

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 573

Review of Non-Metropolitan Counties.

COUNTY OF
SHROPSHIRE
BOUNDARIES WITH
CHESHIRE,
HEREFORD AND WORCESTER
AND STAFFORDSHIRE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 573

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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REVIEW OF NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES
COUNTY OF SHROPSHIRE: BOUNDARIES WITH CHESHIRE
HEREFORD AND WORCESTER AND STAFFORDSHIRE

COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT AND PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

1. On 26 July 1985 we wrote to Shropshire County Council announcing our intention to undertake a review of the County under section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Copies of our letter were sent to all the principal local authorities and parishes in Shropshire and in the adjoining counties of Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire; to the National and County Associations of Local Councils; to the Members of Parliament with constituency interests and to the headquarters of the main political parties. In addition, copies were sent to those government departments with an interest; the regional health authorities; the public utilities; the English Tourist Board; the editors of the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle; the Police Superintendants' Association of England and Wales, and to local television and radio stations serving the area.

2. The County Councils were requested to co-operate as necessary with each other and with the District Councils concerned to assist us in publicising the start of the review by inserting a notice for two successive weeks in local newspapers so as to give a wide coverage in the areas concerned. The County Councils were also asked to ensure that the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of the police and to services in respect of which they have a statutory function, such as the administration of justice.

3. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the adjoining counties, and any person or body interested in the review, to send us their views in detail on whether changes to the county boundary were desirable and, if so, what they should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government, the criterion laid down in the Act.

THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US: OUR INTERIM DECISION TO MAKE NO PROPOSALS

4. We received letters and submissions from Shropshire County Council and other interested local authorities. No comments were received from members of the public.

5. Shropshire County Council and other local authorities in Shropshire were content with the status quo and were generally opposed to any boundary changes. However, changes to Shropshire's boundaries with Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire were suggested by local authorities in those counties.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SHROPSHIRE AND HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

6. In a detailed submission, Leominster District Council suggested the transfer of the town of Burford from Shropshire to Hereford and Worcester, on the grounds that the town was so closely linked with Tenbury Wells, on the opposite side of the River Teme, that they should be in the same County.

7. Leominster District Council argued that Burford's growth had been influenced by a shortage of land suitable for housing and industrial development on the Tenbury Wells side of the River Teme and that further growth would need to be on the Burford side. In addition to the ties formed by the closeness of the settlements, the District Council pointed to the employment and social factors they saw as underlining the essential unity, including the use made by Burford residents of shopping and community facilities in Tenbury Wells and of the various public services located there. As one example of the problems caused by

the county boundary the Council considered it absurd that secondary school pupils in Burford should have to be bussed eight miles to Cleobury Mortimer at a time when the number of pupils in the secondary school in Tenbury was declining.

8. Leominster District Council's suggestion was supported by Hereford and Worcester County Council but opposed by Shropshire County Council and by South Shropshire District Council, which produced its own detailed submission in response.

9. In its submission, South Shropshire District Council said that the growth of Burford was not simply due to land use constraints on the Tenbury Wells side of the river but was the result also of the failure of local authorities south of the River Teme, in contrast to action taken by local authorities to the north, to release land earmarked for development by a joint Shropshire/Worcestershire Local Plan of 1971. The District Council also pointed out that future industrial development in Tenbury Wells was in fact envisaged under the Tenbury Wells Draft Local Plan and that no further release of land in Burford for industrial development would be made within the next five years.

10. South Shropshire District Council accepted that some residents of Burford made use of recreational facilities in Tenbury Wells but suggested that this usage may be exaggerated; the Council pointed to a survey indicating that Burford residents looked also to Ludlow for shopping and leisure and that more of them worked in South Shropshire than in the Leominster area. It was argued that the evidence relating to usage of shopping and social facilities did not support the contention that Burford and Tenbury Wells formed one community. On the educational issue, the Council suggested that, in view of the small number of children involved, severing the established link between Burford pupils and the school in Cleobury Mortimer in favour of Tenbury Wells School would put the former at risk without ensuring the survival of the latter. Finally, the District Council claimed that the Leominster proposal took no account of the wishes of the local inhabitants.

