old Edgware. The best Labour bit of Hale is transferred to Burnt Oak.

Edgwarebury (2)

Named after the brook that runs across the largely rural northern part of the ward, this new ward comprises the northern sections of Edgware and Hale, including the archetypal inter-war suburbia of the Broadfields Estate and will be safely Conservative.

Finchley Church End (3)

Largely unchanged: this is a ward of large McMansions near the top of Mill Hill - safe Conservative but gains a few streets from Labour West Finchley which might diminish the Tory lead slightly.

Friern Barnet (3)

This is, essentially, the old Coppetts ward that started marginal but has swung heavily to Labour since 2010.

The ward almost got chopped in two: a single councillor ward south of the North Circular was proposed which would have made the northern remainder of the ward considerably better for the Tories. But Labour pushed back hard against the idea and, yet again, politicians' self-interest (councillors like being able to hide their laziness behind two other ward colleagues, generally) trumped the voters' best interest.

Garden Suburb (2)

This planned district of tree-lined streets of detached and semi-detached houses, with grass verges, has always been Conservative, with the Lib Dems only once running them somewhat close. This is a stable community: not somewhere new residential tower blocks are going up within; and that's why it's losing a councillor: the borough is growing, this ward is not. Former Hendon South MP John Marshall has represented this ward for most of the time since that constituency was abolished.

Golders Green (2)

Safe Conservative but loses a councillor. If the western end that's moving into Cricklewood ward is far better for Labour then this could become the best Conservative ward in Barnet. But I'm a little sceptical that the bit departing is quite as Labour as some expect it to be: there must be some Labour voters left behind in Golders Green, surely?

Hendon (3)

Largely unchanged - gains the eastern end of West Hendon ward which won't affect the large Conservative majority here but will hurt them a bit in the ward it's donated from.

High Barnet (2)

This continues to be a very marginal ward. The creation of Barnet Vale should remove more Labour voters than Tories. Therefore, a slightly larger notional Tory lead than the actual 2018 result seems likely but not by all that much.

Mill Hill (3)

One of the largest Barnet wards before the boundary changes so loses a chunk of streets to Totteridge, but will remain a fairly secure Conservative ward, despite its fading Lib Dem tendencies.

Totteridge and Woodside (3)

The safest Conservative ward in Barnet gains some streets from Mill Hill and donates some to the new Whetstone ward.

Underhill (2)

This usually, but not overwhelmingly Labour ward loses a councillor and some acreage, mainly at its western "Arkley" end to High Barnet. This should increase the Labour majority here but help the Tories in High Barnet.

West Finchley (3)

Largely unchanged - safe Labour. Gains a fair chunk of Woodhouse ward which is why that ward loses a councillor.

West Hendon (3)

Gained in 2018 by the Conservatives for the first time since 1968 the boundary changes here will not help them hang on, as an eastern chunk of streets that are fairly Tory transfer to Hendon ward. What may compensate is the continuing amounts of new build private housing becoming occupied.

This is a very mixed area: the huge Brent Cross shopping centre is here along with the massive knot of dual carriageways wrapping themselves around it. But it extends across Cricklewood Broadway to include land north of the Welsh Harp reservoir: this is where the new housing is located. The inner parts of the ward are typical suburban inter-war semis running uphill to Hendon proper.

These voters may not be anywhere near as solid for the Conservatives but they're also not reliably Labour either so the ward remains highly competitive, albeit with the boundary changes erasing the Conservative lead.

Whetstone (2)

New ward comprising most of the abolished Oakleigh ward but with some extra streets from Totteridge. When Mrs Thatcher represented Finchley this would have been a rock-solid Conservative ward but the demographic trends will have eroded their lead considerably.

Nonetheless, Whetstone should start off providing fairly comfortably Conservative majorities.

Woodhouse (2)

The third of the three strongly Labour Finchley wards, this was Conservative until the mid-1980s - one of the first signs that Mrs Thatcher's constituency was beginning to become insecure; though it didn't collapse to Labour until 1997.

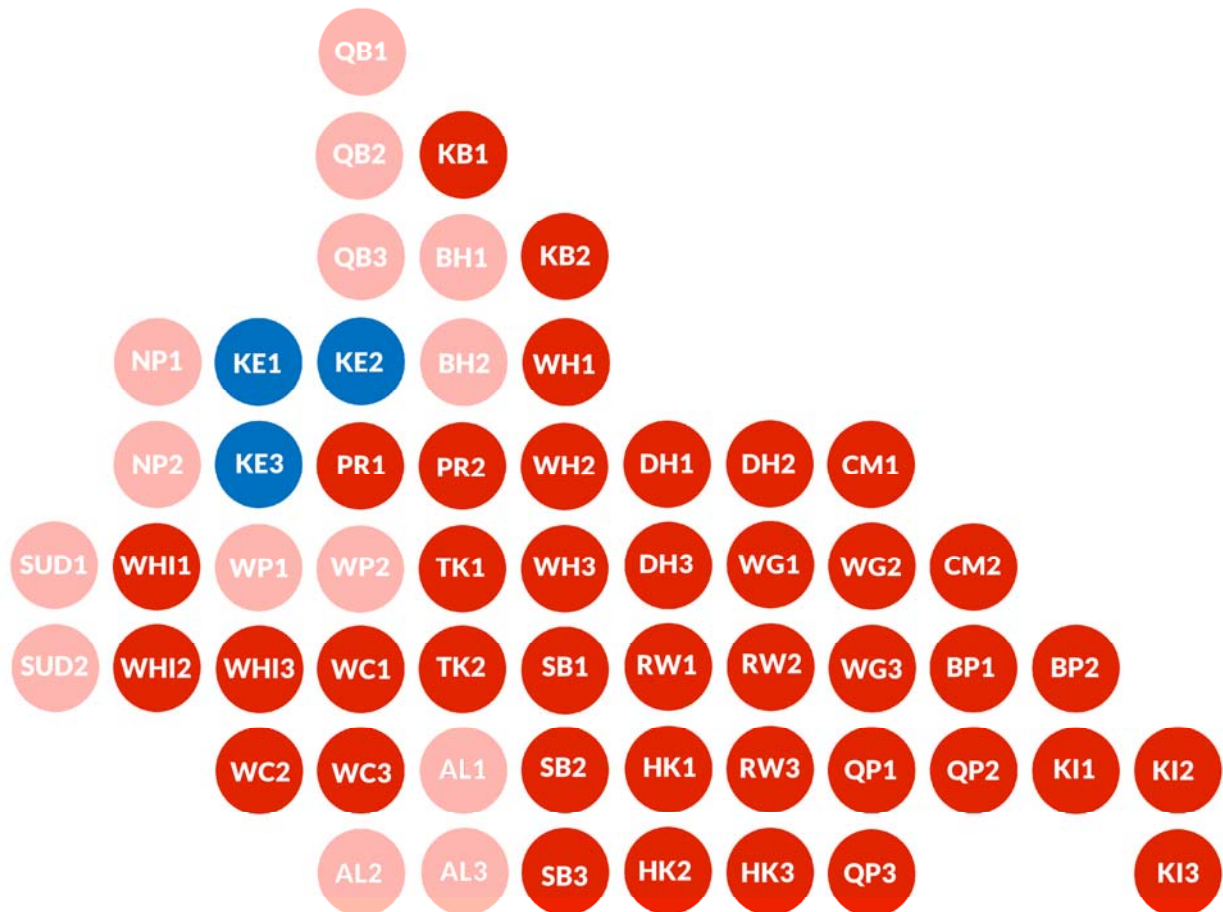
Although it's the least secure of the Finchley Labour wards, Labour is still more than 20 points clear. The ward loses a councillor and a wedge of streets to West Finchley ward.

Safe Conservative	23	Competitive Conservative	11	Competitive Labour	8	Safe Labour	21
Edgware		Barnet Vale		Cricklewood		Burnt Oak	
Edgwarebury		Brunswick Park		East Barnet		Colindale North	
Finchley Church End		Childs Hill		West Hendon		Colindale South	
Garden Suburb		High Barnet				East Finchley	
Golders Green						Friern Barnet	
Hendon						Underhill	
Mill Hill						West Finchley	
Totteridge and Woodside						Woodhouse	
Whetstone							

Brent

2018 current wards	60	3	0	0
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2018 new wards	54	3	0	0
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Brent loses six seats in the boundary review and, because Labour holds almost everything in Brent these days, it's six Labour seats that are abolished.

The review's slightly more complex than just those six axed seats because huge population growth is projected in Wembley (some has already been realised) around the stadium in particular, and that has resulted in two entirely new wards being created there.

The new Wembley Park ward - the northern half of the current Tokyngton - takes one of its councillors from Tokyngton and the other from Preston; in other words a rearrangement within the Wembley area east of the Central Line, but 3-member Wembley Hill is drawn from a much wider

redistribution: from east to west and from north to south.

So there are eleven, not six, abolished seats: one in Barnhill, one in Brondesbury Park, one in Mapesbury, one in Fryent, three in Kensal Green, one in Northwick Park, one in Preston, one in Sudbury and one in Tokyngton

There's one further notable change. The sprawling Dudden Hill ward, which included parts of Neasden, Willesden and Harlesden, has been axed. But this is another "in-area" redistribution as Roundwood ward (North Harlesden) has been recreated in this review.

The abolished ward in this part of the borough is Kensal Green ward, the eastern extent of which has been swallowed by an

enlarged Queen's Park while Harlesden - which also surrenders territory to Roundwood - gains the bulk of the Kensal area.

There may (or may not) be signs of a desire for more opposition to Labour in Brent, evidenced by the four early 2020 council by-elections that were good news for both the Tories and Lib Dems, plus the 7.3% swing from Labour in Brent North at the 2019 general election.

There are somewhat better odds of the Labour majority being reduced a little than there are of Brent joining that small group of councils that are 100% Labour.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Alperton (3 cllrs)

The first of the Brent wards with huge projected housing development, Alperton was a Lib Dem ward for twenty years from 1990 but they were a distant third in 2018. Then a Labour councillor was caught up in a bizarre housing scandal and in the 2020 by-election, the Lib Dems won. They'll be making this, and nearby Sudbury, their top targets in 2022 and the new electors moving in may help them, having no long-term local loyalties.

Barnhill (2)

Barnhill voted 74% Tory as recently as 1994 but in 2018 was 64% Labour. But in a January 2020 double by-election; one of the last before elections were suspended during the Covid crisis, the Conservatives finished just 70 votes behind. The losing Conservatives petitioned the result to the High Court and ended up with a £64,000 award of costs against them for their efforts, but they still came close. The new, slimmed-down, Barnhill may be better for the Tories by a few degrees and that should make it a top target.

Brondesbury Park (2)

The most affluent ward in the east of Brent, Labour narrowly won here in 2018 but they haven't yet made it secure. A long term marginal ward.

Cricklewood and Mapesbury (2)

Mapesbury loses a small area of land around Willesden Green tube station but that and a relatively stable electorate is enough to cost the ward a seat. Traditionally a marginal, this ward looks pretty secure for Labour.

Dollis Hill (3)

Lib Dems have not faded in this ward which expands quite significantly into abolished Dudden Hill (and a little of Welsh Harp). But Labour has also rebuilt its vote: just shy of 60% in the old Dollis Hill so any Lib Dem advance will have to come straight from Labour, unlike in - say - Queen's Park where Labour is 20 percentage points lower.

Harlesden and Kensal Green (3)

This is most of Kensal Green and about half of the old Harlesden ward, but both areas are hugely Labour, deprived wards with majority-minority electorates.

Kenton (3)

The sole surviving Tory ward in Brent, Labour closed to within 10% in 2018. But this will be quite a tough nut for them to crack. Boundaries haven't changed much.

Kilburn (3)

The most inner-city ward in Brent undergoing huge estate regeneration that is changing, slightly, the demographics, but this is a hugely safe Labour ward and it is left unchanged by the boundary changes.

Kingsbury (2)

Although the predecessor ward for Kingsbury is Fryent, this new ward's much more like the pre-2002 Roe Green ward which fell to Labour in 1998 but was a safe Tory ward before that. The area has probably changed too much for the Tories to win nowadays but it should be closer than Fryent was in 2018 (which wouldn't be that hard).

Northwick Park (2)

The Labour majority in Brent North was trimmed noticeably in the 2019 general election. If that trend maintains in the 2022 council elections Barnhill, Northwick Park, Queensbury and Kingsbury might join Kenton as Tory wards; but Labour won here quite comfortably in 2018 - so much so we couldn't record it as a marginal.

Preston (2)

Like Barnhill, this ward used to be heavily Conservative but swung rapidly from 1998. Because so much housing is being built to this ward's east, it loses a councillor so that those new wards emerging in central Wembley have enough electorate to justify their creation. So a Labour councillor goes.

Queen's Park (3)

A relatively affluent, diverse ward which embraced the Lib Dems from the Brent East by-election until 2014. After Alperton and Sudbury arguably best Lib Dem target though territory added from Kensal Green won't help them.

Queensbury (3)

A somewhat contrary ward that readily swings against the borough-wide trend, this is the best Tory opportunity after Brondesbury Park based on 2018 and the ward's expansion probably won't harm them.

Roundwood (3)

The recreated Roundwood - Harlesden North - takes about 60% of Harlesden and 40% from Willesden Green to form a fairly meandering ward that will be very solid for Labour.

Stonebridge (3)

Ward boundaries here are unchanged. This huge slice of central Brent, divided by major roads, railway lines and rivers will remain safely Labour albeit getting some of the new housing - most notably in the isolated south of the ward.

Sudbury (2)

Sudbury was the ward the Lib Dems came closest to winning in 2018 and their organisation in this corner of south-west Brent no doubt helped them win the Alperton by-election in 2020. If they can maintain that momentum - difficult given Covid has curbed their main asset: doorstep campaigning - they could end up with six councillors from these two neighbouring wards in 2022.

Tokington (3)

Like Queensbury, Tokington (the farm of the sons of Toca) has a history of bucking borough-wide trends: it's changed hands eleven times in fifteen contests.

The ward, which currently contains Wembley stadium, is heavily redrawn because of the already-happened and still-to-come housing development. It's more or

less chopped in half with the southern portion becoming a new, 2-member Tokyngton. Labour now have a firm grip on this ward but if their popularity wanes look for Tokyngton to spring a surprise.

Welsh Harp (3)

This ward, created in 2002 from most of the old St Andrew's, now expands north to grab the majority of abolished Fryent. Fryent swung rapidly from a fairly safe Tory to safe Labour in the 1990s and the bit of Fryent moving over is better for Labour than that heading for Kingsbury, so this will stay securely Labour

Wembley Central (3)

Wembley population growth shunts this ward entirely west of the Central Line gaining chunks of Alperton and Sudbury wards. Lib Dems won here at depth of Labour unpopularity in 2006 and 2010 but Labour has recovered strongly. Unless the ripples of the Alperton by-election change the dynamics this should stay safe for Labour.

Wembley Hill (3)

A half-new ward formed partly from the side of Wembley Central east of the Central Line, some of Preston, but mainly a stack of new-build apartment blocks that didn't exist in 2018.

Wembley Park (2)

This ward is effectively entirely new: the developments around Wembley Stadium. Because it has a largely new electorate we're logging this as a Labour marginal, though with the potential of being far stronger for Labour when these new voters are counted.

Willesden Green (3)

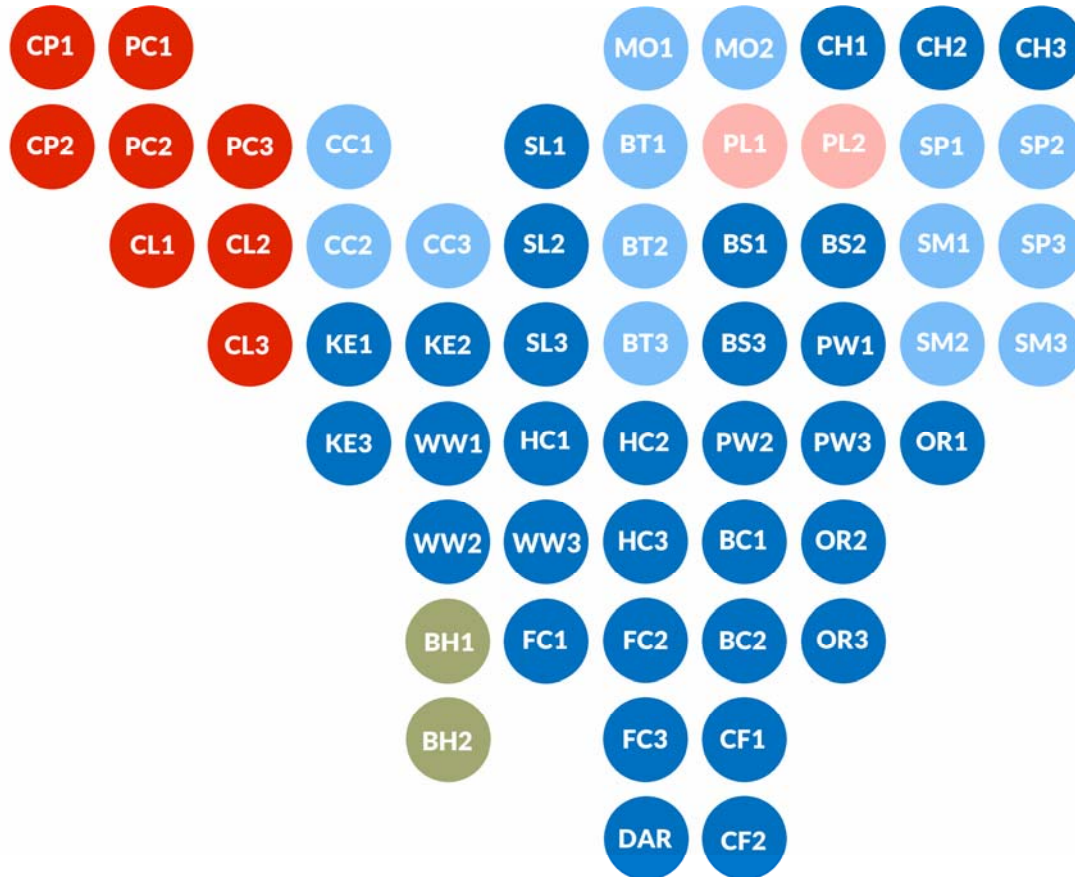
Boundaries have changed markedly: this ward now straddles the Jubilee Line and include Willesden Green station, whereas the old ward was all south of the tube and stopped short of the station. Has traded chunk of territory leaving for Roundwood for the long eastern end of abolished Dudden Hill and a small bit of Mapesbury. Was the least secure of the Lib Dem gains during Labour's fallow years and will be safe enough now.

Safe Conservative	3	Competitive Labour	14	Safe Labour	39
Kenton		Alperton		Cricklewood and Mapesbury	Roundwood
		Barnhill		Dollis Hill	Stonebridge
		Brondesbury Park		Harlesden and Kensal Green	Tokyngton
		Queensbury		Kilburn	Welsh Harp
		Sudbury		Kingsbury	Wembley Central
		Wembley Park		Preston	Wembley Hill
				Queen's Park	Willesden Green

Bromley

2018 current wards	50	8	0	2
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2018 new wards	46	10	0	2
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Bromley is the second-safest Conservative council in London, but that does not mean it is bereft of challenges for the administration group, nor opportunities for the opposition parties.

The Conservatives have been losing support along most of the boundary with Lewisham since the late 1990s and this is now starting to convert into seats gained, not just majorities reduced.

The three inner wards: Crystal Palace, Penge and Cator and Clock House are now safe, or safe enough, for Labour.

Copers Cope (Central Beckenham) - the next ward along, is now highly marginal as is Bromley Town (a somewhat longer-term, three-way marginal); as is the next ward beyond that: Plaistow and Sundridge too.

Mottingham, once the only reliably Labour ward, wedged between the Downham estate in Lewisham and Eltham, swung to the Tories in the late 1990s but that too came back to competitiveness in 2018.

The same demographic change is working its way along the border with Croydon. Clock House, traditionally a Conservative-Lib Dem marginal, looks after 2018 to be a pretty secure Labour ward.

The Tories also had a 2,000 vote lead over Labour in next-door Kelsey and Eden Park in 2006; today it's down to about 800: almost certainly safe in 2022 but heading in the direction of competitiveness.

There is one other challenging area for the Conservatives far beyond this border skirmishing with the inner London boroughs - and that is the Cray Valley, right on the edge of London.

The population centres along the River Cray have given Labour some promising wards for decades: St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray were both more often than not Labour (St Paul's Cray becoming more of a Lib Dem ward until their reconfiguration in 2002).

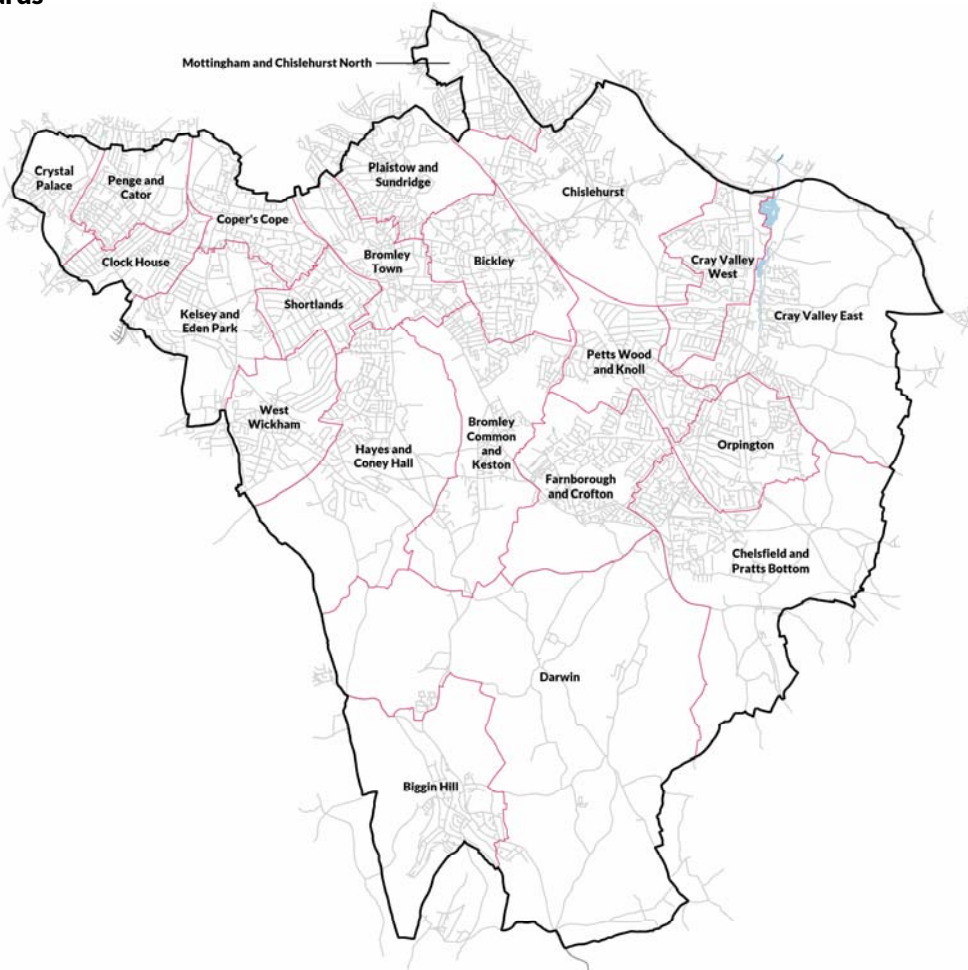
Those two wards return in this boundary redistribution. They are heavily working-class; have among the highest populations of settled traveller communities anywhere in England, and very inclined to UKIP during that party's surge years. Whether that makes for the sort of mix that views today's Labour Party as deserving of their votes is moot, but even if not Labour has the potential of winning maybe 18 seats - rising to 24 if they can flip those Cray Valley wards too.

Beyond that, Bromley is still too staunchly Tory for their overall control to be at risk.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Beckenham Town and Copers Cope (3 cllrs)

Once safely Tory, Copers Cope became highly marginal in 2018 and the demographic trends here give Labour a real chance of three gains adjoining their Penge and Crystal Palace strongholds.

Bickley and Sundridge (3)

Massively Tory Bickley was slated to lose a councillor in the draft recs, but then the Conservatives persuaded the commission to add Sundridge from Plaistow ward and so retain three secure seats.

Biggin Hill (2)

Defecting Tory councillors turned Independent gained/held Biggin Hill in 2018 and, while the Tories weren't miles behind, this should stay independent as long as they wish to stand.

Bromley Common and Holwood (2)

A long-term Lib Dem ward, Bromley Common is now safely Tory and will remain so. Loses Keston to Hayes and Coney Hall.

Bromley Town (3)

Another Lewisham-borders ward that's become marginal. It's also a three-way marginal: if the Lib Dems or Labour can persuade the other side's voters to cast a tactical vote the Tories cannot hold this ward with barely a third of the vote.

Chelsfield (2)

Pratts Bottom has been booted out of the ward and takes a councillor with it, but Chelsfield will remain a secure Conservative ward.

Chislehurst (3)

A safe, suburban Conservative ward that has always stayed loyal to that party.

Clock House (3)

Clock House fell to Labour in 2014 and then swung strongly to them in 2018. This is not even a marginal for them anymore as demographics gradually erode the Tories in wider Beckenham.

Crystal Palace and Annerley (2)

Once a Lib Dem stronghold, this ward is now massively safe for Labour; very much an inner-city ward in this outer London borough.

Darwin (1)

The sole single-member Bromley ward in which Nigel Farage lives, Darwin is overwhelmingly Conservative except when disaffected councillors stand against the party; but the Tories win even then.

Farnborough and Crofton (3)

A safe Tory ward to the south-west of Orpington town.

Hayes and Coney Hall (3)

Safely Tory but no longer overwhelmingly so - their majority looks stronger than it is because the opposition vote is evenly divided, like in adjoining West Wickham. Safe enough for now.

Kelsey and Eden Park (3)

Kelsey and Eden Park is edging towards Labour but isn't quite yet a marginal; may well be after the 2022 contests.

Mottingham (2)

Once the only secure Labour ward in Bromley, Mottingham swung to the Tories in 2002 and has stayed that way. Labour came very close in 2018 but the boundary changes add a chunk of strongly Tory Chislehurst so any demographic change in Labour's favour may be offset for now.

Orpington (2)

Once the best Lib Dem ward here, they have faded badly and now Orpington is safely Tory, Loses a councillor.

Penge and Cator (3)

Largely unchanged. Labour has struggled here in the past but it's now solid for them..

Petts Wood and Knoll (3)

A very safe suburban ward north-west of Orpington for the Conservatives.

Plaistow (2)

We're - perhaps getting a little ahead of ourselves - giving the slimmed-down Plaistow ward a narrow Labour lead having shed the much more Tory Sundridge, Labour was within 300 in 2018 and Labour voters are flowing in from across the Lewisham boundary.

St Mary Cray (3)

The Cray Valley wards have reverted to their pre-2002 boundaries. St Mary Cray was the better Labour ward though this area had a strong UKIP vote that has drained more Labour than Tory support. Nonetheless, a strong potential gain for Labour beyond the inner core of the borough.

St Paul's Cray (3)

The northern Cray ward was traditionally a Lib Dem stronghold but almost certainly won't be any more. Labour may well be competitive but it's the better of the two Crays for the Tories.

Shortlands and Park Langley (3)

The old, small, Shortlands was a very safe Tory ward and added territory gives them a third councillor.

West Wickham (3)

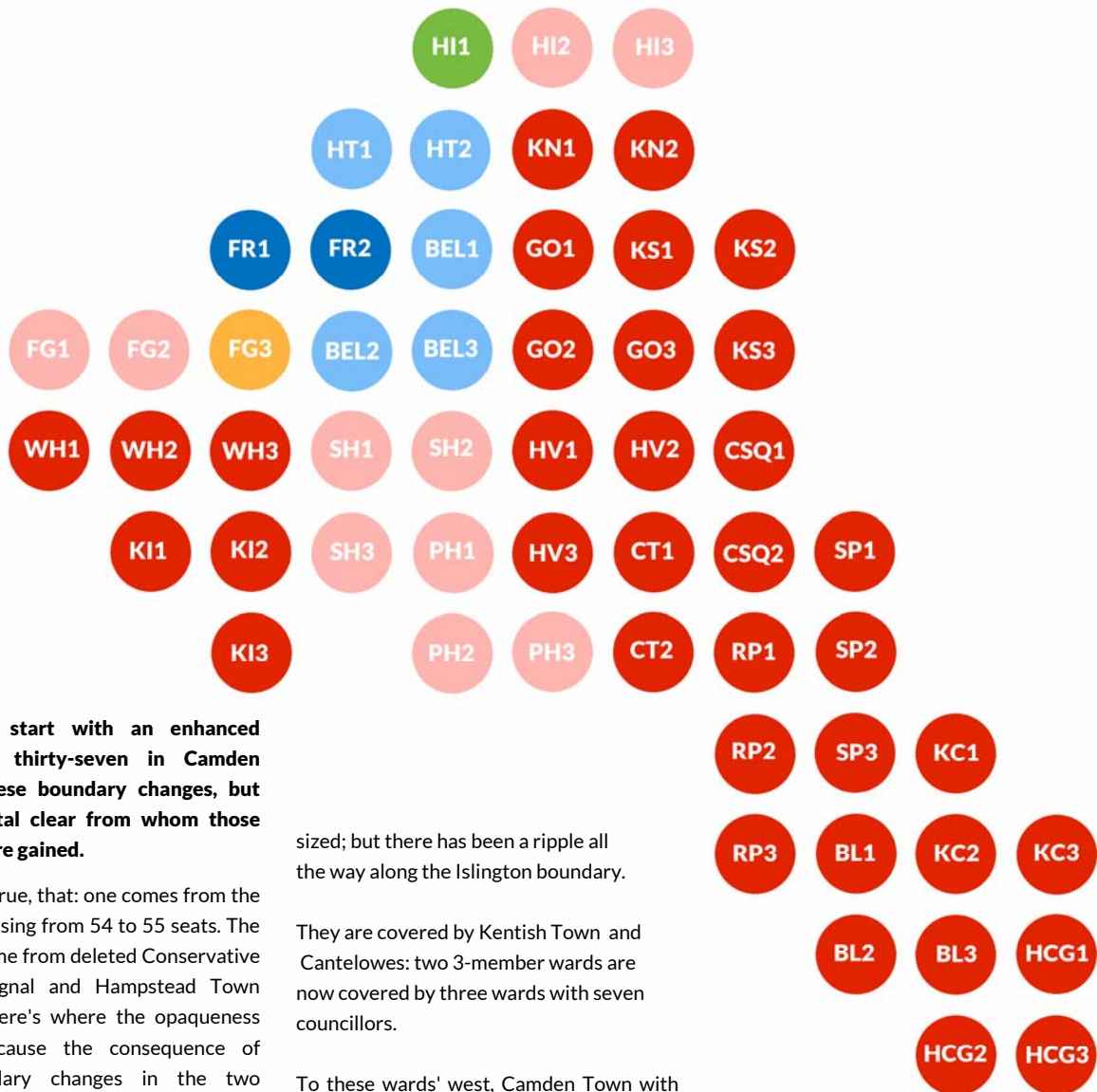
West Wickham remains strongly Tory but Shirley, across the borough border in Croydon, is becoming inexorably better for Labour and that trend will eventually cross the boundary.

Safe Conservative	23	Competitive Conservative	11	Competitive Labour	10	Safe Labour	19
Bickley and Sundridge		Beckenham Town		Plaistow		Clock House	
Bromley Common & Holwood		Bromley Town				Crystal Palace and Annerley	
Chelsfield		Kelsey and Eden Park				Penge and Cator	
Chislehurst		Mottingham					
Darwin		St Mary Cray					
Farnborough and Crofton		St Paul's Cray					
Hayes and Coney Hall							
Orpington							
Petts Wood and Knoll							
Shortlands and Park Langley							
West Wickham							

Camden

2018 current wards	43	7	3	1
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2018 new wards	46	7	1	1
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Labour will start with an enhanced majority of thirty-seven in Camden following these boundary changes, but it's not crystal clear from whom those three seats are gained.

Not entirely true, that: one comes from the council increasing from 54 to 55 seats. The other two come from deleted Conservative seats in Frogna and Hampstead Town wards. But here's where the opaqueness emerges, because the consequence of those boundary changes in the two Conservative wards is that Belsize becomes better for them. We think those improvements would have given the two Lib Dem seats in Belsize to the Tories which would offset their loss.

But the changes are more wide-ranging than just to the Hampstead core. The big regeneration of the largely derelict site behind St Pancras station has led to a redistribution in the south-east of the borough.

This growth in the St Pancras and Somers Town ward was partially offset by adjoining Kings Cross ward being significantly under-

sized; but there has been a ripple all the way along the Islington boundary.

They are covered by Kentish Town and Canteloves: two 3-member wards are now covered by three wards with seven councillors.

To these wards' west, Camden Town with Primrose Hill ward has been split into its two respective sides, while Swiss Cottage has also been broken in two, forming a new (or recreated) South Hampstead. Camden Town is quite a different area to Primrose Hill - far stronger for Labour.

As a consequence, the two new wards should, theoretically, be winnable for the Conservatives (and perhaps Lib Dems given a large chunk of Belsize is added to South Hampstead). South Hampstead (Swiss Cottage) is usually marginal while the last time Primrose Hill (Adelaide) was fought in 1998 it split representation.

But the decline of the Tories in London probably means that - at the very least - Labour starts as clear favourites in both. The other potentially marginal - a 3-way marginal - is West Hampstead. If the Lib Dems recover from their poor position (remember they ran the council in 2006, albeit in the minority) they should win here and regain full control of Fortune Green.

Meanwhile, the Green Party will want to win Highgate outright and improve in at least one of the Kentish Town wards.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Belsize (3 cllrs)

The hardest of the revised wards to call, Belsize - which split 2 LD to 1 Conservative in 2018, expands into the southern sections of Frognaal & Fitzjohns and Hampstead Town, both of which stayed Conservative. And it loses a chunk in the south to Primrose Hill.

So, tentatively, all three seats in new Belsize have been awarded to the Conservatives; though with a low level of confidence. Labour was a close third in 2018.

Bloomsbury (3)

Bloomsbury expands slightly eastward, now taking all of the old Brunswick ward - the only ward in the south of the borough the Conservatives were competitive in. Bloomsbury elected one Tory councillor in 2006 but they have no realistic chance of winning this expanded ward in 2022.

Camden Square (2)

Cantelowes ward - the successor to the old Camden ward - is chopped in half in this review with the bulk comprising this new, 2-member Camden Square. It'll be safe Labour.

Camden Town (2)

Like Cantelowes, this mouthful of an outgoing ward (Camden Town with Primrose Hill) is chopped in two, with the core Camden Town getting its own ward, somewhat like the old Chalk Farm. Camden Town is the better Labour half of the old CT&PH and will be a safe 2-member ward for them.

Fortune Green (3)

Unchanged ward which split 2 Labour to 1 Lib Dem in 2018. That Lib Dem, Flick Rea - councillor here since 1982, stood down after the London elections in 2021 and despite Labour efforts the Lib Dems held the seat in the by-election with an increased majority. Whether that means Labour is in trouble in the two other seats is unclear; perhaps it means the ward will continue to split its representation.

Frognaal (2)

The only ward the Tories won comfortably in 2018, Frognaal loses its Fitzjohns half - and with it one of its increasingly endangered Conservative councillors. But the political preference here won't change.

Gospel Oak (3)

This ward elected Conservative councillors in 2006 and it gains a bit of territory from Tory-voting Hampstead Town; but the Tories have collapsed in Gospel Oak and this minor change won't revive them.

Hampstead Town (2)

Despite Hampstead being the target of "champagne socialist" mockery, Hampstead Town has never elected Labour councillors. The only other all-Tory ward from 2018, like Frognaal it is also pared back and loses a councillor. The Lib Dems are now fighting it out with Labour to be the main challenger but the boundary changes probably entrench the Tories a little in this exclusive enclave.

Haverstock (3)

The ward of the eponymous "success story" comprehensive school attended by the Miliband brothers, apart from 2010 Haverstock (before that Grafton) has been reliable for Labour. There are no boundary changes here.

Highgate (3)

Highgate is a volatile ward that has been won by Labour, Greens and Conservatives in the relatively recent past. At present Sian Berry is the sole Green councillor - she polled more than 500 votes ahead of her running-mates and will be hard to oust. The Conservatives have faded a lot here and this has never been a Lib Dem prospect so the battle is now two-way with the Greens trying to make gains.

Holborn and Covent Garden (3)

The southern-most Camden ward loses a relatively small amount of territory to Bloomsbury but is otherwise unaltered. Labour have an unbroken record of wins here since 1971.

Kentish Town North (2)

All but the tiniest slip of territory inherited by the creation of a northern division of Kentish Town comes from the old ward which is why, even though it's the smaller with just 2 councillors, it's listed as the successor ward. It'll stay Labour though the Greens will hope to advance.

Kentish Town South (3)

This new ward takes about 40% of abolished Cantelowes and the rest from the over-sized Kentish Town ward. Labour polled two-thirds of the vote here in 2018 having struggled a little in the poor Labour years and all five north and south Kentish Town seats will be safe.

Kilburn (3)

Largely unaltered ward. Lib Dems won here in 2006 but normally staunchly Labour.

King's Cross (3)

This ward changes radically, extending north along the borough boundary with Islington to grab most of the regeneration site of former railway and gas company brownfield sites that are being turned into hundreds of new homes. Other than in 1968 King's Cross has always elected Labour councillors and they had a lead of almost a thousand in this undersized ward in 2018.

Primrose Hill (3)

A new ward compared to the existing map, this is actually a recreated Adelaide - which was a very marginal ward. Primrose Hill, with its stunning views over London, is incredibly affluent and this ward takes the eastern half of the abolished Swiss Cottage ward - also marginal, so while Labour is heavily favoured given the politics of London nowadays, the Tories should poll respectably.

Regent's Park (3)

Unchanged ward. Safe Labour, unlike the Westminster version across the boundary. Beyond the park boundary this ward changes rapidly; there are large council estates like the high-rise Regent's Park and tenement Cumberland Market. The ward extends east as far as Euston Station.

St Pancras and Somers Town (3)

The regeneration zone north of St Pancras station would have made this ward massively over-sized so major surgery has been carried out with the bulk of the new housing being transferred to the undersized King's Cross ward. This is usually Labour's safest Camden ward.

South Hampstead (3)

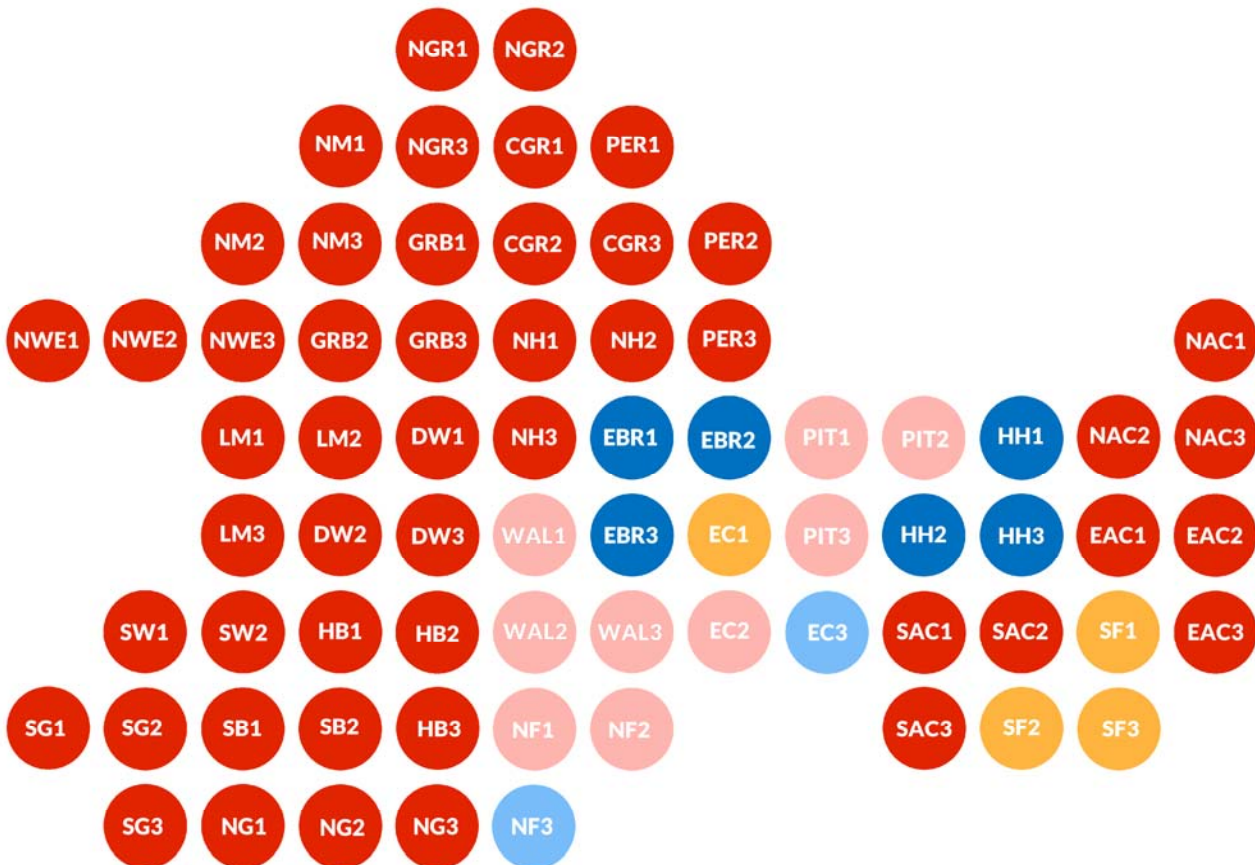
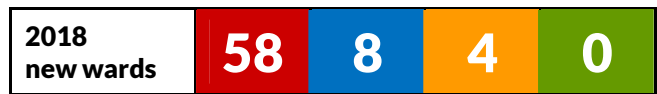
This ward looks quite like the pre-2002 Swiss Cottage which was a Con-Lab marginal. Whether that will still be the case following twenty years of demographic and political change away from the Conservatives is questionable, but they may still be competitive given they didn't lose Swiss Cottage ward by much in 2018. A sizeable chunk of Belsize is added in the north - that may give the Lib Dems a springboard too.

