

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 51

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
DISTRICT OF NORTHAVON IN THE COUNTY OF AVON

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the district of Northavon in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and of Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that district.
2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 13 May 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Northavon District Council, copies of which were circulated to the Avon County Council, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the district, the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of local newspapers circulating in the area and to the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from any interested bodies.
3. Northavon District Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. In doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were asked also to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. We understand that in accordance with section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the District Council have exercised an option for a system of whole council elections.

5. On 27 September 1974 the Northavon District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. The Council proposed to divide the area into 37 wards each returning 1, 2, 3 or 4 members to form a Council of 59, the same number as at present.

6. Before we considered the draft scheme in detail we pointed out to the District Council that, save only in the most exceptional circumstances, our guidelines, as set out in our Report No 6, did not permit district wards returning more than 3 members. The District Council thereupon agreed, pursuant to section 50(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements of the parish of Patchway where it had been proposed that the Callicroft ward of the parish should form a single district ward returning 4 members. The object of the review would be to divide the Callicroft ward into two separate parish wards - to be known as Callicroft and Coniston - which would serve also as district wards, each returning two district councillors. In due course the District Council informed us that they had completed the review and made an order accordingly.

7. Following the publication by the District Council of their draft scheme we received a number of letters. Some of these referred to the future electoral arrangements for the county of Avon and raised objections which lay outside the scope of our present review. A local political party submitted proposals for the reorganisation of a number of the wards proposed by the District Council to produce 5 wards returning a total of eight councillors instead of the ten proposed by the District Council. There were also comments from a district councillor suggesting that the proposed Patchway Stoke Lodge ward should be allocated an extra councillor and from a parish council suggesting that the parish of Dodington should form a single district ward returning three members.

8. The District Council sent us copies of the letters which they received after their publication of the scheme together with copies of their earlier correspondence with parish councils during the period when the scheme was being prepared. In a number of instances the District Council had felt able to adopt the proposals put to them and had modified their draft scheme accordingly. There remained suggestions which had not been accepted by the Council or which had arrived too late to be considered by them. These included proposals for an additional councillor to be assigned to each of the proposed Pilning & Severn Beach and Olveston wards and a suggestion that some of the more rural parts of the proposed Thornbury North-West ward might be included in the proposed Oldbury-on-Severn ward. The District Council had also received representations about the parish of Dodington similar to those which we had received.

9. We studied the draft scheme and, in a number of instances, we considered whether there were modifications which could be made to secure a more even standard of representation. However, the layout of the parishes and parish wards in the district and the pattern of local ties are such that we were forced to conclude that there were no sensible changes which could be made.

10. We then considered the comments which had been received where these suggested the alteration of the Council's draft scheme. In each case we concluded that the suggested change offered no advantage over the proposals submitted by the District Council. Accordingly we resolved that these comments should be rejected.

11. Subject only to the change referred to in paragraph 6 above we decided that the District Council's draft scheme provided a reasonable basis for the future electoral arrangements for the District in compliance with the rules in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act and our guidelines and we formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

12. On 23 December 1974 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying map, which defined the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that any comments should reach us by 28 February 1975.

13. The Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council responded to our invitation by suggesting that the proposed district ward comprising that parish should be allocated an additional councillor. We heard also from the Yate Parish Council suggesting that the number of councillors assigned to the proposed Yate North ward should be reduced from three to two. Both these suggested modifications were supported by the Northavon District Council who recommended that we amend the scheme accordingly.

14. The local political party which had written to us earlier suggesting the reorganisation of some of the wards proposed by the District Council wrote again re-stating their opposition to the scheme which we had adopted and pressing us to adopt the alternative arrangements which they had submitted. We heard again also from the district councillor who pressed the case for an extra councillor to be assigned to the proposed Patchway 'Stoke Lodge' ward and commenting on the District Council's decision to support the representations submitted by the Pilning and Severn Beach and Yate parish councils.

15. Finally we received letters from a parish council supporting the draft proposals and from the Avon County Council informing us that they had no observations to make but reserving the right to comment on the consequential effect of the proposals on the distribution of county electoral divisions when the proposals for the whole of the county had been finalised.

