



Horsham  
District  
Council

# Horsham Town Community Governance Review

Draft Recommendations

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Horsham District Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review of the unparished area of Horsham town. Community Governance Reviews can be instigated by a decision of the principal council, following receipt of a Community Governance Petition, or following receipt of a Community Governance Application from a neighbourhood forum. On 10 December 2024, a Community Governance Application was received from Horsham Blueprint, a neighbourhood forum.
- 1.2 In this review, the Council will be guided by the relevant legislation in Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the [Guidance](#) on Community Governance Reviews that the government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England have issued (the Guidance), and [the Terms of Reference](#) for the review that were adopted by the Governance Committee on 18 December 2024.
- 1.3 Where these recommendations make reference to a parish, or parish area, in this instance this refers to the proposed town council, or town council area. Reference to parish wards, and parish councillors, refers to town wards and town councillors. The proposed Horsham Town Council would be a “parish”, however the use of the term “town council” is an alternative naming convention from parish council, and are fundamentally the same.

## 2. The review

- 2.1 This Review relates to the unparished area of Horsham town, which currently comprises the three neighbourhood councils (Denne, Forest and Trafalgar). The review gives consideration to the creation of a parish area and its electoral arrangements. The review is being conducted by the Governance Committee.

- 2.2 The aim of the review is to bring about improved and stronger community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and more effective and convenient delivery of local services; ensuring electors across the whole area are treated equitably and fairly.

## **Initial Consultation**

- 2.3 On 1 May 2025, a 6-week period of consultation commenced, requesting the views of interested parties, in relation to the proposed creation of a town council for the entirety of the unparished area. The consultation closed at midnight, on 16 June 2025. The review was widely publicised through the Council's website, social media, and through posters and banners in the unparished area.
- 2.4 Responses were welcomed from those who live, work, or have any other interest in the unparished area. West Sussex County Council, the neighbourhood councils, and all elected representatives (District and County Councillors, and the Member of Parliament for Horsham) for the affected area were invited to provide a response. Careful consideration has been given to all submissions received.

## **General Principles**

- 2.5 Following the analysis of responses to the consultation, the Council has developed its proposals for the unparished area. In particular, the Council has sought to ensure that the proposal:

*reflects the identities and interests of the different communities in the area.*

*is effective and convenient. The Council considers that this is a 'viability' test, and the Council is keen to ensure that a town council would be viable and able to actively and effectively promote the well-being of their*

*residents and to contribute to the real provision of services in their areas in an economic and efficient manner.*

*takes into account any other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area that reinforce the 'community of identity' test. This relates in particular to the current arrangement of neighbourhood councils, and is covered further in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.4.*

2.6 In assessing this criteria, the community governance review has taken into account:

*The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and*

*The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.*

### 3. Considerations and evidence

In undertaking the Review, Horsham District Council has taken into account the following:

#### **Responses to the initial consultation**

- 3.1 The Governance Committee has considered responses to the consultation between 1 May and 16 June 2025 (the first of two public consultations planned for the Community Governance Review). 1624 responses to the survey were received during the consultation period. A full summary of responses received can be viewed on the [Community Governance Review page of the Council's website](#).
- 3.2 Responses to these Draft Recommendations: Responses to the proposals contained in these Draft Recommendations will be further consulted upon, from 14 August to 29 September 2025. The responses to this consultation will be carefully considered.

#### **‘Other arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area’**

- 3.3 At present, the unparished area has an existing form of governance and community representation, in the three neighbourhood councils. These councils provide community representation and engagement, however, as they are not legal entities, they are not able to undertake certain activities, such as enter into contracts to provide services in the town. For this reason, they are funded by the ‘special charge’ which is collected by Horsham District Council on behalf of the neighbourhood councils. Horsham District Council then spends this money on behalf of those councils.
- 3.4 The ‘special charge’ is set by Full Council, at Horsham District Council. The Unparished Area Committee advises the Cabinet Member with responsibility

for this function on the appropriate level of ‘special charge’. This committee is formed of district councillors that represent the unparished area, and one co-opted member of each neighbourhood council.

- 3.5 A town council would be funded by a precept and would be able to spend this money on facilities and services in the town. The precept would be set by those elected to the town council.
- 3.6 A town council, in agreement with the district and/or county council, as appropriate, would be able to take on services and assets from these councils and deliver and manage them.

### **Electorate size and housing development data**

- 3.7 Analysis of the present size of the unparished area, together with the 5-year projected electorate. The 5-year projected electorate has been calculated using information about the scale and exact locations of expected future housing developments within the unparished area.
- 3.8 The area under review is currently covered by three neighbourhood councils. The electorate, projected electorate, and number of electors per councillor are as listed in the table below. The increased electorate in Denne is the forecast based on the development in Highwood.

<b>Neighbourhood Council</b>	<b>2025 Electorate</b>	<b>2030 Electorate</b>	<b>Seats on Council</b>	<b>Elector ratio</b>
<b>Denne</b>	8,356	8,882	11	760
<b>Forest</b>	9,173	9,173	13	706
<b>Trafalgar</b>	4,732	4,732	7	676
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,261</b>	<b>22,787</b>	<b>31</b>	-

## **Parish warding, and consideration to district ward and county division boundaries**

3.9 The Council has considered the electoral arrangements of the proposed parish area. The term ‘electoral arrangements’ covers the way in which a council is constituted for the parish, including:

*the number of councillors to be elected to the council;*

*the division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing councillors;*

*the number and boundaries of any such wards;*

*the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward;*

*the name of any such ward.*

3.10 The Council is required by law to consider any change in the number or distribution of the local government electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the Review started.

