

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire

Report to the Secretary of State for the
Environment, Transport and the Regions

May 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for West Bridgford is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

16 May 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 18 May 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Rushcliffe under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 1999 and undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 133) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Rushcliffe.

We recommend that Rushcliffe Borough Council should be served by 50 councillors representing 28 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold whole council elections.

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Rushcliffe on 18 May 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 14 December 1999, after which we undertook an ten-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Rushcliffe:

- **In 14 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **By 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 13 wards and by more than 20 per cent in seven wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 133-134) are that:

- **Rushcliffe Borough Council should have 50 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards, one fewer than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified and nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections of the whole council should continue to take place every four years.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each borough councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 23 of the proposed 28 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only five wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Bingham and Radcliffe-on-Trent;**
- **the redistribution of councillors for Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 27 June 2000:

**The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Abbey (in West Bridgford)	2	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part)	Large map
2	Bingham East	2	Bingham ward (part – Bingham East ward of Bingham Town Council as proposed)	Maps 2, A2 and A3
3	Bingham West	2	Bingham ward (part – Saxondale parish and Bingham West ward of Bingham Town Council as proposed)	Maps 2, A2 and A3
4	Compton Acres (in West Bridgford)	2	Lutterell ward (part); Musters ward (part)	Large map
5	Cotgrave	3	Ash Lea ward (Ash Lea ward of Cotgrave Town Council); Manor ward (part – Manor ward of Cotgrave Town Council)	Map 2
6	Cranmer	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton parishes)	Map 2
7	Edwalton Village (in West Bridgford)	2	Abbey ward (part); Edwalton ward (part); Melton ward (part)	Large map
8	Gamston	2	Abbey ward (part – Gamston parish and unparished area) Edwalton ward (part); Lamcote ward (part – Holme Pierrepont parish)	Map 2 and Large map
9	Gotham	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Barton in Fabis, Gotham and Thrumpton parishes)	Map 2
10	Keyworth North	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (North ward of Keyworth parish)	Map 2
11	Keyworth South	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (South ward of Keyworth parish)	Map 2
12	Lady Bay (in West Bridgford)	2	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part)	Large map
13	Leake	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (East Leake and West Leake parishes)	Map 2
14	Lutterell (in West Bridgford)	2	Lutterell ward (part); Musters ward (part)	Large map
15	Manvers (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	Dayncourt ward (part – Dayncourt ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Town Council (part)); Lamcote ward (part – Lamcote ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Town Council)	Maps 2 and A4
16	Melton (in West Bridgford)	2	Abbey ward (part); Edwalton ward (part); Melton ward (part)	Large map
17	Musters (in West Bridgford)	2	Edwalton ward (part); Lutterell ward (part); Melton ward (part); Musters ward (part)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
18	Nevile	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hickling, Kinoulton, Owthorpe and Upper Broughton)	Map 2
19	Oak	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Car Colston, East Bridgford, Kneeton and Screveton parishes)	Map 2
20	Ruddington	3	Leys ward (Flawford and Manor wards of Ruddington parish); Packman ward (Camelot and Easthorpe wards of Ruddington parish)	Map 2
21	Soar Valley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Kingston on Soar, Ratcliffe on Soar and Sutton Bonington parishes)	Map 2
22	Stanford	1	Rancliffe ward (part – Bradmore and Bunny parishes); Stanford ward (Costock, Normanton on Soar, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar parishes)	Map 2
23	Thoroton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Elton, Flintham, Flawborough, Granby-cum-Sutton, Hawksworth, Orston, Shelton, Sibthorpe and Thoroton parishes)	Map 2
24	Tollerton	1	Manor ward (part – Clipston parish); Tollerton ward (Tollerton parish)	Map 2
25	Trent (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	Dayncourt ward (part – Dayncourt ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Town Council (part)); Malkin ward (Malkin ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Town Council and Shelford & Newton parish)	Maps 2 and A4
26	Trent Bridge (in West Bridgford)	2	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part); Musters ward (part)	Large map
27	Wiverton	2	Bishop ward (Cropwell Bishop parish); Wiverton ward (Colston Bassett, Cropwell Butler, Langar cum Barnstone, Tithby and Wiverton Hall parishes)	Map 2
28	Wolds	1	Rancliffe ward (part – Thorpe in the Glebe, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and Wysall parishes); Wolds ward (Normanton-on-the-Wolds, Plumtree, Stanton-on-the-Wolds and Widmerpool parishes)	Map 2

Notes: 1 West Bridgford is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the proposed wards of Abbey, Compton Acres, Edwalton Village, Lady Bay, Lutterell, Melton, Musters and Trent Bridge as indicated above.

2 Map 2, Appendix A and including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Rushcliffe

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey (in West Bridgford)	2	3,531	1,766	8	3,567	1,784	6
2 Bingham East	2	3,024	1,512	-7	3,596	1,798	7
3 Bingham West	2	3,147	1,574	-4	3,809	1,905	13
4 Compton Acres (in West Bridgford)	2	3,464	1,732	6	3,499	1,750	4
5 Cotgrave	3	5,463	1,821	11	5,526	1,842	9
6 Cranmer	1	1,557	1,557	-5	1,583	1,583	-6
7 Edwalton Village (in West Bridgford)	2	3,091	1,546	-5	3,122	1,561	-7
8 Gamston	2	3,191	1,596	-2	3,223	1,612	-4
9 Gotham	1	1,681	1,681	3	1,696	1,696	1
10 Keyworth North	1	1,481	1,481	-9	1,488	1,488	-12
11 Keyworth South	3	4,373	1,458	-11	4,394	1,465	-13
12 Lady Bay (in West Bridgford)	2	3,508	1,754	7	3,542	1,771	5
13 Leake	3	4,618	1,539	-6	4,862	1,621	-4
14 Lutterell (in West Bridgford)	2	3,183	1,592	-3	3,216	1,608	-5
15 Manvers (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	3,154	1,577	-4	3,486	1,743	3
16 Melton (in West Bridgford)	2	3,322	1,661	2	3,355	1,678	-1
17 Musters (in West Bridgford)	2	3,175	1,588	-3	3,206	1,603	-5
18 Nevile	1	1,559	1,559	-5	1,576	1,576	-7
19 Oak	1	1,725	1,725	6	1,751	1,751	4
20 Ruddington	3	5,168	1,723	5	5,215	1,738	3
21 Soar Valley	1	1,623	1,623	-1	1,674	1,674	-1
22 Stanford	1	1,947	1,947	19	1,963	1,963	16

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23	Thoroton	1	1,547	1,547	-5	1,611	1,611	-5
24	Tollerton	1	1,565	1,565	-4	1,579	1,579	-6
25	Trent (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	3,418	1,709	5	3,418	1,709	1
26	Trent Bridge (in West Bridgford)	2	3,681	1,841	13	3,718	1,859	10
27	Wiverton	2	2,924	1,462	-11	3,003	1,502	-11
28	Wolds	1	1,595	1,595	-2	1,675	1,675	-1
	Totals	50	81,715	–	–	84,353	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,634	–	–	1,687	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rushcliffe Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire. We have now reviewed eight districts in Nottinghamshire 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 currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Rushcliffe. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in June 1975 (Report No. 24). The electoral arrangements of Nottinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in May 1980 (Report No. 383). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie 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 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. 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 general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district 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 a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *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 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 areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Nottinghamshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 18 May 1999, when we wrote to Rushcliffe Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Nottinghamshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and 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 the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 13 September 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 14 December 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire*, and ended on 21 February 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire covers an area of some 41,000 hectares to the south and east of Broxtowe borough and Nottingham city, stretching from the River Trent in the west to the Leicestershire border in the south and east, and to Gedling borough and Newark & Sherwood district in the north. The borough's major settlement is the urban area of West Bridgford, which comprises 36 per cent of the borough's total electorate and contains no parishes. The remainder of the borough is largely rural in character, providing some of Nottinghamshire's richest farmland. Rushcliffe contains 58 parishes, ranging in size from a population of 24 in Saxondale to 6,148 in Bingham.

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

15 The electorate of the borough is 81,715 (February 1999). The Council presently has 54 members who are elected from 29 wards, six of which, in West Bridgford, are essentially urban in character. The remainder of the borough is predominantly rural, although there are larger concentrations of population in the towns of Bingham, Cotgrave, Keyworth and Radcliffe-on-Trent. Of the 29 wards, 10 are each represented by three councillors, five are each represented by two councillors and a further 14 are single-member wards. Elections of the whole council take place every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Rushcliffe borough, with around 26 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Lutterell ward of West Bridgford and in Bingham ward, which currently have approximately 55 per cent and 36 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,513 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,562 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades the number of electors per councillor in 14 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and in five wards by more than 30 per cent. The most significant imbalances are in Lutterell ward, where each of the three councillors represents 55 per cent more electors than the borough average, and in Wolds ward, where the councillor represents 38 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Rushcliffe

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey (in West Bridgford)	3	6,004	2,001	32	6,096	2,032	30
2 Ash Lea (in Cotgrave)	3	4,213	1,404	-7	4,261	1,420	-9
3 Bingham	3	6,171	2,057	36	7,405	2,468	58
4 Bishop	1	1,451	1,451	-4	1,455	1,455	-7
5 Cranmer	1	1,557	1,557	3	1,583	1,583	1
6 Dayncourt (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	2,491	1,246	-18	2,822	1,411	-10
7 Edwalton (in West Bridgford)	3	4,598	1,533	1	4,619	1,540	-1
8 Gotham	1	1,681	1,681	11	1,696	1,696	9
9 Lady Bay (in West Bridgford)	3	4,229	1,410	-7	4,299	1,433	-8
10 Lamcote (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	2,048	1,024	-32	2,049	1,025	-34
11 Leake	3	4,618	1,539	2	4,862	1,621	4
12 Leys	2	2,604	1,302	-14	2,627	1,314	-16
13 Lutterell (in West Bridgford)	3	7,037	2,346	55	7,112	2,371	52
14 Malkin (in Radcliffe-on-Trent)	2	2,468	1,234	-18	2,468	1,234	-21
15 Manor (in Cotgrave)	1	1,296	1,296	-14	1,311	1,311	-16
16 Melton (in West Bridgford)	3	3,769	1,256	-17	3,789	1,263	-19
17 Musters (in West Bridgford)	3	4,074	1,358	-10	4,098	1,366	-13
18 Nevile	1	1,559	1,559	3	1,576	1,576	1
19 North Keyworth	1	1,481	1,481	-2	1,488	1,488	-5

