

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
North West Leicestershire

January 2002

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Coalville is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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 ward boundaries, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of North West Leicestershire's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001.

- **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 North West Leicestershire:

- **in nine of the 22 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to improve only slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in nine wards and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main proposals for North West Leicestershire's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 63 - 64) are that:

- **North West Leicestershire District Council should have 38 councillors, two less than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 18 of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors serving Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council;**
- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors serving Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council;**

- **a reduction in the number and re-distribution of councillors serving Worthington Parish Council.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 15 January 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the 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, with effect from 1 April 2002, will be responsible for implementing change to 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 come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 11 March 2002:

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North West Leicestershire Review
LGCE
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Appleby	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Appleby Magna, Chilcote, Snarestone, Stretton en le Field and Swebstone	Map 2
2	Bardon	1	The parish of Bardon and part of the existing Hugglescote ward	Large map
3	Breedon	1	The parishes of Belton, Breedon on the Hill and Isley cum Langley, and the Diseworth parish ward of Long Whatton parish	Map 2
4	Castle	1	The proposed Castle parish ward of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish	Map A2
5	Castle Donington	3	The parishes of Castle Donington and Lockington-Hemington	Map 2
6	Coalville	2	Coalville ward; part of Snibston ward; part of Holly Hayes ward; part of Whitwick ward	Large map
7	Greenhill	3	Charley parish, part of Greenhill ward and part of Holly Hayes ward	Large map
8	Holywell	2	The proposed Holywell parish ward of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish	Map A2
9	Hugglescote	2	The parish of Ellistown & Battlefleet; part of Hugglescote ward	Large map
10	Ibstock & Heather	3	The parishes of Heather and Ibstock	Map 2
11	Ivanhoe	2	The proposed Ivanhoe parish ward of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish	Maps 2 and A2
12	Kegworth & Whatton	2	The parish of Kegworth and the Long Whatton parish ward of Long Whatton parish	Map 2
13	Measham	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Measham	Map2
14	Moirā	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Ashby Woulds and the Blackfordby parish ward of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish	Map 2
15	Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	Map 2
16	Ravenstone & Packington	1	The parishes of Normanton Le Heath and Packington, and the proposed Ravenstone parish ward of Ravenstone with Snibston parish	Map 2 and Large map
17	Snibston	2	Part of Snibston ward and the proposed The Limes parish ward of Ravenstone with Snibston parish	Large map
18	Thringstone	2	Thringstone ward; part of Whitwick ward	Map 2
19	Valley	2	The parishes of Coleorton, Osgathorpe, Staunton Harold, Swannington and Worthington	Map 2
20	Whitwick	3	Part of Whitwick ward; part of the existing Holly Hayes ward	Large map

Notes: 1 Coalville is the only unparished part of the district and comprises the proposed wards of Coalville, Greenhill, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A1 – A2 in Appendix A.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for North West Leicestershire

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Appleby	1	1,731	1,731	-4	1,714	1,714	-7
2	Bardon	1	1,677	1,677	-7	1,920	1,920	4
3	Breedon	1	2,018	2,018	12	1,998	1,998	8
4	Castle	1	2,021	2,021	12	2,002	2,002	9
5	Castle Donington	3	5,287	1,762	-2	5,463	1,821	-1
6	Coalville	2	3,589	1,795	-1	3,816	1,908	3
7	Greenhill	3	5,491	1,830	1	5,434	1,811	-2
8	Holywell	2	3,612	1,806	0	3,783	1,892	3
9	Hugglescote	2	3,305	1,653	-8	3,617	1,809	-2
10	Ibstock & Heather	3	5,327	1,776	-2	5,478	1,826	-1
11	Ivanhoe	2	3,791	1,896	5	3,770	1,885	2
12	Kegworth & Whatton	2	3,529	1,765	-2	3,560	1,780	-3
13	Measham	2	3,712	1,856	3	3,745	1,873	2
14	Moira	2	3,718	1,859	3	3,749	1,875	2
15	Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	1	1,771	1,771	-2	1,801	1,801	-2
16	Ravenstone & Packington	1	1,953	1,953	8	2,022	2,022	10
17	Snibston	2	3,769	1,885	4	3,920	1,960	6
18	Thringstone	2	3,691	1,846	2	3,719	1,860	1
19	Valley	2	3,339	1,670	-8	3,334	1,667	-10
20	Whitwick	3	5,279	1,760	-3	5,226	1,742	-6
	Totals	38	68,610	-	-	70,071	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,806	-	-	1,844	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North West Leicestershire District 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 district. 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 district of North West Leicestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the eight two-tier districts in Leicestershire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of North West Leicestershire. North West Leicestershire's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1980 (Report no. 377). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report no. 441). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

6 In our *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.

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. 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.