3.11 The Council has also given careful consideration to potential warding arrangements. In considering whether a parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of elections to the town council, the Council is required by legislation to consider the following:

*whether the number, or distribution, of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient;*

*whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the council.*



- 3.12 In allocating town councillors to town wards, the Council has been particularly mindful of the government's Guidance that "it is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the elections of councillors" to a town council.
- 3.13 While there is no provision in legislation that each ward councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors, the Governance Committee concurs with the Guidance that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards. The Governance Committee has therefore attempted to ensure that the ratio of electors to councillors across the different wards of a parish is equitable insofar as that is practical.
- 3.14 The government's guidance states that consideration should be given to the desirability of parish warding where the parish is divided by district wards, and county divisions. There are provisions in Schedule 2 (electoral change in England: considerations on review) to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 in relation to reviews of district and county council electoral arrangements.
- 3.15 The guidance states: 'These provide that when the LGBCE is making changes to principal council electoral arrangements, no unwarded parish should be divided by a district or London borough ward or county division boundary, and that no parish ward should be split by such a boundary.'
- 3.16 While these provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements, the LGBCE believes that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, they are relevant considerations for principal councils to take into account when undertaking community governance reviews. For example, if a principal council chooses to establish a new parish in

an area which is covered by two or more district or London borough wards or county division boundaries it may also wish to consider the merit of putting parish warding in place to reflect that ward and/or division’.

3.17 The unparished area is comprised of three district wards, in their entirety.

These are Denne, Forest and Trafalgar. The unparished area also includes parts of the Holbrook West and Roffey South wards.

Neighbourhood Council	Electoral Area	Whole or part of electoral area within neighbourhood council area	Location of remainder of electoral area
<b>District Wards</b>			
<b>Denne</b>	Denne	Part	Forest neighbourhood
	Holbrook West	Part	North Horsham parish
<b>Forest</b>	Denne	Part	Denne neighbourhood
	Forest	Wholly within	-
	Roffey South	Part	North Horsham parish
<b>Trafalgar</b>	Trafalgar	Wholly within	-
<b>County Divisions</b>			
<b>Denne</b>	Holbrook	Part	North Horsham Parish
	Horsham Hurst	Part	Forest neighbourhood Trafalgar neighbourhood North Horsham parish
	Horsham Riverside	Part	Forest neighbourhood
<b>Forest</b>	Horsham East	Part	North Horsham parish
	Horsham Hurst	Part	Denne neighbourhood Trafalgar neighbourhood
	Horsham Riverside	Part	Denne neighbourhood
<b>Trafalgar</b>	Horsham Hurst	Part	Denne neighbourhood Forest neighbourhood

- 3.18 It is considered that creating parish wards would be desirable, given the electorate figures, and distinct communities within the area under review, as referenced in paragraph 3.11.
- 3.19 There is an option to create parish ward boundaries to be coterminous with the existing electoral arrangements (the district ward boundaries and county division boundaries). This would however require the creation of nine parish wards, and result in significant variation in the councillor to elector ratio.
- 3.20 Consideration has however been given to the existing electoral arrangements in place, and proposed parish warding has been developed to take into account the ward and division boundaries as much as possible. The proposed warding includes one parish ward that covers two county divisions (Ayshe Court). The HEVD polling district contains a small number of electors, and is located in the same district ward as the other polling districts in this proposed ward. It has therefore been included in the Ayshe Court parish ward.
- 3.21 Horsham Park and Chesworth parish wards include polling districts that sit with two district wards (Holbrook West and Denne, and Forest and Denne, respectively). The parish wards are proposed given the community identity within these areas.
- 3.22 As such, it is proposed that the warding arrangements are as follows:

Parish Ward	Polling District(s)	2025 Electorate	Proposed seats	Elector ratio (number of electors per Councillor)
Blackbridge & Highwood	HRNN (Blackbridge)	2993	3	1424.33
	HRQN (Highwood)	1280		
Denne	HRNO (Denne)	1688	1	1688

Forest	HERA (Forest)	1769	1	1769
Ayshe Court	HEVD (Station Road)	24	2	1450.5
	HHPH (New Street)	2160		
	HHJA (Pollards)	717		
Chesworth	HRJB (Millais)	355	2	1788.5
	HRRB (Chesworth)	1269		
	HRPI (Oakhill)	1953		
Kingslea	HEVC (Foundry)	926	1	926
Horsham Park	HHXG (Collyers)	821	1	1507
	HHNP (Horsham Park)	686		
Millpond	HKXC (Millpond)	888	1	888
Trafalgar	HHPV (Trafalgar)	2612	3	1577.33
	HHPW (Greenway)	2120		

## Council size

3.23 The legal minimum number of parish councillors for each council is five (Section 16, Local Government Act 1972). The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) considers that a council of no more than the legal minimum of five members is inconveniently small, and it considers that a practical working minimum should be seven (NALC Circular 1126/1988). The Government's Guidance makes the point that "the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors" (Guidance, paragraph 157).

3.24 There is no requirement in legislation that the number of councillors should be proportional to electorate size. The view given in the Guidance is as follows: "In considering the issue of council size, the Local Government Boundary

Commission for England is of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities. Nevertheless, having regard to the current powers of parish councils, it should consider the broad pattern of existing council sizes. This pattern appears to have stood the test of time and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to have provided for effective and convenient local government.” (Guidance, paragraph 156).