11. We accepted that the close ties between Burford and Tenbury Wells were bound to be relevant to the pattern of community life in the area but saw no sign of any strong local desire for boundary changes. We concluded that the significance of the ties was outweighed by the advantages to local government of long-established county loyalties and of the well-defined county boundary provided by the River Teme. We were not persuaded that that boundary led to difficulties in the provision of local government services which could not be solved within the existing local government structure. We therefore decided to make no proposals for change in this area.

Richard's Castle

12. Leominster District Council had initially drawn attention to the existence of two parishes called Richard's Castle on either side of the county boundary. However the District Council had not taken the matter further and we saw no sufficient reason to propose any changes to the boundary in this vicinity.

Buttonoak

13. At Buttonoak, near Bewdley, the county boundary generally follows the rear of properties on the north side of the B4194. Wyre Forest District Council pointed out that it cuts through two of these properties and suggested that a more appropriate and recognisable boundary would be to follow the line of the B4194. Bridgnorth District Council, on the other hand, said that the present boundary had been drawn so as to retain within Shropshire all the properties which had originally existed on either side of the road and that any adjustment should follow the same principle if it was thought necessary to remove the existing anomalies.

14. We did not consider that there was a sufficiently good case for altering the existing boundary, bearing in mind our predisposition to make changes to county boundaries only where there was a convincing case in operational terms to justify overturning the strong loyalties attaching to counties.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SHROPSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE

Bishops Wood, Codsall Wood, Patshull Park, Rudge

15. In examining this boundary we also had before us the comments and suggestions received during our review of Staffordshire, which had begun at the same time as the Shropshire review.

16. We examined several minor changes in the above areas, which Staffordshire County Council said had been suggested initially by South Staffordshire District Council but which were not now being pursued. Further suggestions for change in the Patshull Park vicinity were made to us by Pattingham Parish Council, mainly to secure better defined boundaries. We concluded however such changes would not be justified.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SHROPSHIRE AND CHESHIRE

17. There was no proposal for changes to this boundary and we had no evidence to suggest any were needed.

PUBLICATION OF OUR INTERIM DECISIONS

18. We announced our interim decisions to make no proposals in a letter to Shropshire County Council dated 6 February 1987. Copies of the letter were sent to the County Councils of Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire. The four County Councils were asked to publish notices giving details of our interim decisions and to post copies of them at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for eight weeks. Comments were invited by 3 April 1987. Copies of our letter were also sent to the District and Parish Councils concerned, and to those who appeared to us to have an interest in the review of Shropshire's boundaries with Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire.

RESPONSE TO OUR INTERIM DECISIONS

19. In response to our interim decisions letter we received representations from Hereford and Worcester County Council, Leominster District Council, Tenbury Town Council and from various individuals who urged us to reconsider our interim decision to make no proposals for the boundary between Shropshire and Hereford and Worcester at Burford and Tenbury Wells. As a result we decided to hold a local meeting in Tenbury in order to have a clearer understanding of residents' views on the present boundary and to obtain further information about the operation of local government services in the area. Our intention was announced in a letter dated 20 August 1987 sent to the four principal local authorities concerned, which was copied to the parish councils and parish meeting concerned and to other interested persons and bodies. The local meeting was held on 29 October 1987 and a report of it is attached at Annex A. This was conducted by the Chairman of the Commission with two other Members present.

20. We returned to this question in the light of this report and of letters received prior to the meeting or submitted during the course of it. It seemed to us that the pattern of residential and industrial development over a number of years, the pattern of road communications and the social and economic interdependence of the areas on either side of the river, had brought about a sufficiently close relationship between Burford and Tenbury Wells for them to form, in effect, a recognisable community. We recognised the strength of the argument advanced at the local meeting that uniting Burford and Tenbury within the same county would enable the wishes of the residents to be more effectively represented and local government resources to be applied more efficiently. There would be some advantage in the planning of any future development, and in the handling of road traffic problems; the community would also be better placed to support social activities and facilities. The same advantages could, we noted, be secured by incorporating Tenbury Wells into Shropshire.