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Oak	1	1,725	1,725	14	1,751	1,751	12
21 Packman	2	2,564	1,282	-15	2,588	1,294	-17
22 Rancliffe	1	1,393	1,393	-8	1,420	1,420	-9
23 Soar Valley	1	1,623	1,623	7	1,674	1,674	7
24 South Keyworth	3	4,373	1,458	-4	4,394	1,465	-6
25 Stanford	1	1,208	1,208	-20	1,218	1,218	-22
26 Thoroton	1	1,547	1,547	2	1,611	1,611	3
27 Tollerton	1	1,519	1,519	0	1,533	1,533	-2
28 Wiverton	1	1,473	1,473	-3	1,548	1,548	-1
29 Wolds	1	941	941	-38	1,000	1,000	-36
Totals	54	81,715	–	–	84,353	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,513	–	–	1,562	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rushcliffe Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Wolds ward are relatively over-represented by 38 per cent, while electors in Lutterell ward are relatively under-represented by 55 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 37 representations, including borough-wide schemes from Rushcliffe Borough Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group, Rushcliffe Borough Council Liberal Democrats, Bingham Labour Party and Elton Parish Meeting. We also received four representations from local political groups, 18 from parish and town councils and community organisations, and 10 representations from local councillors and residents of the borough. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards in the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, including eight wards in West Bridgford, putting forward our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Rushcliffe Borough Council should be served by 50 councillors, compared with the current 54, representing 29 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Bingham, Cotgrave, Keyworth and Radcliffe-on-Trent.

Draft Recommendation

Rushcliffe Borough Council should comprise 50 councillors, serving 29 wards. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 27 of the 29 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average by 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 142 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Rushcliffe Borough Council and the Commission.

Rushcliffe Borough Council

22 The Borough Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, with the exception of our proposals for Bradmore and Saxondale parishes. It considered that, while the resulting levels of electoral inequality in Stanford ward would be relatively high with the inclusion of Bradmore parish, Bradmore has strong community links with the similar small parishes in Stanford ward and shares few ties with the larger town of Keyworth. Similarly, the Council objected to our proposal to include Saxondale parish as part of a revised Wiverton ward, arguing that Saxondale parish retains strong community links with Bingham town and is geographically isolated from the remaining parishes of Wiverton ward. The Council also stated that while it accepted our proposed Ash Lea and Manor wards in Cotgrave, and our proposed Wiverton ward, it was aware of some local opposition to our proposals in these areas and would not object if the Commission were to adopt alternative proposals at this stage.

Rushcliffe Borough Council Conservative Group

23 Rushcliffe Borough Council Conservative Group ('the Conservatives') also broadly welcomed our draft recommendations, but objected to our proposals for Bradmore and Saxondale parishes. They proposed including Bradmore parish in Stanford ward and retaining the link between Saxondale parish and Bingham ward, and suggested an alternative boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards. The Conservatives stated that they were content to accept our proposed Dayncourt and Malkin wards, but suggested renaming them Manvers ward and Trent ward respectively. They also supported our proposed warding arrangements for the West Bridgford area.

Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group

24 We also received a joint submission from Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group and Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party ('the Labour Group'), who also expressed broad support for our draft recommendations. The Labour Group proposed that the single-member Bishop ward be retained, arguing that the identity and interests of Cropwell Bishop parish are different and distinct from those of the remaining parishes in our proposed Wiverton ward. They also argued that Ash Lea and Manor wards should be combined to form a three-member Cotgrave ward, and suggested some further minor amendments to our proposed warding arrangements in West Bridgford, in order to more accurately reflect community identities.

Local Political Groups

25 We received a further 15 responses from local political groups in Rushcliffe. The Conservative Group Agent expressed similar comments to those made by the Conservative Group, as did the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association and Hickling & Upper Broughton Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association. Costock & Rempstone, East Leake, and Gotham branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations in relation to their respective areas, but proposed that Bradmore parish should form part of Stanford ward. Wolds Branch of the Conservative Association also supported our draft recommendations for Wolds ward, and concurred with the Borough Council's comments in relation to other areas at Stage Three. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association objected to our proposal to include Saxondale parish in Wiverton ward, and suggested amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards. Radcliffe-on-Trent Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations for Radcliffe-on-Trent, but proposed replacing the ward names of Dayncourt and Malkin with Manvers and Trent respectively.

26 We received two representations from Radcliffe-on-Trent Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party, who supported our draft recommendations for Rushcliffe, and in particular for Radcliffe-on-Trent, but proposed replacing the ward name of Dayncourt with Lamcote. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party also supported our draft recommendations, but proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards. Cotgrave & Cropwell Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party objected to our proposal to include Cropwell Bishop parish in a revised Wiverton ward, and also proposed combining Ash Lea and Manor wards to form a three-member Cotgrave ward. South Rushcliffe Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party expressed support for our draft recommendations for Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards.

Parish and Town Councils and Community Organisations

27 We received a total of 18 representations from parish and town councils and community organisations in Rushcliffe. Bingham Town Council accepted our draft proposal for two two-member wards for the town, but proposed amending the boundary between the proposed Bingham West and Bingham East wards. It also objected to the proposal to transfer Saxondale parish to a revised Wiverton ward, and Colston Bassett and Cropwell Bishop parish councils and Elton Parish Meeting also supported this view. Bradmore and Keyworth parish councils both objected to our draft proposal to include Bradmore parish in a revised Keyworth South ward, and Elton Parish Meeting and a parish councillor for East Leake parish also objected to our proposal. Keyworth Parish Council also objected to the proposed boundary between the revised Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards, and proposed retaining the existing ward boundaries.

28 Cotgrave Town Council objected to our proposals for the town, and argued that a three-member Cotgrave ward would reflect the identity and interests of the town more appropriately than our revised Ash Lea and Manor wards. Cropwell Bishop Parish Council objected to our proposal to include Cropwell Bishop parish in a two-member Wiverton ward, and argued that the

existing single-member Bishop and Wiverton wards could be retained without detrimental effect on electoral equality. Elton Parish Meeting expressed support for this proposal, while Colston Bassett and Langar cum Barnstone parish councils supported our proposed two-member Wiverton ward. East Leake Parish Council supported our proposed three-member Leake ward, and the Labour Group on the Parish Council and two parish councillors for East Leake also expressed support for our proposals.

29 Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council supported our proposed Dayncourt and Malkin wards, but argued that it would be more appropriate to rename them Manvers and Trent wards respectively. Central West Bridgford Community Association objected to the proposed reduction in the number of councillors representing West Bridgford. However, it supported our proposed Trent Bridge ward, and suggested a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Abbey and Lady Bay wards. Gotham, Granby-cum-Sutton and Stanton-on-the-Wolds parish councils supported our draft recommendations. Ruddington Parish Council supported our draft recommendation for a three-member Ruddington ward, but proposed that there should be a council size of 45 for the borough as a whole.

Nottinghamshire County Council

30 The County Council expressed concern regarding our proposals to reduce the number of councillors representing the district from 54 to 50. It argued that “the United Kingdom already has one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of population in Europe”, contending that our draft recommendations for Rushcliffe would “worsen that position”.

31 The County Council welcomed our recommendation that there be no change to the electoral cycle of the borough, contending that members of the County Council are “satisfied with existing arrangements”.

Members of Parliament

32 We received one representation from a Member of Parliament. The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke MP, the Member of Parliament for Rushcliffe, objected to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in a revised Keyworth South ward, and proposed retaining Bradmore in Stanford ward. He also suggested that the boundary between our proposed Bingham East and Bingham West wards should be amended to form a more clearly identifiable boundary.

Other Representations

33 A further 104 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local councillors and residents. Councillors Boote (North Keyworth ward), Butler (Wolds ward) and Dale (Leake ward) expressed support for our draft recommendations for their own wards, while Councillor Venes (Packman ward) supported our proposed Ruddington ward, but objected to our proposal to include Cropwell Bishop parish in Wiverton ward. All four councillors objected to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward. Councillors Chapman, Jackson and MacInnes (Musters ward) proposed amending the boundary between Lutterell and Trent Bridge wards, while Councillor Greenwood (Leys ward) wished to retain two

two-member wards for the Ruddington area and objected to our proposed three-member Ruddington ward.

34 We received standard letters from 27 councillors supporting our recommendations for Cotgrave, East Leake, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Ruddington and West Bridgford, but objecting to our proposals to include Bradmore parish in South Keyworth ward and Saxondale parish in Wiverton ward. They also proposed amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards, and replacing the ward names of Dayncourt and Malkin with Manvers and Trent respectively. Finally, County Councillor Brandon Bravo (Lutterell division) supported our proposals for West Bridgford and our proposed reduction in council size for the borough, and County Councillor Curry (Bingham division) suggested amending the boundary between the proposed Bingham East and Bingham West wards.

35 We received a total of 69 responses from local residents, including 48 standard letters supporting our recommendations for Cotgrave, East Leake, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Ruddington and West Bridgford, but objecting to our proposals to include Bradmore parish in South Keyworth ward and Saxondale parish in Wiverton ward. They also proposed amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards, and replacing the ward names of Dayncourt and Malkin with Manvers and Trent respectively. A further 13 residents also objected to the proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward, while two residents objected to our proposal to include Saxondale parish in Bingham West ward. Two residents supported our proposed Leake ward, two residents proposed amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards, and two further submissions suggested amending the boundary between Lutterell and Trent Bridge wards.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

36 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Rushcliffe is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same. 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 to the Local Government Act 1972.

37 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

38 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for 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.

39 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

40 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 81,715 to 84,353 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Bingham, although a significant amount is also expected in Dayncourt ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish. The Council stated that it had considered whether the potential impact of the structure plan requirements for housing development in the borough should be taken into account in its electorate forecast. It concluded that the plan, which would cover a period up to 2011, could not be taken into consideration as it had not yet been finalised and any developments which it identified would take place over the period of the plan, and not within the five-year projection period. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

41 We received only one further comment on the Borough Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three. Councillor Venes (Ruddington ward) argued that, under the revised deposit draft of

the borough local plan, further development is likely to take place in Ruddington over the next five years. We consider that as the local plan is still at a draft stage, there must be some doubt as to whether further development will take place in Ruddington within the next five years. On balance, therefore, we remain satisfied that the Council's forecasts represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

42 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

43 Rushcliffe Borough Council is at present served by 54 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a reduction in council size from 54 to 50. The Council noted that it had established a cross-party working group to consider the most appropriate warding arrangements for the borough, which identified three options for consideration, two of which were based on the current council size of 54 and one on a reduction in council size to 45. The working group considered that with the introduction of revised political management structures the number of councillors for the borough could be reduced to 45 without reducing the ability of members to carry out an effective representational role, and indicated that this option was their preference.

