

# Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire

*May 2003*

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No.3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones CBE  
Anne M. Kelly  
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to the number of councillors elected to the council, division boundaries and division names.



# Summary

We began a review of Nottinghamshire's electoral arrangements on 9 July 2002.

- **this report summarises the submissions we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Nottinghamshire:

- **in 30 of the 67 divisions, each of which are currently represented by a single councillor, the number of electors varies by more than 10% from the average for the county and 17 divisions vary by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 35 divisions and by more than 20% in 20 divisions.**

Our main proposals for Nottinghamshire's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 190-191) are that:

- **Nottinghamshire should have 67 councillors, four more than at present, representing 54 divisions;**
- **as the divisions are based on district wards which have themselves been changed as a result of recent district reviews, the boundaries of all divisions except Warsop division in Mansfield district will be subject to change.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each county councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 41 of the proposed 54 divisions the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the average. Only one division would vary by more than 20%.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 44 divisions expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average by 2006. Only one division would vary by more than 20%.**

This report sets out draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 28 May 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, which will then be responsible for implementing change to the local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes will come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 21 July 2003.

**The Team Leader  
Nottinghamshire Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

*Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Division name (by district council area)</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent district wards</b>
<b>Ashfield District Council</b>			
1	Hucknall	3	Hucknall Central ward; Hucknall East ward; Hucknall North ward; Hucknall West ward
2	Kirkby in Ashfield North	1	Kirkby in Ashfield East ward; Kirkby in Ashfield West ward
3	Kirkby in Ashfield South	1	Kirkby in Ashfield Central ward; Woodhouse ward
4	Selston	1	Jacksdale ward; Selston ward; Underwood ward
5	Sutton in Ashfield Central	1	Sutton in Ashfield Central ward
6	Sutton in Ashfield East	1	Sutton in Ashfield East ward
7	Sutton in Ashfield North	1	Sutton in Ashfield North ward
8	Sutton in Ashfield West	1	Sutton in Ashfield West ward
<b>Bassetlaw District Council</b>			
9	Blyth & Harworth	1	Blyth ward; Harworth ward; Langold ward
10	Misterton	1	Beckingham ward; Clayworth ward; Everton ward; Misterton ward; Ranskill ward; Sutton ward
11	Retford East	1	East Retford East ward; East Retford South ward
12	Retford West	1	East Retford North ward; East Retford West ward
13	Tuxford	1	East Markham ward; Rampton ward; Sturton ward; Tuxford & Trent ward; Welbeck ward
14	Worksop East	1	Worksop East ward; part of Worksop North East ward; part of Worksop South East ward
15	Worksop North	1	Worksop North ward; part of Worksop North West ward
16	Worksop North East & Carlton	1	Carlton ward; part of Worksop North East ward
17	Worksop West	1	Worksop South ward; part of Worksop North West ward; part of Worksop South East ward

	<b>Division name (by district council area)</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent district wards</b>
<b>Broxtowe Borough Council</b>			
18	Beauvale	1	Brinsley ward; Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) ward; part of Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward (Beauvale parish ward of Greasley parish)
19	Beeston North	1	Beeston North ward; Beeston West ward
20	Beeston South & Attenborough	1	Attenborough ward; Beeston Rylands ward; Beeston Central ward
21	Bramcote & Stapleford	2	Bramcote ward; Stapleford North ward; Stapleford South East ward; Stapleford South West ward
22	Chilwell & Toton	2	Chilwell East ward; Chilwell West ward; Toton & Chilwell Meadows ward
23	Eastwood	1	Eastwood South ward; part of Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward (North parish ward of Eastwood parish)
24	Kimberley & Trowell	1	Awsorth ward; Cossall & Kimberley ward; Trowell ward
25	Nuthall	1	Nuthall East & Strelley ward; Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) ward
<b>Gedling Borough Council</b>			
26	Arnold North	2	Bonington ward; Killisick ward; Mapperley Plains ward; St Marys ward; part of Lambley ward (unparished area)
27	Arnold South	2	Daybrook ward; Kingswell ward; Porchester ward; Woodthorpe ward
28	Calverton	1	Calverton ward; Woodborough ward; part of Lambley ward (Lambley parish)
29	Carlton East	2	Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward; Gedling ward; Netherfield & Colwick ward; Phoenix ward
30	Carlton West	2	Carlton ward; Carlton Hill ward; St James ward; Valley ward
31	Newstead	1	Bestwood Village ward; Newstead ward; Ravenshead ward
<b>Mansfield District Council</b>			
32	East Mansfield	2	Forest Town East ward; Forest Town West ward; Lindhurst ward; Oak Tree ward
33	North Mansfield	2	Leeming ward; Priory ward; Robin Hood ward; Sherwood ward
34	South Mansfield	2	Berry Hill ward; Eakring ward; Portland ward; Ravensdale ward
35	Warsop	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – Birklands ward; Meden ward
36	West Mansfield	2	Broomhill ward; Cumberlands ward; Grange Farm ward; Ladybrook ward; Pleasley Hill ward

<b>Division name (by district council area)</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent district wards</b>
<b>Newark &amp; Sherwood District Council</b>		
37 Balderton	1	Balderton North ward; Balderton West ward
38 Blidworth	1	Blidworth ward; Rainworth ward; part of Bilsthorpe ward (Rainworth North parish ward of Rainworth parish)
39 Collingham	1	Bridge ward; Collingham & Meering ward; Winthorpe ward
40 Farndon & Muskham	1	Farndon ward; Muskham ward; part of Trent ward (the parishes of Fiskerton cum Morton and Rollerton)
41 Farnsfield & Lowdham	1	Farnsfield ward; Lowdham ward; part of Trent ward (the parishes of Bleasby and Thurgarton)
42 Newark East	1	Beacon ward; Magnus ward
43 Newark West	1	Castle ward; Devon ward
44 Ollerton	1	Boughton ward; Ollerton ward
45 Rufford	1	Clipstone ward; Edwinstowe ward; part of Bilsthorpe ward (Bilsthorpe and Rufford parishes)
46 Southwell & Caunton	1	Caunton ward; Southwell East ward; Southwell North ward; Southwell West ward; Sutton on Trent ward
<b>Rushcliffe Borough Council</b>		
47 Bingham	1	Bingham East ward; Bingham West ward; Cranmer ward; part of Thoroton ward (the parishes of Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby, Hawskworth, Orston, Shelton, Sibthorpe and Thoroton)
48 Cotgrave	1	Cotgrave ward; Wiverton ward
49 Keyworth	1	Keyworth North ward; Keyworth South ward; Nevile ward; part of Wolds ward (the parishes of Stanton on the Wolds, Thorpe in the Glebe, Widmerpool, Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall)
50 Radcliffe on Trent	1	Manvers ward; Oak ward; Trent ward; part of Gamston ward (Holme Pierrepoint parish); part of Thoroton ward (Flintham parish)
51 Ruddington	1	Ruddington ward; Tollerton ward; part of Stanford ward (the parishes of Bradmore, Bunny and Costock); part of Wolds ward (the parishes of Normanton on the Wolds and Plumtree)
52 Soar Valley	1	Gotham ward; Leake ward; Soar Valley ward; part of Stanford ward (the parishes of Normanton on Soar, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar)
53 West Bridgford Central & South	2	Abbey ward; Edwalton Village ward; Lady Bay ward; Melton ward; Trent Bridge ward; part of Gamston ward (Gamston parish and unparished area)
54 West Bridgford West	1	Compton Acres ward; Lutterell ward; Musters ward

#### **Notes**

- The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the Nottinghamshire districts which were completed in May 2000. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.*
- The large maps inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed divisions outlined above.*

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Nottinghamshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Ashfield District Council							
1 Hucknall	3	23,116	7,705	-12	25,203	8,401	-8
2 Kirkby in Ashfield North	1	9,937	9,937	13	10,391	10,391	14
3 Kirkby in Ashfield South	1	10,398	10,398	19	10,888	10,888	19
4 Selston	1	9,955	9,955	14	10,175	10,175	12
5 Sutton in Ashfield Central	1	8,497	8,497	-3	8,733	8,733	-4
6 Sutton in Ashfield East	1	8,402	8,402	-4	8,594	8,594	-6
7 Sutton in Ashfield North	1	8,387	8,387	-4	8,588	8,588	-6
8 Sutton in Ashfield West	1	7,977	7,977	-9	8,572	8,572	-6
Bassetlaw District Council							
9 Blyth & Harworth	1	9,324	9,324	6	9,702	9,702	6
10 Misterton	1	10,310	10,310	18	11,014	11,014	21
11 Retford East	1	8,593	8,593	-2	8,988	8,988	-1
12 Retford West	1	7,971	7,971	-9	8,786	8,786	-4
13 Tuxford	1	9,963	9,963	14	10,664	10,664	17
14 Worksop East	1	9,571	9,571	9	9,784	9,784	7
15 Worksop North	1	9,436	9,436	8	9,308	9,308	2
16 Worksop North East & Carlton	1	9,553	9,553	9	9,832	9,832	8
17 Worksop West	1	8,085	8,085	-8	8,577	8,577	-6

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Broxtowe Borough Council							
18 Beauvale	1	8,584	8,584	-2	8,919	8,919	-2
19 Beeston North	1	8,308	8,308	-5	8,318	8,318	-9
20 Beeston South & Attenborough	1	8,853	8,853	1	9,043	9,043	-1
21 Bramcote & Stapleford	2	17,906	8,953	2	18,266	9,133	0
22 Chilwell & Toton	2	16,161	8,081	-8	16,471	8,236	-10
23 Eastwood	1	8,390	8,390	-4	8,410	8,410	-8
24 Kimberley & Trowell	1	9,345	9,345	7	9,591	9,591	5
25 Nuthall	1	7,392	7,392	-16	7,905	7,905	-13
Gedling Borough Council							
26 Arnold North	2	18,509	9,255	6	18,965	9,483	4
27 Arnold South	2	18,491	9,246	6	18,677	9,339	2
28 Calverton	1	7,873	7,873	-10	8,476	8,476	-7
29 Carlton East	2	17,216	8,608	-2	17,849	8,925	-2
30 Carlton West	2	17,471	8,736	0	17,806	8,903	-2
31 Newstead	1	7,695	7,695	-12	8,758	8,758	-4
Mansfield District Council							
32 East Mansfield	2	17,510	8,755	0	18,305	9,153	0
33 North Mansfield	2	17,357	8,679	-1	18,162	9,081	0
34 South Mansfield	2	17,046	8,523	-3	18,146	9,073	-1
35 Warsop	1	9,466	9,466	8	9,511	9,511	4
36 West Mansfield	2	17,026	8,513	-3	17,323	8,662	-5

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Newark & Sherwood District Council							
37 Balderton	1	8,000	8,000	-9	8,068	8,068	-12
38 Blidworth	1	8,352	8,352	-5	8,369	8,369	-8
39 Collingham	1	9,575	9,575	9	9,954	9,954	9
40 Farndon & Muskham	1	6,110	6,110	-30	8,335	8,335	-9
41 Farnsfield & Lowdham	1	8,539	8,539	-2	8,779	8,779	-4
42 Newark East	1	7,340	7,340	-16	8,187	8,187	-10
43 Newark West	1	8,591	8,591	-2	8,798	8,798	-4
44 Ollerton	1	9,105	9,105	4	9,059	9,059	-1
45 Rufford	1	9,481	9,481	8	10,370	10,370	14
46 Southwell & Caunton	1	9,150	9,150	4	9,639	9,639	6
Rushcliffe Borough Council							
47 Bingham	1	9,313	9,313	6	10,132	10,132	11
48 Cotgrave	1	8,295	8,295	-5	8,529	8,529	-7
49 Keyworth	1	8,547	8,547	-2	8,709	8,709	-5
50 Radcliffe on Trent	1	9,546	9,546	9	9,859	9,859	8
51 Ruddington	1	8,278	8,278	-5	8,446	8,446	-7
52 Soar Valley	1	9,019	9,019	3	9,130	9,130	0
53 West Bridgford Central & South	2	19,718	9,859	13	20,262	10,131	11
54 West Bridgford West	1	9,703	9,703	11	9,923	9,923	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>586,736</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>611,248</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,123</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# 1 Introduction

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the county of Nottinghamshire, on which we are now consulting. Our review of the county is part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. This programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 In carrying out these county reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
  - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - achieve equality of representation;
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

3 Details of the legislation under which we work are set out in *The Electoral Commission's Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews* (published by the EC, July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of electoral divisions. In each two-tier county, our approach is first to complete the PERs of all the constituent districts and, when the Orders for the resulting changes in those areas have been made, then to commence a PER of the county council's electoral arrangements. Final recommendations were made for the new electoral arrangements in the districts in Nottinghamshire in May 2000 and we are now embarking on our county review in this area.

5 Prior to the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000 each county council division could only return one member. This restraint has now been removed by section 89 of the 2000 Act, and we may now recommend the creation of multi-member county divisions. However, we do not expect to recommend large numbers of multi-member divisions other than, perhaps, in the more urban areas of a county.

6 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements. These statutory Rules state that each division should be wholly contained within a single district and that division boundaries should not split unwarded parishes or parish wards.

7 In the *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been created locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local people are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configurations are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

8 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the local authority as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any electoral division will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Similarly, we will seek to ensure that each district area within the county is allocated the correct number of county councillors with respect to the district's proportion of the county's electorate.

10 The Rules provide that, in considering county council electoral arrangements, we should have regard to the boundaries of district wards. We attach considerable importance to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. The term 'coterminosity' is used throughout the report and refers to situations where the boundaries of county electoral divisions and district wards are the same, that is to say where county divisions comprise either one or more whole district wards.