3.25 With regard to parish wards, the Guidance adds another consideration, which is that the levels of representation and the ratios of electors to parish councillors should be broadly equitable. This report has already noted the emphasis in the Guidance “that each person’s vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors” (Guidance, paragraph 166). The consideration in this instance must be given to the current district ward and county division boundaries.

### **Impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion**

3.26 Community governance should reflect the identities and interests of the local community and be effective and convenient. At present, there are three neighbourhood councils representing the residents of the unparished area.

3.27 The town councillors would represent all residents of the unparished area in one elected body, whilst retaining local representation through the warding arrangements. As such, the creation of one town council is likely to improve community cohesion. This notion is supported by the general support indication in the consultation process.

## 4. Town Council functions

- 4.1 The Governance Committee recognises the important role that parish and town councils can play at a local community level serving as a key representative voice and often acting as the eyes and ears for other upper tier local government, public agencies and other organisations to raise local concerns. It further recognises the value and role of the three neighbourhood councils, that have been in place for just under 50 years.
- 4.2 It should be noted however, that as the neighbourhood councils are not legal entities, they have been limited in their ability to raise funds and undertake certain activities.
- 4.3 Councillors for parish and town councils are normally elected to office every four years on the same day as elections for Horsham District Council, however, if a new council is established through this review, it is likely that the elections will take place in May 2026 with the councillors elected serving an initial five-year term. Future elections will then take place every four years thereafter, in line with the scheduled parish elections. Further information on parish and town councils can be obtained from the National Association of Local Councils website, [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk).
- 4.4 Parish and town councils are a statutory consultee on planning, highways and other regulatory matters, and may deliver or support other local services. Depending upon the size, capacity, ambitions and decisions of each council, the services provided by parish and town councils can range from very few activities to wide ranging functions.
- 4.5 The table below illustrates the potential division of responsibility between Horsham District Council and parish and town councils should any be created. As can be seen and although not exhaustive, most services provided by town and parish councils are discretionary. There are further statutory services that

are provided by West Sussex County Council, which are listed below. This list is not exhaustive.

Facilities/Services that must be run by Horsham District Council	Facilities/Services that may be run by Horsham District Council, or the town council, or both	Facilities/services that must be run by a town council
Benefits  Bins & litter  Council Tax & business rates  Environmental Health & Licencing (including noise & nuisance complaints)  Fly tipping  Housing & Homelessness  Parking enforcement  Planning applications, development & enforcement	Bus shelters  Car parks  Community centres  Community events, consultation and engagement  Electric charging points  Grants  Green spaces & play areas  Leisure facilities  Memorials  Museum  Public seating	Allotments  Neighbourhood planning  Planning application consultee
Facilities/Services that must be run by West Sussex County Council		
Adult and children social services  Asylum seekers and refugees  Bus passes  Coroners	Education  Libraries  Public health  Public rights of way	Roads and highway maintenance  Street lighting  Trading Standards  Waste disposal

- 4.6 The level of council tax is not a determining factor for a community governance review, however, it is acknowledged that residents will be curious to understand the likely cost if parish and town councils are established. The average Band D council tax charge for parish level precepts within Horsham district in 2025/26 was £84.24 per year. The highest precept charged was £169.80 per year, and the lowest was £17.37 per year. The current special charge, paid by council tax payers in the unparished area is £40.59 per year.
- 4.7 It is not possible to provide an indication of the anticipated council tax for any new councils at this stage as all the functions listed in paragraph 4.5, except for allotments, are discretionary.



## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1 All residents and any other persons or organisations wishing to make representations on the draft recommendations may do so by completing the online response form, which will be available from 14 August 2025. Alternatively, paper forms will be available for collection at the Council Offices, or a copy can be sent by post on request.
- 5.2 Completed paper forms can be delivered, by hand, or by post, to the Council Offices:-
- Horsham Town Consultation
- Democratic Services
- Horsham District Council
- Albery House
- Springfield Road
- Horsham
- RH12 2GB
- 5.3 Representations that are received will be taken into account by judging them against the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 5.4 The deadline to respond is midnight, 29 September 2025.