16. In view of these comments we considered that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with Section 65(2) of the 1972 Act and at our request, you appointed Mr L H Baines as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

17. Prior to the meeting we heard from the District Council that they wished to withdraw the amendment which they had proposed in relation to the extra councillor for the proposed Pilning & Severn Beach ward. The Pilning & Severn Beach Parish Council, however, pressed their case for an extra member to represent the proposed ward. Copies of these letters were forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner.

18. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at Thornbury on 20 May 1975 and thereafter visited the areas which were the subject of dispute. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us of the meeting is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

19. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that the representation of the Yate North ward be reduced from three to two councillors (but without any undertaking to review the situation within any specific time); that the Old Sodbury ward of the parish of Sodbury be omitted from the proposed Chipping Sodbury ward and the representation of the ward as amended be reduced from three to two councillors; that Old Sodbury should be added to the proposed Badminton ward, the representation to remain at one councillor; and that the draft proposals be amended to give effect to the above recommendations. With regard to the other issues discussed it was recommended that no action be taken to amend the draft proposals.

20. With his report the Assistant Commissioner sent us a letter which he had received from the Thornbury Town Council pursuant to his suggestion at the meeting - see page 9 of his report - that if the Town Council wished to pursue their

suggestion that the proposed Thornbury North East and Thornbury North West should be combined to form one ward returning three councillors they should communicate with us immediately. This proposal would improve the standard of representation in the northern part of Thornbury. We invited the District Council to let us have their comments and they replied that they had no objection to the Town Council's proposal. We later received an objection from a political party to our considering the proposal on the grounds that it had not been a proposal for discussion at the meeting.

21. We considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which had been received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We concluded that the alterations recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted. We also considered the proposal submitted by the Thornbury Town Council and the objection which we had received. We decided that we had sufficient information on which to reach a decision without re-opening the local meeting and concluded that the Town Council's proposal should be accepted. Subject to these amendments we decided that our draft proposals should be confirmed and that we should formulate our final proposals accordingly.

22. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedules 2 and 3 to this report. Schedule 2 defines the areas of the new wards and Schedule 3 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each. The boundaries of the new wards are illustrated on the attached map.

PUBLICATION

23. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the map are being sent to Northavon District Council and will be available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

July 1975

Review of Electoral Arrangements, - District of Northavon

Report of Assistant Commissioner

A local meeting was held on Tuesday 20th May, 1975 at the offices of the Northavon District Council, at which the persons whose names and addresses appear in Annex 'A' were present, to hear representations relating to the following proposed wards in the Draft proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England relating to the District of Northavon in the County of Avon:

Alveston	Pilning and Severn Beach
Badminton	Patchway (Stoke Lodge)
Chipping Sodbury	Thornbury (North West)
Dodington (North)	Wickwar
Iron Acton	Yate (North)
Oldbury-on-Severn	

The Commission's Draft proposals provided for the division of the District into 38 wards, the boundaries of which were defined by reference to existing parishes or wards of parishes, 21 wards each to return one councillor, 13 wards each to return two councillors, and 4 wards each to return three councillors, making a total of 59 councillors for the whole District.

Representations had been received about certain of the proposals:

(a) Pilning and Severn Beach Parish Council on the grounds of the large scattered and complex nature of the area re-iterated an earlier submission that the representation of the parish should be increased from one councillor, as proposed, to two councillors. In this they were at first supported by the District Council though this support was later withdrawn.

(b) Yate parish council objected to the allocation of three councillors to Yate (North) ward in view of the slowing down and uncertain rate of development in the ward and suggested a reduction to two councillors with a further review in two or three years' time.

(c) Dr. Dennis H. Fox, a member of the District Council, questioned the population forecasts relating to the proposed Patchway (Stoke Lodge) ward and suggested increasing the number of councillors from one to two.