West Hampstead (3)

A virtually unchanged ward and one where the Tory vote rose slightly in 2018 making it a three-way marginal. Labour will start as favourites and the Lib Dems may reassert themselves as the clear alternative, but anything might happen in this gentrifying ward.

Safe Conservative	2	Competitive Conservative	5	Competitive Labour	15	Safe Labour	31
Frognaal		Belsize		Fortune Green (2 seats)		Bloomsbury	
		Hampstead Town		Highgate (2 seats)		Camden Square	
				Kentish Town North		Camden Town	
		Competitive Lib Dem	1	Primrose Hill		Gospel Oak	
				South Hampstead		Haverstock	
		Fortune Green (1 seat)		West Hampstead		Holborn and Covent Garden	
						Kentish Town South	
		Competitive Green	1			Kilburn	
				Highgate (1 seat)			
						Regents Park	
						St Pancras and Somers Town	

Ealing



Ealing, already London's second-largest council, gains a seventieth seat in their boundary review. Other than that revolutionary development, this review has been largely becalmed.

Two development zones: one in the east, in Acton; the other in the south-west in Southall, have forced some fairly marked boundary redrawing, including a new 2-member ward: Southall West. That ward is where the one new Ealing seat is located; the ward's second is donated from Southall Broadway ward.

The Acton changes are simply a shunt northward of the existing Acton Central

ward. But it's not completely simple: new residential blocks are rising amidst the warehouses and factories of Park Royal, a long time huge regeneration scheme linking in with Crossrail at Old Oak - if its prospectus is ever delivered.

Otherwise, three wards change names but remain identifiably similar to their predecessors: Elthorne to Hanwell Broadway; Cleveland to Pitshanger and Greenford Green to Central Greenford.

The extra seat is Labour, adding to their already massive majority.

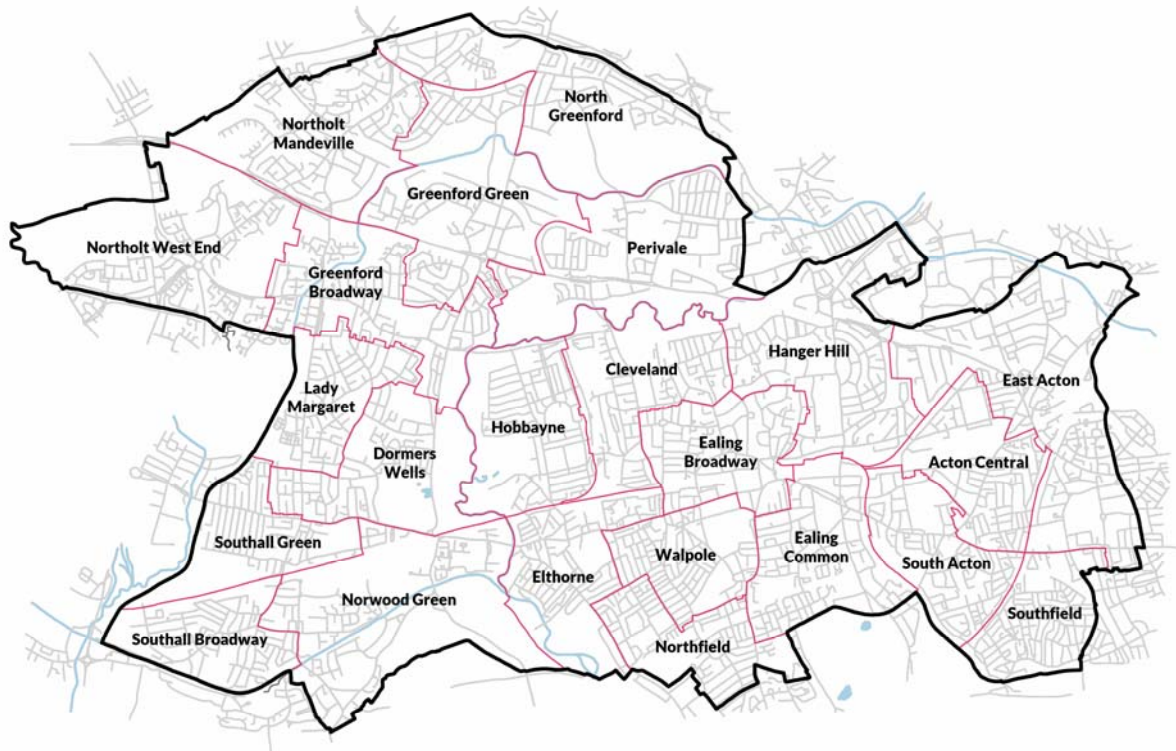
There was quite a big backlash in 2021 over Ealing's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods - the controversy was a large part of the reason 10-year council leader Julian Bell was ousted.

Whether voters feel strongly enough to vote Conservative in these areas is one of the questions we'll find answers to on election night, but they have a record of kicking Labour over transport: in 2006 Ealing went Tory in part because of Ken Livingstone's plans to run a tram along Uxbridge Road. But even the scale of swing that ousted Labour in 2006 wouldn't oust them this time - and the LTN backlash is likely to be considerably smaller.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Central Greenford (3 cllrs)

Largely unaltered ward, though renamed, this is traditionally a Conservative ward (Costons before 2002) that fell to Labour in 2014 and now looks quite safe. The addition of the eastern end of Greenford Broadway ward won't help the Tories pull closer.

Dormers Wells (3)

One of the fiercely safe, heavily Hindu-Sikh Southall wards, largely unaltered. Labour won by over 2,000 votes in 2018.

Ealing Broadway (3)

The anti-Tory swing in Ealing Broadway last time was small and they held off Labour by just over ten points. Ward boundaries aren't much changing and if the Tory ebb reached its lowest in 2018 they should be safe.

Ealing Common (3)

Barely altered ward - the only one in London last time that elected councillors from three different parties. What happens next depends on two factors: whether the long-standing Lib Dem and Tory councillors seek re-election, and whether the swing to Labour has reached its zenith or still has steam behind it.

East Acton (3)

The vast Park Royal regeneration zone that could provide thousands of new homes and voters to Acton has already begun reshaping ward boundaries in Ealing. East Acton included most of Park Royal but, from 2022, is scaled back to the area immediately across the borough boundary from the Old Oak estate (where East Acton tube station confusingly is). Labour occasionally struggles a bit here but for now this is quite safe.

Greenford Broadway (3)

Largely unchanged, as Ravenor ward and in 2006 on the current boundaries Greenford Broadway has been marginal; but a huge swing to Labour in 2014 pushed them above 60% of the vote. Ex-council leader Julian Bell's ward.

Hanger Hill (3)

A 4% swing in this - barely changed - ward brought Labour to within twelve points of the Tories in 2018. As Hanger Lane this used to produce massive Tory majorities and, even though they're much reduced, it'd be surprising if the political outlook changes in 2022.

Hanwell Broadway (3)

Renamed but very distinctly still the outgoing Elthorne ward. This ward isn't quite secure for Labour: they only edged 40% in 2018; but their saving grace is a fractured opposition vote with Lib Dems on 23%, Greens on 19 and Tories on 14.

Lady Margaret (3)

The most northerly of the Southall-proper wards, Labour polled three-quarters of the vote here in 2018 and the ward's boundaries have barely altered.

North Acton (3)

The consequence of the boundary changes to East Acton is that the centre of gravity of Acton Central has expanded northwards. Most of this northern section - Park Royal - is currently warehouses and light industry for now but huge apartment blocks have begun springing up within and around it. Labour was not absolutely secure in this ward - they lost it in 2006 - but at least until the new housing is up and occupied, it should be safe enough.

North Greenford (3)

This was a sort of newly created ward in 2002 and has been Labour ever since. This is exactly the sort of ward that has turned Ealing North into a safe Labour constituency; its boundaries haven't been altered and Labour are now over 35 percentage points ahead here..

North Hanwell (3)

Another re-titled but otherwise unaltered ward - this is Hobbayne by another name. Bounded by the river Brent to its west and north, this is a working-class ward that's usually Labour but can spring a surprise now and then. It hardly swung in 2018 and Labour's vote fell, but they still start 1,500 votes ahead of the Tories - not dented in two interceding by-elections. That's a big lead to defend.

Northfield (3)

Northfield, somewhat inappropriately the borough's most southerly ward, normally votes Conservative, swung to Labour in the 1990s and then back again in the 2010s - but Labour gained two of the three seats in 2018. The few transfers in from Elthorne ward won't alter the political balance.

Northolt Mandeville (3)

Another of the once marginal Ealing North wards, Mandeville - the north-western ward in the "dome" of this borough that comprises Greenford and Northolt - has swung handily to Labour and isn't close to marginal any longer. Tories may still edge a seat in years Labour is very unpopular, but that's not now.

Northolt West End (3)

The west end of Northolt was always the strongest Labour ward in Ealing North: it didn't even go Tory in 1968 (but did, shockingly, in 1990). The Labour lead is still substantial here but other Northolt and Greenford wards have caught up.

Norwood Green (3)

This ward - Southall South East if you like - was newly created in 2002 and is largely unchanged - just losing an erroneous slip of land north of the Southall railway line. Not quite as safe as the named Southall wards, it's still absolutely secure for Labour.

Perivale (3)

Once a reliable Tory ward, Perivale is yet another of those wards that gave Harry Greenway, the last Tory MP for this constituency, a 15,000 majority as recently as 1992. But it's now safely Labour. The Polish party Duma Polska polled almost 8% here in 2018. Boundaries unaltered.

Pitshanger (3)

The return of an old ward name but for a somewhat different area. The true predecessor to Cleveland is Argyle; Pitshanger was divided several different ways in 2002. Pitshanger was a safely Tory ward; Argyle was more marginal but still always Tory. But Labour broke through in Cleveland in 2014 and won all three seats in 2018. It's not beyond the Tories' grasp, but they start some 700 votes behind.

South Acton (3)

South Acton has lost about a third of its territory in these boundary changes due to the largely complete regeneration of the somewhat notorious South Acton estate. The Tories were somewhat close until 2018 and it's still not an overwhelming Labour majority but it'd be an epic surprise for this not to be a Labour hold.

Southall Broadway (3)

The second safest of the Southall wards tucked away in the far south-western corner of the borough. Swaps a few streets with Norwood Green but an absolute fortress for Labour.

Southall Green (2)

...Followed by the one safer, where all three Labour councillors polled over 80% of the vote in 2018 - the norm here. This ward loses a seat to make room for the creation of Southall West ward.

Southall West (3)

The only truly "new" ward emerging from the boundary changes. This is about half of Southall Green ward, with a small chunk of Norwood Green added. This ward will include the bulk of the Southall gasworks (so-called Southall Waterside) regeneration: a huge, already vacant site in the south, built within it.

Southfield (3)

Southfield is the Acton borders, Poets Corner, Bedford Park section of the borough and has voted Lib Dem since 1994. Before that it was a Tory-leaning ward with Labour occasionally able to win here.

The Conservatives got a solitary councillor elected here in 2006 but have fallen back a fair amount. This isn't quite safe territory for the Lib Dems but their vote is pretty stable and, with the opposition vote split almost evenly for now, are probably secure. The ward gains a small number of streets from East Acton, south of The Vale.

Walpole (3)

While never safe-safe, Labour usually won Walpole even when losing the council - this was Hilary Benn's ward and the ward the Kinnocks lived in. But, as with adjoining Northfields, it swung swiftly to the Tories in the early 2000s.

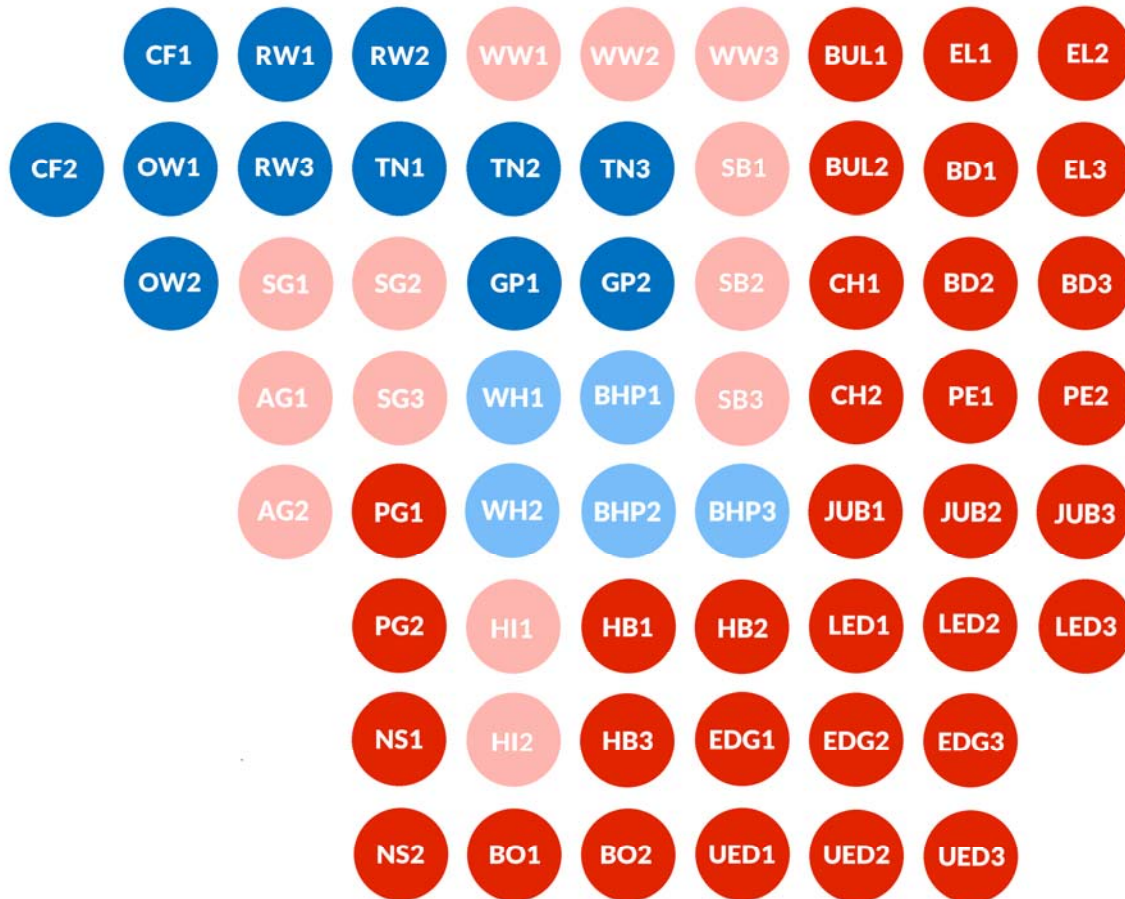
But Labour is back in control now. It gains a few streets from Ealing Broadway but the Conservatives need a nigh-on 10% swing to win it back.

Safe Conservative	6	Competitive Conservative	2	Competitive Labour	12	Safe Labour	44
Ealing Broadway		Ealing Common (1 seat)		Ealing Common (1 seat)		Central Greenford	
Hanger Hill		Northfield (1 seat)		Hanwell Broadway		Dormers Wells	
				Northfield (2 seats)		East Acton	
		Competitive Lib Dem	4	Pitshanger		Greenford Broadway	
		Ealing Common (1 seat)		Walpole		Lady Margaret	
		Southfield				North Acton	
						North Greenford	
						North Hanwell	
						Northolt West End	
						Norwood Green	
						Perivale	
						South Acton	
						Southall Broadway	
						Southall Green	
						Southall West	

Enfield

2018 current wards	46	17	0	0
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2018 new wards	46	17	0	0
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In 1994, Labour celebrated key successes in the far north and far south of London: they gained Croydon and Enfield. Their significance was that these boroughs represented the sort of crucial, suburban, reasonably affluent boroughs that showed the party on track for government.

Both of these boroughs have continued to edge to Labour in the years since, but Enfield far more so. The Conservatives still have a path - a difficult path, but a path nonetheless - to power in Croydon, but none realistically in Enfield.

The marginal wards that populated the eastern "wall" of the constituency alongside the Lea and the reservoirs have turned into very secure Labour seats mainly due to rapid demographic change - the Turkish population is growing fast and

exercises huge influence within the Labour Group especially. The same is true to a somewhat lesser extent to the wards in the south of the Southgate constituency.

Enfield's ward boundaries have changed fairly radically but, somewhat pleasingly, all this re-jigging is projected to have given the parties the exact same number of seats as they actually won in 2018.

That's better news for Labour than the Conservatives given they have - or rather had - a 29-seat majority.

But the one fly in Labour's ointment is the Community Group which has picked up five Labour councillors: two in Southgate Green, one in Southgate, one in Winchmore Hill and one in Chase.

Those defections have slashed the Labour majority in half. Breakaway parties usually find it incredibly hard to turn defections into election wins, though there is a fairly recent history of a local amenity group - the Enfield Chase Party - set up to try to keep their hospital open, winning council seats.

But depending on how well they organise (assuming they wish to put up a fight) and how well-funded they are, their main achievement might be splitting the Labour vote enough to help the Tories win through the middle: their councillors all come from marginal wards after all.

Assuming this remains a two-party fight (and there is no history here for any of the minor parties) Enfield has swung so much to Labour that it's hard to see how they lose. It'd take the Tories winning all the marginals and pulling off at least one surprise gain to win.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Arnos Grove (2 cllrs)

3-member Southgate Green fell to Labour in 2014 and then they won by about 11 points in 2018. The ward reverts to something like its pre-2002 arrangement (though differently named): the bulk goes into a 2-member Arnos Grove with the section south of the A406 moving into New Southgate. This probably makes Arnos Grove somewhat more marginal but not by enough to flip it back to the Tories without some marked recovery.

Bowes (2)

Bowes reverts to something very similar to the pre-2002 2-member ward of the same name. It's hard to imagine that this was a Tory ward until 1986 given in 2018 Labour was over 40 points ahead here. Labour's strength improves as you head east towards Edmonton and as this ward contributes a large chunk of its west to New Southgate, Bowes should be even safer in 2022.

Brimsgate (3)

There is a naming issue with this section of eastern Enfield: Brimsgate is clearly the successor to Enfield Highway, which was previously called Enfield Wash. The Tories won here in 2002 and it's a mark of how strong the tide towards Labour has come in that they were able to gain it in 2006: a far worse Labour year than 2002. Labour is now 40 points ahead here and Brimsgate will not be in jeopardy.

Bullsmoor (2)

Turkey Street reverts to its pre-2002 name and sheds a councillor. Bullsmoor was a marginal Labour ward up to its abolition; the enlarged Turkey Street went Tory in 2002 and 2006 but Labour is now over 30 points clear here and a shrunk-back Bullsmoor won't be winnable.

Bush Hill Park (3)

Historically the only safe Tory ward in the Edmonton constituency, Labour snuck a seat here in 2014 but the Tories clawed it back in 2018. It's now a marginal and the boundary changes, which transfer a northern section into Southbury, won't change that.

Carterhatch (2)

This new ward in north-east Enfield resembles the pre-2002 Hoe Lane ward which was a decent, but not overwhelmingly safe Labour ward. Given the shift to Labour in Enfield Carterhatch should be thoroughly safe in 2022.

Cockfosters (2)

The ward at the end of the Piccadilly Line is reduced in size, losing some of its south-eastern streets to the recreated Oakwood ward. This will have minimal political impact: it will remain that increasingly rare commodity: a safe Tory ward in Enfield, if with one fewer councillor.

Edmonton Green (3)

There are four core Edmonton wards; this is the middle of them and it's the safest with the massive tower blocks over the shopping centre. This ward and its predecessors have never, ever elected Conservatives and it isn't about to start.

Enfield Lock (3)

The ward in the north-eastern corner of the borough, just south of Waltham Cross, Enfield Lock used to be the key marginal. The Conservatives rarely won control of Enfield without winning Enfield Lock - but those days are gone. Labour was almost 40 percentage points ahead in 2018 and this wouldn't be one of the Tory wards even if they could find a path to a majority.

Grange Park (2)

Even in 2018 Labour was more than 20% behind in the old Grange ward. This slimmed-down Grange Park ward loses some of its northern cul de sacs to Ridgeway ward and is probably a little more marginal but should still lie firmly in the Conservative column for the time being.

Haselbury (3)

Haselbury is western Edmonton and, like Edmonton Green, has always voted Labour - even in 1968. It's slightly less secure, but only by degrees: Labour was just shy of 70% here in 2018 and the boundary changes are very minor.

Highfield (2)

Highfield is another of those ward names re-emerging after the 2002-2018 interregnum: part of the area that denotes the change from Edmonton to Palmers Green and then Southgate. In its last contest in 1998, Highfield split one Labour, one Conservative, though in 1994 it was fairly comfortably Labour. Then it became part of the enlarged Palmers Green ward. When battle resumes in 2022 this won't be much of a contest: Palmer's Green had become comfortably - not massively - Labour by 2018.

Jubilee (3)

Jubilee is part of the transitory area between Edmonton and Enfield, though the character of the area doesn't change that much. While the Tories could get councillors elected here as recently as 2006, the rapid demographic changes of this end of the borough have turned Jubilee into an Edmonton ward with all those massive Labour majorities that go with it.

Lower Edmonton (3)

Another "brick" in the wall of eastern Enfield wards between Edmonton Green and Jubilee, this is yet another massively safe Labour ward.

New Southgate (2)

A new ward, this is very similar to the old Arnos ward, formed from the southern part of Southgate Green and the western part of Bowes. Arnos was heavily Labour and New Southgate will be too.

Oakwood (2)

Another resurrected ward name, but for a completely different patch than the pre-2002 Oakwood covered. Half of this new ward comes from Cockfosters, the other half from the abolished Highlands; and that pedigree means Oakwood will start a fairly secure Conservative 2-member ward.

Palmers Green (2)

With the re-creation of Highfield ward, Palmers Green shunts westward and becomes a 2-member ward. It gains a small part of abolished Southgate Green ward too, which may aid the Tories a little in that ward's replacement: Arnos Grove.

Ponders End (3)

Ponders End often ended up in a tug of war in parliamentary boundary reviews. The Conservatives always argued that this very safe Labour ward identified most with Edmonton, not marginal Enfield North. Labour - oddly - argued the opposite. Nowadays Ponders End can be in Edmonton and still Labour win Enfield North easily.

Ridgeway (3)

The new Ridgeway takes almost half of the territory from abolished Chase ward, which Labour gained fully for the first time ever in 2018. But most of this is literally Enfield Chase: no one lives there. The bulk of the population comes from abolished Highlands ward and the Conservatives were 2-to-1 ahead here in 2018. This will stay safely Conservative.

Southbury (3)

Southbury is another of those once marginal Enfield North wards that have swung to Labour. That said, it's been redrawn quite drastically, gaining a chunk of (narrowly) Tory Bush Hill Park and losing some of its better Labour end in the north and east.

The Tories managed to close the gap somewhat in a 2021 by-election but were still 14% short. A Tory gain is on the very outer limits of possibilities in 2022 but perhaps just about in sight if the electorate tire of Labour splits in Enfield.

Southgate (3)

The redrawn Southgate looks quite different to the old version, but that's more to do with transferring non-residential areas around: not that much territory has left and joined. What has happened though is that the centre of gravity has moved south - and that's bad news for the Conservatives.

Labour took two of the three seats here in 2018 for the first time (though they also won in the old version of Oakwood, of which about half is in this ward). Labour would probably have won all three on these boundaries, and it's more probable still they'll win all three in 2022, barring some unexpected Conservative revival across London.

Town (3)

Labour was somewhat confident of winning at least a seat or two in Town in 2018 but the Tories pulled away. Boundary changes aren't hugely significant - certainly not close to being enough to alter the 2018 result, but maybe a tad better for Labour, if anything. It'll be hard for Labour to gain, but not beyond the pale.

Upper Edmonton (3)

Upper Edmonton is the border ward with Tottenham - and that means a massively safe Labour ward. They won over three-quarters of the vote here in 2018.

Whitewebbs (3)

Whitewebbs is the eastern end of Chase ward, and the eastern end of Chase is where the population is. Go back further and it's basically the old Worcester's and Willow wards - there is a predominance of "W" names in this area!

Labour should win this pretty easily because the strongest Tory part of Chase is moving to Ridgeway. That said, the Tories regained a seat in Chase in a 2021 by-election so there's a chance of a Tory gain: they only lost by between 50 and 250 votes in 2018. But marginal wards that fall to Labour in Enfield tend to strengthen into secure Labour wards far more often than they swing back - nowadays at least.

Winchmore Hill (2)

In 2010, this ward elected three Conservatives. In 2014: 2 Conservatives and 1 Labour. In 2018: 2 Labour, 1 Conservative. The questions for 2022 are twofold: how much further has this pro-Labour shift lurched; and have the boundary changes, which have trimmed quite a chunk of the ward off, enhanced or set back that swing?

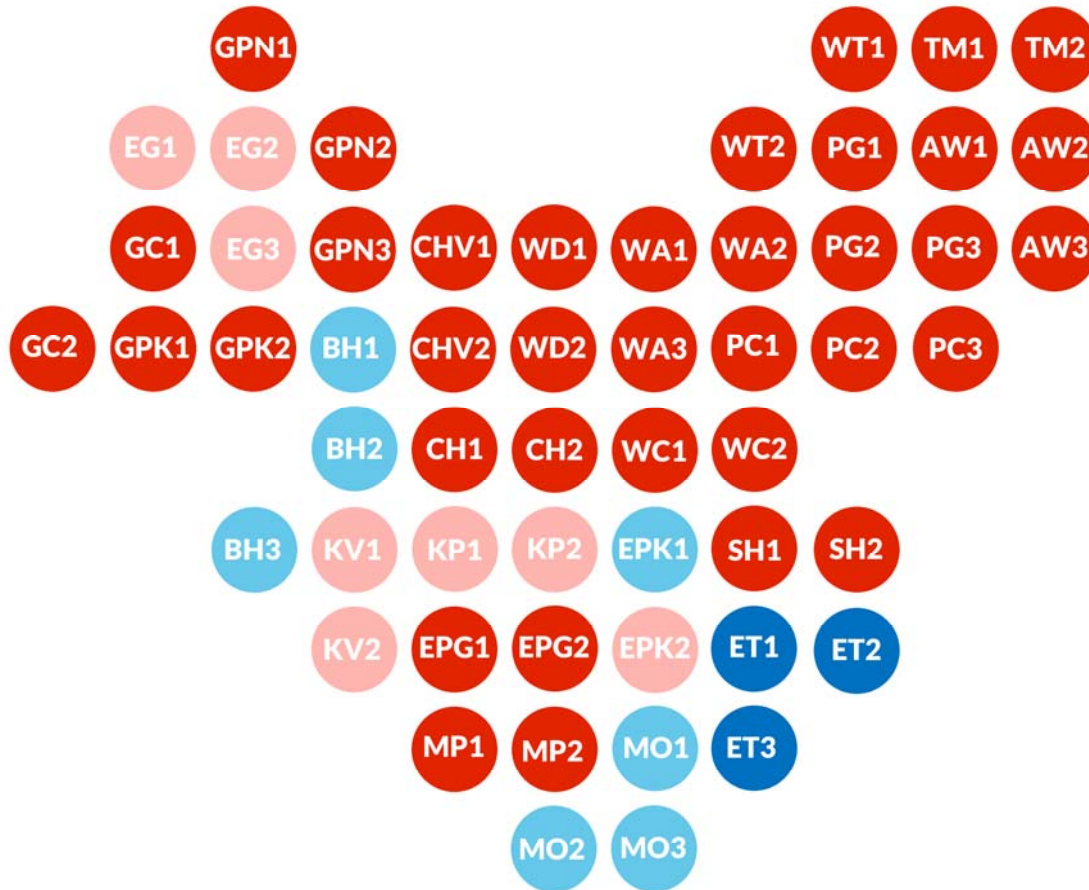
Winchmore Hill's centre of gravity has shunted north because a lot of the ward's southern "tail" has been transferred to Palmers Green. Some more modest housing around Highfield School has moved to that eponymous ward. We're going to predict that had Winchmore Hill been fought on these boundaries in 2018 it would have elected two Conservatives - very, very narrowly.

Safe Conservative	12	Competitive Conservative	5	Competitive Labour	13	Safe Labour	31
Cockfosters		Bush Hill Park		Arnos Grove		Bowes	
Grange Park		Winchmore Hill		Highfield		Brimsgate	
Oakwood				Southbury		Bullmoor	
Ridgeway				Southgate		Carterhatch	
Town				Whitewebbs		Edmonton Green	
						Enfield Lock	
						Haselbury	
						Jubilee	
						Lower Edmonton	
						New Southgate	
						Palmers Green	
						Ponders End	
						Upper Edmonton	

Greenwich

2018 current wards	42	9	0	0
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2018 new wards	45	10	0	0
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Greenwich lost eleven councillors after the 2000 electoral review (from 62 to 51) and some of that loss is undone this time around; they're rising to 55 seats. A lot of this rise might be accorded to population growth in riverside Greenwich, around the Dome and at Woolwich Arsenal and Thamesmead, but the rules are pretty clear that councillor numbers should not be linked to population trends.

This is arguably the steadiest Labour borough in London: it's only been lost to them once, in 1968, and otherwise its returned solid majorities for the party every year, even during those years in the 1980s when there were no Labour MPs for the area (Woolwich and Greenwich had SDP MPs, Eltham a Conservative).

Several new wards are being created for 2022, some of which it is unclear just how securely Labour they are. Kidbrooke

Village, for example, is essentially a completely new neighbourhood built on the demolished Ferrier estate. What impact will splitting the traditionally much more Conservative Kidbrooke (Kidbrooke Park ward) from Hornfair which, as its new name attests is part of Charlton and much safer for Labour.

The other known unknown in Greenwich is that, while the borough as a whole voted Remain in the 2016 EU referendum, the result was close - and the reason for that was the Eltham part of the borough voted Leave, like its neighbours in Bexley. There was a swing to the Tories in Eltham at the 2019 general election: Clive Efford hung on comfortably enough though the Brexit Party vote represented half his majority.

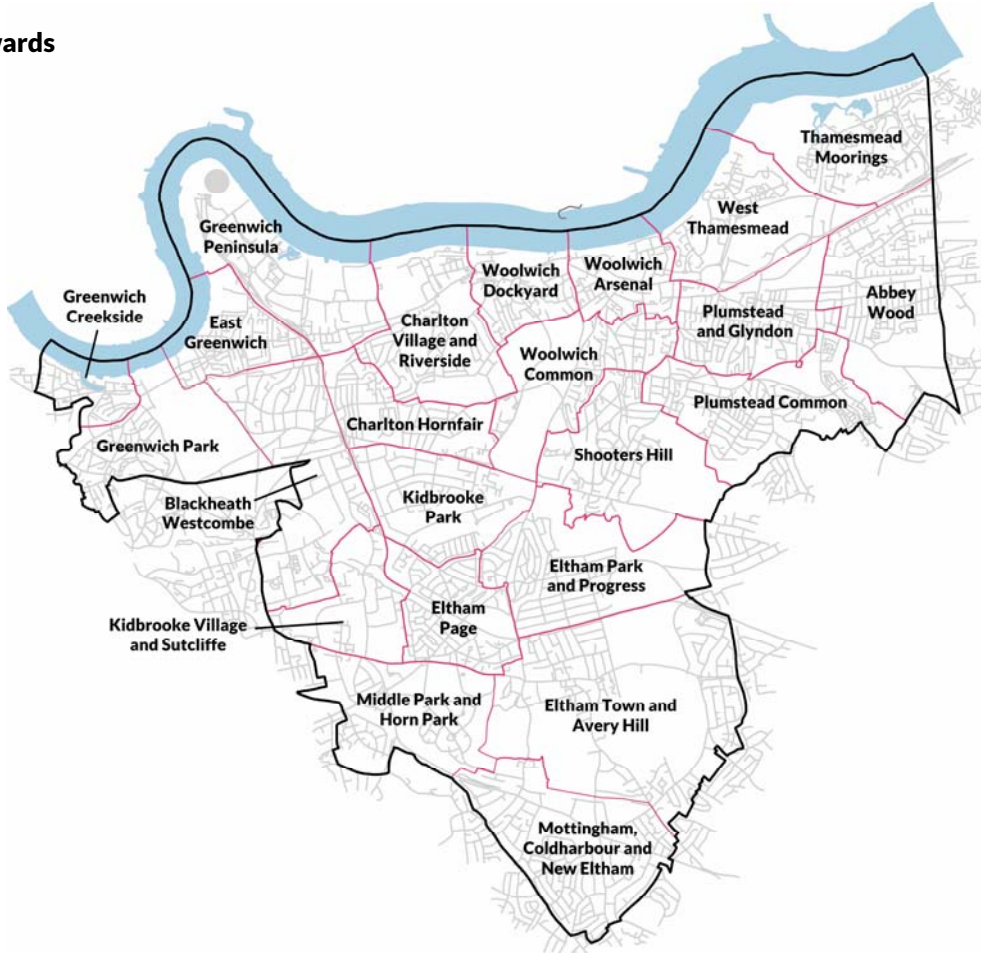
Will this feed through into any of the results. At the very least the Tories will want the Labour seat in the new Eltham

Park & Progress ward (the 2-councillor successor to Eltham North). Kidbrooke Park might be in play too, and Middle Park should be okay but might throw up a surprise; the Lib Dems have won seats in this corner of the borough before. That's not a forecast, just an observation the ward may be volatile.

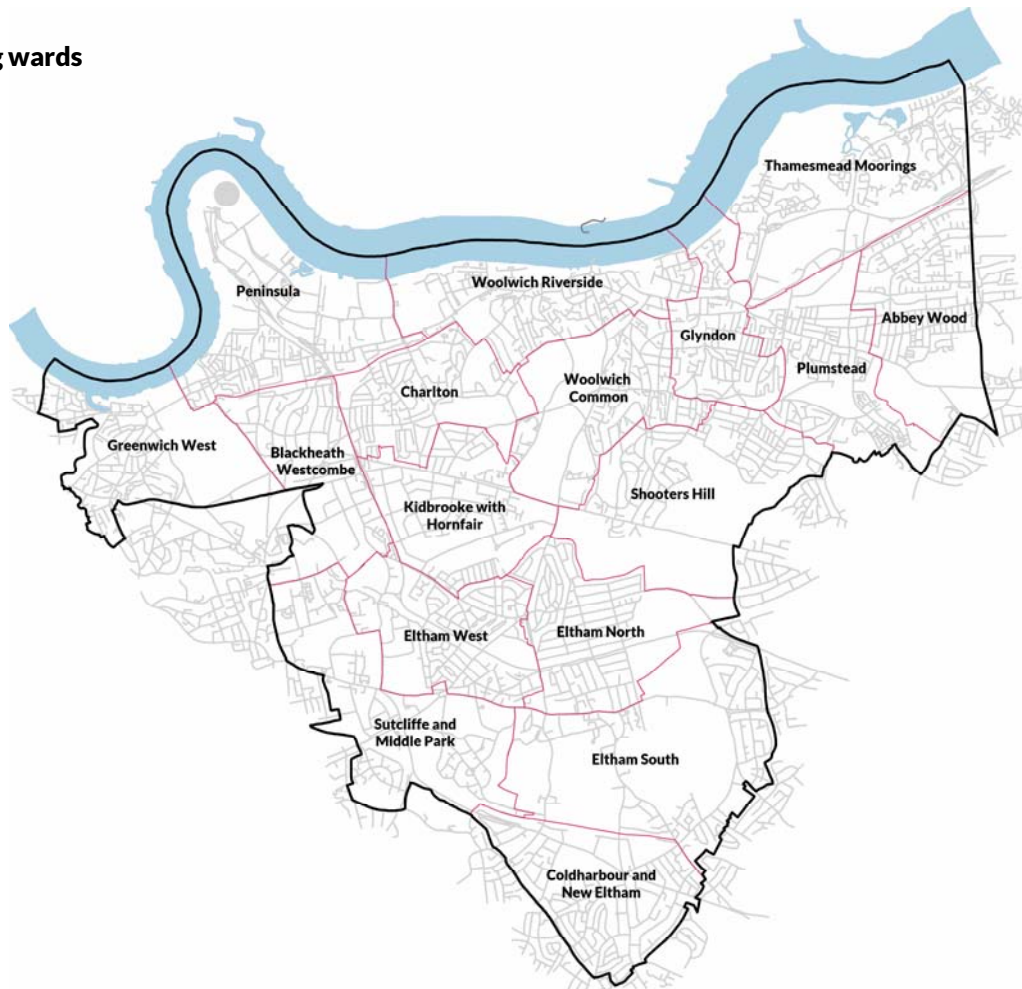
The Greens polled well in Peninsula in 2018 and that ward's split in half it's grown so much - they may be a little stronger in the new East Greenwich ward than the remnant of Peninsula.

The Lib Dems were quite close in Greenwich West in 2018, another ward split in two. It's hard to say whether they'll do better among the newer high rise riverside apartments of Greenwich Creek ward or in posher, older Greenwich Park.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Abbey Wood (3 cllrs)

Unchanged ward (the abbey referred to is Lesnes Abbey across the border in Bexley). The only threat to Labour here was the SDP when John Cartwright was that party's MP for Woolwich. Very safe.

Blackheath Westcombe (3)

The Greenwich side of Blackheath is much more favourable to the Conservatives than Lewisham's half; they have won at least one seat here every election since 2006.

The boundary changes extend the ward south into Blackheath Park, a very affluent area currently in Middle Park ward. This will give the Tories a better chance of winning the other two seats and if they can't win a ward like this what on earth is going on?

Charlton Hornfair (2)

The Charlton ward created in 2002 (but which, in the old days, was called Rectory Field) is combined with the "Hornfair" section of outgoing Kidbrooke and Hornfair ward. Hornfair was exactly what it says on the label: a decadent and rowdy annual fair. Both Charlton ward and the Hornfair section of Kidbrooke and Hornfair are safely Labour, but the ward loses a seat. The Women's Equality Party candidate won 14% of the vote in Charlton in 2018, coming third.

Charlton Village & Riverside (2)

In the 2000 electoral review Charlton ward was abolished, essentially split between Peninsula and Woolwich Riverside wards. A new Charlton ward was created to the south but covering a different area. This time the old Charlton ward has been resurrected because both of the wards that consumed it have grown so much that they need to shed a lot of territory.

East Greenwich (3)

A brand new ward created to accommodate the overspill from the rapid housing growth around the Greenwich Peninsula. Will probably be a Green Party target.

Eltham Page (2)

This is a somewhat slimmed-down version of the outgoing Eltham West ward which, in

the old days was called Sherrard. Eltham West was the only safely Labour of the named Eltham wards; the ward in which Steven Lawrence lived and died.

Eltham Park and Progress (2)

This is - largely unchanged - the current Eltham North ward, which split 2 Labour, 1 Conservative in 2018 (and visa versa in 2014). A seat is lost here because Eltham's population is essentially stable, while the north of the borough is growing rapidly and substantially.

Eltham Town and Avery Hill (3)

Another renaming: this is Eltham South which Labour has never won. Avery Hill, which regains mention in the ward name, used to be a Liberal Democrat single-member ward: it is the area on the eastern boundary adjacent to Welling and Blackfen in Bexley.

Greenwich Creekside (2)

Huge amounts of riverside apartment blocks have been going up along the Thames at Greenwich since the regeneration of the former industrial site on which the Dome/O2 Arena. The far western corner of Greenwich, either side of the mouth of the River Ravensbourne is no exception - so much so that a geographically tiny ward has now been drawn here.

This will almost certainly be a low-turnout ward very difficult to canvass because its residents are hard to reach. The demographic profile of residents here should be one attracted to the Conservatives in normal times but, as noted in other similar ward profiles these are far from normal times for the Conservatives.

Greenwich Park (2)

This ward is the remainder of the outgoing Greenwich West not put in Greenwich Creekside. It's old Greenwich including the Cutty Sark, the village and - as the name implies, the park with the meridian and the sweeping views towards the Isle of Dogs. But away from picture-postcard Greenwich the area is not especially affluent and with a solid Labour history - sometimes with strong Lib Dem challenges.

Greenwich Peninsula (3)

When the Millennium Dome was built on land at the northern pinnacle of Greenwich; the exit of the Blackwall tunnel, a huge new residential area was planned alongside it. That development has continued at pace in the two decades since the Dome opened and made Peninsula the largest ward in the borough.