## 6. Draft Recommendations

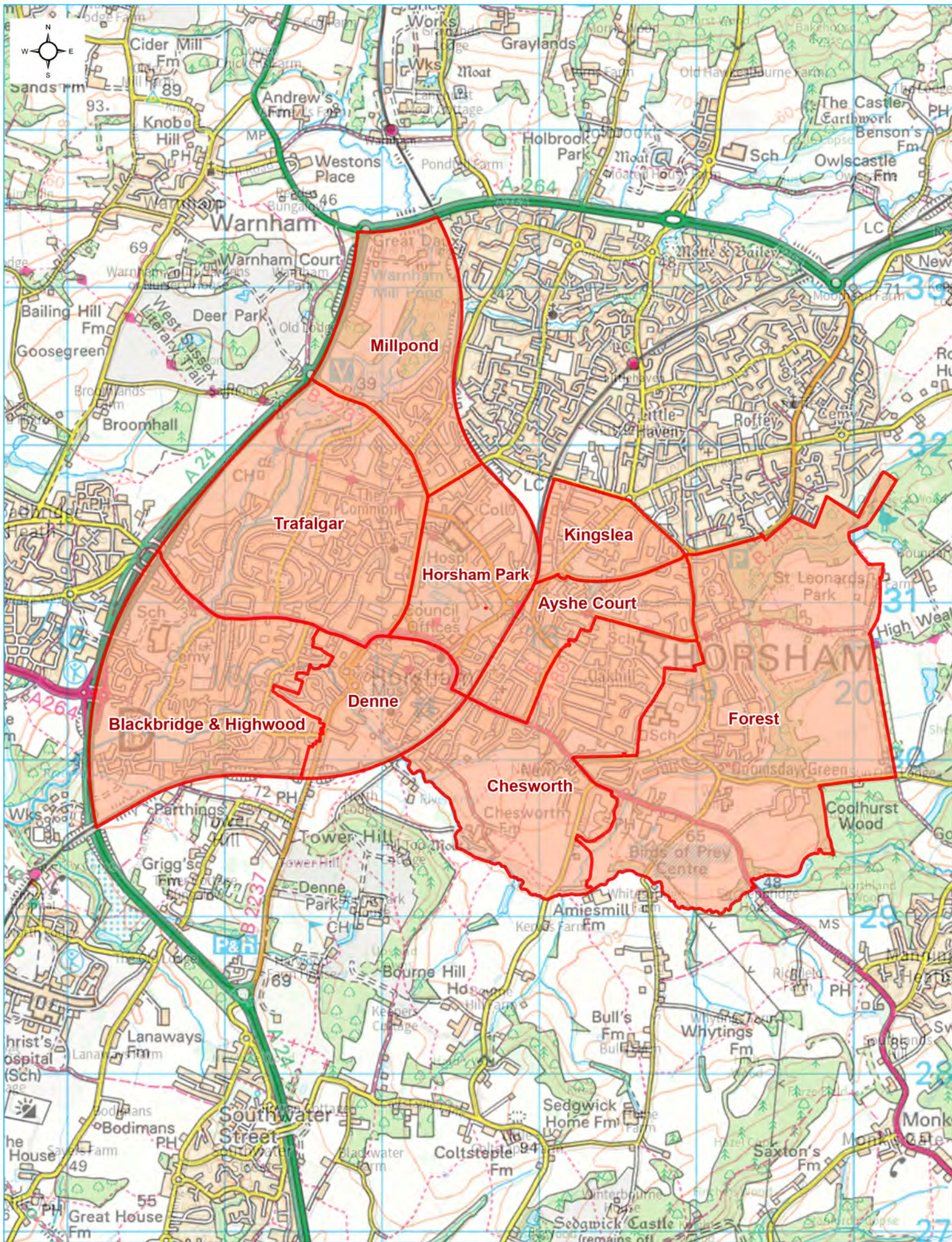
As part of the Community Governance Review, under the Terms of Reference published in December 2024, the Governance Committee has made the following draft recommendations in relation to the unparished area:

- i) That a parish of Horsham be created;
- ii) That the parish be called “Horsham”
- iii) That the parish should have a town council called “Horsham Town Council”
- iv) That the parish’s boundaries be the same as the current Neighbourhood Council boundaries (Denne, Forest and Trafalgar)
- v) That the parish is warded, as per the below table and map

Parish Ward	Polling District(s)	2025 Electorate	Proposed seats	Elector ratio (number of electors per Councillor)
Blackbridge & Highwood	HRNN (Blackbridge)	2993	3	1424.33
	HRQN (Highwood)	1280		
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Trafalgar	HHPV (Trafalgar)	2612	3	1577.33
	HHPW (Greenway)	2120		





**Horsham District Council**



Polling Districts



Proposed town wards for Horsham Town Council

Proposed town wards for Horsham Town Council

Reference:	Scale: 1:30,000 (at A4)
Date: 09/07/2025	Revision:

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Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane Eaton



# HORSHAM

## PROPOSED TOWN WARD NAME: AYSHE COURT

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**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Proposed town ward name: Ayshe Court

Reference:

Date: 09/07/2025

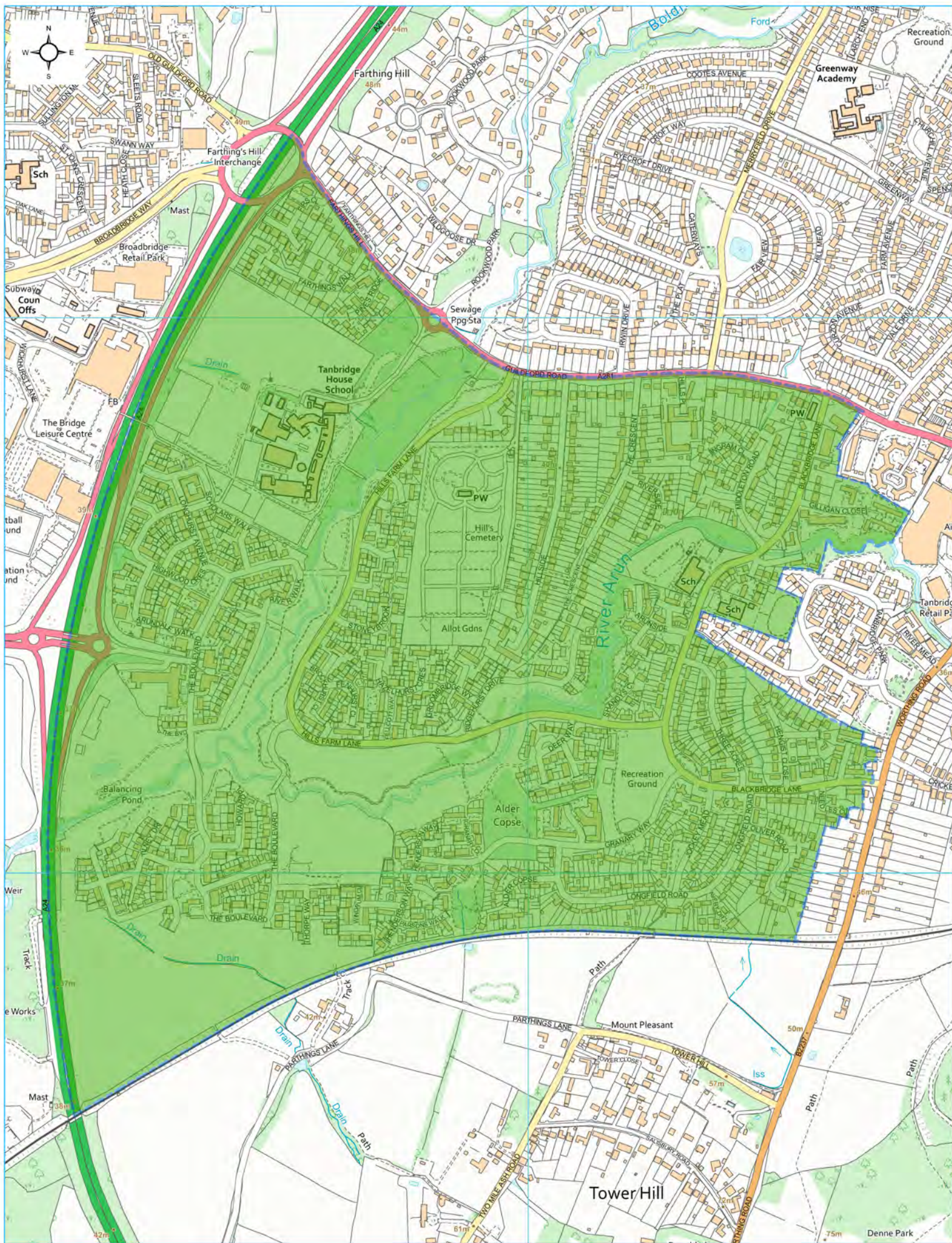
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