Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

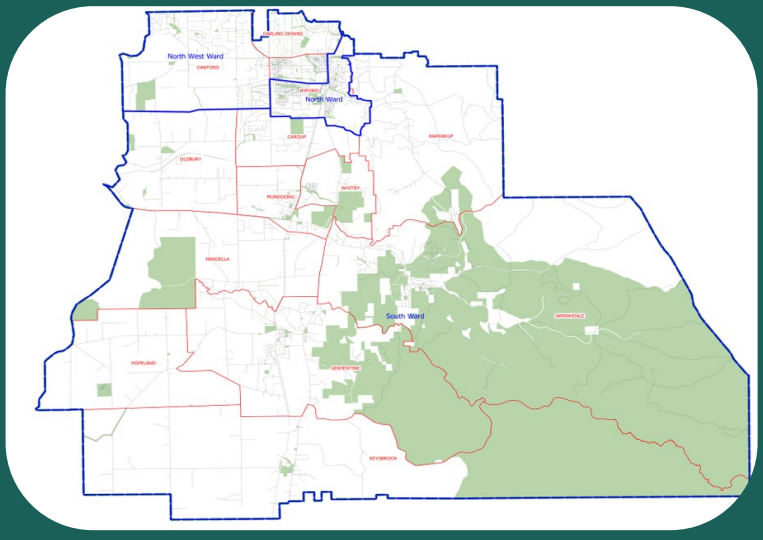
Ward and Representation Review

Discussion Paper

Purpose

To invite informed community feedback on the Shire's future ward boundaries and representation arrangements.

November 2026



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Contents

At a glance 4
Why review the arrangements? 4
The six options 4
How to have your say 5
1. Purpose and background 6
Objectives 6
Review process 6
2. Legislative and policy framework 7
3. Current situation 7
4. Assessment against the Statutory Factors 9
Community of interest 9
Physical and topographic features 10
Demographic trends 11
Economic factors 13
Ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards 14
Bringing the factors together 15
5. Options for community consideration 15
Methodology 15
Number of Councillors – assessment and review 16
Cost of Councillors 18
Options 19
Option 1 - Current three wards / six or eight councillors 20
Option 2 – Revised three wards / six or eight councillors 24
Option 3 - Revised wards / eight councillors 29
Option 4 - Two wards / eight councillors 33
Option 5 - Four wards / eight councillors 37
Option 6 - No wards / six or eight councillors 42
Comparison of elector-to councillor ratios 44
Other options 45
6. Transition and implementation considerations 46
7. Questions for the community 46
8. Making a submission 47
Data 48

Version Control

Version	Date	Issue Description
01	16 November 2026	Endorsed by Council

At a glance

The Shire is reviewing whether its current ward and representation arrangements remain fair, practical and responsive to substantial population growth. The review considers both the number of councillors and whether electors should continue to be represented through wards.

Current arrangement

One popularly elected Shire President and six councillors. Two councillors are elected from each of the North, North West and South wards.

Why review the arrangements?

- Elector numbers are not evenly distributed between the current wards.
- Growth is expected to occur at different rates across Byford, Mundijong, Whitby and the Shire's rural localities.
- The current structure should be tested using current elector data and reasonable future growth scenarios.
- The community should have an opportunity to comment on wards, boundaries and the size of Council before Council decides whether to propose change.

The six options

Option	Model
1	Current three wards / six or eight councillors
2	Revised three wards / six or eight councillors
3	Revised three wards / eight councillors
4	Two wards / eight councillors
5	Four wards / eight councillors
6	No wards / six or eight councillors

How to have your say

Submissions may support one of the options, suggest changes to an option, or propose another arrangement. Council must consider submissions before deciding whether to recommend a change.

Consultation opens	Consultation closes	Submission methods
18 November 2026	3 January 2027	Your Say SJ, email or post

1. Purpose and background

The Shire's ward and representation arrangements have changed over time in response to population distribution and legislative requirements. The present structure was implemented for the 2023 ordinary local government election following Ministerial approval of a proposal for a popularly elected President and six councillors, with two councillors in each of the existing three wards.

Council considered a further review in 2024 and decided not to proceed at that time. Following the 2025 election and continued growth, the Shire is now reconsidering whether the present arrangements meet the district's current and future needs.

Objectives

- assess whether the current ward structure and representation remain appropriate;
- promote equitable representation as far as practicable;
- consider communities of interest, physical and topographic features, demographic trends and economic factors;
- test current arrangements against expected population and elector growth;
- provide clear options for public comment; and
- support an evidence-based Council decision and any subsequent proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board.

Review process

Stage	What happens
1. Initiate	Council resolves to undertake the review and endorses a discussion paper.
2. Advertise	Public notice is given and the community is invited to make submissions for at least six weeks.
3. Assess	Submissions and updated modelling are considered against the statutory factors.
4. Decide	Council determines whether to retain the current arrangements or recommend change.
5. Submit	If change is proposed, the Shire submits its proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board for assessment and recommendation to the Minister.

2. Legislative and policy framework

Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* establishes the review and proposal framework for ward boundaries and representation. For a local government with wards, the review must consider whether ward boundaries and the number of councillor offices for each ward are appropriate. Public notice must invite submissions and allow at least six weeks for them to be made.

Council must consider the submissions and the prescribed factors before deciding whether to make a proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board.

3. Current situation

The Shire's current representation arrangements consist of a popularly elected Shire President and six councillors.

The Shire President is elected by electors across the whole district. The six councillors are elected through three wards, with two councillors in each ward:

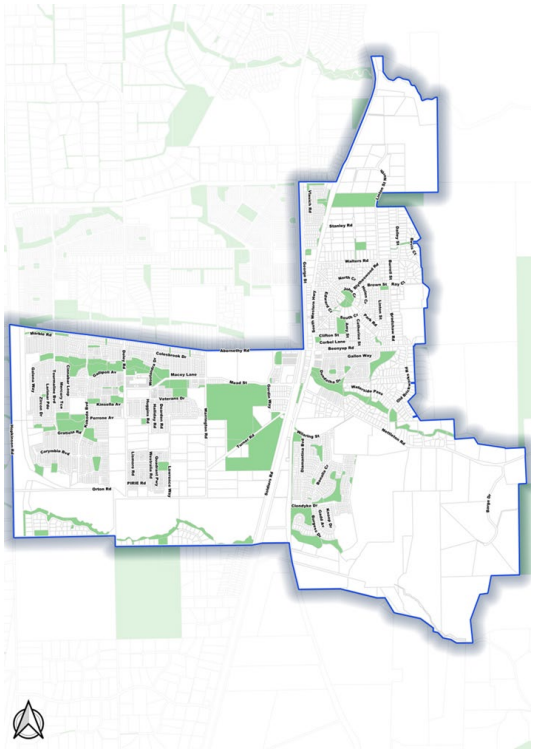
- North Ward;
- North West Ward; and
- South Ward.

The current arrangements were introduced for the 2023 ordinary local government election following changes to the Shire's representation structure.

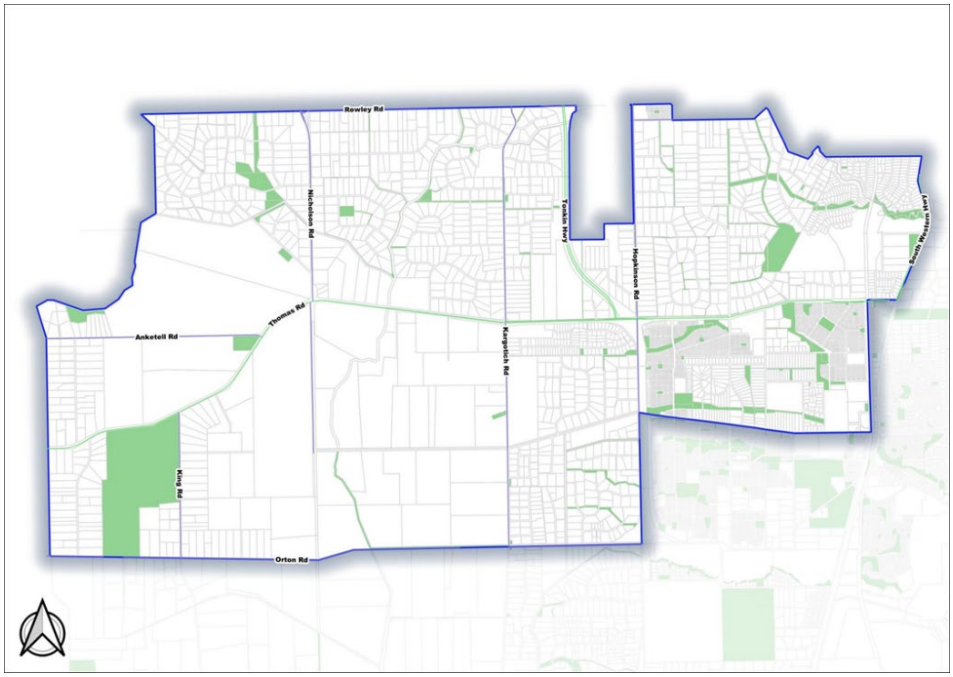
North	North West	South
Byford (70%)	Byford (25%) Darling Downs Oakford	Byford (5%) Whitby Jarrahdale Mundijong Serpentine Cardup Hopeland Karrakup Keysbrook Mardella Oldbury

Byford is currently divided between all three wards. The North and North West wards are concentrated around Byford and the Shire's north-western rural-residential area. The South Ward covers the balance of the district and includes the Shire's central, southern, eastern and emerging urban areas.

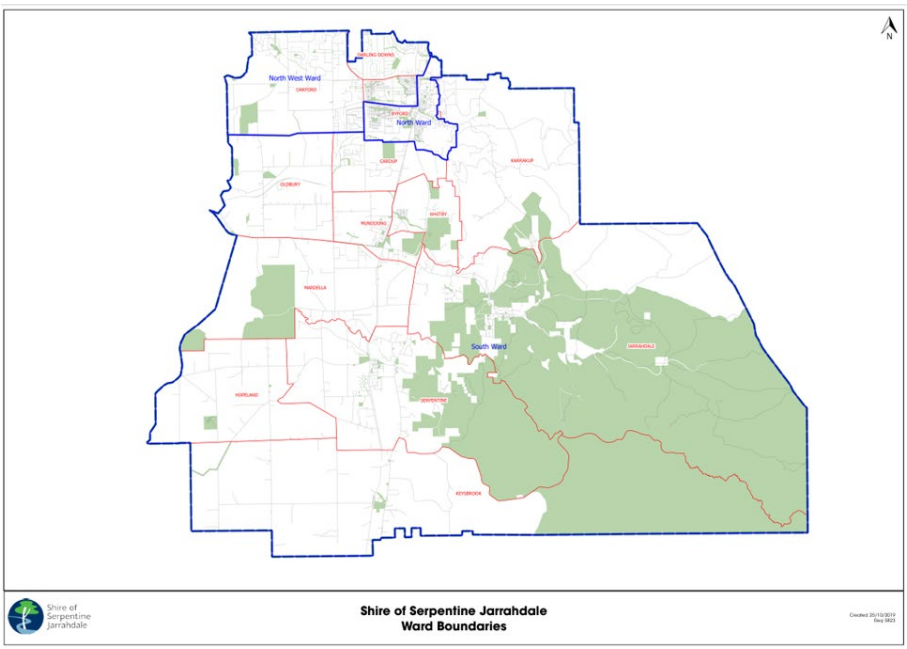
The current ward boundaries are shown in the maps below.



North Ward



North West Ward



South Ward

The current arrangements provide the starting point for this review. To determine whether they remain appropriate, and to assess the alternative arrangements presented in this paper, the Shire must consider the five statutory factors set out in Schedule 2.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

4. Assessment against the Statutory Factors

The following section explains how each of the statutory factors applies within the Shire. These factors provide the basis for assessing the current arrangements and the alternative options presented later in this paper.

Community of interest

The term community of interest has a number of elements. These include a sense of community identity and belonging, similarities in the characteristics of the residents of a community and similarities in the economic activities. It can also include dependence on the shared facilities in a district as reflected in the catchment areas of local schools and sporting teams, or the circulation areas of local newspapers.

Neighbourhoods, suburbs and towns are important units in the physical, historical and social infrastructure and often generate a feeling of community and belonging

The Shire comprises a range of communities with different histories, settlement patterns and local identities.