21. We were however, even more impressed by the strongly-expressed opposition to change voiced at the meeting, mainly on the grounds of Burford's historic ties with Shropshire and the strong local preference for maintaining its separate identity. It was clear that few people in Burford - and possibly not many more in Tenbury - believed that there would be any real advantage in changing the boundary. We did not believe, judging by the views expressed at the local meeting, that the preservation of a separate parish of Burford within Hereford and Worcester would be a sufficient recognition of the strong sense of identity felt by the present residents of Burford. We were reminded of the factors which we had quoted in the letter announcing our interim decision, namely the value to local government of county loyalties and of a clearly defined boundary such as that provided here by the River Teme. Nor was it evident to us that a clear boundary could be found to separate the more urban area of Burford from the purely rural part of the parish. The line of the old railway, which had initially appeared to be a possibility, splits ownerships. It was clear that the two parishes of Burford and Boraston were closely linked together, which argued against taking the whole parish of Burford into Hereford and Worcester, but to include the whole of both parishes would be to incorporate large areas of open countryside with relatively few links with Tenbury Wells, and it would ignore the links of both parishes with those to the north and with Ludlow.

22. On balance we came to the conclusion that the benefits of change as put forward to us were marginal to justify proposals which were so strongly opposed locally and which had their own drawbacks. We therefore decided to confirm our interim decision to make no proposals for any changes to the boundary in this vicinity.

BOUNDARY IN THE VICINITY OF BUTTONOAK

23. We also received representations about the boundary with Hereford and Worcester at Buttonoak. Previously, although Wyre Forest District Council had suggested using the B4194, we had seen insufficient merit in this suggestion to

warrant a change in the county boundary and had decided to make no proposals. However, Hereford and Worcester County Council, Bridgnorth District Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Kinlet Parish Council subsequently suggested that a very minor boundary change would unite within Shropshire two properties currently divided between the two counties. We accepted this suggestion in the light of the local agreement on the need for some amendment to the boundary and noted that it was supported by the property owners concerned. However, it seemed to us that if changes were made, they should include other adjoining properties known as 'Majuba' and the Forestry Houses which appeared to belong to the Buttonoak community. We therefore decided to propose that these too should be brought wholly into Shropshire.

24. There were no criticisms of our interim decisions about the other boundaries of Shropshire and we therefore decided to make no proposals for changes to its boundaries with Cheshire and Staffordshire.

PUBLICATION OF DRAFT PROPOSALS AND CONFIRMATION OF INTERIM DECISIONS

25. We announced our draft proposals for Buttonoak, and confirmed our interim decision to make no proposals for Burford/Tenbury Wells, or for Shropshire's boundaries with Cheshire and Staffordshire, in a letter to Shropshire County Council dated 14 March 1988. Copies of the letter were sent to the County Councils of Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire. Copies of our letter were also sent to the District and Parish Councils concerned, to all those who had made representations to us, to the residents affected by our draft proposal and to other interested persons, organisations, and bodies. The County Councils were asked to publish a notice giving details of our draft proposal. They and the affected District Councils were asked to post copies of the notice at places where public notices are customarily displayed. The County Councils were also asked to place copies of our letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments about the draft proposal for Buttonoak were invited by 9 May 1988.

RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSAL AND CONFIRMATION OF INTERIM DECISION: OUR FINAL PROPOSAL

BURFORD/TENBURY WELLS

26. Of the five councils which commented, Shropshire County Council and South Shropshire District Council expressed their satisfaction with our decision to confirm our interim decision. Hereford and Worcester County Council decided to make no further objection, Leominster District Council accepted the decision and Burford Parish Council approved. The Police Federation of England and Wales had no comment to make. Four residents expressed pleasure with the decision. We therefore decided to adhere to our earlier interim decision to make no proposals as final.