11 We recognise, however, that it is unlikely to be possible to achieve absolute coterminosity throughout a county area while also providing for the optimum level of electoral equality. In this respect, county reviews are different to those of districts. We will seek to achieve the best available balance between electoral equality and coterminosity, taking into account the statutory criteria. While the proportion of electoral divisions that will be coterminous with the boundaries of district wards is likely to vary between counties, we would normally expect coterminosity to be achieved in a significant majority of divisions. The average level of coterminosity secured under our final recommendations for the first 11 counties that we have reviewed (excluding the Isle of Wight) is 70%. We would normally expect to recommend levels of coterminosity of around 60 to 80%.

12 Where coterminosity is not possible in parished areas, and a district ward is to be split between electoral divisions, we would normally expect this to be achieved without dividing (or further dividing) a parish between divisions. There are likely to be exceptions to this, however, particularly where larger parishes are involved.

13 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

14 A further area of difference between county and district reviews is that we must recognise that it will not be possible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse communities, for example, combining rural and urban areas. We have generally sought to avoid this in district reviews, in order to reflect the identities and interests of local communities. Some existing county council electoral divisions comprise a number of distinct communities, which is inevitable given the larger number of electors represented by each councillor, and we would expect that similar situations would continue under our recommendations in seeking the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the statutory criteria.

15 As a part of this review we may also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the county. However, we made some recommendations for new parish electoral arrangements as part of our district reviews. We therefore only expect to put forward such recommendations during county reviews on an exceptional basis. In any event, we are *not* able to review administrative boundaries *between* local authorities or parishes, or consider the establishment of new parish areas as part of this review.

## The review of Nottinghamshire

16 We completed the reviews of the seven district council areas in Nottinghamshire in May 2000 and orders for the new electoral arrangements have since been made. This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Nottinghamshire County Council. The last such review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1980 (Report No. 383).

17 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Stages of the review*

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

18 Stage One began on 9 July 2002, when we wrote to Nottinghamshire County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the seven borough and district councils in the county, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the county, Members of Parliament with constituencies in the county, Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Nottinghamshire County Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 28 October 2002.

19 At Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

20 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 28 May 2003 and will end on 21 July 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

21 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect.



## 2 Current electoral arrangements

22 The county of Nottinghamshire is situated in the East Midlands, bordered to the east, south and west by the counties of Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire respectively. To the north lie the metropolitan authorities of Doncaster and Rotherham and the unitary authority of North Lincolnshire. Nottinghamshire comprises seven districts: Ashfield; Bassetlaw; Broxtowe; Gedling; Mansfield; Newark & Sherwood; and Rushcliffe.

23 Bassetlaw district, Newark & Sherwood district and Rushcliffe borough are generally rural in character, but include the large towns of Newark on Trent, Retford, West Bridgford and Worksop. Mansfield district almost exclusively comprises the large town of Mansfield in the north-west of the county. Ashfield district and the boroughs of Broxtowe and Gedling adjoin the city of Nottingham and are predominantly urban. Nottingham itself became a unitary authority in 1998 and does not fall within the jurisdiction of the County Council.

24 To compare levels of electoral inequality between divisions, we calculated, in percentage terms, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each division (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the county average. In the text which follows, this figure may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

25 The electorate of the county is 586,736 (December 2001). The Council presently has 63 members, with one member elected from each division. At present, each councillor represents an average of 9,313 electors, which the County Council forecasts will increase to 9,702 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration over the last two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 30 of the 63 divisions varies by more than 10% from the district average, 17 divisions by more than 20% and five divisions by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Greasley & Nuthall division in the borough of Broxtowe, where the councillor represents 49% more electors than the county average.

26 As detailed previously, in considering the County Council's electoral arrangements, we must have regard to the boundaries of district wards. Following the completion of the reviews of district warding arrangements in Nottinghamshire, we are therefore faced with a new starting point for considering electoral divisions; our proposals for county divisions will be based on the new district wards as opposed to those which existed prior to the recent reviews. In view of the effect of these new district wards, and changes in the electorate over the past 20 years which have resulted in electoral imbalances across the county, changes to most, if not all, of the existing county electoral divisions are inevitable.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

Division name (by district council area)		Number of councillors	Electorate 2001	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Variance from average %
Ashfield District Council						
1	Hucknall East	1	10,051	8	11,888	23
2	Hucknall West	1	13,065	40	13,315	37
3	Kirkby in Ashfield North	1	9,937	7	10,391	7
4	Kirkby in Ashfield South	1	10,398	12	10,888	12
5	Selston	1	9,955	7	10,175	5
6	Sutton in Ashfield Central	1	8,497	-9	8,733	-10
7	Sutton in Ashfield East	1	8,402	-10	8,594	-11
8	Sutton in Ashfield North	1	8,387	-10	8,588	-11
9	Sutton in Ashfield West	1	7,977	-14	8,572	-12
Bassetlaw District Council						
10	Blyth & Harworth	1	9,064	-3	9,424	-3
11	Misterton	1	10,251	10	10,959	13
12	Retford North	1	8,387	-10	9,150	-6
13	Retford South	1	8,177	-12	8,624	-11
14	Tuxford	1	9,225	-1	9,856	2
15	Worksop East	1	9,809	5	10,126	4
16	Worksop North & Carlton	1	10,625	14	10,325	6
17	Worksop South East & Welbeck	1	5,827	-37	5,988	-38
18	Worksop West	1	11,441	23	12,203	26
Broxtowe Borough Council						
19	Beeston North	1	7,034	-24	6,992	-28
20	Beeston South	1	8,101	-13	8,042	-17
21	Bramcote & Stapleford East	1	9,162	-2	9,440	-3
22	Chilwell	1	9,064	-3	9,399	-3
23	Eastwood & Brinsley	1	10,394	12	10,350	7
24	Greasley & Nuthall	1	13,884	49	14,525	50
25	Kimberley & Trowell	1	9,428	1	9,507	-2
26	Stapleford North & West	1	8,408	-10	8,382	-14
27	Toton & Attenborough	1	9,464	2	10,286	6

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate 2001	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Variance from average %
Gedling Borough Council					
28 Arnold Central	1	8,437	-9	8,651	-11
29 Arnold East	1	10,210	10	10,534	9
30 Arnold West	1	7,353	-21	7,541	-22
31 Calverton	1	10,513	13	10,897	12
32 Carlton Central	1	8,902	-4	9,105	-6
33 Carlton East	1	9,713	4	10,142	5
34 Carlton South	1	13,066	40	13,479	39
35 Carlton West	1	9,047	-3	9,261	-5
36 Newstead	1	10,014	8	10,921	13
Mansfield District Council					
37 Cumberlands & Ladybrook	1	8,812	-5	8,897	-8
38 Leeming & Forest Town	1	11,237	21	12,191	26
39 Northfield & Manor	1	8,327	-11	8,396	-13
40 Oak Tree & Lindhurst	1	7,326	-21	7,506	-23
41 Oakham & Berry Hill	1	9,355	0	10,100	4
42 Pleasleyhill & Broomhill	1	7,295	-22	7,511	-23
43 Ravensdale & Sherwood	1	8,873	-5	9,621	-1
44 Titchfield & Eakring	1	7,714	-17	7,712	-21
45 Warsop	1	9,466	2	9,511	-2
Newark & Sherwood District Council					
46 Balderton	1	11,163	20	13,257	37
47 Blidworth	1	7,245	-22	7,273	-25
48 Caunton	1	11,312	21	11,977	23
49 Collingham	1	9,506	2	10,552	9
50 Newark North	1	9,675	4	10,046	4
51 Newark South	1	6,325	-32	6,341	-35
52 Ollerton	1	9,105	-2	8,896	-8
53 Rufford	1	8,210	-12	9,040	-7
54 Southwell	1	11,702	26	12,176	25

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate 2001	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Variance from average %
Rushcliffe Borough Council					
55 Bingham	1	11,520	24	12,350	27
56 Cotgrave	1	9,863	6	10,152	5
57 East Leake	1	8,745	-6	8,846	-9
58 Keyworth	1	8,250	-11	8,406	-13
59 Radcliffe on Trent	1	7,339	-21	7,641	-21
60 Ruddington	1	7,281	-22	7,410	-24
61 West Bridgford East	1	10,086	8	10,352	7
62 West Bridgford South	1	8,452	-9	8,627	-11
63 West Bridgford West	1	10,883	17	11,206	15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>586,736</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>611,248</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,313</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,702</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Note: Each division is represented by a single councillor, and the electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Worksop South East & Welbeck division in Bassetlaw district were relatively over-represented by 37%, while electors in Greasley & Nuthall division in Broxtowe borough were relatively under-represented by 49%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 Submissions received

27 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire County Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

28 During this initial stage of the review, officers from The Boundary Committee visited the area and met officers and members of the County Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 11 submissions during Stage One, including county-wide schemes from the County Council and the County Council Conservative Group, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the County Council.

#### Nottinghamshire County Council

29 Nottinghamshire County Council ('the County Council') proposed a council of 67 members, four more than at present, serving 65 divisions, representing 64 single-member divisions and one three-member division.

30 Under the County Council's proposals, electoral equality would improve, with 27 divisions varying by more than 10% from the county average by 2006. Only two divisions would vary by more than 20% from the average by 2006. Of the County Council's proposed 65 divisions, 45 (69%) would be coterminous with whole district wards.

#### Political groups

31 Nottinghamshire County Council Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') proposed a council of 55 members, eight fewer than at present, serving 55 single-member divisions (Option 1). However, they also put forward alternative proposals for multi-member divisions in the Hucknall and Sutton-in-Ashfield areas of Ashfield district (Option 2), providing for a council of 55 members serving 50 single-member divisions, a two-member division and a three-member division.

32 Under the Conservatives' proposals, electoral equality would improve under Options 1 and 2, with only 10 divisions under Option 1 and nine divisions under Option 2 varying by more than 10% from the county average by 2006. No division would vary by more than 20% from the average by 2006. Of the Conservatives' proposed divisions, 38 of 55 (69%) under Option 1, or 40 out of 52 (77%) under Option 2, would be coterminous with whole district wards.

33 We received a further two submissions from local political parties. Newark & Retford Liberal Democrat Constituency Party proposed that the town of Southwell in Newark & Sherwood district be wholly included in a single county division. Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party supported six of the County Council's proposed nine divisions in the Rushcliffe borough area. However, in the south-west of the borough it put forward alternative proposals.

#### District and borough councils

34 One submission was received from a district or borough council. Mansfield District Council put forward proposals for their district based on an allocation of nine councillors. It proposed the creation of four two-member divisions and a single-member division. Under Mansfield District Council's proposals all divisions would be coterminous and no division would have an electoral variance of more than 10% initially or in 2006.

## Parish and town councils

35 We received responses from five parish and town councils and a parish meeting. Cotgrave Town Council supported the County Council's proposed council size of 67, while Southwell Town Council proposed that the existing council size be retained.

36 In Gedling borough, Papplewick Parish Council put forward alternative proposals for its area and also proposed an amendment to the external boundary of the parish. In Newark & Sherwood district, Balderton Parish Council proposed that the existing Balderton division be retained, while Upton Parish Council proposed that the existing Caunton division be retained. Finally, Gonalston Parish Meeting, also in Newark & Sherwood district, proposed an amendment to the external boundary of the parish.

## 4 Analysis and draft recommendations

37 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire County Council and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed division boundaries, number of councillors and division names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

38 As with our reviews of districts, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being ‘as nearly as may be, the same in every division of the county’.

39 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and maintaining local ties, and to the boundaries of district wards.

40 We have discussed in Chapter One the additional parameters which apply to reviews of county council electoral arrangements and the need to have regard to the boundaries of district wards in order to achieve coterminosity. In addition, our approach is to ensure that, having reached conclusions on the appropriate number of councillors to be elected to the county council, each district council area is allocated the number of county councillors to which it is entitled.

41 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every division of a county.

42 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, especially when also seeking to achieve coterminosity in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum. Accordingly, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as the boundaries of district wards and community identity. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be taken into account and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### Electorate forecasts

43 Since 1975 there has been an 18% decrease in the electorate of Nottinghamshire County Council because Nottingham City Council became a unitary authority in 1998. However, Nottingham city notwithstanding, the county electorate has in fact increased in this period by approximately 17%, with rates of growth ranging from 11% in Mansfield district to 27% in Rushcliffe borough. The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4% from 586,736 to 611,248 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the district of Newark & Sherwood, although a significant amount is also expected in Ashfield district.

44 In order to prepare these forecasts, the County Council, with the assistance of the seven district and borough councils in Nottinghamshire, estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the County Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to electoral division boundaries has been obtained. We noted that the 2006 forecast electorate for Bassetlaw district provided by the County Council was identical to the 2004 forecast electorate provided by Bassetlaw District Council for the review of its own electoral arrangements, which took place in 1999/2000. We asked officers at the County Council to revisit their projections in the district. Following consultation with the District Council, they stated that they remained content with the 2006 forecast for Bassetlaw, 'on the grounds that there is expected to be little change ... between 2004 and 2006.'

45 We received two representations in relation to electorate projections at Stage One. Firstly, the County Council Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') expressed scepticism as to the accuracy of the 2006 electorate forecasts for Rushcliffe borough, which they considered to be too low, and for Mansfield district, which they considered to be too high. They referred in Rushcliffe to the possibility of three major developments pending completion of the Borough Council's Local Plan and a further projected residential site in Bingham West ward. Secondly, Papplewick Parish Council sought confirmation that consideration would be given to 'changes in population envisaged from the Local Plans.'