Byford is the Shire's largest established urban centre. It contains a substantial proportion of the Shire's population and has established residential neighbourhoods, schools, sporting clubs, community facilities, shopping areas and transport connections. Although Byford operates as a broad community, it is currently divided across all three wards, with approximately 70 per cent in the North Ward, 25 per cent in the North West Ward and 5 per cent in the South Ward.

Mundijong is the Shire's civic and administrative centre and has an established town identity. Together with Whitby and Cardup, it forms part of a major future urban growth area. As development occurs, the relationship between these localities is expected to strengthen through shared infrastructure, services, schools, recreation facilities and transport connections.

Oakford and Darling Downs are characterised primarily by rural-residential development and larger properties. These communities have geographic and service connections with the northern and north-western parts of the Shire, while retaining identities that differ from the more densely developed urban areas of Byford.

The southern and eastern parts of the Shire include Jarrahdale, Serpentine, Keysbrook, Hopeland, Mardella, Karrakup and surrounding rural localities.

These areas generally have lower population densities, larger distances between settlements and different land-use and service characteristics from the Shire's urban growth areas. Individual towns and localities also have their own historical associations, community organisations and local identities.

The Shire therefore includes established urban communities, emerging urban communities, rural-residential areas and rural towns and localities. These communities may have different interests and service needs and may rely on different combinations of schools, sporting groups, community facilities, commercial centres and transport networks.

Any ward model should therefore seek, as far as practicable, to:

- retain identifiable communities within the same ward;
- avoid dividing established localities without a clear justification;
- recognise connections created through schools, sporting clubs, community facilities, shopping areas and transport networks; and
- acknowledge the differing characteristics of urban, rural-residential and rural communities.

Physical and topographic features

These may be natural or man-made features that will vary from area to area. Water features such as rivers and catchment boundaries may be relevant considerations. Coastal plain and foothills regions, parks and reserves may be relevant as may other man-made features such as railway lines and freeways.

The Shire extends from the Swan Coastal Plain in the west to the Darling Scarp and forested areas in the east. Its physical form includes urban areas, rural-residential development, agricultural land, waterways, environmental areas, parks and reserves.

A number of natural and constructed features may provide identifiable ward boundaries, including:

- Tonkin Highway;
- South Western Highway;
- Mundijong Road;
- Thomas Road;
- the Perth to Bunbury railway corridor;

- major waterways and drainage catchments;
- parks, reserves and State forest;
- the Darling Scarp; and
- established locality boundaries.

The Shire's transport corridors influence how communities connect and move through the district. Tonkin Highway, South Western Highway and Mundijong Road provide important north-south and east-west connections, while the railway corridor passes through several established and emerging communities.

Some major roads, railway lines and waterways may provide clear and readily understood boundaries. However, these features may also connect communities or pass through localities that share facilities and services. Their relevance as ward boundaries may therefore differ across the district.

The physical separation between some rural communities, the concentration of urban development in Byford and the planned expansion of Mundijong, Whitby and Cardup are also relevant to the practicality and durability of future ward boundaries.

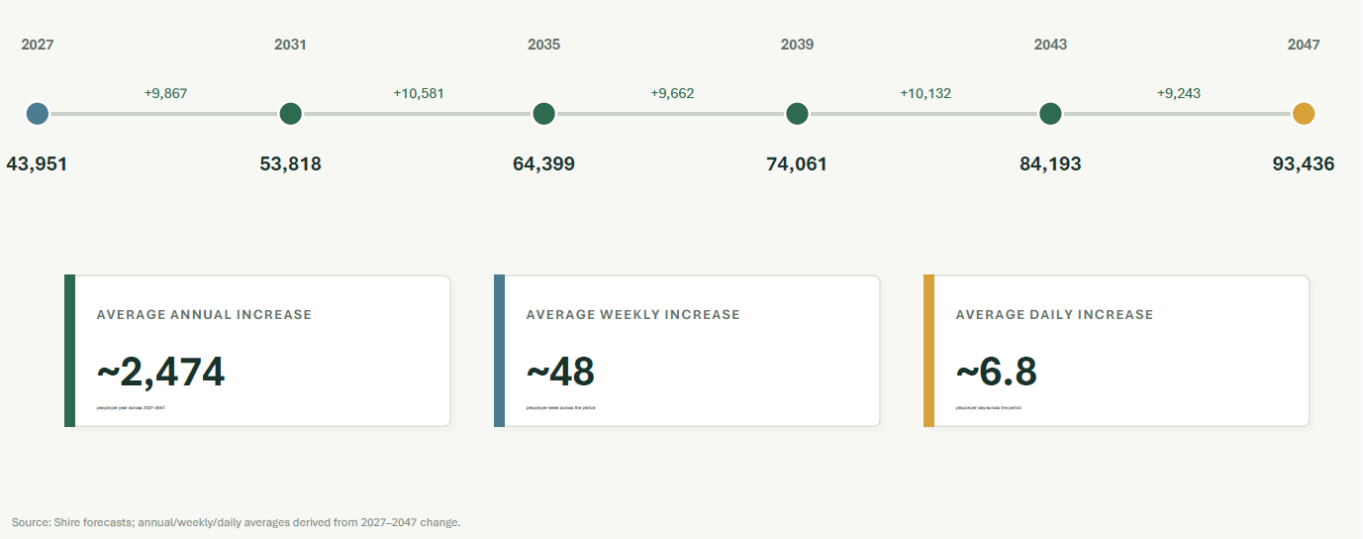
Where practicable, ward boundaries should follow clear and readily identifiable features, avoid unnecessary complexity and minimise the division of localities.

Demographic trends

Several measurements of the characteristics of human populations, such as population size, and its distribution by age, sex, occupation and location provide important demographic information. Current and projected population characteristics will be relevant as well as similarities and differences between areas within the local government.

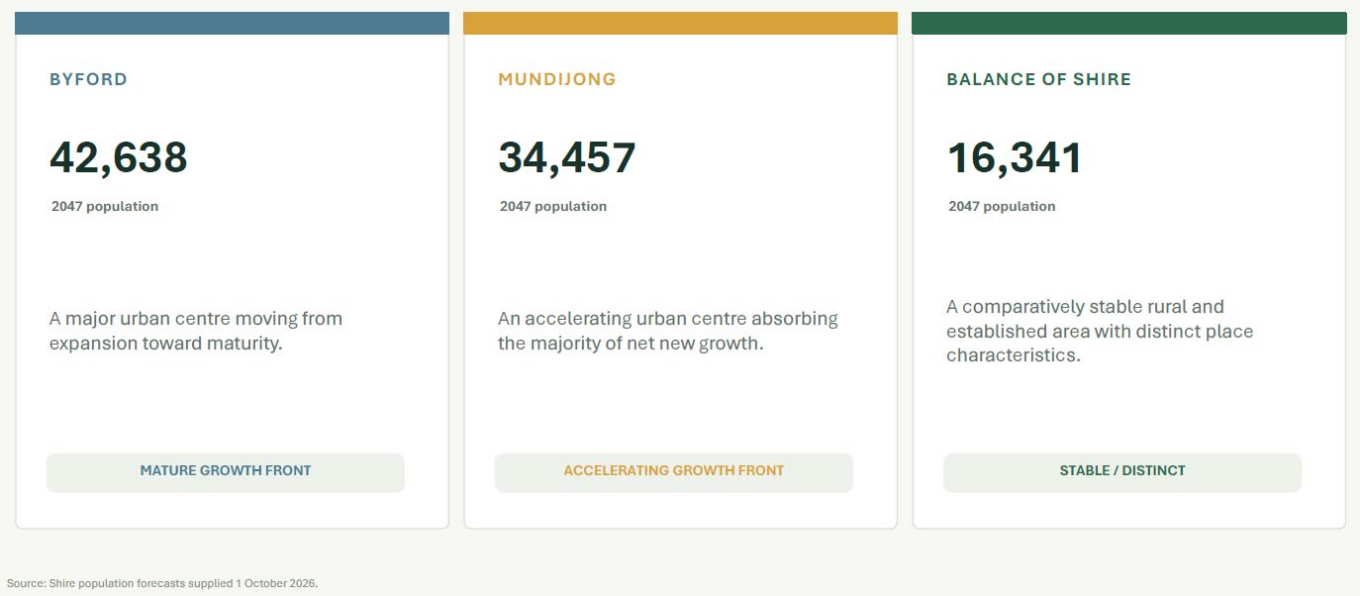
The following demographic forecasts provide broader context for the Shire's long-term growth. For the purpose of comparing ward and representation options, elector modelling has been limited to 2036, consistent with the 10-year statutory review cycle.

The Shire's population is forecast to increase from approximately 43,951 in 2027 to approximately 93,436 in 2047. This represents an increase of approximately 49,485 residents, or 113 per cent.



Over the same period:

- Byford is forecast to increase by approximately 15,392 residents, or 56 per cent;
- Mundijong and its surrounding growth area are forecast to increase by approximately 30,666 residents, or 809 per cent; and
- the balance of the Shire is forecast to increase by approximately 3,427 residents, or 27 per cent.

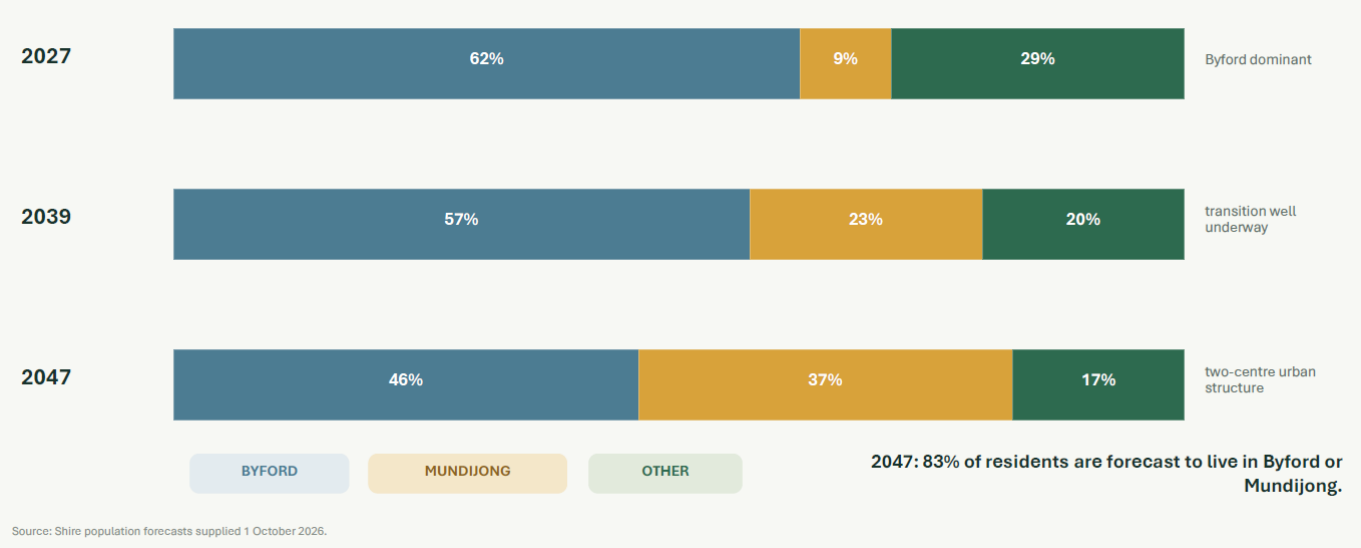


Byford is expected to remain the Shire's largest population centre for much of the forecast period, although its rate of growth is expected to moderate in later years.

Mundijong, together with surrounding growth areas including Whitby and Cardup, is forecast to experience substantial and sustained growth. These areas are expected to accommodate the majority of the Shire's additional population over the longer term.

The balance of the Shire, comprising much of its rural, rural-residential and hills areas, is forecast to grow more gradually and represent a smaller proportion of the Shire's total population over time.

The Shire is therefore expected to transition from a population structure centred predominantly on Byford to one characterised by two major population centres in Byford and Mundijong. In 2027, Byford is forecast to contain approximately 62 per cent of the Shire's population and Mundijong approximately 9 per cent. By 2047, Byford is forecast to contain approximately 46 per cent and Mundijong approximately 37 per cent.



Between 2027 and 2031, Byford is expected to remain the principal population centre, while Mundijong remains comparatively smaller but grows rapidly. Between approximately 2031 and 2039, the shift towards a two-centre urban structure is expected to become more pronounced.

These differing rates of growth mean that ward boundaries and representation ratios that are relatively balanced when introduced may change over time as development proceeds.