(d) The South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party objected to the Draft proposals in so far as they claimed they were based on a politically motivated scheme submitted (on a party vote) by the District Council. In particular, they objected to a council membership of 59 which they maintained should be reduced to 57. As an alternative proposal they submitted a scheme which was one of six alternative schemes originally submitted to the District Council's Management Committee by the officers of the Council and which would amend the Commission's proposals in the following ways

- (i) the proposed wards of Oldbury-on-Severn and Thornbury (North West), each returning one councillor, to be combined into one ward returning two councillors.
- (ii) the proposed Wickwar ward to have added to it the parish of Rangeworthy with no increase in the representation of one councillor.

- (iii) the proposed Alveston ward to have added to it the parish of Iron Acton with no increase in the representation of two councillors.
- (iv) the proposed Chipping Sodbury ward to omit the Old Sodbury ward of the existing parish of Sodbury and the representation to be reduced from three to two councillors.
- (v) the proposed Badminton ward to have added to it the existing Old Sodbury ward with no increase in the representation of one councillor.

(e) Dodington parish council, querying planning forecasts of population, had earlier suggested the amalgamation of the existing Dodington North and Dodington South wards into a proposed new Dodington ward with a representation of three councillors instead of two. They had not re-iterated this suggestion on publication of the Commission's Draft proposals, but appeared at the local meeting in support of their earlier representations.

(f) At the local meeting Mrs. Pam Rickard, a member of the Thornbury Town Council put forward a suggestion, which she said was in accordance with a resolution of that council (though not yet conveyed to the Commission) that the proposed Thornbury (North-East) and Thornbury (North-West) wards should be combined as one ward returning three councillors instead of the proposed representation of the two separate wards of two and one councillors respectively. This was on the ground of uneven development in the whole area of the two wards where expected development in Thornbury (North-East) was not taking place.

These various representations were developed and dealt with at the local meeting as follows:-

Pilning and Severn Beach

No representative of the Parish Council attended the local meeting in support of their objections and suggestions, and in these circumstances the letters (of 10th May, 1974 and 8th October, 1974) containing their request for an additional councillor were read to the meeting. On behalf of the District Council it was pointed out that this was a case of the largest single member ward wishing to become the smallest two-member ward with an estimated 1980 electorate of 2006, compared with the 1974/75 register of 1843. A change of planning policy had resulted in a higher density of development being approved for a large scheme in the parish, and on the strength of the increase in the 1980 electorate expected as a result, and of the scattered nature of a parish of some 1533 hectares the District Council had decided to support the parish council's request, but had withdrawn that support on an estimate from their Planning Department that the net increase over the five-year period would only be 50 electors.

Mr. Day, on behalf of the South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party, and Dr. Dennis Fox opposed an extra representative on the grounds that rural weighting was excluded by law and that the area of the ward was in the circumstances irrelevant.

It was clear that the District Council's estimates of population and electorate had been very carefully prepared, and the arguments put forward at the meeting against the parish council's suggestion appeared to be soundly based; I have no hesitation in rejecting the request of the parish council.

Yate (North)

Mr. Wheway on behalf of the Yate parish council objected to the allocation of three councillors to Yate (North) ward which had been based on an increase in expected electorate from 1578 in 1974 to 5249 in 1980. The development in Yate (North) was about the last stage of the development of Yate as a new town and the large increase was purely a matter of conjecture. In present economic circumstances the rate of development was highly speculative and only about 20 houses had been built in the area in the last year. The parish council's proposal for two instead of three councillors was based on the assumption that about half the original expected increase would be achieved by 1980, though they coupled this proposal with a request for a further review in two or three years time. Mr. Maude, for the District Council, supported the parish council's proposal on the same grounds and drew attention to drainage problems in the area, which were not yet resolved, and which might aggravate any delay.

Dr. Fox, in opposition to the District Council's view, claimed that everything was ripe for the expected development to take place, but Mr. Nash, of the Northavon District Labour Group, said that a majority of the District Council favoured the views of the parish council and that development would depend on questions of drainage and of availability of finance.

Mr. Kowalczyk of the Planning Department conceded that there would undoubtedly be delays not envisaged when the forecasts were made.

