

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for North West Leicestershire

Report to the Electoral Commission

June 2002

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Coalville 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 implementing them.

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.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North West Leicestershire.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of North West Leicestershire's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 15 January 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. 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 and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received by the LGCE during consultation on its draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.**

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in North West Leicestershire:

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

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 75–76) are that:

- **North West Leicestershire District Council should have 38 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**

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

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

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

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

- **revised warding arrangements and a redistribution of councillors serving Worthington Parish Council.**

All further representations on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission at the address below, and should reach the Commission by 18 July 2002.

**The Secretary
Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

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

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

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for North West Leicestershire

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

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North West Leicestershire District Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of North West Leicestershire. The seven two-tier districts in Leicestershire and Leicester unitary authority have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

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

3 In 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 North West Leicestershire was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). 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, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as North West Leicestershire is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did 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 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when the LGCE wrote to North West Leicestershire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the Local Government Associations, Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies

in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 September 2001. At Stage Two the LGCE considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 15 January 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire*, and ended on 11 March 2002. During this period, comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The district of North West Leicestershire, as its name suggests, is situated in the north-west of the county of Leicestershire. The district is bounded to the east by Charnwood Borough, to the south by the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth and to the north and west by the county of Derbyshire. It is within close proximity to the major cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and benefits from strong transport links, including the M1 motorway and the A42. The current population stands at 85,000 and is spread over some 27,933 hectares.

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

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

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

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

Map 1: Existing Wards in North West Leicestershire

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

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

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North West Leicestershire District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Long Whatton ward were relatively over-represented by 23 per cent, while electors in Hugglescote ward were significantly under-represented by 40 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

15 During Stage One the LGCE received three representations, including a district-wide scheme from North West Leicestershire District Council, and representations from Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council and Worthington Parish Council. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire*.

16 The draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals, in view of the unanimous support given them by the Council, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties prior to the submission of its scheme. However, the LGCE moved away from the District Council's scheme in three areas, in order to secure a better reflection of community interests and identities and more identifiable boundaries. It proposed that:

- North West Leicestershire District Council should be served by 38 councillors, compared with the current 40, representing 20 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council, Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council and Worthington Parish Council.

Draft Recommendation

North West Leicestershire District Council should comprise 38 councillors, serving 20 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

17 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 18 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

18 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received 17 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of North West Leicestershire District Council.

North West Leicestershire District Council

19 The District Council supported the draft recommendations for all areas apart from the proposed Ravenstone & Packington, Snibston and Valley wards. It stated that it had “grave concerns” over the proposed parish wards in Ravenstone with Snibston parish, asserting that those electors in the proposed The Limes parish ward strongly feel part of Ravenstone with Snibston parish. The District Council opposed placing these electors in Snibston ward for district warding purposes, and urged that the draft recommendations for these wards be reconsidered and that its Stage One proposals be adopted as the final recommendations.

Leicestershire County Council

20 Leicestershire County Council stated that it envisaged “considerable difficulties ... in using the wards contained in the draft recommendations as building blocks for future County electoral divisions”. It also stated that ward names in towns should contain the name of the town.

The North West Leicestershire Labour Party

21 The North West Leicestershire Constituency Labour Party opposed the draft recommendations for Ravenstone & Packington and Snibston wards, in particular the creation of a parish ward for The Limes estate, which, it claimed, would “create difficulties for electors and overly complicate the electoral process” and “reduce the opportunity for Ravenstone Parish (sic) based electors to be involved in the democratic process”.

Parish and Town Councils

22 Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council stated that it did not wish to make any representations in respect of the draft recommendations. Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations for Ravenstone & Packington and Snibston wards, in particular the creation of The Limes parish ward, and stated that it preferred the District Council’s Stage One proposal. Staunton Harold Parish Meeting reiterated its Stage One opposition to being transferred to the proposed Valley ward, stating it had shared community interests with Breedon on the Hill parish and wished to remain in the Breedon ward.