46 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the County Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We note that the Conservatives were content to use these forecasts as the basis of their proposals despite the reservations expressed above. We further note that the County Council had regard to local plans in producing its 2006 electorate data, as proposed by Papplewick Parish Council. We have also decided to accept the electoral projections for Bassetlaw district, having regard to the assurances of the County Council that no further growth is expected in the district by 2006 than that which was forecast for 2004.

## Council size

47 Nottinghamshire County Council presently has 63 members. In January 2002, a new constitution, setting out a leader and cabinet committee system of political management, came into effect. As explained earlier, we now require justification for any council size proposed, whether it is for an increase, decrease, or for the retention of the existing council size.

48 At Stage One, we received proposals for three different council sizes from the County Council, the Conservatives, Cotgrave Town Council and Southwell Town Council. Having carefully considered these representations, we decided that we required further argumentation and evidence for each proposed council size. In particular, we requested additional information concerning the County Council's new political management structures and the role of councillors within them, under the council sizes that had been proposed. We wrote accordingly to the four respondents on 29 October 2002, and received three responses.

49 However, having considered all of the evidence received at that time, we were still not convinced that we had all the evidence necessary to make an informed decision. Therefore, on 27 November 2002, we wrote once again to Mr Roger Latham, the Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council, to the leaders of the three political groups (Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat) on the County Council and to Southwell Town Council. We also wrote again to Cotgrave Town Council following separate correspondence. In this letter we outlined exactly where we felt the cases put forward to us needed strengthening. We received responses from the County Council, the Conservatives, the leader of the Labour Group (also leader of the Council) and the Chief Executive of the County Council. The case put forward by each of the respondents during this correspondence is outlined below.

50 The County Council proposed a council size of 67, an increase of four members. It considered that overall there had been a substantial rise in the majority of members' workload following the introduction in January 2002 of the new leader and cabinet committee system of political management, rather than the reduction that had been anticipated. The County Council stated that members reported 'difficulties in attending all the meetings and events required of them.' It acknowledged that 'the plethora of Committee attendances by ... [executive] members had been replaced by more efficient and quicker decision-making', but noted a 'marked increase in the time now spent on County Council duties', for some non-executive councillors, particularly in relation to the scrutiny function. In its view, 'unlike the work undertaken in former Committees, the workload of Members involved in scrutiny is more diverse, involving more time spent on investigative work.'

51 The County Council provided evidence of the work of councillors in the internal political management of the council, in the community and on partnership bodies. It also noted new demands placed on councillors by changing statutory requirements, expecting an increase in the health scrutiny function. The County Council concluded that, 'the amount of local work required, together with the internal, external and corporate workloads of each Member, contributes to a substantial reduction in the quality of democratic representation which Electors can expect.'

52 The County Council considered that an increase in council size to 67 members would address these problems by ensuring that members' workload and potential local caseload would be 'adequate, but not excessive.' It estimated that, in the existing 63-member council, members had an average of 15 places on committees and other bodies per six-week cycle, which would be reduced to an average of 14 places per cycle in the proposed 67-member council. The County Council undertook an extensive local consultation exercise on its proposals for an increase in council size, involving borough and district councils, town and parish councils and community groups, together with other public and private stakeholders.

53 The Conservatives put forward alternative proposals for a 55-member council. They concurred with the County Council that members' workload had increased under the new political management structures, though they expected a future reduction in county councils' statutory duties. The Conservatives provided evidence of the work of councillors in the internal political management of the council, in the community and on partnership bodies. However, they considered that non-executive councillors now occupied a 'peripheral role', attending 'time-consuming' 'ad hoc/sub-committee/informal meetings ... whether all of these extra meetings are really necessary has been a source of considerable debate.' The Conservatives were therefore not convinced that the issue of members' workload should be addressed by an increase in council size.

54 Instead, they suggested that a reduction in council size would firstly reflect the way in which the County Council currently operated in practice under the new political management structures. The Conservatives argued that a reduction in the number of members would still enable the scrutiny function for each cabinet portfolio to be carried out effectively, allowing for more than four backbench councillors to be assigned to each policy area. Citing the minutes of recent Select Committee scrutiny meetings, they considered that 'although there may be up to 13 members present, a much smaller number actually provides the impetus.' In comparison to the former committee structure, it was also noted that non-executive members involved in scrutiny no longer had to read full officer reports on issues.

55 Secondly, the Conservatives expressed the view that a reduction in council size would address the recent increase in workload by 'compelling members and officers to be more prudent with their time ... this would make the whole decision-making process more robust.' They considered that the size of the County Council should reflect its 'strategic' rather than 'all-purpose' role, noting that 'the trend in recent years has been for most public bodies to be reduced in size, with a more focused and better trained membership.' The Conservatives argued that the County Council 'should do more to improve its efficiency', reflecting the Council's

Improvement Plan, and 'reduce the burden on the taxpayer,' In their view, this should include 'streamlining the number of county councillors.' They indicated that, if they were the largest group on the council, they would 'review internal political management with a view to reducing the amount of bureaucracy in County Hall.'

56 Thirdly, the Conservatives considered that a council size of 55 would provide the most accurate allocation of county councillors to each of the seven districts of Nottinghamshire and consequently the best available electoral equality. In their view, there was little evidence to suggest that a smaller number of divisions would adversely affect the performance of the County Council or the quality of local representation, as each county councillor would continue to be supported in their locality by a number of district or borough councillors, as well as in many areas by parish and town councillors. The Conservatives also enclosed copies of a number of letters from parish councils and local residents in support of their proposals on council size.

57 We received two further representations in relation to council size at Stage One. Cotgrave Town Council supported the County Council's proposed 67-member council. Southwell Town Council proposed that the existing council size of 63 be retained, considering that based on its the criteria of 'value for money', 'access to services' and 'professionalism,' an increase in council size was not required.

58 Following our letter of 27 November 2002 requesting further evidence from interested parties, we received responses from Councillor Mick Warner (Beeston South division), Leader of the County Council and the Labour Group, and Mr Roger Latham, Chief Executive of the County Council. Councillor Warner stated that the Council's scheme, which was supported by the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups on the council, had been produced without 'political input'.

59 Mr Latham made a number of general comments concerning the implementation of new political management structures in local authorities under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. He stated that the County Council had run a year-long trial of the new leader and cabinet committee system and had now begun a review of its new scrutiny system. He considered the review of scrutiny procedures to have been 'partly successful', but 'as yet unconsolidated. The backbench issue in Nottinghamshire is, as elsewhere, unresolved.' In his view, it was therefore 'hardly surprising' that the County Council and the Conservatives had come to different conclusions on the number of councillors required.

60 Mr Latham summarised their positions as follows: 'The County Council's submission, supported by the controlling Labour Group and Liberal Democrats, sees an increasing place for the democratic role, recognises the increasing complexity of local government and sees a rising workload in both executive and scrutiny areas. The Conservative Group, as the main opposition group, ... [is] clearly reflecting in ... [its] concern the increased difficulties of backbenchers and the uncertainty over the existing scrutiny function ... Their view appears to be that a reduction in Councillors would in fact make the scrutiny process more robust and would therefore provide a more effective system of checks and balances.' He concluded that there was evidence to support both points of view.

61 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. As explained in our *Guidance*, we take no preconceived view as to the most appropriate council size for Nottinghamshire, but carefully examine the argumentation and evidence received. We note that the County Council's and the Conservatives' proposals would provide the correct allocation of county councillors for each of the seven districts as well as improvements in electoral equality. The Conservatives' 55-member council would provide the more exact allocation of the two proposals, although we consider that similar accuracy would be achieved with a council size of 62 or 68. Although we have a statutory duty to achieve electoral equality, we have an equal responsibility to ensure that the council size proposed would provide effective and convenient local government. Accordingly, we are unlikely to be convinced of the merits of a council size purely by the provision of the correct allocation of county councillors per district council area.

62 We note that respondents have raised a number of issues that we are unable to take into consideration in making a recommendation on council size. We note the view of the Conservatives that ‘the trend in recent years has been for most public bodies to be reduced in size’. However, we have no particular view on whether moves towards new political management structures should result in an increase, a reduction or in no change to the size of the council. We are also of the view that each local authority area should be considered on its own merits. We further note that both the Conservatives and Southwell Town Council referred to the economic implications of proposals for council size. However, there is no provision in legislation for us to make recommendations on this basis.

63 We request that proposals for council size be developed in the context of changes to internal political management structures (in the case of Nottinghamshire, the introduction in January 2002 of a leader and cabinet committee model) and the role of councillors in these new structures. We do not consider that Southwell Town Council’s proposal to retain the existing 63-member council provided any evidence in this respect. Further, we note that both the County Council and the Conservatives provided substantive evidence that the new management structures were not functioning optimally under the current council size. We therefore examined their proposals for 67-member and 55-member councils respectively.

64 Considering the evidence received, we recognise that both the County Council and the Conservatives put a great deal of time and effort into their proposals, and we appreciate their co-operation in this process. We note that the County Council and the Conservatives each provided evidence of the effect of the new leader and cabinet committee structures on the role of members. Both agreed that as a result of these reforms members’ workload had grown, although they disagreed as to whether the future statutory obligations of county authorities would rise or fall. Both respondents concurred that this increase in workload is adversely affecting council governance and the representative role of members.

65 Nonetheless, despite this consensus, the County Council and the Conservatives have proposed significantly different council sizes of 67 and 55. We note Mr Latham’s view that the County Council is still adjusting to changes to its political management structures in the past year, particularly those changes relating to the scrutiny function and the role of backbench members. It is possible that with more experience of operating within the new management structure, the County Council’s political groups and other interested parties will develop a greater degree of consensus on the role of councillors, and by implication, the issue of council size.

66 We note the view of the Conservatives that a reduction in the size of the council to 55 members would, by means of a corresponding reduction in the number of meetings held, result in a rationalisation of the workload of non-executive members and more effective decision-making. We further note that evidence has been provided to suggest that, in the event of a reduction in both the number of councillors and the amount of work per councillor, the performance of the representative and scrutiny functions would not be adversely affected.

67 However, we would seek to recommend a council size that would best provide effective and convenient local government under the new political management arrangements *as they currently stand*, rather than effectively compelling a council to change its working practices by means of a reduction in council size that would in our view be partly prescriptive in character. At a time in Nottinghamshire when the role of backbench members in the policy-making process remains in flux, but their workload is considered by both the County Council and the Conservatives to have risen, at least in the short term, we would be reluctant to take the risk of proposing a significant reduction in council size. In the absence of such a reduction in workload, we would not wish to test the Conservatives’ proposition that the duties of councillors will contract in proportion to the overall size of the council, and that the County Council will be able to carry out its functions with eight fewer councillors.

68 We acknowledge the view of the Conservatives that members' duties may be reduced by qualitative change to working practices, such as a reduction in the number of meetings, rather than by a quantitative increase in the number of councillors. Nonetheless, we consider at this time that the County Council's proposal for a 67-member council, an increase of four, would not impact adversely on the exercise of the Council's functions. Indeed, we consider it likely that a small increase in council size would promote effective and convenient local government by addressing the increase in workload identified by both respondents. We note the support of Cotgrave Town Council for the County Council's proposals.

69 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we therefore conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 67 members. In arriving at this conclusion, we must stress that we have not dismissed the rationale for the Conservatives' proposal for a council size of 55. Rather, we note that the current structure has only been operational since January 2002 and we have to be slightly more cautious in our decision on the most appropriate council size for Nottinghamshire, as the full impact of the new political management arrangements is not yet known.

70 Unlike our predecessor, the Local Government Commission for England, we can undertake ad hoc electoral reviews, albeit on the direction of the Electoral Commission. It is conceivable we would revisit the issue of council size in Nottinghamshire should a further review be requested by the County Council once the current political management structure is well established and there is a clearer appreciation locally of its implications for the role of councillors.

## Electoral arrangements

71 We have given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One, including county-wide schemes from the County Council and the Conservatives. We note that both schemes would provide for improved levels of electoral equality.

72 However, our *Guidance* states that council size is the starting point in periodic electoral reviews, since it determines the number of councillors to which each of the seven district areas of Nottinghamshire is entitled and the optimum councillor:elector ratio to be achieved across all divisions. As a consequence of our decision to adopt the County Council's proposed council size of 67, we were therefore only able to give limited further consideration to the proposals from the Conservatives, which were based upon a council size of 55. Nevertheless, we note that in a number of areas there was some agreement between the County Council and the Conservatives on the composition of proposed divisions. In other parts of the county, the Conservatives provided evidence of community identities and interests, which we were able to consider for the purposes of our draft recommendations.

73 We note that the County Council's proposals would improve electoral equality to some extent, compared to the existing arrangements with the number of divisions in which the number of electors would vary by more than 10% from the county average by 2006 being reduced from 35 to 27. Further, 45 of the proposed 65 divisions (69%) would be coterminous with district wards. On the basis of the evidence available to us at this time, we are content that the County Council's proposals for many areas would provide the best available balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. We are therefore proposing to adopt its proposals for Ashfield district without amendment.

74 However, while our draft recommendations for Bassetlaw district, Broxtowe borough, Newark & Sherwood district and Rushcliffe borough are based to some extent on the County Council's proposals, we have put forward amendments of our own to improve electoral equality or coterminosity, or to better reflect community identities and interests. In Gedling borough, we are largely putting forward our own proposals in order to improve electoral equality, while in

Mansfield district, we are proposing to adopt Mansfield District Council's scheme, which would provide for better levels of electoral equality and coterminosity than the County Council's proposals. Under our proposals only 10 divisions would have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the county average by 2006, while 36 of the proposed 54 divisions (67%) would be coterminous with district wards. In comparison to the County Council's proposals, our proposals would secure a substantial reduction in electoral variance at the expense of only a slightly lower rate of coterminosity. In our view, this would provide a better overall balance between electoral equality and effective and convenient local government. We also consider that several of our non-coterminous proposals would facilitate a better reflection of community identities and interests.