44 As part of its own consultation process, the Borough Council invited comments on its three options from parish and town councils and community organisations within the borough. As a result of the Council's consultations, a revised warding proposal was produced for 45 members which was then subject to yet further consultation. In response to this further period of consultation, a revised proposal was submitted by Elton Parish Meeting based upon a council size of 50. The Council considered that this proposal met the concerns raised by parishes about whether new electoral arrangements would adequately reflect community identities and historical links. It also considered that with a less significant reduction in council size, to 50 councillors, the proposals would to some extent address the concerns expressed about diminishing the effectiveness of local representation, particularly in the rural area.

45 At Stage One, Cotgrave Town Council, Cropwell Bishop and Kinoulton parish councils and Tithby & Wiverton Parish Meeting all supported retaining the current council size, or options based upon the current council size for their areas. The Labour Group proposed an increase in council size to 56, which was supported by Radcliffe-on-Trent Branch Labour Party and Central West Bridgford Community Association. The Labour Group argued that this increased council size would address the issue of under-representation in West Bridgford and would be in line with the projected growth in the electorate forecast over the next five years. Rushcliffe Liberal Democrats and Bingham Labour Party proposed schemes based upon a council size of 45. Bingham Town Council, East Leake and Ruddington parish councils, East Leake Labour Party and Councillors Boote (North Keyworth ward) and Venes (Ruddington ward) supported a reduction in council size or options based on a reduced council size of 45.

46 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We

recognised that the Borough Council's scheme was based on a proposal which it received at a late stage in its own consultation exercise, and while this meant that a number of respondents had insufficient time to comment on it in detail, we considered that it met most of the concerns raised in response to the Council's initial consultations. We noted that in Rushcliffe the Council has introduced new political management structures in line with the Government's White Paper *Local Leadership, Local Choice* and that this has led to a reduction in the number of committees and the development of the scrutiny role of members. On this basis, we were content that reducing council size would not affect the ability of members to carry out an effective representational role. We also noted the concern expressed by some respondents, particularly by parish councils, that a large reduction in council size would not best reflect community identities in the borough and would impair the effectiveness of councillor representation.

47 While we were satisfied that, in the light of evidence presented to us at Stage One, a more significant reduction in council size would not be detrimental to the internal management of the local authority, we noted that there was clearly some local concern that such a decrease might not allow for sufficient attention to be paid to the identities and interests of communities in the borough, and might in turn provide less effective and convenient local government. Conversely, we were not persuaded that there was significant evidence to support an increase in council size to 56. We considered that a reduction in council size to 50 would, by largely retaining the existing ward structure in the rural area, address the concerns over the adequacy of councillor representation, would enable the proper level of representation to be afforded to both rural and urban areas and would reflect the majority view that a reduction in council size would be desirable. We concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 50 members.

48 During Stage Three we received 10 representations regarding the issue of council size. The Borough Council welcomed our draft proposal to reduce the council size to 50. The Labour Group, Gotham branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Radcliffe-on-Trent and South Rushcliffe branches of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party, Elton Parish Meeting, County Councillor Brandon Bravo (Lutterell division) and a local resident also expressed support for our draft recommendation relating to council size. Nottinghamshire County Council, however, expressed concern regarding this reduction in council size, arguing that this is "undesirable" as the United Kingdom has "one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of population in Europe". Ruddington Parish Council objected to the proposed reduction in council size to 50, and proposed a council size of 45.

49 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One and Stage Three. While we note that the County Council has not supported our proposed council size, we note that there has not been widespread support for alternative warding arrangements based on a larger council size. In addition, we do not accept the argument that, in determining council size for a given area, the number of elected members in other European countries is a significant consideration, as political systems and cultures vary across Europe. On the other hand, we note that there is a degree of support for a reduction in council size, and are content that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 50 members. Accordingly, we confirm our draft recommendation that Rushcliffe Borough Council should be served by 50 members.

Electoral Arrangements

50 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group, Rushcliffe Borough Council Liberal Democrats, Bingham Labour Party and Elton Parish Meeting. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendation for a council size of 50, which we considered to be the most appropriate council size for the borough, meant that we were unable to reflect all of the different views expressed to us. While our draft recommendations were based primarily upon the Borough Council's proposals, we sought to build on those proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve yet further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria.

51 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations received a degree of local support and we propose that our draft recommendations should be substantially endorsed, subject to a number of boundary modifications in the light of further evidence received at Stage Three. While we received a large number of submissions at Stage Three, we note that many were broadly supportive of our draft recommendations and proposed changes to a limited number of wards. In light of the further evidence we have received, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendations in several areas in order to better reflect community identities and interests and create more clearly identifiable boundaries. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards;
- (b) Bingham ward;
- (c) Bishop, Nevile and Wiverton wards;
- (d) Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards;
- (e) Leys and Packman wards;
- (f) Rancliffe, Stanford and Wolds wards;
- (g) North Keyworth and South Keyworth wards;
- (h) Ash Lea, Manor and Tollerton wards;
- (i) Dayncourt, Lamcote and Malkin wards;
- (j) Abbey and Lady Bay wards;
- (k) Edwalton and Melton wards;
- (l) Lutterell and Musters wards.

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

Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards

53 Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards cover the largely rural north-east part of the borough, and each ward is represented by a single councillor. Cranmer ward contains the parishes of Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton, and Oak ward consists of Car Colston, East Bridgford, Kneeton and

Screveton parishes. Thoroton ward comprises the parishes of Elton, Flawborough, Flintham, Granby-cum-Sutton, Hawksworth, Orston, Shelton, Sibthorpe and Thoroton. Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards currently have 3 per cent, 14 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, and are forecast to have 1 per cent, 12 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively by 2004.

54 At Stage One the Borough Council and Elton Parish Meeting proposed no change to these wards. Elton Parish Meeting argued that its proposals would reflect existing community ties in the area. As part of the Council's own consultation exercise, four other parishes in this area made comments. Flintham and Granby-cum-Sutton parish councils requested no change to the existing Thoroton ward, and Screveton Parish Meeting argued that it should be linked with Car Colston and Flintham parishes. Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council preferred to remain linked with Aslockton parish, arguing that the A52 separates the parish from areas to its west.

55 The Labour Group proposed a greater degree of change in this area at Stage One, enlarging Thoroton ward to include the parishes of Kneeton and Screveton, currently in Oak ward, and transferring the parish of Granby-cum-Sutton to a revised Wiverton ward. Under their proposals, Cranmer ward would remain unchanged. The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring Car Colston parish to Cranmer ward, Flintham parish to Oak ward and Langar cum Barnstone parish to Thoroton ward. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party proposed substantially enlarging Cranmer ward to include Car Colston and Screveton parishes from Oak ward and all but Granby-cum-Sutton and Flintham parishes of Thoroton ward. Flintham parish would be included in Oak ward, and Granby-cum-Sutton and Whatton parishes would form part of an expanded Wiverton ward. We received only one further representation regarding this area at Stage One, from Langar cum Barnstone Parish Council, which argued that the parish maintained stronger community ties with the current Wiverton group of parishes, and not with those of Thoroton ward.

56 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the Borough Council's proposal to retain the existing electoral arrangements of Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards. We considered that the current arrangements for this area reflect community ties well, and recognised that the Council's consultation exercise highlighted a significant degree of local support for their retention among parish councils. We also noted that, under a council size of 50, the current wards would achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality.

57 At Stage Three we received three representations regarding this area. The Borough Council and Elton Parish Meeting both supported our draft recommendations for this area, and Granby-cum-Sutton Parish Council also welcomed our proposals, noting that our recommendations "have taken care to respect the very important links this parish has with neighbouring rural communities". The Conservatives and the Labour Group broadly supported our draft recommendations, but made no specific comments in relation to this area.

58 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We are content that the current arrangements reflect community identities and interests well, and note that our proposals have received a degree of support at Stage Three. Under a council size of 50, Cranmer and Thoroton wards would each have

5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while Oak ward would have 6 per cent more than average (6 per cent and 5 per cent fewer, and 4 per cent more than average respectively by 2004).

Bingham ward

59 Bingham ward comprises the town council area of Bingham in the north-east of the borough, together with Saxondale parish to its west. The ward has one of the highest levels of electoral inequality in the borough, with each of its three councillors representing 36 per cent more electors than the borough average. This inequality is forecast to increase significantly over the next five years, with each councillor representing 58 per cent more electors than the borough average by 2004.

60 At Stage One, all five borough-wide schemes acknowledged the need to provide increased representation for Bingham. The Borough Council, Elton Parish Meeting, the Liberal Democrats and Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party proposed an increase of one councillor for the town, while the Labour Group proposed increasing the number of councillors by two. The Council proposed dividing the town between two wards, each to be represented by two councillors, including Saxondale parish in the proposed Bingham West ward. The boundary between its two proposed wards would follow Chapel Lane, to the rear of properties on Kirkhill and Fairfield Street, Nottingham Road, the disused railway line and Tithby Lane.

61 The Liberal Democrats, Elton Parish Meeting and Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party also proposed increasing the number of councillors for Bingham to four, and dividing the current ward between two new wards. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party proposed combining Saxondale parish with Shelford & Newton parish and part of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish. Elton Parish Meeting also noted that Saxondale parish could be combined with the current Bishop and Wiverton wards to improve electoral equality. The Labour Group proposed creating a two-member Bingham East ward and a three-member Bingham West ward, and combining Saxondale parish with Shelford & Newton parish and part of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish. None of these submissions provided detailed proposals for boundaries within the town. We also received submissions relating to this area from Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Bingham Town Council and Councillor Stockwood (Bingham ward), all supporting the creation of two two-member wards in Bingham.