Other Representations

23 A County Councillor and Borough Councillor for Charnwood echoed Leicestershire County Council’s proposal to associate the urban wards with the name of the town in which they are situated, and particularly specified that the wards in the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch should be preceded by the name ‘Ashby’. A District Councillor for Ravenstone & Packington ward and nine local residents echoed North West Leicestershire District Council’s opposition to the draft recommendations for the Ravenstone & Packington and Snibston wards.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

24 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

25 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

28 Since 1975 there has been a 23 per cent increase in the electorate of North West Leicestershire district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2 per cent from 68,610 to 70,071 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Hugglescote ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Holly Hayes ward. However, a number of wards will remain static or see a slight decline in electorate. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

29 The LGCE received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

30 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

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

32 During Stage Three, no representations were received regarding the issue of council size. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendation of a council size of 38 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

33 The LGCE carefully considered all representations it received during Stage One. In view of the unanimous support given to the District Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties prior to the submission of its scheme, the LGCE proposed basing its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme. It considered that the scheme provided a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, bearing in mind local community identities and interests, the LGCE moved away from the District Council's proposals in three areas in order to secure a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and more identifiable boundaries.

34 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

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

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

Breedon, Castle Donington, Kegworth and Long Whatton wards

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

37 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of Staunton Harold from the existing Breedon ward into the proposed Valley ward, as detailed below. Breedon ward would therefore comprise the parishes of Belton, Breedon on the Hill, Isley cum Langley and the Diseworth parish ward of the parish of Long Whatton & Diseworth and would continue to be represented by a single councillor. The Long Whatton parish ward of Long Whatton & Diseworth parish would be included in the new two-member Kegworth & Whatton ward together with the parish of Kegworth. The proposed three-member Castle Donington ward would comprise the parishes of Castle Donington and Lockington-Hemington.

38 The LGCE carefully considered the District Council's proposals for this area. It agreed that it was necessary to transfer the parish of Staunton Harold out of Breedon ward in the interests of electoral equality. Furthermore, it noted that the M1 and A42 provide significant boundaries between the settlements of Long Whatton and Diseworth in the parish of Long Whatton and provide similar boundaries between the settlements of Kegworth and Lockington & Hemington. The LGCE therefore accepted the Council's proposals for the new wards of Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton and, as a result, adopted them as part of its draft recommendations.

39 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton wards would be 12 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (8 per cent above, 1 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2006, respectively).

40 During Stage Three, the District Council supported the draft recommendations. One other representation was received in response to the draft recommendations for these wards. Staughton Harold Parish Meeting stated its objection to being transferred into the proposed Valley ward. It further emphasised that it had shared community interests with Breedon on the Hill parish and wished to remain in the Breedon ward.

41 Having carefully considered Staunton Harold Parish Meeting's objection to the draft recommendation to transfer it into the proposed Valley ward, we have concluded that we cannot retain the parish within Breedon ward, as this would result in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality of 15 per cent in Valley ward and 14 per cent in Breedon ward by 2006. We also note that the proposed ward was part of the District Council's Stage One submission, which had received unanimous support from the council. Given the District Council's broad support for the draft recommendations as a whole, and the lack of other local opposition to the draft recommendations for these wards, we have decided to confirm them as final.

42 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Breedon, Castle Donington and Kegworth & Whatton wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2.

Coalville, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick wards

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

44 At Stage One, the District Council proposed revised warding arrangements for this area. It proposed extending the southern-most boundary of Thringstone ward to encompass the area known as New Swannington from Whitwick ward, using the A511 Coalville bypass to the south of this area as the new boundary, retaining the ward's existing boundaries to the west, north,

east and south-east. The majority of the remainder of Whitwick ward would be joined with the north-western part of Holly Hayes ward; the area around Hall Lane to the north of Kingfisher Close/Sharpley Avenue, using the A511 (Stephenson Way) as its south-western boundary.