75 As stated on page 15 of this report, following the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with district ward boundaries. As part of our draft recommendations we have put forward a three-member division in Ashfield district, as proposed by the County Council, and four two-member divisions in Mansfield district, as proposed by Mansfield District Council. However, we have also decided to put forward our own proposals for two-member divisions: four in Gedling borough; two in Broxtowe borough; and one in Rushcliffe borough. We note that the locally generated proposals for multi-member divisions in Ashfield and Mansfield sought to provide both electoral equality and coterminosity in urban areas when both criteria could not be met by the *same* pattern of single-member divisions.

76 Having accepted this principle, we consider that we have to apply this approach to similar cases in other urban areas of Nottinghamshire. This would ensure not only that we adopt a consistent approach across the county, but also that the best possible balance between electoral equality and coterminosity is attained in the affected areas. We note that the Conservatives expressed concern that multi-member divisions 'would be stretching the principle of multi-member representation too far, to the extent where residents would find the lines of accountability becoming blurred.' However, we note that multiple district or parish councillors are returned from a single ward in many areas of Nottinghamshire and consider on the basis of the evidence available to us at this time that multi-member divisions, where appropriate, will provide effective and convenient local government. We welcome further evidence from interested parties at Stage Three concerning multi-member divisions, as well as concerning all other aspects of our draft recommendations.

77 For county division purposes, the seven district areas in the county are considered in turn, as follows:

- i. Ashfield district (page 31)
- ii. Bassetlaw district (page 34)
- iii. Broxtowe borough (page 37)
- iv. Gedling borough (page 40)
- v. Mansfield district (page 43)
- vi. Newark & Sherwood district (page 45)
- vii. Rushcliffe borough (page 49)

78 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps inserted at the back of this report.

## Ashfield district

79 Under the current arrangements, the district of Ashfield is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Hucknall East and Hucknall West divisions are both forecast to be relatively under-represented in five years' time, with 8% and 40% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (23% and 37% more by

2006). The existing Kirkby in Ashfield North, Kirkby in Ashfield South and Selston divisions have 7%, 12% and 7% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (7%, 12% and 5% more by 2006). The existing Sutton in Ashfield Central, Sutton in Ashfield East, Sutton in Ashfield North and Sutton in Ashfield West divisions have 9%, 10%, 10% and 14% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (10%, 11%, 11% and 12% fewer by 2006).

80 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Ashfield be represented by 10 county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, serving eight divisions, all of which would be coterminous with district wards. In the town of Hucknall, it proposed a new three-member Hucknall division, comprising Hucknall Central, Hucknall East, Hucknall North and Hucknall West wards. The County Council considered that single-member divisions coterminous with district wards would not achieve good electoral equality in the town. It also considered that the inclusion of part of Hucknall in a single-member division with the only adjoining part of Ashfield district (the rural southern part of Woodhouse parish) would not reflect community identities and interests in either area. The County Council noted that 'Local residents do not describe themselves as coming from a particular part or area of the town – they come from Hucknall,' adding that a single Local Area Forum had been established to represent 'the interests of the whole of the community and geographic area of Hucknall.' It therefore took the view that single-member divisions would be 'artificial and divisive' for the Hucknall community.

81 The County Council also proposed revised single-member Kirkby in Ashfield North and Kirkby in Ashfield South divisions, which would both be slightly under-represented but coterminous with district wards. The proposed Kirkby in Ashfield North division would comprise Kirkby in Ashfield East and Kirkby in Ashfield West wards, reflecting 'strong community links between East and West Kirkby.' The proposed Kirkby in Ashfield South division would comprise Kirkby in Ashfield Central and Woodhouse wards. The County Council considered that the electorate of Woodhouse ward, concentrated in the Annesley Woodhouse area, had an affinity with Kirkby in Ashfield town to the north rather than Hucknall town further to the south.

82 The County Council also proposed a revised single-member Selston division comprising Jacksdale, Selston and Underwood wards, which would be slightly under-represented by 2006. It noted the strong links between the communities in this area, and stated that it had been unable to identify any part that might be transferred to another division to improve electoral equality. Finally, in the town of Sutton in Ashfield, the County Council proposed revised single-member Sutton in Ashfield Central, Sutton in Ashfield East, Sutton in Ashfield North and Sutton in Ashfield West divisions, each coterminous with the district ward of the same name.

83 Under the County Council's proposals, Hucknall division would have 12% fewer electors per councillor than the county average, improving to 8% fewer than the average by 2006. Kirkby in Ashfield North, Kirkby in Ashfield South and Selston divisions would have 13%, 19% and 14% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (14%, 19% and 11% more by 2006). Sutton in Ashfield East and Sutton in Ashfield North divisions would both have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the average (both 6% fewer by 2006). Sutton in Ashfield Central and Sutton in Ashfield West divisions would have 3% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the average (4% and 6% fewer by 2006).

84 We received one further representation in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. We note that the Conservatives put forward single-member Kirkby in Ashfield North, Kirkby in Ashfield South and Selston divisions that were identical to those proposed by the County Council. They noted that the proposed Selston division is 'separated from the rest of the district by the significant barrier of the M1 motorway.'

85 The Conservatives also put forward alternative proposals for three single-member divisions, a two-member division in Hucknall and a three-member division in Sutton in Ashfield. Like the

County Council, the Conservatives considered that a multi-member division would 'serve Hucknall well in terms of achieving [electoral] equality and coterminosity' and 'would also incorporate the whole of the town as a single community of interest, which in some ways might be preferable to the present, rather uneven East-West split.' However, commenting on Sutton in Ashfield, they also expressed concern that a three-member division 'would be stretching the principle of multi-member representation too far, to the extent where residents would find the lines of accountability becoming blurred.' In the Conservatives' view, single-member divisions would 'unite residents from specific parts' of the town and 'mean less variation from the existing county division arrangements.'

86 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the County Council's proposals for Ashfield. We consider that these proposals would provide for improved electoral equality and complete coterminosity across the district as a whole, while also reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. As stated earlier, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with district ward boundaries. We note that the town of Hucknall is entitled to three rather than two county councillors on a council size of 67 (2.6 members currently and 2.8 members by 2006). However, the electorates of the four district wards in the town are such that three coterminous single-member divisions would not provide good electoral equality.

87 We note that the County Council and the Conservatives considered that the town constituted a single community, and we concur with the view of the County Council that there is no other part of the district that could be linked with part of Hucknall in a proposed division in a manner consistent with the reflection of community identities and interests. We note that the town is separated from the Annesley Woodhouse and Selston areas to the north and north-west by a sparsely populated rural area and the M1 motorway respectively. We acknowledge the concern of the Conservatives as to whether a three-member division would provide effective and convenient local government. However, we are content to put forward the County Council's proposed three-member Hucknall division as part of our draft recommendations on the basis of the evidence received, considering that it would provide the best available balance between achieving electoral equality and coterminosity, reflecting community identities and interests, and providing effective and convenient local government.

88 We are also adopting the County Council's and Conservatives' proposed single-member Kirkby in Ashfield North, Kirkby in Ashfield South and Selston divisions. Despite their slight under-representation, we consider that electoral equality in this area could only be improved at the expense of coterminosity with district wards. As such amendments would require the inclusion of part of the Kirkby-in-Ashfield or Selston areas in a division with part of either Hucknall town or Sutton-in-Ashfield town, we are not persuaded that they would adequately reflect community identities and interests. Finally, in the north of the district, we are adopting the County Council's proposed single-member Sutton in Ashfield Central, Sutton in Ashfield East, Sutton in Ashfield North and Sutton in Ashfield West divisions. While we note the Conservatives' alternative proposal for a multi-member division in Sutton in Ashfield, we have noted that this was based on a 55-member council, and that on our proposed council size of 67 it is possible to put forward single-member divisions, which would provide 100% coterminosity and good electoral equality in the town.

89 Under our draft recommendations, Hucknall division would have 12% fewer electors per councillor than the county average, improving to 8% fewer than the average by 2006. Kirkby in Ashfield North, Kirkby in Ashfield South and Selston divisions would have 13%, 19% and 14% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (14%, 19% and 11% more by 2006). Sutton in Ashfield East and Sutton in Ashfield North divisions would both have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the average (both 6% fewer by 2006). Sutton in Ashfield Central and Sutton in Ashfield West divisions would have 3% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the average (4% and 6% fewer by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 100% coterminosity

between county divisions and district wards and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Bassetlaw district

90 Under the current arrangements, the district of Bassetlaw is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Blyth & Harworth, Misterton and Tuxford divisions have 3% fewer, 10% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (3% fewer, 13% more and 2% more by 2006). The existing Retford North and Retford South divisions have 10% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (6% and 11% fewer by 2006). The existing Worksop East, Worksop North & Carlton, Worksop South East & Welbeck and Worksop West divisions have 5% more, 14% more, 37% fewer and 23% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (4% more, 6% more, 38% fewer and 26% more by 2006).

91 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Bassetlaw continue to be represented by nine single-member divisions, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, seven of which (78%) would be coterminous with district wards. Its proposed single-member Blyth & Harworth division would comprise Blyth, Harworth and Langold wards, which it considered would reflect the identities of communities to the north of Worksop. The proposed single-member Misterton division would comprise Beckingham, Clayworth, Everton, Misterton and Ranskill wards, while the proposed single-member Tuxford division would comprise East Markham, Sturton, Rampton and Tuxford & Trent wards. The County Council considered that both divisions would correctly reflect community identities in the rural area of the district.

92 The County Council's proposed single-member Clumber division would comprise the district wards of Sutton, Welbeck and Worksop South East. The County Council acknowledged that this division would combine part of Worksop town with a rural area, but noted that it would provide improved electoral equality and would be coterminous with district wards. The County Council also proposed to retain the existing single-member Worksop North & Carlton division, comprising the wards of the same names. In the remainder of the town, the existing pattern of county divisions would be retained subject to amendments to provide for coterminosity with the new district wards. The proposed single-member Worksop East division would comprise Worksop East and Worksop North East wards, and the proposed single-member Worksop West division would comprise Worksop North West and Worksop South West wards.

93 Finally, the County Council proposed to retain the existing single-member Retford North and Retford South divisions. Although it noted that neither division was coterminous with the new district wards in Retford town, it considered that they would better reflect community identities in the town than new coterminous divisions. Retford North division would therefore continue to comprise East Retford North ward and part of East Retford West and East Retford East wards. The remainder of these two wards would continue to form Retford South division together with East Retford South ward.

94 Under the County Council's proposals, Blyth & Harworth, Misterton and Tuxford divisions would have 6% more, 1% fewer and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (6% more, 2% more and 3% fewer by 2006). Retford North and Retford South divisions would have 10% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (6% and 11% fewer by 2006). Clumber, Worksop East, Worksop North & Carlton and Worksop West divisions would have 1%, 19%, 19% and 15% more electors per councillor than the average (equal to the average and 18%, 13% and 18% more by 2006).

95 We received one further representation in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we could only give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that the Conservatives put forward a single-member

Blyth & Harworth division identical to that proposed by the County Council, stating that 'Harworth [ward's] only boundary is with Blyth [ward]...whilst Langold [ward] ... remains the most suitable partner to make up the remainder of this seat numerically, geographically and in terms of community identity.'

96 We also note that they did not support the County Council's proposals for Retford town, expressing the view that 'it seems implausible to continue with the present arrangement where a county boundary cuts straight through the East Retford West and East Retford East district wards.' The Conservatives also considered that the existing Worksop South East & Welbeck division was 'an inappropriate alliance of two wards of an entirely different nature.' They stated, 'Welbeck is a small, parished, predominantly rural ward that has much in common with Sutton and Ranskill [wards]. Worksop South East, in contrast, is a large town ward and, as such, has a more natural association with the adjoining town ward of Worksop East.'

97 We have given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One and, while we are broadly basing our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals, we are also putting forward our own amendments. We note that, on a council size of 67, the electorate of Bassetlaw district is entitled to 9.46 county councillors now and 9.498 councillors by 2006. Although this merits an allocation of nine whole councillors, it is inevitable that there will be a degree of under-representation in this district, since the number of electors per councillor will be somewhat higher than the county average. We therefore note that the County Council's proposals would result in one over-represented division in Retford town and three under-represented divisions in Worksop town.

98 In the north-west of the district, we are adopting the County Council's and Conservatives' proposed single-member Blyth & Harworth division without amendment, noting that both respondents considered that this would reflect community identities and interests in the area. In the town of Retford, we note the County Council's proposal to retain the existing Retford North and Retford South divisions. However, noting the view of the Conservatives, we consider that as we are able to achieve coterminosity with the new district wards and improve electoral equality, this outweighs the advantages that may result from the retention of the status quo. We are therefore putting forward our own proposals for a new single-member Retford East division comprising East Retford East and East Retford South wards, and a new single-member Retford West division comprising East Retford North and East Retford West wards.

99 While the County Council's proposals for Worksop would facilitate coterminosity between county divisions and the new district wards, we are concerned that the County Council's proposed Clumber division (comprising Sutton, Welbeck and Worksop South East wards) would not reflect community identities and interests. We concur with the view expressed by the Conservatives that Worksop South East ward comprises part of Worksop town and is predominantly urban in character, whereas Welbeck ward comprises rural villages to the south and east of Worksop. We further note that Sutton ward is equally rural in character. We are therefore proposing to include Sutton ward in the County Council's proposed rural Misterton division and to include Welbeck ward in the County Council's proposed rural Tuxford division. While we note that our amendment would result in both divisions being slightly under-represented, we consider that they would better reflect community identities and interests for the electorate of Sutton and Welbeck wards. While we note the Conservatives' view that these wards have much in common, their inclusion in the same rural division would result in substantial under-representation.