BUTTONOAK

27. Hereford and Worcester County Council supported Wyre Forest District Council and Upper Arley Parish Council in objecting to the transfer of 'Majuba' and the eight 'Forestry Houses' (which are numbered 5-12) into Shropshire. Wyre Forest District Council felt that it would be sufficient to remove the anomalies in relation to 'Azalia Cottage' and 'Two Shires' by re-drawing the boundary along the B4194. The District Council also noted, without wishing to pursue the point, that as the residents of Buttonoak look to the Wyre Forest towns for many of their community and commercial needs, an argument could be put forward for placing the whole community within Hereford and Worcester. Upper Arley Parish Council said it had contacted the households concerned and found that about half were not in favour of the proposal, the other half were unconcerned. The Council was opposed to the change principally on the ground that residents looked to the Hereford and Worcester towns of Bewdley (four miles away), Kidderminster (seven miles away) and Stourport (seven miles away) for facilities rather than to the more distant Bridgnorth (15 miles away). It supported some change to the boundary and agreed with the Wyre Forest District Council that the boundary should be drawn along the B4194. Bridgnorth District

Council 'wholeheartedly' supported our proposal. Kinlet Parish Council also supported it and Bridgnorth Town Council had no comment.

28. The residents of one of the properties affected by our draft proposal supported the proposed change on the grounds of more convenient schooling, better road and sewerage services and lower rates. However, seven other residents of Buttonoak, who included the residents of five of the Forestry Houses proposed for transfer, objected to the proposal on the grounds of easier access to services in the towns of Hereford and Worcester and stronger links with Wyre Forest.

29. We reconsidered our draft proposal in the light of the representations we had received. We noted the affinity with Bewdley and Kidderminster which Upper Arley Parish Council said was felt by many residents of the area, but considered that to reflect that affinity would involve the transfer to Hereford and Worcester of a much larger area for which little other justification had been advanced. We accepted that some residents of Buttonoak looked to towns such as Bewdley or Kidderminster in Hereford and Worcester mainly for shopping facilities, but considered that this argument in itself did not constitute sufficient justification for a change in our draft proposals to transfer the entire Buttonoak area and the other rural areas which adjoined it, to Hereford and Worcester. We felt sympathy for those residents who had opposed our draft proposal, but considered that Buttonoak constituted a single community and should be united as such within Shropshire, where the greatest number of dwellings already lies, in the interests of effective and convenient local government. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal as our final proposal.

30. We are satisfied that the changes set out above are desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government and we propose them accordingly. The change proposed involves very few electors and we further propose the consequential electoral changes set out in Annex B to this report.

PUBLICATION

31. A separate letter, enclosing copies of this Report, is being sent to the County Councils of Shropshire, Cheshire, Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire asking them to deposit copies of this Report at their main offices for inspection for six months. They are also asked to put notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. The text of the notice will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in the matter, and that it now falls to you to make an Order implementing the proposals if you think fit, though not earlier than six weeks from the date they are submitted to you. Copies of this Report, which includes a small scale map, are also being sent to those who received our draft proposals and interim decisions letter and to those who made comments.

SIGNED:

G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

G E CHERRY

K F J ENNALS

G R PRENTICE

HELEN SARKANY

BRIAN SHOLES

S T GARRISH
Secretary

23 February 1989

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND
COUNTY REVIEW: COUNTY OF SHROPSHIRE
BOUNDARY BETWEEN SHROPSHIRE AND HEREFORD AND WORCESTER AT TENBURY WELLS/
BURFORD

REPORT OF A LOCAL MEETING HELD AT TENBURY WELLS ON 29 OCTOBER 1987 BY
MR G J ELLERTON, CMG., MBE., (CHAIRMAN), PROFESSOR G E CHERRY, BA., FRTP1.,
FRICS., AND MR B SCHOLES, OBE., (MEMBERS)

1. Before inviting the individual representatives of the local authorities to speak, the Chairman opened the discussion by explaining the course of the review so far, the Commission's objectives in seeking further information by way of a local meeting and the guidelines set out in the Department of the Environment Circulars. He explained that the three members of the Commission present would report back to their colleagues and that a decision would be taken in the light of that report and of all the letters received prior to the meeting. He also assured the meeting that the Commission members present had visited the areas in question that morning.
2. Mr Renney, County Secretary of Hereford and Worcester County Council, drew attention to the interdependence of Burford and Tenbury and suggested that the transfer of Burford and Boraston to Hereford and Worcester would reflect the existence of a single community in this area. He cited four of the County Council's services as evidence of the need for change; Burford children were being bussed to Cleobury Mortimer when they could fill vacant places in Tenbury High School; 20% of borrowers from the library in Tenbury came from Shropshire; Shropshire farmers bringing livestock to Tenbury market needed animal licences from Hereford and Worcester County Council; 30% of Tenbury Youth Club's membership came from Shropshire. Mr Renney also gave examples of the operation of services to the community on both sides of the river and of the distribution of employment, sport and social facilities. He suggested that although opinion was presently opposed to change, future generations might well take a different view about its desirability.