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

46 The LGCE carefully considered the District Council’s proposals for the Coalville area. It agreed with the majority of the District Council’s proposals for the area and, as a result, decided to adopt them as part of its draft recommendations. In particular, the LGCE recognised that the A511 Coalville bypass represents a significant and identifiable boundary in the area. In addition, it concurred that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, the electors in Kane Close should be transferred from Snibston ward into Coalville ward and the electors in properties 74 and 76 Ashburton Road should be transferred from Snibston ward into Hugglescote ward. However, the LGCE departed from the District Council’s proposals for the western boundary of Snibston ward. It acknowledged the District Council’s concerns over the parish boundary of Ravenstone with Snibston parish running through The Limes estate. However, it did not consider the retention of this boundary to be either in the interests of the local community or conducive to providing effective and convenient local government. The LGCE therefore proposed creating a parish ward of Ravenstone with Snibston parish for that area which falls within The Limes estate. This parish ward, to be named The Limes parish ward and to be included in Snibston ward for district council purposes, would enable all electors within the estate to be united in the same ward at district level. The LGCE proposed that the remainder of Ravenstone with Snibston parish form a new Ravenstone parish ward. It believed that the creation of these parish wards was justifiable in terms of the provision of effective and convenient local government, using identifiable boundaries that are tied to ground detail.

47 Under the draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed two-member Coalville, Snibston and Thringstone wards would be 1 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent above the district average, respectively (3 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 1 per cent above by 2006, respectively). The number of electors per councillor in Whitwick ward, represented by 3 councillors, would be 3 per cent below the district average (6 per cent below by 2006).

48 During Stage Three, 13 representations were received in response to the draft recommendations for these wards, from North West Leicestershire District Council, Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council, the North West Leicestershire Constituency Labour Party, a District Councillor for Ravenstone and nine local residents. All 13 representations were

unanimous in opposing the draft recommendations to create two parish wards within the parish of Ravenstone with Snibston, in order that those electors in The Limes estate could be represented in Snibston at district ward level. The District Council stated that “that part of the parish which you [the LGCE] are proposing to create as ‘The Limes’ parish ward strongly feels part of Ravenstone”, and requested that the LGCE reconsider its recommendations. The District Council further proposed that its Stage One proposals for the wards of Ravenstone, Snibston and Valley be adopted as the final recommendations.

49 We have carefully considered the opposition to the draft recommendations to create a parish ward for The Limes estate, in order that those electors may vote in Snibston ward for district council elections. We recognise that this has been a contentious issue locally. We note that the alternative proposals submitted by the District Council during Stage One would entail the parish of Packington being included in the large rural Valley ward. As detailed below, the LGCE believed, and we are also of the opinion, that the geography of the District Council’s proposed Valley ward would make the provision of effective and convenient local government difficult, due to its size and the dispersal of the communities within it. We are therefore not persuaded to adopt the District Council’s proposed Valley ward. As a consequence, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation to combine Packington parish with Ravenstone with Snibston parish in a proposed Ravenstone & Packington ward. However, as this would result in an unacceptable level of electoral equality of 33 per cent in the resultant Ravenstone & Packington ward, we propose confirming the draft recommendation to create The Limes parish ward in Ravenstone with Snibston parish, in order to enable all electors within The Limes estate to be represented in Snibston ward. Furthermore, we note that, in its Stage One submission, the District Council stated that the parish and ward boundary which passes through The Limes estate was “not ideal” and “in need of revision”. As previously mentioned, the LGCE asserted in its draft recommendations that it did not consider the retention of this boundary to be conducive to the provision of effective and convenient local government, and we are also of that opinion. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Snibston ward as final. Given the broad support given to the draft recommendations in general by the District Council and the lack of local opposition to the proposed wards of Coalville, Thringston and Whitwick, we have also decided to confirm the draft recommendations for these wards as final.