9 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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half of the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when we wrote to North West Leicestershire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the 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 North West Leicestershire District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 3 September 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 15 January 2002 and will end on 11 March 2002, 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.**

14 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

15 The district of North West Leicestershire, as its name suggests, is situated in the north-west of the county of Leicestershire. The district is bounded to the east by Charnwood Borough, to the south by the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth and to the north and west by the county of Derbyshire. It is within close proximity to the major cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and benefits from strong transport links including the M1 motorway and the A42. The current population stands at 85,900 and is spread over some 27,933 hectares.

16 The district is parished in part, containing 29 civil parishes, and contains two significantly populated towns; Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The remainder of the district consists of rural areas and smaller villages, the largest of which are Castle Donington, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham. Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch comprise around 43 per cent of the district's total electorate.

17 The electorate of the district is 68,610 (February 2001). The Council presently has 40 members who are elected from 22 wards, 9 of which are relatively urban in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coalville, with the remainder being mainly rural. Four of the wards are each represented by three councillors, ten are each represented by two councillors and eight are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,715 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,752 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in nine of the 22 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, five wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Hugglescote ward where each of the councillors represents 40 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in North West Leicestershire

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Appleby	1	1,731	1,731	1	1,714	1,714	-2
2 Breedon	1	1,589	1,589	-7	1,573	1,573	-10
3 Castle	1	2,377	2,377	39	2,370	2,370	35
4 Castle Donington	3	4,847	1,616	-6	5,027	1,676	-4
5 Coalville	2	3,236	1,618	-6	3,204	1,602	-9
6 Greenhill	3	4,231	1,410	-18	4,292	1,431	-18
7 Holly Hayes	2	2,708	1,354	-21	2,943	1,472	-16
8 Holywell	2	3,820	1,910	11	3,989	1,995	14
9 Hugglescote	2	4,786	2,393	40	5,242	2,621	50
10 Ibstock & Heather	3	5,431	1,810	6	5,581	1,860	6
11 Ivanhoe	2	3,227	1,614	-6	3,195	1,598	-9
12 Kegworth	2	3,171	1,586	-8	3,166	1,583	-10
13 Long Whatton	1	1,328	1,328	-23	1,355	1,355	-23
14 Measham	2	3,712	1,856	8	3,745	1,873	7
15 Moira	2	3,718	1,859	8	3,749	1,875	7
16 Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	1	1,771	1,771	3	1,801	1,801	3
17 Ravenstone	1	2,282	2,282	33	2,348	2,348	34
18 Snibston	2	3,240	1,620	-6	3,392	1,696	-3
19 Swannington	1	1,784	1,784	4	1,766	1,766	1
20 Thringstone	2	3,039	1,520	-11	3,009	1,505	-14
21 Whitwick	3	5,128	1,709	0	5,142	1,714	-2
22 Worthington	1	1,454	1,454	-15	1,468	1,468	-16
Totals	40	68,610	-	-	70,071	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,715	-	-	1,752	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North West Leicestershire District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Long Whatton ward were relatively over-represented by 23 per cent, while electors in Hugglescote ward were relatively under-represented by 40 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

20 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 North West Leicestershire District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received three submissions during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council. All the submissions may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

North West Leicestershire District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 38 members, two less than at present, serving 20 wards, compared to the existing 22. It consulted locally on its proposals before submitting them to the Commission. The Council's scheme was devised by a cross-party group and received unanimous support from the members of the council. It proposed changes to 18 of the existing 22 wards, resulting in a net reduction of two, although many of the proposed boundary changes were of a minor nature. The District Council's scheme resulted in significantly improved levels of electoral equality, with only one ward varying above 10 per cent from the district average initially. This would improve by 2006, when all wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the district average. The District Council proposed to maintain the current electoral cycle of whole council elections every four years.