The objective should not be to create boundaries that remain numerically equal throughout the entire forecast period, as this is unlikely to be achievable in a rapidly growing district. Rather, the preferred model should provide a reasonable and evidence-based balance between current representation and foreseeable demographic change.

Economic factors

Economic factors can be broadly interpreted to include any factor that reflects the character of economic activities and resources in the area. This may include the industries that occur in a local government area (or the release of land for these) and the distribution of community assets and infrastructure such as road networks.

Economic activity and land use vary considerably across the Shire.

Byford is currently the Shire's largest urban and commercial centre. It contains established retail, education, recreation, community and service infrastructure and provides services to residents from Byford and surrounding localities.

Mundijong is the Shire's civic and administrative centre. Planned growth in Mundijong, Whitby and Cardup is expected to be accompanied by further residential development and investment in roads, schools, recreation facilities, community infrastructure, commercial services and employment opportunities. This is likely to strengthen the economic and service relationships between these areas over time.

The Oakford and Darling Downs areas are predominantly rural-residential in character. Economic and land-use activities in these areas differ from those in the Shire's urban centres and include larger residential holdings, equine activities and rural enterprises.

The southern and eastern parts of the Shire support a range of rural and natural-resource-based activities, including agriculture, equine activities, tourism, extractive industries and environmental land uses. Jarrahdale also has a distinct historical and tourism role associated with its heritage and surrounding natural environment.

Economic activity is supported by major transport routes, including Tonkin Highway, South Western Highway and connections to the wider metropolitan and Peel regions. The distribution of activity centres, employment areas, transport infrastructure and community assets influences how residents access employment, shopping, education, recreation and other services.

The Shire consequently includes established and emerging urban economies, rural-residential areas and rural districts with different economic characteristics and infrastructure needs.

Ward boundaries should therefore have regard to:

- the location of existing and planned activity centres;
- employment and commercial areas;
- major transport and road networks;
- patterns of access to community infrastructure and services;
- areas identified for future urban development; and
- the differing economic interests of urban, rural-residential and rural communities.

Economic factors should not be considered solely by reference to land use. The way residents travel to employment, shopping areas, schools, recreation facilities and other services may also demonstrate practical relationships between communities.

Ratio of councillors to electors in the various wards

It is expected that each local government will have similar ratios of Electors to Councillors across the wards of its district.

The Shire currently has six councillors, with two councillors representing each of the North, North West and South wards. The popularly elected Shire President represents the whole district and is not included in ward ratio calculations.

As at 30 September 2026, the Shire had 24,991 electors. The district-wide average was one councillor for every 4,165 electors.

Ward	Electors	Councillors	Electors per councillor	Deviation
North	9,533	2	1:4,767	14.44%
North West	8,470	2	1:4,235	1.68%
South	6,988	2	1:3,494	-16.11%
Shire total / average	24,991	6	1:4,165	

Table: Current Elector Ratios

Calculation method

Average electors per councillor
Total electors in the Shire ÷ total number of ward councillor positions.

Ward deviation
(Ward electors per councillor − average electors per councillor) ÷ average electors per councillor × 100

A positive deviation indicates that a councillor represents more electors than the district average. A negative deviation indicates that a councillor represents fewer electors than the district average.

The North and South wards are currently outside the Local Government Advisory Board's usual tolerance of plus or minus 10 per cent.

The uneven distribution of forecast growth is also relevant. Wards containing rapidly developing areas may experience greater increases in elector numbers than wards containing established or more gradually growing communities. As a result, the relative ratios between wards may change even where the total number of councillors remains the same.

For options that remove wards, all councillors would be elected across the whole district and there would be no separate ward ratios. The overall number of electors represented by each councillor would, however, continue to increase as the Shire grows.

Bringing the factors together

The Shire's future representation arrangements need to account for:

- the identities and connections of established and emerging communities;
- the physical form of the district and the location of recognisable boundaries;
- substantial but uneven population growth;
- the distribution of economic activity, infrastructure and services; and
- equitable representation across the district.

The factors may point in different directions. A boundary that closely follows an established community may not produce equal elector ratios, while a boundary designed primarily to equalise elector numbers may divide a locality or become outdated as growth occurs.

The options in this paper are intended to present different ways of balancing these considerations. Community feedback will assist Council in determining which arrangement best reflects the Shire's current circumstances and anticipated future development.

5. Options for community consideration

Methodology

No statutory body publishes forward elector enrolment projections. Future elector numbers have therefore been modelled using forecast population growth for residents aged 18 years and over at either the suburb or SA1 level, adjusted by an assumed enrolment rate of 83 per cent to reflect current enrolment levels within the Shire. The modelling uses enrolment data as at September 2026, based on Western Australian Electoral Commission data, together with .id population forecasts. The resulting figures are planning estimates rather than precise forecasts.

The 2026 option modelling uses estimated elector numbers derived through this population-based methodology. These figures differ from the actual enrolment figure of 24,991 electors as at 30 September 2026, which is used when assessing the current ward and representation arrangements.

Elector forecasts have been prepared to 2036, providing a 10-year outlook on the anticipated growth and changing distribution of electors across the Shire. This timeframe aligns with the statutory review cycle and provides a reasonable period over which to consider how each option may respond to expected growth.

The Shire is forecast to experience significant growth over this period; however, that growth is not expected to occur evenly across the district. This presents an ongoing challenge in maintaining balanced representation under a ward system, as areas experiencing higher rates of growth may increase their share of the Shire's electors more rapidly than established or slower-growing areas. Consequently, elector-to-councillor ratios may become less balanced over time, even where ward boundaries and councillor numbers initially provide relatively balanced representation.

The projections are therefore intended not only to show the anticipated number of electors under each option, but also to test how representation may change as growth occurs and to identify where representational imbalances may emerge over the 10-year forecast period. Under options where wards are removed, differences in elector-to-councillor ratios between wards would not arise; however, the overall number of electors represented by each councillor would continue to increase as the Shire grows.

Population forecasts and demographic assumptions may change as updated Census, population and enrolment data become available. The projections should therefore be treated as indicative and subject to revision. Future ward and representation reviews will provide an opportunity to reconsider ward boundaries, councillor numbers and representation arrangements having regard to actual growth and the most current information available.

The percentage deviation shows how each ward’s electors-per-councillor ratio compares with the district-wide average. A deviation close to zero indicates a more even distribution of electors per councillor across the wards.

Number of Councillors – assessment and review

As part of the ward and representation review, the number of councillors is also being considered. Several options presented in this paper propose increasing the number of councillors from six to eight. If the number of Councillors is increased to 8, the Shire would have a total of nine elected members, with the President being elected by Electors.

Section 2.17 of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides that, where the President is elected by electors and the district’s population is more than 5,000 but not more than 75,000, the council is to comprise the popularly elected President and between four and eight councillors. The Shire may therefore have between four and eight councillors, in addition to the popularly elected Shire President.

For clarity, the statutory limits on the number of councillors are determined by the district’s population, while the ward representation modelling in this paper is based on estimated elector numbers.

To provide context for considering the appropriate level of representation for the Shire, the table below compares Serpentine Jarrahdale's current elector-to-councillor ratio with a selection of other Western Australian local governments. The comparison demonstrates the variation in representation levels across the sector and provides a useful reference point when considering the options presented through this review.

Table: Elector to councillor ratios – other local governments (ordered by elector – councillor ratio)

Local Government	Number of councillors	Number of electors (September 2026[1])	Councillor to elector ratio
Murray	8	15,896	1:1,987 electors
Harvey	8	22,488	1:2,811 electors
Fremantle	8	25,306	1:3,163 electors
Belmont	8	27,695	1:3,462 electors
Greater Geraldton	8	30,002	1:3,750 electors
Mundaring	8	30,338	1:3,792 electors
Serpentine Jarrahdale	**6**	**24,991**	**1:4,165 electors**
Kwinana	8	33,541	1:4,193 electors
Armadale	14	68,449	1:4,889 electors
Kalamunda	8	44,599	1:5,575 electors
Mandurah	11	75,924	1:6,902 electors
Rockingham	11	102,058	1:9,278 electors
Cockburn	9	89,181	1:9,909 electors

[1] Enrolment-Statistics-Report-as-at-30-September-2026.pdf

Cost of Councillors

The fees, allowances and expenses associated with each councillor are determined through Council's annual budget. As some costs vary depending on superannuation, training and expense claims, the table below provides an approximate annual cost per councillor based on the 2026–27 financial year.

Type	Amount
Annual Attendance Fee	$24,236
Superannuation	$2,909
ICT Allowance	$2,500
Training	$4,500
Other (catering, stationary, ICT subscriptions)	$2,000
Total	$36,145

Cost is one consideration when determining the appropriate number of councillors, alongside councillor workload, accessibility, diversity of perspectives in decision-making and the capacity to provide effective community representation. The number of positions should also be considered in the context of the Shire's ability to attract sufficient candidates to support competitive elections and fill available positions.

Potential advantages and disadvantages of increasing the number of councillors include:

Advantages	Disadvantages
• A reduction in the councillor-elector ratio. • A perception of improved accessibility to councillors. • Potential increased opportunities for residents to approach and engage with councillors. • The potential for councillor workload to be distributed across a greater number of elected members. • Greater resilience in governance where councillors are unavailable due	• Increased costs associated with councillor fees, training and administration. • Larger meeting sizes and potentially longer deliberations. • Reduced efficiency if governance structures become disproportionately large relative to the size and complexity of the local government. • Community expectations of improved service levels or engagement outcomes due to increased councillors, which may not necessarily

to leave or conflicts of interest. • Potential for increased diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, skills and experience, to inform Council deliberations.	occur. • Potential challenge to attract sufficient candidates to contest all available councillor positions.

Options

The Shire has undertaken detailed modelling on a range of options for consideration. Council may ultimately adopt one option, modify an option, retain the current arrangements, or consider an alternative arising from submissions, subject to the statutory requirements.

The forecast growth across the Shire presents an inherent challenge in establishing a ward structure that will maintain relatively even representation over the longer term. Growth is not expected to occur uniformly across the district, with some areas forecast to experience substantially greater increases in population and elector numbers than others.

As a result, no ward structure examined through this review is expected to completely remove the potential for representational imbalances to emerge as growth occurs. Ward boundaries and the allocation of councillors can be designed to accommodate anticipated growth to an extent; however, the scale and distribution of forecast growth means that variations between wards are likely to increase over time under each of the models considered.

Increasing the number of councillors may assist in achieving a more balanced distribution of representation in the nearer term. However, doing so would also reduce the capacity to respond to future population and elector growth through a further increase in councillor numbers, placing greater reliance on future changes to ward boundaries or councillor allocation. Future reviews may therefore need to consider changes to ward boundaries, the allocation of councillors between wards, or the continued suitability of a ward system as the district grows.

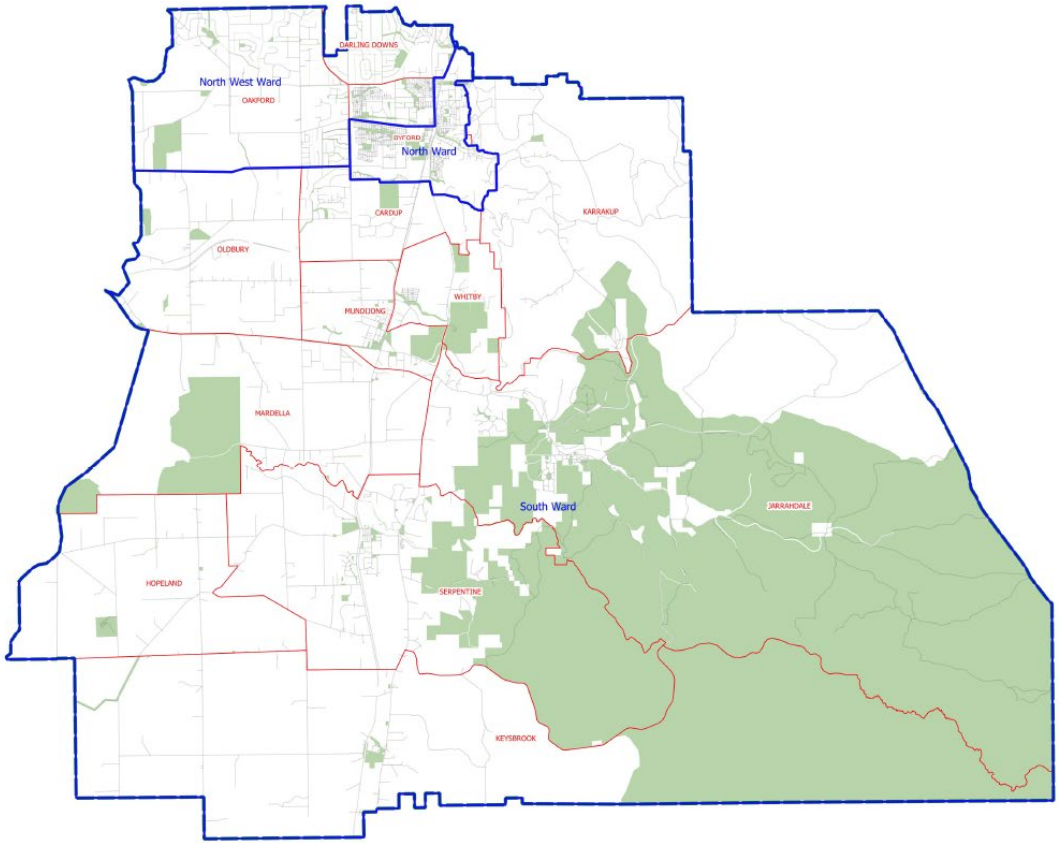
The options presented in this discussion paper should therefore be considered as structures that seek to provide the most appropriate and equitable representation for the foreseeable planning period, rather than as arrangements capable of permanently accommodating the Shire's substantial and uneven growth.