62 In our draft recommendations report we recognised that Bingham is a growing town, and that its electorate may continue to increase beyond a five-year period. We noted, however, that we are unable to have regard to changes which may take place beyond this period, and in the context of our proposed council size of 50, we proposed that Bingham should be represented by four councillors, an increase of one. In view of the substantial support for the creation of two wards in Bingham, each to be represented by two councillors, and in the absence of any alternative detailed proposals for warding arrangements, we were content to adopt the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements as part of our draft recommendations, subject to one minor amendment. In order to further improve electoral equality in both Bingham West and Wiverton wards, we proposed including Saxondale parish in a revised two-member Wiverton ward.

63 At Stage Three, we received a total of 88 representations objecting to our proposal to include Saxondale parish, which contains 24 local government electors, in Wiverton ward, including 75 standard letters from councillors and local residents. The Borough Council argued that the Commission's draft proposals ignore "the historical links between the parish of Saxondale and Bingham" and fail "to take account of the physical boundary of the A52 dividing Saxondale from the Wiverton ward". The Conservatives also argued that the A52 forms a significant community boundary, and that Saxondale "has traditionally been a part of Bingham ward". The Conservative Group Agent, and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association expressed similar comments to those made by the Conservative Group. Bingham Town Council, Colston Bassett and Cropwell Bishop parish councils, Elton Parish Meeting, and Bingham and Hickling & Upper Broughton branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association also objected to our proposals for Bingham and Wiverton wards. We also received further representations from two local residents objecting to our proposals for Saxondale.

64 We also received 85 representations at Stage Three proposing amendments to the boundary between Bingham West and Bingham East wards. The Conservatives proposed amending the boundary to run north along the centre of Kirkhill and Fairfield Street before rejoining Chapel Lane, arguing that this would provide a "far simpler and more straightforward" boundary. Under their proposals, Bingham East and Bingham West wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (17 per cent and 3 per cent more by 2004). The Conservative Group Agent, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Bingham and Hickling & Upper Broughton branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Bingham Town Council and Elton Parish Meeting also expressed similar comments to those made by the Conservative Group. We received a further 75 standard letters from councillors and local residents supporting the Conservative's proposals. The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke MP asked that we reconsider the ward boundaries in Bingham in order to make the boundary between the two wards clearer. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party also proposed amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards to run to the rear of properties on the east side of Kirkhill and Fairfield Street, thereby uniting the Carnarvon Close flats within Bingham West ward and both sides of Kirkhill and Fairfield Street within Bingham East ward.

65 Having considered all the evidence received, we consider that our proposal to create two two-member wards for Bingham has received a degree of local support, and are content to confirm our draft recommendation as final subject to some minor modifications. While we note that there is some concern about our proposal to include Saxondale parish in Wiverton ward, we recognise that many of the responses received were standard letters and from people not resident in the parish. Indeed, we received more representations at Stage Three in relation to Saxondale than are resident in the parish. Nevertheless, we recognise that the settlement is isolated from the remainder of Wiverton ward by the A52 and shares strong community ties with Bingham, and that a change to our draft recommendations would have only a marginal effect on electoral equality. We therefore propose that Saxondale parish should form part of our new Bingham West ward.

66 We also received a number of comments in relation to our proposed boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards. While the proposed amendments to the boundary would

appear to provide for a more easily identifiable boundary, we are concerned that, under the Conservatives' and Bingham Branch Labour Party's proposals, levels of electoral inequality in Bingham West ward would be unacceptably high by 2004, at 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. We therefore do not propose putting forward either proposal as part of our final recommendations in their entirety. However, we consider that there is some merit in the proposal to unite the Carnarvon Close flats within Bingham West ward, and propose amending the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards to run to the east of Carnarvon Close.

67 Under our final recommendations, Bingham East and Bingham West wards would have 7 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent and 13 per cent more by 2004). The proposed boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards is illustrated on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

Bishop, Nevile and Wiverton wards

68 Bishop, Nevile and Wiverton wards cover the area to the south of Bingham and east of the A46 trunk road, and are each represented by a single councillor. Bishop ward is coterminous with the parish of Cropwell Bishop, while Nevile ward consists of Hickling, Kinoulton, Owthorpe and Upper Broughton parishes. Wiverton ward comprises the parishes of Colston Bassett, Cropwell Butler, Langar cum Barnstone, Tithby and Wiverton Hall. Currently, Bishop and Wiverton wards have 4 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2004), and Nevile ward has 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent more by 2004).

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council and Elton Parish Meeting proposed retaining the current Nevile ward, and combining Bishop and Wiverton wards to form a revised two-member Wiverton ward. Elton Parish Meeting argued that a combined ward would improve electoral equality and reflect ecclesiastical links. The Labour Group proposed a number of changes to these wards, transferring Granby-cum-Sutton parish to Wiverton ward, combining Cropwell Butler parish with part of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish in a revised Dayncourt ward, and combining Owthorpe parish with Cropwell Bishop parish in a revised Bishop ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed combining Granby-cum-Sutton and Langar cum Barnstone parishes with Thoroton ward, less Flintham parish, to form a revised Thoroton ward. Under their proposals, Colston Bassett parish would be included in a revised Nevile ward, while Tithby, Wiverton Hall and Cropwell Butler parishes would be combined with Cropwell Bishop parish in a revised Bishop ward. Bingham Labour Party proposed combining Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler parishes in a revised Bishop ward, including Colston Bassett parish in a revised Nevile ward, and combining Granby-cum-Sutton and Whatton parishes with Langar cum Barnstone, Tithby and Wiverton Hall parishes in a revised Wiverton ward.

70 We also received representations from five parish councils concerning warding arrangements in this area at Stage One. Colston Bassett Parish Council argued that "Colston Bassett has no link whatsoever with Kinoulton and surrounding villages in Nevile ward", and asserted that the parish has stronger community ties with the other parishes of Wiverton ward. Langar cum Barnstone Parish Council argued that it has no social, political or economic links with the other villages in

Thoroton ward, and that it should remain linked with parishes to the south of the A52 and east of the A46. Tithby & Wiverton Parish Meeting requested no change to the current warding arrangements, but argued that if there was to be change, the links with Cropwell Butler parish should be retained. Cropwell Bishop Parish Council objected to being combined with Cropwell Butler parish in a single-member Bishop ward, preferring to be linked with Owthorpe parish in a single-member ward. Kinoulton Parish Council supported retaining the existing Nevile ward. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, Granby-cum-Sutton Parish Council argued that it should remain part of Thoroton ward.

71 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the Borough Council's scheme would provide the best balance between electoral equality and community identities and interests in this area, and adopted it as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we considered that it would reflect the significant physical boundaries of the A46 and A52 trunk roads and, to a large extent, the preferences of Colston Bassett, Kinoulton and Langar cum Barnstone parish councils and Tithby & Wiverton Parish Meeting. In order to further improve electoral equality in both Bingham West and Wiverton wards, we proposed including Saxondale parish in a revised two-member Wiverton ward.

72 At Stage Three Cropwell Bishop Parish Council argued that Cropwell Bishop is a clearly defined community which, under our draft recommendations, would be "submerged in a large rural area called Wiverton". It proposed retaining separate single-member Bishop and Wiverton wards and asserted that, under a council size of 50, its proposals would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality. Under Cropwell Bishop Parish Council's proposals, Bishop and Wiverton wards would have 11 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (14 per cent and 8 per cent fewer by 2004). The Labour Group, Cotgrave and Cropwell Branch Labour Party, Elton Parish Meeting and Councillor Venes (Ruddington ward) also supported Cropwell Bishop Parish Council's proposal. Langar cum Barnstone Parish Council supported our proposed two-member Wiverton ward, and Colston Bassett Parish Council supported our proposed Wiverton ward less Saxondale parish. While the Borough Council did not make any specific proposals in relation to this area, it noted that it was aware of local opposition to our proposals, and that it would not object if the Commission were to propose retaining the existing single-member Bishop and Wiverton wards. The Conservatives broadly supported our draft recommendations, but made no specific comments in relation to this area.

73 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to broadly confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to Saxondale parish forming part of Bingham West ward rather than Wiverton ward, as discussed previously. While we recognise that there is some local support for retaining separate Bishop and Wiverton wards, we have not been persuaded that Cropwell Bishop is sufficiently separate and distinct from the parishes of Wiverton ward to justify creating a single member Bishop ward. While we accept that Cropwell Bishop is a more substantial settlement than Cropwell Butler and the other villages of Wiverton ward, we note that the proposal for two separate wards would provide poorer levels of electoral equality, and are content that Cropwell Bishop parish would not be adversely affected by its inclusion in Wiverton ward. Under our final recommendations, Nevile and Wiverton wards would have 5 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent and 11 per cent fewer by 2004).

Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards

74 Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards lie in the south-western corner of the borough. Gotham ward comprises the three parishes of Barton in Fabis, Gotham and Thrumpton; Leake ward consists of East Leake and West Leake parishes; and Soar Valley ward comprises Kingston on Soar, Ratcliffe on Soar and Sutton Bonington parishes. Currently, the single-member Gotham and Soar Valley wards have 11 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 7 per cent more by 2004), while the three-member Leake ward has 2 per cent more electors than the average (4 per cent more by 2004).

75 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed no change to the current Gotham and Soar Valley wards. It proposed dividing the current Leake ward to form a two-member Castle ward, comprising Castle and Woodgate wards of East Leake parish and the parish of West Leake, and a single-member Stonebridge ward comprising Stonebridge ward of East Leake parish. Elton Parish Meeting proposed maintaining the existing warding arrangements of all three wards, and argued that this proposal would minimise change and maintain the current links between West Leake and East Leake. The Labour Group proposed no change to Gotham and Soar Valley wards, and proposed transferring West Leake parish to a revised Stanford ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed a greater degree of change in this area, transferring Ratcliffe on Soar parish from Soar Valley ward to Gotham ward, and Normanton on Soar parish to their proposed Soar Valley ward. Under their proposals, Leake ward would comprise West Leake and Stanford on Soar parishes together with Woodgate and Stonebridge wards of East Leake parish. Castle ward of East Leake parish would be combined with Costock and Rempstone parishes in a new Castle ward. Bingham Labour Party proposed adopting identical warding arrangements to the Liberal Democrats in relation to their proposed Gotham and Soar Valley wards, but proposed including Costock, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar parishes in an enlarged Leake ward.