A sizeable chunk of the south-western side of Peninsula has departed, therefore to form the new East Greenwich ward. The Greens won over 30% of the vote here in 2018, only about 13% behind Labour, so will be targeting here and East Greenwich.

Kidbrooke Park (2)

The outgoing Kidbrooke with Hornfair (the only ward that used "with" rather than "and" in London) has been divided into its two constituent halves in the boundary review. This makes sense as Hornfair has always been a Charlton-oriented area while Kidbrooke looks much more towards Eltham.

Kidbrooke was traditionally a marginal ward: the Tories won two seats in the amalgamated ward in 2006 and in old Kidbrooke in 1990 and 1982. There is still a Labour plurality in this new ward but the Tories were able to close to within 9% in a Kidbrooke and Hornfair by-election in 2021; so this looks to be a key marginal.

Kidbrooke Village (2)

The Ferrier council estate was arguably the most troubled in Greenwich; a sprawling concrete development of streets in the sky and tower blocks, with high levels of crime and deprivation. It was one of the first estates to be "regenerated" with over 4,000 apartment blocks of a quite different type and tenure - and this new ward is the result.

Middle Park and Horn Park (2)

This slimmed-down ward loses the "Sutcliffe" part to the new Kidbrooke Park ward and, beyond that, Blackheath Park to Blackheath Westcombe. This makes an already safe ward even safer for Labour (though the Lib Dems used to be able to win here - Harry Potter was one of their councillors) though representation is trimmed to just two seats.

Mottingham, Coldharbour and New Eltham (3)

Mottingham has been added to an increasingly unwieldy ward name but little extra territory is added to this marginal Conservative ward at the foot of the borough.

In the old days, Coldharbour was a safe, but small, Labour ward while New Eltham was usually safely Tory. Their amalgamation looked like it should produce a small Labour lead but the Tories haven't ever lost here (though Labour got within 100 in 2018). The small boundary change won't affect the balance.

Plumstead and Glyndon (3)

Despite the name, this ward is much more Glyndon than Plumstead, which has always been a phenomenally safe Labour ward.

Plumstead Common (3)

Labour has never lost Plumstead Common. The ward extends into the northern section of Shooters Hill, costing Labour a councillor there but ensuring that this ward continues with 3 members.

Shooters Hill (2)

Until 1994 Shooters Hill was a reliable Conservative ward but has become very comfortably Labour. The Labour lead is a little deceptive because the opposition is fractured: 2018 was the first time they managed to poll over 50% here.

The ward may be heading back towards competitiveness though as it is reducing in size and the area being lost is on the Plumstead side, which is much better for Labour than the Eltham end. Nonetheless, the Tories will start a very long way back.

Thamesmead Moorings (2)

Thamesmead was an entirely new neighbourhood built on reclaimed marshland in the 1950s. This starkly modernist community, built around huge lakes, with pedestrian walkways over busy roads, makes for a remarkable landscape, remote and cut off from the nearest neighbouring communities of Woolwich, Plumstead, Belvedere and Erith.

Plenty of the original Thamesmead has been demolished and rebuilt as cul-de-sac houses, but the core of that settlement, including the towers similar to Roehampton's Alton Estate, survive and are in this core Thamesmead ward. This is a very safe Labour ward: they polled around 70% of the vote in 2018 and what's left in this slimmed-down ward was probably their even better bit.

West Thamesmead (2)

The Blair Labour government was famously disdainful of the capacity of local government so, when approaching the chronic underinvestment in municipal housing stock they inherited in 1997 made a condition of funding that the work be carried out by, and the homes transferred to, housing associations.

One of the outcomes is this new ward; West Thamesmead. Peabody has taken over the running of Thamesmead and many of the new homes built to help finance the renewal of the area lie here; just east of the Woolwich Royal Arsenal.

West Thamesmead, at least when fully built, will have a somewhat different character to the original settlement which is mostly in Thamesmead Moorings (and Bexley's Thamesmead East) wards; it will have far higher levels of owner-occupation; be less deprived and whiter. That means it shouldn't - at least in theory - be anything like as safe as Moorings but, again, London politics isn't behaving normally at the moment so Labour should still be able to produce a very comfortable win.

Woolwich Arsenal (2)

A single-member Arsenal ward was abolished in 2002 - but it makes a triumphant return in 2022 and with twice the representation too. The reason is the redevelopment of the eponymous Arsenal buildings into a huge new residential area.

Woolwich Common (3)

This was the safest Labour ward in 2018.

Woolwich Dockyard (2)

The substantially oversized Woolwich Riverside ward has shed territory in the west to Charlton Village, and in the east to Woolwich Arsenal. This 2-member ward is what's left: a mix of still-operating riverside industry, some still derelict wharves and the remains residential - mainly south of Woolwich Church Street.

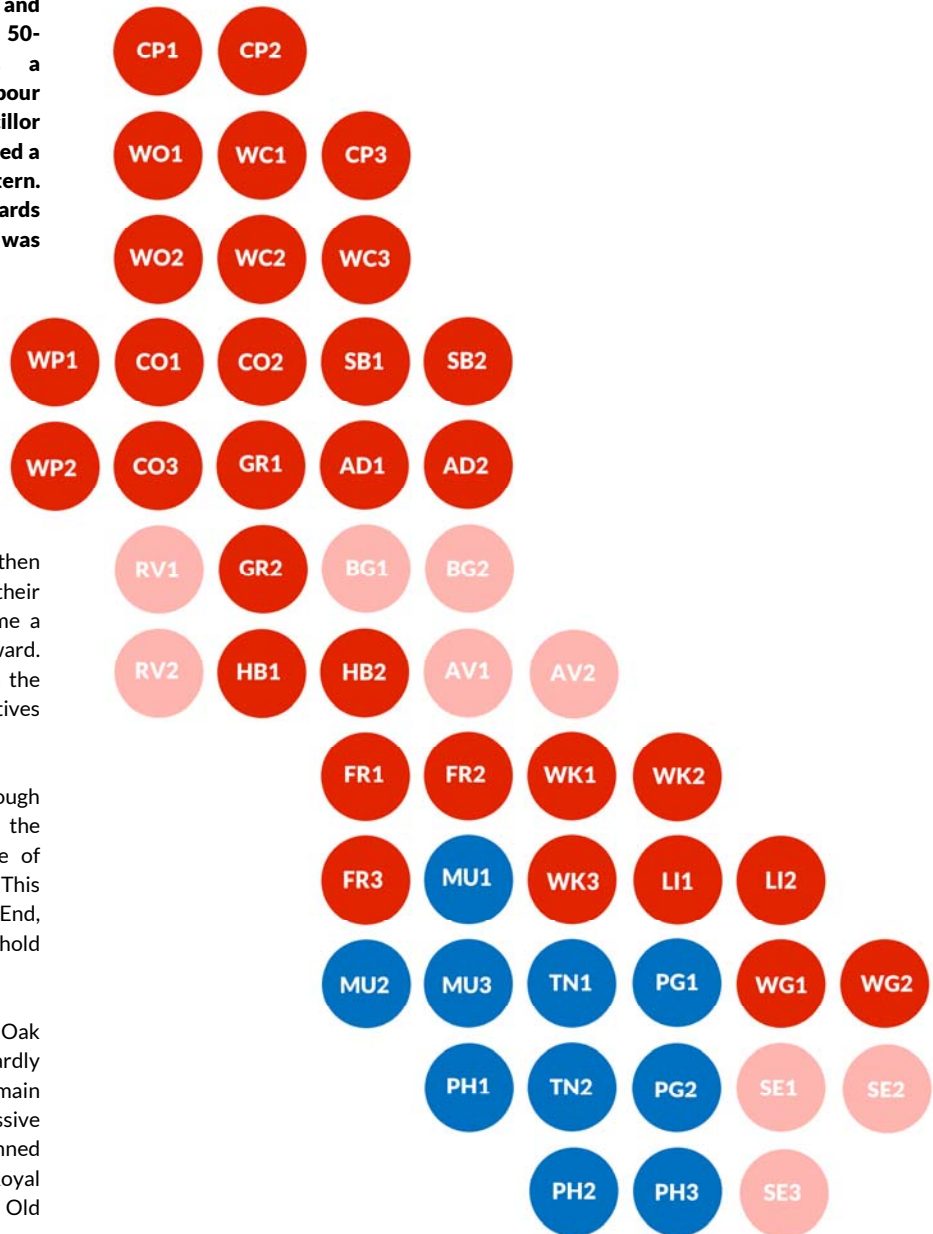
Safe Conservative 3	Competitive Conservative 7	Competitive Labour 13	Safe Labour 32
Eltham Town and Avery Hill	Blackheath Westcombe	East Greenwich	Abbey Wood
	Eltham Park (1 seat)	Eltham Park (1 seat)	Charlton Hornfair
	Mottingham etc.	Greenwich Creekside	Charlton Village and Riverside
		Greenwich Peninsula	Eltham Page
		Kidbrooke Park	Greenwich Park
		Kidbrooke Village	Middle Park and Horn Park
			Plumstead and Glyndon
			Plumstead Common
			Shooters Hill
			Thamesmead Moorings
			West Thamesmead
			Woolwich Arsenal
			Woolwich Common
			Woolwich Dockside

Hammersmith and Fulham

2018 current wards	35	11	0	0
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2018 new wards	40	10	0	0
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Labour nearly completely got their way in the boundary review of Hammersmith and Fulham. Labour sought a return to a 50-seat council; the Conservatives a reduction to a 45-seat council. Labour won. Labour sought a variety of councillor numbers in the wards; the Tories wanted a uniform 3-councillor warding pattern. Labour won. In four-fifths of the wards proposed, it was Labour's plan that was adopted.



The only area they were thwarted - and then at the eleventh hour - was in their preference for Tory Munster to become a (very much more marginal) 2-member ward. But that would have been the icing on the cake; potentially driving the Conservatives down to just nine seats out of fifty.

Labour's grip on this marginal borough tightens not just because they won the battle of the boundaries, but because of where population growth is occurring. This is in the Fulham marginal of Sands End, partly, but mainly in the Labour stronghold of Shepherd's Bush.

The reason College Park and Old Oak regains a third councillor is not dastardly line-drawing (its boundaries remain unchanged for the second successive review) but rather the massive planned housing development in the Park Royal regeneration area getting underway in Old Oak and along Wood Lane.

There's a new White City ward not because of gerrymandering (the Conservatives themselves proposed a broadly similar ward) but because of the new apartment housing at Westfield and BBC Television Centre.

But boundaries do matter in such a polarised borough, especially in Fulham. There are going to be four fairly secure Labour seats in central Fulham where currently there are three.

West Kensington (North End) while currently safe, was Conservative in 2006 and 2010. They probably could not win this slightly altered version which loses Queens Club Gardens and its 800 or so mainly Tory voters.

The area covered by the current Sands End could have been turned into two secure Conservative 3-member seats. As it is, the revised Sands End is very slightly better for

Labour and the extra councillor the Conservatives hoped for in their proposed Fulham Reach - very alike the old Crabtree - was turned into a Labour one in the Final Recommendations.

Not only does Labour's majority increase from 24 to 30 on these new boundaries but the swing required for the Tories to win rises substantially. It was 8%; it's would have been 14% on these new boundaries.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Addison (2 cllrs)

The new, smaller Addison ward, virtually identical to the pre-2002 version, is better for Labour than the current ward by about 8 points.

Avonmore (2)

Avonmore and Brook Green ward has been split into its two constituent parts. Historically the best Conservative ward in Fulham, Avonmore has now swung somewhat more to Labour than Brook Green. The Tories now need something approaching a 9% swing to win this ward.

Brook Green (2)

After Sands End, Brook Green is the top Conservative target in this borough with a notional Labour lead of around 8% - about half what it is in the outgoing Avonmore and Brook Green.

College Park and Old Oak (3)

This ward's boundaries haven't changed since 1978 but the third councillor it lost in 2002 is restored in this review due to population growth. This is the second-best Labour ward in the borough though there is massive, massive further growth planned here on the Car Giant and Old Oak sidings, which may create better Tory prospects some way in the future.

Coningham (3)

Core Shepherd's Bush covering the long, densely-packed, high turnover streets between Uxbridge and Goldhawk Roads. This is usually very safely Labour but may well have fallen in 2006 when there was a three-way split in the vote.

Fulham Reach (3)

Boundary changes are fairly neutral: here. The ward gains heavily Tory Queens Club Gardens but loses some fairly Conservative streets north of Charing Cross Hospital and gains the mainly Labour-voting riverside that used to form the core of the Labour vote in the old marginal Crabtree ward. Labour won here easily in 2018 though it can swing heavily to the Tories when they're popular.

Fulham Town (2)

Labour nearly won Town in 2018 but the council estates in the east that enabled that near-miss have been moved to a much better Labour ward and what remains makes a safe 2-councillor Tory ward.

Grove (2)

Another re-created ward that would have gone Tory in 2006, 2010 and, perhaps, 2014, but which Labour always won (to Tory bafflement, oftentimes) before its abolition in 2002, bar 1968. This is very affluent, very liberal central Hammersmith - formed from the northern part of Hammersmith Broadway and the eastern end of Ravenscourt Park - a David Cameron Conservative ward perhaps, but not one pro-Brexit Tories can probably compete in.

Hammersmith Broadway (2)

Loses the Brackenbury Village in the north of the old ward leaving the even more strongly Labour core around the Broadway itself. Very safely Labour focussed on five large estates. Quite a lot of new-build exclusive apartment blocks have been built here or are transferring from Fulham Reach, but nowhere near enough to outvote the estates.

Lillie (2)

3-member marginal Fulham Broadway ward is split into two 2-member wards. All of Lillie was in Fulham Broadway; essentially the Clem Attlee estate plus the residential streets east of North End Road from Lillie Road down to Farm Lane. This ward will be a bit safer for Labour than Fulham Broadway, which was a marginal.

Munster (3)

Labour almost got away with making Munster a very marginal two-member ward but the Conservatives put all their effort into retaining the existing ward, slightly enlarged. That means it will stay Conservative - even a bigish swing in 2018 didn't bring Labour close here.

Palace and Hurlingham (3)

Palace, Riverside expands not just to take in the Parson's Green half of Hurlingham but also the Sullivan area east of Hurlingham Park. This sprawling ward now extends from the edge of Crabtree Lane right around the famous curve of the river Thames to Wandsworth Bridge. It will remain massively Conservative.

Parson's Green and Sandford (2)

The safest Tory ward had become the smallest of the 3-member wards and with, the loss of its Hurlingham end to Palace and Hurlingham; and the loss of the Walham end to Walham Green ward it could only survive as a 2-councillor ward. It will grow, as Labour persuaded the Commission to stick the Imperial Gas Works into it. Hundreds and hundreds of new homes are planned for the site beyond 2025.

Ravenscourt (2)

Labour finally won all three seats in Ravenscourt Park in 2018 - and by quite a margin. This slimmed-down Ravenscourt loses the Tory area north of Goldhawk Road so becomes better for Labour - but what a ward as affluent as this is doing electing Labour at all is a question to dog the Tories.

Sands End (3)

This ward loses the "Sullivan" section west of Wandsworth Bridge to Palace & Hurlingham. Although this contained the large Sullivan Court estate, it also houses a lot of high-turnout Tory-voting streets, so the overall impact of the new boundaries is virtually no change, though residents of new luxury apartment blocks are coming onto the electoral register every month.

Shepherd's Bush Green (2)

This ward will start as the smallest in the borough as most of its projected new-build housing north of Westfield shopping centre is still not occupied. Until it is the high-rise Edward Woods Estate and a handful of streets north and west of Shepherd's Bush Market will comprise most of the electorate; much safer for Labour than the larger ward in which they lost a seat in 2006.

Walham Green (2)

New ward comprising the council estates from Town ward just west of Fulham Broadway; the Samuel Lewis Trust estate on the Broadway; and the Walham Green Court and Oswald Stoll estates beside Chelsea Football Club from Parson's Green and Walham.

This is a bit like the old Eel Brook ward which local MP Greg Hands won in 1998. The difference between Eel Brook and Walham Green is that this new ward doesn't have the massively Tory, but quite small, Eel Brook Common area and does have the central part of the old Walham ward around Chelsea Football Club, which should vote Labour by a clear margin and is larger.

The very strongly Tory streets west of North End Road and south of the Clem Attlee Court estate that were in Eel Brook come in too but the Conservatives will find it very hard to swing this extremely polarised ward their way. There may be too many council and housing association properties here for them to reasonably expect to win, assuming Labour can turn them out to vote.

Wendell Park (3)

Identical boundaries to the old Starch Green ward; this ward swung from marginal to safely Labour by 1998 - its last outing. The northern half of the ward comes from abolished Askew and is comfortably Labour; the southern half from Ravenscourt Park and much more Conservative - but also very much smaller.

West Kensington (3)

Forecast population growth in North End ward forces the removal of Tory-voting Queens Club Gardens, boosting Labour's majority further in this ward that has swung heavily in part over the Tory plan to sell off the Gibbs Green and West Ken estates. Renamed West Kensington.

White City (3)

A new ward created because of major population growth projections. Whatever ward the vast White City estate lies within should be the safest Labour ward in the borough. Also has the Batman Close estate and the streets around QPR's Loftus Road ground, plus the old BBC Television Centre - now luxury flats.

Wormholt (2)

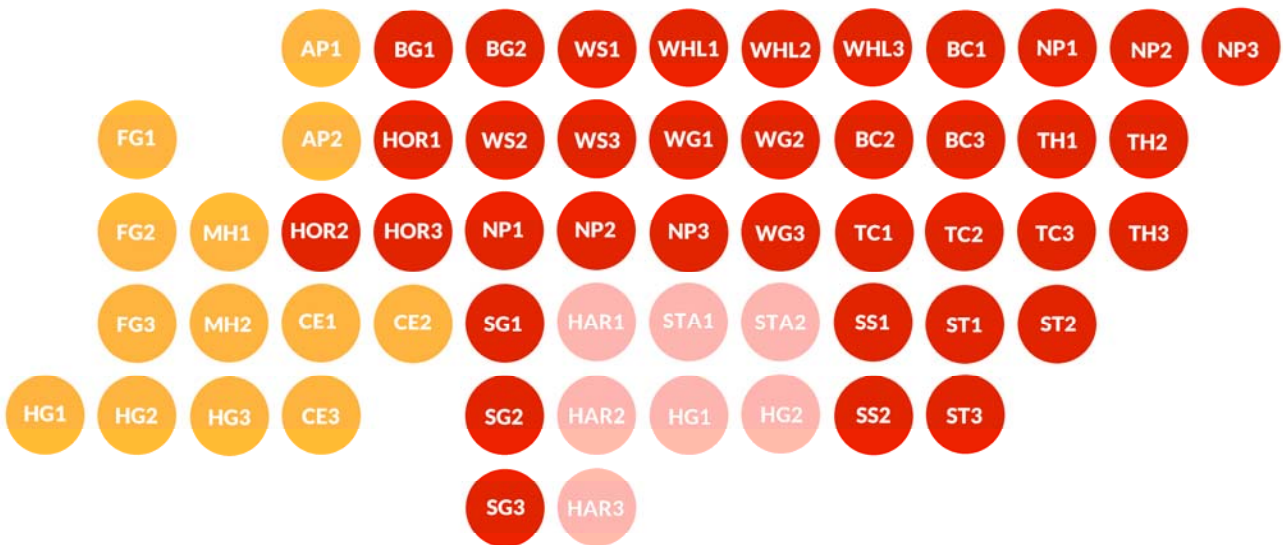
Loses the White City estate and one councillor, but Wormholt: a working-class ward of picturesque garden cottage estates, the Wren-inspired Cleverly Estate and long streets off Uxbridge Road, will still be a solid Labour ward.

Safe Conservative	10	Competitive Labour	10	Safe Labour	30
Fulham Town		Avonmore		Addison	Lillie
Munster		Brook Green		College Park and Old Oak	Shepherds Bush Green
Palace & Hurlingham		Ravenscourt		Coningham	Wendell Park
Parson's Green and Sandford		Sands End		Fulham Reach	West Kensington
		Walham Green		Grove	White City
				Hammersmith Broadway	Wormholt

Haringey

2018 current wards	42	0	15	0
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2018 new wards	44	0	13	0
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Haringey retains 57 councillors, but there has been a shunt of 3 councillors from the Hornsey side to Tottenham, following population and thus electorate growth in the east of the borough.

Essentially the same pattern of ward remains: the loss of three councillors in the west stems from Alexandra, Bounds Green and Muswell Hill each losing one councillor to become two-member wards. The new ward in Tottenham is Bruce Castle, squeezed in between White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park.

Slightly confusingly, the existing Bruce Grove ward is renamed Tottenham Central. South Tottenham also gets radically redrawn: three two-member wards will

cover the area currently covered by St Ann's, Seven Sisters and Tottenham Green, though the consequential shuffling caused by the creation of Bruce Castle means there will be three wards in the far east of the borough instead of the current two.

That's not a loss of representation in these areas: fifteen councillors will continue to serve the electorate here.

The Green Party had established themselves in clear but distant second place in St Ann's. Despite Hermitage and Gardens sounding like it should be the "Greener" ward, St Ann's is probably more promising for them as it is a more cohesive area. The new ward contains much of the

South Tottenham warehouse district and is more fragmented geographically.

But there are no real targets for any party on the Tottenham side of Haringey: these are among the safest Labour wards anywhere in London.

The reduction in size of the Lib Dem wards of Alexandra and Muswell Hill, and the addition of a new ward in overwhelmingly Labour boundaries been in place in 2018, Labour's majority would have been four seats larger than it actually was. But there is potential for Labour to win the vast majority of seats in Hornsey too, given that Highgate is the only ward that looks beyond their reach.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Alexandra Park (2 cllrs)

Ally Pally ward loses a small number of streets in the west to Fortis Green and, because it's a stable area in a borough that is growing, this is enough to delete one of the seats here. Lib Dems down one. Labour was 140 votes behind here in 2018 having won two of its seats in 2014.

Bounds Green (2)

Bounds Green is part of the "Wood Green" section of the borough. Fell to the Lib Dems in 2006 but has been safely Labour since. Hardly changed in boundary review but loses a seat.

Bruce Castle (3)

This ward might be regarded as "new". Bruce Grove was a central Tottenham ward, whereas Bruce Castle has squeezed into a space between White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park in the north, with only about the northern third of Bruce Grove retained. However it is drawn, this is a safe Labour ward, just across the road from the new Tottenham football stadium.

Central Tottenham (3)

The remaining two-thirds of Bruce Grove and the north-western corner of Tottenham Green ward forge to become a new Central Tottenham ward. Tottenham Green's Labour councillors won with well over 70% of the vote; Bruce Grove was only just a degree below those shares, so there'll be no change in representation.

Crouch End (3)

Another of the affluent Lib Dem wards in the west of the borough, Crouch End becomes a lot more compact after these boundary changes but retains three councillors. Labour won two seats here in 2014 but the Lib Dems won them back in 2018 and were about 10% ahead. May be slightly less secure on the new boundaries.

Fortis Green (3)

Covering the north-western corner of the borough bordering East Finchley this is another of the Lib Dem-Labour marginals. Gains a few voters from Highgate ward and a few more from Alexandra. Lib Dems were about 10% ahead here too after Labour won one of its seats in 2014.

Harringay (3)

Harringay ward comprises a ladder of streets running up the centre of the borough with New River carving across it. This is as far as the Lib Dem tide reached in 2006 and they did not fade completely even in 2018; polling just under 30% of the vote.

Hermitage and Gardens (2)

New ward taking the western end of Seven Sisters ward and the southern half of St Ann's ward. The Greens are fairly strong - by which I mean they are a clear but distant second - in St Ann's and this ward name sounds like it should be one in which the Greens perform well. But "Harringay Warehouse District" is a slightly more honest description of the type of area this is: with a mix of Georgian terraces and 1980s low rise homes.

Highgate (3)

The only Haringey Labour has never won, Highgate is now the only safe Lib Dem ward in the borough. Gains the western end of Crouch End, which won't affect anything.

Hornsey (3)

Hornsey expands quite considerably into Muswell Hill and somewhat into Crouch End, which should weaken the Labour lead here somewhat. But as Labour polled over 60% in 2018, they have quite a surplus to deplete before they need to be worried about new voters.

Muswell Hill (2)

A very much shrunken Muswell Hill - the central ward on the Hornsey side of the borough - loses a councillor. This was Lynne Featherstone's ward before she became Lib Dem MP for the area. Labour is closing in; their vote increased in 2018 even though they lost the one seat they gained in 2014. It's hard to quantify how boundary change hit the Lib Dem vote because Lib Dem voters don't necessarily bundle into particular streets or blocks. But they'll start out ahead.

Noel Park (3)

This is the heart of the Wood Green district. Noel Park itself is the eastern side of the ward - a grid of very long arts and crafts movement style terraces; while the western side originated from the old Coleraine ward. Two streets move from here to West Green but that's a tiny fraction of the ward. Labour won two-thirds of the vote here in 2018.

Northumberland Park (3)

The Northumberland Grove estate is, along with Broadwater Farm, one of the controversial council estate regeneration schemes that caused schisms in the ruling Labour Group. This ward, with that estate in its centre, shunts eastward and southward. Also the home of the new Tottenham stadium. This was the safest Labour ward in 2018: Labour on 82%, the runner-up Conservatives on just under 7%.

St Ann's (2)

Arguably the best Green Party opportunity in Haringey; they won over a quarter of the vote in 2018 and this slimmed-down 2-member ward might make things a bit easier for them. But don't get too carried away: Labour was still about 30 points ahead so Greens have a very big gap to close.

Seven Sisters (2)

This ward is radically redrawn. Currently a linear strip running along the borough boundary with Hackney the new Seven Sisters covers the middle of the old ward (between Seven Sisters Road and Tottenham High road) but then extends north as far as West Green Road. This includes the Sir Frederick Messer estate with its two high rise blocks. It goes without saying this is nothing other than a massively Labour 2-member ward.

South Tottenham (3)

This is arguably the new ward in the south-eastern corner of the borough. It's carved out of the eastern end of Seven Sisters and Tottenham Green wards; and a small section of Tottenham Hale.

Stroud Green (3)

The most southerly ward on the Hornsey side of the tracks, this was another solidly Labour ward that went Lib Dem in 2006 but which has returned to form. The Lib Dems are not completely out of it and there's a wide vote spread between first and third Labour councillors, but they're far enough ahead to hold on (easily) even if there is a swing away.

Tottenham Hale (3)

Tottenham Hale runs along the edge of the River Lea. There has been a lot of new housing in this corner of the borough.

West Green (3)

This ward, centred on the Broadwater Farm estate - the "regeneration" of which fuelled the Momentum-led ousting of Haringey Council leader Clare Kobe and others in her cabinet before the 2018 elections - is barely altered in the review.

White Hart Lane (3)

The former home of Spurs, the wider ward is a pleasant inter-war cottage estate arranged in crescents and curves. The Conservatives won here in 1986 and 1990, but it's become yet another ultra-safe Labour ward. Sheds territory at each end to Woodside and Bruce Castle wards.

Woodside (3)

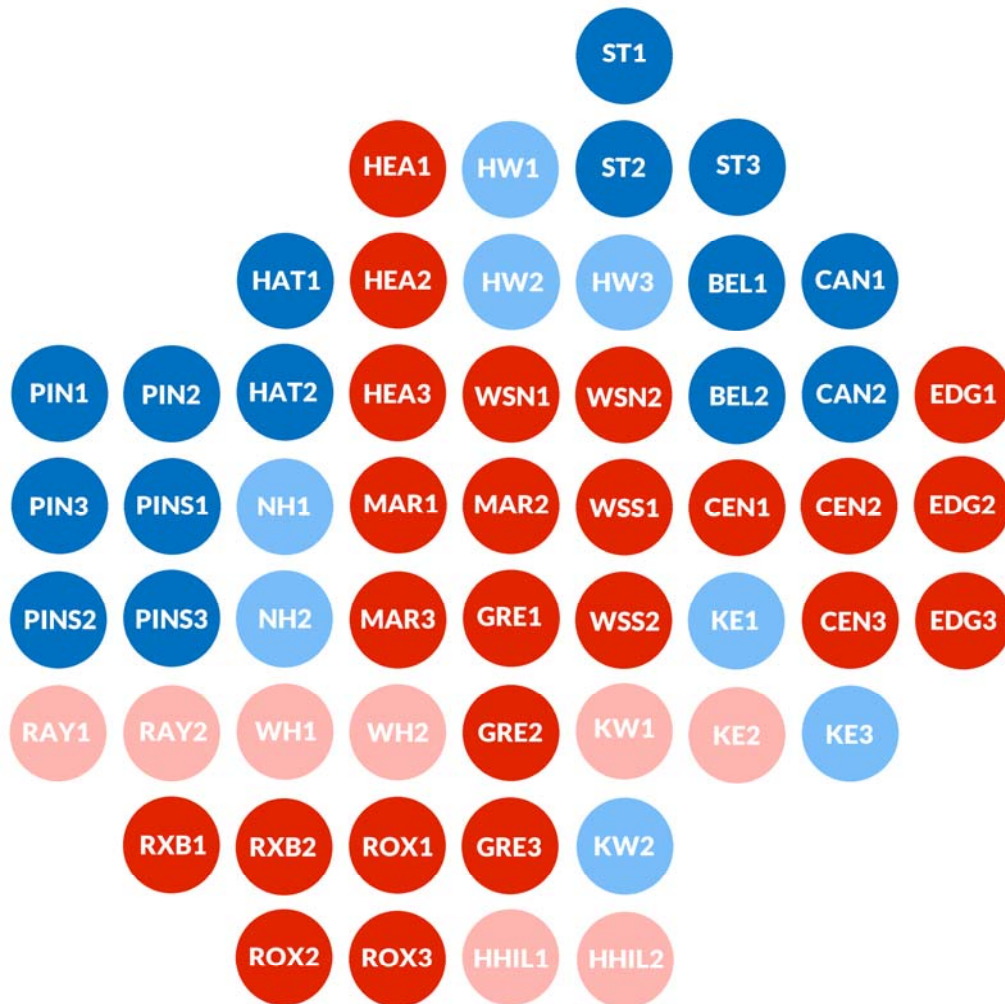
A bit of shunting around here: gains some streets in the west from Bounds Green and sheds some in the east to White Hart Lane. This was a competitive ward that the Tories could win in the late 1970s and early 1980s but didn't flirt with the Lib Dems during Labour's nadir in the early 2000s. As with all the wards in Tottenham it's now very safe for Labour.

Competitive Lib Dem	13	Competitive Labour	7	Safe Labour	22
Alexandra Park		Harringay		Bounds Green	South Tottenham
Crouch End		Hermitage and Gardens		Bruce Castle	Stroud Green
Fortis Green		St Ann's		Central Tottenham	West Green
Highgate				Hornsey	White Hart Lane
Muswell Hill				Noel Park	Woodside
				Seven Sisters	

Harrow

2018 current wards	35	28	0	0
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2018 new wards	32	23	0	0
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Harrow loses eight seats in the review while also undergoing some considerable electorate redistribution from Tory north to Labour south.

The eight Conservative seats lost are in Hatch End, Belmont, Kenton West and Canons and the complete abolition of Headstone North ward - which could be argued to only be a one seat loss given the creation of North Harrow ward - basically its south-western corner.

Labour, meanwhile, loses seats in Rayners Lane, Roxbourne, West Harrow, Harrow on the Hill, and get one newly created in rapidly growing Marlborough. While Wealdstone South looks like the new ward here, one of its seats comes from the old 3-

member Wealdstone and the other from the eastern "bulb" of Marlborough which gets severed from the bulk of that ward west of the railway line, where three seats are retained.

This worsens things for the Tories, especially as over one third of the Conservative seats are, at best, marginals.

The question is what happens to the wards where the new housing development is occurring: mainly Greenhill and Marlborough. Greenhill is traditionally more marginal and the extent of the new housing is such that the occupants of these homes could - could - realign them. But they both have big Labour leads to start.

The Conservatives still have a relatively achievable path to a majority in Harrow: they're notionally five seats short on the new boundaries.

Two could come from the split Kenton wards and two from Harrow on the Hill, which continues to look very odd electing Labour councillors given its affluence and famous school.

The inroads the Conservatives appear to be making among Hindus in Harrow East could tip the two Kenton seats they don't currently hold and, perhaps, Edgware and Centenary (Queensbury) - though they are some way off these two.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Belmont (2 cllrs)

This is a secure ward and the boundary changes, which transfer territory out of it to Stanmore and Centenary, won't change that. But it loses a councillor as a result.

Canons (2)

Canons sheds a lot of its current area, mainly to Stanmore ward. It's going to be slimmed down to the area between Stanmore Park station in the north and Canons Park station in the south. Losing the semi-rural sections of the ward reduces the Tory majority a little but this will remain a safe Conservative ward, albeit with only two councillors.

Centenary (3)

This ward (when it was last called Centenary) was a Conservative-leaning marginal until Labour established itself as the primary opposition to the Tories in 1994 and they've only lost one of its seats, once, since. But they've also never put it beyond contention and the boundary changes expand it northwards into safely Tory Belmont. The Tories may look hard at whether they could win if they poured resources in, but it's a tough ask.

Edgware (3)

Edgware has nearly always voted Labour - so should be a safe ward. Yet it's now only as secure as next-door Centenary - which means it starts with a comfortable but not entirely unassailable lead. Could Edgware be the next Kenton East? A ward with a loyal Labour tradition that suddenly becomes marginal? Edgware's not all that different demographically.

Greenhill (3)

Once an SDP/Liberal Alliance-Conservative marginal, this ward now leans clearly Labour. A lot of the central Harrow new residential development is being built in the north and west of this ward and it's going to be heavily pared-down following the boundary review. This may help keep the ward relatively marginal, though the Tories may only be able to win here nowadays in their very best years London-wide.

Harrow on the Hill (2)

The elite, pretty village above wider Harrow, dominated by the public school. A massive swing to Labour here in 2018 put them 500+ votes clear, but there is surely a very secure Conservative base here that limits how far Labour can advance.

Harrow Weald (3)

Harrow Weald for years was the best centre party ward in the borough but the Tories regained it in 2006; then the Lib Dem vote collapsed and for the last two elections Labour has been fairly close without looking like real challengers.

That may change in 2022 as the ward will extend into quite a sizeable chunk of Wealdstone, one of the safest Labour areas in the borough. The Conservatives will probably start ahead but the majority will be substantially down - maybe to within 5% but certainly within 10% unless there's a swing back.

Hatch End (2)

Hatch End - Pinner East if you like - is largely unchanged but because it isn't growing while other parts of the borough are it loses a councillor. It would probably have been more helpful for the Conservatives for this ward to extend into Headstone North, retaining that councillor, but this review isn't especially helpful to them.

Headstone (3)

Although the two Headstone wards are amalgamated, this ward is clearly the successor to Headstone South - and that's good news for Labour. South has been Labour, increasingly securely, since 1998.

North has essentially been securely Tory for its existence, though independent candidates and the Lib Dems have occasionally won. But Labour closed to within ten points in 2018. But less than a third of North (or at least North's electorate) makes it into this merged ward while almost all of South survives here.

Kenton East (3)

Hornsey expands quite considerably into The Harrow side of Kenton has always been better for Labour than Brent's but that changed in 2018. Labour had won Kenton East at every election from its founding in 1978 until 2018. But then the Tories took two seats on a 6% swing in one of their poorest London-wide years ever, so anything is possible. Gains a small section of Kenton West in the boundary changes.

Kenton West (2)

Unlike the eastern Kenton ward, Kenton West has always been Conservative or a Tory-Labour marginal. While Kenton East swung substantially to the Conservatives in 2018, West did not (just by 0.7%) which kept Labour's Ajay Maru his seat. Essentially unchanged ward.

Marlborough (3)

The current Marlborough lies mainly west of the railway line that runs through the centre of the borough, but with a "bulb" of territory on its eastern side. But this is one of the wards with a huge population growth forecast, so the railway line will now confine Marlborough to just the western side of the tracks.

This is one of the safer Labour wards; though for a time the Alliance held it. Whether the new electorate moving in over the coming years will alter the balance is moot, but they probably won't - at least enough to make it marginal.

North Harrow (2)

North Harrow can either be a brand new ward or - just about - the successor to Headstone North. That ward, south of the Metropolitan Line and a small strip north of it, forms the bulk of this new 2-member division, with the rest being contributed from the northern chunk of West Harrow.

I've chalked this one up as very slightly Conservative but that call may well be wrong; the Tories were about 10 points ahead in Headstone North while Labour was about 12 points ahead in West Harrow - with their better bits probably in the section staying in that ward. It'd have been very close had it been contested in 2018.

Pinner (3)

This ward extends into the middle section of Headstone North. The Conservative vote share in Pinner has slid to below 50% in recent years but they were still about 25 points ahead of Labour and this section of Headstone North won't dent this lead.

Pinner South (3)

Pinner South is somewhat safer (nowadays) than Pinner but it gains the northern chunk of marginal Rayners Lane ward, which might bring their majority down a bit. This will still be a safe Tory ward.

Rayners Lane (2)

Rayners Lane loses a councillor and all of its terrain north of the Metropolitan Line. This probably helps Labour a bit as the northern section is probably the best part for the Conservatives. In 2006, 2010 and 2014 Rayners Lane split representation in varying arrangements but Labour finally gained all three seats in 2018, despite remaining a 3-way marginal.

Roxbourne (2)

Usually the best Labour ward in Harrow West - though it now has competition for that title. Because of the shift in population towards the centre of the borough the triumvirate of now-Labour wards along the Hillingdon boundary loses two councillors. One of them disappears here.

Roxeth (3)

Roxeth was a Residents Association ward in which Labour broke through in 1998 and has held very securely ever since. It expands into the eastern end of Roxbourne which won't alter the huge Labour lead which was about forty points in 2018.

Stanmore (3)

This ward expands into the northern chunk of Canons ward. Stanmore Park was 3 to 1 Conservative and the expanded ward will be every bit as safe.

Wealdstone North (2)

Although there are now going to be two Wealdstone wards, very little of what is now Wealdstone ends up in the southern ward. Most of the changes here move Wealdstone territory into Harrow Weald - which helps Labour there without harming them here. They nominally lose a councillor in this ward as a result but this is smoke and mirrors given the creation of Wealdstone South; in fact Wealdstone gets four councillors instead of three.

Wealdstone South (2)

Wealdstone South is mainly the "bulge" of Marlborough ward east of the railway line. There is a very small transfer from Wealdstone as well, but the population growth forecast in Marlborough has been sufficient to create this 2-member ward all on its own.

This might be an interesting ward given it borders marginal Kenton West but it is more likely to be reasonably securely Labour, even if it is in the Tory-leaning Harrow East constituency.

West Harrow (2)

Another almost-marginal. Existing West Harrow, where Labour was just over 10% ahead in 2018, loses a lot of territory to the new North Harrow ward, and gains some from almost equally marginal Harrow on the Hill.

But the bit gained is probably better for Labour, and the bit lost probably better for the Conservatives, so Labour should be in a better position in this altered West Harrow. Not so significantly that the ward is beyond contestation but significantly enough to make this a much tougher nut for the Tories to crack.

Safe Conservative 15	Competitive Conservative 8	Competitive Labour 17	Safe Labour 15
Belmont	Harrow Weald	Centenary	Edgware
Canons	Kenton East (2 seats)	Greenhill	Marlborough
Hatch End	Kenton West (1 seat)	Harrow on the Hill	Roxbourne
Pinner	North Harrow	Headstone	Roxeth
Pinner South		Kenton East (1 seat)	Wealdstone North
Stanmore		Kenton West (1 seat)	Wealdstone South
		Rayners Lane	
		West Harrow	

Havering

2018 current wards	25	22	5	2
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2018 new wards	26	22	5	2
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London's least London-like borough hasn't seen especially radical boundary changes, though there has been some change in the centre and far south.

The Conservatives battle for control with Residents Association councillors in Havering. Labour was once strong: strong enough to run the council in the minority in 1986 and with a majority in 1994.

Labour's strength emanated from the Harold Hill GLC estate right on the edge of London: where their current five councillors represent. But they could also win wards down the borough boundary with Redbridge and Dagenham: Mawneys, Elm Park, South Hornchurch and the predecessors to Rush Green and St Edwards. They could even win Rainham.