3. The Chief Planning Officer of Leominster District Council, Mr Campbell,

outlined his Council's case for the transfer of areas north of the river to Leominster district in order that the community in Burford and Tenbury would have the benefit of a unified planning approach that would be responsive to the wishes of the community as a whole. He described the benefits of the joint planning policies that had been pursued by local authorities in the past. Broadly speaking, these provided for the establishment of industry north of the boundary and for residential development to the south. More recently, however, the two district councils had produced separate plans for their respective halves, albeit with joint liaison arrangements.

4. Using three maps, Mr Campbell illustrated the distribution of the facilities and services shared by the community in Burford and Tenbury together with the development that had taken place since the 1960's. In employment terms, an unacceptably high proportion of the working population in the area was being left with the options of either having to travel considerable distances to work or of leaving altogether. Future industrial and residential development in Tenbury was much constrained by the problems not only of water supply to land over 250 feet but also of drainage in the flood plain of the Teme and the Council had reluctantly decided that large-scale development would be too costly to support. However, there were extensive areas north of the river whose development would meet the needs of the community for decades to come. Mr Campbell argued that although South Shropshire District Council could no doubt plan effectively for the area within its jurisdiction, the division of the community between two planning authorities was bound to lead to differences. It

would be better that one authority and one electorate should make the decision for one community.

5. Mr Campbell concluded by suggesting that the line of the disused railway would be a suitable boundary but he accepted that there might be administrative reasons for transferring the whole of the parishes of Burford and Boraston.

6. The County Secretary of Shropshire County Council, Mr Sawtell, said the County Council wholeheartedly endorsed the Commission's interim decision to make no proposals. He accepted that the two historic communities in Burford and Tenbury were bound to have close ties with each other, particularly where employment and local shopping were concerned. He described the fairly extensive cross-boundary movement of children in Burford and Tenbury to schools in the neighbouring county; this had caused no difficulty and it was arguable that the existence of the boundary gave a greater variety of choice than would have been the case if the communities concerned had been under one administration. Neither was there any difficulty about the cross-border arrangements in the provision of fire service, highways maintenance and social services. The pattern of public transport provision indicated that the area as a whole had closer links with South Shropshire than with areas to the south. Mr Sawtell concluded by suggesting that there was no need for change nor any local support for it on the Shropshire side.

7. South Shropshire District Council's case was introduced by the Council Chairman, Councillor Meredith and its Chief Executive, Mr Kellett. The details were set out by the Acting District Secretary, Mr Biggs. He accepted that in many respects Burford and Tenbury formed a single community but argued that the boundary's prime function was to delineate^e two separate areas of public administration and that there were bound to be arbitrary features about the way such boundaries were drawn. In this instance, the river was a clear physical feature and therefore a good boundary. It was the Council's view that no clear advantages had been demonstrated to support the need for change. Moreover the postal referendum conducted by the Council (in accordance with accepted practice) clearly showed that 78% of the electorate in Burford and Boraston were opposed to change.

8. Mr Biggs said that the loss of Burford's concentration of residential areas would increase the cost of providing housing maintenance, refuse collection and street cleansing in the remainder of the district. The loss of the significant industrial/commercial rateable value in the parish would severely weaken an already low industrial base and would shift the financial burden more to domestic ratepayers. The loss of housing schemes and of the income from Council-owned accommodation would adversely affect the Council's housing programme and its Housing Revenue Account.

9. On the matter of planning issues, Mr Biggs commented that there was no evidence to suggest that further development on the Burford side would be appropriate or acceptable locally and, since the respective County Structure

Plans were broadly similar in their approach to planning issues in this area, he assumed that Leominster District Council would want to encourage development in Burford that was simply too contentious in Tenbury and be feared that less notice would be taken of the wishes of Burford residents. He pointed out that there was provision for Joint Local Plans to be agreed between the two District Councils if this was necessary.

