

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Rutland

May 2002

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

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Kru Desai
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

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

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of the electoral arrangements for Rutland on 16 October 2001. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us the Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE.

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

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

- **in 12 of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 64-65) are that:

- **Rutland County Council should have 26 councillors, six more than at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, with one ward retaining its existing boundaries.**

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

- **In 12 of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all 16 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the reduction and re-distribution of councillors for the parish of Oakham.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 14 May 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**

- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, with effect from 1 April 2002, will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 8 July 2002:

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

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Braunston & Belton	1	The parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Leighfield, Preston, Ridlington and Wardley	Map 2
2	Chater	1	The parishes of Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe, Morcott, Pilton and Wing	Map 2
3	Cottesmore	2	The parishes of Barrow, Cottesmore, Market Overton and Teigh	Map 2
4	Exton	1	The parishes of Ashwell, Burley, Egleton, Exton, Hambleton, Horn and Whitwell	Map 2
5	Greetham	1	The parishes of Clipsham, Greetham, Pickworth, Stretton and Thistleton	Map 2
6	Ketton	2	The parishes of Barrowden, Ketton, Tinwell and Tixover	Map 2
7	Langham	1	The parish of Langham	Map 2
8	Lyddington	1	The parishes of Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Glaston, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water	Map 2
9	Normanton	2	The parishes of Edith Weston, Empingham, Normanton, North Luffenham and South Luffenham	Map 2
10	Oakham North East	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham North East parish ward)	Large Map
11	Oakham North West	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham North West parish ward); the parish of Barleythorpe	Large Map
12	Oakham South East	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham South East parish ward)	Large Map
13	Oakham South West	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham South West parish ward)	Large Map
14	Ryhall & Casterton	2	The parishes of Essendine, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Ryhall and Tickencote	Map 2
15	Uppingham	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – The parishes of Beaumont Chase and Uppingham	Map 2
16	Whissendine	1	The parish of Whissendine	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the Large Map inserted in the back of this report.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Rutland

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Braunston & Belton	1	985	985	-2	1,028	1,028	-4
2	Chater	1	971	971	-3	1,002	1,002	-6
3	Cottesmore	2	2,033	1,017	1	2,083	1,042	-3
4	Exton	1	1,083	1,083	8	1,113	1,113	4
5	Greetham	1	921	921	-8	969	969	-9
6	Ketton	2	2,073	1,037	3	2,186	1,093	2
7	Langham	1	875	875	-13	1,042	1,042	-3
8	Lyddington	1	1,064	1,064	6	1,081	1,081	1
9	Normanton	2	2,262	1,131	13	2,279	1,140	6
10	Oakham North East	2	1,886	943	-6	2,048	1,024	-4
11	Oakham North West	2	2,196	1,098	10	2,243	1,122	5
12	Oakham South East	2	1,727	864	-14	2,172	1,086	1
13	Oakham South West	2	2,065	1,033	3	2,094	1,047	-2
14	Ryhall & Casterton	2	2,203	1,102	10	2,289	1,145	7
15	Uppingham	3	2,750	917	-9	3,143	1,048	-2
16	Whissendine	1	972	972	-3	1,055	1,055	-1
	Totals	26	26,066	-	-	27,827	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,003	-	-	1,070	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Rutland County Council's submission.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of Rutland, on which we are now consulting. This district being reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 Rutland's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1977 (Report no. 199). Since undertaking that review, Rutland became a unitary authority in 1997.

3 In making final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Rutland was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fifth edition published in October 2001). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

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

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

Table 3: Stages of the Review

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

9 Stage One began on 16 October 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Rutland County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified, Leicestershire Constabulary, the Local Government Association, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Rutland Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 7 January 2002.

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

11 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 14 May 2002 and will end on 8 July 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS;

13 Rutland lies between the counties of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Rutland gained unitary status in April 1997 and is known as Rutland County Council in recognition of its strong local identity. Rutland has a population of 34,600 and covers a total area of 39,367 hectares. The district contains 58 civil parishes with the whole area being parished. It is predominantly comprised of rural parishes but also includes two towns, Oakham and Uppingham, which together account for 41 per cent of the total electorate. At its centre is Rutland Water which covers 3,000 acres. Rutland County Council has projected an increase in the electorate of around 7 per cent from 26,066 to 27,827 by 2006 with much of the development projected in Braunston and Oakham East wards.