100 We are therefore also putting forward revised proposals for the Worksop area. We note that the under-representation of this area under the County Council's proposals would be corrected by the transfer of Sutton and Welbeck wards to the proposed Misterton and Tuxford divisions. This would result in the Worksop area being entitled to 4.2 county councillors now and 4.1 councillors in 2006. However, the configuration and electorates of the seven district wards in this area is such that coterminous single-member or two-member divisions would not provide

good electoral equality. We are therefore proposing four single-member divisions that are not wholly coterminous with district wards.

101 In the north of the town, we are proposing a new single-member Worksop North division, comprising the district ward of the same name, together with the unparished part of Worksop North West ward to the north of the Retford to Sheffield railway line, and the parished part of Worksop North West ward (the parishes of Rhodesia and Shireoaks). Having visited the area, we consider that the railway line, bordered to the north and south by industrial and commercial areas, provides a clearly identifiable boundary in the unparished area. We also consider that the A60 Carlton Road (the eastern boundary of Worksop North ward) performs a similar role to the east. Further, we note that our proposal would unite adjoining residential areas in Worksop North ward and Worksop North West ward situated to the east and west of the B6040 Gateford Road. In our view their inclusion in the same division would not adversely affect the reflection of community identities and interests.

102 We are also putting forward a new single-member Worksop North East & Carlton division comprising Carlton ward (the parishes of Carlton in Lindrick and Wallingwells) and all of Worksop North East ward except a small part to the south of (and including) The Baulk and the Westfield Drive estate. We are proposing to depart from coterminosity with district ward boundaries in this area to improve electoral equality. However, in doing so we have sought to avoid dividing the larger estates in the north of Worksop North East ward. We note that the large village of Carlton in Lindrick is distinct from, but situated in close proximity to Worksop town, and that its continued inclusion in a division with part of the town is necessary to provide for good electoral equality in this part of the district.

103 To the east, we are proposing a revised single-member Worksop East division, which would include Worksop East ward and a small part of Worksop North East ward as outlined above. It would also comprise part of Worksop South East ward to the east of the B6041 High Hoe Road, to the south of properties on the B6040 Cheapside, and to the east of Lowtown View, Lowtown Close, Southwell Close, Ely Close and Netherton Road. We note that this division would include parts of Worksop to the north and to the south of the Retford to Sheffield railway line. However, having visited the area, we consider that Worksop East ward and the affected part of Worksop South East ward, broadly comprising the Manton area of the town, are well linked via the B6041 and the B6040.

104 To the west, we are proposing a revised single-member Worksop West division comprising Worksop South ward, the remaining part of Worksop South East ward and the remaining part of Worksop North West ward. Having visited the area, we consider that this proposal would unite the town centre in Worksop South ward with that part of Worksop South East ward immediately to the east, without encroaching on the Manton area. We also note that to the north of the proposed division the railway line would form a clearly identifiable boundary. Overall, we consider that our proposals for Worksop facilitate a clearer distinction between the urban and rural areas of the district, thereby reflecting community identities and interests, while also reducing the number of relatively under-represented proposed divisions across the district from four divisions under the County Council's proposals to two divisions.

105 Under our draft recommendations, Blyth & Harworth, Misterton and Tuxford divisions would have 6%, 18% and 14% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (6%, 21% and 17% more by 2006). Retford East and Retford West divisions would have 2% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (1% and 4% fewer by 2006). Worksop East, Worksop North, Worksop North East & Carlton and Worksop West would have 9% more, 8% more, 9% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (7% more, 2% more, 8% more and 6% fewer than the average by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 56% coterminosity with district wards (five out of nine divisions), and are illustrated on sheets one and two of the large map at the back of this report.

## Broxtowe borough

106 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Broxtowe is represented by nine county councillors. The existing Beeston North, Beeston South and Bramcote & Stapleford East divisions have 24% , 13% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (28% fewer, 17% fewer and 3% fewer by 2006). The existing Chilwell, Stapleford North & West and Toton & Attenborough divisions have 3% fewer, 10% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (3% fewer, 14% fewer and 6% more by 2006). The existing Eastwood & Brinsley, Greasley & Nuthall and Kimberley & Trowell divisions have 12%, 49% and 1% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (7% more, 50% more and 2% fewer by 2006).

107 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Broxtowe be represented by 10 county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, representing 10 single-member divisions. These proposals would secure coterminosity in six (60%) of the 10 proposed divisions. In the north of the borough the County Council proposed that Eastwood parish, which covers Eastwood South borough ward and North parish ward from Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) borough ward, form a new single-member Eastwood division. The County Council acknowledged that this division would not be coterminous with borough ward boundaries, but considered that it would give 'a more accurate reflection of community identities and interests than would otherwise be achieved'.

108 The County Council proposed that the remainder of Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward, the Beauvale parish ward of Greasley parish, form a new single-member Beauvale division together with Brinsley ward and Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) ward. It also put forward a new single-member Nuthall division comprising Nuthall East & Strelley ward and Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) ward, and a revised Kimberley & Trowell division comprising Awsworth, Cossall & Kimberley and Trowell wards.

109 In the south of the borough, the County Council proposed single-member Bramcote & Stapleford East and Stapleford North & West divisions. The proposed Bramcote & Stapleford East division would comprise Bramcote ward and all of Stapleford South East ward except a small part of Stapleford town to the north of the B5010 Nottingham Road and to the west of West Avenue. The County Council proposed to include this area in its proposed Stapleford North & West division together with Stapleford North and Stapleford South West wards. It considered that these proposals, although not wholly coterminous with borough ward boundaries, would better reflect community identities and interests in Stapleford North & West division, since residents in the part of Stapleford South East ward to be included in this division identified with and used services in Stapleford rather than Bramcote.

110 The County Council also proposed a revised single-member Chilwell division comprising Chilwell East and Chilwell West wards, and a revised single-member Toton & Attenborough division comprising Toton & Chilwell Meadows and Attenborough wards. It considered that its proposals reflected community identities and interests in each area. In Beeston town, the County Council proposed that Beeston North and Beeston West wards form a revised single-member Beeston North division, and that Beeston Central and Beeston Rylands wards form a revised single-member Beeston South division. While the proposed Beeston South division would be relatively over-represented, it considered that there was little scope for further amendment and that the proposed division would maintain this area 'as a distinct community in terms of its shopping, leisure and education interests.'

111 Under the County Council's proposals, Beauvale, Eastwood, Kimberley & Trowell and Nuthall divisions would have 2% fewer, 4% fewer, 7% more and 16% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (2% fewer, 8% fewer, 5% more and 13% fewer by 2006). Bramcote & Stapleford East, Stapleford North & West and Toton & Attenborough divisions would have 8% more, 4% fewer and 13% fewer electors per councillor than the

average respectively (6% more, 6% fewer and 14% fewer by 2006). Beeston North, Beeston South and Chilwell divisions would have 5% fewer, 20% fewer and 18% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (9% fewer, 22% fewer and 15% more by 2006).

112 We received one further representation in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that the Conservatives put forward a Chilwell division identical to that proposed by the County Council to reflect community identities and interests in this part of the borough. We further note that, like the County Council, they proposed to include all of Eastwood parish in a single division. The Conservatives also proposed to include in a single division Attenborough and Toton & Chilwell Meadows wards, which they considered to be 'two similar communities who see themselves and are seen by others as quite separate from Beeston and Chilwell.'

113 We also note there were a number of areas in which the Conservatives identified community links which were not reflected by the County Council's proposed divisions. They considered that the Trowell community identified more closely with the town of Stapleford than with Kimberley, stating that 'Trowell residents live within walking distance of Stapleford town centre and are certainly more likely to use the amenities in Stapleford in their day-to-day lives.' The Conservatives also stated that residents of Bramcote and Beeston North wards shared 'social, medical and leisure amenities' and that residents of Stapleford South East ward to the east of the B6003 Toton Lane had more in common with Toton than Stapleford itself in terms of school catchment areas, road links and socio-economic characteristics.

114 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the County Council's proposals for the northern half of Broxtowe. We consider that the County Council's proposed single-member Beauvale and Eastwood divisions, which would use the northern boundary of Eastwood parish instead of being wholly coterminous with borough wards, would achieve better electoral equality than would otherwise be the case. We note that the North parish ward of Eastwood parish is not geographically distinct from the remainder of Eastwood parish, although they are in separate borough wards. We are therefore content that the inclusion of the entire parish in a single division would also reflect community identities and interests.

115 We are also proposing to adopt the County Council's proposed single-member Kimberley & Trowell and Nuthall divisions. We note that the proposed Nuthall division would be slightly over-represented both now and in 2006, and also note the view of the Conservatives that Trowell identifies more closely with the adjacent town of Stapleford to the south than with Kimberley, situated further to the north. However, on a council size of 67, we consider that the size and configuration of borough wards and parish electorates in this area limits the number of viable options, and are not convinced that two-member divisions in this partly rural area would provide effective and convenient local government. We have also been unable to identify an alternative arrangement that would better reflect the interests of Trowell residents without further adversely affecting electoral equality and the reflection of community identities and interests further to the north.

116 In the south of the borough, we are adopting the County Council's proposed single-member Beeston North division, which would be coterminous and provide good electoral equality, but we are putting forward our own proposals in the remainder of this area. The town of Stapleford is parished and divided into three parish wards – Stapleford North, Stapleford South East and Stapleford South West, each coterminous with the borough ward of the same name. The statutory rules set out in the Local Government Act 1972 state that county division boundaries should not split parish wards. The County Council's proposal to include part of Stapleford South East borough ward in the proposed Stapleford North & West division would therefore require the division of Stapleford South East parish ward into two new parish wards.

117 Having visited the area, we acknowledge the proximity of the affected area of Stapleford South East ward to Stapleford town centre, although we note that it is closer to Bramcote than the southern part of the ward, which is accessed from the B6003 Toton Lane. It may therefore be more appropriate to transfer this area to the proposed Stapleford North & West division rather than that proposed by the County Council. Nonetheless, at this time and on the basis of the evidence received, we are not convinced that the creation of an additional parish ward, which would be comparatively small and entitled to only one parish councillor, would provide effective and convenient local government in Stapleford town.

118 We therefore examined alternative proposals for this area. We note that the inclusion of all of Stapleford South East ward in the County Council's proposed Bramcote & Stapleford East division would result in the division becoming under-represented, while the proposed Stapleford North & West division would become over-represented. Furthermore, we were unable to identify an alternative configuration of single-member divisions in the south of the borough that would achieve electoral equality and coterminosity in Bramcote and Stapleford while reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government.

119 As stated earlier, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with borough ward boundaries. Indeed, we note that to this end the County Council proposed a three-member division in Hucknall (in Ashfield district), which we have adopted as part of our draft recommendations. We note that Bramcote and Stapleford form two contiguous urban communities. In the absence of two suitable single-member wards in this area, we have therefore decided to put forward a two-member Bramcote & Stapleford division comprising the County Council's proposed divisions of Bramcote & Stapleford East and Stapleford North & West. We note that this proposed division would achieve both electoral equality and coterminosity while also addressing the concerns that have been raised by the County Council regarding the separation of Stapleford South East ward from the remainder of the town. Our recommendation would also avoid the creation of a new parish ward for Stapleford Town Council, which we consider would not provide effective and convenient local government.

120 In the remainder of the south of the borough, we note that the County Council's proposed Beeston South, Chilwell and Toton & Attenborough divisions, although coterminous with borough wards, would provide relatively high electoral variances. We examined possible alternative configurations of single-member divisions in this area to determine whether or not they better met our objectives. While electoral equality in this area could be improved by recommending single-member divisions that were not wholly coterminous, we were concerned that these proposals would arbitrarily divide wards between county divisions, or would bisect the Beeston and Chilwell communities.

121 As noted above, we may now recommend multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with borough ward boundaries. We have therefore decided to put forward as part of our draft recommendations a two-member Chilwell & Toton division, comprising Chilwell East, Chilwell West and Toton & Chilwell Meadows wards, and a single-member Beeston South & Attenborough division, comprising Attenborough, Beeston Central and Beeston Rylands wards. These proposals would provide for substantial improvements in electoral equality and coterminosity with borough wards. We also consider that they would reflect community ties in the southern part of Beeston identified by the County Council, and similar ties in Chilwell identified by the County Council and the Conservatives.

122 We acknowledge that both respondents also noted links between the Attenborough and Toton communities. However, having visited the area we consider that they comprise comparatively distinct geographical areas which may be placed in separate divisions to provide for a better overall balance between electoral equality and coterminosity across the south of the borough. We are also content that under our proposals Attenborough and Toton have been

linked with other nearby urban communities (Beeston and Chilwell) to which they are well linked by the A6005 Bye Pass Road/Nottingham Road and the B6003 High Road/Stapleford Lane.

123 Under our draft recommendations, Beauvale, Eastwood, Kimberley & Trowell and Nuthall divisions would have 2% fewer, 4% fewer, 7% more and 16% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (2% fewer, 8% fewer, 5% more and 13% fewer by 2006). Beeston North and Beeston South & Attenborough divisions would have 5% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (9% and 1% fewer by 2006). Bramcote & Stapleford and Chilwell & Toton divisions would have 2% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (equal to the average and 10% fewer by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 75% coterminosity with borough wards (six out of eight divisions), and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Gedling borough

124 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Gedling is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Arnold Central, Arnold East and Arnold West divisions have 9% fewer, 10% more and 21% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (11% fewer, 9% more and 22% fewer by 2006). The existing Calverton and Newstead divisions have 13% and 8% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (12% and 13% more by 2006). The existing Carlton Central, Carlton East, Carlton South and Carlton West divisions have 4% fewer, 4% more, 40% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (6% fewer, 5% more, 39% more and 5% fewer by 2006).