Option 1 - Current three wards / six or eight councillors

This option proposes retaining the existing three ward boundaries, with consideration given to either:

- six councillors, maintaining the existing allocation of two councillors per ward; or
- eight councillors, with councillor representation redistributed between the existing wards to better reflect elector numbers. The proposed 3:2:3 allocation reflects projected elector growth, particularly within the South Ward.

The existing ward boundaries would remain unchanged under either model.



Projected growth and representation change

The following table illustrates how elector growth may affect representation across the current three wards with six and eight ward councillors[2].

Percentage deviation is calculated using the methodology described above. A result close to zero indicates closer alignment with the district-wide average.

[2] Elector estimates are based on .id population forecasts for residents aged 18 years and over, using suburb-level or SA1-level data as applicable, adjusted by the assumed enrolment rate described in the methodology.

Six (6) Councillors

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
North	2	9,533	4,767	14.44%	11,751	5,876	17.31%	13,011	6,506	16.82%	15,465	7,733	10.85%
North West	2	8,470	4,235	1.68%	9,374	4,687	-6.42%	9,745	4,873	-12.51%	10,689	5,345	-23.38%
South	2	6,988	3,494	-16.11%	8,927	4,464	-10.88%	10,658	5,329	-4.31%	15,698	7,849	12.53%
Total	**6**	**24,991**	**4,165**		**30,052**	**5,009**		**33,414**	**5,569**		**41,852**	**6,975**	

Table: Option 1 projected ratios – 6 Councillors

Eight (8) Councillors

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
North	3	9,533	3,178	1.72%	11,751	3,917	4.27%	13,011	4,337	3.84%	15,465	5,155	-1.46%
North West	2	8,470	4,235	35.57%	9,374	4,687	24.77%	9,745	4,873	16.66%	10,689	5,345	2.16%
South	3	6,988	2,329	-25.43%	8,927	2,976	-20.79%	10,658	3,553	-14.94%	15,698	5,233	0.02%
Total	**8**	**24,991**	**3,124**		**30,052**	**3,757**		**33,414**	**4,177**		**41,852**	**5,232**	

Table: Option 1 projected ratios – 8 Councillors

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	The existing ward boundaries would continue to apply. While this maintains existing representation arrangements, Byford would remain divided between three wards and the South Ward would continue to encompass a broad range of established, emerging urban and rural communities.
Physical and topographic features	The existing ward boundaries use a combination of established locality boundaries and major physical and transport features. However, the current structure also divides Byford across all three wards, meaning the ward boundaries do not always correspond with identifiable communities or settlement patterns. Retaining the existing boundaries provides continuity and avoids the need to establish new boundaries. However, as development expands within Byford, Mundijong, Whitby and Cardup, some existing boundaries may become less reflective of the Shire's evolving urban form and transport connections.
Demographic trends	The current ward structure would remain unchanged despite significant differences in forecast population growth across the Shire. Growth is expected to be concentrated predominantly within Mundijong, Whitby, Cardup and Byford, while the Shire's rural and outer areas are expected to grow more gradually. As these growth areas are distributed across the existing wards, retaining the current boundaries and equal allocation of two

	councillors per ward would not respond to the changing distribution of electors. The modelling indicates that this would result in increasing differences in representation between the wards over time.
Economic factors	Retaining the existing ward boundaries would maintain the current distribution of urban, rural-residential, agricultural and other economic interests between the wards. As growth and development occur within Byford, Mundijong, Whitby and Cardup, the existing boundaries may become less reflective of emerging economic, infrastructure and service relationships.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	Retaining the existing ward boundaries results in differing elector-to-councillor ratios depending on whether six or eight councillors are elected and how those councillors are distributed between the three wards. Under the six-councillor model, each ward would retain two councillors. Forecast growth, particularly within the South Ward, results in increasing variation between the wards over time. Increasing representation to eight councillors allows councillor positions to be redistributed to better reflect elector numbers and forecast growth. While this improves representation at particular points in the forecast period, uneven growth means the ratios also change over time and would require future review.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	• Retains familiar existing ward boundaries, providing continuity for electors. • Avoids the need to establish new ward boundaries. • Provides a choice between retaining six councillors or increasing representative capacity to eight councillors. • The eight-councillor alternative provides greater flexibility to distribute representation according to elector numbers.
Disadvantages	• Retains existing ward boundaries despite significant changes in the location and distribution of forecast growth. • Byford would continue to be divided between existing wards. • Uneven population growth results in elector-to-councillor ratios becoming increasingly unbalanced over time. • Increasing the number of councillors does not, by itself, resolve issues arising from the existing ward boundaries. • The eight-councillor alternative would increase the cost of elected member representation.

Summary

This option would retain the current three wards and existing ward boundaries, with consideration given to either retaining six councillors or increasing representation to eight councillors. It provides continuity for electors and preserves the existing ward structure, while avoiding the need to establish new ward boundaries.

Under the six-councillor model, each ward would continue to elect two councillors. An eight-councillor model would allow additional councillor positions to be distributed between the existing wards to better reflect elector numbers and forecast growth.

While retaining the existing boundaries provides continuity, it does not address the underlying differences in the rate and location of growth across the three wards. Elector-to-councillor ratios would continue to change over time under either model, although increasing to eight councillors provides greater flexibility to distribute representation in response to elector numbers.

Option 2 – Revised three wards / six or eight councillors

This option retains three wards with revised ward boundaries based on suburb boundaries and considers two possible council sizes: six or eight councillors. Under both models, councillors would be distributed between the wards to better reflect the current and forecast distribution of electors.

The proposed wards and councillor distribution would be:

Central Ward: Byford, Cardup and Mundijong

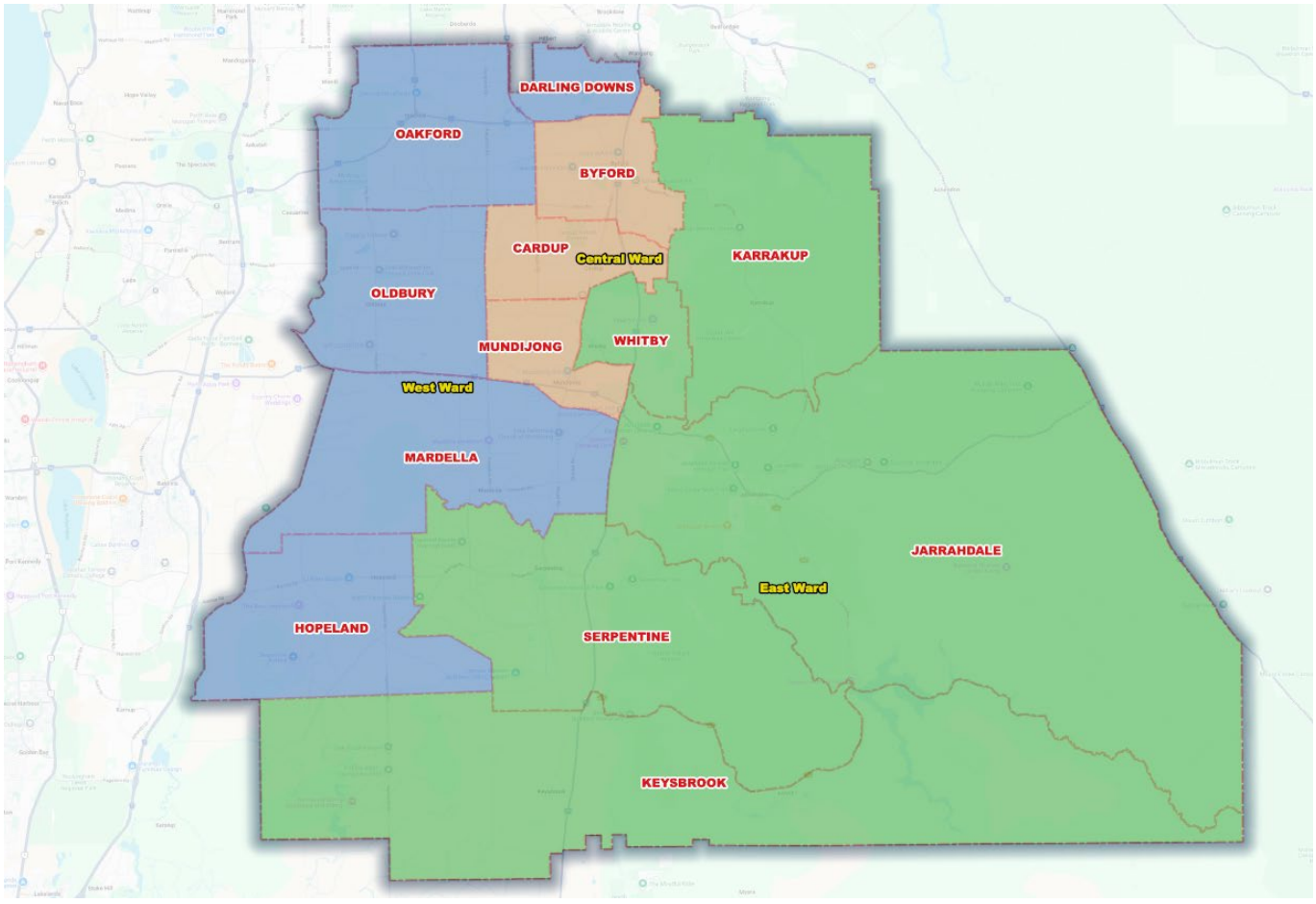
- Six-councillor model: four (4) councillors
- Eight-councillor model: five (5) councillors

West Ward: Darling Downs, Hopeland, Oakford, Oldbury and Mardella

- Six-councillor model: one (1) councillor
- Eight-councillor model: one (1) councillor

East Ward: Jarrahdale, Karrakup, Keysbrook, Whitby and Serpentine

- Six-councillor model: one (1) councillor
- Eight-councillor model: two (2) councillors



Projected growth and representation change

To account for the significant expected growth in the Central Ward, both models allocate the majority of councillors to that ward. Under the six-councillor model, Central Ward would have four councillors, with one councillor each for the West and East Wards. Under the eight-councillor model, Central Ward would have five councillors, West Ward one councillor and East Ward two councillors. In both models, the Shire President would also provide district-wide representation.

The following table illustrates how projected elector growth would affect representation across the revised three ward structure with six and eight councillors[3].

Percentage deviation is calculated using the methodology described above. A result close to zero indicates closer alignment with the district-wide average.