14 The Council presently has 20 members who are elected from 16 wards. One ward is represented by three councillors, two are represented by two councillors while the remaining 13 wards are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

15 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 district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,303 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 1,391 by the year 2006 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 12 of the 16 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Oakham East ward where the councillor represents 39 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Rutland

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Barrowden	1	1,093	1,093	-16	1,111	1,111	-20
2 Belton	1	1,225	1,225	-6	1,277	1,277	-8
3 Braunston	1	840	840	-36	875	875	-37
4 Casterton	1	802	802	-38	843	843	-40
5 Cottesmore	1	1,584	1,584	22	1,622	1,622	17
6 Edith Weston	1	1,018	1,018	-22	1,023	1,023	-26
7 Empingham	1	931	931	-29	954	954	-31
8 Exton	1	1,135	1,135	-13	1,177	1,177	-15
9 Ketton	1	1,554	1,554	19	1,654	1,654	19
10 Langham	1	1,021	1,021	-22	1,196	1,196	-14
11 Luffenham	1	1,216	1,216	-7	1,228	1,228	-12
12 Oakham East	2	3,613	1,807	39	4,220	2,110	52
13 Oakham West	3	4,115	1,375	5	4,183	1,394	0
14 Ryhall	1	1,663	1,663	28	1,726	1,726	24
15 Uppingham	2	2,750	1,375	6	3,143	1,572	13
16 Whissendine	1	1,506	1,506	16	1,604	1,604	15
Totals	20	26,066	-	-	27,827	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,303	-	-	1,391	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Casterton ward were relatively over-represented by 38 per cent, while electors in Oakham East ward were relatively under-represented by 39 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

17 At the start of the review the LGCE invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to it giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Rutland County Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

18 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from Rutland County Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. Four representations were received during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Council.

Rutland County Council

19 Rutland County Council proposed a council of 26 members, an increase of six, serving 16 wards, the same as at present. Initially the council consulted on three options A, B and C for the rural areas and three options D, E and F for Oakham town. The Council proposed changes to the boundaries of 14 of the existing 16 wards and also offered proposals for new ward names. This scheme would result in one ward having an electoral variance of over 10 per cent in 2006.

Parish Councils

20 We received one representation from Ashwell Parish Council that expressed support for option A of the Council's consultative scheme.

Other Representations

21 We received a further two representations from a local political party and a parish meeting. Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats proposed that elections should continue to be held every four years, that the number of councillors should be increased from 20 to 26 and that Uppingham should continue as a single member ward. It further proposed that wherever possible rural areas should be represented by single-member wards and that it preferred either options A or B for the rural areas and either D or E for Oakham town. Pickworth Parish Meeting expressed concern that it did not want to be "subsumed into a Parish Council based on a larger village in the area".

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

25 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme that results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

26 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme that provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

27 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 7 per cent from 26,066 to 27,827 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Oakham East ward. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

28 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

29 Rutland County Council presently has 20 members. The Council proposed a council size of 26 members serving 16 wards. It argued that this proposed increase would ‘provide more effective and convenient Local Government in Rutland’ stating that the present number of 20 councillors was set at the time of the previous review when Rutland was a district council.

30 It also argued that since obtaining unitary status, its range of operations and responsibilities had grown to the extent that it could not now operate effectively at the present council size of 20 members. It stated that 'the increased responsibilities of the authority was not reflected in an increase in the total number of councillors'. The Council further argued that the proposed increase in council size would facilitate more effective decision-making under its new political arrangements and enable an improvement in the scrutiny functions of the members of the Council.

31 With the adoption of new executive arrangements the Council stated that the potential of these arrangements could only be utilised if the 'creative tension' between the three separate roles of the executive, council committees and scrutiny was maintained. The Council argued that with the current council size the workload on members was such that the high level of cross-representation of members was not 'conducive to efficient and effective Local Government'. It also noted members' personal interests within Rutland often reduced the effectiveness of council decision-making on policy because this disqualified members from attending debates. It further identified the problem of there not being enough members to represent Rutland's interests on external bodies.

32 The Council further argued that in seeking to implement the Government's modernisation agenda its present size hindered its members from dealing with constituency matters and in particular placed extra strain on members who were in fulltime employment. It stated that 'by increasing the size of the Council the workload can be spread more equitably, and allow all Councillors to spend more time on ward work. The Council believes this will enhance effective and convenient local government in Rutland'.