The parish council's case as presented and supported at the meeting was undoubtedly more compelling than the written submission made by them on 15th January, 1975. Any area where large and rapid increases of population are planned must always present difficult problems of representation over a period involving some years; in this case the factors of the economic situation, some as yet unresolved drainage problems, the actual rate of development over the past year, as well as the considered views of the District and parish councils and the calculations of the planning department lead me to conclude that the probable delays in the rate of development would not be likely to justify more than two councillors for the ward by 1980. Unless this view and the combined local opinion which has helped to form it is proved very seriously wrong by events, I do not think a special review in two or three years time would be justified and a reduction from three to two councillors should certainly not be accompanied by any undertaking to hold such an early review.

Patchway (Stoke Lodge)

Dr. Fox, who had been a representative on the District Council of Patchway, and subsequently and, indeed, now when the parish was warded, of Stoke Lodge ward, said he was on the Management Committee of the District Council charged with the preparation of the scheme of electoral arrangements.

He was, and had been for many years, a General Practitioner in the area. He re-iterated his previous submission that rural weighting should no longer be applied and said that the projected electorate of the ward by 1980 was 2000 compared with the present register (1975/76) of 2008. The main development of the area had taken place between 1958 - 62 and the nature of the population at that time, largely young newly-married couples, coupled with the present ages of their families, implied a higher proportion of electors in 1980 than had been allowed for in the planning calculations. His own medical records going back to the period of main development, he claimed, bore out his view and suggested that his figures were more likely to be right than those of the planning department.

He also claimed that the development of a Polytechnic at Stoke Gifford for an expected student population of 8000, of whom about 1000 would come from the resident population and for 4500 - 5000 of whom accommodation in the area would be required, would have an inevitable impact on the electorate for the Stoke Lodge ward. In answer to my questions he claimed that because of the high birth rate in the area between 1960 - 1963 the projected electorate of 2000 should be increased by 100 - 150 and that the Polytechnic (which would achieve a student population in the next year of 2500, the rate of further development being dependent on funds being available) would account for a further increase in the projected electorate of 100.

Mr. Maude, for the District Council, gave details of the Council's calculations, which he said refuted Dr. Fox's figures, as follows:

- (i) The Stoke Lodge Ward was covered by 5 enumeration areas in the 1971 Census. One of the 5 areas also covered a small part of the Callicroft Ward (about 300 people) but it is thought the Census breakdown by ages for these 5 areas give a fair reflection of the breakdown for the Ward. The figures for Stoke Lodge compared with the whole of the District are as follows:-

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Stoke Lodge</u>	<u>Northavon</u>
0 - 4 years	9.02%	10.25%
5 - 9 years	11.07%	10.02%
10 - 14 years	8.32%	7.44%
15 - 19 years	5.72%	6.06%
	<u>34.13%</u>	<u>33.77%</u>

- (ii) The whole of the 15 - 19 age group is now on the Register of Electors except for those that have left the District. The age group having a bearing on the 1980 electorate is the 10 - 14 years group. In fact the older children in this group are already on the Register, but this is counteracted by the fact that some of the 5 - 9 years group will also be included by 1980. The 10 - 14 years group shows an advantage of 0.88% for Stoke Lodge compared with the whole District.

- (iii) The 10 - 14 years group comprises 8.32% of the population of Stoke Lodge Ward on the Census figures and this represents an addition of 260 electors by 1980. On present planning policy only another 4 houses will be erected by 1980 (say 12 electors), so that the maximum number of new voters that can be expected is approximately 272.
- (iv) Against this will be the number of deaths and the number of young people who leave the Ward on marriage or to find work in other parts of the Country. The 1971 Census shows that the number of people aged over 70 is considerably less in Stoke Lodge than in the District as a whole (3.90% against 5.42%) and it can be assumed that the death rate will be correspondingly lower. The death rate for the District as a whole was 0.8% per annum in 1971, and if a rate of 0.6% is assumed for Stoke Lodge there will be a loss of 94 electors in the next 5 years. Because of the lack of new building in the Ward the young people now living in Stoke Lodge will have to find homes outside the Ward when they marry. Those that do find homes in the Ward will normally only be replacing existing electors. A number of young people can also be expected to leave home to find work elsewhere or for other reasons. The majority of people who leave the Ward for these reasons over the next 5 years were in 1971 in the 10 - 14 and 15 - 19 years age groups, representing 14.02% of the population (435 people). If only a half of these people move, the Council's estimate will be correct. By 1980 these people will be aged 20 - 30, and a half is probably a low estimate of the number who will marry or leave the Ward.