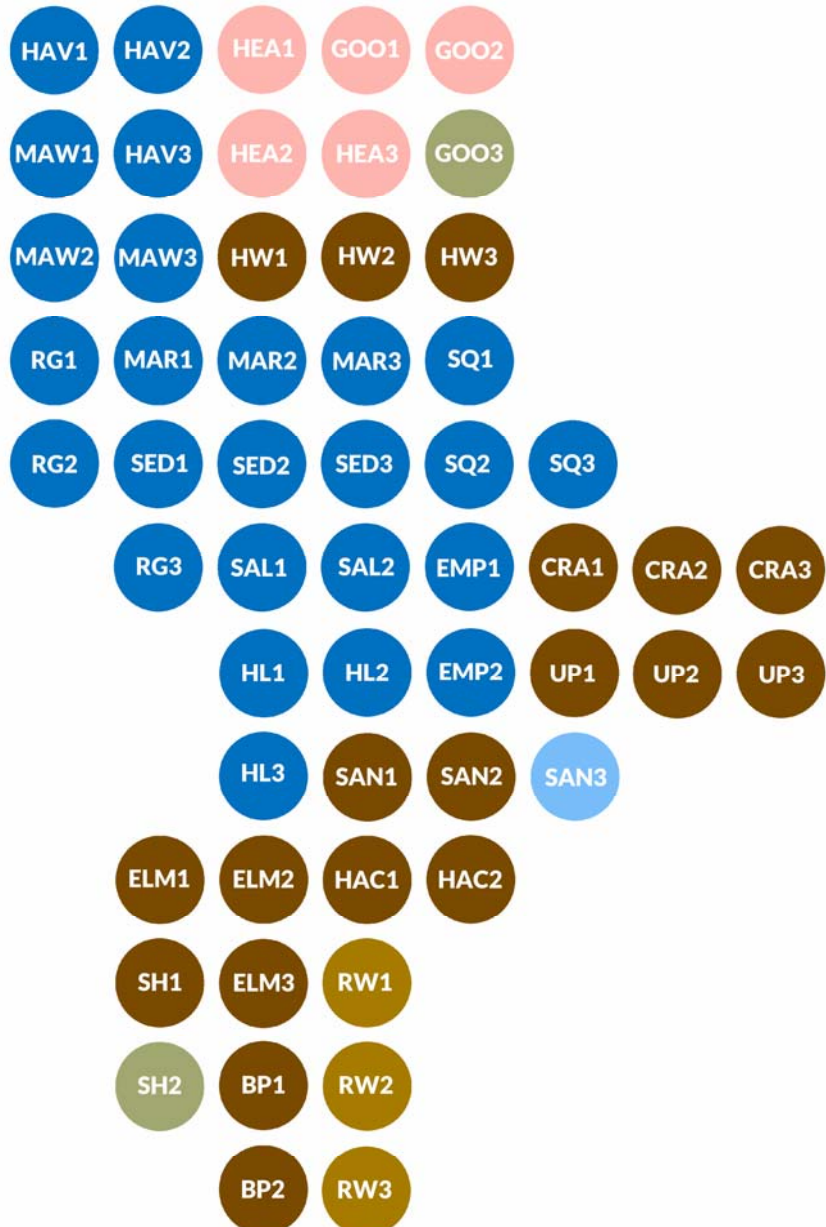
But Labour did not impress residents with their administration of Havering and, combined with relative Labour government unpopularity in 2002, they crashed from 29 seats to just 9, and then 2; even down to one in 2014 - UKIP tore chunks out of their vote in Harold Hill.

Most of the Labour vote has gone across to the various Residents Associations that have gradually challenged for power. There's always been a strong RA presence on this council, typically winning between 12 and 17 seats. They're now well above that average.

There are no longer Lib Dem councillors here; it's never been a great borough for the centre - not very liberal is Havering; the Greens, likewise, probably won't be winning any seats here in 2022.

Havering gains one seat, so 28 seats are needed for a majority. We're forecasting that to have been an extra Conservative councillor, so had these wards been in place in 2018 the Tories would have fallen two seats short of a majority.

The Conservatives have struggled to take wards off the Residents once they've been lost so a two-seat gain may be tougher than it looks. There's split St Andrew's ward to start with though and - who knows? - Labour's five seats in Harold Hill are probably still not safe given this borough voted heavily Leave and Labour did not.



Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Beam Park (2 cllrs)

A new ward covering the middle section of the outgoing South Hornchurch ward. South Hornchurch was a very volatile ward; almost any party can win here.

Cranham (3)

Cranham is a ridiculously safe Residents Association ward north of Upminster. Since Havering was founded in 1964 it has never elected anything other than the RA, and in 2018 they polled over 60% while the second-placed Tories couldn't quite manage 20%. This ward, Hacton and Upminster are the epicentres of the Residents' Association vote in Havering.

Elm Park (3)

The Resident's Association in Havering has done to Labour what the Lib Dems have in places like Sutton and Kingston: convinced voters that they are the real challengers to the Conservatives. That has enabled them to take over wards like this - which elected Labour even in horrendous 2006. Another Lib Dem behaviour the RA mimics is to win a ward narrowly then make it safe in the subsequent election. In 2019 they added 20 points to their vote share and Elm Park now looks like a solid brick in the RA wall in Hornchurch.

Emerson Park (2)

This was once a very safe Conservative ward but in 2014 UKIP won a seat here. The Tories got that seat back in 2018 - but only by 4 votes over the Residents Association and there is a real threat of this being the latest ward to succumb to this substantial force in Havering. If the Tories lose seats here there's no way they can win a council majority, though its importance is diminished slightly by only returning two members from 2022.

Gooshays (3)

The vast Harold Hill GLC estate in the north-eastern corner of the borough (and London) was once Labour's fortress in Havering, returning eight councillors with massive majorities. It was the principal reason Labour could occasionally win the Upminster constituency - there were scant Labour votes in Upminster and Cranham after all.

But affection for the 1997 Labour government evaporated rapidly, coupled to a seriously unpopular Labour council. Between 1998 and 2006 Labour's vote share more than halved both here and in neighbouring Heaton - and it's not recovered.

Gooshays has been the more troublesome of the two for Labour: in 2006 it elected a BNP councillor and two Tories; in 2010 they prised one seat back, only to lose it in 2014 when UKIP won all three; and in 2018 they won two back as a third went independent.

The ward is barely changed and it can't be drawn any more favourably for Labour: it's just that, where once a 70% share for Labour was unsurprising, today that's the share that chooses not to vote for the party.

Hacton (2)

This ward - Hornchurch Central, if you like - has been Resident Association held non-stop since the creation of the borough in 1964 (and probably considerably before that too). In 2018 the RA polled about 52% and the second-placed Conservatives less than 17% - but the ward loses a seat in 2022.

Harold Wood (3)

Sort of the third Harold Hill ward: it comprises that part of the estate south of the A12. But that's only part of this sparsely populated ward: it's also overspill from Squirrels Heath; very much less favourable to Labour. This is another ward that has elected almost everybody at one time or another - it was once a fairly reliable centre party ward. They lost it to Labour, who lost it to the Tories, who lost it to the Residents Association. It's now as safe for them as Cranham and Upminster are.

Havering-atte-Bower (3)

This is the renamed Havering Park ward which, before that was called Chase Cross and before that Bedfords. A lot of names for this semi-rural ward in the far north of the borough. The Alliance won here in the 1980s and one Residents' Association candidate gained a seat in 2006 but this has become one of the safer Conservative wards.

Heaton (3)

The other half of the Harold Hill estate and barely less of a problem for Labour than Gooshays. They hold all 3 seats here again now, with former Upminster MP Keith Darvill as one of the councillors, but they're far from secure. The vote here, as in Gooshays, is very fractured.

Hylands and Harrow Lodge (3)

The successor to Hylands ward: middle ground between Romford and Hornchurch. This is another ward with a decent but fading Labour pedigree, but which the Tories now have a secure grip on. The Residents Association are now the main challengers here: Labour polled just 13% in 2018 but the Tories won over half the vote so should be clear favourites, even though the ward loses a councillor.

Marshalls and Rise (3)

The new name for Pettits ward and, before that, Rise Park - effectively Romford North. This ward and its predecessors have only ever elected Conservative councillors and, while the Residents' Association has moved to within sniffing distance, the Tories will start as clear favourites in 2022.

Mawneys (3)

Mawneys is an exemplar of how Labour have ceased to be relevant in white working-class Essex-London. This ward was more often than not Labour from 1964 to 1998. But in 2018 they finished third, with the Tories around 60% of the vote. The ward is barely changed and this is now one of the safer Tory divisions.

Rainham and Wennington (3)

The huge ward in the south-east of the borough covering the Rainham Marshes, has been won by Labour, Liberals and Residents - never the Tories. The ward grows slightly, taking the industrial riverside from South Hornchurch.

Although the Residents (actually a separate set to the main RA council group) have won here since 2002 they are not embedded: two of its councillors won with less than 30% of the vote. The field is splintered with six parties standing last time and that's why the Independent RA can win on such a low share. They'll start as favourites but anything could happen.

Rush Green and Crowlands (3)

The new name for Brooklands ward which, in theory, should be marginal. The ward boundaries haven't changed much and Labour polled about a third of the vote here in 2018.

As Labour's vote began to wane in the late 1990s the Lib Dems were able to break through but Romford is not in the least a liberal area and they were unable to survive long.

By 2018 the Lib Dems came fifth of five parties contesting Brooklands taking just 5% of the vote. Labour was on a third of the vote and the Conservatives just below 50% so it's not beyond Labour's grasp - but only if they become a lot more credible here than they have been for the past quarter of a century.

St Alban's (2)

This is a new ward comprising the southern portion of the outgoing Romford Town ward - south of the Great Eastern mainline. Romford Town. Labour has a decent vote in central Romford (their 2018 share here was no worse than that in Gooshays). Labour might be slightly better placed in St Edward's ward; the rest of Romford Town, but there isn't much in it and this could be marginal if Labour can recover any of its old strength in Romford.

St Andrew's (3)

This is the Conservative-Residents Association battleground ward on the outer edges of Hornchurch. This was once a solidly Tory ward but they lost it in 1994.

However, unlike other wards the RA took, they've never secured it. The Tories have got one councillor elected here in three of the past four contests and both have a % vote share in the mid-thirties. Tories need all three for a majority on the council.

St Edward's (3)

St Edward's is Romford Town ward north of the railway line. This resurrected ward was always a Tory-Labour marginal and given Labour's vote in Romford Town hasn't been annexed by the Residents Association (yet) it probably still will be.

South Hornchurch (2)

A vast amount of population growth has occurred in South Hornchurch to the extent that it has spawned a whole new ward within it (Beam Park), shed its riverside end to Rainham and Wennington and still survives in its own right (albeit one councillor down).

This ward has a chaotic recent history; traditionally Labour it has gone Tory, then Residents Association; for two terms it elected one councillor from each of those three; then UKIP won, then the breakaway Residents Association won back the ward, but with an ex-UKIP councillor hanging on as an independent. If you can forecast what's going to happen from that morass, good luck to you!

Squirrel's Heath (3)

This is arguably the safest Conservative ward in Havering - essentially the suburban east end of Romford. The Conservatives

have enjoyed hegemony here ever since the ward (then called Ardleigh Green) was founded in 1978 and in 2018 they won 60% with second-placed Labour on less than 20%. But - and it's a big "but" - the Residents Association did not contest this ward. If they do, the Conservatives will not win so easily - as evidenced in next door Emerson Park, which is a twin; there's no significant difference between the two.

Upminster (3)

The largest ward in Havering borough protruding into .next door Thurrock; and also up there with Cranham in terms of its solidity for the Residents' Association. Upminster doesn't quite have the longevity of RA representation Cranham does: it was Tory-held in the late 1970s and most of the 1980s, but it's been in the RA column since 1990.

If there was any misapprehension that the RA only wins wards like this in low turnout council elections - that, if only a party could turn its voters out in general election numbers they could win, that was dispelled in 2010.

In those elections, held the same day as the general election, the Residents' Association piled up nearly 5,000 votes in this ward while the Conservatives managed 1,939. That landslide while the Tories were simultaneously winning the constituency by 16,000. Massive ticket-splitting occurred here. It is the will of local people to have a Tory MP and RA councillors.

Safe Conservative 22	Competitive Conservative 4	Competitive Res Assoc 5	Safe Res Assoc 17
Emerson Park	St Andrew's (1 seat)	Beam Park	Cranham
Harrow Lodge	St Edward's	St Andrew's (2 seats)	Elm Park
Havering-atte-Bower		South Hornchurch (1 seat)	Hacton
Marshalls and Rise	Competitive Labour 5		Harold Wood
Mawneys			Rainham and Wennington
Rush Green	Gooshays (2 seats)		Upminster
St Alban's	Heaton		
Squirrel's Heath			
	Competitive Independent 2		
		Gooshays (1 seat)	
	South Hornchurch (1 seat)		

Hillingdon

2018 current wards	44	21	0	0
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2018 new wards	34	19	0	0
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Hillingdon council is being reduced in size by twelve councillors: sixty-five down to fifty-three.

From a partisan viewpoint this is called shooting oneself in the foot, because ten of the twelve lost seats would likely have been filled by Conservatives. In part, that's due to there being many more Tories on Hillingdon than Labour, but the ratio is drastically worse for the administration than the opposition.

Hard to believe, perhaps, but the motive wasn't the least party political: it seems the Conservatives simply wanted a smaller, less costly, hopefully more streamlined council to benefit residents. The reduction in councillors may save taxpayers about £150,000, for example.

Even after this reduction in council size there is still a big gap between the Conservatives and Labour. But that's because Labour - which usually underperforms in this borough - was roundly defeated in the 2018 elections.

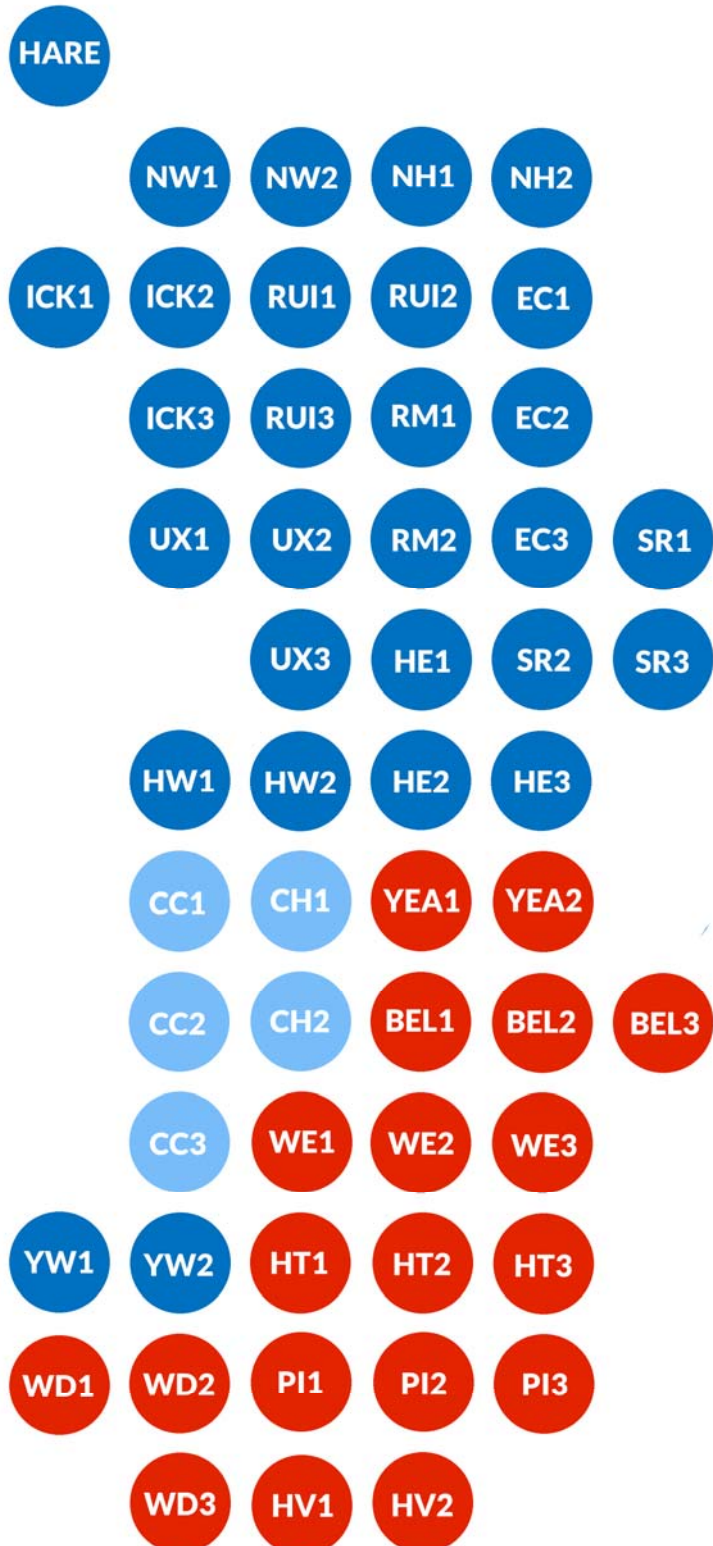
On a 53 seat council, 27 are needed for a majority. Labour is projected to have won nineteen on these new boundaries in 2018; there are five marginal Conservative seats plus there's Yiewsley - technically not a marginal but which Labour should be able to win in a reasonably good year.

If Labour won these seven they'd be on 26 seats. Where might the extra one or more come from? There are no other Labour prospects.

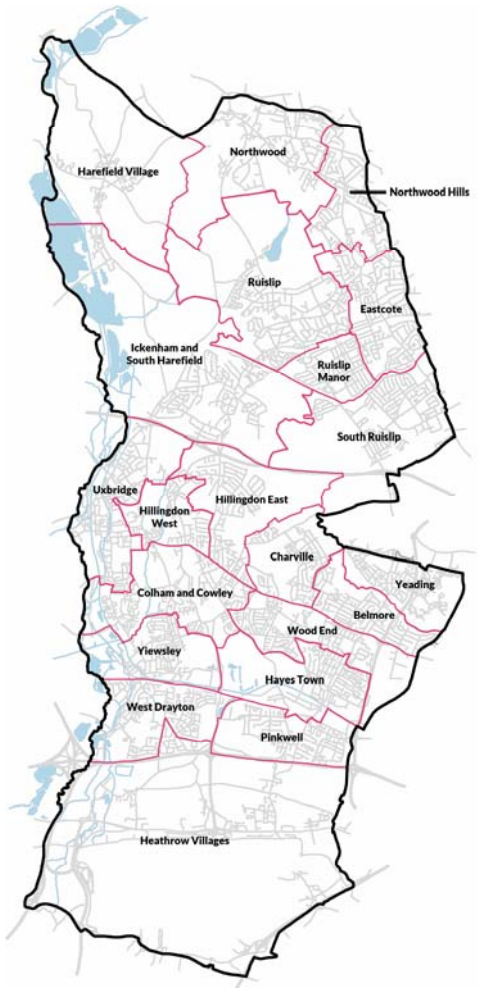
So, a bit like Wandsworth, the boundary changes weaken the Conservatives in terms of overall numbers but they entrench the smaller Tory majority somewhat.

The question is: how vulnerable was their majority on current boundaries? This borough swung to the Tories in 2018 when London swung to Labour. By 2022 Labour won't have won a majority here for almost a quarter of a century. And in the 2019 general election Labour's majority fell markedly in Hayes and Harlington, and they also fell back in Boris Johnson's Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency.

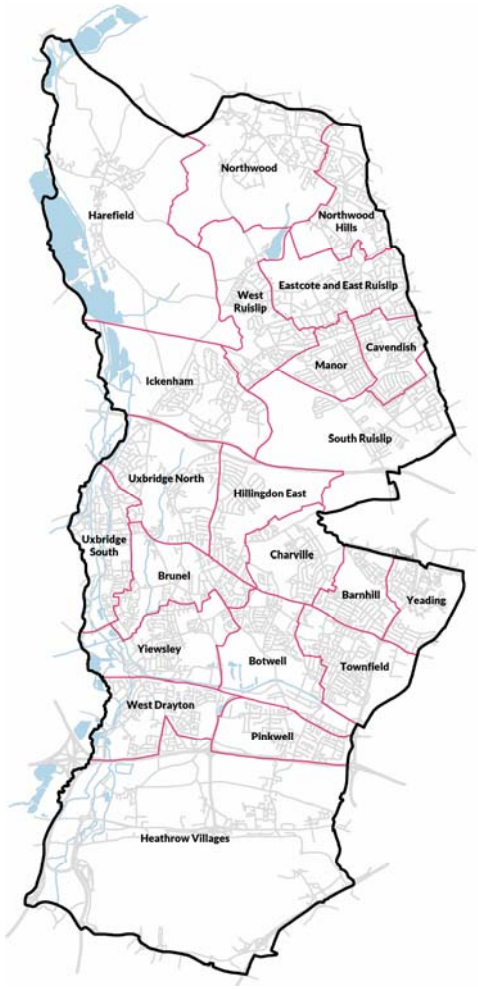
Whatever the motivation for this radically smaller council, Hillingdon will remain one of the few secure Conservative boroughs in London.



Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Belmore (3 cllrs)

The two east-west wards of Barnhill and Yeading are reoriented north-south along Yeading Brook. One of the six seats between them is lost - but that is in Yeading ward. The five remain very strongly Labour.

Charville (2)

This long-term marginal, right on the cusp of Hillingdon town but part of John McDonnell's Hayes and Harlington, has elected Conservative councillors in each of the last four elections. In 2018 they won a clean slate but their third councillor won by just 23 votes.

The ward loses a councillor and some streets at its eastern end to the re-created Belmore ward. That will strengthen the Conservatives a bit but it'll still be marginal.

Colham and Cowley (3)

This is a better Labour prospect than abolished Brunel, adding the southern chunk of abolished Uxbridge South and a small piece of Yiewsley. Tories won Brunel in 2018 by almost 20%; the changes may almost halve that lead, but a lead they still hold.

Eastcote (3)

Eastcote, just across the Harrow border from Pinner, is safely Conservative; it has extended into almost all of abolished Cavendish ward which has a Lib Dem pedigree, but they've faded to the point of failing to even stand here in 2018. Tories won with over 70%.

Harefield Village (1)

Harefield residents were deeply unhappy at the boundary changes here but there was no (better) alternative to reducing the ward's representation to just a single councillor.

Labour won Harefield occasionally in the past, but this is not the sort of area that warms to the values of the current Labour Party and should remain safely Tory. If a local independent stood, they could potentially win.

Hayes Town (3)

Major projected new development here. Unless the new residents have radically different politics to those of existing Hayes residents, this ward will stay very securely Labour.

Heathrow Villages (2)

Unchanged boundaries but the ward loses a councillor. These villages, which include Harlington, lean Labour but Tories aren't quite out of contention here. Maybe residents will want to reward Boris Johnson for opposing Heathrow expansion and saving their homes. Maybe they won't.

Hillingdon East (3)

Was once the sole centre party ward in Hillingdon but is now a Tory-leaning ward that Labour can win when on track to win the council. Because that hasn't happened for a fair while, the Tories start comfortably ahead, especially now the ward has extended into safe Conservative Uxbridge North territory.

Hillingdon West (2)

A new (or rather: recreated) ward forged from most of strongly Conservative Uxbridge North. Will have the political leanings of its predecessor.

Ickenham & South Harefield (3)

This very safe Conservative ward expands significantly in geographical size but will continue to give them a thumping majority. If this ward were in Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Boris Johnson would have a considerably safer seat - but, alas, it's in Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner for the time being.

Northwood (2)

Another very safe Conservative ward on the edge of London that loses a councillor. The Commission paid attention to the proposals of the local Residents Association as to how the boundaries should be drawn here, which differed from other submissions, including the council's.

Northwood Hills (2)

Sometimes subject to a Residents Association challenge (the same RA which helped draw the new ward boundaries) that can run the Tories close, but otherwise has identical voting preferences to neighbouring Northwood (or Pinner in next door Harrow).

Pinkwell (3)

Covering the northern part of Harlington, like Hayes Town there's a lot of new development pending here, but even if these forthcoming residents are less inclined to support the party, Labour has a huge lead.

Ruislip (3)

A much-expanded version of the outgoing West Ruislip ward gaining lots of open space but also the "East Ruislip" half of the current Eastcote ward. This will be another ward where the Tories stack up the votes.

Ruislip Manor (2)

Barely altered ward from the existing Manor ward, but loses a councillor because the much-reduced council size increases the councillor to elector ratio.

The Lib Dems won seats in Manor ward sporadically in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, but Labour has established itself as - albeit distant - runner-up since it switched from being part of the unwinnable Ruislip-Northwood constituency. Now it's in Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Labour is more active here. Nonetheless, two Tories will win this ward in 2022.

South Ruislip (3)

The Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders all represent London constituencies and all have come to their new jobs since London last voted in 2018.

It's hard to measure any bounce their parties might get in the coming council elections from having their figure-head as their local MP, not least because they already hold almost every ward in their patches.

There is some evidence, however, that the Conservatives do much better in local elections in the wards comprising Boris

Johnson's Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency than when he's on the ballot. In 2019, for example, the prime minister only won by fifteen percentage points, whereas in the 2018 council elections the Conservatives were ahead by more than thirty.

Of course, there may be reasons for this: Labour poured vastly more resources into the area to try to oust Johnson at the general election than they do in local elections when the majority of wards here probably see no Labour activity.

South Ruislip is arguably the pivot ward in the constituency: if Labour can win here they'd win the seat and send Carrie Johnson shopping for yet more gold wallpaper for their new home after Downing Street.

They'd also be in charge at the town hall if South Ruislip went Labour they won this ward in the 1990s when they were last in power in Hillingdon. But the boundary changes don't help: a slither of abolished Cavendish ward south of the River Pinn is added to make sure the ward still merits service from 3 councillors.

Labour polled 19% in Cavendish in 2018; the Tories 72%. And Labour wasn't exactly close in South Ruislip without these unhelpful additions: the Conservative majority was already 900.

Uxbridge (3)

Conservatives regained all three seats in the outgoing Uxbridge South ward in 2018 though it usually leans Labour. But this new, virtually merged, Uxbridge contains a chunk of strongly Tory Uxbridge North, and loses a Labour area in the south to the re-created Colham & Cowley.

That means it'll be less safely Conservative than North was, but far more. Labour isn't out of contention, but they'll have to do much better than they have in the last twenty years.

West Drayton (3)

Unchanged ward immediately north-west of Heathrow airport. It's here that many of the villages threatened by the third Heathrow runway lie; though the likelihood of that project happening has receded since the Covid epidemic.

UKIP polled almost a quarter of the vote here in 2014 but their absence in 2018 benefited Labour more than the Tories. It's still marginal but Labour starts ahead.

Wood End (3)

Hayes used to be warded east-west with Botwell and Townfield. Now re-created Wood End ward covers the northern side of Hayes and Hayes Town the southern. Both are safe Labour wards.

Yeading (2)

Now covering Yeading north of Yeading Brook, this ward loses a (Labour) councillor but stays safe for the party.

Yiewsley (2)

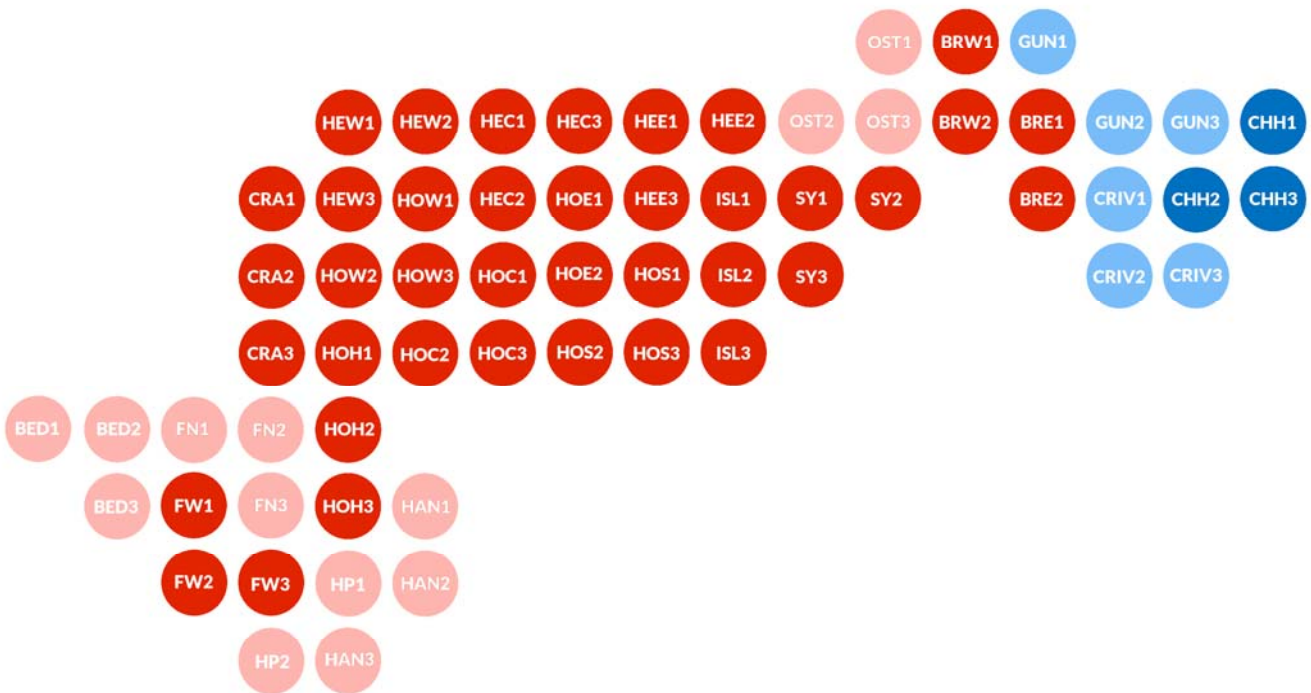
Another long-term marginal in the centre of the borough, Yiewsley loses some territory to re-created Colham & Cowley and with it one of its three councillors. Conservatives won here very comfortably in 2018 - by rights, it shouldn't be classed as a marginal based on that result, but the long-term underlying competitiveness means it still has the potential to spring an upset.

Safe Conservative 29	Competitive Conservative 5	Competitive Labour 5	Safe Labour 14
Eastcote	Charville	Heathrow Villages	Belmore
Harefield Village	Colham and Cowley	West Drayton	Hayes Town
Hillingdon East			Pinkwell
Hillingdon West			Wood End
Ickenham and South Harefield			Yeading
Northwood			
Northwood Hills			
Ruislip			
Ruislip Manor			
South Ruislip			
Uxbridge			
Yiewsley			

Hounslow

2018 current wards	51	9	0	0
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2018 new wards	53	9	0	0
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This sprawling borough, which stretches from Chiswick to the edge of Stanwell, has the potential to be interesting in very poor Labour years but is swinging increasingly to Labour as the already substantial Hindu and Sikh population expands from the centre.

New housing development in central Hounslow and Brentford increase Labour's grip on the borough and their majority slightly. But as Labour hold everything other than the nine Chiswick wards here,

their gain comes from a slightly expanded council size.

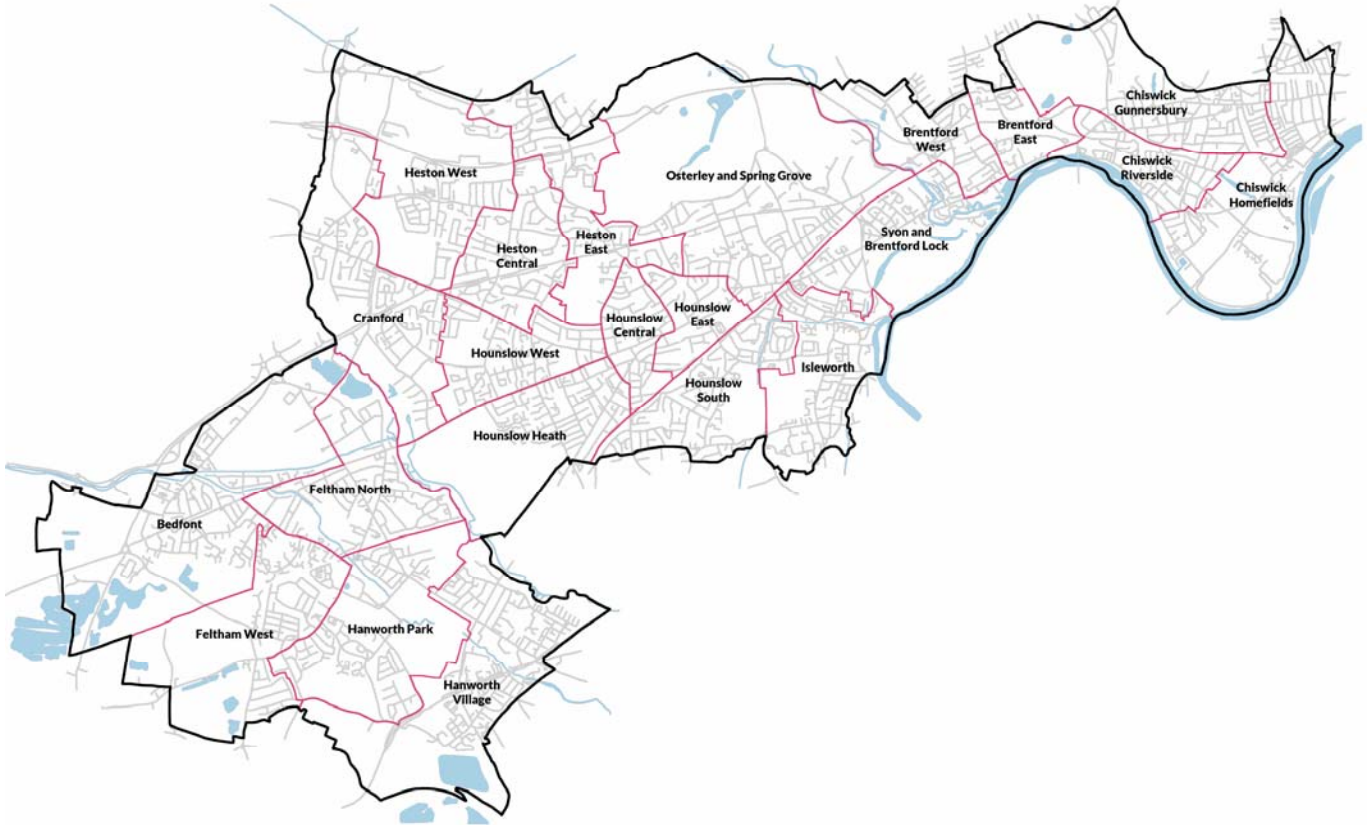
The boundary changes barely change the battleground at all because most of the marginal - or almost marginal - wards are left unaltered or barely changed.

The one exception to that is the new Chiswick Gunnersbury ward, which amalgamates the usually Tory - but currently marginal - Turnham Green with the solidly Labour Gunnersbury area, currently part of Brentford ward.

But the longer-term potentially competitive wards: Bedfont, Feltham North, Feltham West, Hanworth Village, Hanworth Park, Osterley and Spring Grove and - maybe - Hounslow South are still recognisable and comparable to the existing wards of those names.

Hounslow's Labour majority is entrenched and enhanced by these boundary changes, but they were thoroughly ensconced here already.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Bedfont (3 cllrs)

Largely unchanged ward expanding slightly into the north-western end of Feltham; this is relatively marginal and, unlike the rest of the borough, has inched away from Labour in the 2000s.

Brentford East (2)

Contains the new riverside developments west of Kew Bridge and the Green Dragon Lane high rise council estate; loses Gunnersbury Park. Should be the safer of the two Brentford wards.

Brentford West (2)

This is the more "authentic" successor to the old 3-member Brentford, containing the bulk of the terraced streets on either side of the M4. Labour won Brentford by about 30 points in 2018 and, though this is perhaps the less good side of the ward for them, it's safe enough.

Chiswick Gunnersbury (3)

This will be a key ward to watch. The bulk of it is Turnham Green: a reliable Tory ward, though one Labour came close in last time. But annexed to it has been Gunnersbury which used to have its own ward comfortably but not overwhelmingly Labour.

It's not obvious that enough of Gunnersbury has been added to switch the political allegiance over though, given how close Labour got last time it could well have switched. For now, I'm calling this as a very, very narrow Tory hold - but I may be wrong.

Chiswick Homefields (3)

Chiswick Homefields on its new boundaries consumes almost all of Chiswick Riverside too, at least in terms of the area's geographic spread.

The three Chiswick wards proved robust in 2018 despite Labour hopes that the Remain majority might turn against the Tories. Labour won here in its high tide elections of 1994 and 1998 though on better boundaries than these. Now it's the safer Chiswick ward.

Chiswick Riverside (3)

Although the ward is pared down a little, this probably helps the Conservatives somewhat as it loses small sections east and north of Kew Bridge, while retaining the abundance of Strand on the Green. Labour got within eight points of the third seat here in 2018 but this is not all that close.

Cranford (3)

To non-locals perhaps known for its motorway services on the way to Heathrow, Cranford gains a chunk of over-sized Heston West ward. This doesn't alter the political balance: Cranford is one of the safer Labour wards.

Feltham North (3)

The better of the Feltham wards for the Conservatives but one that swung firmly from them in 2018 as demographic change has increased the Hindu and Sikh community in this formerly heavily white neighbourhood. The Tories regained a seat here in a by-election held on general election polling day 2019 so their flame hasn't quite been extinguished.

Feltham West (3)

Unchanged ward. Labour struggles here when they aren't doing well in London but they are currently secure enough.

Hanworth Park (2)

At present, the only truly marginal Labour-held ward having been fairly solidly Conservative in 2006 and 2010. Loses a councillor.

Hanworth Village (3)

For years the best Lib Dem ward in Hounslow, they collapsed in Hanworth even before going into coalition with the Tories nationally and the Conservatives were able to win the only seat they've ever held here in 2010.

The Conservatives aren't entirely out of contention here and the boundary changes may help them a little as the ward pushes into Hanworth Park, but Labour starts off about 20 points ahead.

Heston Central (3)

Heston is barely touched by these boundary changes and Central not at all. Labour is about forty points clear here.

Heston East (3)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s this was a marginal Conservative ward but all three Heston wards are now very safely Labour. Unchanged ward boundaries.

Heston West (3)

The best of the three Heston wards for Labour, West loses a small portion of streets to Cranford but is otherwise unaltered.

Hounslow Central (3)

Almost all of the substantial electorate growth throughout Hounslow town has occurred in Hounslow Central ward - enough for an extra ward to be carved out from within its boundaries. This is the safest of the core Hounslow wards.

Hounslow East (2)

This is the new ward emerging from the reorganisation of over-sized Hounslow Central ward. This ward is unlikely to vote differently from the ward it has emerged from, but with so much brand new housing it has the slightest potential to throw a surprise.

Hounslow Heath (3)

Unchanged ward - large Asian population and very safely Labour

Hounslow South (3)

Somewhat undersized so crosses over the Duke of Northumberland's River into the edges of Isleworth. This will do very little to shift this ward back to the Conservatives who usually won here until 2014.

Hounslow West (3)

Essentially unchanged (it loses one side of one street), all of Hounslow town looks very safely Labour now.

Isleworth (3)

This ward epitomises Hounslow electorally: nearly always Labour but never by overwhelming margins. Fell to the Isleworth Community Party from 1998 to 2006 but they have disappeared. At present the opposition to Labour is fairly evenly divided with the Conservatives just about clear in second place, but quite distant. Ward expands north into Syon which is similar territory politically.

Osterley and Spring Grove (3)

If the Conservatives are to recover any relevance in Hounslow beyond Chiswick they need to regain Osterley and Spring Grove, unchanged in this boundary review. Labour surged in 2018 and are now over 20 points clear, so it won't be a remotely easy task for the Tories..

Syon and Brentford Lock (3)

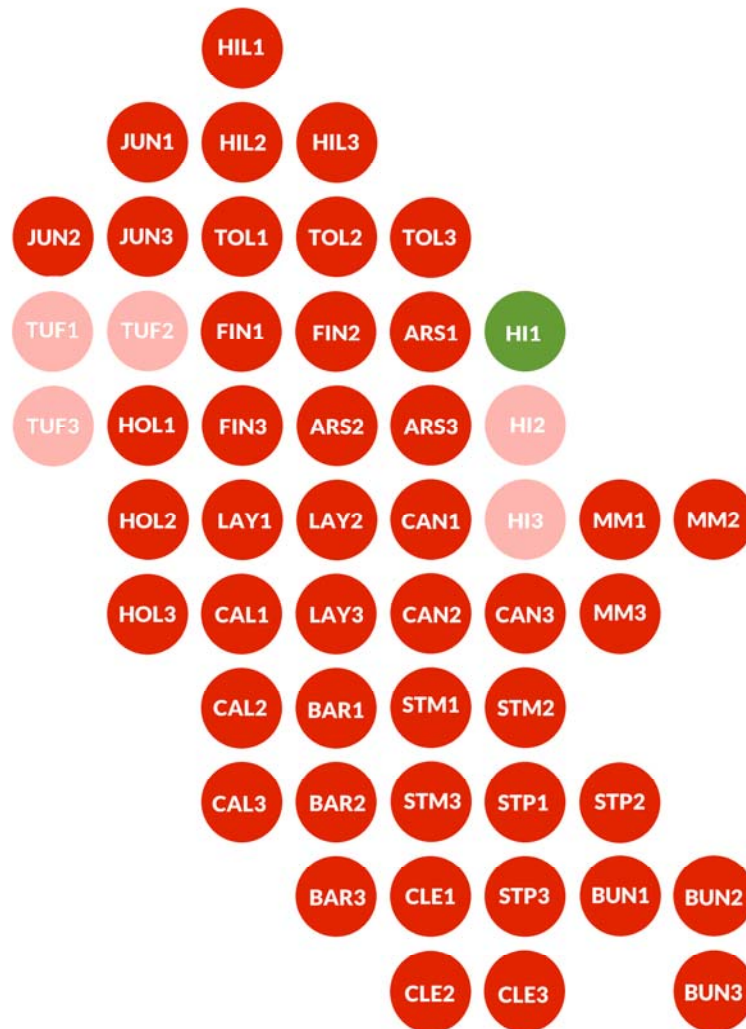
Despite the substantial housing development in the north this is still recognisably the old Syon ward. In fact, it's in the south that territory has been transferred to Brentford ward. This used to be called Isleworth North ward and the results are almost identical to its southern twin - securely Labour but not by such astounding margins as to make it secure in a very poor Labour year; which isn't likely to occur again for some considerable time.