Six (6) Councillors

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
Central	4	16,889	4,222	-0.56%	20,063	5,016	0.14%	22,690	5,673	1.86%	29,227	7,307	4.75%
West	1	4,085	4,085	-3.80%	4,574	4,574	-8.68%	4,681	4,681	-15.95%	4,793	4,793	-31.29%
East	1	4,503	4,503	6.05%	5,415	5,415	8.11%	6,042	6,042	8.50%	7,832	7,832	12.28%
Total	**6**	**25,477**	**4,246**		**30,051**	**5,009**		**33,413**	**5,569**		**41,852**	**6,975**	

Table: Option 2 projected ratios – 8 Councillors

Eight (8) Councillors

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
Central	5	16,889	3,378	6.07%	20,063	4,013	6.82%	22,690	4,538	8.65%	29,227	5,845	11.74%
West	1	4,085	4,085	28.27%	4,574	4,574	21.75%	4,681	4,681	12.07%	4,793	4,793	-8.39%
East	2	4,503	2,251	-29.30%	5,415	2,707	-27.92%	6,042	3,021	-27.67%	7,832	3,916	-25.15%
Total	**8**	**25,477**	**4,246**		**30,051**	**3,756**		**33,413**	**4,177**		**41,852**	**5,231**	

Table: Option 2 projected ratios – 8 Councillors

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	The proposed ward structure groups Byford, Cardup and Mundijong within the Central Ward, reflecting their increasing urbanisation, population growth and shared interests associated with residential development, infrastructure, transport, community facilities and service provision. The West Ward groups Darling Downs, Hopeland, Oakford, Oldbury and Mardella, which generally share rural, rural-residential and agricultural characteristics. The East Ward comprises Jarrahdale, Karrakup, Keysbrook, Whitby and Serpentine. While these communities share some rural and environmental characteristics, the inclusion of Whitby is less consistent with the broader character of the ward given its relationship to the Mundijong growth area and anticipated urban

[3] Elector estimates are based on .id population forecasts for residents aged 18 years and over, using suburb-level or SA1-level data as applicable, adjusted by the assumed enrolment rate described in the methodology.

	development. Overall, the model provides some identifiable communities of interest, although the ward composition is influenced by the need to achieve balanced elector-to-councillor ratios.
Physical and topographic features	The proposed structure uses existing suburb boundaries, providing clearly identifiable ward boundaries and avoiding the division of individual suburbs between wards. The West and East Wards also broadly reflect the geographic distribution of the Shire's rural and outer communities, with the Central Ward encompassing the more concentrated urban and developing areas. However, the boundaries are primarily based on suburb groupings and elector distribution rather than significant physical or topographic features.
Demographic trends	The Central Ward contains Byford, Cardup and Mundijong, where a substantial proportion of the Shire's population and future growth is expected to occur. Allocating four of the six councillors to this ward reflects the existing concentration of electors and provides additional representation to the principal growth areas. Growth is not expected to occur evenly across the three wards. In particular, future growth within the East Ward, including Whitby, results in the distribution of electors changing over time. Consequently, while the proposed allocation responds well to the current and near-term population distribution, its alignment reduces over the longer term.
Economic factors	The proposed wards broadly reflect differences in economic and land-use characteristics across the Shire. The Central Ward is increasingly characterised by residential development, commercial activity and investment in urban infrastructure and community facilities. The West Ward includes areas with stronger rural, agricultural, equine and rural-residential characteristics, while the East Ward includes rural, environmental, tourism and land-based activities. Economic interests are not confined to individual ward boundaries, and the inclusion of Whitby within the East Ward means that ward would incorporate both established rural areas and an emerging urban growth area.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	The revised ward boundaries provide a comparatively balanced distribution of electors between councillors in the short term under both council-size models. Under the 6-councillor model, the ratios remain comparatively close in 2029, before beginning to diverge as growth occurs at different rates across the three wards. The modelling indicates that the revised boundaries and 4:1:1 distribution of councillors

	provide improved alignment in the earlier years, but this balance is not maintained over the longer term as the distribution of electors changes. Under the eight-councillor model, the 5:1:2 distribution provides additional representation in the Central and East Wards; however, the ratio of electors to councillors is less evenly balanced across the three wards than under the six-councillor 4:1:1 model.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	• The 4:1:1 model provides a substantially more balanced elector-to-councillor ratio in the short term, while the 5:1:2 model provides a higher overall level of elected member representation. • Provides flexibility to consider either six or eight councillors within the same proposed ward structure. • Groups Byford, Cardup and Mundijong within the Central Ward, recognising the concentration of electors and projected growth within this part of the Shire. • Under the 5:1:2 model, the East Ward would have two councillors, providing electors with greater choice of ward representatives than under the 4:1:1 model. • Uses whole suburb boundaries, avoiding the need to divide individual localities between wards. • Provides distinct ward representation for the Shire's western and eastern communities.
Disadvantages	• Under the 4:1:1 model, the West and East Wards would each be represented by only one ward councillor, reducing the choice of ward representatives available to electors in those areas. • Under the 5:1:2 model, the elector-to-councillor ratios are less evenly balanced between the three wards than under the 4:1:1 model. • The model is influenced significantly by the distribution of electors and the capacity to achieve reasonable elector-to-councillor ratios across wards. • Whitby is separated from the other major growth areas and included within the East Ward, despite its anticipated urban development and connection with the broader Mundijong growth area. • The relative balance between wards changes over the longer term as growth occurs at different rates across the Shire.

	• The West Ward remains a single-member ward under both models, making it more sensitive to changes in elector numbers and providing less flexibility to redistribute representation without changing ward boundaries or councillor numbers. • Under both models, representation in the West Ward may be affected by a councillor vacancy or periods of unavailability to a greater extent than in a multi-member ward.

Summary

This option provides two approaches to representation within the same three-ward structure. The six-councillor 4:1:1 model provides relatively close elector-to-councillor ratios across the three wards in the earlier years of the forecast period, while retaining the existing number of councillors. The eight-councillor 5:1:2 model provides additional representation in the Central and East Wards, although the elector-to-councillor ratios are less evenly balanced than under the six-councillor model.

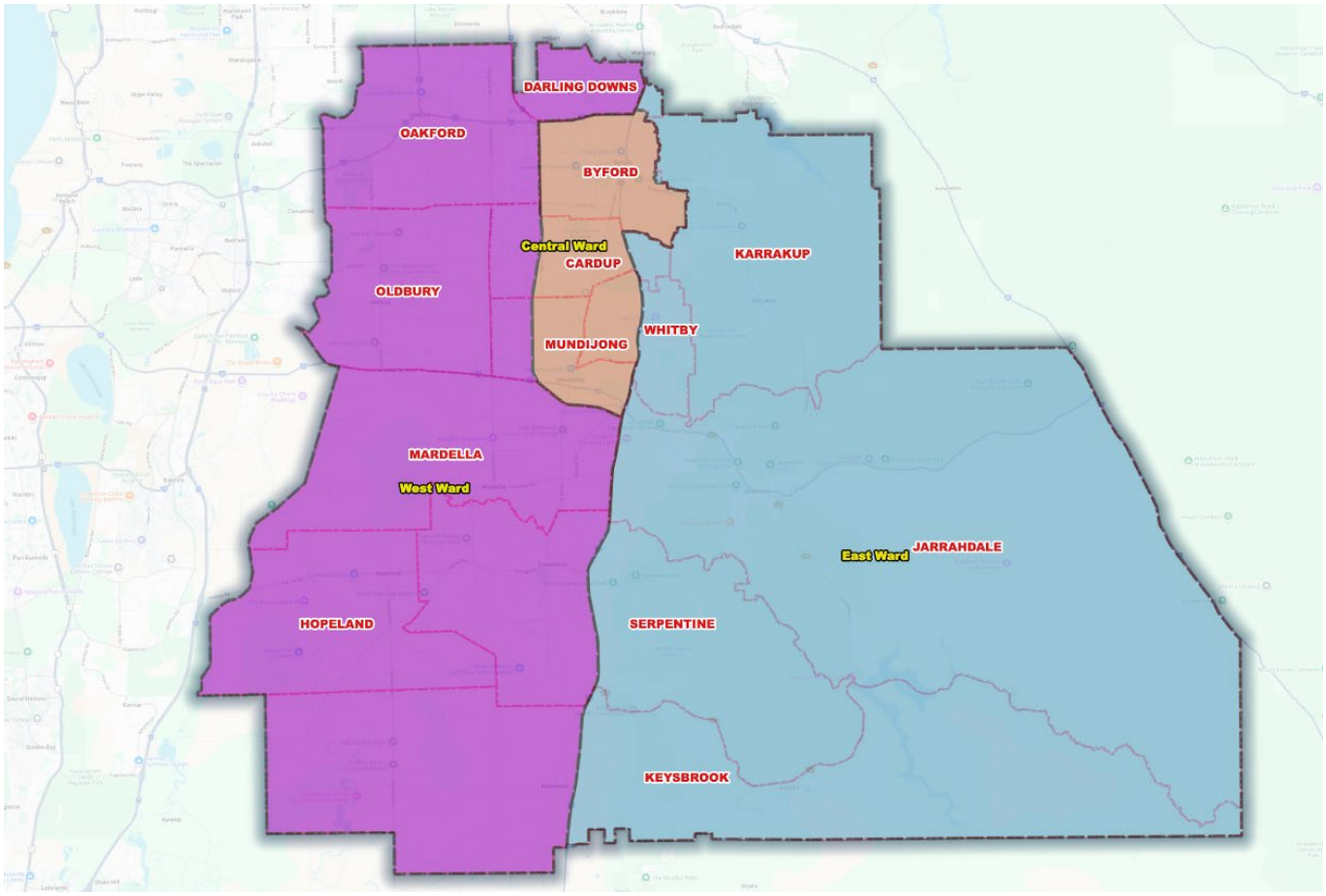
Both models use whole suburb boundaries and provide distinct representation for the Shire's central, eastern and western communities. However, the West Ward remains represented by a single councillor under both models, while the East Ward has one councillor under the six-councillor model and two under the eight-councillor model. Under both models, differences in forecast growth across the wards result in greater variation in elector-to-councillor ratios over time.

Option 3 - Revised wards / eight councillors

This option retains three wards but proposes revised ward boundaries (based on identifiable features) and an increase in the number of councillors to eight to better align representation with the forecast population growth.

The proposed wards would be:

1. Central Ward, five (5) councillors: The majority of Byford, together with portions of Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby located between Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway.
2. West Ward, two (2) councillors: Darling Downs, Oldbury and Oakford, together with the portions of Mundijong and Cardup located west of Tonkin Highway, Hopeland, Mardella, together with the portions of Serpentine and Keysbrook located west of South Western Highway.
3. East Ward, one (1) councillor: Jarrahdale and Karrakup, together with the portions of Whitby, Serpentine and Keysbrook located east of South Western Highway.



Projected growth and representation change

To account for the significant expected growth in the Central Ward, it would have five councillors, with the West Ward having two, and the East Ward one.

The following table illustrates how projected elector growth would affect representation across the revised three ward structure with eight councillors[4].

Percentage deviation is calculated using the methodology described above. A result close to zero indicates closer alignment with the district-wide average.

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
Central	5	17,689	3,538	11.09%	20,530	4,106	9.31%	22,662	4,532	8.52%	27,259	5,452	4.21%
West	2	5,317	2,658	-16.52%	6,398	3,199	-14.84%	7,157	3,579	-14.32%	9,497	4,748	-9.23%
East	1	2,471	2,471	-22.42%	3,123	3,123	-16.85%	3,594	3,594	-13.95%	5,096	5,096	-2.59%
Total	**8**	**25,477**	**3,185**		**30,051**	**3,756**		**33,413**	**4,177**		**41,852**	**5,231**	

Table: Option 3 projected ratios

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	The proposed ward structure groups the Shire's principal urban and developing areas within the Central Ward, while the West and East Wards primarily comprise rural and rural-residential communities. The boundaries recognise broad differences in settlement patterns and community characteristics, although some localities would be divided between wards.
Physical and topographic features	The proposed boundaries use significant and readily identifiable features, including Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway, to define parts of the ward boundaries. This provides identifiable boundaries between the Central, West and East Wards, although several localities would be divided where these roads pass through them.
Demographic trends	Significant growth is forecast across all three wards to 2036, although the scale and rate of growth varies between areas. The Central Ward continues to contain the majority of the Shire's electors, while the East and West Wards are forecast to experience proportionally stronger growth over the review period. This changes the distribution of electors between the wards over time and demonstrates the importance of considering both current and forecast demographic patterns when assessing the proposed structure.
Economic factors	The proposed wards broadly recognise the differing economic characteristics across the Shire. The Central Ward incorporates the principal urban and commercial growth areas associated with Byford and the future development of Mundijong and surrounding areas. The West Ward predominantly encompasses rural, rural-residential and agricultural areas, while the East Ward includes

[4] Elector estimates are based on .id population forecasts for residents aged 18 years and over, using suburb-level or SA1-level data as applicable, adjusted by the assumed enrolment rate described in the methodology.

	rural communities and areas associated with tourism, recreation and the natural environment, particularly around Jarrahdale. The proposed structure therefore provides some alignment between representation and the different economic and land-use characteristics of the Shire, while recognising that economic activity and employment patterns extend across ward boundaries.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	The proposed allocation results in some variation in representation between the wards at the commencement of the review period. However, this variation is forecast to reduce over time as growth occurs across the Shire, particularly within the East and West Wards. By 2036, the distribution of electors per councillor is considerably more even across the three wards. This indicates that the proposed allocation becomes more balanced over the 10-year forecast period as the distribution of electors changes.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	• Retains a three-ward structure, while adjusting boundaries and councillor numbers to reflect forecast changes in the distribution of electors. • Uses major and readily identifiable features, including Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway, as ward boundaries. • Provides separate representation for the Shire's central urban/developing areas and the predominantly rural areas to the east and west. • Increasing to eight councillors provides greater flexibility to distribute representation between areas with different elector populations. • Projected elector-to-councillor ratios become more closely aligned over the medium term, with all three wards projected to be within 10% of the average ratio by 2036. • Maintains ward-based representation for communities with differing geographic, settlement and land-use characteristics.
Disadvantages	• Creates a more complex ward structure, with three separate wards and boundaries that may be less straightforward for electors to understand than broader ward arrangements. • Divides several existing localities, including Mundijong, Cardup, Whitby, Serpentine and Keysbrook, between different wards, which may separate communities that share a common identity or interests. • While major roads provide clear physical boundaries, Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway do not necessarily

	represent boundaries between communities of interest. • Different rates of population growth between the three wards may cause elector-to-councillor ratios to change over time, requiring future adjustment to ward boundaries or the distribution of councillors.