76 We received several other representations relating to this area at Stage One. East Leake Conservative Association objected strongly to the division of the current Leake ward under the Borough Council's proposals, while East Leake Parish Council proposed combining East Leake, West Leake, Costock and Rempstone parishes in an enlarged Leake ward. East Leake Parish Council Labour Group proposed creating a revised Leake ward consisting of East Leake, West Leake, Costock and Rempstone parishes. Councillors Dale, Males and O'Toole (Leake ward), objected to the Borough Council's proposal to divide East Leake parish between wards and the proposed ward names of Stonebridge and Castle. One resident supported the combination of East Leake, West Leake, Costock, Rempstone and Stanford-on-Soar parishes in a new ward. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, Costock Parish Council opposed being combined with East Leake in a new ward, while West Leake Parish Meeting opposed being grouped with other parishes in Stanford ward.

77 In our draft recommendations report we were content to adopt the Borough Council's proposal to retain the existing Gotham and Soar Valley wards. In relation to the current Leake ward, we noted the concerns expressed by a number of respondents about dividing East Leake parish between wards, and noted the preference of West Leake Parish Meeting to remain linked with East Leake for warding purposes. We therefore proposed retaining the existing three-member Leake ward.

78 At Stage Three, we received a significant degree of local support for our draft recommendations in this area. East Leake Parish Council supported our proposed Leake ward, and the Labour Group on East Leake Parish Council and two parish councillors also expressed support for our draft recommendations. Gotham Parish Council expressed support for our proposed Gotham ward. Costock & Rempstone, East Leake, and Hickling & Broughton branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association also supported our proposed Leake ward, while Gotham Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association expressed support for our proposed Gotham and Leake wards. South Rushcliffe Branch Labour Party supported our proposed Gotham, Leake and Soar valley wards. Elton Parish Meeting, Councillor Dale (Leake ward) and three local residents also supported our proposals in this area. The Conservatives supported our draft recommendations for Leake ward, and we also received representations from the Conservative Group Agent, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association and standard letters from 27 councillors and 48 local residents expressing support for our proposed Leake ward. The Labour Group broadly supported our draft recommendations, but made no specific comments in relation to this area. The Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations for this area and stated that, in relation to East Leake ward, it had no objection to our proposal “on the basis that the Commission was responding to local representations”.

79 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content that our proposals have a significant degree of local support, and propose confirming our draft recommendations as final without amendment. Under our final recommendations, Gotham, Leake and Soar Valley wards would have 3 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer by 2004).

Leys and Packman ward

80 The two-member Leys and Packman wards lie to the south of West Bridgford in the west of the borough, and together cover the parish of Ruddington. Currently Leys ward has 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average and Packman ward has 15 per cent fewer than average. These poor levels of electoral equality are forecast to worsen to 16 per cent and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively by 2004.

81 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed enlarging the two-member Leys ward to include part of the current Packman ward, and creating a new single-member Easthorpe ward comprising the remaining part of Packman ward. The Liberal Democrats, Elton Parish Meeting and Bingham Labour Party all proposed combining the current Leys and Packman wards to form a new three-member Ruddington ward. The Labour Group proposed a greater degree of change, enlarging the existing Leys ward to include the parishes of Bradmore and Bunny, and transferring the parish of Plumtree from Wolds ward to a revised Packman ward.

82 We received three further representations relating to this area at Stage One. Councillor Venes (Packman ward), and a resident of Ruddington argued that Leys and Packman wards should be combined to form a three-member Ruddington ward. Ruddington Parish Council also proposed creating a three-member Ruddington ward and a council size of 45.

83 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed combining Leys and Packman wards to form a new Ruddington ward. We were not persuaded that either the Borough Council or the Labour Group had provided significant evidence or argumentation to support their proposed division of Ruddington parish between borough wards, and were content that there was significant local support for uniting Ruddington within a single ward.

84 At Stage Three, we received several representations in relation to our proposed Ruddington ward. Ruddington Parish Council supported the creation of a three-member Ruddington ward, although it reiterated its preference for a council size of 45, rather than 50. Councillor Venes (Packman ward) also expressed support for our proposed Ruddington ward, but asserted that further development in the parish was likely to take place over the next five years. Councillor Greenwood (Leys ward), however, argued that Ruddington Parish Council had only supported creating a three-member Ruddington ward at Stage One under a council size of 45, and proposed retaining two two-member wards for the area. She argued that the high density housing in the area caused problems which increased councillor workload. The Conservatives expressed support for our proposed Ruddington ward, as did the Conservative Group Agent and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association. We also received standard letters from 48 councillors and 27 local residents supporting our draft recommendations for Ruddington. The Labour Group broadly supported our draft recommendations, but made no specific comments in relation to this area. The Borough Council stated that, in relation to our proposed Ruddington ward, it had no objection “on the basis that the Commission was responding to local representations”.

85 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Ruddington as final. We note that our proposals have received a significant degree of local support, and are not persuaded that two two-member wards should be retained. We note the comments from councillors in this area in relation to councillor workload and a perceived rural bias in our proposals. However, under the current legislative framework, we are unable to give either urban or rural areas a higher level of representation than that to which they are entitled given the size of their electorates. We do not accept that we have treated rural areas in Rushcliffe differently to urban areas, and maintain that, in our view, our proposals represent the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under a council size of 50, Ruddington would be entitled to a total of three councillors, and on this basis we are content to propose that it should be represented by three councillors. In relation to Councillor Venes’ comments, we are content that, even with a more significant development over the next five years, Ruddington would continue to be entitled to three councillors rather than four. Under our final recommendations, Ruddington ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent more by 2004).

Rancliffe, Stanford and Wolds wards

86 Rancliffe, Stanford and Wolds wards cover a large rural area surrounding the village of Keyworth in the south west of the borough, and are represented by one councillor each. Rancliffe ward comprises the parishes of Bradmore, Bunny, Thorpe in the Glebe, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and Wysall, and has 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent fewer by 2004). Stanford and Wolds wards are more significantly over-represented at

present. Stanford ward contains Costock, Normanton on Soar, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar parishes and has 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (22 per cent fewer by 2004), while Wolds ward, which comprises the parishes of Normanton-on-the-Wolds, Plumtree, Stanton-on-the-Wolds and Widmerpool, has 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (36 per cent fewer by 2004).

87 At Stage One the Borough Council and Elton Parish Meeting proposed expanding the current Stanford ward to include the parishes of Bradmore and Bunny, and transferring Thorpe in the Glebe, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and Wysall parishes to an enlarged Wolds ward. Elton Parish Meeting had initially proposed combining Bradmore parish with part of Keyworth parish in order to improve electoral equality, but considered that Bradmore parish would be better combined with smaller neighbouring parishes. The Labour Group proposed including Bradmore and Bunny parishes in an enlarged Leys ward, and transferring Plumtree parish from Wolds ward to a revised Packman ward. Under their proposals the remaining parishes of Wolds wards would be combined with Clipston, Thorpe in the Glebe, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and Wysall parishes to form an enlarged Wolds ward, and West Leake parish would be transferred from Leake ward to a revised Stanford ward.

88 The Liberal Democrats proposed combining Stanton-on-the-Wolds and Widmerpool parishes with the current Rancliffe ward to form a revised Wolds ward, and combining Costock and Rempstone parishes with Castle ward of East Leake parish to form a new Castle ward. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Stanford on Soar parish would be included in their Leake ward, and Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Plumtree parishes would be included in a revised Tollerton ward. Bingham Labour Party's proposals for Tollerton and Wolds wards were identical to the Liberal Democrats', and would divide the parishes of Stanford ward between revised Leake and Soar Valley wards.

89 We received further representations regarding the warding arrangements for this area from Bradmore and Stanton-on-the-Wolds parish councils. Bradmore Parish Council stated that it would not object to the Borough Council's proposal to include the parish in a revised Stanford ward, but would prefer that the ward be named Rancliffe, while Stanton-on-the-Wolds Parish Council requested no change to the existing Wolds ward. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, Costock Parish Council stated that it would prefer to remain linked with parishes of a similar size, while Wysall and Widmerpool parish councils preferred to be linked with similar rural communities. Normanton-on-Soar Parish Council stated that it would prefer to form part of a revised Soar Valley ward, while Stanford on Soar Parish Council stated that it would prefer retaining the existing Stanford ward.

90 In our draft recommendations report we carefully considered the various proposals which we received for these wards. We were content that the amalgamation of the three existing wards to form revised Stanford and Wolds wards, as proposed by the Borough Council, was the most appropriate solution in this area. We considered that this proposal would build upon existing arrangements in this area, providing two wards with a distinct rural focus. However, in order to improve electoral equality in Stanford ward, we proposed including Bradmore parish in a new Keyworth South ward. As part of our draft recommendations report, we invited further comments on these proposals at Stage Three.

91 At Stage Three we received a significant response to our draft recommendations. We received a total of 105 representations objecting to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward. The Borough Council argued that “there are stronger community links and interests between Bradmore and similar smaller parishes in the Stanford ward, particularly Bunny, than there would be with Keyworth”. The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke MP stated that residents of Bradmore would not consider that they had links with Keyworth. He considered that Bradmore is associated “much more with the other small villages that used to be in the Basford Rural District, stretching from Bunny to Costock”. Both Bradmore and Keyworth parish councils objected to our proposals, as did Elton Parish Meeting. Bradmore Parish Council stated that “Bradmore is a small rural village which has no links with Keyworth”, while Keyworth Parish Council argued that “Bradmore belongs to the group of villages along the line of the A60, being drawn more to Bunny and Costock or Ruddington than to Keyworth”.

92 The Conservative Group and the Conservative Group Agent, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association and Costock & Rempstone, East Leake, Gotham, Hickling & Upper Broughton branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association also objected to our proposals for Bradmore parish. We received further representations opposing our proposals for Bradmore from 31 councillors (including 27 standard letters), and from 61 local residents (48 of which were standard letters).

93 We also received several further representations in relation to our proposed Stanford and Wolds wards. Costock & Rempstone Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association supported our proposed Stanford ward, subject to their comments regarding Bradmore parish, as did a local resident. Wolds Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Stanton-on-the-Wolds Parish Council and Councillor Butler (Wolds ward) all expressed their support for our proposed Wolds ward. Bradmore Parish Council also stated that Stanford ward should be renamed Rancliffe ward.