23 The Council proposed revised parish warding arrangements for the parish of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and proposed using an existing parish ward boundary in Long Whatton Parish for district warding purposes.

Parish and Town Councils

24 We received responses from Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council and Worthington Parish Council. Both councils proposed changes to their own electoral arrangements. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council proposed an increase in number and re-allocation of town councillors in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, based on the District Council's revised warding arrangements. Worthington Parish Council proposed a reduction in the number of its parish councillors, from seven to five, and a re-distribution between the current parish wards.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

25 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

26 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

27 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.

28 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. 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.

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, 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 community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

30 Since 1975 there has been a 23 per cent increase in the electorate of North West Leicestershire district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2 per cent from 68,610 to 70,071 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Hugglescote ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Holly Hayes ward. However, a number of wards will remain static or see a slight decline in electorate. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council 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 District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the District Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

32 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

33 North West Leicestershire District Council presently has 40 members. In its Stage One submission, the District Council stated that in formulating its draft proposals, the Council's cross-party working party "decided at an early stage that proposals should look to reduce council size". It contended that "this decision was reached, particularly bearing in mind the changing role of councillors with more time being spent on their representational duties rather than spending time in meetings. Through this reasoning, less councillors were thought to be needed to manage the political management structures within the authority". The District Council therefore proposed a council of 38 members which received unanimous support from all members, as this would also facilitate a scheme which would provide for the best balance of representation between the rural and the urban areas of the district.

34 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 38 members.

Electoral Arrangements

35 In view of the unanimous support given to the District Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties prior to the submission of its scheme, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are moving away from the District Council's proposals in three areas in order to secure more identifiable boundaries. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Breedon, Castle Donington, Kegworth and Long Whatton wards;
- (b) Coalville, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick wards;
- (c) Greenhill, Holly Hayes, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards
- (d) Castle, Holywell, Ivanhoe, Ravenstone, Swannington and Worthington wards;
- (e) Appleby, Measham, Moira and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards.

36 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Breedon, Castle Donington, Kegworth and Long Whatton wards

37 These four wards are situated in the north of the district. Breedon ward comprises the parishes of Belton, Breedon on the Hill, Isley cum Langley and Staunton Harold and is represented by a single councillor. Castle Donington ward comprises solely the parish of Castle Donington and is represented by three members, while the two-member Kegworth ward comprises the parishes of Lockington-Hemington and Kegworth. Long Whatton ward comprises solely the parish of the same name and is represented by one member. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 7 per cent below the district average in Breedon ward (10 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent below in Castle Donington ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 8 per cent below in Kegworth ward (10 per cent below by 2006) and 23 per cent below the district average in Long Whatton ward, both now and by 2006.

38 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of Staunton Harold from the existing Breedon ward into the proposed Valley ward, as detailed below. Breedon ward would therefore comprise the parishes of Belton, Breedon on the Hill, Isley cum Langley and the Diseworth parish ward of the parish of Long Whatton & Diseworth and would continue to be represented by a single councillor. The Long Whatton parish ward of Long Whatton & Diseworth parish would be included in the new two-member Kegworth & Whatton ward together with the parish of Kegworth. The District Council argued that “community interests/identification are satisfied, for although the ward boundary in effect splits a parish (given the use of the parish ward boundary), the settlements of Diseworth and Long Whatton are separated by the M1 motorway and the A42”. The proposed three-member Castle Donington ward would comprise the parishes of Castle Donington and Lockington-Hemington. The District Council stated that “there is no recognised affinity between the parish of Lockington-Hemington and the parish of Kegworth, particularly bearing in mind that these parishes are separated by the M1 and the A453 trunk road”. Under the District Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton wards ward would be 12 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (8 per cent above, 1 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2006, respectively).

39 We have carefully considered the District Council’s proposals for this area. We agree that it is necessary to transfer the parish of Staunton Harold out of Breedon ward in the interests of electoral equality. Furthermore, we note that the M1 and A42 provide significant boundaries between the settlements of Long Whatton and Diseworth in the parish of Long Whatton and provide similar boundaries between the settlements of Kegworth and Lockington & Hemington. We therefore accept the Council’s proposals for the new wards of Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton and have decided to adopt them as our draft recommendations.