Summary

This option retains three wards, revises the ward boundaries and increases representation from six to eight councillors. Five councillors would represent the Central Ward, two would represent the West Ward and one would represent the East Ward.

The proposed boundaries use major transport corridors to distinguish the Central, West and East Wards, although this would result in parts of several localities being divided between wards.

The modelling indicates that the distribution of electors per councillor becomes progressively more balanced over the forecast period as proportionally stronger growth occurs within the East and West Wards. By 2036, representation across the three wards is relatively closely aligned, although the distribution would continue to require monitoring as development occurs.

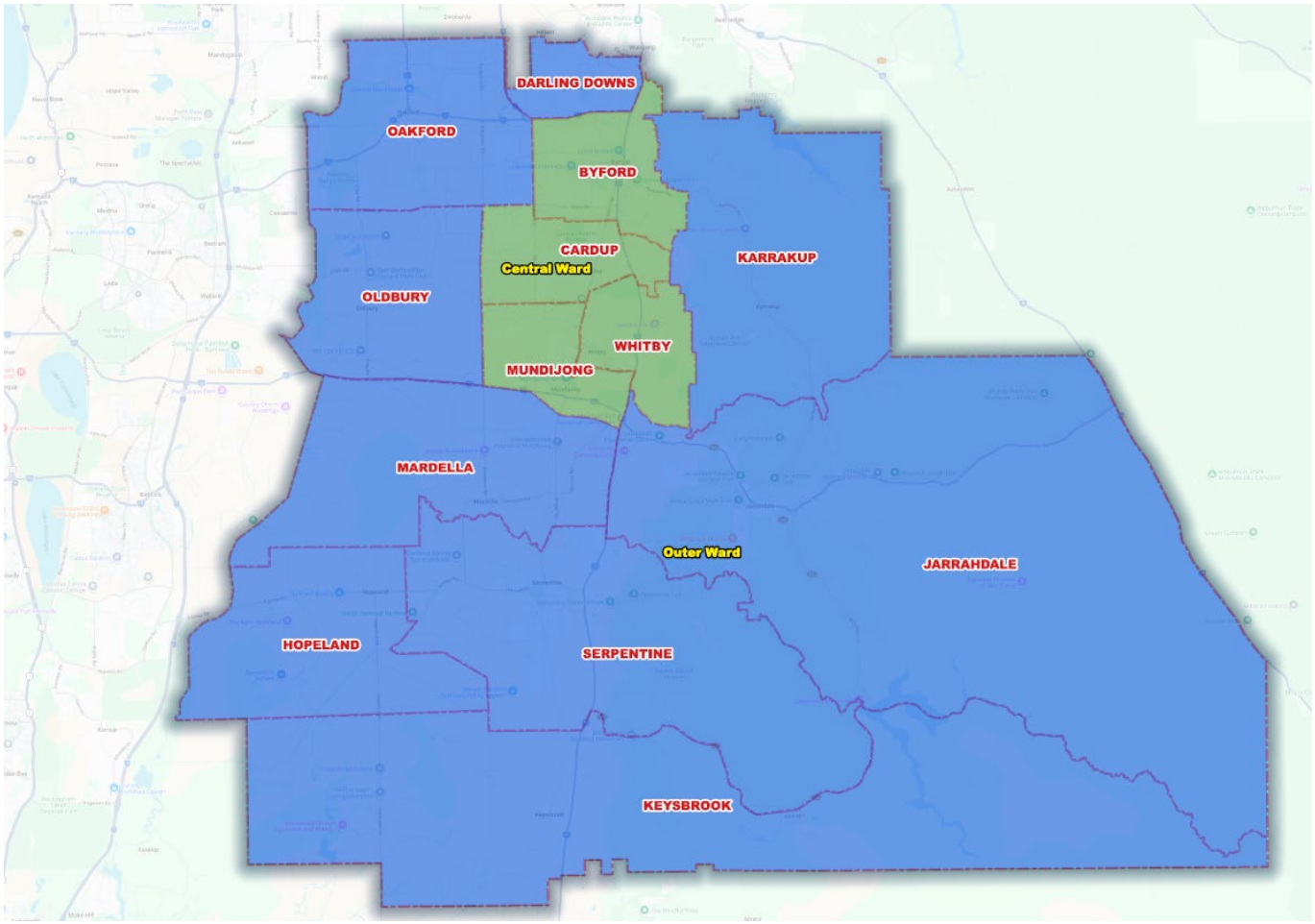
Option 4 - Two wards / eight councillors

Option 4 proposes to reduce the number of wards from three to two (based on suburb boundaries) and increase the number of councillors from six to eight.

To recognise the significant population growth forecast within Byford, Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby, these suburbs would be grouped to form a Central Ward, with all remaining suburbs forming an Outer Ward.

The proposed wards would be:

1. Central Ward, six (6) councillors: Byford, Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby
2. Outer Ward, two (2) councillors: All remaining suburbs within the Shire



Projected growth and representation change

To account for the significant expected growth in the Central Ward, it would have six councillors, with the Outer Ward having two (plus representation from the Shire President).

The following table illustrates how projected elector growth would affect representation across the revised two ward structure with eight councillors[5].

[5] Elector estimates are based on .id population forecasts for residents aged 18 years and over, using suburb-level or SA1-level data as applicable, adjusted by the assumed enrolment rate described in the methodology.

Percentage deviation is calculated using the methodology described above. A result close to zero indicates closer alignment with the district-wide average.

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	Councillors	Number of Electors	Electors per Councillor	% Ratio	Number of Electors	Electors per Councillor	% Ratio	Number of Electors	Electors per Councillor	% Ratio	Number of Electors	Electors per Councillor	% Ratio
Central	6	17,915	2,986	-6.24%	21,724	3,621	-3.61%	24,822	4,137	-0.95%	32,832	5,472	4.60%
Outer	2	7,561	3,781	18.72%	8,328	4,164	10.84%	8,591	4,295	2.84%	9,019	4,510	-13.80%
Total	**8**	**25,477**	**3,185**		**30,051**	**3,756**		**33,413**	**4,177**		**41,852**	**5,231**	

Table: Option 4 projected ratios

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	The proposed two-ward structure provides a relatively clear distinction between the Shire's growing urban communities and its smaller, more dispersed rural and outer communities. The proposed six-councillor Central Ward would comprise Mundijong, Byford, Cardup and Whitby, which collectively represent the Shire's principal growth corridor. These localities share a number of common characteristics and interests associated with population growth, residential development, infrastructure provision, transport, community facilities and the delivery of services to an expanding population. The proposed two-councillor Outer Ward would comprise the Shire's smaller outer localities. While these communities are individually diverse, they generally have lower population densities and may share interests associated with rural living, agriculture, environmental management, bushfire risk, rural roads, access to services and the preservation of rural character. The proposed structure provides an opportunity to group communities experiencing similar growth and development pressures while maintaining distinct representation for the Shire's rural and outer communities.
Physical and topographic features	The proposed ward structure broadly reflects the different physical characteristics of the Shire. The six-councillor Central Ward would encompass the more urbanised and developing portion of the Shire, while the two-councillor Outer Ward would cover the more geographically dispersed rural and outer localities. This creates ward boundaries that can be understood in the context of the Shire's settlement pattern, rather than relying solely on elector numbers.
Demographic trends	Population growth within the Shire is expected to be concentrated primarily within Byford, Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby. Combining these growth areas within one ward allows future population change to be considered collectively and recognises

	that the representation requirements of these areas are likely to evolve together. The allocation of six councillors to the Central Ward also reflects the substantially greater concentration of electors within these areas compared with the Shire's outer localities.
Economic factors	The two proposed wards reflect, to some extent, differences in economic activity across the Shire. The Central Ward contains areas experiencing significant residential development and associated investment in infrastructure, commercial activity and community facilities. In comparison, the Outer Ward includes areas where rural industries, agriculture, tourism, equine activities and other land-based economic activities may have greater significance. While economic interests are not uniform within either ward, the proposed structure would provide an identifiable representative voice for both the developing urban areas and the Shire's rural and outer areas.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	The proposed allocation results in some variation in representation at the commencement of the review period, with the Central Ward below the district average and the Outer Ward above the district average. This difference progressively reduces through to 2031, when both wards are relatively close to the district average. By 2036, the position shifts as stronger growth in the Central Ward results in the Outer Ward falling below the district average. Overall, the 6:2 allocation provides a comparatively balanced distribution of representation from 2029, but the different rates of growth between the two wards result in increasing variation over the longer term.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	• Recognises distinct communities of interest by grouping Mundijong, Byford, Cardup and Whitby, which share significant population growth, development, infrastructure and service pressures, within the same ward. • Provides dedicated representation for outer communities, ensuring the Shire's smaller and more dispersed rural localities retain a distinct electoral voice rather than being incorporated into a predominantly urban growth ward. • Reflects the current distribution of electors, with six of the eight councillor positions allocated to the ward containing the substantial majority of the Shire's electors. • Provides increasingly balanced representation in the short to

	medium term. • Aligns representation with anticipated growth patterns, recognising that most future elector growth is expected within Mundijong, Byford, Cardup and Whitby. • Reflects differences in settlement patterns and local issues, with the Central Ward generally characterised by urban growth and development, while the Outer Ward encompasses larger geographic areas with lower population densities and different infrastructure, environmental and rural land-use considerations. • Provides electors in the Central Ward with a broad choice of representatives, with six councillors representing the ward rather than representation being divided between several smaller wards.
Disadvantages	• Does not provide equal representation at commencement, but the imbalance reduces significantly by 2029 and 2031. • The two-councillor Outer Ward covers a comparatively large geographic area, which may make it more challenging for two councillors to maintain visibility and engagement across its dispersed communities. • Different rates of growth between the wards may necessitate an earlier future review, potentially requiring changes to ward boundaries or councillor allocation as the Central Ward continues to grow substantially faster than the Outer Ward.

Summary

Overall, the proposed two-ward structure distinguishes between the Shire's principal growth areas and its smaller, more dispersed rural and outer communities. Grouping Byford, Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby within the Central Ward recognises their shared growth, development, infrastructure and service pressures, while the Outer Ward provides distinct representation for communities with different geographic, economic and land-use characteristics.

The proposed 6:2 distribution of councillors becomes increasingly balanced through to 2031. While the Outer Ward would have two ward councillors, residents would also be represented at a district-wide level by the popularly elected Shire President.

Beyond 2031, the concentration of growth within the Central Ward results in the elector-to-councillor ratios progressively diverging. The structure therefore provides a reasonable medium-term response to the Shire's changing population distribution but would need to be monitored and reconsidered through future ward and representation reviews as growth occurs.