94 Having considered all the evidence received, we propose amending our draft recommendations for Stanford ward in light of the significant opposition to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward. While levels of electoral inequality in a revised Stanford ward which included Bradmore parish would be relatively high, we accept that Bradmore shares strong community ties with the smaller more rural villages of Stanford ward, in particular with Bunny parish, and few ties with the larger settlement of Keyworth. We are satisfied that, notwithstanding objections to the inclusion of Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward, our proposals for Stanford and Wolds wards have received a degree of local support. Therefore, subject to transferring Bradmore parish to a revised Stanford ward, we are content to confirm our draft proposals as final. Under our final recommendations, Stanford and Wolds wards would have 19 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (16 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer by 2004).

North Keyworth and South Keyworth wards

95 North Keyworth and South Keyworth wards cover the village of Keyworth, and are represented by one and three councillors respectively. At present, North Keyworth ward contains 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average and South Keyworth ward has 4 per cent fewer than average. However, these levels of electoral inequality are predicted to increase to 5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than average respectively by 2004.

96 At Stage One the Borough Council and Elton Parish Meeting proposed creating revised Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards which would be represented by two councillors each. Both the Liberal Democrats and Bingham Labour Party proposed combining the two existing wards to form a three-member Keyworth ward, while the Labour Group proposed no change to the existing warding arrangements. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, Keyworth Parish Council requested no change to its current arrangements.

97 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals for Keyworth would result in relatively high levels of electoral inequality. We therefore gave further consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements in this area. In order to improve electoral equality, we proposed including Bradmore parish in a revised Keyworth South ward, and modifying the boundary between Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards to run along the centre of Wynbreck Drive and Wolds Drive, and to the rear of properties on the northern side of Selby Lane. We recognised that our proposals were a significant departure from the existing arrangements and invited further comment on our proposals at Stage Three.

98 At Stage Three we received 105 representations objecting to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward, as discussed previously. We received two responses specifically relating to warding arrangements in Keyworth. Keyworth Parish Council objected to our revised two-member Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards, arguing that our proposals would not accurately reflect the identities and interests of communities in Keyworth, and proposed retaining the existing single-member North Keyworth and three-member South Keyworth wards. Councillor Boote (North Keyworth ward) supported the proposal to create two two-member wards in Keyworth, but argued that Bradmore parish should form part of Stanford ward.

99 Having considered all the evidence received, we propose amending our draft recommendations for Keyworth in light of our final recommendation to include Bradmore parish in Stanford ward rather than Keyworth South ward. We recognise that Bradmore is distinct from the larger settlement of Keyworth, and consider that there is a case for reflecting community concerns in this area. As a result of this change, however, there will be a higher level of electoral inequality in Keyworth itself. We received few comments on the merits of creating two two-member wards or retaining the existing structure of one single-member ward and one three-member ward. Subject to the inclusion of Bradmore parish in Stanford ward, we consider that the parish council's proposal to retain the existing wards in Keyworth would cause least disruption to electoral arrangements in the area and would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality, and we are therefore content to put forward their proposals as part of our final recommendations. Under our final recommendations, the single-member Keyworth North and three-member Keyworth South wards would have 9 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (12 per cent and 13 per cent fewer by 2004).

Ash Lea, Manor and Tollerton wards

100 The three-member Ash Lea and single-member Manor wards comprise the Cotgrave Town Council area together with Clipston parish, while Tollerton ward is coterminous with the parish of Tollerton and is represented by a single councillor. Currently, Ash Lea and Manor wards

contain 7 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 16 per cent fewer by 2004), while Tollerton ward has equal to the average number of electors per councillor (2 per cent fewer by 2004).

101 The Borough Council proposed relatively few changes in this area at Stage One, transferring Clipston parish to a revised Tollerton ward, and modifying the boundary between Ash Lea and Manor wards. Elton Parish Meeting also proposed transferring Clipston parish to Tollerton ward, but proposed combining the remaining part of Manor ward with Ash Lea ward to form a three-member Cotgrave ward. The Liberal Democrats and Bingham Labour Party both proposed creating a three-member Cotgrave ward, and proposed combining Clipston, Normanton-on-the-Wolds, Plumtree and Tollerton parishes to form a single-member Tollerton ward. The Labour Group proposed transferring Clipston parish to Wolds ward and retaining the existing electoral arrangements of Tollerton ward. Under their proposals Ash Lea ward would be expanded to include part of Manor ward, and Holme Pierrepont parish would be included in a revised Manor ward.

102 We received only one further representation concerning this area at Stage One, from Cotgrave Town Council, who opposed the creation of a three-member Cotgrave ward, arguing that this would reduce representation for the town and asserting that two separate wards were essential in order to ensure continued effective local government in Cotgrave. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, Tollerton Parish Council opposed being combined with Clipston, Plumtree and Normanton-on-the-Wolds parishes, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats and Bingham Labour Party.

103 In our draft recommendations report we endorsed the Borough Council's proposals to maintain a single-member Tollerton ward and provide two revised wards for the town of Cotgrave. We considered that, on balance, this proposal would reflect the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in the area.

104 At Stage Three Cotgrave Town Council objected to our proposed Ash Lea and Manor wards, arguing that under our proposals "the essential character of Manor ward and its sense of being 'Old Cotgrave' is lost". It proposed combining the revised Ash Lea and Manor wards to form a three-member Cotgrave ward, and both the Labour Group and Cotgrave and Cropwell Branch Labour Party supported its proposal. The Borough Council accepted the revised Ash Lea and Manor wards, but noted that it was aware of local objections to our proposals. The Conservatives also supported our proposals for Cotgrave.

105 Having considered all the evidence received, we note that there has been some opposition to our proposal for two wards in Cotgrave. On balance, we propose amending our draft recommendations, and propose creating a three-member Cotgrave ward comprising Ash Lea and Manor wards of Cotgrave Town Council. Our draft recommendations for revised Ash Lea and Manor wards were based on Cotgrave Town Council's initial request that two separate wards be retained. In light of representations received at Stage Three, we recognise that there is some concern that our proposals for two revised wards would no longer reflect the distinct identities and interests of communities within Cotgrave. We are therefore content to put forward a three-member ward for Cotgrave, which would also provide a slightly improved levels of electoral

equality. We are confirming our draft recommendation for a revised Tollerton ward, including Clipston parish, as final. Under our final recommendations, Cotgrave and Tollerton wards would have 11 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer by 2004).

Dayncourt, Lamcote and Malkin wards

106 Dayncourt, Lamcote and Malkin wards cover the Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council area together with Holme Pierrepont and Shelford & Newton parishes in the north of the borough, and are each represented by two councillors. Malkin ward comprises Malkin ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council and Shelford & Newton parish, while Lamcote ward comprises Lamcote ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council and Holme Pierrepont parish. Dayncourt ward is coterminous with Dayncourt ward of Radcliffe Parish Council. All three wards are significantly over-represented at present, with both Dayncourt and Malkin wards containing 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (10 per cent and 21 per cent fewer respectively by 2004). Lamcote ward currently has 32 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (34 per cent fewer by 2004).

107 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed creating two wards for this area, and reducing the number of councillors from six to four. Under the Council's proposals, Malkin ward would be expanded to include part of Dayncourt ward, and the remaining part of Dayncourt ward would be combined with Lamcote ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish in a revised Dayncourt ward. Holme Pierrepont parish would be combined with Gamston parish and the Gamston development to form a new two-member Gamston ward. Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council supported the Council's proposals. The Labour Group also proposed considerable change in this area, combining Holme Pierrepont parish with part of Cotgrave parish to form a revised Manor ward, and combining Dayncourt ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish with Cropwell Butler parish to form a two-member Dayncourt ward. The remaining part of the current Lamcote ward (Lamcote ward of Radcliffe-on-Trent parish) would form a single-member Lamcote ward, and Saxondale parish would be included in a two-member Malkin ward. Radcliffe-on-Trent Branch Labour Party supported the Labour Group's proposals for Radcliffe-on-Trent, but suggested several minor amendments in order to improve electoral equality.

108 The Liberal Democrats and Elton Parish Meeting both proposed warding arrangements similar to those of the Borough Council, uniting the Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council area in a new Gamston ward, and combining Lamcote ward with parts of Dayncourt and Malkin wards of Radcliffe-on-Trent Town Council to form a revised Dayncourt ward. The remaining part of Malkin town council ward would be combined with part of Dayncourt town council ward and Shelford & Newton parish in a two-member Malkin ward. Bingham Labour Party proposed creating two two-member wards in Radcliffe-on-Trent, but did not provide detailed proposals for warding arrangements.

109 In our draft recommendations report we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals without amendment. We were content that the Council's proposals would achieve reasonable electoral equality and reflect the preference of Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council for the area to be divided between two borough wards, and the request from Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council to unite the parishes of Holme Pierrepont and Gamston within one ward.

110 At Stage Three we received a number of representations in relation to our proposals for Radcliffe-on-Trent. Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council supported our proposed Dayncourt and Malkin wards, but proposed renaming them Manvers and Trent wards respectively. The Conservative Group and the Conservative Group Agent, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association and Hickling & Upper Broughton and Radcliffe-on-Trent branches of Rushcliffe Conservative Association also supported renaming Dayncourt and Malkin wards. We received representations from 27 councillors (all of which were standard letters) and 49 (of which 48 were standard letters) which proposed renaming Dayncourt and Malkin wards Manvers and Trent wards respectively. Radcliffe-on-Trent Branch Labour Party also supported our proposed Dayncourt and Malkin wards, but proposed that Dayncourt ward be renamed Lamcote ward.

111 Having considered all the evidence received we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for warding arrangements in Radcliffe-on-Trent as final. However, in light of the significant support for alternative ward names, we propose renaming Dayncourt and Malkin wards as Manvers and Trent wards respectively. Under our final recommendations, Manvers and Trent wards would have 4 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent and 1 per cent more by 2004). The proposed warding arrangements are illustrated on Map A4 in Appendix A.

Abbey and Lady Bay wards

112 Abbey and Lady Bay wards are each represented by three councillors and cover the north-eastern part of West Bridgford to the south of the River Trent, together with Gamston parish. Abbey ward is significantly under-represented at present, with 32 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Lady Bay ward contains 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (30 per cent more and 8 per cent fewer respectively by 2004).