33 In support of its proposals for this increase in council size the Council stated that it had the unanimous support of all the members, as expressed at a full Council meeting on 15 November 2001. It also submitted evidence of how the proposed change in council size would affect the electoral equality in both the rural and urban areas of Rutland. The Council argued that as the *Guidance* opposed the mixture of urban and rural areas the parishes of Oakham and Uppingham should form separate urban wards. Within this evidence the Council concluded that in order to achieve the creation of wards with variances within 10 per cent of the district average, without mixing rural and urban areas 'then the most suitable figure is 26 Councillors'.

34 The Council also submitted evidence of support it had received for the council size change and the various options for both the rural and urban areas during its consultation. In a sample survey specifically on the issue of council size the Council stated that it had received 51 per cent support for its proposals for an increase to 26 councillors. However, on holding public meetings it stated that 100 per cent of those who returned survey forms subsequent to these meetings supported the increase to 26 councillors. It stated that the 'reasons given for opposing a greater Council size centred on perceived additional expense'. The Council further argued that an increase to 26 members would decrease the risk of conflicting personal interests and also provide more flexibility in placing members on internal and external bodies that would enable it to further influence policy.

35 The Rutland and Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats argued that the 'increase in council size is required to reflect the additional burden upon councillors of the unitary status and the executive/scrutiny arrangements'. Ashwell Parish Council expressed support for option A in the rural areas of Rutland within the context of a 26-member scheme.

36 The Commission will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but will be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. At this point however it should be noted that within the Commission's final recommendations for the structure of local government in Leicestershire, consideration was given to the potential difficulties a local authority the size of Rutland would face in fulfilling its statutory obligations. We

also note that there has been some local opposition to the proposed increase on the grounds of increased expense and the appropriateness of Rutland's unitary status.

37 However, we further note the unanimous support the council members have given to this proposed increase. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be served by a council size of 26 members.

Electoral Arrangements

38 We have considered all the district-wide schemes presented to us and taken into account all the submissions received. As mention above, Rutland County Council proposed an increase of council size from 20 to 26 members. It developed a number of schemes based on this council size on which it undertook public consultation. It outlined options A, B and C for the rural areas of Rutland and three options, D, E and F for Oakham town. As part of its official Stage One scheme, the Council put forward options B and D for the rural area and Oakham town respectively. The Council therefore proposed a pattern of one three-member ward, eight two-member wards and seven single-member wards. These proposals were also supported by the Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats. Ashwell Parish Council expressed support for the warding pattern of option A in the rural area within the context of a 26-member scheme.

39 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise that it undertook with interested parties, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals. However to further improve electoral equality we propose amendment to the Council's scheme by including Barleythorpe parish in the proposed Oakham North West ward.

40 In the urban area of Oakham the Council consulted on options D, E and F. With the population of Oakham amounting to 30 per cent of Rutland's overall electorate the town is entitled to eight members under a 26-member scheme. All three options provided the correct allocation of members for Oakham and had good levels of electoral equality. However under options E and F we noted that the proposed ward boundaries were less clearly tied to ground detail. Having noted the Council's preference for option D, the public consultation, the support of Rutland and Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats and its clear ward boundaries we consider that this option would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either current arrangements or other consultation options.

41 In the conduct of this review we also noted that there were presently parish boundary anomalies around Rutland Water. According to the mapping information we received from Ordnance Survey, the Council and our subsequent visit to Rutland, the present parish boundaries of Burley, Edith Weston, Empingham, Gunthorpe, Hambleton, Manton, Normanton and Whitwell are each partially defaced by water. Having discussed this situation with the Council and established that no electors are adversely affected particularly in Hambleton, we are not able to propose any parish warding to rectify these anomalies. We suggest that after the completion of this PER a parish review is conducted by Rutland County Council to address these anomalies. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards;
- (b) Oakham East, Oakham West and Langham wards;
- (c) Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards;
- (d) Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston, Luffenham and Uppingham wards.

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

Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards

43 Located in the north-west of the district, the wards of Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine are each represented by a single councillor. Braunston ward comprises the parishes of Ashwell, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Burley, Egleton and Leighfield. Cottesmore ward comprises Barrow and Cottesmore parishes. Whissendine ward comprises the parishes of Market Overton, Teigh, Thistleton and Whissendine. The number of electors per councillor is 36 per cent below the district average in Braunston ward (37 per cent below the by 2006), 22 per cent above the district average in Cottesmore ward (17 per cent above the by 2006) and 16 per cent above the district average in Whissendine ward (15 per cent above the by 2006).