40 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton wards would be the same as under the District Council’s proposals. Our draft proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Coalville, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick wards

41 These wards are situated in the east of the district and encompass the unparished Coalville town area. Coalville and Snibston wards are each represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor is currently 6 per cent below the district average in both wards (9 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2006, respectively). Thringstone and Whitwick wards are currently represented by two and three members, respectively. The number of electors per councillor is currently 11 per cent below and equal to the district average, respectively (14 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2006).

42 At Stage One, the District Council proposed revised warding arrangements for this area. The Council proposed extending the southern-most boundary of Thringstone ward to encompass the area known as New Swannington from Whitwick ward, using the A511 Coalville bypass to the south of this area as the new boundary, retaining the ward's existing boundaries to the west, north, east and south-east. The majority of the remainder of Whitwick ward would be joined with the north-western part of Holly Hayes ward; the area around Hall Lane to the north of Kingfisher Close/Sharpley Avenue, using the A511 (Stephenson Way) as its south-western boundary. The District Council supported this proposal by stating that "those residents to the north of the [boundary] line see themselves as Whitwick residents".

43 The District Council proposed minor modifications to the existing Coalville ward, transferring Kane Close from Snibston ward into Coalville ward as it is a cul-de-sac which has its access cut off under the existing arrangements. In the north and east the District Council proposed using the more identifiable boundary of the A511 Coalville bypass as the ward boundary, thus transferring those electors to the west of the bypass from the existing Holly Hayes ward and those to the south from Whitwick ward into the revised ward. The Council stated "given the readily identifiable boundaries, this ward is felt to be both effective and convenient in local government terms". The District Council proposed retaining the existing Snibston ward, with a minor amendment to transfer the two properties of 74 and 76 Ashburton Road from Snibston ward into Hugglescote ward as, under the existing arrangements, the two properties were "placed in one ward whereas the rest of Ashburton Road falls in another". As mentioned above, the District Council also proposed that Kane Road be transferred from Snibston ward into Coalville ward and that in the north of Snibston ward, the A511 Coalville bypass be used as a more readily identifiable boundary. The Council recognised that the existing parish boundary of Ravenstone with Snibston parish which serves as the western ward boundary of Snibston ward, "is not ideal as it passes through the middle of the housing development know as 'The Limes'", and concluded that it "accepts that the parish boundary is in need of revision". Under the District Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Coalville, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick wards would be 1 per cent below, 8 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 3 per cent below the district average, respectively (3 per cent above, 5 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 6 per cent below by 2006, respectively).

44 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for the Coalville area. We agree with the majority of the District Council's proposals for the area and have decided to adopt them as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we recognise that the A511 Coalville bypass represents a significant and identifiable boundary in the area. In addition, we concur that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, the electors in Kane Road should be transferred from Snibston ward into Coalville ward and the electors in

properties 74 and 76 Ashburton Road should be transferred from Snibston ward into Hugglescote ward. However, we intend to depart from the District Council's proposals for the western boundary of Snibston ward. We acknowledge the District Council's concerns over the parish boundary of Ravenstone with Snibston parish running through The Limes estate. However, we do not consider the retention of this boundary to be either in the interests of the local community or conducive to providing effective and convenient local government. We therefore propose creating a parish ward of Ravenstone with Snibston parish for that area which falls within The Limes estate. This parish ward, to be named The Limes parish ward and to be included in Snibston ward for district council purposes, will enable all electors within the estate to be united in the same ward at district level. We propose that the remainder of Ravenstone with Snibston parish form a new Ravenstone parish ward. We believe that the creation of these parish wards is justifiable in terms of the provision of effective and convenient local government, using identifiable boundaries that are tied to ground detail.

45 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed two-member Coalville, Snibston and Thringstone wards would be 1 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent above the district average, respectively (3 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 1 per cent above by 2006, respectively). The number of electors per councillor in Whitwick ward, represented by 3 councillors, would be 3 per cent below the district average (6 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Greenhill, Holly Hayes, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards

46 These four wards are situated in the south and south-east of the district and are part parished. Holly Hayes ward comprises the parish of Charley and part of the unparished area of Coalville town, Hugglescote ward comprises the parishes of Bardon and Ellistown & Battlefleet and part of the unparished area of Coalville town, Greenhill ward comprises part of the unparished area of Coalville town and Ibstock & Heather ward comprises the parishes of Heather, Ibstock and Normanton le Heath. The number of electors per councillor in the Holly Hayes and Hugglescote wards, each represented by two councillors, is currently 21 per cent below and 40 per cent above the district average, respectively (16 per cent below and 50 per cent above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Greenhill and Ibstock & Heather wards is 18 per cent below and 6 per cent above the district average, respectively, both now and by 2006.