113 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed dividing the area between three two-member wards. It proposed creating a new two-member Gamston ward, uniting Holme Pierrepont and Gamston parishes and the part of Abbey ward comprising the new Gamston development. Part of the current Lady Bay ward would be transferred to a new Trent Bridge ward and the remaining part would be combined with part of Abbey ward to form a revised Lady Bay ward. Parts of the current Abbey ward would also be transferred to a revised Melton ward and the new Trent Bridge ward, and the remaining part would be combined with part of Musters ward to form a revised Abbey ward.

114 The Labour Group also proposed substantial change to this area. Under their proposals, the Adbolton area would be transferred from Lamcote ward to a revised Lady Bay ward, and a new Gamston ward would be created, comprising Gamston parish and parts of Abbey and Edwalton wards. Parts of the current Abbey and Lady Bay wards would be combined in a new two-member Park ward, while the remaining part of Abbey ward would be combined with part of Edwalton ward to form a revised Abbey ward.

115 The Liberal Democrats and Bingham Labour Party proposed that West Bridgford be represented by 16 councillors, while Elton Parish Meeting proposed 17 councillors. However,

none of these submissions provided detailed proposals for this area. We received three further representations concerning this area. Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council requested that its combined parish area be united within a single ward named Pierrepont Gamston, Lady Bay Community Association objected to the boundaries of the Borough Council's proposed Lady Bay ward, while Central West Bridgford Community Association argued that the number of councillors for West Bridgford should not be reduced.

116 In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the Labour Group's proposals would more accurately reflect community identities in the area than the other proposals received at Stage One, and were content to base our Abbey, Gamston and Lady Bay wards on their proposals. However, as their proposals were based on a council size of 56, we made some amendments to secure more reasonable levels of electoral equality. Given the degree of support for the proposal to unite the parish council area of Holme Pierrepont & Gamston within a single ward, we proposed creating a two-member Gamston ward comprising the parish council area of Holme Pierrepont & Gamston together with parts of Abbey and Edwalton wards. We also proposed creating a revised two-member Lady Bay ward to the north of the Grantham Canal and east of the dismantled railway line. Finally, we proposed transferring parts of the current Abbey ward to revised Edwalton and Melton wards and a new Trent Bridge ward. The remaining part of the current Abbey ward would form a revised two-member Abbey ward.

117 At Stage Three we received several representations in relation to warding arrangements in West Bridgford. The Borough Council, the Conservative Group and the Conservative Group Agent, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rushcliffe Conservative Association, Hickling & Upper Broughton branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations for West Bridgford. We also received representations from 27 councillors (all of which were standard letters) and 48 residents (all of which were standard letters) expressing support for our proposals.

118 We also received two further representations in relation to this area of West Bridgford. The Labour Group broadly supported our draft recommendations for warding arrangements in West Bridgford, but proposed minor boundary amendments to Lutterell, Musters and Trent Bridge wards, as detailed below. They also argued that the Adbolton area should be transferred from Gamston parish to Lady Bay ward as part of a future parishing review. Central West Bridgford Community Association expressed disappointment that the number of councillors representing West Bridgford, relative to the number on the Borough Council, was to fall and requested that Mabel Grove be united within a single ward.

119 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to largely confirm our draft recommendations for Abbey, Lady Bay and Gamston wards as final. We note the comments made by the Central West Bridgford Community Association in relation to the number of councillors representing West Bridgford wards. However, under a council size of 50, the eight West Bridgford wards would be entitled to just over 16 members by 2004, and we are content that our proposals reflect this level of representation appropriately. We do, however, propose transferring those properties on the northern side of Mabel Grove from Lady Bay ward to Abbey ward, thereby uniting Mabel Grove within a single ward. As stated in our draft recommendations, we consider that there is a case for considering the appropriateness of the boundary between the Lady

Bay area and Holme Pierrepont parish in the Adbolton area. However, we continue to consider that this issue should be considered as part of a future parishing review. Under our final recommendations, Abbey, Gamston and Lady Bay wards would have 8 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more by 2004). The proposed warding arrangements are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

Edwalton and Melton wards

120 Edwalton and Melton wards cover the southern and central areas of West Bridgford respectively, and are each represented by three councillors. Edwalton ward currently has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer by 2004), while Melton ward has 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (19 per cent fewer by 2004).

121 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating a revised two-member Melton ward and a new two-member Edwalton Village ward, largely based on the existing Edwalton ward. Parts of the current Edwalton ward would be transferred to Melton ward, which would also include parts of Abbey and Lutterell wards. The remaining part of Edwalton ward would be combined with part of the current Melton ward in the new Edwalton Village ward. Part of the current Edwalton ward would also be transferred to the new Gamston ward.

122 The Labour Group proposed creating a revised two-member Melton ward, based largely on the current ward, transferring parts of the current Melton ward to their proposed Abbey and Harrow wards. The western part of the current Melton ward, between Musters Road and the disused railway line would be combined with the part of Lutterell ward to the east of Loughborough Road, a small part of the current Musters ward and the part of Edwalton ward to the south of Boundary Road, to form a new Harrow ward. The Labour Group proposed creating a revised two-member Melton ward, based largely on the current ward. Under their proposals, part of the current Melton ward would be combined with parts of Lutterell, Musters and Edwalton wards to form a new Harrow ward, and part would be transferred to Abbey ward. Edwalton ward would also remain largely unchanged, although parts would be transferred to Gamston and Melton wards.

123 In our draft recommendations report we carefully considered both the detailed proposals put forward to us, and proposed basing our draft recommendations on those put forward by the Labour Group. We were not persuaded that the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements would best reflect community ties in this area, in particular in Melton ward, which would combine areas which appear to have little affinity and are divided by the disused railway line across its centre. Our proposals for the Melton area were based on those put forward by the Labour Group, including parts of Abbey and Edwalton wards in a revised two-member Melton ward. We also proposed transferring part of the current Melton ward to a revised Musters ward. We were also content to largely retain the current Edwalton ward, as proposed by both the Borough Council and the Labour Group, but proposed transferring parts of the existing Edwalton ward to Gamston and Musters wards.

124 At Stage Three we received broad support for our proposals in the West Bridgford area, as detailed above. We received only one further comment in relation to this area of West Bridgford from the Labour Group, which argued that name of Edwalton ward should be retained, rather than changing to Edwalton Village.

125 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Edwalton and Melton wards as final, without amendment. We note the Labour Group's comments in relation to the name of Edwalton Village ward. However, given the degree of support expressed for our draft recommendations, we have not been persuaded that there is significant opposition to the name of the proposed Edwalton Village ward. Under our final recommendations, Edwalton Village and Melton wards would have 5 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2004). The proposed warding arrangements are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

Lutterell and Musters wards

126 Lutterell and Musters wards, in the western part of West Bridgford, are bounded by the Musters Road to the east, and by the River Trent in the north and the A52 Nottingham Ring Road in the south, and are each represented by three councillors. Lutterell ward currently has the worst level of electoral equality in the borough, with 55 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Musters ward currently has 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (52 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer respectively by 2004).

127 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed substantially reorganising the warding arrangements of these two wards, creating revised two-member Lutterell and Musters wards and new two-member Rivermead and Trent Bridge wards. In the north of West Bridgford, the new Trent Bridge ward would comprise parts of Abbey and Lady Bay wards and part of Musters ward. Under the Council's proposals, part of Musters ward would be combined with parts of the current Lutterell and Melton wards to form a revised Musters ward, and the remaining part of the current Musters ward would be combined with part of Lutterell ward to form the new Rivermead ward. Finally, the Council proposed creating a revised two-member Lutterell ward comprising the southern part of the current Lutterell ward. The Labour Group also proposed creating four two-member wards in this area, including new Compton Acres and Harrow wards. In the west of West Bridgford, the Labour Group's proposed two-member Compton Acres and Lutterell wards would each comprise parts of the current Lutterell and Musters wards. Under their proposals, a revised Musters ward would comprise the remaining part of the current Musters ward, while a new two-member Harrow ward would comprise parts of the current Lutterell, Melton and Musters wards.

128 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the Labour Group's proposed warding arrangements for this area would more accurately reflect the various community areas in the western part of West Bridgford, and were content to largely adopt their proposals. We proposed creating a new Trent Bridge ward, comprising parts of Abbey, Lady Bay and Musters wards, and combining parts of the current Lutterell, Melton and Musters wards in a revised two-member Musters ward. Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Compton Acres and Lutterell wards would each comprise parts of the current Lutterell and Musters wards in the western part of West Bridgford.

129 At Stage Three we received several comments in relation to this area of West Bridgford. The Labour Group proposed transferring the part of the proposed Lutterell ward to the west of Loughborough Road, incorporating Chestnut Grove and Elm Tree Avenue, to the new Trent Bridge ward. It argued that this area is close to existing polling facilities, and that many residents of this area are elderly. The Labour Group also proposed transferring those properties on the northern side of North Road, currently in Trent Bridge ward, to Musters ward in order to improve electoral equality in the revised Trent Bridge ward. Councillors Chapman, Jackson and MacInnes (Musters ward), and four residents of the Chestnut Grove area also put forward a similar amendment.

130 Having considered all the evidence received we propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, subject to some minor amendments to ward boundaries. We are content to endorse the view expressed by the Labour Group, that the Chestnut Grove and Elm Tree Avenue area “has close community ties with the area to the east of Loughborough Road”, and propose adopting their amendments to the proposed Lutterell, Musters and Trent Bridge wards. Under our final recommendations, Compton Acres and Trent Bridge wards would have 6 per cent and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent and 10 per cent more by 2004), while Lutterell and Musters wards would each have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (5 per cent fewer by 2004). The proposed warding arrangements are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

Electoral Cycle

131 At Stage One we received five representations regarding the Borough Council’s electoral cycle, none of which proposed changing the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole council elections every four years.

132 At Stage Three we received only one further comment in relation to the Borough Council’s electoral cycle from Keyworth Parish Council, which supported retaining the present system of whole council elections every four years. Accordingly, we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

133 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to largely endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- we propose including Bradmore parish in Stanford ward;
- we propose retaining the existing Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards;
- we propose creating a three-member Cotgrave ward in place of the current Ash Lea and Manor wards;
- we propose including Saxondale parish in Bingham West ward, and modifying the boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards;

- we propose renaming Dayncourt and Malkin wards as Manvers and Trent wards respectively;
- we propose minor amendments to the boundaries of Abbey, Lady Bay, Lutterell, Musters and Trent Bridge wards in West Bridgford.