10. In conclusion Mr Biggs reminded the Commission of the decision by the government minister, following proposals made more than 20 years ago for the transfer of Burford, to maintain the existing boundary and suggested that the reasons for that decision (to make no changes) still held good.

11. Mr Bunn, Chairman of Burford Parish Council attested to the strength of feeling against change in the Burford community. There was deep concern about the future of Burford Primary School in the event of one authority assuming responsibility for the whole area. There were long-established ties with local government at county and district level and the Parish Council did not think that a change to the county boundary would serve any advantage.

12. Major Coles, the county councillor for the Clee Hill division of Shropshire, said there was no doubt about the views of Burford residents. The Community had a thriving and effective parish council. The boundary was clearly defined by the River Teme. On behalf of the Governors of Burford Primary School, Mr Arthur Allen said that the loss of one of the primary schools would require children to negotiate the dangerously busy A456. The closure of the Burford school would undermine staff morale and possibly adversely affect the

development of the curriculum; it would also adversely affect the secondary school in Cleobury Mortimer.

13. Councillor Harrison, one of the representatives of Tenbury on Leominster District Council, said that the interests of Burford and Tenbury were identical and pointed out that the river did not form the boundary elsewhere along its length. There was an interest in 'taking over' Burford but there was a concern about the funding of local facilities that were shared by Burford residents but which were supported by Tenbury ratepayers. It was important that local government played a creative and flexible role in the life of the community.

14. Mr Kimber, the Hon Secretary to the Shropshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, said the Association supported Burford Parish Council's opposition to change; the present system worked very well and changes were unlikely to improve matters. He noted the good response to the postal referendum.

15. Councillor Jones, the member for the Tenbury division on Hereford and Worcester County Council, referred to his previous letter to the Commission in response to the interim decision to make no proposals. He wanted to make some further points at the meeting. He said nothing had come of hopes for a sports club in Tenbury, due to the division of responsibility. Leominster District Council had declined to support a project that would be sited outside its area and South Shropshire District Council had seen no reason to spend funds in support of the ratepayers of another district. Similarly, the problems of water supply were not effectively tackled when there were two parishes and two

districts involved. Road traffic was another problem. The difficulties of heavy traffic passing through Tenbury, pressure on the bridge over the Teme and the need for a small by-pass would have to be dealt with by two County Councils.

There was a real need for a unified approach to such matters; at present Burford residents had no say in what happened on the Tenbury side, and vice versa.

16. Speaking as chairman of Burford Parochial Church Council Prebendary Thompson, Rural Dean of Ludlow and the Team Vicar of the Tenbury Wells Team Ministry, (in the Diocese of Hereford) said the PCC was opposed to the changes suggested. The Parish Church had a long association with Shropshire and its records were lodged in the county archives at Shrewsbury. People needed historical roots and wished to maintain their links with the district and county. For its own part the church needed to retain the loyalty of residents, to keep its own churchyard and its own primary school. If this loyalty was diluted by the transfer of Burford to Tenbury Wells, the church would be weakened. Prebendary Thompson expressed support for the headmaster and governors of the Primary School's opposition to the possible changes.

17. Mrs Perkins a Burford parish councillor, saw no advantage to Burford residents in boundary changes. She stated that less than half the employees in the factories in Burford came from the Hereford and Worcester side of the boundary and pointed out that not only did Burford residents help to support facilities in Tenbury but that Tenbury residents used facilities in South Shropshire for which they made no contribution in rates.

18. Mrs Harris, a resident of Tenbury and local organiser of the WRVS, pointed out that while voluntary services in the area worked together without regard to the boundary, many of them used the community centre in Tenbury; they were not charged an economic rent and were being supported by Hereford and Worcester County Council and by Tenbury residents in particular.

19. Several speakers, all residents of Burford and Boraston, expressed satisfaction with the existing local government arrangements. They could see no reason to change and considered that the clearly expressed wishes of Burford residents should prevail so that Burford could continue to maintain its own identity. They thought Burford and Tenbury would be best served by remaining separate.