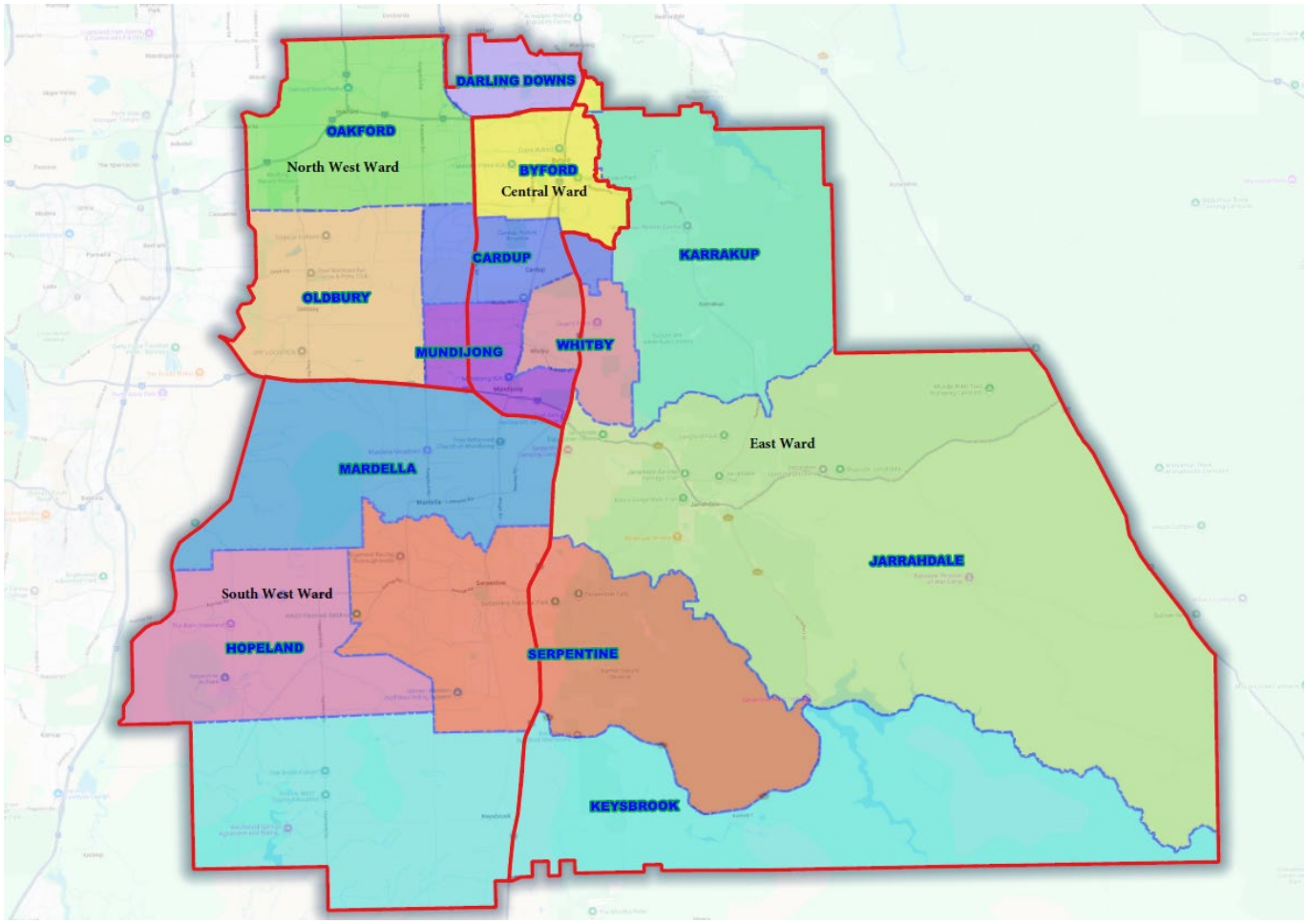
Option 5 - Four wards / eight councillors

Option 5 proposes to increase the number of wards from three to four (based on identifiable features) and increase the number of councillors from six to eight.

To respond to forecast population growth and differences in the distribution of electors across the Shire, this option proposes four wards, with the number of councillors varying between wards.

The proposed wards are:

1. Central Ward, five councillors: The majority of Byford, together with portions of Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby located between Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway.
2. North West Ward, 1 councillor: Darling Downs, Oldbury and Oakford, together with the portions of Mundijong and Cardup located west of Tonkin Highway.
3. South West Ward, 1 councillor: Hopeland and Mardella, together with the portions of Serpentine and Keysbrook located west of South Western Highway.
4. East Ward, 1 councillor: Jarrahdale and Karrakup, together with the portions of Serpentine, Whitby and Keysbrook located east of South Western Highway.



Projected growth and representation change

To account for the significant expected growth in the Central Ward, it would have five councillors, with the remaining three wards having one each (plus representation from the Shire President).

The following table illustrates how projected elector growth would affect representation across the revised four ward structure with eight councillors[6].

Percentage deviation is calculated using the methodology described above. A result close to zero indicates closer alignment with the district-wide average.

		2026			2029			2031			2036		
Ward	**Councillors**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**	**Number of Electors**	**Electors per Councillor**	**% Ratio**
Central	5	17,689	3,538	11.09%	20,530	4,106	9.31%	22,662	4,532	8.52%	27,259	5,452	4.21%
North West	1	3,497	3,497	9.82%	3,984	3,984	6.05%	4,078	4,078	-2.36%	4,181	4,181	-20.08%
South West	1	1,820	1,820	-42.86%	2,414	2,414	-35.73%	3,079	3,079	-26.27%	5,316	5,316	1.62%
East	1	2,471	2,471	-22.42%	3,123	3,123	-16.85%	3,594	3,594	-13.95%	5,096	5,096	-2.59%
Total	**8**	**25,477**	**3,185**		**30,051**	**3,756**		**33,413**	**4,177**		**41,852**	**5,231**	

Table: Option 5 projected ratios

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	The proposed four-ward structure seeks to group communities with similar characteristics while providing more localised representation across the Shire. The Central Ward would contain the majority of the Shire's urban and future growth areas, including most of Byford and portions of Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby. These areas share common interests associated with population growth, residential development, infrastructure provision, transport, community facilities and access to services. The North West Ward would combine Darling Downs, Oldbury and Oakford with portions of Mundijong and Cardup west of Tonkin Highway. These areas generally have lower residential densities and retain stronger rural, rural-residential and equine characteristics. The South West and East Wards would provide more localised representation for the Shire's southern and eastern communities, where issues associated with rural living, agriculture, environmental management, bushfire risk, access to services and rural infrastructure may have greater prominence. However, the proposed boundaries would divide Mundijong, Cardup, Serpentine and Keysbrook between different wards. This may separate parts of an established locality that otherwise share a common identity and community of interest.

[6] Using suburb data provided by .ID

Physical and topographic features	The proposed structure uses the Tonkin Highway, Mundijong Road and South Western Highway as significant and readily identifiable boundaries between a number of the proposed wards. These transport corridors provide clear physical reference points and assist in creating ward boundaries that can be readily understood. The structure also broadly distinguishes the more urbanised and developing areas from the Shire's geographically dispersed rural and outer areas. A potential limitation is that using major roads as boundaries may divide established suburbs or localities where communities and activities extend across those roads.
Demographic trends	Population growth is expected to be concentrated predominantly within the Shire's urban growth areas, particularly Byford, Mundijong, Cardup and Whitby. The four-ward model seeks to respond to this growth by establishing a Central Ward incorporating much of the principal growth corridor, while retaining separate wards for the less densely populated northern, southern and eastern areas. However, the concentration and rate of future development may result in elector numbers changing at significantly different rates between the four wards. The allocation of councillors and elector-to-councillor ratios would therefore need to be monitored as development occurs.
Economic factors	The proposed wards broadly reflect some of the different economic characteristics across the Shire. The Central Ward is more closely associated with residential growth, commercial development and investment in urban infrastructure and community facilities. The remaining wards contain larger rural and rural-residential areas where agriculture, equine activities, tourism, environmental assets and other land-based activities may have greater significance. The four-ward structure may therefore enable different economic and land-use interests to be represented more locally. However, these interests are not confined to individual ward boundaries, and economic activity across the Shire remains interconnected.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	The proposed allocation results in considerable variation in representation at the commencement of the review period, particularly in the South West Ward. The position progressively improves as forecast growth occurs, with the South West and East Wards moving closer to the district average over time. By 2036, the Central, South West and East Wards are relatively closely aligned with the district average, while the North West Ward has moved further below the average as a result of

	comparatively slower growth. Overall, the modelling demonstrates that the balance of representation changes considerably over the forecast period as different parts of the Shire experience different rates of growth.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	• Provides more localised representation, with four wards reflecting different geographic areas and communities across the Shire. • Uses Tonkin Highway, Mundijong Road and South Western Highway as clear and identifiable physical boundaries between a number of the proposed wards. • Provides greater opportunity for councillors to develop knowledge of, and represent, the particular issues and priorities of their ward. • Recognises differences between the Shire's urban growth areas, rural-residential areas and more dispersed rural communities. • Provides a structure that can allocate different numbers of councillors between wards to respond to differences in elector numbers and anticipated population growth. • May strengthen representation of smaller rural and outer communities by providing them with clearly defined ward representation, rather than incorporating them into a larger predominantly urban ward.
Disadvantages	• Creates a more complex ward structure, with four separate wards and boundaries that may be less straightforward for electors to understand than broader ward arrangements. • Divides several existing localities, including Mundijong, Cardup, Serpentine and Keysbrook, between different wards, which may separate communities that share a common identity or interests. • While major roads provide clear physical boundaries, Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway do not necessarily represent boundaries between communities of interest. • Different rates of population growth between the four wards may cause elector-to-councillor ratios to change over time, requiring future adjustment to ward boundaries or the distribution of councillors. • Increasing the number of wards creates more ward boundaries that need to be maintained and reviewed as the Shire continues to grow and develop.

	• Greater emphasis on geographically defined representation may increase the perception that councillors primarily represent their individual ward, rather than considering the interests of the Shire as a whole.

Summary

This option establishes four wards and increases representation to eight councillors, with five councillors representing the Central Ward and one councillor representing each of the North West, South West and East Wards.

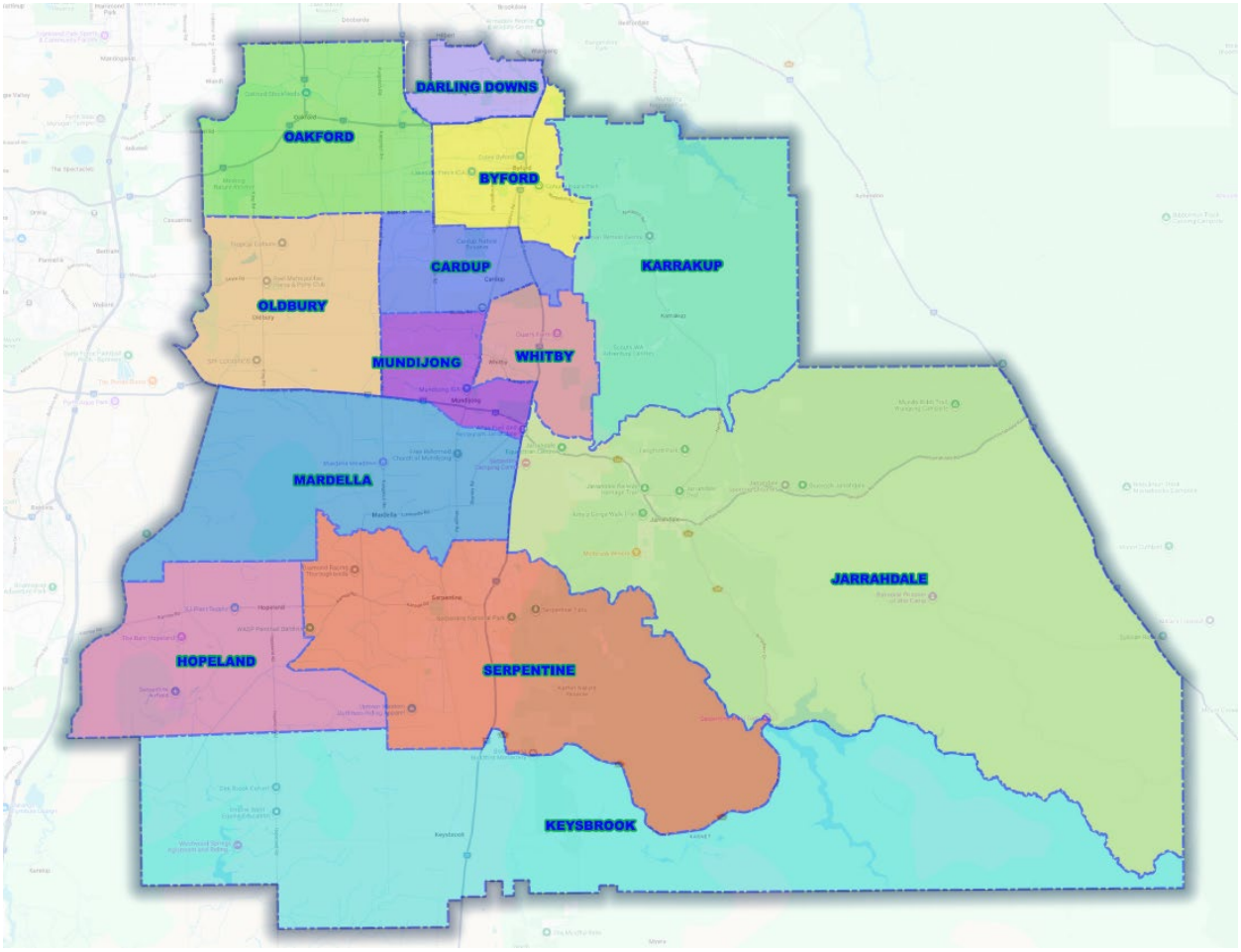
The proposed structure seeks to provide more localised representation for the Shire's rural and outer communities while concentrating representation within the Central Ward, where the majority of electors and future population growth are expected to be located. Major transport corridors are used to define a number of the ward boundaries, although this results in some established localities being divided between wards.