44 During Stage One the Council proposed modifying of all three wards. It proposed a single-member Braunston & Belton ward consisting of the parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Leighfield, Preston, Ridlington and Wardley. The Council also proposed a two-member Cottesmore ward comprising of parishes of Barrow, Cottesmore, Market Overton and Teigh. It also proposed a single-member Whissendine ward, coterminous with the parish of the same name. Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats expressed support for this proposal.

45 Ashwell Parish Council expressed support for the ward pattern in the rural area under option A. This ward pattern would place Ashwell Parish ward in a similar ward to that proposed under the Council's preferred option.

46 We have carefully noted the representations received at Stage One. We noted the submission of Ashwell Parish Council and that, under option A, acceptable levels of equality would have been achieved. However, we cannot look at an area in isolation and note the support Rutland County Council received from other local parishes during its public consultation for option B. In the light of all the different opinions expressed at Stage One and the similarities between the Council's options A and B we are adopting the proposals of the Council as our draft recommendations in this area without amendment.

47 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Braunston & Belton, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards would be 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (4 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Oakham East, Oakham West and Langham wards

48 Located in the west of Rutland the three wards of Langham, Oakham East and Oakham West are presently represented by one, two and three councillors respectively. Langham ward comprises the parishes of Barleythorpe and Langham. Oakham East and Oakham West wards are coterminous with the parish wards of the same names. The number of electors per councillor is 22 per cent below the district average in Langham ward (14 per cent below the by 2006), 39 per cent above the district average in Oakham East ward (52 per cent above the by 2006) and 5 per cent above the district average in Oakham West ward (equal to the average by 2006).

49 Under option D the Council proposed that Oakham town be divided into four two-member wards. Oakham North East, Oakham North West, Oakham South East and Oakham South West. Initially the Council developed three options for the town of Oakham, all of which allocated eight councillors to the town under a council size of 26. Following consultation on these options the Council put forward option D as part of its Stage One proposals. The Council

proposed retaining the railway line as a ward boundary. It proposed that Braunston Road be used as the boundary between Oakham North West and Oakham South West. It further proposed that the boundary between Oakham North East and Oakham South East lying to the East of the railway line follow along South Street, Mill Street and then along Burley Road up to the proposed ward boundary with the proposed Exton ward. Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats expressed support of this proposal.

50 Rutland County Council proposed no change to Langham ward which, under a 26-member scheme ward would then have an electoral variance of 12 per cent by 2006. The Council noted the option of transferring the Barleythorpe parish into one of the Oakham town wards, but expressed a preference for retaining the parishes of Langham and Barleythorpe together due to community links.

51 We have carefully noted the Council's submission in respect of these wards. In the light of the consensus achieved and the strong and clearly identifiable boundaries, we are adopting the Council's proposals for Oakham town. Consequently, we also propose modifying the parish ward boundaries within Oakham to reflect the changes we propose at district ward level. These recommendations are outlined below.

52 However, having considered the Council's proposals and visited Rutland we do not consider that an electoral variance of 12 per cent in Langham ward is justified. We note that Barleythorpe, geographically, is nearer to Oakham town than it is to the Langham settlement and also that Barleythorpe is well served with direct access to Oakham via Barleythorpe Road. In the light of all the evidence we have received during Stage One and our consideration of the geography of the area we propose that Barleythorpe parish be included in the the proposed Oakham North West ward. We consider that this modification would continue to provide a good balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria in the Oakham wards and ensure that the electoral variances of Langham ward is within a 10 per cent variance by 2006.

53 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards Langham, Oakham North East, Oakham North West, Oakham South East and Oakham South West would be 13 per cent above, 14 per cent below, equal to the average, 22 per below and 6 per cent below the district average respectively (3 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 5 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 2 per cent below in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards

54 Located in the east and centre of the district Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards are each represented by a single councillor. Casterton ward comprises the parishes of Clipsham, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Pickworth and Tinwell. Empingham ward comprises the parishes of Empingham, Hambleton, Tickencote and Whitwell. Exton ward comprises the parishes of Exton, Greetham, Horn and Stretton. Ketton ward comprises the parishes Ketton and Tixover. Ryhall ward comprises the parishes of Essendine and Ryhall. The number of electors per councillor is 38 per cent below the district average in Casterton ward (40 per cent below by 2006), 29 per cent below the district average in Empingham ward (31 per cent below by 2006), 13 per cent below the district average in Exton ward (15 per cent below by 2006), 19 per cent above the district average in Ketton ward (19 per cent above by 2006) and 28 per cent above the district average in Ryhall ward (24 per cent above by 2006).