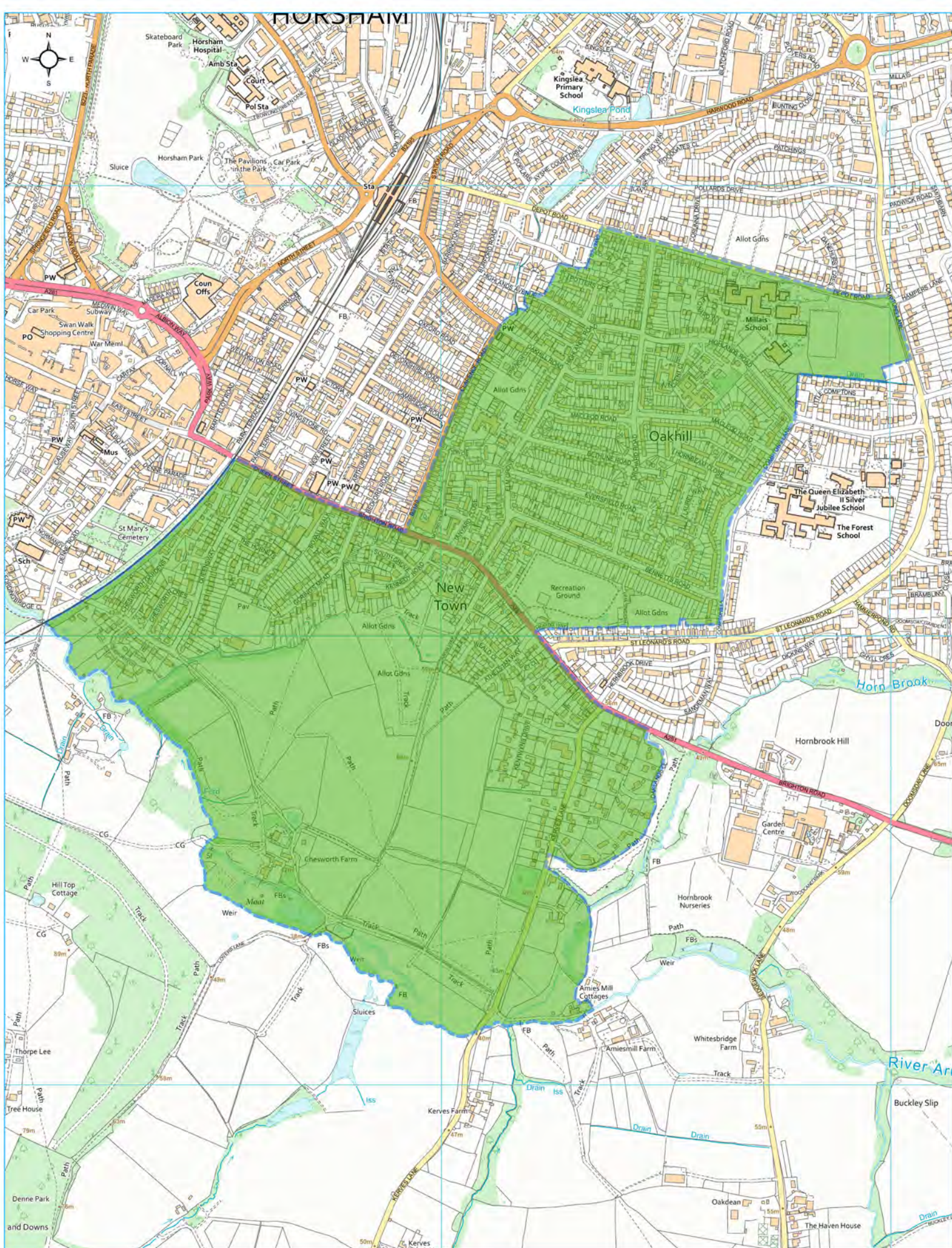
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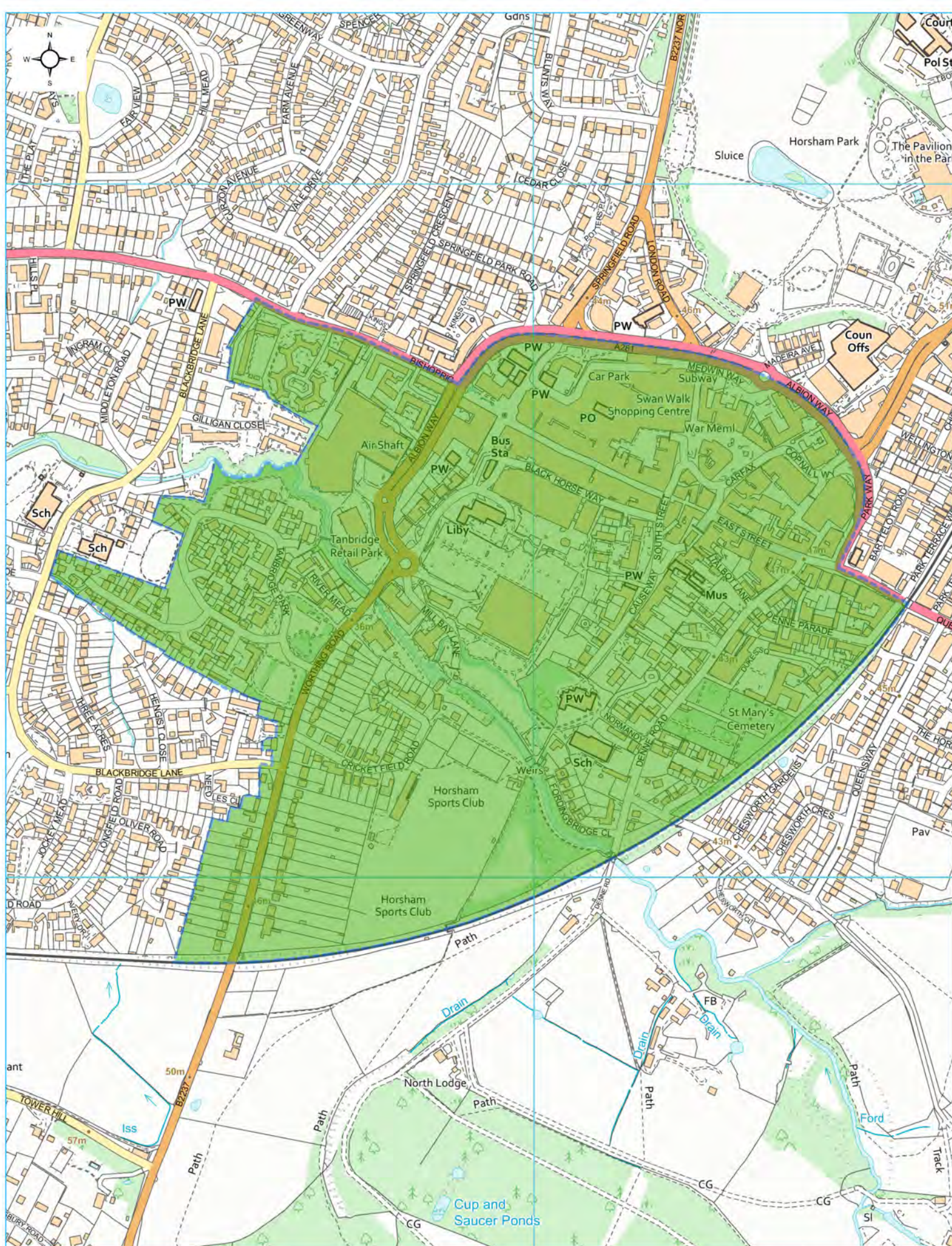