125 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Gedling be represented by 10 county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, representing 10 single-member divisions, all of which would be coterminous with borough wards. It acknowledged that 'while the proposals better reflect the distinct community identities of the borough, this has meant accepting a wider disparity of electorates in some of the divisions, mainly between the urban and rural areas.' In the rural north of the borough, the County Council put forward revised single-member Calverton and Newstead divisions. Under these proposals, Calverton division would comprise Calverton and Woodborough wards, while Newstead division would comprise Bestwood Village, Newstead and Ravenhead wards. The County Council considered that Woodborough looked to the larger village of Calverton for its shops, services and schools, and that the parishes of Newstead division had a common rural identity as former mining villages.

126 The County Council proposed four divisions representing Arnold town to the east of the city of Nottingham, together with the village of Lambley. A new single-member Arnold North division would comprise St Marys and Killisick wards, while a new single-member Arnold South division would comprise Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards. The County Council considered that the proposed Arnold North division would link wards in the same secondary school catchment area, whose residents used shops and services in Arnold town centre. It also considered that the proposed Arnold South division reflected the shared use of services and schools by residents of Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards.

127 The County Council also proposed a revised single-member Arnold West division comprising Bonington and Daybrook wards, which it noted 'shared transport links along the A60 Nottingham to Mansfield Road.' It also proposed a new single-member Dumbles division comprising the urban Mapperley Plains ward and the more rural Lambley ward. The County Council considered that both communities 'are of similar social and economic status and have a shared interest in the green belt area around the Lambley Dumble Beck. Primary schools in both areas belong to the same family of schools.'

128 Further to the south, the County Council proposed four divisions representing Carlton town, together with the villages of Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph. A revised single-member

Carlton Central division would comprise Phoenix, St James and Valley wards, which were considered to 'form the central hub of the Carlton area,' sharing public transport links and sports facilities. The County Council noted that 'Three local primary schools belong to the same family of schools.' A revised single-member Carlton South division would comprise Carlton and Netherfield & Colwick wards. The County Council noted that these wards were linked by the A612 and B688, and that their residents shared two railway stations, used the same shops and were employed by businesses based at the Colwick Industrial Estate.

129 The County Council's revised single-member Carlton West division would comprise Carlton Hill and Porchester wards. The County Council stated that this area comprises 'a densely populated and clearly defined community with shared services ... defined and contained within four arterial roads.' It also noted that both wards fell within the same school catchment area.' The County Council's proposed single-member Le Willows division would comprise the rural Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward together with Gedling ward. The County Council considered that both wards fell within the same comprehensive school catchment area and had 'shared transport links and common interests ... such as green belt issues.'

130 Under the County Council's proposals, Arnold North, Arnold South, Arnold West and Dumbles divisions would have 18% fewer, 7% more, 2% more and 18% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (19% fewer, 3% more, 1% fewer and 20% fewer by 2006). Calverton and Newstead divisions would have 21% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (18% and 4% fewer by 2006). Carlton Central, Carlton South, Carlton West and Le Willows divisions would have 17% more, 22% more, 23% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (14% more, 22% more, 20% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

131 We received two further representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that the Conservatives put forward a Carlton South division identical to that proposed by the County Council, which they considered would reflect 'community interests on the outskirts of the city'. The Conservatives also noted that Woodthorpe and Porchester wards would 'combine well in geographical and community terms,' and that Carlton Hill, St James and Valley wards represented a 'community of interest'.

132 Papplewick Parish Council proposed two unnamed single-member divisions in the north-west of the borough, one comprising Bestwood St Albans, Linby and Papplewick parishes, the other comprising Ravenshead and Newstead parishes. The Parish Council also noted its aim of amending the external parish boundary (which is also the boundary between Gedling borough and Ashfield district), an issue that we are unable to address as part of this review.

133 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we are putting forward our own proposals for Gedling, except in the north-west of the borough. We are content that the County Council's proposed Newstead division would provide for good electoral equality by 2006 and coterminosity with borough wards while reflecting community identities and interests. While we acknowledge Papplewick Parish Council's proposal for this part of the borough, we note that on a council size of 67 this area is entitled to only one county councillor.

134 However, we are concerned that the County Council's proposals for the remainder of the borough, although coterminous, would result in relatively high electoral variances, which would not generally improve on those provided by the existing county divisions. We have not been convinced by the arguments put forward by the County Council that this high electoral inequality is justified. We therefore propose to improve electoral equality in Calverton division by also including the rural parish of Lambley (part of Lambley ward). We note the view of the County Council that its proposed Dumbles division, linking Lambley ward with the urban ward of Mapperley Plains in Arnold town, would reflect community ties. Nonetheless, we consider that

our proposal would also distinguish more clearly between the urban and rural areas of the borough, better reflecting community identities and interests in the affected area. We note that the revised Calverton division would not be wholly coterminous with borough ward boundaries. However, having visited the area, we consider that the remainder of Lambley ward, a small unparished area of new residential development to the east of the B684 Mapperley Plains road, forms part of Arnold town rather than Lambley village.

135 We note that on a 67-member council Carlton town, together with Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward, is entitled to 4.6 members currently and 4.503 members by 2006, and has been allocated four members under the County Council's proposals. We note that this would result in a degree of under-representation in this area, as the number of electors per councillor will be somewhat higher than the average for the county. We therefore examined the possibility of reducing this electoral inequality by including part of this area in another county division. Initially, we considered that this problem could be resolved by the inclusion of the rural Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward in a wholly rural division. We noted that it was also possible that this proposal might better reflect community identities and interests by more clearly distinguishing between the urban and rural areas of the borough. However, we note that the inclusion of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward in the proposed Calverton division would lead to its under-representation. We were also unable to identify any alternative configuration of rural divisions including Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward that would provide for good electoral equality by 2006.

136 In contrast, Arnold town is entitled to 3.6 members on a 67-member council, which is forecast to decrease to 3.53 members by 2006 (3.7 and 3.6 members by 2006 if Langley parish is included, as under the County Council's proposals). While the County Council has correctly allocated four members to this area, we note that it would provide for a degree of over-representation, since the average number of electors per councillor would be somewhat lower than the average for the county.

137 Since Arnold adjoins Carlton to the north, we are therefore proposing to improve electoral equality in both areas by proposing a new pattern of county divisions, one of which would comprise parts of both towns. This would address the slight over-representation of Arnold and the slight under-representation of Carlton under the County Council's proposals. We found this process to be complicated by the fact that on a council size of 67 the size and configuration of borough ward electorates in Arnold and Carlton does not facilitate a pattern of single-member divisions that would provide both electoral equality and coterminosity with borough ward boundaries. While electoral equality in the two towns could be improved by recommending single-member divisions that were not wholly coterminous, we were concerned that these proposals would arbitrarily divide wards between county divisions, or would bisect communities within the town.

138 In Carlton, we also note that the County Council's proposals for coterminous single-member divisions would entail a new Carlton South division comprising the wards of Carlton and Netherfield & Colwick, which are separated by the Nottingham to Newark-on-Trent railway line and a steep hill, and linked by road only on Victoria Road, which forms part of the eastern boundary of Carlton ward. We are therefore not persuaded on the basis of the evidence received that this proposal would reflect community identities and interests.

139 However, as stated earlier, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with borough ward boundaries. Indeed, we note that to this end the County Council proposed a three-member division in Hucknall (in Ashfield district), which we have adopted as part of our draft recommendations. We therefore propose a pattern of four two-member divisions in Arnold and Carlton, of which only the proposed Arnold North division would not be wholly coterminous, due to the inclusion of part of Langley ward, as previously discussed. While we acknowledge that these proposals would not reflect every community link identified by the County Council and the

Conservatives, we consider that they would greatly improve electoral equality without loss of coterminosity except in the Langley area, where this would, in our view, be offset by a better reflection of community identities and interests.

140 The proposed two-member Arnold South division would comprise Daybrook, Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards in Arnold, and Porchester ward in Carlton. We are content that the constituent wards are well linked via the A60 Mansfield Road, A6211 Arno Vale Road/ Thackeray's Lane and B684 Woodborough Road. We therefore concur with the view of the Conservatives that the communities of Porchester and Woodthorpe are linked. We further note that the proposed Arnold South division would reflect ties between Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards identified by the County Council. We are also proposing a two-member Arnold North division comprising the wards of Bonington, Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Mary's, together with the unparished part of Lambley ward. We note that this proposal would reflect links identified by the County Council between Killisick and St Mary's wards.

141 In Carlton, we are proposing a two-member Carlton East division, comprising the wards of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Gedling, Netherfield & Colwick and Phoenix. As previously discussed, electoral equality could not be provided for in the rural area of the borough if the rural ward of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph was transferred to a wholly rural division. We note the view of the County Council that there are ties between this ward and the urban ward of Gedling. Having visited the area, we also note the close proximity of Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph villages to Carlton town, to which they are linked by the A612 Burton Road. More broadly, we are content that the constituent wards of the proposed Carlton East division are well linked via the A612 and A6211 Main Road/Shearing Hill. Our proposed two-member Carlton West division would comprise the wards of Carlton, Carlton Hill, St James and Valley. We note that this proposal would reflect links identified by the County Council between St James and Valley wards, and by the Conservatives between these two wards and Carlton Hill ward.

142 Under our draft recommendations, Arnold North and Arnold South divisions would each have 6% more electors per councillor than the county average (4% and 2% more by 2006). Carlton East and Carlton West divisions would have 2% fewer than and equal to the average number of electors per councillor respectively (both 2% fewer by 2006). Calverton and Newstead divisions would have 10% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (7% and 4% fewer by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 67% coterminosity with borough wards (four out of six divisions), and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Mansfield district

143 Under the current arrangements, the district of Mansfield is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Cumberlands & Ladybrook, Northfield & Manor and Oak Tree & Lindhurst divisions have 5%, 11% and 21% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (8%, 13% and 23% fewer by 2006). The existing Pleasleyhill & Broomhill, Ravensdale & Sherwood and Titchfield & Eakring divisions have 22%, 5% and 17% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (23%, 1% and 21% fewer by 2006). The existing Leeming & Forest Town, Warsop and Oakham & Berry Hill divisions have 21% and 2% more than and equal to the average number of electors per councillor respectively (26% more, 2% fewer and 4% more by 2006).

144 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Mansfield be represented by nine county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, representing nine single-member divisions, five of which (56%) would be coterminous. It stated that it had made every effort 'to reflect the different communities in Mansfield' while improving electoral equality. In the north of Mansfield town, the County Council's proposed new single-member Priory Leeming and Robin Hood & Sherwood divisions would comprise the district wards of the same names. It noted the 'strong community links' between Priory and Leeming wards. In the east of the town, the County

Council proposed to unite the Forest Town community in a new single-member Forest Town division, comprising Forest Town East and Forest Town West wards. In central Mansfield, its new single-member Ravensdale and Eakring division would comprise the district wards of the same names.

145 To the south-east, the County Council's revised single-member Oak Tree & Lindhurst division would comprise the district wards of the same names, except for a small area of Lindhurst ward to the west of Bellamy Road and to the south of The Avenue. The proposed division would also include that part of Berry Hill ward to the east of the disused Berry Hill Quarry, excluding King's Stand, King's Walk and Mendip Close. Under the County Council's proposals, the remainder of Berry Hill and Lindhurst wards would be included with Portland ward to form a new single-member Portland & Berry Hill division. The County Council considered that these non-coterminous divisions would better reflect community identities and interests in the affected area, noting that 'a key road is to be built' that would separate the majority of Lindhurst ward from the area to the west of Bellamy Road. The County Council also noted that this area fell in a different school catchment area to the rest of the Lindhurst community.

146 In the west of Mansfield town, the County Council's proposed single-member Ladybrook Grange division would comprise Grange Farm and Ladybrook wards, while its revised single-member Pleasley & Broomhill division would comprise Pleasley Hill and Broomhill wards. However, to provide for good electoral equality, each proposed division would also include part of Cumberland ward. Ladybrook Grange division would include that part of the ward to the south of the Road Safety Training Centre on Brick Kiln Lane, to the south of Allington Drive and Abbott Lea, and to the west of Hall Barn Lane, Mansfield Redgate School and Beck Crescent. The remainder of Cumberland ward would be included in the proposed Pleasley & Broomhill division. Finally, under the County Council's proposals, the existing Warsop division, comprising the district wards of Birklands and Meden (together forming Warsop parish) would remain unchanged.

147 Under the County Council's proposals, Forest Town, Oak Tree & Lindhurst and Warsop divisions would have 2%, 2% and 8% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (5%, 1% and 4% more by 2006). Pleasley & Broomhill, Portland & Berry Hill and Priory Leeming divisions would have 6%, 6% and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (7% fewer, 4% fewer and equal to the average by 2006). Ravensdale & Eakring, Robin Hood & Sherwood and Ladybrook Grange divisions would have 4% fewer, 1% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (4%, 1% and 3% fewer by 2006).

148 We received two further representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for seven single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that, like the County Council, the Conservatives proposed to retain the existing Warsop division, arguing that this area is geographically and socially distinct from urban Mansfield.