Competitive Conservative	9	Competitive Labour	7	Safe Labour	22
Chiswick Gunnersbury		Bedfont		Brentford East	Hounslow Central
Chiswick Homefields		Feltham North		Brentford West	Hounslow East
Chiswick Riverside		Hanworth Park		Cranford	Hounslow Heath
		Hanworth Village		Feltham West	Hounslow South
		Osterley and Spring Grove		Heston Central	Hounslow West
				Heston East	Isleworth
				Heston West	Syon and Brentford Lock

Islington

2018 current wards	47	0	0	1
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2018 new wards	50	0	0	1
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Islington's Labour Group - in effect the whole council given there was only one non-Labour member - proposed an increase in the number of councillors by three to 51.

This dealt with the problem of uneven electorate growth in the Clerkenwell area by creating a new ward in the south.

Although the brand new ward name is "Laycock", covering the area around Paradise Park just north of Pentonville Prison, it's arguable that the new ward is actually St Peter's and Canalside. This ward is formed from a chunk of massively oversized Bunbury ward and some of St Peter's - all the existing wards in the

vicinity jostle about a bit to make space for this new entry. Thus St Mary's and St James is more the successor to St Peter's ward; while Laycock looks more like the existing St Mary's than the new version does.

The only other notable changes are to ward names: Highbury East becomes just Highbury ward while Highbury West gets renamed Arsenal. St George's in the north-west of the borough is renamed Tufnell Park. All Islington wards remain three-member.

Most of the Islington ward results were very similar to each other, with Labour polling in the mid 50% and the opposition vote split very evenly; Greens, Lib Dems

and Conservatives finishing as runners up in assorted corners but, at best, in the low 20s%. That suggests - correctly - that Labour has re-established a firm grip on this borough.

The only "but" is that when the voters here decide to change control of the council big majorities can dissolve in an instant. That happened when Labour lost; it happened again when they decided to turf the Lib Dems out. In other words, Labour's grip might look deceptively strong. And I suspect the Greens will feel mighty aggrieved if they only come away with one seat. They might have reason to expect double figures.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Arsenal (3 cllrs)

Was one of just three all-Labour wards in their 2002 debacle. But then the Greens snuck a seat here in 2006. They couldn't hold on and it was Highbury East where they eventually gained the only opposition seat on the council, for now at least.

Although this renamed Arsenal ward looks quite a radically different shape, the actual shunts of population aren't that major: an oversized ward that has lost a small number of streets in the north to Finsbury Park and in the south to the renamed Highbury [East].

Barnsbury (3)

Barnsbury's been slightly enlarged bringing it right up to the edge of Caledonian Road but loses the Priory Green estate to Caledonian ward.

Bunhill (3)

Heavy population growth moves the ward boundary from City Road south to Lever Street. This ward, just north of the Barbican and Old Street, named after Bunhill Fields, was a Lib Dem stronghold for years but Labour re-established control in 2010.

Labour easily won the by-election here when Corbynite councillor Claudia Webbe, now MP for Leicester East, stood down on London election day 2021.

Caledonian (3)

Covers the area between Kings Cross and Caledonian Road. Now the safest Labour ward in the south of the borough; only flirted with the Lib Dems once, in 2002.

Canonbury (3)

Almost unchanged ward, gaining a catch of roads north-east of New North Road from St Peter's.

Clerkenwell (3)

Unchanged ward: population growth in Clerkenwell area comes in next door Bunhill. Another long-term Lib Dem ward - was the base of Sarah Ludford before she became an MEP and then a Lib Dem peer - but Labour regained the ward in 2010 and easily held it in 2018 despite Ludford seeking to regain her old seat in that election.

Finsbury Park (3)

The safest Labour ward is moderately altered losing some of its western end to Tollington and taking the north-eastern chunk of the old Highbury West.

Highbury (3)

The only ward not electing a full slate of Labour councillors, renamed Highbury (loses the "East") gains the area around the Hamilton Park estate from Highbury West (now Arsenal) and loses a smattering of streets in the south-east to Mildmay.

These changes are unlikely to affect the electoral chances of the Green councillor, Caroline Russell, who was almost 800 votes ahead of the unsuccessful Labour candidate in 2018. The Greens will obviously be hoping to add the other two seats here, but wholly-Green wards are the exception, not the norm - at least in London; at least for now.

Hillrise (3)

This ward, when the borough was hung 26-26 after 1998, gave the Lib Dems their majority in a 1999 by-election, but Labour is very much back in control here nowadays.

Holloway (3)

A somewhat oversized ward pared-back to make space for the new Laycock. Holloway was Lib Dem for three terms but this is back very firmly in Labour's fold: they won two-thirds of the vote here in 2018. Yet the Tories currently hold a seat here because Cllr Rakhia Ismail defected after her term as mayor ended, alleging bullying by council leader Richard Watts. Tories won just 9% here in 2018.

Junction (3)

Not the most romantic ward name, named after Junction Road, but this is actually the Islington section of Archway as the borough heads towards Haringey. Gains Archway Park from Hillrise but otherwise unchanged.

Laycock (3)

No identifiable precedent, either in the existing wards or in the pre-2002 ward. Centred on Paradise Park, stretching south-east to Islington Town Hall. Takes territory from Holloway, St Marys, Barnsbury and Caledonian wards.

Mildmay (3)

Most easterly Islington ward nudging into Stoke Newington; expands somewhat into Highbury East but essentially unchanged. After a three term dalliance with the Lib Dems, Mildmay is very firmly back in Labour's column.

St Mary's and St James (3)

Loses its north-western sections around Islington Town Hall to the new Laycock ward and takes the northern portion of St Peter's in compensation - which is where the "St James" addition to the ward name comes from - the parish church in that part of the borough.

St Peter's and Canalside (3)

St Peter's was the long-term Alliance ward in Islington - sometimes being their only seats here. But Labour took it in 2006 and it looks safe now. Only about half of the current St Peter's survives in this new ward: takes the northern slice of Bunhill to straddle City Road.

Tollington (3)

Along with next-door Finsbury Park and Highbury West, now Arsenal, this was the only part of the borough that returned Labour councillors in 2002 and is only a few degrees less safe than Finsbury Park.

Tufnell Park (3)

New name for St George's ward - but unaltered ward boundaries. Green Party established themselves as clear runners up in 2018: this is their next-best opportunity after the remaining two Labour seats in Highbury.

Safe Green	1	Competitive Labour	5	Safe Labour	45
Highbury (1 seat)		Highbury (2 seats)		Arsenal	Holloway
		Tufnell Park		Barnsbury	Junction
				Bunhill	Mildmay
				Caledonian	St Mary's and St James
				Canonbury	St Peter's and Canalside
				Clerkenwell	Tollington
				Finsbury Park	
				Hillrise	

Kingston upon Thames

2018 current wards	39	9	0	0
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2018 new wards	39	9	0	0
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Kingston retains the broad outline of its existing wards though nine new 2-member wards do chop things up in specific areas: Kingston west of Richmond Park and Malden particularly.

Because this is a Lib Dem-Conservative battleground borough it's harder to define how boundary changes will alter the balance of the new wards. The Lib Dems have the capacity to win almost everything in Kingston upon Thames.

In the north-west of the borough, a new 3-member Kingston Gate ward is created from bits of safe Tory Coombe Hill and marginal Canbury and Tudor. Given the area around Kingston Gate is one of the most affluent parts of this borough you'd think this should be a new Tory ward, but it's highly unlikely to be. But it might change the political balance in neighbouring Canbury Gardens and Tudor.

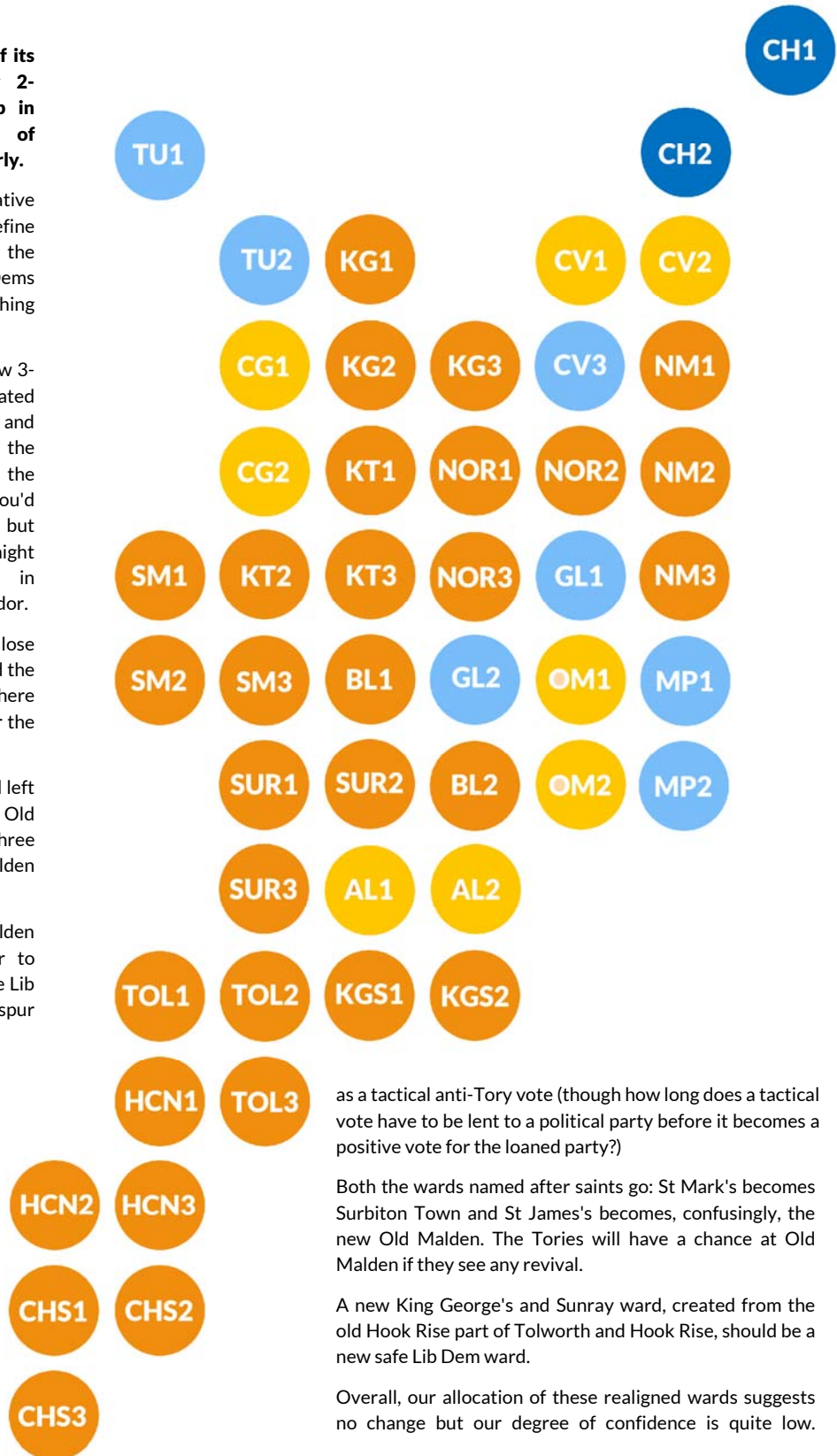
Coombe Hill loses enough territory to lose a councillor - a hit for the Tories, so had the new wards been fought in 2018 there would likely have been no net gains for the Tories at this end of the borough.

The only other fully Conservative ward left in Kingston after their 2018 disaster is Old Malden and that ward gets chopped three ways: into New Malden Town, New Malden West and Motspur Park.

We can unravel this a bit: New Malden Town is most closely the successor to Beverley ward, which is normally a safe Lib Dem ward. New Malden West and Motspur Park take about half of Old Malden.

Even though the Conservatives only just held Old Malden, I'm giving both these new wards to them, though that's only one extra seat cos these two new wards are only 2-councillor.

Tolworth gets a ward entirely to itself once again, almost a whole amalgamation of the old Tolworth South and Tolworth West wards which Labour used to win in all but their poorest years. But their support has collapsed - albeit having been co-opted by the Lib Dems years ago



as a tactical anti-Tory vote (though how long does a tactical vote have to be lent to a political party before it becomes a positive vote for the loaned party?)

Both the wards named after saints go: St Mark's becomes Surbiton Town and St James's becomes, confusingly, the new Old Malden. The Tories will have a chance at Old Malden if they see any revival.

A new King George's and Sunray ward, created from the old Hook Rise part of Tolworth and Hook Rise, should be a new safe Lib Dem ward.

Overall, our allocation of these realigned wards suggests no change but our degree of confidence is quite low.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Alexandra (2 cllrs)

Chopped in half, with the southern section forming the eastern end of the new King George's and Sunray ward. The Lib Dems won here by enough in 2018 for them to be secure enough on the new boundaries, but it's possible the better Lib Dem areas are moving into King George's and Sunray, which means the Tories need to target Alexandra, even though it now has only two councillors.

Berrylands (2)

Slightly scaled back in the reshuffle that creates a new ward south of the A3, and loses a councillor too. Berrylands was a reliably Tory ward until 2002 but now looks fairly securely Lib Dem.

Canbury Gardens (2)

Both wards in the north-west of the borough shrink to two councillors to make space for the new Kingston Gate.

Canbury Gardens is the far better Lib Dem prospect comprising the tightly packed terraces of cottages north of Kingston Town Centre that slope down from Richmond Park to the Thames. Labour has been able to do well here: they won in 1998 but propping up a minority Conservative council wiped them out here and they never recovered.

Despite the Lib Dems winning the ward back in 2018 it was one of their narrower gains. Their vote was probably fairly evenly spread across this ward so the creation of Kingston Gate ward, where a large chunk of Canbury transfers to, probably doesn't shunt what's left of the ward one way or the other, but the Tories might be a little better off here as a result, having more support nearer the Thames.

Chessington South and Malden Rushett (3)

Limited options for adjusting this ward with the borough boundary on three sides; there's a very slight land swap with the northern Chessington division. This was once a Labour ward - which I mention not because they have any chance here these days but because wards with a Labour tradition here tend to be far more reliable than wards where the Lib Dems have little Labour vote to annexe.

Tories last won here in 1986 but got very close in a 2021 by-election made (in) famous because Covid rules, relaxing the number of assenters needed to support a nomination, allowed the Monster Raving Loony Party to field no fewer than 13 candidates for the one vacancy. Combined, these candidates received 92 votes. If the result at the top end of the ballot represents things to come the Tories could be on course to gain quite a few seats in 2022 - though even on this Chessington swing they wouldn't be challenging for control.

Coombe Hill (2)

The best Conservative ward by far loses some territory around Kingston Hill to the new Kinston Gate, and with it a councillor. Boundary changes remove the council estates off Kingston Hill so Coombe Hill becomes even safer Tory.

Coombe Vale (3)

This is a fairly good barometer ward; it swung relatively early to the Alliance but then the Tories won it back in 2006 and even in 2018 they managed to hold a seat here despite the Lib Dem surge. Absolute must win for the Tories. Ward is barely changed but the few streets it gains come from strongly Tory Coombe Hill.

Green Lane and St James (2)

The three north to south-running Beverley, Old Malden and St James wards have been swept away for four new wards organised in a square. This ward comprises the western ends of Beverley and Old Malden and probably starts with a very small Lib Dem lead - but in which the Tories might have won a seat

Hook and Chessington North (3)

Barely altered ward. Tories were competitive here in 2010 and 2014, but the Lib Dems advanced by well over 20 points in 2018.

King George's and Sunray (2)

This new lanky ward snakes along between the southern side of the A3 and the borough boundary. Formed from half of Tolworth and Hook Rise, and Alexandra wards, this should be safe for the Lib Dems.

Kingston Gate (3)

This is a brand new ward in every sense: even before 2002 there was no ward remotely like it. It draws territory from Tudor, Canbury and Coombe Hill - mostly from Canbury. So how will it go? Although Kingston Hill is generally very affluent, the slope down towards Kingston is less so and there are council estates behind - this is all in Kingston Gate.

Likewise, the streets nearest Richmond Park are very affluent but they soon become tighter packed terraces heading towards Canbury. The Tories have a strong base and this will be a marginal, but remember: the Lib Dems proposed these boundaries and they're not in the business of creating Tory 3-councillor wards.

Kingston Town (3)

Grove was one of the first wards to elect Alliance councillors, back in 1982 and, other than a slight wobble in 2014, they've held it ever since. Slightly pared-back because of population growth, the new (more aptly named for modern times) Kingston Town will continue to be one of the most reliable Lib Dem wards.

Motspur Park and Old Malden East (2)

Essentially a new ward taking half of St James's and half of Old Malden. Now centred on the Fulham FC training ground I forecast a very narrow Conservative edge - but it's possible the ward could have split its representation.

New Malden Village (3)

The clearest successor to the old Beverley ward, this was one of the longer-term Lib Dem wards until the council leader, who represented this area, resigned before his conviction on child sex offences. Went Tory after that but the Lib Dems surged by 30 points in 2018.

Norbiton (3)

In recent years the only Labour ward left in Kingston, they lost even this in 2018 - and by a country mile. The Cambridge Road estate - the only tower block council estate in this borough - is being "regenerated" which will both add significant population to the ward and dilute Labour's traditional vote further.

Old Malden (2)

Confusingly the bulk of St James's ends up in Old Malden while the ward name transfers to Green Lane & St James which has none of the old ward within it. Likewise, none of the current Old Malden ward transfers to this ward. St James was almost always Tory until 2018 when the Lib Dem tsunami swept them away by as much as 600 votes. Loses a councillor.

St Mark's and Seething Wells (3)

Ward barely altered: gains the eastern end of the old Grove ward. Has been securely Lib Dem since 2002 and these small changes won't affect that allegiance.

Surbiton Hill (3)

Gains the western end of Berrylands ward and surrenders its south-eastern corner to the significantly changed Tolworth. The Lib Dems gained this ward in 2010 and have held it since: this corner of the borough, shared with Tolworth, is now their strongest.

Tolworth (3)

This is very similar to the area covered by the old Tolworth West and Tolworth South wards combined, which were both usually Labour. But the 2002 boundary changes ruined Labour's chances by diluting them among surrounding wards.

The Lib Dems gradually assimilated the Labour vote across Tolworth to the extent that this was their safest ward in 2018. Now it's all but impossible for Labour to rebuild their vote in this much better version of Tolworth - it's a quarter of a century since they last won here.

Tudor (2)

This ward, tucked to the south-west of Richmond Park, is normally safely Tory but Lib Dems won a seat here in 2018. It's reduced to a 2-member ward; probably somewhat better for the Conservatives, so the Lib Dems may lose a seat - but the Tories won't gain one.

Safe Conservative	2	Competitive Conservative	7	Competitive Lib Dem	17	Safe Lib Dem	22
Coombe Hill		Coombe Vale (1 seat)		Alexandra		Berrylands	
		Green Lanes and St James		Canbury Gardens		Hook and Chessington North	
		Motspur Park		Chessington South		King George's and Sunray	
		Tudor		Coombe Vale (2 seats)		Kingston Town	
				Kingston Gate		New Malden Village	
				Old Malden		Norbiton	
						St Mark's and Seething Wells	
						Surbiton Hill	
						Tolworth	

Lambeth

2018 current wards	57	5	1	0
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2018 new wards	56	5	2	0
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Lambeth's days as London's most controversial, turbulent, headline-grabbing borough may be behind it but with them went a lot of the political competitiveness of this diverse area.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Conservatives were Labour's main challengers, winning the council in 1968 and taking it to no overall control in 1982 (with some help from the SDP-Liberal Alliance).

Then, in the 1990s the Lib Dems became the dominant party as the Tories lost support in their enclaves of Streatham and Norwood. The council fell to no overall control in 1994 and 2002. A map of that 1994 result shows a Lib Dem north, a Labour centre and a Conservative south.

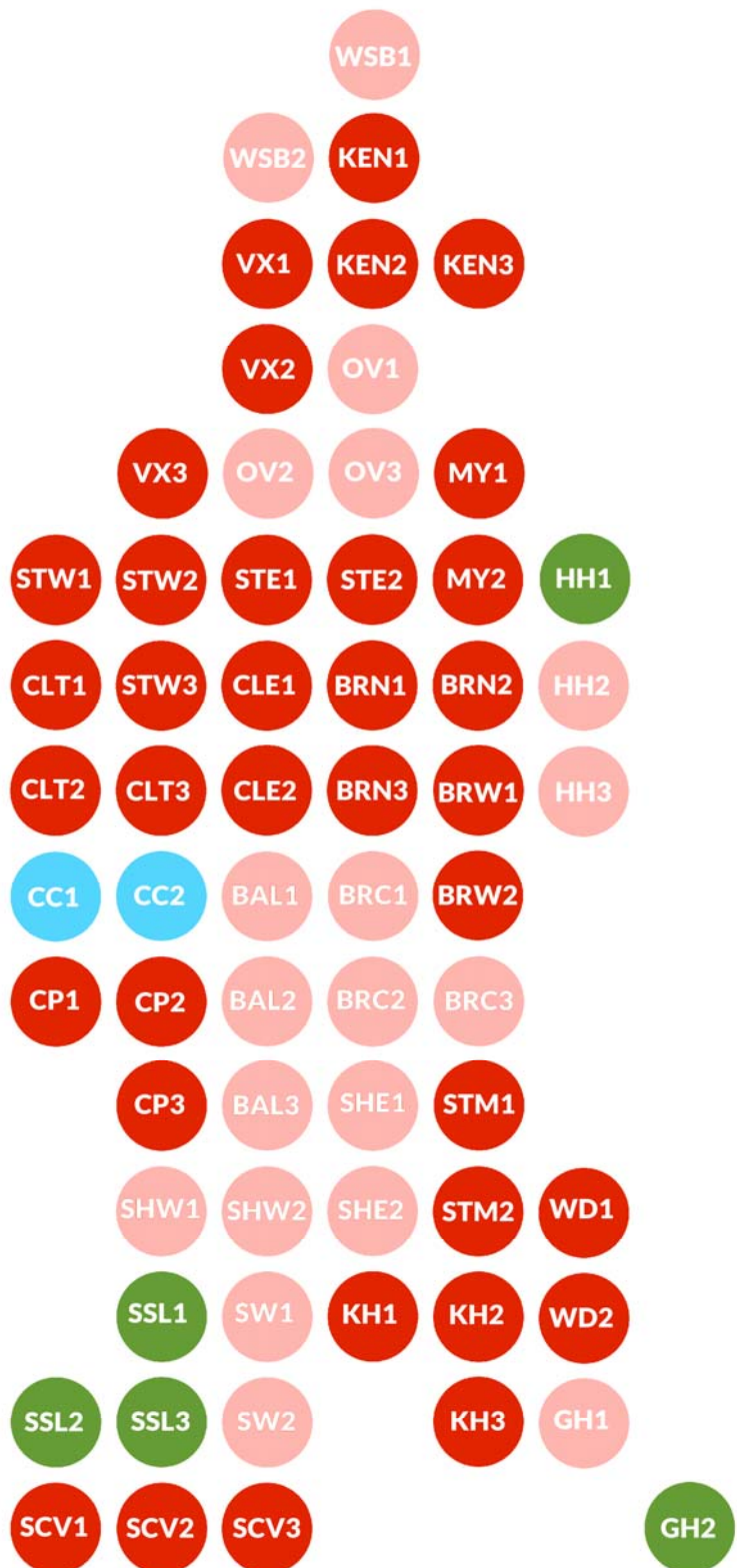
The Lib Dems were purged from Lambeth in 2014 as a result of their national coalition with the Conservatives: just Clapham Common and one seat in St Leonard's resisted the Labour sweep that year. Then in 2018, the Greens gained four more seats and the Tories were nearly obliterated.

Lambeth's boundary changes are pretty radical: eleven new two-member wards, the disappearance of Larkhall and Ferndale wards, most places renamed.

Lots of new development, especially in the north of the borough, muddies the water a little, but Labour's leads in this part of Lambeth are so large that it'd take a near 100% vote for a different party in these new blocks to alter results.

This is the Green Party's top target for expansion and, even more so than Islington, they will expect at least ten councillors: a doubling of their representation. But even that is just three 3-councillor wards plus one extra councillor: it's not really going to shift the balance of power in Lambeth. To do better they need a much larger presence across the Streatham end of the borough.

The Conservatives are fighting for survival and the boundary changes may help them with this: Clapham Common loses a councillor but removes some Labour voting areas. It's unlikely there's a way back for the Lib Dems but, if there is, it will likely begin in the renamed Bishop's ward (Waterloo and South Bank) or Oval.



Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Brixton Acre Lane (3 cllrs)

This is the current Brixton Hill ward. Labour's third candidate was 23 points ahead of the Greens here in 2018 - a big stretch but not beyond the realms of possibility. Other than 1968 this ward has always been Labour.

Brixton North (3)

Most of the current Coldharbour ward moves across to this ward along with a bit of abolished Ferndale. The Greens were second in both these wards in 2018 but quite distant, and it'd be very odd for a Brixton ward not to vote Labour.

Brixton Rush Common (3)

Successor to Tulse Hill ward. Labour won Tulse Hill over the Greens by about ten points more than they did Brixton Hill but this one may be the better shot for the Greens. It borders their already-held ward of Herne Hill and it's a much more mixed ward than Brixton Hill - by which I mean it has a larger white, middle-class population: it's less Brixton and more Norwood.

Brixton Windrush (2)

A new pretentious name for what is the southern half of abolished Coldharbour ward. Loughborough Park would have been more appropriate. Coldharbour voted 56% Labour to 18% Green in 2018, though this is the less densely packed, greener, more open end of that ward and might be a bit better for the Green Party.

Clapham Common and Abbeville (2)

A slimmed-down Clapham Common ward yet with a longer name. Loses the outskirts of the Clapham Park estate and some bits closest to Brixton, both of which should assist the Conservatives. The Tories were over 300 behind Labour in the 2021 London elections so they need all the help boundary changes can give them.

Clapham East (2)

A new ward that takes a lot of abolished Ferndale and the streets closest to Brixton from both Clapham Town and Clapham Common wards. Fernhill was a very safe ward and, though it loses its Brixton half, this part of Clapham heading towards Lambeth Town Hall is a lot less grand and will be reliably Labour, unless the Greens can do something exciting here.

Clapham Park (3)

The Clapham Park estate has undergone massive "regeneration" which essentially means drastically increasing housing density in exchange for some largely imaginary improvements to local amenities. This ward is forged out of the northern arc of Thornton ward and some of Clapham Common. It should be safely Labour unless there's a credible Green challenge.

Clapham Town (3)

Largely unchanged but taking an extra chunk of territory from abolished Larkhall ward, Clapham Town includes not just the historic core of the district north of the common but also the chain of council estates north of Wandsworth Road. Labour was over 20% clear in 2018 and the boundary changes make the ward safer.

Gipsy Hill (2)

The Greens won one seat in the old Gipsy Hill ward, which has been quite electorally volatile over the past two decades: it elected the Conservatives by quite hefty margins from 1994 until 2010.

Loses a councillor, which might be deputy leader Matthew Bennett, responsible for the push to demolish the ward's Central Hill estate then squeeze twice as many residents onto the site (why should council tenants have the privilege of humane density standards?!)

This ward will have to go Green by quite a margin to signal that they are going to make major advances across the borough.

Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction (3)

Another barely changed ward that has seen its name more than doubled. This ward covers a fair chunk of the central-eastern side of the borough stretching south as far as Brockwell Park. The Greens topped the poll here in 2018 but couldn't get the other two seats. This ward gave them their highest vote in the 2021 elections but a long way behind Labour.

Kennington (3)

The district of Kennington finally gets recognised in a ward name. This new ward comprises the eastern half of Prince's and a little bit of Oval.

Prince's was the best centre party ward in Lambeth for years before falling to Labour in 2006. It's not impregnable and the Lib Dems remain strong on the Southwark side of Kennington, but Labour start strong favourites.

Knight's Hill (3)

This southerly ward went from Conservative to Labour without barely considering the Lib Dems (2002 was its one Lib Dem flirtation). Now it might be the Greens' turn to shine here though they were miles behind in 2018: this ward produced Labour's largest majority.

Myatts Fields (3)

This is the bulk of the old Vassall ward, which the council wanted to rename because of its association with a slave owner. 99.9% of Lambeth's residents probably don't know a Vassall ward even exists. The far more well-known roads in the area named after Vassall-Fox aren't being changed.

Vassall can be quite volatile but it's usually a solidly Labour ward which gave the party about 60% of the vote in 2018.

Oval (3)

Oval is arguably the best Lib Dem target. Its centre of gravity shifts eastward, away from the Thames, but is basically the same ward as now, just with the cricket club in the north, not the middle. There was a swing back to the Lib Dems in 2018 but they were still 500+ votes behind here.

St Martin's (2)

St Martin's ward existed in Lambeth until 2002 and has been resurrected this time. It takes bits from Streatham Hill, Tulse Hill and Thurlow Park. But - and this is subject to the possibility it might be a promising ward for the Greens - St Martin's was a safe Labour ward and should continue to be so; quite demographically and economically mixed but still a little down at heel.

Stockwell East (2)

A new ward formed from a relatively small slither of Stockwell, a bit of Larkhall and a lot of abolished Vassall. Between Clapham Road and Brixton Road, including the Stockwell Gardens Estate but also much more of "old" Stockwell and what's become known as Little Portugal.

Stockwell West and Larkhall (3)

This ward is far more Stockwell than Larkhall, which seems a bit unfair given Stockwell seems to get two wards. This larger entity covers the bulk of both wards as they straddle Wandsworth Road, with huge council estates.

Streatham Common and Vale (3)

A renamed Streatham South ward. This was one of the last Conservative hold-outs but swung strongly to Labour in recent years and should be the most resilient to any Green advance. In the draft boundary

proposals single- and two-councillor wards were proposed here but the two ideas were eventually rolled into one 3-member ward.

Streatham Hill East (2)

The bulk of the current Streatham Hill ward ends up in Streatham Hill East, though it loses its most easterly parts to St Martin's and gains a chunk of Streatham Wells in return.

Streatham Hill, Streatham Wells and Thornton had nine councillors between them; these three 2-councillor wards will only have eight (though the bit going into St Martin's is worth perhaps half a councillor).

After long stints as a Conservative, then Lib Dem ward, Streatham Hill looks relatively comfortably Labour now, but the Greens moved into second place in 2018.

Streatham Hill West and Thornton (2)

This ward is quite a lot more Thornton than Streatham Hill: it just loses the spike Thornton ward had north of Poynder's Road. Thornton has undergone two by-elections since 2018 as Jane Edbrooke and former council leader Lib Peck moved on.

Labour held the first one reasonably easily but the second by just 19 votes. Whether that was voter backlash against being called to the polls essentially unnecessarily or a swing back to the Lib Dems who won here in 1994 and 2002 remains to be seen.

Streatham St Leonard's (3)

Nowadays the only ward in which the Greens hold all three seats, and historically the least inclined to vote Labour: it's had long periods of Conservative and Lib Dem representation, but Labour only won two seats here in 2014, before losing them.

Streatham Wells (2)

This ward loses some streets in the north to Streatham Hill East, and some streets in the south to Streatham Common and Vale - more than enough losses to cost the ward a councillor. The Lib Dems have not collapsed here the way they have in Streatham Hill; they're about 800 behind but still clearly second placed.

Vauxhall (3)

The river-side of Prince's ward plus Vauxhall Bridge from Oval ward. Includes the M16 HQ. The Nine Elms redevelopment flows across the borough boundary with Wandsworth. Because a lot of this ward is new (and a lot is not) it may have produced a closer result than Prince's did in 2018; the Lib Dem presence from the parts contributed by Oval ward may also make it more marginal, but Labour, without doubt, starts comfortably ahead in this new riverside ward.

Waterloo and South Bank (2)

Successor to Bishop's ward. Loses a small section in the south-east to the new Kennington ward but this was so undersized that it already merited just two councillors.

Alongside Oval ward this is a Lib Dem target: along with Prince's it was the first to elect Alliance councillors in 1982 and they polled just under 30% here in 2018.

West Dulwich (2)

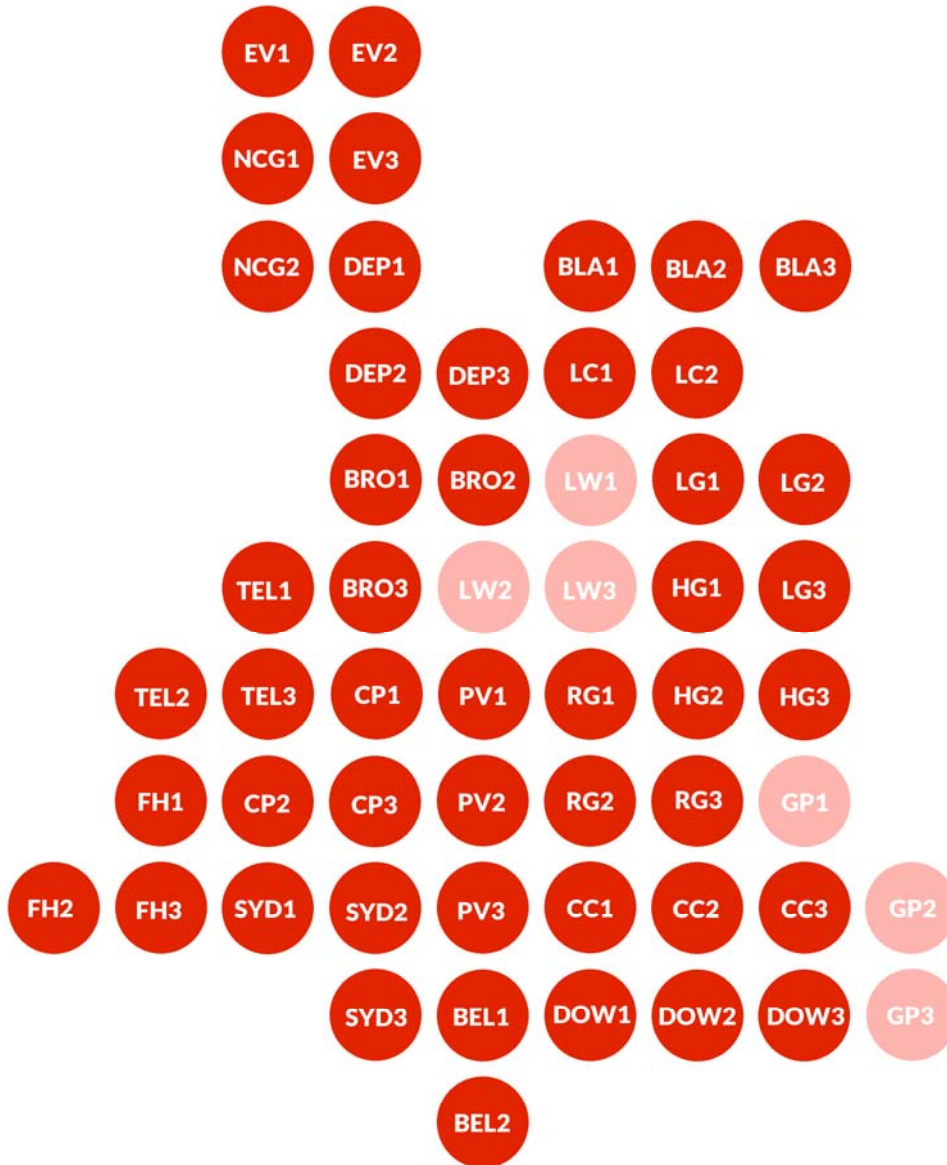
Successor to Thurlow Park ward which was one of the last wards to abandon the Conservatives. The Greens were second here in the 2021 London elections but the Tory vote's still there, albeit greatly diminished, showing there's a big non-Labour vote

Competitive Green 5	Competitive Labour 20	Safe Labour 34	
Gipsy Hill (1 seat)	Brixton Acre Lane	Brixton North	Stockwell East
Herne Hill (1 seat)	Brixton Rush Common	Brixton Windrush	Stockwell West and Larkhall
Streatham St Leonard's	Gipsy Hill (1 seat)	Clapham East	Streatham Common and Vale
	Herne Hill (2 seats)	Clapham Park	Vauxhall
	Oval	Clapham Town	West Dulwich
Competitive Conservative 2	Streatham Hill East	Kennington	
	Streatham Hill West	Knight's Hill	
Clapham Common	Streatham Wells	Myatts Fields	
	Waterloo and South Bank	St Martin's	

Lewisham

2018 current wards	54	0	0	0
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2018 new wards	54	0	0	0
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Relatively minor boundary changes occur in Lewisham though there's a small shift in political power from the suburban south of the borough to the regeneration zones along the River Ravensbourne.

Deptford gains an extra 2-seat ward (New Cross Gate) - New Cross gets renamed "Deptford". Although Lewisham Central loses a councillor to become a 2-member ward, this represents the second additional seat for the north of the borough as a new (or rather returning) ward called Hither Green is created from the southern part of

Lewisham Central and the eastern end of abolished Whitefoot ward.

So: two gains for the north of Lewisham and - as the council isn't changing in size - two losses in the south.

Bellingham is the first victim, reduced in representation to two councillors. The other is in the area that was covered by Whitefoot ward: not a loss of three councillors because that new Hither Green ward effectively consumes two of the three seats there (its third being the

aforementioned change to Lewisham Central). So, just the one seat gone from that Downham-Whitefoot-Catford area, even though the boundary changes in this part of the borough are quite radical.

Every seat in Lewisham is currently Labour-held and these boundary changes won't alter that, though the smaller Lewisham Central is almost an entirely new ward and potentially might vote differently in the long run if London's political balance alters

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Bellingham (2 cllrs)

Already under-sized, Bellingham loses further territory to Perry Vale and Rushey Green, and with it a councillor. This was always Labour's best ward in the old Lewisham West constituency and will still be absolutely reliable for them, but just with one councillor fewer.

Blackheath (3)

Now the best (least bad) Lib Dem ward in Lewisham, having held it in 2006 and 2010 but faded somewhat since - their claim is not entirely unrealistic. Gains the small protuberance of Lewisham Central ward that lay east of the river Ravensbourne but is otherwise unaltered.

Brockley (3)

One of two wards the Greens were able to win in the early 2000s (the other being neighbouring Ladywell) they are still in with a shot, especially if left-wing Labour supporters defect with the passing of the Corbyn leadership and wanting a more radical choice. But Ladywell is the better prospect for them, even if this ward - in minor boundary changes - gains a small section of that one.

Catford South (3)

Loses its eastern end and gains the western end of Whitefoot ward. Was the best Tory ward for years.

Crofton Park (3)

Unaltered ward boundaries.

Deptford (3)

Recreated ward - very similar to the old Grinling Gibbons ward before 2002. Will be very safely Labour.

Downham (3)

Covers an inter-war council estate running along the boundary with Bromley. Was Lib Dem for 20 years but Labour is in control here, with Tories currently second. Ward expands into the south-eastern corner of abolished Whitefoot, which was sort of the overflow ward for Downham.

Evelyn (3)

Usually the safest Labour ward in Lewisham comprising the almost endless high rise council estates of the Deptford riverside but in recent years their vote has been down considerably. Still a very safe Labour ward it loses its south-east corner to the new Deptford ward.

Forest Hill (3)

Unchanged ward boundaries - nowadays a safe Labour ward but with a Conservative (Horniman) and Lib Dem history.

Grove Park (3)

Unchanged ward boundaries. Realistically the only Conservative prospect left in Lewisham. The ward barely swung to Labour in 2018.

Hither Green (3)

Re-created ward formed from the bottom of Lewisham Central and the eastern sections of Catford South and abolished Whitefoot. Hither Green - which was a much smaller ward - was always safely Labour and will resume being so.

Ladywell (3)

The best Green prospect in the borough: their top candidate was 9% behind the third Labour councillor in 2018. Expands considerably into the central section of Lewisham Central.

Lee Green (3)

Unchanged ward boundaries. Greens have a slight chance here because the Labour vote isn't especially high in this ward.

Lewisham Central (2)

Massively pared-down ward to the extent that the recreated Hither Green is possibly the more logical successor to the current Lewisham Central. There has been huge new construction in the north of Lewisham and this may make the ward a bit closer.

New Cross Gate (2)

Very similar to the old Marlowe ward (Lewisham used to have great ward names). This is the western end of New Cross ward. Some considerable new development being constructed here and the very strongest Labour areas transfer to Deptford ward.

Perry Vale (3)

Another of those once-Tory wards that are now far beyond their reach. Ward gains a chunk of Bellingham ward which will set the Tories back further. Safe, but not overwhelmingly Labour.

Rushey Green (3)

A splodge of a ward in the centre of the borough and long-term one of the safest Labour wards here. Moves slightly westwards in the boundary changes.

Sydenham (3)

Once a strong Tory ward along the south of the borough, Sydenham is now strongly, if not overwhelmingly, safe for the party. Greens came second in 2018 but well over twenty points behind.