Mr. Dolling said that the future development of the Polytechnic was at this stage very uncertain; it was in any case a building planned in four phases. He said that the view of the District Council, with which he largely went along, was supported by the Patchway parish council and this was confirmed by Mr. Brook who said the parish council were unanimous on the matter.

Mr. Day supported the District Council and noted the request as an example of the demands likely to be made in an area of expanding population and of the inflexibility of a Council of 59 members (against a ceiling of 60) compared with the 57 members proposed by his Party.

As against the detailed calculations made by the District Council, even though they did not specifically take the Polytechnic factor into account, I do not think that Dr. Fox made out his case for an additional councillor. The combination of planning policy and the actual availability of accommodation in the ward supports the District Council's estimates and seems to me sufficiently conclusive to reject Dr. Fox's proposal.

Dodington

Dr. Harris, for the Dodington parish council, urged that Dodington, where the character of the North ward has changed dramatically in the last ten years, could be encouraged to develop as a community by being linked with Dodington (South) ward thus avoiding what he termed as an unnecessary split across the community.

He further developed the argument set out in the parish council's letter to the Commission of 23rd September, 1974 that the estimated 1980 electorate is too low; that since the 1974 Register showing Dodington (North) electorate at 3420, 150 houses have been occupied and work started on a further 200 - 300 houses for which planning permission has been given. Add a further figure for children coming of age in 1975 - 1979 and, he claimed, a projected 1980 electorate of 4200 - 4600 was not unreasonable. He maintained that various alternative groupings of parishes were possible, and gave one such grouping as an example, to avoid excessive rural weighting by the omission of Dodington (South) from the proposed Badminton ward, if the two Dodington wards were combined.

Mr. Marshall spoke in support of the figures quoted by Dr. Harris and estimated the combined electorate at 4800 by 1980.

Mr. Maude for the District Council, while conceding that their estimate might be on the low side, as in other rapidly developing areas, pointed out that in such areas the ratio between electors and population tends to be low because the new houses are largely occupied by young families. When the ward was completely developed the electorate might be about 4100 rising over future years to 4500 as the age pattern settles to nearer the average for the District. At these figures Dodington (North) would be the largest two-member ward in the District, but if representation were increased would be the smallest three-member ward. There was therefore, no anomaly in the present proposed representation of two councillors.

In this he was supported by Mr. Day who also claimed that Dodington (South) had much more community of interest with a parish such as Acton Turville than with Dodington (North).

Mr. Monyard said that Dyrham and Hinton, a parish likely to be affected by any re-grouping consequential on a linking of Dodington (South) with Dodington (North) would wish to remain grouped, as the Commission proposed, in the Badminton ward, and Mr. Nash, for Wick and Abson parish which might similarly be affected, also strongly supported the present proposed status.

An inspection confirms that the character of the two wards is now completely different and this factor, coupled with the very marked disparity in numbers of the electorate makes it in my view quite unreasonable that the two wards should be combined for electoral purposes. On this basis, even if the estimates of the parish council are right, the case for a third councillor is barely made out. I prefer to accept as more likely the revised estimates put forward by the District Council and to table the view that the parish council have not made out their case for an increase in representation.

Alternative proposals of the South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party

Mr. Day said that the object of electoral arrangements was to achieve impartiality. His Party welcomed the machinery devised to achieve this end and had no criticism of the Commission. Their criticism was of the District Council who, with a Conservative membership of 28, a Labour membership of 24, and the remaining independent members balanced in their support, had a moral responsibility to produce a balanced proposal.