47 At Stage One the District Council proposed creating a new Bardon ward which would comprise elements of the existing Greenhill, Holly Hayes and Hugglescote wards. Specifically, Bardon ward would comprise the parish of Bardon and the residential area on and between Bardon Road and Broom Leys Road, from Greenhill and Hugglescote wards. The District Council stated that there was "sufficient justification" for the new ward because it would unite areas of new housing development. It further stated that the new ward should be readily identifiable with the name Bardon, given that it would comprise Bardon parish, the area around Bardon Road and Bardon Quarry. The remaining boundaries of Hugglescote ward would remain unchanged, although with the minor modifications to its northern boundary as detailed above. The revised Greenhill ward would comprise the remainder of the ward and the parish of Charley. The District Council proposed that the parish of Normanton le Heath be transferred from Ibstock & Heather ward into the revised Ravenstone ward, leaving Ibstock & Heather ward comprising the two parishes of the same name. Under the District

Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bardon, Greenhill, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards would be 3 per cent below, equal to, 8 per cent below, and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (8 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2006).

48 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for this area. We note that under the existing arrangements, the levels of electoral inequality are unacceptable and that significant revisions to the warding arrangements are necessary. We agree that the significant development in the area between Bardon Road and Broom Leys Road should be united in one ward and that the new ward be named Bardon, given the prevalence of the name Bardon in the local area. However, we propose to make a small modification to the northern boundary of Bardon ward in order to improve the levels electoral equality in both Bardon and Greenhill wards. We propose that the boundary should follow the centre of Broom Leys Road, instead of running to the north of the properties on the northern side of the road. We have decided to adopt the District Council's proposed Bardon, Greenhill and Hugglescote wards with the above minor amendment, although we agree with the District Council's observation that the situation of combining rural and urban areas "is not considered to be ideal". Nevertheless, given the constraints of the district boundary in this area, the District Council's proposals appear secure the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also propose adopting the District Council's revised Ibstock & Heather ward as it secures better electoral equality than the current arrangements and would facilitate the provision of a good scheme across the district as a whole.

49 Under our draft recommendations, Bardon and Hugglescote wards would be represented by one and two councillors respectively. The number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent below and 8 per cent below the district average, respectively (4 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Greenhill and Ibstock & Heather wards would be 1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (2 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Castle, Holywell, Ivanhoe, Ravenstone, Swannington and Worthington wards

50 These wards are situated in the west and centre of the district and comprise the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and the more rural parishes to its east. Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe wards comprise the parish wards of the same names of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish. Ravenstone ward comprises the parishes of Ravenstone with Snibston and Packington, Swannington ward comprises the parishes of Coleorton and Swannington and Worthington ward comprises the parishes of Osgathorpe and Worthington. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Castle ward and the two-member Holywell and Ivanhoe wards is 39 per cent above, 11 per cent above and 6 per cent below the district average, respectively (35 per cent above, 14 per cent above and 9 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member wards of Ravenstone, Swannington and Worthington is 33 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 15 per cent below the district average, respectively (34 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 16 per cent below by 2006).

51 At Stage One, the District Council proposed modifications to all wards in this area due to the unacceptable levels of electoral inequality. In Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the District Council stated that “there was a desire for the three ward structure in Ashby to be retained and therefore the Council looked to implement a scheme for Ashby as a whole which caused the minimum disruption”. It proposed transferring the area in the south west of the existing Castle ward (the part to the west of Lower Packington Road and Windsor Road) into a revised Ivanhoe ward in the interests of electoral equality. The remainder of Ivanhoe ward would form a revised Ivanhoe ward. The District Council further proposed moving the boundary between Castle and Holywell wards from the centre of Upper Church Street and Leicester Road to the backs of the properties on those roads. This change was necessary “to improve upon electoral equality”. The remainder of Holywell ward would form a revised Holywell ward. Under the District Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Castle and two-member Holywell and Ivanhoe wards would be 3 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 7 per cent above the district average, respectively (equal to, 4 per cent above and 5 per cent above by 2006).