50 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Coalville, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick wards would be the same as under the LGCE’s draft recommendations. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Greenhill, Holly Hayes, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards

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

52 At Stage One the District Council proposed creating a new Bardon ward, which would comprise elements of the existing Greenhill, Holly Hayes and Hugglescote wards. Specifically, Bardon ward would comprise the parish of Bardon and the residential area on and between Bardon Road and Broom Leys Road, from Greenhill and Hugglescote wards. The District Council further stated that the new ward should be readily identifiable with the name Bardon,

given that it would comprise Bardon parish, the area around Bardon Road and Bardon Quarry. The remaining boundaries of Hugglescote ward would remain unchanged, although with the minor modifications to its northern boundary as detailed above. The revised Greenhill ward would comprise the remainder of the ward and the parish of Charley. The District Council proposed that the parish of Normanton le Heath be transferred from Ibstock & Heather ward into the revised Ravenstone ward, leaving Ibstock & Heather ward comprising the two parishes of the same name. Under the District Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bardon, Greenhill, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards would be 3 per cent below, equal to, 8 per cent below, and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (8 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2006).

53 The LGCE carefully considered the District Council's proposals for this area. It agreed that the significant development in the area between Bardon Road and Broom Leys Road should be united in one ward and that the new ward be named Bardon, given the prevalence of the name Bardon in the local area. However, the LGCE proposed to make a small modification to the northern boundary of Bardon ward in order to improve the levels of electoral equality in both Bardon and Greenhill wards. It proposed that the boundary should follow the centre of Broom Leys Road, instead of running to the north of the properties on the northern side of the road, which had the added benefit of providing a more identifiable boundary. The LGCE decided to adopt the District Council's proposed Bardon, Greenhill and Hugglescote wards, subject to the above minor amendment, although it agreed with the District Council's observation that the situation of combining rural and urban areas "is not considered to be ideal". Nevertheless, given the constraints of the district boundary in this area, the LGCE was of the opinion that the District Council's proposals appeared to secure the best balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria. The LGCE also proposed adopting the District Council's revised Ibstock & Heather ward, as it secured better electoral equality than the current arrangements and would facilitate the provision of a good scheme across the district as a whole.

54 Under the draft recommendations, Bardon and Hugglescote wards would be represented by one and two councillors respectively. The number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent below and 8 per cent below the district average, respectively (4 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Greenhill and Ibstock & Heather wards would be 1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (2 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2006).

55 During Stage Three, one representation was received in response to the draft recommendations for these wards. North West Leicestershire District Council stated that "with regard to the recommendations affecting ... Bardon/Greenhill wards, the Council supports these changes". Given the support from the District Council and the absence of other responses, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for these wards as final.

56 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Bardon, Greenhill, Hugglescote and Ibstock & Heather wards would be the same as under the LGCE's draft recommendations. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

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

57 These wards are situated in the west and centre of the district and comprise the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and the more rural parishes to its east. Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe wards comprise the parish wards of the same names of Ashby-de-la-Zouch parish. Ravenstone ward comprises the parishes of Ravenstone with Snibston and Packington, Swannington ward comprises the parishes of Coleorton and Swannington and Worthington ward comprises the parishes of Osgathorpe and Worthington. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Castle ward and the two-member Holywell and Ivanhoe wards is 39 per cent above, 11 per cent above and 6 per cent below the district

average, respectively (35 per cent above, 14 per cent above and 9 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member wards of Ravenstone, Swannington and Worthington is 33 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 15 per cent below the district average, respectively (34 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 16 per cent below by 2006).

58 At Stage One, the District Council proposed modifications to all the wards in this area, due to the unacceptable levels of electoral inequality. In Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the District Council proposed transferring the area in the south west of the existing Castle ward (the part to the west of Lower Packington Road and Windsor Road) into a revised Ivanhoe ward, in the interests of electoral equality. The remainder of Ivanhoe ward would form a revised Ivanhoe ward. The District Council further proposed moving the boundary between Castle and Holywell wards from the centre of Upper Church Street and Leicester Road to the backs of the properties on those roads. The remainder of Holywell ward would form a revised Holywell ward.