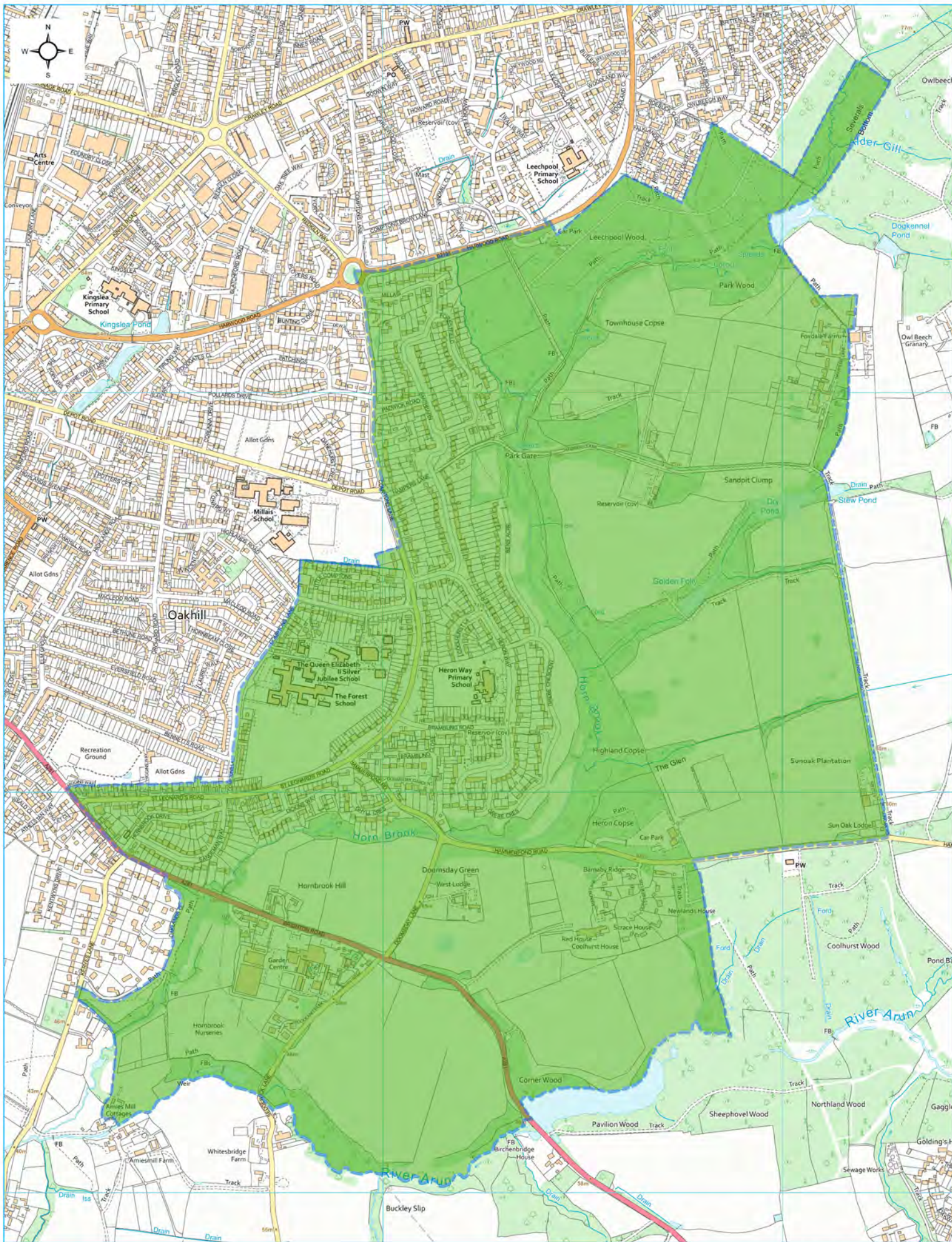












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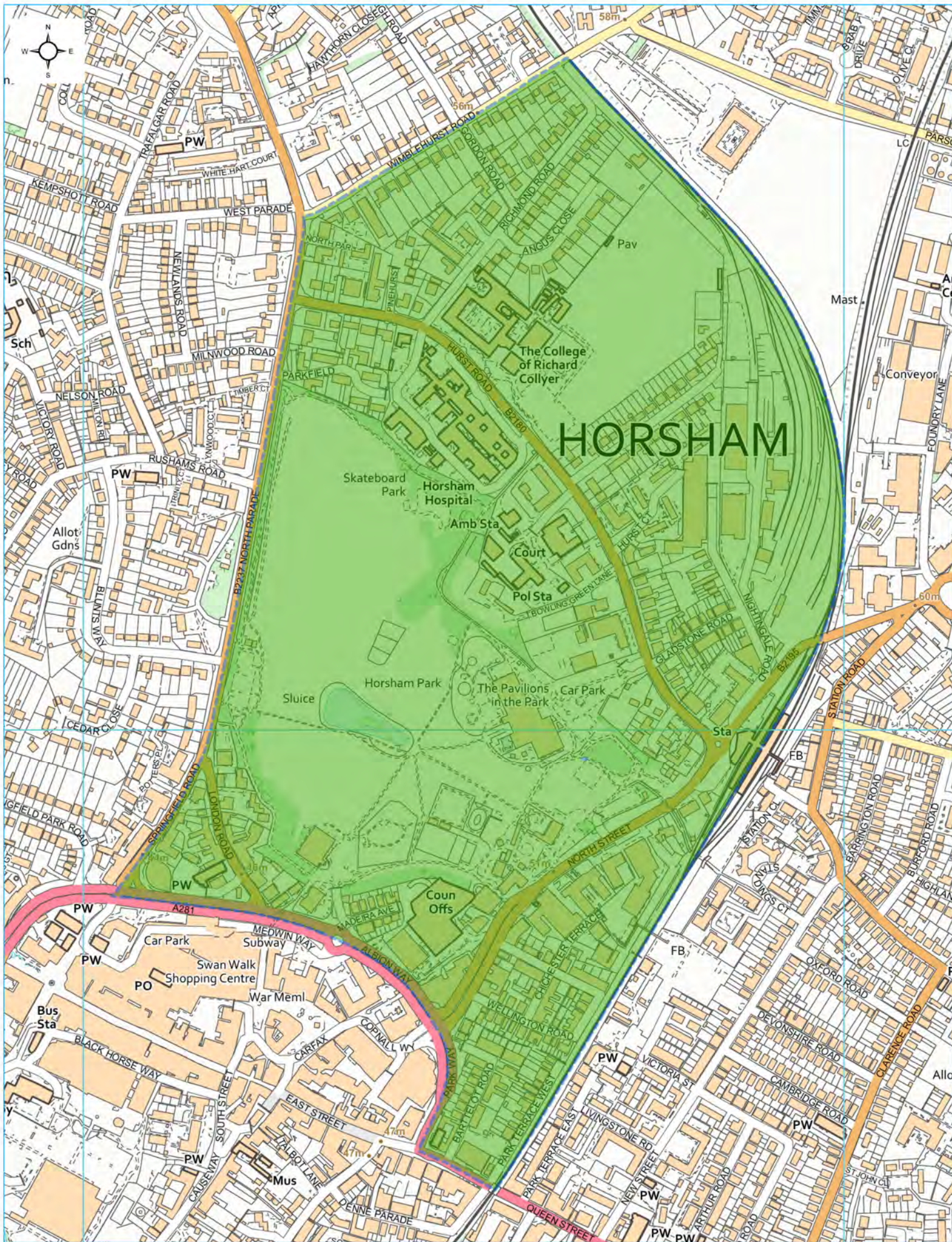
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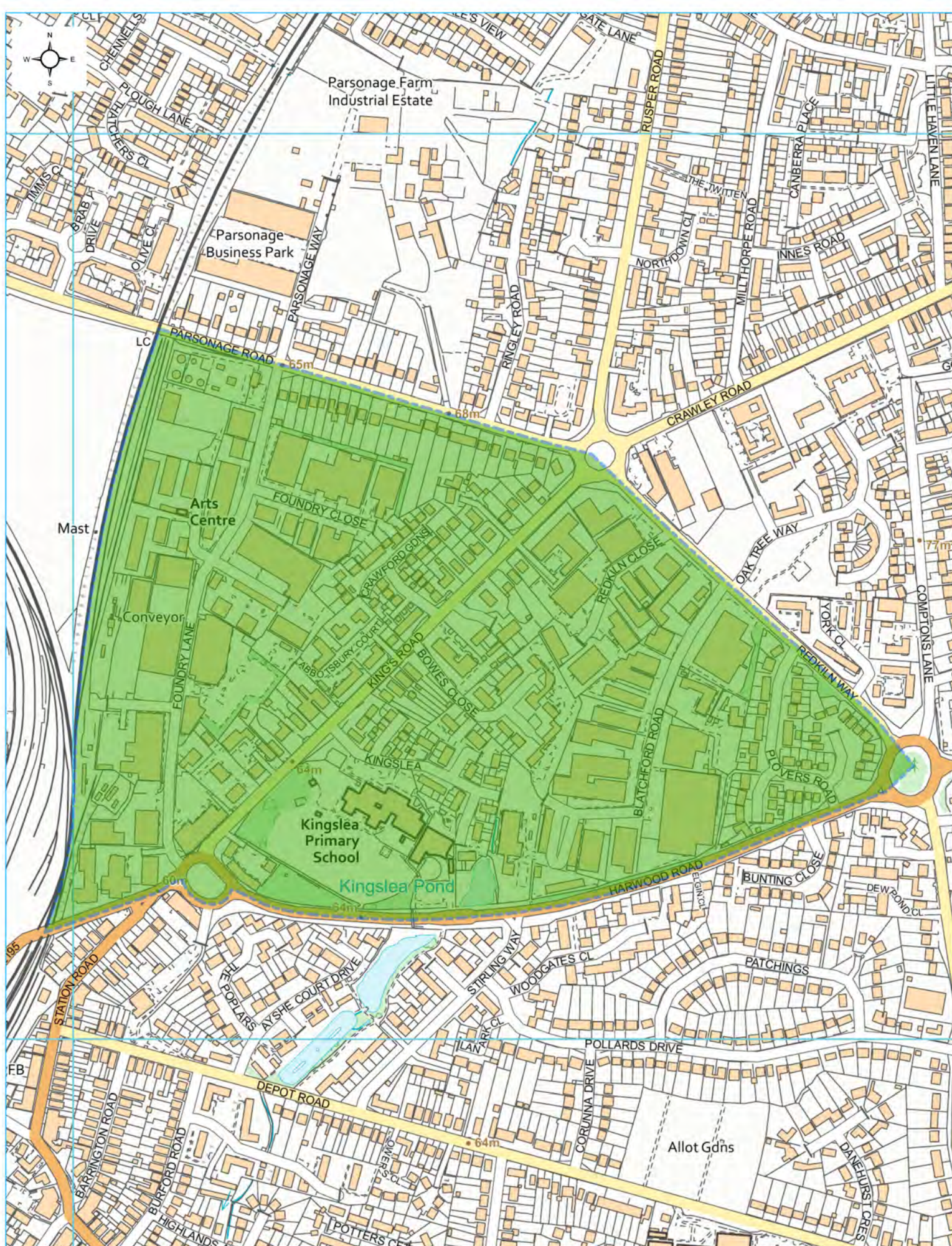
Proposed town ward name: Horsham Park

Reference:	Scale: 1:6,200 (at A4)
Date: 09/07/2025	Revision:

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Proposed town ward name: Kingslea

Reference:

Date: 09/07/2025

Scale: 1:5,200 (at A4)

Revision:

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