52 To the east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the District Council proposed creating a new two-member Valley ward comprising the parishes of Coleorton, Osgathorpe, Packington, Staunton Harold, Swannington and Worthington. The Council stated “Given the rural nature and sparse population in some areas, it was inevitable that some wards would be large in size and this one is an example ... Central to the ward is an area of land known as the Coleorton Valley, hence the title of Valley ward”. Finally, the District Council proposed a revised Ravenstone ward comprising the parishes of Ravenstone with Snibston and Normanton le Heath. The Council stated that “the boundaries for this ward are clearly identifiable, being parish boundaries”. However, as detailed earlier, it recognised that the Ravenstone with Snibston parish boundary is in need of realignment but acknowledge that this is beyond the scope of the review. Under the District Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the two-member Valley and single-member Ravenstone wards would be 10 per cent above and 4 per cent below the district average, respectively (8 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2006).

53 We received two other submissions regarding this area during Stage One. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council supported the District Council’s proposals and proposed revised parish councillor allocation within its town wards. Similarly, Worthington Parish Council proposed a reduction in parish councillors from seven to five. These proposals are discussed later in the report.

54 We have carefully considered all representations made to us during Stage One. We agree with the District Council’s assertion that it was necessary to make revisions to the boundaries of Castle ward due to the unacceptable levels of electoral inequality. We have therefore decided to adopt the Council’s proposals in this area as part of our draft recommendations. However, for reasons of access, we propose transferring Tudor Close and Stuart Way from Ivanhoe ward into Castle ward, and the cul-de-sac estate that is accessed by Abbotsford Road from Holywell ward into Castle ward. Both of these areas have their access cut off under the District Council’s proposals, which we do not believe facilitates effective and convenient local government. As a consequence of these minor amendments, we propose retaining the existing boundary between Castle ward and Holywell ward along Upper Church Street and Leicester Road, rather than moving it to follow along the backs of the houses, as proposed by the District Council. This also allows access to Range Road, which would otherwise have been cut off by moving this boundary, and will improve electoral equality in Castle ward.

55 In the rural area to the east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, we propose to make a small alteration to the District Council’s proposal. As mentioned previously, we propose creating two parish wards in Ravenstone with Snibston parish in order that all electors in The Limes estate may be included in Snibston ward for district warding purposes. As a consequence of our revisions to the proposed Snibston ward we propose modifying the District Council’s Valley and Ravenstone wards, in order to secure good electoral equality. We propose transferring the parish of Packington from the proposed Valley ward into a revised Ravenstone & Packington ward with Normanton le Heath parish and the remainder of Ravenstone with Snibston parish. We recognise that the level of electoral equality in Valley ward deteriorates slightly. However, we believe that this is justified given the better reflection of local communities. Furthermore, this proposal will have the benefit of reducing the geographic size of the District Council’s proposed Valley ward.

56 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Castle ward would be 12 per cent above the district average (9 per cent above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Holywell, Ivanhoe and Valley wards would be equal to, 5 per cent above and 8 per cent below the district average, respectively (3 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 10 per cent below by 2006, respectively). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member Ravenstone & Packington ward would be 8 per cent above the district average (10 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Appleby, Measham, Moira and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards

57 These four wards are situated in the south-west of the district. Appleby ward comprises the parishes of Appleby Magna, Chilcote, Snarestone, Stretton en le Field and Swepstone, Moira ward comprises the parish of Ashby Woulds and the Blackfordby parish ward of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish, and Measham and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards comprise the parishes of the same names. Under existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Appleby and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe is 1 per cent above and 3 per cent above the district average, respectively (2 per cent below and 3 per cent above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Measham and Moira wards is 8 per cent above the district average in both wards initially (7 per cent above in both wards by 2006).

58 During Stage One the District Council proposed the retention of all four of the current wards. The Council stated that “the boundaries are clearly defined as parish boundaries” and “familiar given that they are existing district ward boundaries”. The Council felt that there was no need to modify these wards as the criteria of electoral equality and community identity would continue to be satisfied under a council size of 38.