The projected distribution of electors changes considerably over the forecast period. Representation within the South West and East Wards becomes more closely aligned with the district average as growth occurs, while comparatively slower growth in the North West Ward results in greater variation by 2036. The structure would therefore require ongoing monitoring as population growth and development occur.

Option 6 - No wards / six or eight councillors

Option 6 proposes to abolish the ward system, with consideration given to either retaining the existing six councillors or increasing representation to eight councillors.

Under this option, all councillors would be elected to represent the Shire as a whole, rather than a specific ward.



Projected growth and representation change

The following table illustrates how projected elector growth would affect representation across a no ward structure with both six and eight councillors.

	2026		2029		2031		2036	
Councillors	Estimated Electors	Elector Ratio	Number of Electors	Elector Ratio	Number of Electors	Elector Ratio	Number of Electors	Elector Ratio
6	24,991	1:4,165	30,051	1:5,009	33,413	1:5,569	41,852	1:6,975
8		1:3,124		1:3,756		1:4,177		1:5,231

Table: Option 6 projected ratios

Assessment of factors

The following is an assessment of this proposal against the factors.

Community of interest	Under a no-ward system, all councillors would be elected by electors across the whole Shire and would represent the district as a whole. Communities of interest would therefore not be formally divided or grouped through ward boundaries.
Physical and topographic features	With no ward boundaries, this factor has limited application.
Demographic trends	The at large structure removes the need to allocate councillors by ward. Both options of 6 or 8 councillors would accommodate the Shire's projected growth.
Economic factors	All economic interests would be represented Shire-wide rather than locally.
Ratio of electors to Councillors	Increasing the number of councillors from six to eight would reduce the number of electors represented by each councillor across the forecast period. In 2026, the average ratio would reduce from 1 councillor per 4,165 electors with six councillors to 1 per 3,124 electors with eight councillors. By 2036, the respective ratios are projected to increase to 1:6,975 and 1:5,231. The eight-councillor model therefore provides a lower elector-to-councillor ratio throughout the forecast period and greater capacity to accommodate the Shire's significant projected growth.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The Local Government Advisory Board[7] describes the advantages and disadvantages of a no ward system as follows:

Advantages	• Elected members are elected by the whole community not just a section of it. Knowledge and interest in all areas of the Council's affairs would result in broadening the views beyond the immediate concerns of those in a ward. • The smaller town sites and rural areas would have the whole Council working for them. • Members of the community who want to approach an elected member can speak to any elected member. • Social networks and communities of interest are often spread across a local government and elected members could have a broader overview and understanding of these.

[7] Local Government Advisory Board

	• Elected members can use their specialty skills and knowledge for the benefit of the whole local government. • There is balanced representation with each elected member representing the whole community. • The election process is much simpler for the community to understand and for the Council to administer.
Disadvantages	• Electors may feel that they are not adequately represented if they don't have an affinity with any of the elected members. • Elected members living in a certain area may have a greater affinity and understanding of the issues specific to that area. • There is potential for an interest group to dominate the Council. • Elected members may feel overwhelmed by having to represent all electors and may not have the time or opportunity to understand and represent all the issues. • It may be more difficult and costly for candidates to be elected if they to canvass the whole local government area.

Summary

A no-ward structure, with either six or eight councillors, removes the issue of variations in elector-to-councillor ratios between wards, as all councillors are elected to represent the Shire as a whole. This avoids the need to adjust ward boundaries or redistribute councillors in response to uneven population growth across different areas.

Under either option, representation would remain consistent across the district as the Shire grows. The choice between six and eight councillors would instead determine the overall number of electors represented by each councillor, rather than how representation is distributed geographically.

Comparison of elector-to councillor ratios

The following table brings together the projected percentage deviation in elector-to-councillor ratios for each of the ward models considered in this discussion paper. It provides a comparative view of how evenly representation is distributed under each model in 2026 and how this is forecast to change through to 2036.

A percentage closer to zero indicates that the number of electors per councillor in a ward is closer to the district average. The table should be considered alongside the broader assessment of each option, as elector-to-councillor ratios are one of a number of factors relevant to determining an appropriate ward and representation structure.

Option/model	Ward	Councillors	2026 deviation	2029 deviation	2031 deviation	2036 deviation	Overall ratio observation
Option 1A: 6 Councillors	North	2	14.44%	17.31%	16.82%	10.85%	Moderate variation initially, with increasing variation by 2036.
	North West	2	1.68%	-6.42%	-12.51%	-23.38%	
	South	2	-16.11%	-10.88%	-4.31%	12.53%	
Option 1B: 8 Councillors	North	3	1.72%	4.27%	3.84%	-1.46%	Significant initial variation, becoming substantially more balanced by 2036.
	North West	2	35.57%	24.77%	16.66%	2.16%	
	South	3	-25.43%	-20.79%	-14.94%	0.02%	
Option 2A: 6 Councillors	Central	4	-0.56%	0.14%	1.86%	4.75%	Strong short-term alignment, with increasing variation over time.
	West	1	-3.80%	-8.68%	-15.95%	-31.29%	
	East	1	6.05%	8.11%	8.50%	12.28%	
Option 2B: 8 Councillors	Central	5	6.07%	6.82%	8.65%	11.74%	Greater variation across the forecast period, particularly in the East Ward.
	West	1	28.27%	21.75%	12.07%	-8.39%	
	East	2	-29.30%	-27.92%	-27.67%	-25.15%	
Option 3: 8 Councillors	Central	5	11.09%	9.31%	8.52%	4.21%	Variation reduces substantially over the forecast period.
	West	2	-16.52%	-14.84%	-14.32%	-9.23%	
	East	1	-22.42%	-16.85%	-13.95%	-2.59%	
Option 4: 8 Councillors	Central	6	-6.24%	-3.61%	-0.95%	4.60%	Comparatively balanced, with some divergence by 2036.
	Outer	2	18.72%	10.84%	2.84%	-13.80%	
Option 5: 8 Councillors	Central	5	11.09%	9.31%	8.52%	4.21%	Significant initial variation, particularly in the South West Ward, reducing over time.
	North West	1	9.82%	6.05%	-2.36%	-20.08%	
	South West	1	-42.86%	-35.73%	-26.27%	1.62%	
	East	1	-22.42%	-16.85%	-13.95%	-2.59%	

Note: green highlight indicates ratios within +/- 10%

The modelling indicates that no single option provides the closest elector-to-councillor alignment in every forecast year. Option 2A provides comparatively close alignment in the earlier years, while Option 4 maintains a relatively consistent level of alignment across the forecast period. Option 1B displays greater variation in the earlier years but becomes substantially more balanced by 2036. This demonstrates the effect of forecast growth on each model and the difficulty in establishing ward arrangements that maintain even representation over the longer term.

Other options

The options presented in this paper are meant to assist with community input and discussion. It is not meant to be exhaustive and the community are invited to suggest other options.

Suggestions for ward names are also welcome and encouraged.

6. Transition and implementation considerations

If Council decides to propose a change to the Shire's ward or representation arrangements, the proposal will be submitted to the Local Government Advisory Board for assessment. Any change would require the necessary approvals before it could take effect. The intended commencement date for any approved change is the October 2027 ordinary local government election.

The effect on existing councillors will depend on the option ultimately proposed and the arrangements approved for its implementation. This may include changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillor positions allocated to each ward, the total number of councillors, or the removal of wards.

Where councillor positions are redistributed between wards, or the Shire moves to a no-ward system, transitional arrangements will need to be developed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Schedule 4.2 provides that, where practicable:

- half of the total number of councillors retire at each ordinary election; and
- where wards apply, as close as practicable to half of the councillors representing each ward retire at each ordinary election.

If wards are retained but their boundaries or councillor allocations change, the proposal may also need to address how serving councillors are allocated to the new wards during the transition. This would be determined as part of the final proposal and would need to be consistent with the requirements and intent of the Act.

Final transition arrangements cannot be confirmed until Council has considered community submissions and determined whether to propose a change.

7. Questions for the community

1. Should the Shire retain wards or adopt a no-ward system?
2. Should the Shire retain six councillors or increase to eight councillors, in addition to the popularly elected President?
3. If wards are retained, should there be two ward, three wards or four wards?
4. What boundaries would reflect recognisable communities of interest and practical physical boundaries?
5. Are there localities that should be kept together or separated? Please explain why.
6. Which option best balances local representation, fairness, future growth, governance capacity and cost?
7. Are there alternative ward names, boundaries or representation arrangements Council should consider?
8. What transition issues should Council take into account?

8. Making a submission

Submissions should identify the preferred option or alternative and explain the reasons for that view.

Where possible, submissions should address community identity, boundaries, demographic trends, economic factors, representation equity, governance capacity and cost.

Method	Details
Online	https://www.yoursaysj.sjshire.wa.gov.au/ward-and-representation-review
Email	info@sjshire.wa.gov.au
Post or hand delivery	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, 6 Paterson Street, Mundijong WA 6213
Closing date	5.00pm, 3 January 2027

Council will consider all submissions before deciding whether to recommend a change. Council is not limited to the options in this paper and may consider a variation or alternative arising from consultation, provided the statutory requirements are met.

Data

Locality Name	2026			2029			2031			2036		
	Population	18+	Electors	Population	18+	Electors	Population	18+	Electors	Population	18+	Electors
Byford	25,971	18,298	15,187	29,135	20,952	17,390	31,347	22,805	18,928	36,166	26,783	22,230
Cardup	1,329	1,003	833	2,150	1,606	1,333	2,941	2,175	1,805	5,050	3,683	3,057
Darling Downs	2,063	1,442	1,197	2,596	1,850	1,535	2,694	1,931	1,602	2,696	1,969	1,634
Hopeland (WA)	441	365	303	419	360	299	427	372	309	421	375	311
Jarrahdale	1,315	1,085	901	1,327	1,133	941	1,327	1,148	953	1,319	1,170	971
Karrakup	208	156	129	221	163	135	225	164	136	228	166	138
Keysbrook	316	261	217	319	273	226	319	277	230	318	283	234
Mardella	454	343	285	463	351	291	468	354	294	481	362	300
Mundijong	1,386	1,047	869	2,155	1,614	1,340	3,183	2,358	1,957	6,504	4,747	3,940
Oakford	3,249	2,479	2,057	3,456	2,650	2,200	3,498	2,680	2,225	3,614	2,758	2,290
Oldbury	388	293	243	396	300	249	400	302	251	412	310	257
Serpentine (WA)	3,241	2,686	2,230	3,436	2,955	2,452	3,579	3,122	2,592	3,892	3,474	2,883
Whitby	1,641	1,237	1,026	2,685	2,001	1,661	3,481	2,569	2,132	5,934	4,343	3,605
Serpentine-Jarrahdale	**42,001**	**30,695**	**25,477**	**48,756**	**36,206**	**30,051**	**53,888**	**40,257**	**33,413**	**67,035**	**50,424**	**41,852**
		As at 30/9/26*	**24,991**									
# Councillors	**6**		4,165			5,009			5,569			6,975
# Councillors	**8**		3,124			3,756			4,177			5,231

Note 1: Suburb-level Elector estimates are based on .id population forecasts for residents aged 18 years and over, adjusted by the assumed enrolment rate described in the methodology.

*Current number of electors provided by Electoral Commission as at 30 September 2026