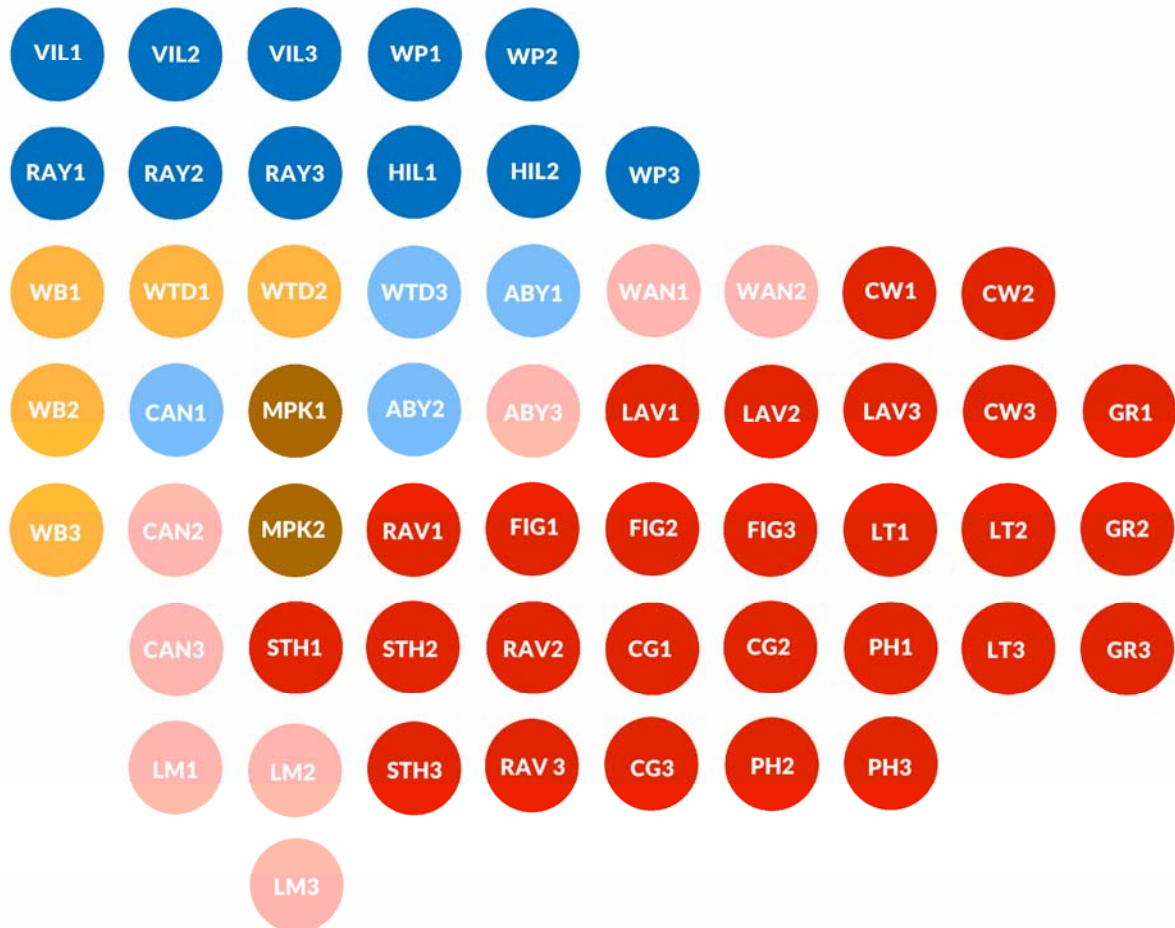
Telegraph Hill (3)

The old Pepys ward, this has proved tricky for Labour in the relatively recent past, when fringe localist parties have stood and won, but it's solid again for them for now.

Competitive Labour	12	Safe Labour	42
Blackheath	Bellingham	Evelyn	New Cross Gate
Brockley	Catford South	Forest Hill	Perry Vale
Grove Park	Crofton Park	Hither Green	Rushey Green
Ladywell	Deptford	Lee Green	Sydenham
	Downham	Lewisham Central	Telegraph Hill

Merton

2018 current wards	34	17	6	3	2018 new wards	35	15	5	2
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Population shifts, a reduction in council size of three seats and the impact of the advancing Liberal Democrats combine to damage the Conservatives in Merton; though perhaps not as critically as the headline numbers suggest.

The most visible hit to the Tories is in their safe Hillside ward, which reduces to two councillors. They are also harmed by the effective merger of Dundonald and Trinity wards in downhill Wimbledon (Dundonald is the abolished ward): they have three seats in these two current wards and would at best have held two in this combined ward had it been fought in 2018.

The perennial Residents' Association ward of Merton Park is also hit, reducing from three to two councillors.

There has been a huge amount of new housing built around the Wimbledon Football Club ground in Plough Lane and this forms the basis of a new 2-member ward called Wandle. Half comes from Tory Wimbledon Park; the other chunk from Tory-Lib Dem (but once Labour) Trinity.

This does not mean it's a likely new Conservative ward though: their strength in both these wards is drawn from other neighbourhoods. They may be competitive (or not) here, but this will probably count as two new Labour seats: the Gap Road area is not especially affluent, nestled against Tooting and Colliers Wood.

I said this was not perhaps as grim for the Tories as the headline might appear. That's because, if the Conservatives can win back the seats they've lost to the Lib Dems (a big

if), recover in Lower Morden (another big if), and win Abbey, Cannon Hill, the new Wandle ward and take the Residents Association out in Merton Park (a very big if) there is still a path - just - to a majority for them. But it's narrow and steep, and narrowing all the time.

One final curiosity: Merton and Wandsworth have for years shared a ward called Graveney. That is finally being addressed because Wandsworth's Graveney has been axed, but with the creation of new Wandle wards in both boroughs they will continue to share ward names.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Abbey (3 cllrs)

The creation of Wandle ward takes a chunk of the most easterly, and probably more Labour than Conservative end, of marginal Abbey - which surprisingly split its representation in 2018.

Because of this, we've awarded one further of this ward's seats to the Conservatives. Again, this is a guesstimate of how the ward on these new boundaries would have voted in 2018, not a forecast of how it will go in 2022.

Cannon Hill (3)

Cannon Hill bucked the trend of wards being won by Labour going on to becoming safe for the party when the Tories won back a seat in 2018.

Then the Lib Dems gained one of the other Labour seats just before the 2019 general election during that period of peak Brexit turmoil when the Lib Dems seemed to be uniting the Remain vote in London behind them.

As the ward has been left almost entirely untouched by the boundary changes, this will remain a three-way marginal in 2022.

Colliers Wood (3)

A multicultural ward to the west of Tooting Broadway, Colliers Wood's boundaries haven't been altered. Tories only managed to win here in 1968. Safe Labour.

Cricket Green (3)

The southern Mitcham ward; loses a few streets to Lavender Fields and gains a few streets from Figge's Marsh. Will stay safely Labour.

Figge's Marsh (3)

Central Mitcham. Once elected Conservative councillors but now gives Labour around 80% of the vote. Largely unaltered.

Graveney (3)

The changes in next-door Wandsworth mean this is the only Graveney ward in London now. This side of the estate of the Gravenal family has been safe for Labour since 1986.

The boundaries haven't changed and they won over 80% of the vote in 2018.

Hillside (2)

This ward covers the part of Wimbledon Village as it slopes down towards the town centre. Loses a councillor though not all that much territory to Village and Raynes Park. Lib Dems polled well here in the 2019 general election but it'd be surprising if they broke through in a ward that gave the Conservatives 56% in 2018.

Lavender Fields (3)

North Mitcham merging into Colliers Wood. Not quite as secure for Labour as the other Mitcham wards but very much safe enough.

Longthornton (3)

Right on the cusp of both Streatham and the north of Croydon. Used to be a solidly Residents Association ward but has become part of Siobhain McDonagh's wall of very strongly Labour Mitcham wards.

Lower Morden (3)

This undersized ward has expanded east into St Helier. Was for years the only Conservative ward in Mitcham and Morden constituency but fell to Labour in 2014 by a lot, then by a bit less in 2018. This is one of those not-quite-safe, not-quite-marginal wards.

Merton Park (3)

The ward loses a councillor but boundary changes are the only way the Resident's Association, which has won here non-stop since 1986, loses seats in this central Merton ward.

Pollards Hill (3)

Once-Tory ward on the border with Norbury and West Thornton in Croydon has swung massively and rapidly to Labour and is now massively safe: Labour polled over 80% here in 2018.

Ravensbury (3)

Part St Helier, part Mitcham, this is another relentlessly loyal ward to Labour: never voted Conservative and essentially unchanged.

Raynes Park (3)

One of the three very safe Conservative wards of uphill Wimbledon. Gains the western end of the Dundonald rack of tightly packed streets, which - along with their 2019 general election performance - is making Lib Dems excited about their prospects, but they need to calm down: the Tories have never lost here and won't start in 2022.

St Helier (3)

The Merton side of St Helier has never taken a shine to the Lib Dems the way the Sutton half has. This ward has nearly always been loyal to Labour. Loses its western fringe to Lower Morden.

Village (3)

Wimbledon Village is a picture-postcard landscape set around the common. It is utterly impregnable - the Conservatives won with 70% of the vote in 2018 - despite being one of their worst London-wide results ever. Gains a moderate amount of Raynes Park, which is only less Conservative by a few degrees.

Wandle (2)

The only genuinely new ward in Merton. As the name suggests, this small ward runs down the western bank of the river Wandle, most of it coming from Wimbledon Park ward and a little from Trinity.

But this is the decidedly better side of Wimbledon Park for Labour, around the old Wimbledon Stadium and Plough Lane. The Wandle was a working river so there are lots of old industrial sites around here; warehouses too.

The ward may be competitive because it contains a lot of new build apartment blocks, but we're rating it as at least Labour-leaning to start off.

West Barnes (3)

Unaltered ward in the south-west corner of the borough below Raynes Park. Safe Liberal Democrat.

Wimbledon Park (3)

Although Labour used to win the Durnsford ward - the predecessor to Wimbledon Park, the expansion of the ward into one of the safest Conservative wards in London: Village, in 2002; and now the small loss of territory in the south-east to Wandle ward, makes Wimbledon Park even more securely Conservative.

Wimbledon Town and Dundonald (3)

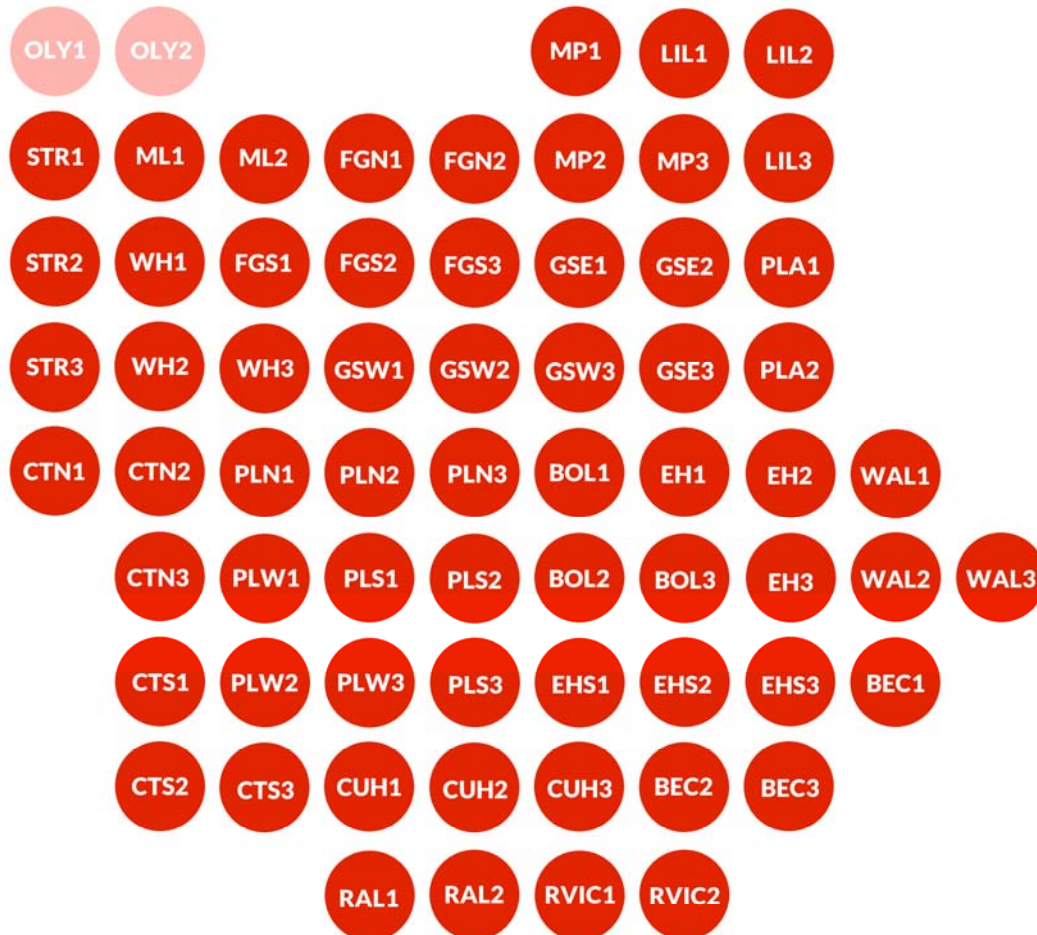
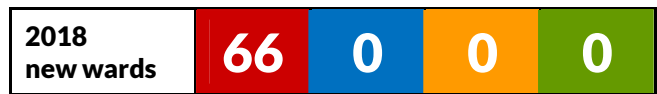
Just over half of Dundonald ward, which sweeps west from just behind Wimbledon Broadway and rapidly becomes classic inter-war suburban London, has been amalgamated with the vast majority of Trinity ward; the area just north of the town centre.

These two wards split between the Tories and Lib Dems in 2018 and the new one probably would have too: two Lib Dems, 1 Conservative.

These are both wards Labour used to be able to win (Trinity more so than Dundonald) and they, in theory, aren't out of the race in this new ward, but on the 2019 general election result in Wimbledon the Lib Dems start as very clear favourites.

Safe Conservative	12	Competitive Conservative	3	Competitive Labour	8	Safe Labour	27
Hillside		Abbey (2 seats)		Abbey (1 seat)		Colliers Wood	
Raynes Park		Cannon Hill (1 seat)		Cannon Hill (2 seats)		Cricket Green	
Village		Wimbledon Town (1 seat)		Lower Morden		Figge's Marsh	
Wimbledon Park				Wandle		Graveney	
						Lavender Fields	
Safe Lib Dem	3	Competitive Lib Dem	2			Longthornton	
West Barnes		Wimbledon Town (2 seats)				Pollards Hill	
						Ravensbury	
						St Helier	
Safe Res Assoc	2						
Merton Park							

Newham



Newham council initially proposed that the number of councillors should increase by twelve to 72, which would have made it the largest council in London. This stalled the review at the get-go as there were no other submissions on council size and this was an unusual gambit.

Eventually, the council decided to reduce its ask to an extra six councillors which is enough to preserve every incumbent Labour councillor (there hasn't been a non-Labour councillor elected here since 2006) and deal with the patches of population growth.

There are two such patches: the 2012 Olympic Village, where the apartments used by the athletes have been turned into a whole new community around what is now West Ham's stadium.

This development had made Stratford and New Town twice the size of the Newham average - there will be six councillors where now there are three: three in Stratford, two in Stratford Olympic Park (the successor to the old New Town ward), and one contributed to the new Maryland ward - there has been no predecessor ward like this one.

The other major development area is the western end of docklands: a third Canning Town/Plaistow ward has been created, and the Royal Docks ward has been split into two 2-councillor wards.

None of Newham's wards was remotely close to being recorded as a marginal in 2018: just five of their councillors were elected with less than 50% of the vote and even these five seats weren't close.

The boundary changes probably won't change that, though because the new Olympic Park ward is new, and has a somewhat different demographic profile to much of the rest of Newham: whiter, more affluent, more owner-occupied, we've logged it as marginal until its votes have been disentangled from those of wider Stratford.

The top Lib Dem and Conservative candidates polled over 1,300 votes apiece in 2018: in part because of the size of the ward but also far, far more than they got anywhere else. If they were predominantly concentrated in the Olympic Park section of the ward, that'd make it electorally interesting.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Beckton (3 cllrs)

Largely unchanged ward covering the huge sewage works: almost all the population of this ward is in the western half.

Boleyn (3)

Named after the famous Protestant family whose manor was here, and who the old West Ham stadium was named after, this ward is largely unchanged - donates a small section to Plaistow North.

Canning Town North (3)

Briefly the base of the only Christian People's Alliance councillors in the country in 2006, this ward had grown substantially and the eastern triangle of it has transferred to the new Plaistow West & Canning Town East. CPA challenge has disappeared.

Canning Town South (3)

Somewhat uncomfortably, Canning Town South stretched across the Newham Way, physically separated from the bulk of the ward. That problem has been resolved: this section now completes the Plaistow West and Canning Town East ward.. Canning Town is now a compact ward covering the area east of the loop of the River Lea before it reaches the Thames.

Custom House (3)

The Custom House dealt with all the taxes due on the cargoes deposited on the Royal Docks during the era of Empire. In the 1990s the Custom House and Silvertown ward came close to electing Tories, who almost won the abolished Newham South constituency in 1987. But the gentrifying docks were part of that ward. Now, this is a ward of 1950s low rise council estates and much more recent cul de sacs, largely unchanged in the boundary changes.

East Ham (3)

Core East Ham is a tightly packed grid of terraced streets, as opposed to wider West Ham where newer council estates redrew the landscape. The name has been shortened but this is very similar to the old East Ham Central.

East Ham South (3)

Traditionally the least Labour-inclined ward in Newham - its predecessor, Greatfield, was the last ward to elect Conservative councillors, back in 1990.

Forest Gate North (2)

Right on the edge of Wanstead Flats, this ward sheds a councillor to contribute to the creation of Maryland ward to its west. Otherwise unchanged.

Forest Gate South (3)

Gains a triangle of streets in the east from Manor Park and donates a few in the east to Maryland.

Green Street East (3)

Neither of the Green Street twin wards have their boundaries altered at all in this review. The eastern side of Green Street was formed from the western ends of St Stephen's and Monega wards.

Green Street West (3)

Respect won this ward at the height of opposition to the Iraq War, especially among London's Muslim communities but it quickly returned to its default Labour setting. Formed from the bulk of the old Upton ward.

Little Ilford (3)

As the name suggests, this north-eastern Newham ward lies just across Barking Creek from Ilford. It expands into the eastern end of East Ham North/Plashet ward to maintain three councillors while losing some streets in the south-west to Manor Park. Safest Labour ward in Newham: top Labour candidate polled over 90% of the vote here in 2018.

Manor Park (3)

This ward straddles the Overground Line at Woodgrange Park station. Gains a fair chunk of Little Ilford.

Maryland (2)

A new ward that in the old days used to be called New Town ward, and was merged with Stratford in 2002. Now it's a

considerably larger area, and some of New Town is part of the Olympic Park site.

There's been a row about the naming of this ward as some allege it has connotations with slavery. But if the penchant is to purge all history from the borough, why on earth aren't they seeking to remove the Canning Town names or the imperial dock ward names? How can Custom House survive? There are few boroughs more central to the British Empire than Newham given the trade that arrived here.

Plaistow North (3)

This ward straddles the District Line and contains part of core West Ham beyond that ward itself. But it loses all its territory south-west of the High Street.

Plaistow South (3)

Loses territory north of Barking Road to Plaistow North; gains a smaller section in the south-west from Canning Town South.

Plaistow West and Canning Town East (3)

This is a genuinely new ward in the sense it has no clear precedent. Almost exactly half comes from the former Canning Town wards and half from the former Plaistow wards. It takes territory from four outgoing wards. There is also no precedent from the wards that existed prior to 2002 though Grange might have been a possibility for those seeking less of a mouthful.

Plashet (3)

This is the pre-2002 name for East Ham North and loses some of its eastern end to Little Ilford, which also costs the area one of its three councillors.

Royal Albert (2)

Covers North Woolwich and the ferry port. Slightly less dense housing than Royal Victoria. 2,000 voters are projected to come on to the electoral register by 2025. It may be winnable for the Conservatives at some point, but they only won 16% in Royal Docks ward in 2018.

Royal Victoria (2)

If there's ever a ward the Conservatives might be able to win in Newham it's this one. But the demographic profile of Docklands/Silvertown apartment owners has changed somewhat: a lot more are now corporation-owned and often empty.

Plus the backlash against Brexit among City workers has made this secure for Labour for the time being. Another 2,500 voters are forecast to be added here in the next five years.

Stratford (3)

This ward's electorate falls from 18,118 to 9,259 with the removal of the Olympic Village and New Town. It should also increase the security of the Labour councillors as Stratford is a quite different area, albeit having undergone a lot of regeneration, to the Olympic Park.

Stratford Olympic Park (2)

Essentially a completely new ward. The top Lib Dem candidate here polled 27% and the top Tory 25% in Stratford and New Town, while Labour polled between 46% and 55%. If the distribution of this opposition vote is unevenly weighted to this northern ward it could be quite marginal in its first contest.

Though we're putting Labour down as the party that would have won here until we have real votes in real ballot boxes to reflect on.

Wall End (2)

Wall End sounds like a romantic remnant from working-class history but the wall was nothing more than a flood defence embankment from Barking Creek. This is essentially East Ham East.

West Ham (3)

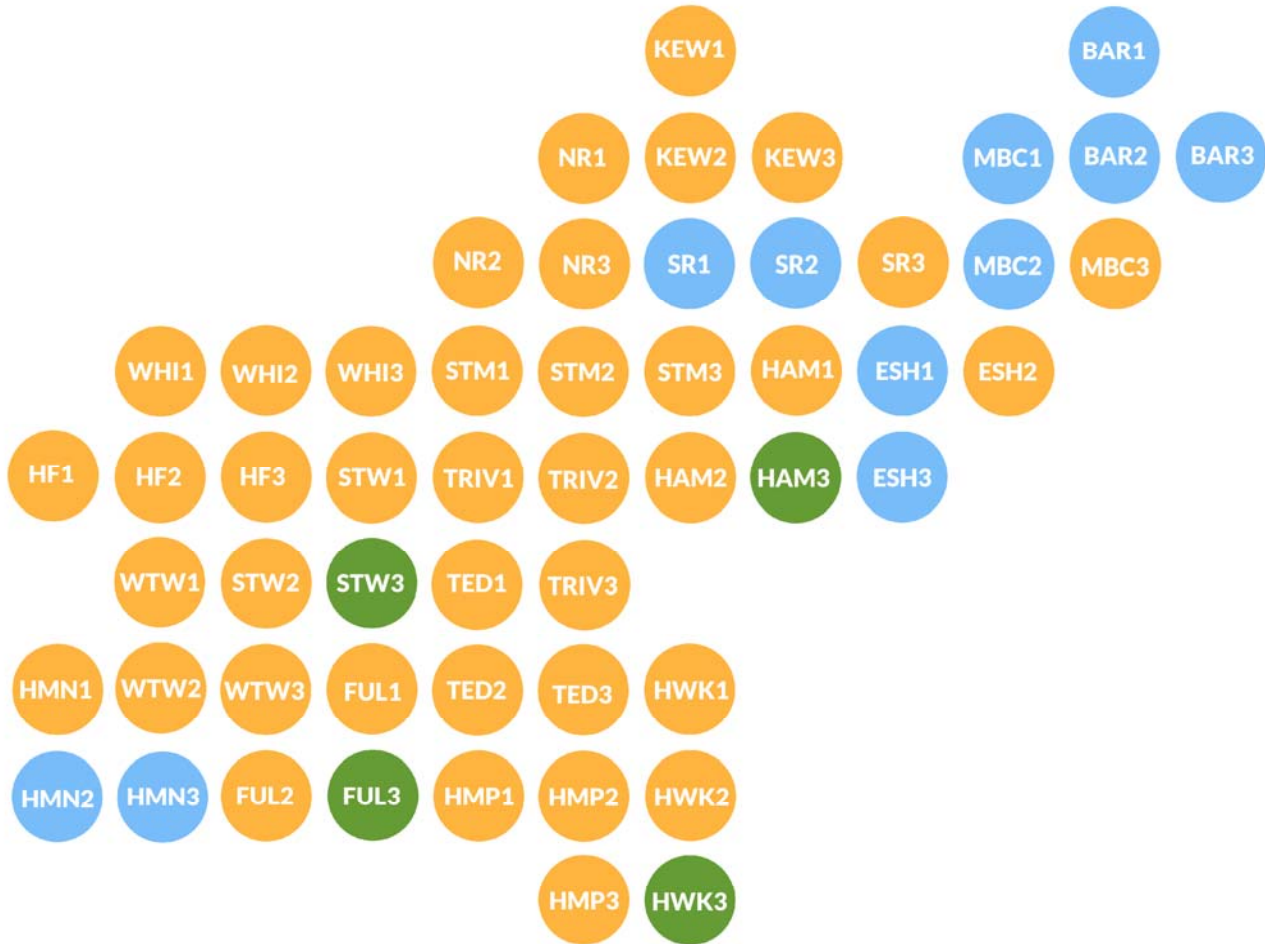
The arguably better known, but smaller of the two "Hams" here, West Ham ward is entirely unaltered in this review. Labour polled over 60% and the second placed Conservatives 12% in 2018, so this is not going to be a competitive ward in 2022.

Competitive Labour	2	Safe Labour	58	
Stratford Olympic Park		Beckton	Forest Gate South	Plaistow West
		Boleyn	Green Street East	Plashet
		Canning Town North	Green Street West	Royal Albert
		Canning Town South	Little Ilford	Royal Victoria
		Custom House	Manor Park	Stratford
		East Ham	Maryland	Wall End
		East Ham South	Plaistow North	
		Forest Gate North	Plaistow South	

Richmond upon Thames

2018 current wards	39	11	4	0
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2018 new wards	39	11	4	0
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The boundary changes here were the least radical in London. None of the parties submitted borough-wide plans leaving it entirely to the commission to redraw the map.

The Liberal Democrats won a landslide majority in 2018 - not quite of the levels managed in the late 1980s and early 1990s but still crushing. But this is a borough that swings; the Tories tend to enjoy big majorities when they win control here.

But this is a borough where Brexit may have impaired Conservative chances long term; and which - of the three south-west London boroughs they are strongest in - the electors have the longest experience of voting for the centre parties and, arguably,

the best demographics for the Lib Dems (and Greens).

No changes have been made to Heathfield: now Labour's best (or least poor!) chance of a gain; neighbouring West Twickenham (which in 1998 produced a huge Labour majority) has lost some territory which is mainly open space, not housing.

But voters are now so clearly aware that the only choices here are Lib Dem or Conservative-run councils that even if Labour were as popular nationally as they were in the late 1990s they would struggle to win anything nowadays.

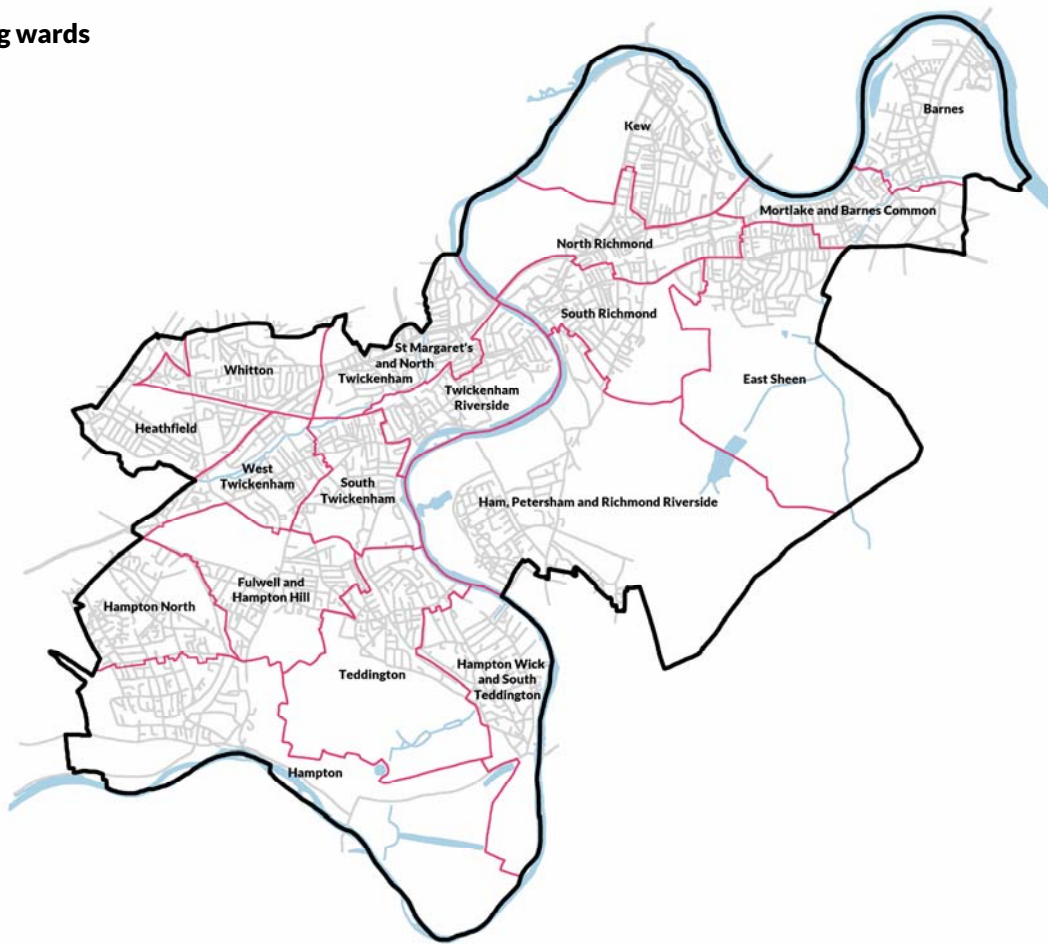
Perhaps the most interesting question now is: how might the Greens progress. The Lib

Dems must surely be reticent about gifting them any more of what otherwise would probably be their seats: we've already seen in a by-election in Hampton Wick ward what happens to Green prospects when they go head-to-head with the Lib Dems.

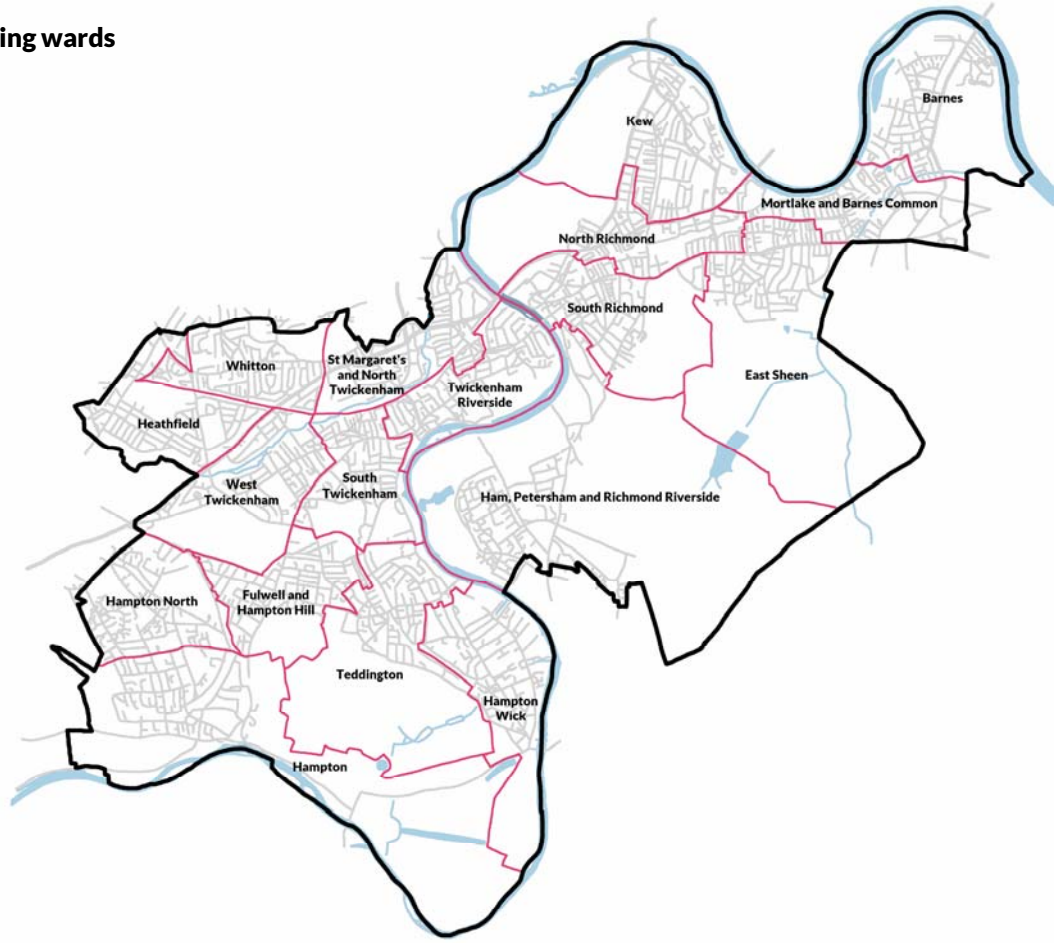
Perhaps the best hope of continuing their alliance would be to give the Greens clear runs in the few Tory-held seats left?

Richmond has changed control several times in recent years: in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2018. The last Conservative administration here lasted two terms and this Lib Dem one has a majority large enough to withstand all but the most fierce swing back. But when it chooses to oust a party lots of seats tend to change hands.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Barnes (3 cllrs)

Almost entirely unchanged now the major development around the Harrods Depository has long been completed. The ward reverted to the Conservatives around the time that massive development was finished. Gyles Brandreth's daughter is one of the Conservative councillors, and the Tories were about eight points clear of the Lib Dems in 2018.

East Sheen (3)

Unaltered ward covering almost half of Richmond Park plus Palewell Common and the streets south of Upper Richmond Road.

The ward split two Tories to one Lib Dem in 2018, the first Lib Dem to ever win here (by 54 votes). But the Lib Dems won a landslide by-election victory here in 2019 in what was always the best (sometimes only) Conservative ward in the borough.

Fulwell and Hampton Hill (3)

Gains the Fulwell Park golf club and some electorate along Twickenham Road. This was one of the Lib Dem-Green pact wards; the Green replacing a Tory in what has been a split ward these past two elections.

Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside (3)

Unaltered ward, traditionally the strongest Lib Dem ward in the borough, but much closer these days, even after the 2018 Lib Dem surge. It contains most of Richmond Park and the hamlets around the curve of the Thames past Richmond. There is some council housing in this ward: it was once a Labour-voting area.

The Greens won one of the seats here as part of their election pact with the Lib Dems, but they were only just over 400 votes clear in a high turnout election. If the Lib Dems contest that third seat they will surely get it, though the split could let in a Conservative on a very low winning percentage.

Hampton (3)

This sprawling ward covers the entire south of the Middlesex side of the borough with the vast bulk of the electorate in the west. Usually one of the stronger Lib Dem wards but the Tories weren't miles behind

here in 2018. The only boundary change is running the northern border down the centre of Broad Lane, rather than south of it.

Hampton North (3)

Elected two Conservatives in 2018 despite the Lib Dem landslide, but doesn't have an especially great record of voting Tory. UKIP stood in 2018 and polled twice the amount the third Tory lost by. The only boundary change is running the southern border down the centre of Broad Lane, rather than south of it.

Hampton Wick and Teddington South (3)

Boundaries are unchanged but the ward name has been lengthened. The Lib Dems gained the Green seat here in a 2021 by-election; their pact seemingly over. In fact, they thrashed them: Lib Dems 53%, Green 12%. The Tories showed no sign of recovery in this once reasonably safe ward of theirs: they managed just 26%.

Heathfield (2)

Commission proposed renaming this ward Whitton South, but that didn't survive the consultation. Heathfield was a three-way marginal in 2014 with the Tories winning two of the three seats and Labour a very close third.

Labour was confident of winning this Hounslow-borders ward in 2018 but the huge surge in the Lib Dem vote took it much further from Labour's grasp as the Tories - just - faded to third place. Labour and the Conservatives are about 500 votes short. There were no boundary changes here.

Nowadays Labour's best opportunity - they were about five hundred off winning a seat here in 2018, though there was a big increase in the Lib Dem vote. Boundaries unchanged.

Kew (3)

Kew was the first ward in Richmond borough to elect Liberal councillors back in 1971. In the early 2000s the ward swung to the Tories, ousting then council leader Serge Lourie. But it's swung back a fair bit and the third Lib Dem councillor was almost ten percentage points clear in 2018.

It'd be surprising if the Tories got this one back, but it's not quite impregnable.

Yet another ward with no boundary changes at all.

Mortlake & Barnes Common (3)

And another. Mortlake is, or was, the only ward on the Surrey side of the borough that Labour could win when it was very popular nationally - it's as close as Richmond gets to an affordable neighbourhood. But in 2002 it was merged with much of Palewell ward - the Barnes Common side - and that's very, very not Labour. That boundary change, not reversed this time, plus Labour's decline nationally and the alignment behind the Lib Dems locally makes this yet another zero prospect for Labour.

North Richmond (3)

The Lib Dems took all three seats in North Richmond - just - in 2018. There was no Green candidate in this ward: it wasn't a pact ward - so both the Lib Dem and Conservative percentages were much higher than in South Richmond, which was.

St Margarets and North Twickenham (3)

This is one of the safer Lib Dem wards immediately south of Isleworth. The ward boundary has been slightly realigned with Twickenham Riverside but essentially it's unchanged.

South Richmond (3)

Another unaltered ward. This is one of the Conservative-Lib Dem split wards with former Tory MEP - now Lib Dem - Bill Newton-Dunn snatching the third seat here in 2018. Greens were about ten points behind the two main contestants here. This and Barnes were the only two wards where the pact between the Lib Dems and Greens didn't work as planned.

South Twickenham (3)

The last of the "pact" wards with the Green councillor about 120 votes ahead of the top Conservative. This ward is the Strawberry Hill part of Twickenham: fairly densely packed. The ward's boundary with West Twickenham has been slightly adjusted but it's a very minor change.

Teddington (3)

Another unaltered ward. Teddington has a very faded history of electing Labour councillors but a more recent history of being one of the safest Lib Dem wards in this borough.

Twickenham Riverside (3)

Boundary slightly realigned with St Margaret's and North Twickenham but essentially unchanged. The Conservatives lost all three seats here in 2018 by a lot and a Women's Equality Party candidate polled an impressive 17% of the vote.

West Twickenham (3)

Ward looks quite radically different on a map but this is mainly just a transfer of a golf course to Fulwell and Hampton Hill; relatively few electors transfer.

Labour won West Twickenham on more favourable boundaries in 1994 and 1998 (the latter election by a lot) but was easily ousted in 2002 and haven't been anywhere close since.

Whitton (3)

Another unaltered ward: the home of Twickenham rugby stadium. None of the decent level of Labour support in next-door Heathfield rubs off on this ward, despite both wards bordering solid Labour areas just over the borough boundary in Hounslow.

This isn't a hard border: there is not much difference in housing styles either side of it and no Berlin Wall keeps the two boroughs apart. It's just different perceptions of place and levels of party campaigning that make Hounslow vote Labour and this part of Twickenham vote Lib Dem.

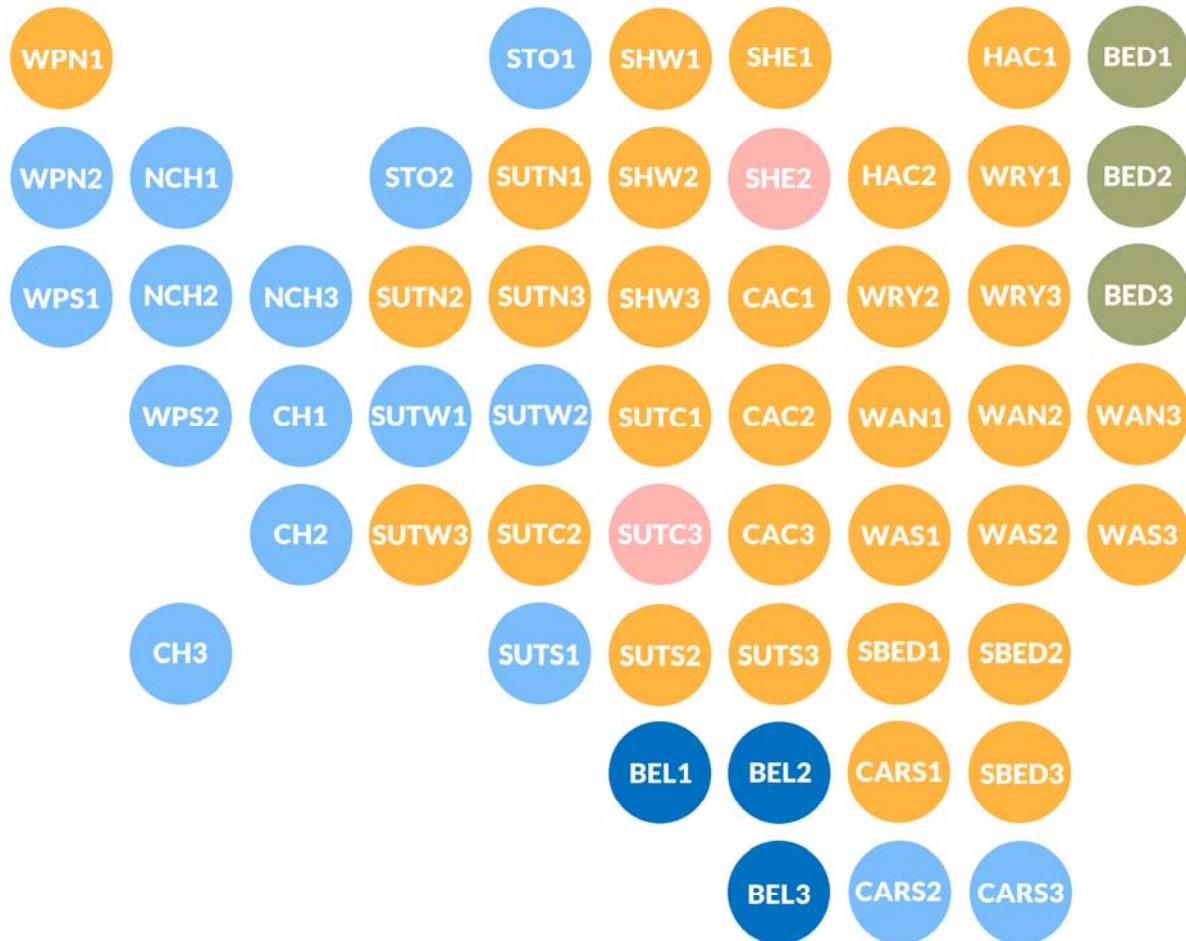
The Lib Dems gained two seats here in 2018 but the Conservatives weren't that far off - if there's a Tory rebound this might be one of their top targets.