The fact that the Council had divided on party lines over amendments to one of the schemes put forward impartially by their officers meant that the District Council's views must carry substantially less weight in the event of disagreement than if they had been based on a generally acceptable agreement within the Council. Mr. Day's, and his Party's, own impartiality had been demonstrated that very morning by his support of proposals, which, though impartial in origin, were in fact against Labour party political interests.

He then developed the theme that within the suggested limits a Council membership of 57 was almost too close to the ceiling in a rapidly expanding area. The proposal for 59 councillors which emanated from the District Council was far too close. In a fast growing district with many uncertainties it was important to keep some flexibility to enable extra representation, when and where justified, to be given without disturbing representation elsewhere which might well be at the proper level.

On this point Mr. Maude pointed out that if the District Council's suggestions about Yate (North) were to be adopted the total membership would be reduced to 58.

Oldbury-on-Severn

Thornbury (North West)

Mr. Day said that these suggestions were consequential on the adoption by the Party in total of one of the schemes (E.2) put forward by the Chief Executive of the Council. They were not vital to the Party's case, did not affect total representation and he therefore withdrew them. There was general concurrence at the meeting with this action.

Wickwar

Iron Acton

Alveston

Mr. Day claimed that the onus should be on the District Council to say why the Chief Executive's scheme had been altered by them.

Mr. Maude referred to the manner in which the various alternative schemes presented to the Council had been prepared and said that as officers they had taken no account of relationships between parishes. In fact, ~~none~~ of the parishes concerned in this part of the scheme had objected to the District Council's proposals. On representation, he submitted that, though rural weighting had been abolished, it was preferable in a scattered rural area to go below rather than above the norm. He also said there was objection to combining Alveston on one side of the A38 road with Iron Acton, a place of a different character 5 miles away on the other side of the A38.

Mr. Glover, and Mr. Judd (ward representative for Alveston and Tytherington) supported Mr. Maude about association with Iron Acton. Mr. Day acknowledged generally the validity of local opinion here and though not specifically withdrawing his proposal appeared not to press it.

The arguments in favour of the proposal had not of course been deployed at the meeting other than in the general introductory terms of seeking to limit the size of the Council. Superficially and on paper the proposal has merits in this respect, nor do I think, after inspection, that the addition of Rangeworthy parish to Wickwar would be objectionable or create any problems. The association, however, of Alveston, Tytherington and Iron Acton parishes in one ward would be less happy, for the reasons given by the District Council and the parishes, and I do not think there is sufficient, if any, balance of advantage in the Labour party proposals to justify their adoption here.

Chipping Sodbury

Badminton

Mr. Day claimed that Old Sodbury had much more in common with the parishes in the proposed Badminton ward than with Chipping Sodbury from which it is effectively divorced. He also argued that the proposed Badminton ward had too few electors - 1007 - against the District average of 1437.

Mr. Maude claimed that the merit of the draft proposals was that the whole of the parish of Sodbury would be in one District ward. The low number in the Badminton ward could be justified by the very large area (4906 hectares).

A letter was submitted to the meeting from the Chairman of the Badminton parish council (the Duke of Beaufort) stating that they had no objection to Old Sodbury but could not see any useful purpose would be served by including them as they (Old Sodbury) are chiefly down in the Vale while the remaining parishes are all on the hill in the Cotswolds.

Mr. Monyard reinforced this latter point and Dr. Harris reiterated that Dodington (South) should be joined with Dodington (North).

Mr. Day expressed concern at the attitude towards rural weighting displayed by the District Council. On the question of 'hill' and 'vale' he pointed out that the majority of Dodington (South) and of Dyrham and Hinton parish, both areas part of Badminton ward in the Commission's draft proposals, were within the valley area and immediately bordered on the Old Sodbury area.

I subsequently inspected in some detail the whole of the areas affected, in the company of Mr. Monyard who knows the area and the people intimately. As has occurred in several parts of this District, rapid development has created a situation where at Old Sodbury the village and rural community pattern has been retained cheek by jowl with urban development and population of a totally different size and character. I did not think that the arguments for retaining the whole of the parish of Sodbury in one ward carried great weight and, indeed, to me they appeared to lack conviction.