20. Mrs Moss, the district councillor for the Burford and Boraston ward of South Shropshire, made a statement in addition to the letter she had previously written to the Commission. South Shropshire was a small authority and would suffer, if Burford was transferred. She shared the fears for the future of Burford Primary School and suggested that secondary school children in other parts of the South Shropshire would suffer if the Lacon Childe school at Cleobury Mortimer was put at risk. She was convinced that Burford was well served by the present arrangements and she was totally opposed to change. She observed that Leominster District Council had been given the opportunity to take part in the postal referendum but had declined to do so.

21. The afternoon session ended at approximately 5pm. The attendance book recorded a total of 75 people at the meeting.

The evening session

22. Following the Chairman's introductory remarks, the individual representatives or members of the local authorities concerned repeated their statements and either amplified or commented on statements made earlier in the day.

23. Mr Bright, the Mayor of Tenbury, accepted that the issue should not be forced against the opposition of Burford residents although he doubted whether old county and district loyalties were as strong as previously since about 90% of the population had lived there less than 20 years. He said there had never been any discrimination against Burford residents using sports and social facilities supported by Tenbury Town Council but the continued running of these facilities would depend on contributions from Burford towards the running costs. He thought that if changes were proposed Burford should continue as an independent parish within the same district. On the education issue Mr Bright suggested that attending functions at the school in Cleobury Mortimer was difficult for those without their own transport and he thought the fears over children having to walk to Tenbury High School rather exaggerated.

24. Mr Biggs (South Shropshire District Council) said, in addition to his main statement, that his Council's level of expenditure on Burford would not be maintained under a single authority for the area as a whole. He argued that the boundary suggested by Leominster District Council (along the line of the disused railway) was indistinct and some sections were in private ownership. He pointed

out that there was no financial contribution to Tenbury's services from nearby parishes in the Leominster district.

25. The agent for Mr Gill, the Member of Parliament for Ludlow, read out his letter to the Commission explaining his objections to the suggested transfer.

26. Mr Williams, a member of Tenbury Town Council, said that residents on both sides of the river were part of the same community and that the community's development needs and problems should be tackled by one authority. He warned that services and facilities in Tenbury would suffer unless the artificial barrier caused by the county boundary was removed.

27. Other Tenbury Town Council members, Mr Parkin and Mr Griffith, also spoke in support of change. The point was made that in present circumstances further industrial development was simply not possible. The town was a conservation area and the narrow bridge and streets made it difficult for large vehicles to service even the small-scale development envisaged.

28. Mr Marston, chairman of Boraston Parish Meeting, said that there was almost total support in Boraston for remaining in Shropshire. Most of the other speakers were opposed to change or could see no benefit from it. In reply to the claim that the leaflet accompanying the voting card urged the retention of the status quo, it was said that Leominster District Council had been given the opportunity to take part. It was also pointed out that Tenbury residents had not been asked for their views and that comparatively few had turned up for the meeting.

29. Mr Renney, representing Hereford and Worcester County Council, asked if, in the event of change, the same dire effect on South Shropshire would occur if the new community charge were in force. However, the representatives of South Shropshire District Council said that the precise effect of these changes could not be assessed at this early stage.

30. Prebendary Thompson speaking this time as an individual and as Team Vicar of the Tenbury Wells Team Ministry, said he thought it unlikely that a change of boundary would alleviate the three main anxieties in the area about education, planning and the decline of local service. Changing the boundary would also introduce fresh problems elsewhere. He also suggested that Burford had strong ties with neighbouring Shropshire parishes that Tenbury did not have and that each side had maintained its historic ties with its own county.

31. The Chairman pointed out, in response to assertions that Burford residents would become 'second-class citizens' if they were joined up with Tenbury, that the Commission had the power to propose that Burford remain a separate parish with its own parish council.