149 Mansfield District Council put forward a nine-member scheme for the district, representing one single-member division and four two-member divisions, all of which would be coterminous with district wards. Its proposed two-member North division would comprise Leeming, Priory, Robin Hood and Sherwood wards, while its proposed two-member East division would comprise Forest Town East, Forest Town West, Lindhurst and Oak Tree wards. The proposed two-member South division would comprise Berry Hill, Eakring, Portland and Ravensdale wards, and the proposed two-member West division would comprise Broomhill, Cumberlands, Grange Farm, Ladybrook and Pleasley Hill wards. Under the District Council's proposals the existing single-member Warsop division (comprising Birklands and Meden wards) would be retained.

150 The District Council noted that its proposals would not only achieve coterminosity between county divisions and district wards, but also between the five county divisions and Mansfield district's five Area Assemblies, which are themselves based on groupings of district wards. Under its proposals, North and South divisions would have 1% and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (equal to the average and 1% fewer by 2006). East division would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor both now and in 2006. Warsop and West divisions would have 8% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (4% more and 5% fewer by 2006).

151 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we are adopting the District Council's proposals, but changing the names of the proposed East, North, South and West divisions to Mansfield East, Mansfield North, Mansfield South and Mansfield West for ease of recognition. As stated earlier, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with district ward boundaries. Indeed, we note that to this end the County Council proposed a three-member division in Hucknall (in Ashfield district), which we have adopted as part of our draft recommendations. In Mansfield town, we note that both the District Council's proposals for four two-member divisions and the County Council's proposals for eight single-member divisions would each secure good electoral equality. We also note that the District Council's proposed divisions would link the same wards as those divisions put forward by the County Council, and consider that the reflection of community identities and interests achieved by each scheme would be comparable.

152 However, the District Council's proposals would secure complete coterminosity with district ward boundaries, whereas the County Council put forward four divisions that would not be coterminous. While the County Council proposed non-coterminous Oak Tree & Lindhurst and Portland & Berry Hill divisions to better reflect community identities and interests, we are not persuaded on the basis of the evidence received that the advantages which may result from this would outweigh the benefits of coterminosity. Finally, we note that the District Council, the County Council and the Conservatives all supported the retention of the existing single-member Warsop division. Having visited the area, we are content that this would reflect its semi-rural character while providing good electoral equality and coterminosity with district wards.

153 Under our draft recommendations, North Mansfield and South Mansfield divisions would have 1% and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (equal to the average and 1% fewer by 2006). East Mansfield division would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor both now and in 2006. Warsop and West Mansfield divisions would have 8% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (4% more and 5% fewer by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 100% coterminosity between county divisions and district wards, and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Newark & Sherwood district

154 Under the current arrangements, the district of Newark & Sherwood is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Balderton, Caunton and Southwell divisions would have 20%, 21% and 26% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (37%, 23% and 25% more by 2006). The existing Blidworth, Ollerton and Rufford divisions would have 22%, 2% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (25%, 8% and 7% fewer by 2006). The existing Collingham, Newark North and Newark South divisions would have 2% more, 4% more and 32% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (9% more, 4% more and 35% fewer by 2006).

155 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Newark & Sherwood be represented by 10 county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, representing 10 single-member divisions. Its proposals would secure coterminosity in five (50%) of the 10 proposed

divisions. In the west of the district, the County Council proposed a revised single-member Ollerton division comprising Boughton and Ollerton wards, which it considered would reflect community identities and shared use of services in these 'former mining communities'. It also proposed a revised single-member Blidworth division comprising Blidworth and Rainworth wards, together with Rainworth North parish ward, situated in Bilsthorpe ward, which it considered would reflect the identity of the 'distinct former coalfield community of Blidworth'. Together with Clipstone and Edwinstowe wards, the remainder of Bilsthorpe ward, the parishes of Bilsthorpe and Rufford, would form a revised single-member Rufford division representing 'former mining communities'.

156 In the centre of the district, the County Council proposed a revised single-member Caunton division comprising Caunton, Southwell North, Southwell East and Sutton on Trent wards, together with the parishes of Eakring and Kirklington from Farnsfield ward. It noted that this division would form 'a distinct agricultural area,' incorporating part of the town of Southwell. Under the County Council's proposals, Southwell West ward, which covers the remainder of the town together with the parish of Halloughton, would form a 'largely unchanged' single-member Southwell division together with Lowdham ward, the remainder of Farnsfield ward, the parishes of Edingley, Farnsfield, Halam and Oxtun, and the parishes of Bleasby and Thurgarton from Trent ward.

157 In the south-east of the district, the County Council proposed a new single-member Farndon & Muskham division comprising Farndon and Muskham wards, together with the remainder of Trent ward, the parishes of Fiskerton cum Morton and Rolleston. It acknowledged that this division would be divided by the River Trent. The County Council also proposed in this area a revised single-member Balderton division comprising Balderton North and Balderton West wards. Whereas the existing Balderton division combines the urban parish of Balderton with the rural parishes of Farndon ward to the south of Newark on Trent town and to the east of the Trent, the County Council considered that its proposal would enable Balderton to form 'a distinct electoral division' on its own.

158 In the town of Newark on Trent, the County Council proposed 'largely unchanged' single-member Newark North and Newark South divisions, respectively comprising Bridge and Castle wards, and Magnus and Devon wards. The remaining part of the town, Beacon ward, would be combined with the rural wards of Collingham & Meering and Winthorpe in a revised single-member Collingham division. The County Council noted that the rural part of Collingham division was 'separated from the rest of the district by the River Trent with a crossing in Newark.'

159 Under the County Council's proposals, Balderton, Blidworth and Caunton divisions would have 9%, 5% and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (12%, 8% and 10% fewer by 2006). Collingham, Newark North and Newark South divisions would have 6% more, 2% more and 17% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (13% more, 1% more and 19% fewer by 2006). Ollerton, Rufford and Southwell divisions would have 4%, 8% and 12% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (1% fewer, 14% more and 11% more by 2006). Farndon & Muskham division would have 30% fewer electors per councillor than the average, improving to 9% fewer by 2006.

160 We received five further representations in relation to this area. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that the Conservatives put forward an Ollerton division identical to that proposed by the County Council, noting community ties between Boughton and Ollerton. They also put forward a Rufford division identical to that proposed by the County Council, except for the inclusion of Rainworth North ward of Rainworth parish.

161 The Conservatives also considered that Southwell town should not be divided between two divisions, as is the case under the existing arrangements and the County Council's

proposals. In their view, this 'splits the town artificially ... and sometimes blurs the lines of accountability,' while its inclusion in a single division would better reflect the town's community and provide more effective and convenient local government. Newark & Retford Liberal Democrat Constituency Party proposed that Southwell town form a single division, employing similar argumentation to that used by the Conservatives.

162 Balderton Parish Council proposed that the existing Balderton division be retained. It added 'Confusing changes are to be implemented for Balderton relating to District Council electoral arrangements (which this council fiercely opposed at the time of consultation), and members do not wish the County's electoral structure to follow similar lines to that of the district.' Upton Parish Council proposed that the existing Caunton division be retained. Gonalston Parish Meeting put forward a minor amendment to the external boundary of Gonalston and Lowdham parishes in the Cliff Mill area. However, we have no remit to recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of this review.

163 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we have based our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals, subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality and reflect community identities and interests in the central and eastern areas of the district. In the west, we are adopting the County Council's proposed single-member Blidworth, Ollerton and Rufford divisions without amendment. We consider that the proposed non-coterminous Blidworth division would achieve good electoral equality by including all of Rainworth parish, and note the view of the County Council that the communities of Blidworth and Rainworth are linked.

164 We also consider that the County Council's and the Conservatives' proposed Ollerton division would provide unified representation for the contiguous settlements of Boughton and Ollerton/New Ollerton while providing for good electoral equality and coterminosity. We note that the County Council's proposed Rufford division would be slightly under-represented by 2006. However, we consider that the size and configuration of district ward and parish electorates in this area limits the number of viable options. In this context, we are content that the proposed Rufford division would facilitate the best available balance between the statutory criteria in this part of the district.

165 In the central part of the district, we acknowledge Upton Parish Council's preference for the retention of the existing Caunton division. However, the under-representation of this division on a 63-member council would worsen under the proposed council size of 67, and we would seek to improve coterminosity between divisions and district wards in this area. Examining the County Council's proposals, we note that the County Council's proposed Southwell division would be relatively under-represented by 2006. We concur with the view of the Conservatives and the Newark & Retford Liberal Democrat Constituency Party that the town of Southwell should be included in a single division to better reflect community identities and interests.

166 Accordingly, we propose a new single-member Southwell & Caunton division, comprising the wards of Caunton, Southwell East, Southwell North, Southwell West and Sutton on Trent, and a new single-member Farnsfield & Lowdham division comprising the district wards of the same names together with Bleasby and Thurgarton parishes from Trent ward. These proposals are identical to those of the County Council, except for the inclusion of Southwell West ward in the proposed Southwell & Caunton division and the inclusion of all of Farnsfield ward in the proposed Farnsfield & Lowdham division. We are content that they would improve upon the coterminosity and electoral equality provided by the County Council's proposals, while also better reflecting community identities and interests in Southwell town.

167 In the east of the district, we note that the County Council's proposals for the Newark area would result in the relative over-representation of Newark South division and the slight under-representation of Collingham division by 2006, which is primarily rural but includes Beacon ward, situated in Newark town. We therefore propose to improve electoral equality in

both divisions while retaining coterminosity in this area by proposing a new single-member Newark East division comprising Beacon and Magnus wards, and a new single-member Newark West division comprising Castle and Devon wards. Bridge ward, which covers the remainder of Newark town, would be included instead of Beacon ward in the County Council's proposed single-member Collingham division, to which it is linked via the A1133 road to Gainsborough. We note that our proposed Collingham division is identical to that put forward by the Conservatives on a 55-member council.

168 In the south-east of the district we are proposing to adopt the County Council's proposed single-member Balderton and Farndon & Muskham divisions. We acknowledge the preference of Balderton and Upton parish councils for the retention of the existing Balderton and Caunton divisions, but note that they are significantly under-represented, with 20 and 21% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (37% and 23% more by 2006). We would also seek to improve on the level of coterminosity with district wards currently provided by Caunton division. We note that on a 67-member council the electorate in the part of Newark & Sherwood district to the east of the River Trent is currently entitled to 4.2 county councillors, rising to 4.4 councillors by 2006. In order to provide for electoral equality in this part of the district by 2006, we must therefore propose a division comprising wards (or parts of wards) on both sides of the river, which is bridged only in the Newark on Trent area.

169 In this context, we consider that the County Council's proposed Farndon & Muskham division would provide the best available balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. Unlike other options, we note that this proposed division would combine wards to the east and west of the Trent that are not only similar in character, but also possess good road links via the A1, the A46 Fosse Road, the A616 Ollerton Road and the A617/A612 to Southwell. Although the proposed Farndon & Muskham division would be significantly over-represented based on current electorates, we note that, due to electorate growth in Balderton South parish ward, electoral equality is forecast to substantially improve by 2006. We further note that, while Trent ward would be divided between the proposed Farndon & Muskham and Farnsfield & Lowdham divisions, as proposed by the County Council, a degree of non-coterminosity is required to provide for good electoral equality in this area if single-member divisions are recommended. We do not consider that two-member divisions in rural areas would provide effective and convenient local government.

170 We also consider that the County Council's proposed Balderton division, although slightly over-represented, would provide for an improvement in electoral equality and for coterminosity with district ward boundaries. We note that Balderton Parish Council has expressed the view that new county electoral arrangements for Balderton parish should not be based upon the new district wards, which place Balderton South parish ward, comprising a new residential development on the site of the former Balderton Hospital, in Farndon district ward. However, the inclusion of this area in the proposed Balderton division would result not only in its slight under-representation, but also the significant over-representation of the proposed Farndon & Muskham division. In comparison to existing arrangements, we consider that the proposed Balderton division would provide a more accurate reflection of the village's status as an urban community distinct from those rural parishes to the south-west which the County Council has proposed to include in the new Farndon & Muskham division.

171 Under our draft recommendations, Balderton, Blidworth and Farnsfield & Lowdham divisions would have 9%, 5% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (12%, 8% and 4% fewer by 2006). Ollerton, Rufford and Southwell & Caunton divisions would have 4%, 8% and 4% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (1% fewer, 14% more and 6% more by 2006). Collingham, Newark East and Newark West divisions would have 9% more, 16% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the average respectively (9% more, 10% fewer and 4% fewer by 2006). Farndon & Muskham division would have 30% fewer electors per councillor than the average, improving to 9% fewer by 2006. Our draft

recommendations would achieve 60% coterminosity with district wards (six out of ten divisions), and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Rushcliffe borough

172 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Rushcliffe is represented by nine county councillors, serving nine single-member divisions. The existing Bingham and Cotgrave divisions have 24% and 6% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (27% and 5% more by 2006). The existing East Leake, Keyworth, Radcliffe on Trent and Ruddington divisions have 6%, 11%, 21% and 22% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (9%, 13%, 21% and 24% fewer by 2006). The existing West Bridgford East, West Bridgford South and West Bridgford West divisions have 8% more, 9% fewer and 17% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (7% more, 11% fewer and 15% more by 2006).

173 At Stage One the County Council proposed that Rushcliffe be represented by nine county councillors, as it is entitled to under a council size of 67, representing nine single-member divisions. Its proposals would secure coterminosity in four (44%) of the nine proposed divisions. In the West Bridgford urban area, it proposed three single-member divisions: West Bridgford Central, comprising Abbey, Lady Bay and Trent Bridge wards; West Bridgford South, comprising the Edwalton Village and Melton wards together with Gamston parish and an adjoining small unparished area (both part of Gamston ward); and West Bridgford West, comprising Compton Acres, Lutterell and Musters wards. The County Council considered that its proposals would provide coterminosity, improve electoral equality and reflect community identities and interests in the town. In particular, it noted that the Edwalton and Gamston areas in the proposed West Bridgford South division were 'seamlessly linked'.