If Old Sodbury is transferred to the proposed Badminton ward, the area of the ward would be large but the addition of 520 electors would bring the number of electors per councillor much closer to the average for the District of 1437. The small communities or hamlets of Wapley, Codrington, Hinton and Dyrham, already in the proposed Badminton ward, are below the hill and parts of Old Sodbury, though admittedly sparsely populated, are on the hill and indeed adjoin Badminton parish, Communication would present no problem, with the A46, A432 and B4040 all meeting in the Old Sodbury area. With the addition of Old Sodbury the Badminton ward would be better balanced with a collection of small villages and hamlets each retaining their own individuality and identity but with a community of interest in a typical rural and agricultural area of the county.

In my view the advantages of a better balance of representation, the grouping of areas with a greater community of interest, and the reduction of one councillor - giving greater margin and flexibility for future adjustments - when taken together fully justify the amendments to this area proposed by the South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party.

Thornbury

Mrs. Rickards had expected to speak in support of a formal submission by Thornbury Town Council for a combination of Thornbury (North-East) and Thornbury (North-West) as one ward returning three councillors more particularly on the grounds that projected development in the North-East ward was not taking place and that they had been advised by the Planning Authority that the Thornbury estimated figures would not be realised. Dr. Fox on behalf of the Planning Authority disputed that such advice had been given. I indicated to Mrs. Rickards that though I would note her remarks, it would be inappropriate to call on the District Council to comment at the meeting on the suggestion put forward as it was clearly related to forward estimating on which the District Council would doubtless wish to give a detailed reply. I suggested that if the Thornbury Town Council wished to pursue the matter, they should immediately communicate with the Commission, who, if they decided at this stage to consider the representations would doubtless call on the District Council for comments. I am unwilling, and indeed unable, to advise upon a case put forward imperfectly (through no fault of Mrs. Rickards) and without full supporting information and figures at this point. If, as seems likely, this is a submission which, if pursued, will depend almost entirely on predictions of development and the effect on electorate, it may well be a case which the Commission can decide on paper submissions alone.

At the end of the meeting I inspected the following areas, accompanied (with the concurrence of the meeting, all present having been given a similar opportunity) by Mr. Moryard: Alveston, Tytherington, Rangeworthy, Iron Acton, Yate, Dodington North and South, Chipping Sodbury, Old Sodbury, Badminton, Acton Turville, Tormarton, Dyrham and Hinton. I later inspected the areas of Patchway (Stoke Lodge) and Pilning and Severn Beach. I had earlier inspected Wickwar and Thornbury.

Arising from the meeting and my inspections I recommend that no action be taken to amend the draft proposals as requested by the Dodington Parish Council, by the Pilning and Severn Beach parish council, by Dr. Fox in relation to the Patchway (Stoke Lodge) ward nor by the South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party in relation to Oldbury-On-Severn and Thornbury (North-West) wards and to Wickwar, Iron Acton and Alveston wards.

I recommend that, in accordance with the request of the Yate parish council, supported by the Northavon District Council, the representation of Yate (North) ward be reduced from three to two councillors (but without any undertaking to review the situation within any specific time). I recommend also that, as suggested by the South Gloucestershire Constituency Labour Party, the Old Sodbury ward of the parish of Sodbury be omitted from the proposed Chipping Sodbury ward and the representation of the ward as amended be reduced from three to two councillors; and that Old Sodbury should be added to the proposed Badminton ward, the representation to remain at one councillor; and that the draft proposals be amended to give effect to the above recommendations.