32. The meeting concluded at 9.40pm. The attendance register recorded a total of 89 people for the evening session.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

COUNTY BOUNDARY REVIEW

SHROPSHIRE

AFFECTING HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

FINAL PROPOSAL

EXISTING COUNTY BOUNDARY



PROPOSED COUNTY BOUNDARY

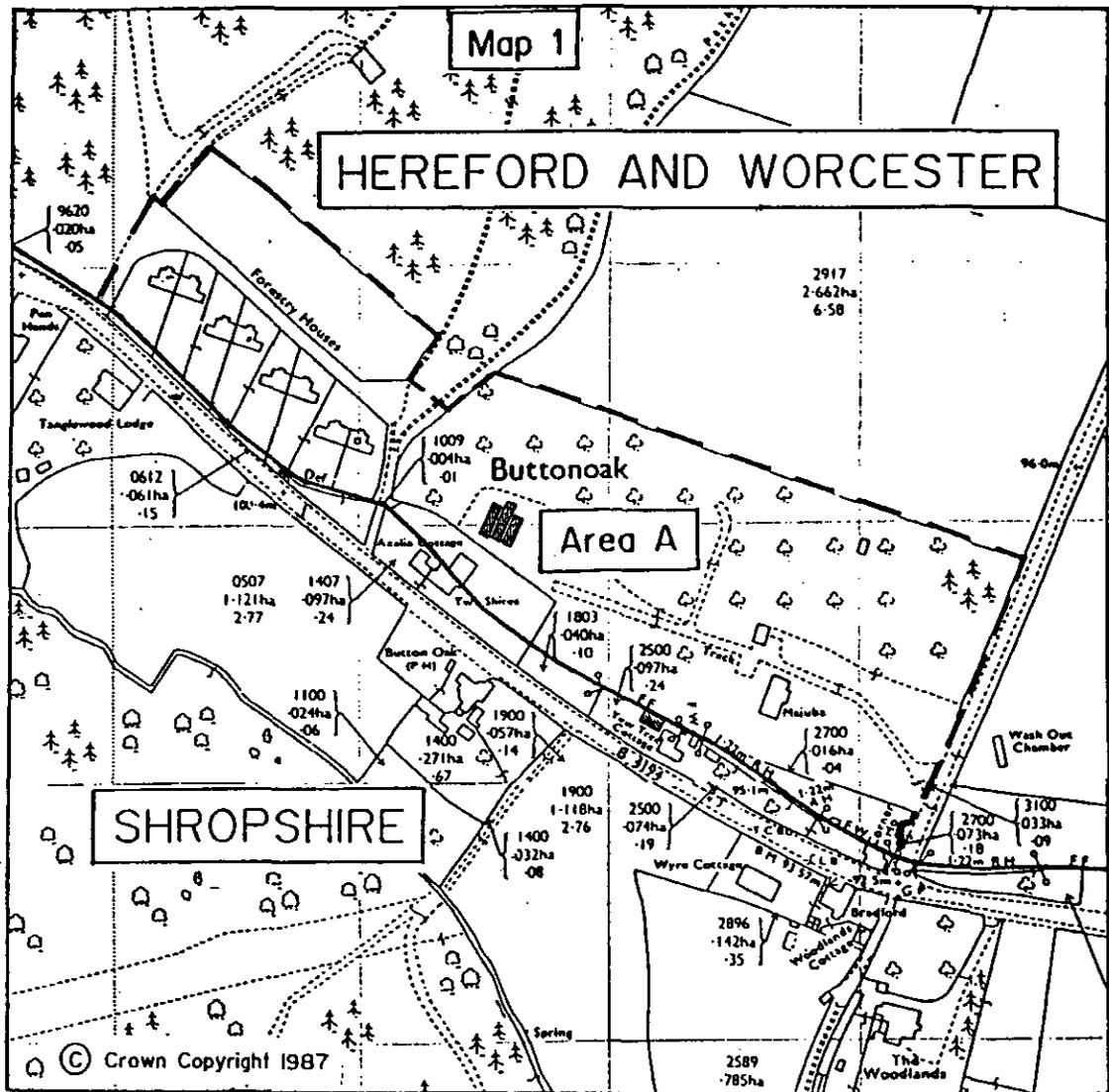


LOCATION DIAGRAM

SHROPSHIRE

Map 1

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER



CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

MAP NO	AREA REF	FROM	TO
1	A	Hereford and Worcester Wyre Forest District Upper Arley CP Wribbenhall and Arley Ward Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall ED	Shropshire Bridgnorth District Kinlet CP Kinlet Ward Stottesdon ED