55 Under its preferred option the Rutland County Council proposed modifications to all of these wards above. The Council proposed a single-member Exton ward comprising the parishes of Ashwell, Burley, Egleton, Exton, Hambleton, Horn and Whitwell; a single-member Greetham ward comprising the parishes of Clipsham, Greetham, Pickworth, Stretton and Thistleton. The Council further proposed a two-member Ketton ward comprising the parishes of Barrowden,

Ketton, Tinwell and Tixover, and a two-member Ryhall & Casterton ward comprising the parishes of Essendine, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Ryhall and Tickencote. These proposals received the support of Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats.

56 Pickworth Parish Meeting expressed concern that it did not want to be “subsumed into a Parish Council based on a larger village in the area”. As mentioned above, Ashwell Parish Council expressed a preference for the Council’s consultation option A.

57 Having considered all the submissions received at Stage One we are persuaded that the proposals of the Council provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The Council’s preferred option would place Ashwell parish in a similar grouping to that supported by Ashwell Parish Council under consultation option A. We are therefore content to adopt the above proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

58 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Exton, Greetham, Ketton and Ryhall & Casterton would be 8 per cent below, 8 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 10 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent above, 9 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 7 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston, Luffenham and Uppingham wards

59 Located in the south of Rutland the wards of Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston, and Luffenham are each represented by a single councillor while Uppingham ward is represented by two councillors. Barrowden ward comprises the parishes of Barrowden, Caldecott, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water. Belton ward comprises the parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Bisbrooke, Glaston, Preston, Ridlington, Wardley and Wing. Edith Weston ward comprises the parishes of Edith Weston, Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe and Normanton. Luffenham ward comprises the parishes of Morcott, North Luffenham, Pilton and South Luffenham. Uppingham ward comprises the parishes of Beaumont Chase and Uppingham Town. The number of electors per councillor is 16 per cent below the district average in Barrowden ward (20 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent below the district average in Belton ward (8 per cent below by 2006), 22 per cent below the district average in Edith Weston ward (26 per cent below by 2006), 7 per cent below the district average in Luffenham ward (12 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above the district average in Uppingham ward (13 per cent above by 2006).

60 Under its preferred option the Council proposed a single-member Chater ward comprising the parishes of Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe, Morcott, Pilton and Wing. It proposed a single-member Lyddington ward comprising the parishes of Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Glaston, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water. The Council also proposed a two-member Normanton ward comprising of the parishes of Edith Weston, Empingham, Normanton, North Luffenham and South Luffenham. Finally within this area, the Council proposed no change to Uppingham ward. This proposed warding pattern received the support of Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats.

61 We have carefully considered all the submissions received at Stage One. We note that in the Council’s consultations with its parish councils, Manton, Pilton and South Luffenham all expressed support for option B as a first preference. In the light of the general consensus for option B and the good balance that this warding pattern achieves between electoral equality and the statutory criteria within the context of the whole scheme we are adopting these proposals for our draft recommendations without amendment.

62 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards Chater, Lyddington, Normanton and Uppingham would be 3 per cent below, 6 per cent above, 13 per cent above and 8 per cent below the district average respectively (6 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2006) Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

63 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

Conclusions

64 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be an increase in council size from 20 to 26;
- there should be 16 wards;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries.

65 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on Rutland County Council’s proposals, but propose departing from them in the following area:

- the boundary between Langham and Oakham North West should be modified.

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

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	20	26	20	26
Number of wards	16	16	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,303	1,003	1,391	1,070
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	12	4	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	1	6	0

67 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Rutland County Council would result in

a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 12 to four. This level of electoral equality would improve further with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent by 2006.

Draft Recommendation

Rutland County Council should comprise 26 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

69 The parish of Oakham is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Oakham East (returning six councillors) and Oakham West (returning nine councillors). We propose in the light of our recommended district warding arrangements that Oakham parish should comprise four wards: Oakham North East returning three councillors, Oakham North West returning three councillors, Oakham South East returning three councillors and Oakham South West returning three councillors. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the Rutland County Council wards within Oakham town.

Draft Recommendation

Oakham Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, representing four wards: Oakham North East (returning three councillors), Oakham North West (returning three councillors), Oakham South East (returning three councillors) and Oakham South West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Rutland

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

70 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Rutland contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 8 July 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of Rutland County Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

71 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Rutland: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Rutland area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the area that is shown in more detail on the large map at the back of the report.

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

Map A1: Draft recommendations for Rutland: Key Map

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Although the Boundary Committee for England is not a Government body we seek to follow the Code.

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

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

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