28 May 1975



Assistant Commissioner

SCHEDULE 2

NORTHAVON DISTRICT: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARIES

ALMONDSBURY	The parish of Almondsbury
ALVESTON	The parishes of Alveston and Tytherington
BADMINTON	The parishes of Acton Turville, Badminton, Dyrham & Hinton and Tormarton, the South ward of the parish of Dodington and the Old Sodbury ward of the parish of Sodbury
CHARFIELD	The parishes of Charfield, Falfield and Tortworth
CHIPPING SODBURY	The Chipping Sodbury ward of the parish of Sodbury
DODINGTON NORTH	The North ward of the parish of Dodington
FILTON CHARBOROUGH	The Charborough ward of the parish of Filton
FILTON CONYGRE	The Conygre ward of the parish of Filton
FILTON NORTHVILLE	The Northville ward of the parish of Filton
FRAMPTON COTTERELL CENTRAL	The Central ward of the parish of Frampton Cotterell
FRAMPTON COTTERELL EAST	The East ward of the parish of Frampton Cotterell
FRAMPTON COTTERELL WEST	The West ward of the parish of Frampton Cotterell
HAWKESBURY	The parishes of Hawkesbury, Horton and Little Sodbury
IRON ACTON	The parishes of Iron Acton and Rangeworthy
MARSHFIELD	The parishes of Cold Ashton, Doynton and Marshfield
OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN	The parishes of Aust, Hill, Oldbury-on-Severn and Rockhampton
OLVESTON	The parish of Olveston
PATCHWAY CALLICROFT	The Callicroft ward of the parish of Patchway
PATCHWAY CONISTON	The Coniston ward of the parish of Patchway
PATCHWAY STOKE LODGE	The Stoke Lodge ward of the parish of Patchway
PILNING & SEVERN BEACH	The parish of Pilning & Severn Beach
PUCKLECHURCH	The parish of Pucklechurch

STOKE GIFFORD SOUTH	The South ward of the parish of Stoke Gifford
STOKE GIFFORD NORTH	The North ward of the parish of Stoke Gifford
THORNBURY NORTH	The North East ward and the North West ward of the parish of Thornbury
THORNBURY SOUTH	The Central ward and the South ward of the parish of Thornbury
WESTERLEIGH STANSHAWES	The Stanshawes ward of the parish of Westerleigh
WESTERLEIGH & COALPIT HEATH	The Westerleigh ward and the Coalpit Heath ward of the parish of Westerleigh
WICK & ABSON	The parish of Wick & Abson
WICKWAR	The parishes of Cromhall and Wickwar
WINTERBOURNE FRENCHAY	The Frenchay ward of the parish of Winterbourne
WINTERBOURNE	The Winterbourne ward of the parish of Winterbourne
WINTERBOURNE DOWN & HAMBROOK	The Winterbourne Down & Hambrook ward of the parish of Winterbourne
YATE CENTRAL	The Central ward of the parish of Yate
YATE NORTH	The North ward of the parish of Yate
YATE SOUTH	The South ward of the parish of Yate
YATE WEST	The West ward of the parish of Yate

NORTHAVON DISTRICT: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO.OF COUNCILLORS</u>
ALMONDSBURY	2
ALVESTON	2
BADMINTON	1
CHARFIELD	1
CHIPPING SODBURY	2
DODINGTON NORTH	2
FILTON CHARBOROUGH	2
FILTON CONYGRE	2
FILTON NORTHVILLE	2
FRAMPTON COTTERELL CENTRAL	1
FRAMPTON COTTERELL EAST	1
FRAMPTON COTTERELL WEST	1
HAWKESBURY	1
IRON ACTON	1
MARSHFIELD	1
OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN	1
OLVESTON	1
PATCHWAY CALLICROFT	2
PATCHWAY CONISTON	2
PATCHWAY STOKE LODGE	1
PILNING & SEVERN BEACH	1
PUCKLECHURCH	1
STOKE GIFFORD SOUTH	1
STOKE GIFFORD NORTH	2
THORNBURY NORTH	3
THORNBURY SOUTH	3
WESTERLEIGH STANSHAWES	2

NAME OF WARDNO. OF COUNCILLORS

WESTERLEIGH & COALPIT HEATH	2
WICK & ABSON	1
WICKWAR	1
WINTERBOURNE FRENCHAY	1
WINTERBOURNE	3
WINTERBOURNE DOWN & HAMBROOK	1
YATE CENTRAL	1
YATE NORTH	2
YATE SOUTH	2
YATE WEST	1