Competitive Conservative 11	Competitive Green Party 4	Competitive Lib Dem 13	Safe Lib Dem 26
Barnes	Fulwell (1 seat)	East Sheen (1 seat)	Fulwell (2 seats)
East Sheen (2 seats)	Ham (1 seat)	Hampton North (1 seat)	Ham (2 seats)
Hampton North (2 seats)	Hampton Wick (1 seat)	Heathfield	Hampton
Mortlake (2 seats)	South Twickenham (1 seat)	Mortlake (1 seat)	Hampton Wick (2 seats)
South Richmond (2 seats)		North Richmond	Kew
		South Richmond (1 seat)	St Margaret's
		Whitton	South Twickenham (2 seats)
			Teddington
			Twickenham Riverside
			West Twickenham

Sutton

2018 current wards	33	18	0	3
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2018 new wards	31	19	2	3
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Having agreed with Sutton Council's preference for retaining 54 councillors (as opposed to Labour's more vague proposition for a larger council of around 57, depending on the size Merton ended up being for some obscure reason) there were very few issues of electoral imbalance for the Local Government Boundary Commission to resolve.

Just two wards: Sutton Central and Wandle Valley, had grown beyond the accepted 10% variance, though Worcester Park was also getting there. So, it was not hugely surprising that Sutton has been added to the list of boroughs undergoing relatively minor change.

The plans are not without political consequence, however, because the St Helier area gets a new ward: Wandle Valley is essentially chopped in half, with a new two-member Hackbridge ward east of the Wandle, and a two-member St Helier East to the west of that river.

Both of these wards are winnable for Labour though St Helier East is the better prospect and the Independents who won Beddington North in 2018 might also fancy their chances in Hackbridge.

One other new ward is created. Worcester Park, Nonsuch (renamed Worcester Park South) and Stonecot are reduced to two-

member wards and a new, three-member ward - North Cheam - is created to their east and south. This is essentially a reinvention of the North Cheam ward that existed prior to 2002 and that ward was one of the best Lib Dem prospects in the borough (they polled over 70% here in 1994).

Whether it still is following the substantial Conservative 2019 general election win in Sutton and Cheam is questionable, but then Sutton Lib Dems were able to win big council majorities for a decade and more before they won the local parliamentary seats in 1997.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Beddington (3 cllrs)

Barely altered; just loses the "North" of its title. Independents should hold if they want to.

Belmont (3)

The best Tory ward in Sutton with almost no boundary changes.

Carshalton Central (3)

Again: almost unchanged - now using the rail line as the entire southern boundary.

Carshalton South and Clockhouse (3)

Very minor boundary changes insufficient to alter balance in this split ward.

Cheam (3)

Another virtually unchanged ward that Tories regained in 2018.

Hackbridge (2)

Wandle Valley is split in half; the rest of it creates St Helier East ward.

North Cheam (3)

There was a 2-member North Cheam ward prior to 2002 which was just about the safest Lib Dem ward in Sutton. This 3-member version takes territory from Nonsuch, Stonecot and Worcester Park wards.

St Helier East (2)

Pre 2002 there were northern and southern St Helier divisions. All of this new eastern ward comes from Wandle Valley ward, but taking it back further it's the eastern half of St Helier North. Labour was 67 votes short of winning a seat in Wandle Valley in 2018. This is the better half of Wandle Valley for them - sufficiently better to predict that they'd have won at least one of the seats in St Helier East last time.

St Helier West (3)

Virtually unchanged ward. Labour was 46 votes shy of winning a seat here in 2018 and the Tories polled a decent 20%. UKIP also polled very strongly here in 2014.

South Beddington and Roundshaw (3)

Ward boundaries are largely unchanged though Roundshaw has been added to the ward name. Roundshaw has some of the highest levels of deprivation in Sutton but Labour isn't strong here.

Stonecot (2)

Reduced from 3 councillors to 2 due to the creation of North Cheam ward, this is one of the key wards that have turned Sutton and Cheam into a reasonably safe Conservative constituency: Tory vote increased by around 20 points in 2018. The boundary changes probably make this ward better for the Conservatives.

Sutton Central (3)

The third of the wards Labour challenges credibly in - they were just 32 votes short of the third seat here in 2018. The boundary changes are relatively minor - a dozen or so streets in the west are transferred to Sutton West. This is the more affluent end of the ward, so we're forecasting that Labour would have won that 3rd seat had these boundaries been in force last time.

Sutton North (3)

Council Leader Ruth Dombey's ward - again, largely unaltered - the Tories narrowed the gap here substantially in 2018: they were about 80 votes short of the third seat.

Sutton South (3)

Sutton South has split 2 Lib Dem to 1 Conservative in the past three elections. Very minor boundary changes utilising the railway line as the ward's northern border.

Sutton West and East Cheam (2)

This ward has shrunk in geographical size but gains a longer name. Lib Dem since 1986, the Tories put in another surge here in 2018 and won two of the seats. The territory added from Sutton Central may not help them capture the third seat, but the swing to the Tories in the 2019 general election must give them hope of a clean sweep regardless.

The Wrythe (3)

Arguably the safest Lib Dem ward and minor boundary changes will not affect that.

Wallington North (3)

The Wallington wards form a corridor south of The Wrythe and are similarly safe for the Lib Dems: the only three reasonably reliable Lib Dem wards following the 2018 results.

Wallington South (3)

Unaltered ward, a bit closer than the preceding two but should still stay Lib Dem.

Worcester Park North (2)

Loses one councillor - probably a Lib Dem in this split ward.

Worcester Park South (2)

Loses one councillor - Tories gained all three here in 2018 in their surge in the west of the ward so this would be a Conservative loss.

Safe Conservative	3	Competitive Conservative	16	Competitive Lib Dem	22	Safe Lib Dem	9
Belmont		Carshalton South (2 seats)		Carshalton Central		The Wrythe	
		Cheam		Carshalton South (1 seat)		Wallington North	
Safe Independent	3	North Cheam		Hackbridge		Wallington South	
		Stonecot		St Helier East (1 seat)			
Beddington		Sutton South (1 seat)		St Helier West			
		Sutton West (2 seats)		South Beddington			
Competitive Labour	2	Worcester Park North (1 seat)		Sutton Central (2 seats)			
		Worcester Park South		Sutton North			
St Helier East (1 seat)				Sutton South (2 seats)			
Sutton Central (1 seat)				Sutton West (1 seat)			

Waltham Forest

2018 current wards	46	14	0	0
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2018 new wards	45	15	0	0
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In the 1980s and 1990s, Labour struggled to win overall majorities in Waltham Forest, partly because the Conservatives were competitive in Walthamstow - but more because the Lib Dems put together a chain of wards in Leyton, Higham Hill and Chapel End.

The collapse of the Lib Dems following their coalition with the Conservatives in 2010, put paid to that part of Labour's problem while demographic change - young professionals and more affluent ethnic minority voters - moving north into relatively affordable Walthamstow and the southern end of Chingford, has made sure that Conservative ambitions are curbed.

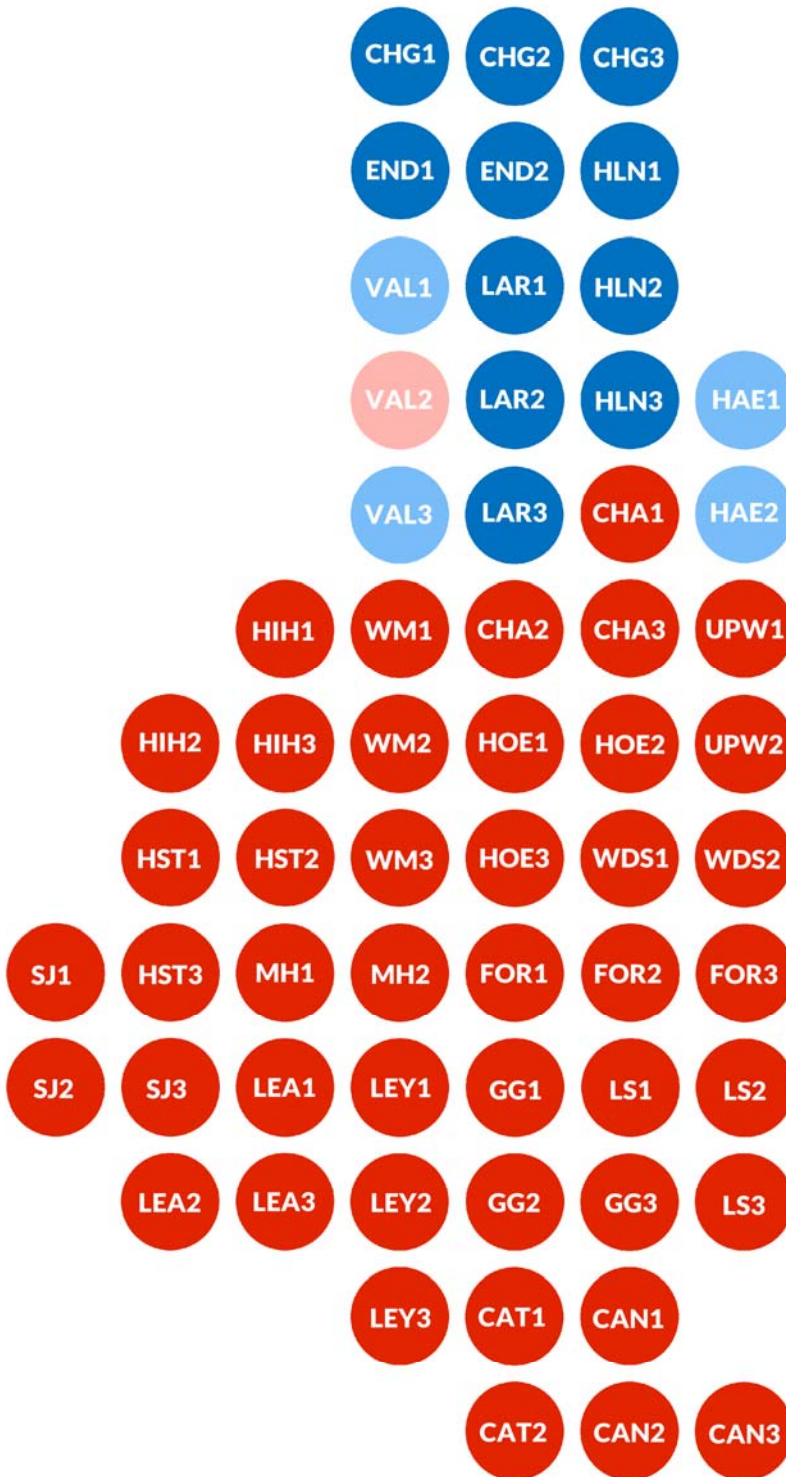
The boundary review was a little messy. At the drafts stage several submissions (including Labour's) were not logged, the commission published a draft plan based on the Conservative submission and then the mistake was noticed and the whole thing was restarted.

Finally published in December 2020 the results aren't as grim for the Conservatives as they could have been. They only lose one of their secure (for now) seats in Endlebury ward, and the changes to the marginal Hale End and Highams Park ward might make them net gainers in 2022. But there is still no path for them towards a majority, and the demographics continue to keep them on the defence.

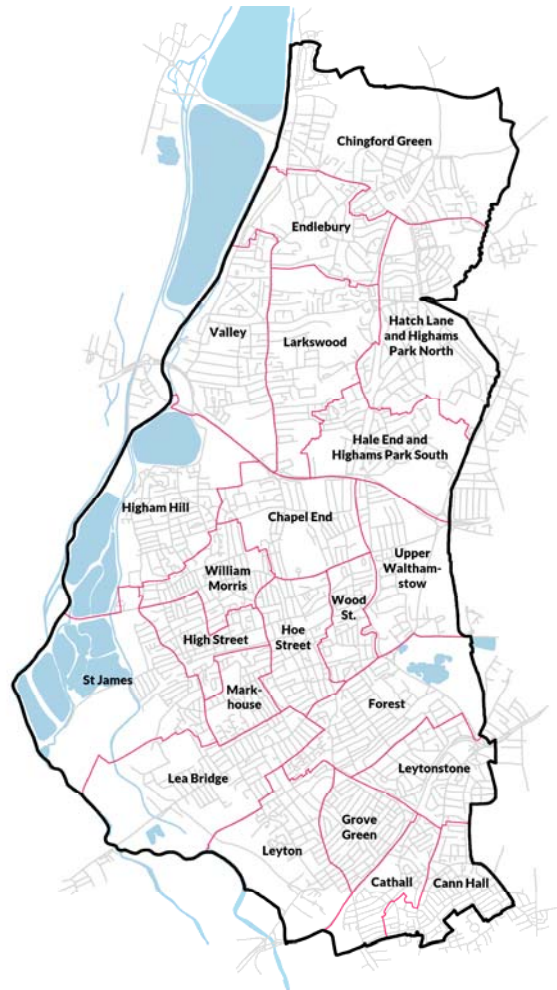
Labour loses seats in Leyton's Cathall ward and the Walthamstow wards of Markhouse and Wood Street, and the Chingford ward of Hale End and Highams Park South. But these losses are offset by the creation of an entirely new ward: Upper Walthamstow and the re-creation of a St James ward in the south-west of the borough. That's four seats lost but five created.

The only question is what the impact of the creation of Upper Walthamstow - which comprises the eastern end of pared-back Wood Street ward and the chunk of Hale End and Highams Park south of the North Circular, will have on the new version of that latter ward.

Simplistically, if the borough becomes more Labour as you head south, then a marginal Labour ward losing its southern-most section is bad news for the party. Labour was just under six points ahead in that ward in 2018 and the changes are radical enough to perhaps have erased that lead if this section is very much more Labour than the side north of the A406. But whether or not the Tories can win these two seats, the only difference that will make is between a Labour majority of 30 seats or 34.



Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Cann Hall (3 cllrs)

The south-easternmost ward in the borough - just north of Forest Gate - and a solid Lib Dem ward for almost a quarter of a century Labour is now almost 40 points clear here and expanding it into always-Labour Cathall is probably the last nail in any Lib Dem hopes here.

Cathall (2)

Cathall, focussed on a fierce council estate of that name, loses a seat in this review. Labour has never lost here and took over 70% in 2018.

Chapel End (3)

This review imposes the North Circular as a ward boundary right across the borough. That pares back Chapel End ward, compensated by taking a small chunk of territory from Higham Hill. Chapel End was another reliably Lib Dem ward for years and before that a Labour-Tory marginal, but the Greens finished (very distant) runners up in 2018.

Chingford Green (3)

The northern-most ward, utterly different from the dense terraces and council blocks of Leyton. This is still strongly Conservative territory though they lost a lot of votes to UKIP in 2014. Almost unchanged in this review: still three safe Tory seats.

Endlebury (3)

Endlebury was even safer than Chingford Green in 2018 but, because its population isn't keeping pace with the growth of the borough, and because it loses a small piece of territory to its northern neighbour, this ward loses a councillor.

Forest (3)

Forest was historically one of the marginal Waltham Forest wards but the Conservative vote has evaporated. Expanded slightly into the northern tip of Leyton ward, the Lib Dems are not entirely out of the picture here but Labour is over 30 points ahead of them.

Grove Green (3)

A maze of long, densely packed terraced streets in the centre of Leyton, this ward has nearly always stayed loyal to Labour. Like Forest there is a latent Lib Dem vote here, but over a thousand votes behind Labour.

Hale End and Highams Park South (2)

Labour gained a seat here in 2014 and all three in 2018 having before that been almost always loyal to the Conservatives. As mentioned in the introduction, this ward loses its southern-most third to the new Upper Walthamstow ward and with it one of its councillors - and that change might enable the Conservatives to reassert themselves, at least in the short term. But the demographics continue to work against the Tories.

Hatch Lane and Highams Park North (3)

The least secure of the Conservative wards after Valley, Labour is about 13 points behind in a ward that hasn't changed vastly. That's not an insignificant deficit but nor is it quite enough for the Tories to be able to rest on their laurels.

High Street (3)

High Street ward loses the majority of its territory but this is because the western half of the ward is largely reservoirs and open space. The pared-down High Street comprises the area east of Blackhorse Road now: a dense urban ward that should be at least as safe as the current version.

Higham Hill (3)

Another of the former Lib Dem wards in the middle of the borough, their challenge has again faded and Labour looks very secure here. The Greens also finished runners up here in 2018 but too far behind to challenge seriously.

Hoe Street (3)

This central Walthamstow ward is unchanged. Labour's lead here was safe but not overwhelming, again with the Green Party finishing second in 2018.

Larkwood (3)

This is another just-about safe enough Conservative Chingford ward, though expanding south into the part of Labour Chapel End ward that currently lies north of the North Circular. But this section is not huge and won't influence the result this time at least.

Lea Bridge (3)

Another unaltered ward stretching from the bridge over the Lea right into the centre of the borough, a long way from the Lea. Labour polled over 60% here in 2018.

Leyton (3)

This remains the Lib Dems' best chance of winning back seats in this borough but they were about 25% or 1,600 votes adrift in 2018. But the only ward they polled above 30% in. The ward loses its northern tip but is otherwise unchanged.

Leytonstone (3)

Another safe essentially inner-city ward. An unaltered ward bar its southern boundary being realigned entirely along the London Overground line.

Markhouse (2)

Markhouse is heavily redrawn to help make room for the re-created St James ward and loses a councillor as a consequence. Another very secure ward with a high Muslim population.

St James (3)

This regenerated ward (called St James's Street when it existed before 2002) is formed mainly from the western end of High Street and Markhouse wards, with a small bit of William Morris thrown in. Labour won with less than half the vote in 1998 but with a diversity of opponents. They'll win here by a lot more probably when battle resumes.

Upper Walthamstow (3)

A completely new ward taking the eastern end of Wood Street ward and the southern area of Hale End and Highams Park. The Wood Street section will dictate the outcome of this ward, voting almost 60% Labour in 2018 and there are plenty of Labour votes coming in from Hale End. It'll be a bit less Labour than Wood Street, but not enough for them to worry about.

Valley (3)

Valley elected a Labour councillor in 2014 and 2018 (and 1998 too) and this ward isn't changed enough in this review to alter that outcome (though it does gain a small amount of territory from Endlebury that should boost Tory chances.

William Morris (3)

Largely unchanged central Walthamstow ward that is securely Labour.

Wood Street (3)

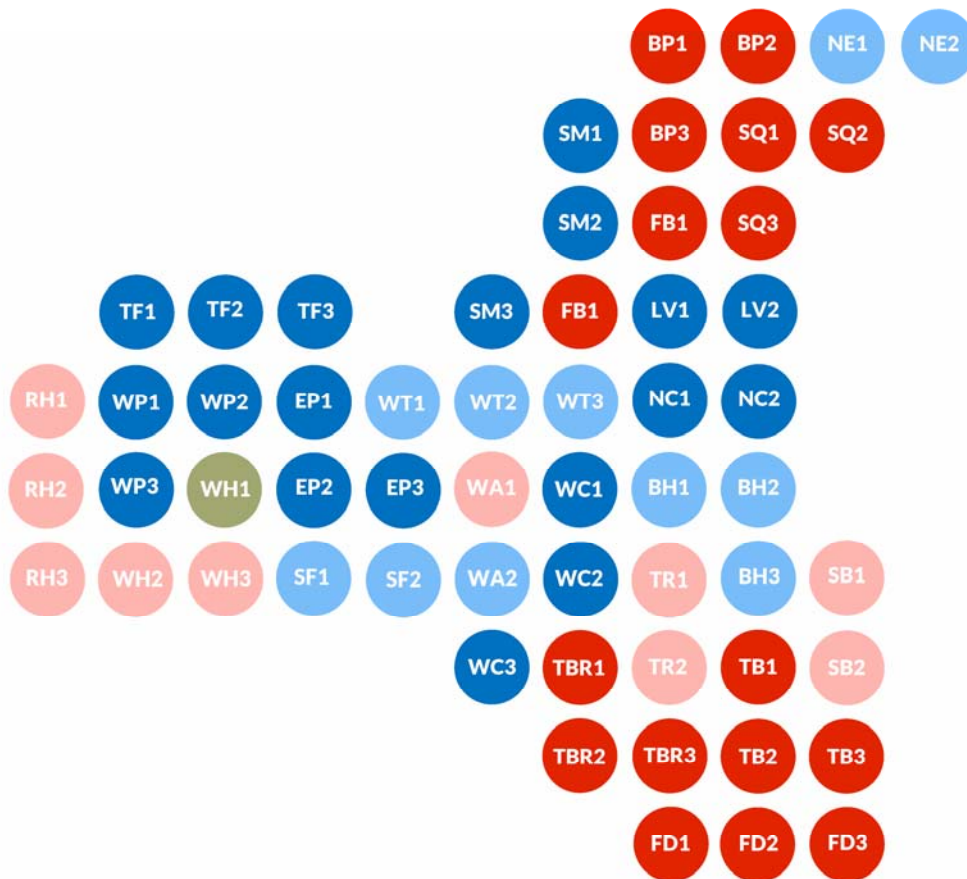
The majority of Wood Street's geographical size moves over to Upper Walthamstow, leaving a very small, compact ward just east of Hoe Street. Labour won most of Walthamstow's seats with very similar majorities and this is no different.

Safe Conservative	11	Competitive Conservative	4	Competitive Labour	1	Safe Labour	44
Chingford Green		Hale End & Highams Park S.		Valley (1 seat)		Cann Hall	
Endlebury		Valley (2 seats)				Cathall	
Hatch Lane & Highams Park N.						Chapel End	
Larkwood						Forest	
						Grove Green	
						High Street	
						Higham Hill	
						Hoe Street	
						Lea Bridge	
						Leyton	
						Leytonstone	
						St James	
						Upper Walthamstow	
						William Morris	
						Wood Street	

Wandsworth

2018 current wards	33	26	0	1
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2018 new wards	30	27	0	1
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The headline stats above put Wandsworth right on the brink: a Tory majority of just two seats, down from six.

But the headline is somewhat deceptive because even if Labour takes the most marginal Tory seat in Wandle ward it's very much harder for them to get a second - and it's two that they need to win the council.

This is the paradox of the Wandsworth review: it will help Labour move within touching distance, but it makes it far harder to gain a majority. Beyond split Wandle, no Tory seat looks especially marginal. I've been generous in colouring several wards that I'm sceptical Labour can win as competitive in the map above.

The underlying demographics of Wandsworth mean a shift in seats from Tooting to Battersea - due to mega-development in Nine Elms and Central Wandsworth; with Putney maintaining its current representation.

The two lost Tooting seats are interesting. One is a Labour seat in Bedford, which becomes a 2-councillor South Balham ward, and very slightly more marginal. The other erased seat is in Nightingale, which becomes a 2-councillor Trinity ward.

But other changes to this ward, and the closeness of the Nightingale result in 2018 mean Trinity would probably have been won by Labour, so it's not an even loss of seats here: the Tories probably lose two from this arrangement.

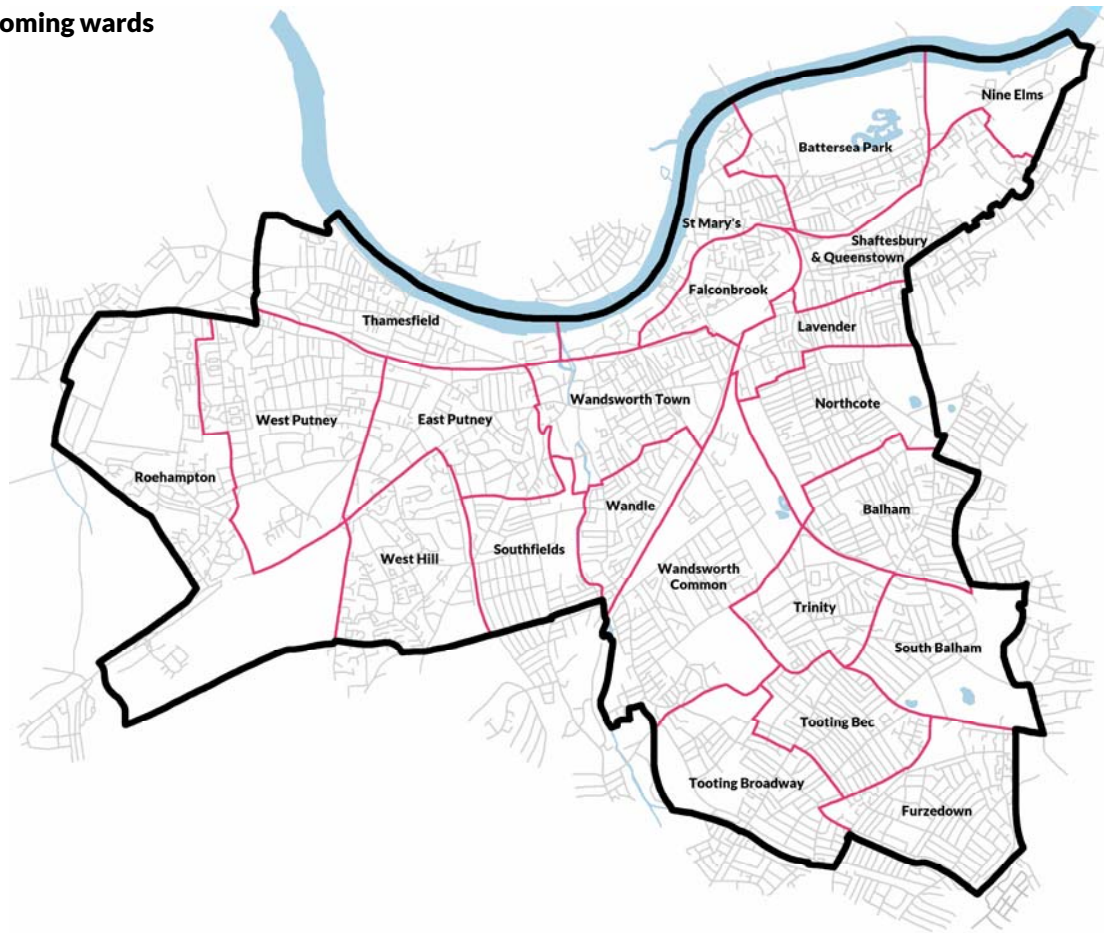
Labour did not draw Battersea's wards at all well in their submission: the area's gains split evenly. In 2018 Battersea's existing seats went 14 Conservative, 7 Labour. Re-run on these lines they'd have elected 15 Tory and 8 Labour councillors. There is a new 2-seat Labour ward in Falconbrook - the west end of abolished Latchmere; and a new 2-seat Tory ward in Nine Elms.

But Labour loses its foothold in St Mary's with the removal of the Surrey Lane and Ethelburga council estates, and that ward's gain of yet more of Wandsworth's riverside. And while the Tories lose a seat in 3-councillor Shaftesbury as it becomes 2-councillor Lavender, Labour was just 35 votes shy in the former while the latter is unwinnable for them.

The key wards to watch: West Hill, where anything could happen; and split Wandle, which Labour will fancy and the Tories are nervous about. But beyond that? Maybe Southfields, given how easily Labour gained Putney in the 2019 general election. But Southfields, like much of this borough, is far more inclined to vote Labour in general elections than in locals. As are Balham and Wandsworth Town - a reconfigured Fairfield. The "Wandsworth effect", while diminished, is still a factor.

This is where the election will be won and the Tories start as favourites in those maybe, maybe not competitive new wards.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Balham (3 cllrs)

Labour got to within 9 points of the Tories in Balham in 2018 but the ward gains the most Conservative part of abolished Nightingale ward so their task is a fair bit harder in 2022.

Battersea Park (3)

This new ward combines the Battersea Fields estates from Latchmere, the Lego-like Doddington estate from Queenstown, the heavily Tory mansion blocks ringing the park and - oddly - the Surrey Lane estate - which forms the funnel shape on the western boundary. This will be a comfortably Labour ward.

East Putney (3)

East Putney gets slightly cleaner boundaries but stretches further into central Wandsworth than the outgoing ward does. Labour tried to slim this ward down to two councillors but their machinations for the middle of the borough were thwarted. Will remain a safely Conservative 3-councillor ward.

Falconbrook (2)

Falconbrook is the western end of Latchmere ward, including the Clapham Junction estates being "regenerated". Until these hundreds of new apartments have residents on the electoral register - and possibly even then - this will be a safe Labour ward.

Furzedown (3)

Largely unchanged - the wedge of Graveney ward between Church and Rectory Lanes moved into the ward may even make Furzedown safer for Labour than it is now.

Lavender (2)

Marginal Shaftesbury has been split in two. This is the uphill half running along Clapham Common, plus the northern part of Northcote ward - the shopping centre at St John's Road - and will be much safer for the Conservatives than Shaftesbury, albeit with one fewer councillor.

Nine Elms (2)

Nine Elms ward is being reborn because of the vast redevelopment around the new US Embassy.

This could have been a 3-seat marginal if the Patmore, Savona and Carey Gardens had been added, but Labour persuaded the Commission against that idea so it'll start a reasonably secure Conservative 2-member ward with a very small electorate.

Northcote (2)

Old Northcote was already under-sized for a 3-councillor ward and has lost further territory to Lavender ward, reducing its representation to two. But they'll be Conservatives.

Roehampton (3)

Roehampton didn't swing in 2018 and the areas being added to it because its electorate has fallen are more favourable to the Conservatives. But the ward would have needed to retain Putney Heath to become truly marginal again. Labour wins by huge margins in general elections, but by not so much in council battles.

St Mary's (3)

St Mary's Park elected a Labour councillor in 2018 but this St Mary's would not. Labour persuaded the commission to move the Surrey Lane council estate into the new Battersea Park ward; and to extend St Mary's west of Wandsworth Bridge, which contains more gated-off riverside housing. Tories will start at least 15 points ahead.

Shaftesbury & Queenstown (3)

This is the northern, downhill side of Shaftesbury - far better for Labour than the uphill parts; plus the Queenstown "Diamond" and the isolated council estates far up Wandsworth Road. Will be comfortably but not massively Labour.

South Balham (2)

The successor to marginal-ish Bedford but slimmed down, losing a councillor and probably a slither of the Labour majority built up in 2018. Would need a decisive swing back to the Conservatives in London for them to retake this ward.

A by-election in Bedford ward in 2021 saw a minute further shift to Labour but essentially was the same result as 2018.

Southfields (2)

Slimmed-down to core Southfields: the Grid, the Wimbledon Park Road area north of the tube station, and the Earlsfield borders. This should be safer for the Conservatives than the outgoing, 3 member Southfields that stretched north to include the low-turnout Arndale estate and other decent areas for Labour north of Granville Road. That said, Labour's Fleur Anderson MP won here comfortably in the 2019 general election.

Thamesfield (3)

Barely altered in the boundary changes, this riverside Putney ward is one of the safest Tory fortresses in Wandsworth.

Tooting Bec (3)

The two core Tooting wards have been reconfigured east-west rather than north-south. This ward: Upper Tooting, is much the less safe of the two but all six Tooting seats are nowadays very secure for Labour.

Tooting Broadway (3)

Takes the western sections of Graveney and Tooting wards: St George's Hospital, the Hazlehurst and Tooting Grove estates. This is much better for Labour than the uphill Tooting Bec ward; it may even be the best Labour ward in Wandsworth.

Trinity (2)

Labour never won Nightingale ward but came very close in 2018. These boundary changes remove enough Tory votes east of the railway that this successor 2-seat ward starts out with Labour slightly ahead. They're not a shoo-in because a bloc of mainly Tory voters from Wandsworth Common transfers in; it's just they're fewer than those exiting to Balham ward.

Wandle (2)

Essentially identical to the Earlsfield ward that existed prior to 2002. Back then this was a gentrifying marginal that kept returning the Tories by ever-increasing margins. But there's been a substantial swing back to Labour more recently.

Enough to win? Possibly - but definitely enough to make it at least neck-and-neck in 2018. Labour is strongest downhill on the Henry Prince and Atheldene estates; the Tories uphill in the multi-million-pound houses nearest Wandsworth Common.

Wandsworth Common (3)

A big part of the reason Labour won seats in the outgoing Earlsfield recently was lots of new-build key worker housing in the south of the ward. This - indeed all of Earlsfield south of the station - is moving into Wandsworth Common, a ward that actually swung to the Tories in 2018 and is by far their safest. The majority will come down a bit, but nowhere near enough for Labour to threaten.

Wandsworth Town (3)

This is most of abolished Fairfield: safe enough for the Tories, gaining the northern chunk of Southfields. That chunk includes the huge Arndale council estate above Southside shopping centre, but also new build towers of a very different sort all around it - and it's very hard to see Labour polling enough votes to challenge. It's a ward they need for a comfortable working majority though.

West Hill (3)

Boundaries are unaltered. This is the joker in the pack due to the presence of Malcolm Grimston, a former Tory councillor turned independent. In 2018 Labour gained the other two seats but on a much lower vote share than 2014 due to Grimston's landslide; the Tories slid even further.

This is a polarised ward with tower block council estates that Labour usually wins easily in general elections - but struggle at other times (mainly because they don't turn out). Tories will target the ward to offset any surprises elsewhere in the borough, but given the 2019 general election result that might be a fanciful hope.

West Putney (3)

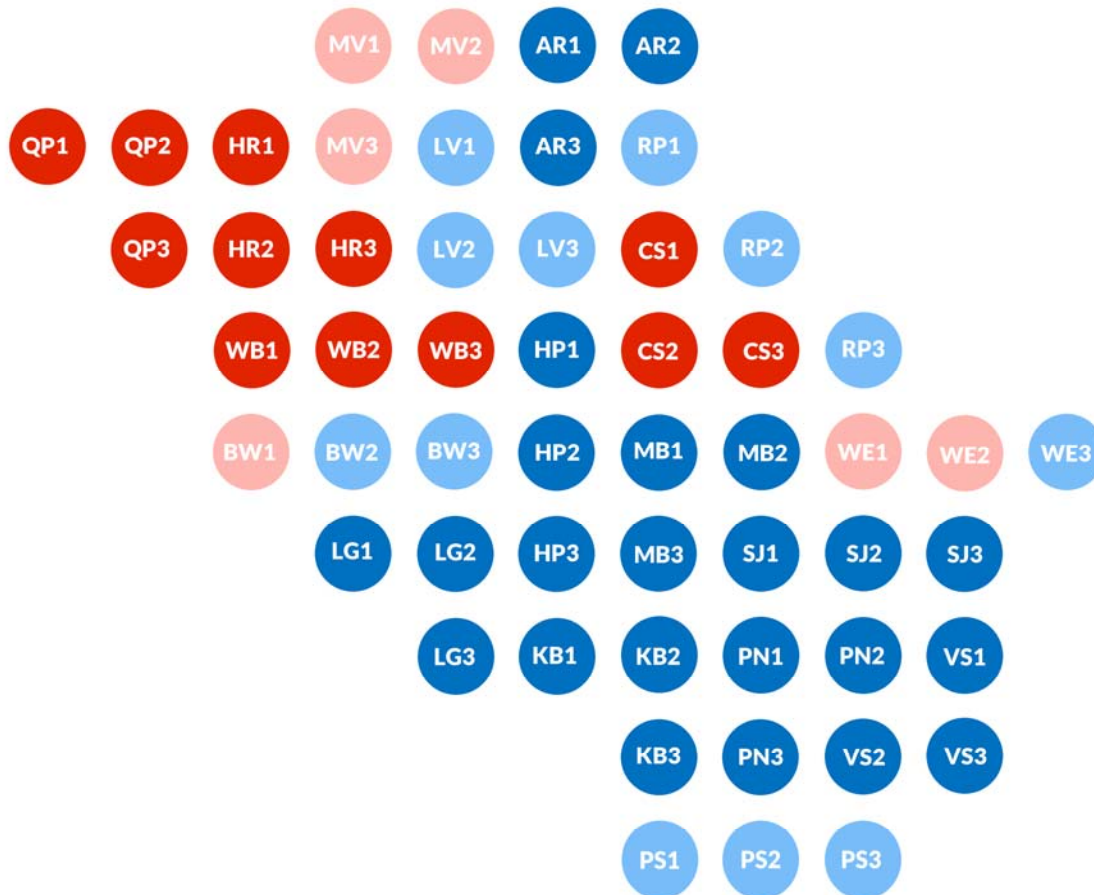
The whole of the Ashburton estate, previously split with East Putney, moves into West Putney, and some Tory voting areas in the west transfer to Roehampton. But that is more than offset by the other transfers from East Putney; the rest of the ultra-affluent hillside; plus Putney Heath moving back to West Putney from Roehampton. Will remain one of the safest Tory wards even though it shouldn't be.

Safe Conservative	19	Competitive Conservative	11	Competitive Labour	10	Safe Labour	17
East Putney		Balham		Roehampton		Battersea Park	
Lavender		Nine Elms		South Balham		Falconbrook	
Northcote		Southfields		Trinity		Furzedown	
St Mary's		Wandle (1 seat)		Wandle (1 seat)		Shaftesbury and Queenstown	
Thamesfield		Wandsworth Town		West Hill (2 seats)		Tooting Bec	
Wandsworth Common						Tooting Broadway	
West Putney							
						Safe Independent	1
						West Hill (1 seat)	

Westminster

2018 current wards	41	19	0	0
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2018 new wards	36	18	0	0
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Westminster is another Tory-run borough that sought a significant (10%) reduction in councillors - a move that has hurt them far more than opposition Labour.

In fact the headline result is worse than it appears because the five-seat loss is net: it includes two seats that flip back to them in the successor ward to Churchill: Pimlico South.

The actual seven seats lost are easy enough to locate - for a start two entire wards: Bryanston and Dorset Square; and Tachbrook, are abolished. The seventh seat is one we believe has been flipped to Labour in West End ward, where more favourable boundaries suggest they might have won two of the three had the ward been fought on these lines in 2018.

The only upside to such a significant sacrifice of seats (as might be seen in

Wandsworth) is if the realignment entrenches the ruling group further in the wards that survived. But here that's not obviously true either.

We've already seen that the revised West End ward is slightly better for Labour. Pimlico South is clearly worse because it now includes Dolphin Square, still a very Conservative enclave. But it's not so much worse for Labour that they're out of contention: it'll be hard, but winning back Churchill after a quarter of a century as a Tory ward was hard too.

Maida Vale: Labour's most marginal fully-held ward becomes better for them with the addition of territory from Harrow Road; while neighbouring Little Venice - a Tory marginal, is unchanged.

Bayswater's boundaries are largely unaltered so, although the Tories managed to keep the Hallfield estate out there isn't

much additional gain for them in this split ward.

Regent's Park should become better for Labour too with the abolition of Bryanston and Dorset Square. There is a fair amount of council housing in the Dorset Square chunk of the ward transferring to Regent's park: Bryanston was where the Tories stacked up the votes. They're going to start ahead still, but Labour was already closing in on this ward before the boundary review.

So if Labour can regain Pimlico South, win the better Regent's Park and take the two seats in split Bayswater and West End, that gets them to 26 with 28 now needed for a majority. Little Venice and, by a few degrees more, Vincent Square, are hard to crack, but they only need two from these six seats for a majority.

Incoming wards



Outgoing wards



Ward by ward

Abbey Road (3 cllrs)

The most northerly Westminster ward including Lord's Cricket Ground. Some streets swap with Regent's Park ward but this remains a very safe Tory St John's Wood ward.

Bayswater (3)

This marginal ward elected one Labour councillor in 2018, which was a decent result given the ward hasn't contained the Hallfield council estate since 2002. There are quite small boundary changes here: some streets down the borough boundary with Kensington come in from Lancaster Gate ward. They'll slightly help the Tories but probably not enough to erase the Labour councillor had this redrawn ward been fought in 2018.

Church Street (3)

Unaltered ward. This is a safe Labour Marylebone ward with the Regents Canal running through it. Some of the massive Labour strength here could have been divested to create two slightly less safe 2-councillor Labour wards but no one proposed this to the commission.

Harrow Road (3)

Largely unaltered ward with, actually, only a very small section of Harrow Road running through it. The middle of the three ultra-safe Labour North Paddington wards, it donates some territory to Maida Vale and gains some from Westbourne but it's an even swap politically.