134 We conclude that, in Rushcliffe:

- There should be a reduction in council size from 54 to 50.
- There should be 28 wards, one fewer than at present.
- The boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified.
- Elections of the whole council should continue to be held every four years.

135 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	54	50	54	50
Number of wards	29	28	29	28
Average number of electors per councillor	1,513	1,634	1,562	1,687
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	14	5	13	5
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	7	0

136 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 14 to five with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2004, with no ward varying by more than 16 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Rushcliffe Borough Council should comprise 50 councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold whole council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

137 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the towns of Bingham and Cotgrave and the parishes of Holme Pierrepont & Gamston, Keyworth and Radcliffe-on-Trent to reflect the proposed borough wards.

138 Bingham Town Council is currently served by 13 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations report we proposed creating two borough wards for the town, Bingham East and Bingham West. We therefore proposed dividing the town between two town council wards, which would be coterminous with the new borough wards. We proposed increasing the number of town councillors by one to 14, and that the two proposed town council wards should each be represented by seven town councillors.

139 In response to our consultation report, we received a number of representations concerning the electoral arrangements of Bingham Town Council. While several respondents objected to the boundary between our proposed Bingham East and Bingham West wards, others commented more specifically on our proposal to increase the number of town councillors serving Bingham. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Conservative Association argued that the present number of 13 councillors served the town well, and objected to any increase in the size of the council. Two local residents also objected to increasing the size of the council. Bingham Branch of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party, however, argued that the present number of town councillors was inadequate, and that an increase in council size would “enable the council to be more truly representative of the views and opinions of the town as a whole”. They proposed increasing the number of councillors for Bingham to 18, with nine councillors representing each ward. Two local residents also supported increasing the size of the town council. Bingham Town Council supported our proposal to increase the number of councillors to 14, but stated that it would object to any further increase in council size.

140 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft proposal for two town council wards, coterminous with the new borough wards, as final, subject to a minor boundary amendment as discussed previously. We note a continued lack of consensus on the most appropriate number of town councillors, and consider that this issue would best be considered as part of a future parishing review. We continue, however, to consider that each ward should have an equal number of town councillors. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation to increase the size of Bingham Town Council to 14 as final.

Final Recommendation

Bingham Town Council should be represented by 14 councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards. Bingham East and Bingham West town wards should each be represented by seven town councillors. The two town council wards should reflect the proposed borough wards of Bingham East and Bingham West, as illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

141 The parish of Keyworth is currently served by 17 councillors representing two wards: North ward returns four parish councillors and South ward returns 13 councillors. In our draft recommendations report, we proposed two wards, Keyworth North and Keyworth South, each to be represented by two borough councillors. As a consequence of our recommendation for borough warding arrangements, we proposed modifying the existing parish wards and redistributing the number of councillors for each ward, with North ward returning nine parish councillors, and South ward returning eight parish councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards would reflect the proposed borough ward boundary between Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards.

142 In response to our consultation report, we received substantial opposition to our proposal to include Bradmore parish in Keyworth South ward, as discussed previously. In particular, Keyworth Parish Council objected to our proposals for revised warding arrangements in Keyworth, and requested that the current borough and parish council warding arrangements be retained. Having considered all the evidence received, we have proposed retaining the existing single-member North Keyworth and three-member South Keyworth wards for borough warding purposes, although we have proposed renaming them Keyworth North and Keyworth South wards respectively. Consequently, we are content to propose retaining the current arrangements for North and South wards of Keyworth parish.

143 Cotgrave Town Council is currently served by 16 councillors, who represent the two town wards of Ash Lea and Manor. Ash Lea ward is currently represented by 12 town councillors and Manor is represented by four town councillors. In our draft recommendations report we proposed modifying the boundary between Ash Lea and Manor borough wards, and therefore also proposed that the two town council wards should be amended to reflect the revised borough warding arrangements. Under our draft recommendations, Ash Lea ward would return 11 town councillors, one fewer than at present, while Manor ward would return five town councillors.

144 In response to our consultation report, we received opposition to our proposed warding arrangements for Cotgrave from Cotgrave Town Council, who argued that our proposals failed to accurately reflect the identity and interests of residents of the town, and proposed creating a single three-member Cotgrave ward. The Borough Council argued that, if a three-member Cotgrave ward were to be created, the existing parish warding arrangements should be retained. Having considered all the evidence received, we have proposed creating a three-member Cotgrave ward, and therefore we propose retaining the current arrangements of Ash Lea and Manor parish wards. We note that the current parish ward boundaries have been obscured by development.

However, we consider that their revision would require further consultation with local people, and therefore that any such changes would be best considered as part of a future parishing review.

145 Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council is currently served by 18 councillors, who represent the three parish wards of Dayncourt, Lamcote and Malkin. Dayncourt and Malkin parish wards are coterminous with the borough wards of the same name, while Lamcote parish ward is combined with Holme Pierrepont parish in the current Lamcote borough ward. Each of the three wards is currently represented by six parish councillors. In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the parish should in future be divided between two borough wards, Dayncourt and Malkin. As a consequence of our proposal, we proposed that the parish should be divided between two new parish wards whose boundaries should be amended to reflect the revised borough warding arrangements, and which should be represented by nine parish councillors each.

146 In response to our consultation report, we received a degree of support for our draft recommendations for Radcliffe-on-Trent, as discussed previously. Having considered all the evidence received, we have proposed confirming our draft recommendations for borough warding arrangements in Radcliffe-on-Trent as final, subject to renaming Dayncourt and Malkin wards Manvers and Trent wards respectively. As a consequence of our recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we propose confirming our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements of Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council as final, subject to renaming Dayncourt and Malkin parish wards as Manvers and Trent wards respectively.

<p>Final Recommendation Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council should continue to be represented by 18 councillors, but should be divided between two wards instead of three as at present. Manvers and Trent parish wards should each return nine parish councillors, and should reflect the proposed borough wards of Manvers and Trent, as illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4 in Appendix A.</p>
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147 Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council is currently served by 10 councillors, seven of whom represent the parish of Holme Pierrepont, while three represent Gamston parish. In our draft recommendations report we considered that, in view of the significant growth in the Gamston area, there would be some merit in redistributing parish councillors between the two parish areas to reflect their current electorates. We noted the views of the Parish Council that the two parishes should be dissolved and combined to form one single parish. We also noted the views of the Labour Group regarding their view that the Adbolton area should no longer form part of the parished area. We noted, however, that we were unable to consider such changes as part of a periodic electoral review, and considered that these issues could be better addressed as part of a future parishing review. We therefore proposed increasing the number of councillors for Gamston parish to seven, and reducing the number for Holme Pierrepont parish to three.

148 Having received no significant opposition to our draft proposals for this area, we are content to confirm them as final.

Final Recommendation

Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, as at present. Gamston parish should be represented by seven parish councillors, four more than at present, and Holme Pierrepont parish should be represented by three councillors, four fewer than at present.

149 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the borough, and are confirming this as final.

Final Recommendation

For parish and town councils, elections of the whole council should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the Borough Council.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Rushcliffe

6 NEXT STEPS

150 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Rushcliffe and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

151 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 27 June 2000.

152 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Rushcliffe: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Rushcliffe area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 to A4 and the large map at the back of the report.

Maps A2 and A3 illustrate the proposed boundary between Bingham East and Bingham West wards.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary between Manvers and Trent wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the town of West Bridgford.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Rushcliffe: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Boundary Between Bingham East and Bingham West wards (part)

Map A3: Proposed Boundary Between Bingham East and Bingham West wards (part)

Map A4: Proposed Boundary Between Manvers and Trent wards

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Rushcliffe

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Dayncourt ward as Manvers and Malkin ward as Trent.

Figure B1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Abbey (in West Bridgford)	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part)
Ash Lea (in Cotgrave)	Ash Lea ward (part – Ash Lea ward of Cotgrave Town Council (part)); Manor ward (part – Manor ward of Cotgrave Town Council (part))
Bingham East	Bingham ward (part – Bingham East ward of Bingham Town Council as proposed)
Bingham West	Bingham ward (part – Bingham West ward of Bingham Town Council as proposed)
Keyworth North	North Keyworth ward (North ward of Keyworth parish); South Keyworth ward (part – South ward of Keyworth parish (part))
Keyworth South	Rancliffe ward (part – Bradmore parish); South Keyworth ward (part – South ward of Keyworth parish (part))
Lady Bay (in West Bridgford)	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part)
Lutterell (in West Bridgford)	Lutterell ward (part); Musters ward (part)
Manor (in Cotgrave)	Ash Lea ward (part – Ash Lea ward of Cotgrave Town Council (part)); Manor ward (part – Manor ward of Cotgrave Town Council (part))
Musters (in West Bridgford)	Edwalton ward (part); Lutterell ward (part); Melton ward (part); Musters ward (part)
Stanford	Rancliffe ward (part – Bunny parish); Stanford ward (Costock, Normanton on Soar, Rempstone and Stanford on Soar parishes)
Trent Bridge (in West Bridgford)	Abbey ward (part); Lady Bay ward (part); Musters ward (part)
Wiverton	Bingham ward (part – Saxondale parish); Bishop ward (Cropwell Bishop parish); Wiverton ward (Colston Bassett, Cropwell Butler, Langar cum Barnstone, Tithby and Wiverton Hall parishes)

Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Abbey (in West Bridgford)	2	3,497	1,749	7	3,532	1,766	5
Ash Lea (in Cotgrave)	2	3,638	1,819	11	3,685	1,843	9
Bingham East	2	3,093	1,547	-5	3,665	1,833	9
Bingham West	2	3,054	1,527	-7	3,713	1,857	10
Keyworth North	2	3,065	1,533	-6	3,079	1,540	-9
Keyworth South	2	3,027	1,514	-7	3,041	1,520	-10
Lady Bay (in West Bridgford)	2	3,542	1,771	8	3,577	1,789	6
Lutterell (in West Bridgford)	2	3,470	1,735	6	3,505	1,752	4
Manor (in Cotgrave)	1	1,825	1,825	12	1,841	1,841	9
Musters (in West Bridgford)	2	3,097	1,549	-5	3,128	1,564	-7
Stanford	1	1,709	1,709	5	1,725	1,725	2
Trent Bridge (in West Bridgford)	2	3,472	1,736	6	3,507	1,753	4
Wiverton	2	2,948	1,474	-10	3,030	1,515	-10

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rushcliffe Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.