174 Under the County Council's proposals, the remainder of Gamston ward (Holme Pierrepont parish) would be included in a revised single-member Radcliffe on Trent division together with Manvers, Oak and Trent wards and Flintham parish, situated in Thoroton ward. The County Council stated, 'the inclusion of ... Oak ward and Flintham parish helps with electoral equality. Holme Pierrepont parish is rural and is therefore appropriately located in this largely rural division.' To the south-east, the County Council proposed a revised single-member Bingham division comprising Bingham East, Bingham West and Cranmer wards and the parishes of Elton-on-the-Hill, Flawborough, Granby, Hawksworth, Orston, Shelton, Sibthorpe and Thoroton, situated in Thoroton ward. The County Council stated that the villages in the proposed division 'look to Bingham for their services, including education, leisure, healthcare, rail links and shopping.'

175 In the south, the County Council proposed a revised single-member Cotgrave division, comprising Cotgrave, Nevile and Wiverton wards, and a revised Keyworth division, comprising Keyworth North, Keyworth South, Tollerton and Wolds wards. To the south-west, it proposed a non-coterminous single-member Ruddington division comprising Gotham and Ruddington wards, together with the parishes of Bradmore, Bunny and Costock from Stanford ward, in order to improve electoral equality in this part of Rushcliffe while 'maintaining the rural nature of the area'. The remainder of Stanford ward (the parishes of Normanton-on-Soar, Rempstone and Stanford-on-Soar) would form a revised single-member Soar Valley division together with Leake and Soar Valley wards. The County Council noted that 'the parishes included in this proposal are those which have close links with East Leake, the main centre of population in the Division.'

176 Under the County Council's proposals, Bingham, Cotgrave and Keyworth divisions would have 6%, 12% and 2% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (11% more, 11% more and equal to the average by 2006). Radcliffe on Trent, Ruddington and Soar Valley divisions would have 9% more, 9% fewer and 16% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (8% more, 11% fewer and 19% fewer by 2006). West Bridgford Central,

West Bridgford South and West Bridgford West divisions would have 17%, 8% and 11% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (16%, 6% and 9% more by 2006).

177 We received three further representations in relation to this area. Cotgrave Town Council stated that, as the existing Cotgrave division provided comparatively good electoral equality, it did not expect it to be affected by the review of county council electoral arrangements. The Conservatives put forward proposals based on a 55-member council for eight single-member divisions. As a result of our recommendation of a 67-member council, we were only able to give these proposals limited further consideration. However, we note that the Conservatives put forward Cotgrave and West Bridgford Central divisions identical to that proposed by the County Council, though they proposed that West Bridgford Central division be named West Bridgford East or Trentside. We also note that there were a number of areas in which they identified community links that were not reflected by the County Council's proposals. The Conservatives considered that residents of Ruddington parish looked to West Bridgford for schools and services. In Stanford ward, they considered that residents of Costock and Rempstone parishes looked to the village of East Leake for shops and services, whereas residents of Bradmore and Bunny parishes looked to Keyworth.

178 Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party supported the County Council's proposed Bingham, Cotgrave, Radcliffe on Trent, West Bridgford Central, West Bridgford South and West Bridgford West divisions. In particular, it supported the inclusion of the rural Holme Pierrepont parish in the proposed Radcliffe on Trent division, considering that this proposal would provide for better electoral equality in West Bridgford South division while better reflecting community identities in the parish. The Constituency Labour Party also noted that West Bridgford Central division would broadly represent the older parts of West Bridgford town, West Bridgford West division the newer parts, and West Bridgford South division a combination of new development and the older urban villages of Edwalton and Gamston.

179 However, in the south-west of the borough Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party put forward alternative single-member Keyworth, East Leake and Ruddington divisions. Its proposed Keyworth division would comprise Keyworth North, Keyworth South and Tollerton wards together with the parishes of Normanton on the Wolds, Plumtree, Stanton on the Wolds and Widmerpool from Wolds ward. The remainder of Wolds ward, the parishes of Thorpe in the Glebe, Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall, would form part of the Constituency Labour Party's proposed Ruddington division together with Ruddington ward and Stanford ward. Its proposed East Leake division would comprise Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards.

180 Under Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party's alternative proposals for the south-west of the borough, based on a council size of 67, East Leake, Keyworth and Ruddington divisions would have 5%, 5% and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the county average respectively (8%, 7% and 14% fewer by 2006). Its proposals would secure coterminosity in four (44%) of the nine proposed divisions.

181 After careful consideration of the representations received at Stage One, we have based our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality. In the West Bridgford urban area, we are adopting the proposed single-member West Bridgford West division without amendment, which we consider would provide coterminosity and good electoral equality by 2006. However, we note the under-representation of the proposed West Bridgford Central division both now and in 2006. We note that electoral equality in West Bridgford could be improved by recommending single-member divisions with a lower level of coterminosity, entailing the inclusion of part of Abbey ward in the County Council's proposed West Bridgford South division. However, we are concerned that such proposals would arbitrarily divide wards between divisions, bisecting communities within the town. We note that the Conservatives identified community ties between West Bridgford and Ruddington; however on a 67-member council the inclusion of Ruddington

parish in one of the above divisions would not provide for good electoral equality in this part of the borough.

182 As stated earlier, we may now recommend the creation of multi-member divisions, particularly where this facilitates electoral equality and coterminosity with borough ward boundaries. Indeed, we note that to this end the County Council proposed a three-member division in Hucknall (in Ashfield district), which we have adopted as part of our draft recommendations. We are therefore proposing to combine the County Council's proposed single-member West Bridgford Central and West Bridgford South divisions in a new two-member West Bridgford Central & South division, comprising the Abbey, Edwalton Village, Lady Bay, Melton and Trent Bridge wards, together with Gamston parish and a small adjoining unparished area situated in Gamston ward.

183 We consider that the proposed West Bridgford Central & South division would improve electoral equality without requiring further departures from coterminosity with borough wards, while also reflecting those ties between communities in the West Bridgford urban area that were identified by the County Council and Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party. We are also content on the basis of the evidence received that the County Council's proposal to include Gamston parish, situated in Gamston ward, in a division with part of the West Bridgford unparished area, would better reflect community identities and interests than its inclusion in a rural division, since the parish effectively forms part of the West Bridgford urban area.

184 In the south-west of the borough, we consider that on a council size of 67 the borough warding pattern does not facilitate the achievement of electoral equality and coterminosity using single-member divisions. Although we note that two-member divisions would resolve this problem, we do not consider that their use in this rural area would provide effective and convenient local government. Under the County Council's proposals, the proposed Ruddington and Soar Valley divisions are both forecast to be over-represented by 2006 and are not coterminous with borough wards. We are also concerned that Gotham ward, centred on the A453 M1 link road, does not possess good road links with the remainder of the County Council's proposed Ruddington division, except via the Clifton area of Nottingham city. We examined Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party's alternative proposals for this area, noting that of its three proposed divisions, only one (Ruddington) would be over-represented. However, we are not persuaded by the evidence received that the inclusion of the southern parts of Stanford and Wolds wards in its proposed Ruddington division would reflect community identities and interests, given their distance from Ruddington and their proximity to the large villages of East Leake and Keyworth respectively.

185 To improve electoral equality and better reflect community identities and interests, we are therefore proposing to add Gotham ward to the County Council's proposed single-member Soar Valley division. We note that this division would to some extent reflect the Constituency Labour Party's proposed Leake ward. While the revised Soar Valley division would not be wholly coterminous, we note the view of the County Council that the parishes situated in Stanford ward to be included in the proposed Soar Valley division, Normanton on Soar, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar, identify with the large village of East Leake in Leake ward. To provide for good electoral equality in this area we are also putting forward a revised single-member Ruddington division comprising Ruddington and Tollerton wards, the remaining part of Stanford ward, the parishes of Bradmore, Bunny and Costock, together with part of Wolds ward, the parishes of Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Plumtree.

186 The proposed Ruddington division would provide for good electoral equality and would comprise parishes situated to the south of the West Bridgford urban area linked via the A60 Loughborough Road and A606 Melton Road. We acknowledge the view of the Conservatives that Costock parish looks to East Leake parish in the proposed Soar Valley division, but consider that its transfer from the proposed Ruddington division would result in this division being slightly under-represented. We also note that the inclusion of the northern part of Wolds ward in

Ruddington division would increase non-coterminosity between proposed county divisions and borough wards. However, this amendment would ensure reasonable electoral equality and, since the parishes of Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Plumtree, to the north of Keyworth, are situated in closer proximity to Tollerton than to much of the rest of Wolds ward, broadly to the south of Keyworth, we are content that it would not adversely affect the reflection of community identities and interests in this area.

187 As a consequence of our proposals for the south-west, and to address the slight under-representation of the County Council's proposed Cotgrave division, we are putting forward revised single-member Cotgrave and Keyworth divisions. We note the view of Cotgrave Town Council that Cotgrave division should remain unchanged. However, it is not possible for us to consider any single division in isolation from the rest of the county and note that some change to division boundaries would in any case be required to improve coterminosity with the new borough wards. We propose that the revised Cotgrave division comprise Cotgrave and Wiverton wards and that the revised Keyworth division comprise the wards of Keyworth North, Keyworth South and Nevile together with the remainder of Wolds ward, the parishes of Stanton on the Wolds, Thorpe in the Glebe, Widmerpool, Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall. We are content that this proposal would provide for electoral equality in both divisions and that the parishes of Nevile ward are linked by via the A606 Melton Road to Keyworth, the principal settlement in the proposed Keyworth division.

188 Finally, we are proposing to adopt the County Council's proposed single-member Bingham and Radcliffe on Trent divisions without amendment. We note the support of the Conservatives for the proposed Bingham division and that of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party for both proposed divisions. While the proposed Bingham division is forecast to be slightly under-represented by 2006, we consider that improvements in electoral equality could only be achieved by further non-coterminous amendments with Cotgrave division. We also note that if Thoroton ward were wholly included in Bingham division, entailing the transfer of Flintham parish from the proposed Radcliffe on Trent division, its electoral variance would worsen. We consider the proposed Radcliffe on Trent division would provide reasonable electoral equality and are also content on the basis of the evidence received that the County Council's proposal to include the rural parish of Holme Pierrepont, part of Gamston ward, would best reflect community identities and interests in the affected area.

189 Under our draft recommendations, Bingham, Radcliffe on Trent and Soar Valley divisions would have 6%, 9% and 3% more electors per councillor than the county average respectively (11% more, 8% more and equal to the average by 2006). Cotgrave, Keyworth and Ruddington divisions would have 5%, 2% and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (7%, 5% and 7% fewer by 2006). West Bridgford Central & South and West Bridgford West divisions would have 13% and 11% more electors per councillor than the average (11% and 9% more by 2006). Our draft recommendations would achieve 25% coterminosity with borough wards (two out of eight divisions), and are illustrated on sheet one of the large map at the back of this report.

## Conclusions

190 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be an increase in council size from 63 to 67;
- the boundaries of all divisions, except Warsop division in Mansfield district, will be subject to change, as the divisions are based on district wards which have themselves changed as a result of the district reviews.

191 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas.

- In Bassetlaw, we are proposing amendments to the County Council's proposals in the rural area of the district. We are also putting forward our own proposals in Retford town, to improve electoral equality and coterminosity, and in Worksop town, to improve electoral equality and better reflect community identities and interests.
- In Broxtowe, we are putting forward our own proposals in the south of the district to generally improve electoral equality, but also to improve coterminosity in the Bramcote and Stapleford areas. Our proposals include two two-member divisions in the south of the district.
- In Gedling, we are putting forward our own proposals to improve electoral equality, which include four two-member divisions in the Arnold and Carlton urban areas.
- In Mansfield, we propose adopting Mansfield District Council's proposals, which provide the best levels of electoral equality and coterminosity.
- In Newark & Sherwood, we have based our draft recommendations on the County Council's proposals, but we are putting forward our own proposals to include all of Southwell town in a single division. We also propose amendments in the Newark on Trent area to improve electoral equality.
- In Rushcliffe, we are basing our draft recommendations in the east of the borough on the County Council's proposals. However, we are putting forward our own proposals in the West Bridgford urban area and in the south and south-east of the borough to improve electoral equality. Our proposals include a two-member division in West Bridgford.

192 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

*Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements*

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft arrangements	Current arrangements	Draft arrangements
Number of councillors	63	67	63	67
Number of divisions	63	54	63	54
Average number of electors per councillor	9,313	8,757	9,702	9,123
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	30	13	35	10
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	17	1	20	1

193 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Nottinghamshire County Council would result in a reduction in the number of divisions with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 30 to 13. By 2006 only 10 divisions are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%.

*Draft recommendation*

Nottinghamshire County Council should comprise 67 councillors serving 54 divisions, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps inside the back cover.

## 5 What happens next?

194 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire County Council contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 21 July 2003. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the County Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

195 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**The Team Leader  
Nottinghamshire Review  
Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

196 In the light of responses received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, ***whether or not*** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.



# Appendix A

## Draft recommendations for Nottinghamshire: detailed mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed division boundaries for Nottinghamshire.

**Sheet one** of the **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates in outline form the proposed divisions for Nottinghamshire, including constituent district wards and parishes.

**Sheet two** of the **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed divisions for the town of Worksop in Bassetlaw district, which are non-coterminous. The map also illustrates district wards and parishes in the area.



# Appendix B

## Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

*Table B1: Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.