59 Having considered the Council’s submission, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for this area in full as we agree that the criteria of providing good levels of electoral equality while recognising community interests and identities and facilitating effective and convenient local government is satisfied by retaining the existing ward pattern.

60 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Appleby and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards would be 4 per cent below and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (7 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2006).

The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Measham and Moira wards would be 3 per cent above the district average in both wards initially (2 per cent above in both wards by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

61 We received one response regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council itself stated that "the current electoral cycle of whole council elections every four years [was] to be maintained".

62 Given that the majority view on the council appears to be that the present electoral cycle should be retained, we propose no change.

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 40 to 38;
- there should be 20 wards;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held every four years for the whole council.

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

- we propose minor modifications to the boundary between Castle ward and Ivanhoe and Holywell wards to provide for more identifiable boundaries;
- we propose modifications to the proposed Snibston, Ravenstone and Valley wards in order to secure more identifiable boundaries and a better reflection of local communities. We further propose that the revised Ravenstone ward should be named Ravenstone & Packington ward;
- we propose that the boundary between Bardon and Greenhill wards be modified to improve electoral equality.

65 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect 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 recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	40	38	40	38
Number of wards	22	20	22	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,715	1,806	1,752	1,844
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	9	2	9	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	4	0

66 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for North West Leicestershire District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from nine to two. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

North West Leicestershire District Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including Map A2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

67 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parish of Ravenstone & Snibston to reflect the proposed district wards.

68 The parish of Ravenstone with Snibston is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. In the light of our draft recommendations for district wards in this area we are proposing to create two parish wards, Ravenstone and The Limes, to reflect the proposed district ward boundary. We propose that Ravenstone parish ward should be represented by five councillors and The Limes parish ward should be represented by two councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Ravenstone parish ward (returning five councillors) and The Limes parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map in Appendix A.

69 The parish of Worthington is currently served by seven parish councillors representing three wards: Griffydam (represented by one councillor), Newbold (represented by four councillors) and Worthington (represented by two councillors). At Stage One, Worthington Parish Council proposed a reduction in number and a reallocation of councillors representing its parish. It proposed that Worthington parish ward and Newbold parish ward each be represented by two councillors and Griffydam parish ward be represented by one councillor, stating that this proposal had been “unanimously agreed” by the Parish Council.

70 Given that this proposal does not have consequential effects on our proposed district wards in this area, and in view of Worthington Parish Council’s unanimous support for this change, we are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

Draft Recommendation

Worthington Parish Council should comprise five councillors, two fewer than at present, representing three wards: Worthington and Newbold, each returning two councillors, and Griffydam, returning one councillor. The boundaries between the three parish wards should remain unchanged.

71 The parish of Ashby-de-la-Zouch is currently divided into four parish wards, Blackfordby, Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe. At Stage One, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council proposed an increase in the number of town councillors from 15 to 17, and a reallocation of town councillors among the town wards. In order to reflect the revised town wards proposed by the District Council and to secure a better balance of representation at Town Council level, the Town Council proposed that Blackfordby parish ward should be served by two councillors, Castle ward should be served by three, and Ivanhoe and Holywell wards should each be served by six.

72 As outlined in the report, we propose adopting the District Council’s revised district wards for Ashby-de-la-Zouch as part of our draft recommendations, albeit with some minor modifications to secure more identifiable boundaries. We are therefore proposing consequential amendments to the warding arrangements for Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council to reflect the district ward boundaries. Furthermore, we propose adopting Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council’s proposals for an increase in the number of town councillors and a re-distribution of councillors between town wards.

Draft Recommendation

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, instead of the current 15, representing four wards: Blackfordby (returning two councillors), Castle (three), Ivanhoe (six) and Holywell (six). The boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named in Map A2 in Appendix A.

73 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

Draft Recommendation

Parish and town council elections should continue to take place every four years, at the same time as elections for the district ward of which they are part.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for North West Leicestershire

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

74 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 11 March 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

75 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
North West Leicestershire Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

76 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 North West Leicestershire: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the North West Leicestershire area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Map A2 and the large map at the back of this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Coalville.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for North West Leicestershire: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Ashby-de-la-Zouch

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, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission 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: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
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.