Hyde Park (3)

Largely unaltered ward though finally gets a piece of Hyde Park itself, even if this makes for an ugly boundary. Labour inching closer but this remains just about a safe Tory ward that includes Paddington Station and the huge Paddington Basin regeneration zone.

Knightsbridge and Belgravia (3)

This ward is the nub of how wrong the boundary review went for Labour.

By 2018 the electorate of Knightsbridge and Belgravia had crashed to just 4,310 (compared to 8,175 in Queen's Park).

Labour could have proposed adding the whole of Mayfair to it; creating the possibility of a much more favourable West

End ward; or simply a 2-member ward on broadly similar boundaries to now.

Instead, the Tories succeeded in adding the Ebury Bridge and Abbots Manor Estates, enabling them to turn Churchill ward - now Pimlico South - Tory.

Lancaster Gate (3)

Retains the Hallfield estate - one of the infamous "designated sales" estates under Lady Porter - so a decent Labour base but still too much Tory territory for them to challenge seriously. If only they'd persuaded the Commission to return Hallfield to Bayswater ward...

Little Venice (3)

Ward unaltered - Labour pulled close in 2018 but couldn't break through in this polarised ward. If Maida Vale and Little Venice had been broken into three 2-councillor wards Labour would have been favoured to win the smaller Little Venice as the better Labour areas lie south of the Regents Canal - and could have been added to from oversized Westbourne.

Maida Vale (3)

Labour just scraped all three Maida Vale seats in 2018 and the gain of a V-shaped chunk of Harrow Road ward will embed them further, though should still just about retain marginal status.

Marylebone (3)

As an example of how Westminster's electorate has declined precipitously, this ward now covers virtually the entirety of the pre-2002 Bryanston ward, most of the pre-2002 Baker Street ward and most of the pre-2002 Cavendish ward - three into one, give or take.

This expansion of the outgoing Marylebone High Street ward reinforces its Conservative dominance; especially as somewhat mixed Fitzrovia territory along the boundary with Camden is transferred to West End.

Pimlico North (3)

The three Pimlico wards are reduced to two due to Knightsbridge and Belgravia expanding significantly down their eastern size.

Pimlico North is essentially Warwick ward but with the Lillington Gardens estate. Lillington Gardens will reduce the Conservative majority but, like Vincent Square, there will still be too much Tory-voting territory to give Labour a realistic chance unless London swings a lot further towards them.

Pimlico South (3)

A disastrous outcome for Labour having just clawed back Churchill ward in 2014.

The ward loses both the Ebury Bridge estate and the Peabody Estate off Turpentine Lane and gains most of the old, massively Tory St George's ward, of which Dolphin Square was its most famous address.

It's not all bad news: the Tachbrook estate comes in from, oddly enough, Tachbrook ward, but along with it comes more exclusive housing surrounding it.

Pimlico South is not beyond reach but Labour already struggled in Churchill in 2018 following the defection to the Tories of ward councillor Murad Gassanly, who held his seat.

Queen's Park (3)

Ward unaltered. Locals argued ward boundaries should stay aligned with the recently-established Community Council; still the only one in London. It's a little large, so a couple of streets could have been moved to Harrow Road ward, but it makes no odds: this Kilburn borders ward is very safely Labour.

Regent's Park (3)

Ward has to expand due to a fall in the electorate, so Bryanston & Dorset Square ward is abolished and Regent's Park gains the Dorset Square half - north of the Marylebone Road. This new area is mixed and will make Labour somewhat more competitive in Regent's Park. It's still probably a little beyond their reach at the moment.

St James's (3)

This huge ward, geographically, comprises the heart of tourist, political, ecumenical and diplomatic Westminster. Stretches from Victoria Station right up to Aldwych, including St James's and Green Parks, the Palace of Westminster, Whitehall,

Trafalgar and Leicester Squares, Pall Mall and The Strand there are Labour pockets in this ward but not enough to seriously challenge for its three seats.

Vincent Square (3)

Victoria including the Millbank and Grosvenor estates - so there's a 2-member Labour ward locked somewhere within Vincent Square but probably not a 3-member one. That's because along with the estates are loads of exclusive mansion blocks surrounding Westminster Cathedral.

West End (3)

This huge slab of central Westminster north of Piccadilly fuses two quite different neighbourhoods: exclusive Mayfair and cosmopolitan Soho. This ward finally returned a Labour councillor in 2018 and the party's chances are bolstered - for a change - by the boundary changes.

The ward expands further northwards into bohemian Fitzrovia, shared with Camden, which helps Labour, though perhaps not quite so much that they would have won all three seats on these boundaries in 2018.

Westbourne (3)

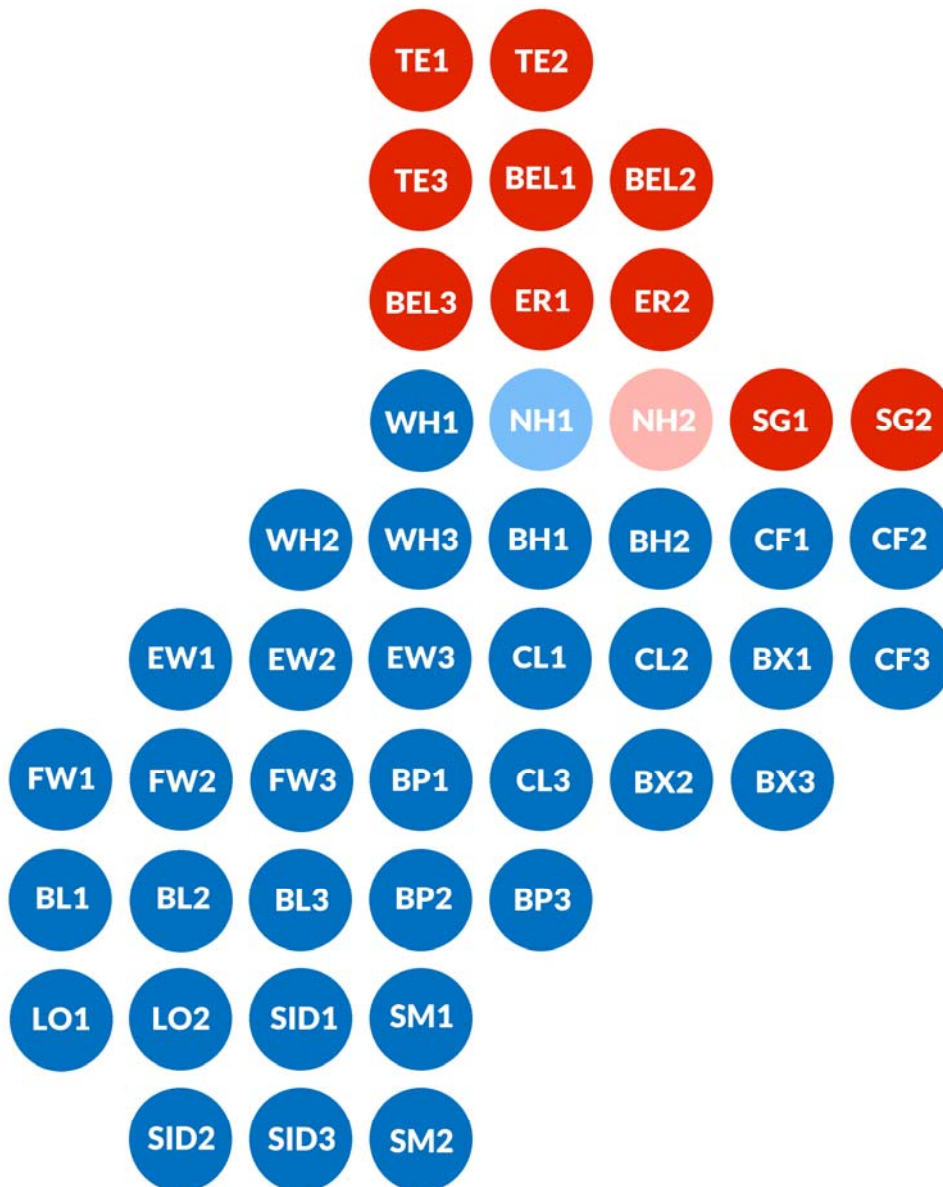
The largest ward in Westminster at present, and which somewhat uncomfortably straddles the Paddington Mainline, the elevated section of the Westway and the Hammersmith and City Line.

Westbourne donates a small amount of territory to Harrow Road but is otherwise unchanged, comprising huge high rise council estates like the Brindley, Brunel and Warwick. Very safe Labour.

Safe Conservative 27	Competitive Conservative 9	Competitive Labour 6	Safe Labour 12
Abbey Road	Bayswater (2 seats)	Bayswater (1 seat)	Church Street
Hyde Park	Pimlico South	Maida Vale	Harrow Road
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	Regent's Park	West End (2 seats)	Queen's Park
Lancaster Gate	West End (1 seat)		Westbourne
Little Venice			
Marylebone			
Pimlico North			
St James's			
Vincent Square			

The boroughs without boundary changes

Bexley



Bexley has become a very safe Conservative borough. It's also joint smallest borough in London these days, having reduced to just 45 councillors at its boundary review in time for the 2018 local elections.

Labour, which used to be able to challenge for power here, also had winnable wards the length and breadth of the borough: from Thamesmead to the Cray Valley, and from Lamorbey to Crayford.

Today the party is confined to the northern-most wards along the edge of the

Thames: gritty industrial areas plus the Bexley half of the Thamesmead GLC estate.

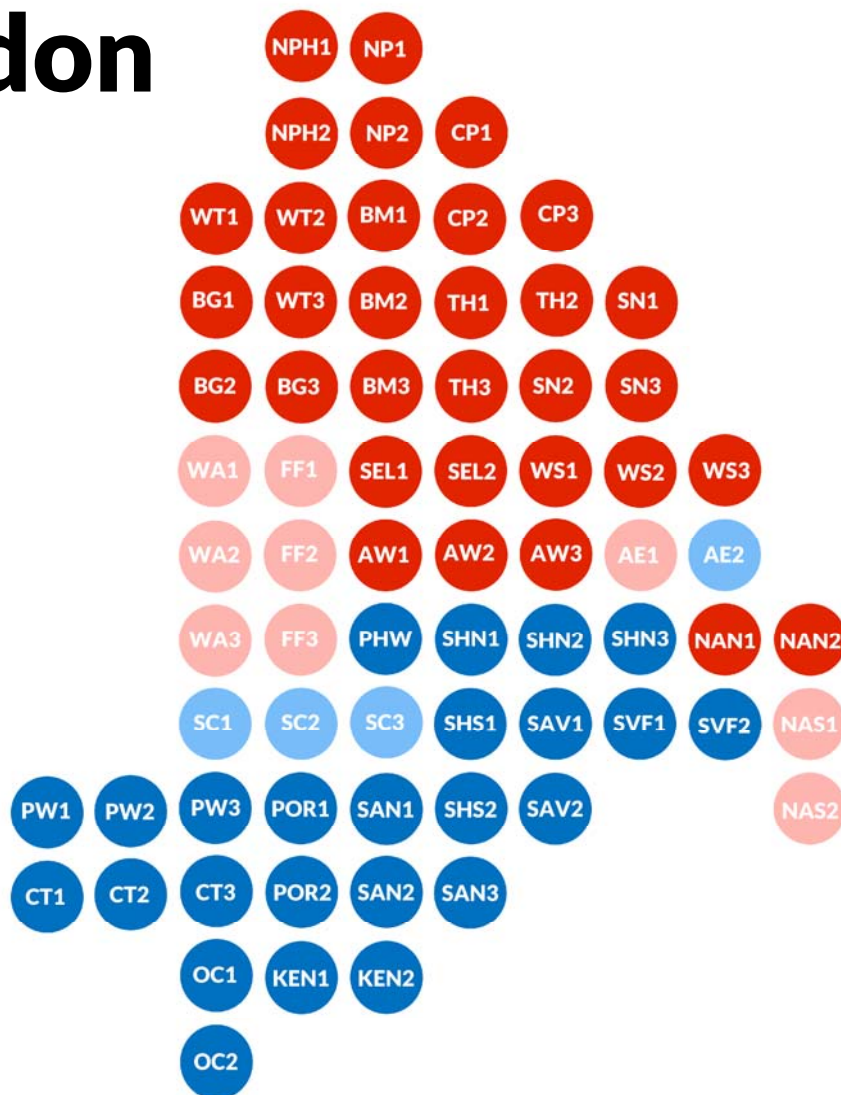
Labour gained one seat that it notionally didn't hold before the 2018 elections: 2-councillor Northumberland Park split its representation 1 Labour, 1 Conservative.

Labour are about ten points adrift in Crayford ward, fifteen in East Wickham and twenty in West Heath. These nine seats, plus the one left in Northumberland Heath represent the sum of Labour's realistic ambitions in Bexley.

That'd be a big advance in this much smaller council, but Bexley voted Leave and the gulf in values between Labour activists and the wider electorate in this Kentish borough is huge.

The SDP Liberal Alliance was once pretty strong in Bexley, centred on a block of wards in Bexleyheath and Welling. But this was more a protest vote than a demand for Liberalism and their votes crumbled as Labour became the clear alternative to the Tories, and thereafter when the BNP, which was based in Welling, surged.

Croydon



Labour has been beset by difficulties in the huge south London borough of Croydon since 2018.

Some of these; such as the additional strain placed on the borough by the presence of the government's visas and immigration department here - and the accompanying obligation to house prospective refugees and asylum seekers - are beyond the council's influence. Economic uncertainty also brought about the collapse of a massive town-centre regeneration scheme on which the council had staked a lot.

But more - far more - have been home-grown; the disastrous mismanagement of the council's in-house "housing developer" Brick by Brick; poor property acquisition; absurdly secretive and parochial political management by the former leader and cabinet member for finance; shocking neglect of a council block flooded by leaking pipes for months; a failed child services department which needed millions spent responding to a critical Ofsted report; and general over-spending by a

Labour administration which couldn't come across a problem without the urge to throw money they don't have at it.

The political consequences of this mismanagement have been massive cuts and as big an increase in council tax as can be imposed on residents without triggering a referendum, plus a government bail-out and the embarrassment of having commissioners sent in to make sure the council from now on lived within its means.

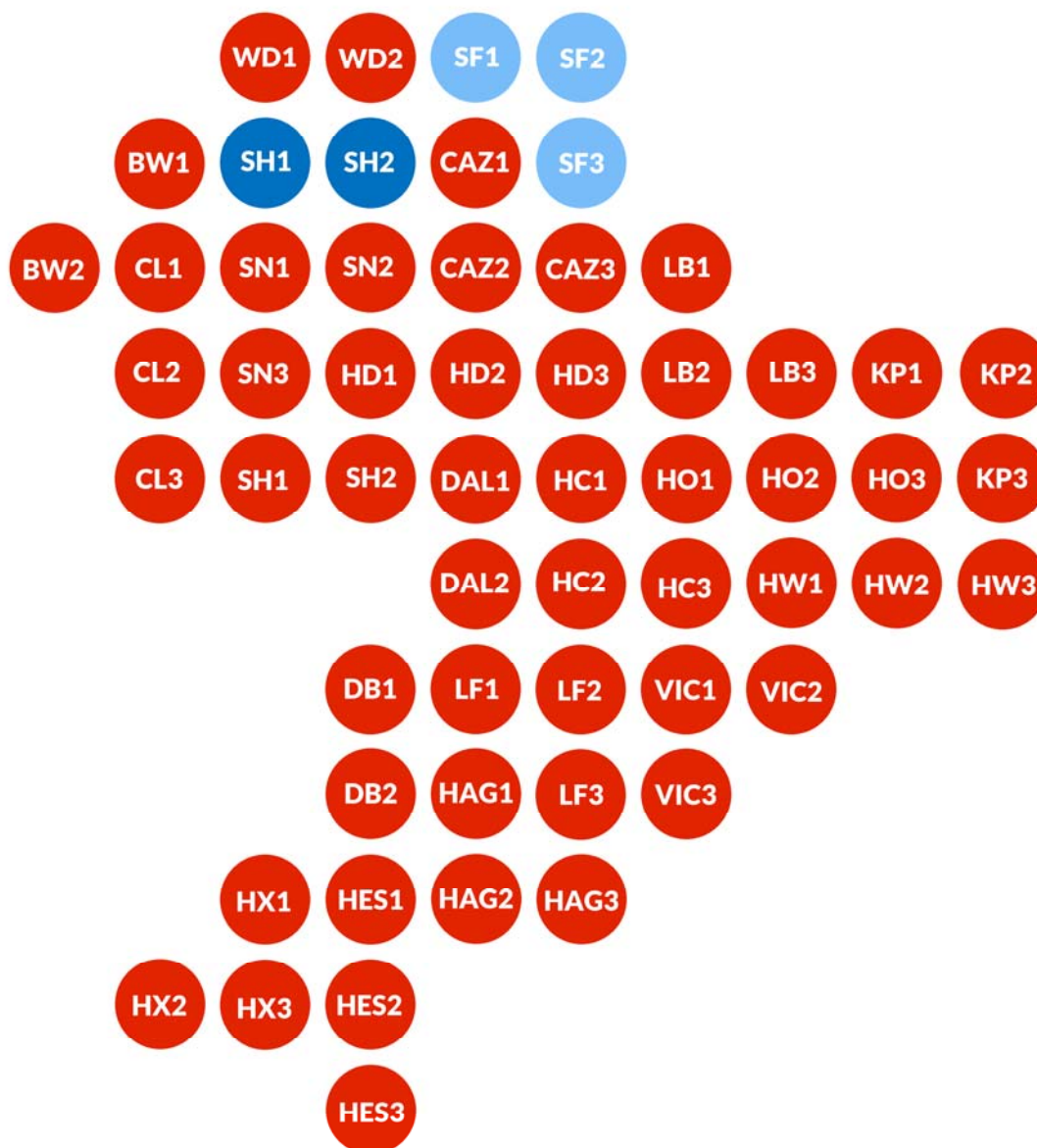
And there have been some signs of political consequence for Labour too. In a brace of by-elections in May 2021, Labour suffered huge swings against it in New Addington North (16%); South Norwood (15%) and Woodside (11%). These are all very safe Labour wards and Labour successfully defended them, but swings of that scale would easily erase the party's majority in 2022 and give the Tories the largest of London's councils. The split 2-member ward of Addiscombe East (the old Ashburton ward) would fall first; followed by New Addington South; then always-

marginal Waddon; and then Fairfield - the town centre ward which is still significantly under-sized. On the outer edges of the Tory battleground lies Norbury Park ward which would fall on the New Addington North 16% swing, but only just. Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood may - just may - be vulnerable because of controversies over a low traffic neighbourhood there and so may see an above-average swing if Labour is being evicted.

Nor, despite holding it in the by-election, can New Addington North be assumed to be secure: this isolated GLA estate is home to the sort of voters rapidly losing affection for the sort of Labour Party Sir Keir Starmer epitomises.

On top of all this, in October 2021 the council held a referendum on switching to a directly elected mayor. By and large, the pressure for this came from the Tory south of the borough, fed up with polarising divide and rule politics that seem to punish whichever half of the borough didn't vote for the party in power.

Hackney



After the single-party state councils of Newham and Barking & Dagenham, Hackney is probably the third-safest London Borough for Labour. The party has only lost here twice: in 1968 and 1994; these were both one-off debacles that were corrected at the subsequent election.

Aside from the heavily Jewish enclaves in the north of the borough, Hackney is nowadays uniformly Labour, seeing off the last Lib Dems in 2018 in Cazenove ward.

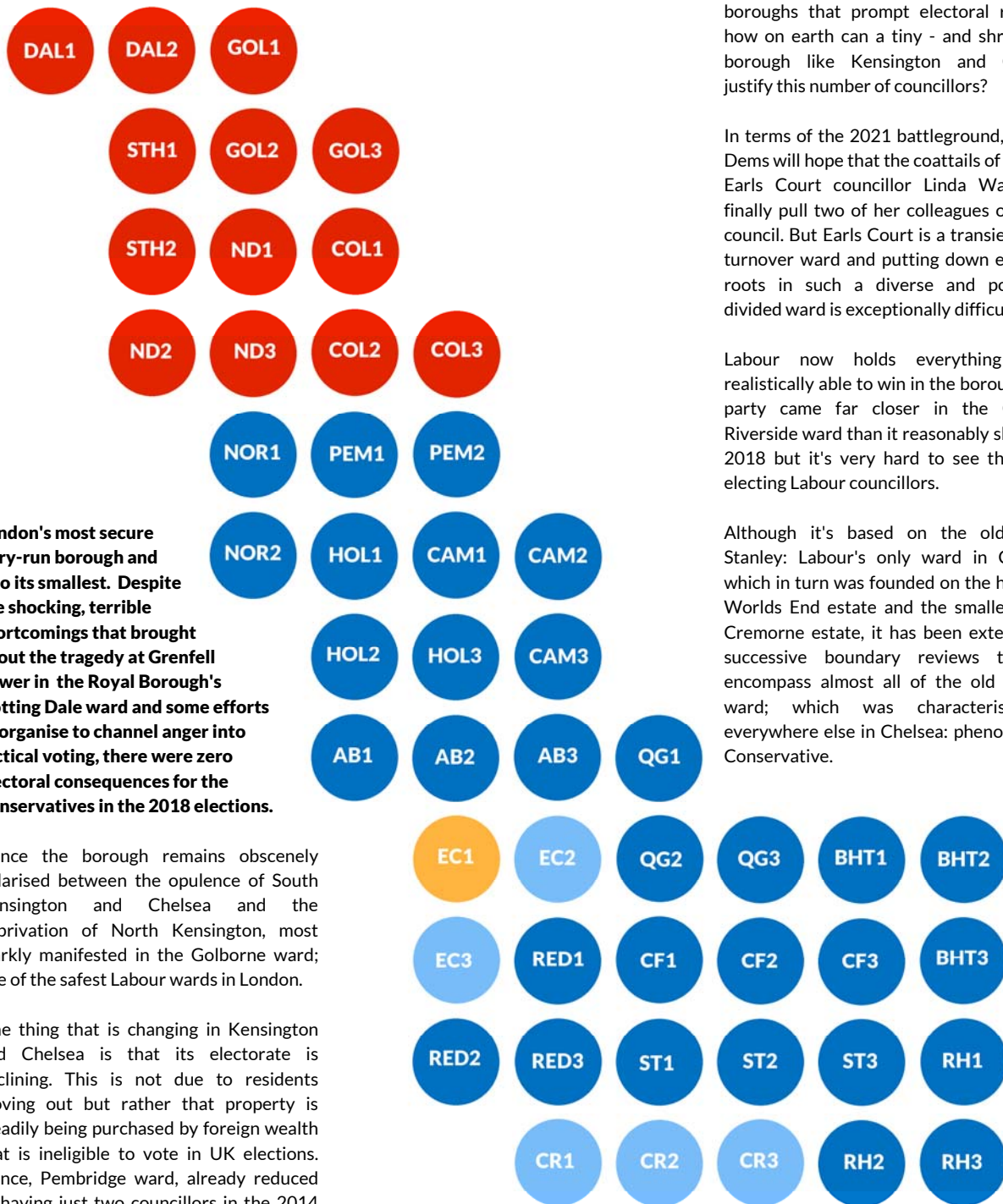
Hackney elected London's first Green Party councillors in the North Defoe ward in 1994 but that ward has long disappeared, as have the Greens who were elected there. But if a change is going to come in Hackney it will in likelihood come from that party.

Greens finished second in every ward except the Conservative-held ones and Cazenove, coming closest in Dalston and Hackney Downs. They are still a long way behind in most of the wards but perhaps not quite as far as it first appears.

The Greens tend to fare better at the Stoke Newington end of the borough rather than the Shoreditch end which is perhaps odd given the metrosexual stereotype of those who live in the south-west. Hoxton West, Hoxton East and De Beauvoir should all be wards that net a considerable Green vote.

The Conservatives hold everything they are likely to be able to win already, while the Lib Dems didn't lose Cazenove by that much and will be focussing on getting those three seats back.

Kensington and Chelsea



London's most secure Tory-run borough and also its smallest. Despite the shocking, terrible shortcomings that brought about the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in the Royal Borough's Notting Dale ward and some efforts to organise to channel anger into tactical voting, there were zero electoral consequences for the Conservatives in the 2018 elections.

Hence the borough remains obscenely polarised between the opulence of South Kensington and Chelsea and the deprivation of North Kensington, most starkly manifested in the Golborne ward; one of the safest Labour wards in London.

One thing that is changing in Kensington and Chelsea is that its electorate is declining. This is not due to residents moving out but rather that property is steadily being purchased by foreign wealth that is ineligible to vote in UK elections. Hence, Pembridge ward, already reduced to having just two councillors in the 2014 boundary review, barely has 3,000 electors.

Although the level of representation cannot reasonably be based on the need of an area for services or support, Kensington and Chelsea is heavily over-represented. On the electoral quota used for Hammersmith and Fulham (3,069 electors per councillor), the Royal Borough would merit 28 councillors, not 50.

Applying the quota of neighbouring Wandsworth (4,057) it would have 21 councillors; and on that of one of the massive Metropolitan cities - Leeds for example (6,064) just 14 councillors.

Putting aside for a moment that these massive divergences in the number of electors per councillor between boroughs are almost as iniquitous as those within

boroughs that prompt electoral reviews, how on earth can a tiny - and shrinking - borough like Kensington and Chelsea justify this number of councillors?

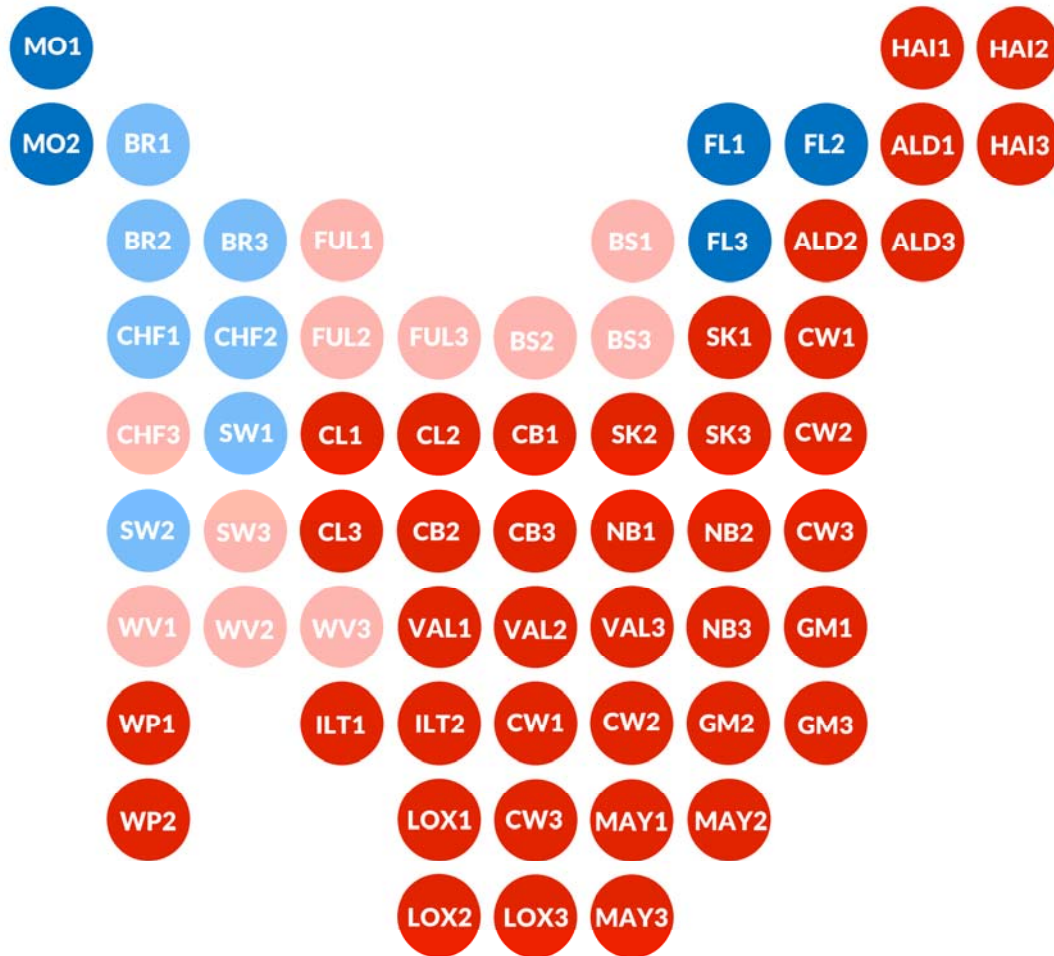
In terms of the 2021 battleground, the Lib Dems will hope that the coattails of popular Earls Court councillor Linda Wade can finally pull two of her colleagues onto the council. But Earls Court is a transient, high turnover ward and putting down electoral roots in such a diverse and politically divided ward is exceptionally difficult.

Labour now holds everything it is realistically able to win in the borough. The party came far closer in the Chelsea Riverside ward than it reasonably should in 2018 but it's very hard to see this ward electing Labour councillors.

Although it's based on the old South Stanley: Labour's only ward in Chelsea, which in turn was founded on the high-rise Worlds End estate and the smaller, older Cremorne estate, it has been extended in successive boundary reviews to now encompass almost all of the old Cheyne ward; which was characteristic of everywhere else in Chelsea: phenomenally Conservative.

Labour's best - or least bad - hope after Chelsea Riverside is Holland ward in South Kensington. There are Labour pockets here, but like so much else in this borough, much of the ward is either transient, hidden away behind entry phones and security gates; or not in the least inclined to vote Labour.

Redbridge



Redbridge used to be one of the safe, suburban, outer London Conservative boroughs, comprising the Tory-leaning marginal of Ilford South, far safer Ilford North and Winston Churchill's rock-solid Wanstead and Woodford. Today, Ilford South is a massively safe Labour constituency, Ilford North a Labour-leaning marginal and, if it existed, Wanstead and Woodford would just about be Labour too.

The history of London's East End has been as a home for immigrants from around the world, starting off largely with nothing, working tirelessly to enrich themselves and their new city and then moving out of the poorer areas enabling a new generation a start.

This is partly what's happened in Redbridge: more affluent principally Muslim families from Tower Hamlets, Newham and, to a lesser extent Barking

and Dagenham, moving out to the suburbs for a better quality of life.

Redbridge also benefits from the "gentrification effect" of having comparatively affordable housing and so attracting professionals seeking more bang for their buck willing to be slightly further from the centre of the capital.

They're able to find homes here because, of course, older residents are either moving out or dying out; white flight (that is: flight of white British citizens) from the capital is a huge and little-discussed demographic change that was identified in the 2011 census and will have continued further. And of course there's the widening gap between the Conservative Party and the type of people who live in cities like London.

All these trends weaken the Conservatives. They've broken the party in Merton, Croydon, Enfield, Harrow and Ealing. But

they've been most rapid in Redbridge - to the extent that only losing twelve seats in 2018 exceeded expectations.

There are signs that the Tory decline has bottomed out, at least for now. The 2019 general election saw a successful defence of Chingford & Woodford Green and a small swing away from Labour in Ilford North. These are the areas packed with marginal wards.

All the Tory seats here are marginal except two in Monkham and three in Fairlop. There are two split wards: Churchfields and South Woodford, and then the most vulnerable fully Labour-held wards are Wanstead Village and Barkingside. Leave-voting Hainault: one of the few parts of London where current Tory values may be more closely aligned than Labour's, may also be at risk. What isn't under threat, though, is Labour's majority on Redbridge. It may decline but it won't fall.

Southwark

The Conservatives lost their last seats on Southwark council in 2018 and, while they have a shot at winning back the two in Dulwich Village ward, there's as much chance of the Lib Dems pushing them into third this time.

While Labour has regained the Old Southwark & Bermondsey constituency, the Lib Dems remain highly competitive in the northern wards of the borough, actually increasing their seats here - partly due to the boundary changes that gave extra councillors to this end of Southwark.

Other than London Bridge and West Bermondsey, none of the Lib Dem wards look especially marginal - but it's quite hard to talk about Lib Dem wards in these terms: the party can be prone to larger swings than Labour and Conservatives.

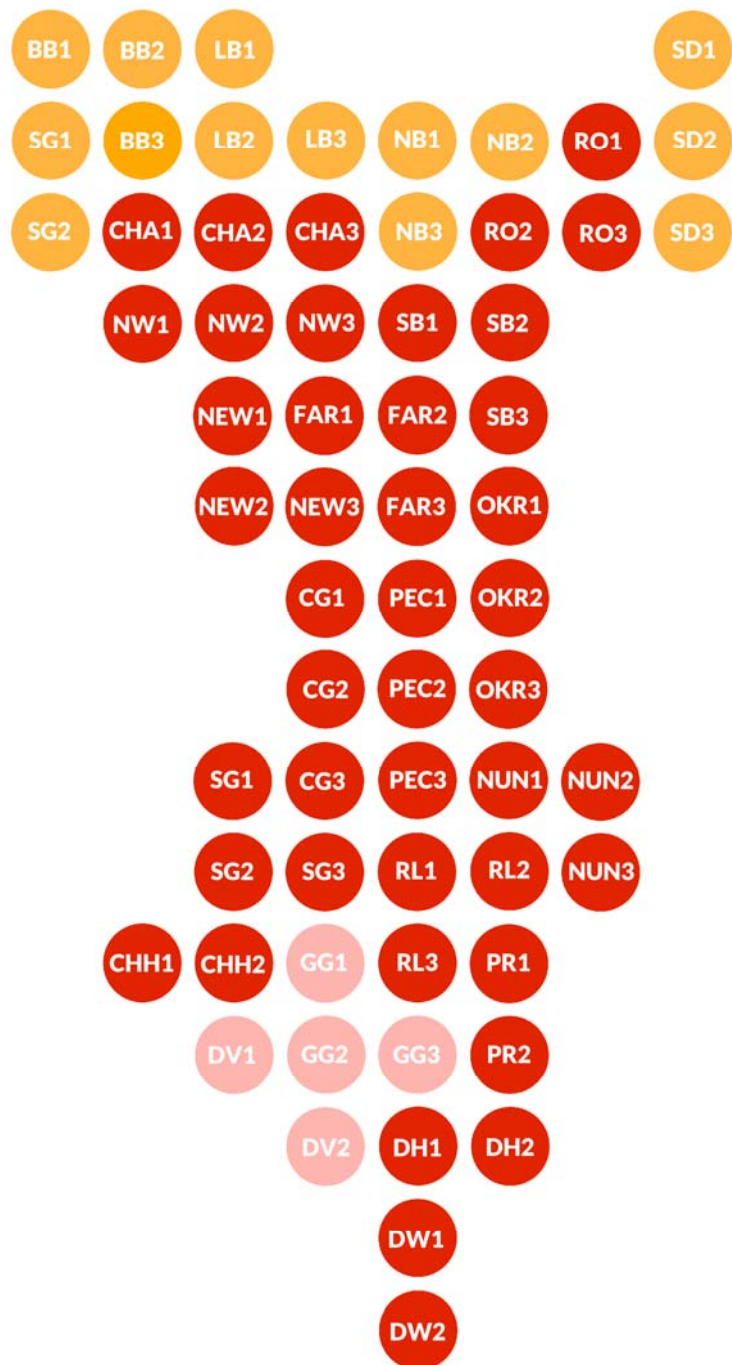
The Lib Dems will want Goose Green - the old East Dulwich - ward back, which they lost in 2018. Labour hasn't quite shut them out of Rotherhithe or South Bermondsey but nor are these quite marginals either.

There is still a lot of new housing coming onto the electoral register in Southwark and, as we've talked about in earlier borough profiles, we cannot be 100% certain how these new electors will vote. They also tend to be in gated off communities harder for political parties to reach. They probably won't be Tory voters in the main, but for the sort of people who'd opt to live in Southwark the Lib Dems and Greens could certainly compete.

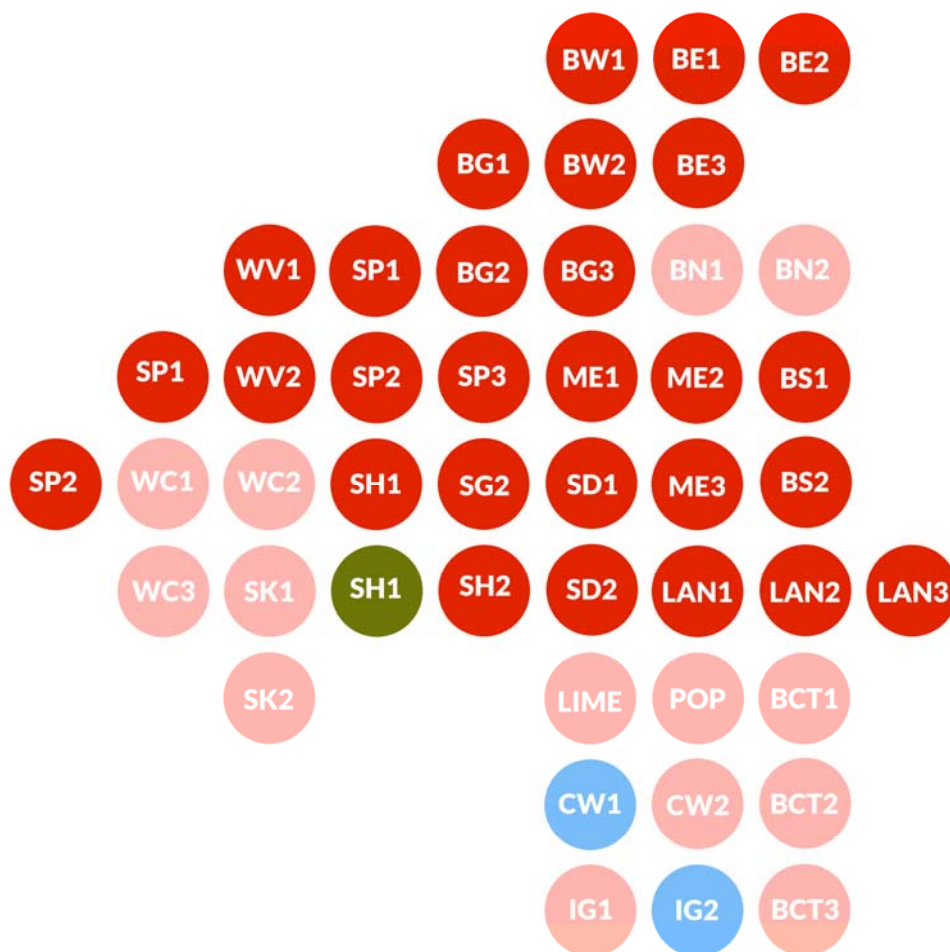
The Greens will want to get back on the council - they won a seat in what is now Champion Hill in 2006. The Greens' problem is that, while they came second in a handful of wards in the 2021 London elections, these tended to be the very safest Labour wards in Peckham: St Giles, Peckham Rye, and Rye Lane.

That said, be mindful of the many spectacular wins the Greens pulled off in the 2021 council elections, with vote share increases of over forty points in some cases. They don't need to be polling highly across the borough to take a specific ward off Labour here or there - possibly unexpectedly for all concerned. They also have those Green councillors in next door Lambeth to prove that if you vote Green you get Green.

The days when Labour struggled for a majority on Southwark, sandwiched between a Lib Dem north and a rump Tory south are gone. But they are more likely to lose seats than gain them.



Tower Hamlets



Labour may be in a bit of trouble in Tower Hamlets. How much I'm not clear about, and the party did very well in the 2021 London elections here.

But there are clouds on the horizon. Lutfur Rahman, the former mayor of the borough who was disqualified from seeking office, has now served his period of disbarment.

Parties founded in his image have also maintained a presence on the council, notably gaining a by-election seat in Weavers ward in an August 2021 by-election on a huge swing from Labour. This after they won another in Shadwell shortly after the 2018 council elections. There is, in short, a real and credible threat from the Rahmanites; they are organised and, provided they stand are likely to have an impact.

But Rahman is a symptom of Labour's problem: he wasn't the reason George Galloway won Bethnal Green and Respect councillors, some of whom morphed into

Rahman acolytes later on, won seats in 2014. He's not why the SDP Liberal Alliance managed to win the council in 1986 and 1990.

Labour seems to be starting to have a problem with younger Muslims who simply no longer follow a set voting line the way their parents and grandparents were more likely to. This was seen not just in Tower Hamlets in its support for Galloway and Respect; and thereafter to Rahman and co. but also in the Batley and Spennings by-election in June 2021 where the Muslim vote in Batley again appears to have gone substantially to Galloway.

If Labour is losing younger Muslim votes then sooner or later it's going to lose lots of seats in Tower Hamlets: not to the Conservatives but to other, possibly bespoke local parties.

The Conservatives were largely pushed out of their Isle of Dogs wards in 2018. They have two seats left there and the Labour

seats are also vulnerable, but the Tories weren't close in the 2021 London elections.

While people vote differently in London and Tower Hamlets borough elections (so don't read too much across) a sizeable chunk of the 2016 Remain vote was driven by those whose jobs allegedly depend on uninhibited access to the EU - and Canary Wharf is the epicentre of that trade, so it'd be surprising to see a big swing back to the Tories here.

The reason Tower Hamlets politics is quite difficult to read is that it is less subject to the ebbs and flows of national, or even London-wide political popularity. One of the grounds on which Rahman was removed from office was "spiritual influence": voters were told that it was their duty as Muslims to vote for him. It's hard to think of another place in England in these times that such an abuse could be tried, let alone be successful. Labour may be alright, or they could face a meltdown in their vote. Stay tuned!