59 To the east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the District Council proposed creating a new two-member Valley ward, comprising the parishes of Coleorton, Osgathorpe, Packington, Staunton Harold, Swannington and Worthington. The Council stated "given the rural nature and sparse population in some areas, it was inevitable that some wards would be large in size and this one is an example ... Central to the ward is an area of land known as the Coleorton Valley, hence the title of Valley ward". Finally, the District Council proposed a revised Ravenstone ward comprising the parishes of Ravenstone with Snibston and Normanton le Heath. The Council stated that "the boundaries for this ward are clearly identifiable, being parish boundaries". However, as detailed earlier, it recognised that the Ravenstone with Snibston parish boundary is in need of realignment but acknowledged that this was beyond the scope of the review. Under the District Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Castle and two-member Holywell and Ivanhoe wards would be 3 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 7 per cent above the district average, respectively (equal to, 4 per cent above and 5 per cent above by 2006).

60 Two other submissions regarding this area were received during Stage One. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council supported the District Council's proposals and proposed revised parish councillor allocation within its town wards. Similarly, Worthington Parish Council proposed a reduction in parish councillors from seven to five.

61 The LGCE gave careful consideration to all representations received during Stage One. It agreed with the District Council's assertion that it was necessary to make revisions to the boundaries of Castle ward due to the unacceptable levels of electoral inequality, and therefore decided to adopt the Council's proposals in this area as part of its draft recommendations. However, for reasons of access, it proposed transferring Tudor Close and Stuart Way from Ivanhoe ward into Castle ward, and the cul-de-sac estate that is accessed by Abbotsford Road from Holywell ward into Castle ward, as both of these areas have their access cut off under the District Council's proposals. As a consequence of these minor amendments, the LGCE proposed retaining the existing boundary between Castle ward and Holywell ward along Upper Church Street and Leicester Road, rather than moving it to follow along the backs of the houses, as proposed by the District Council. This also allowed access to Range Road, which would otherwise have been cut off by moving this boundary, and improved electoral equality in Castle ward.

62 In the rural area to the east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the LGCE proposed making a small alteration to the District Council's proposal. As mentioned previously, it proposed creating two parish wards in Ravenstone with Snibston parish, in order that all electors in The Limes estate may be included in Snibston ward for district warding purposes. As a consequence of the revisions to the proposed Snibston ward, it proposed modifying the District Council's Valley and Ravenstone wards in order to secure good electoral equality. It proposed transferring the parish of Packington from the proposed Valley ward into a revised Ravenstone & Packington ward with Normanton le Heath parish and the remainder of Ravenstone with Snibston parish. The LGCE

stated that this proposal would also reduce the geographic size of the District Council's proposed Valley ward, which, it believed, would facilitate effective and convenient local government.

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

64 During Stage Three, 13 representations were received in response to the draft recommendations for Ravenstone with Snibston parish, all opposing the creation of two parish wards within the parish. These are discussed earlier in this report.

65 A further two representations were received during Stage Three in response to the draft recommendations for these wards. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council stated that it wished to make no representations regarding the draft recommendations. Councillor Hunt, a county councillor and borough councillor for Charnwood Borough Council, proposed that the wards within the parish of Ashby-de-la-Zouch be preceded by the name of the town, in order that they are readily identifiable with the town in which they are situated.

66 We have carefully considered Councillor Hunt's proposals to rename the wards in the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. We recognise that this is the case already in some Leicestershire wards and note that it has been proposed in other districts in Leicestershire. Therefore, in the interests of consistency, we have decided to rename Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe wards, Ashby Castle, Ashby Holywell and Ashby Ivanhoe, respectively.

67 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Ashby Castle, Ashby Holywell and Ashby Ivanhoe wards would be the same as for the LGCE's Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe wards, respectively. The number of electors per councillor in Ravenstone & Packington and Valley wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Appleby, Measham, Moira and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards

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

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

70 Having considered the Council's submission, the LGCE proposed adopting the District Council's proposals for this area in full, as it agreed that the criteria of providing good levels of

electoral equality while recognising community interests and identities and facilitating effective and convenient local government was satisfied by retaining the existing ward pattern.

71 Under the draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Appleby and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards would be 4 per cent below and 2 per cent below the district average, respectively (7 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Measham and Moira wards would be 3 per cent above the district average in both wards initially (2 per cent above in both wards by 2006).

72 During Stage Three, the District Council supported the draft recommendations for these wards. Given that the LGCE adopted the District Council's Stage One proposals as part of its draft recommendations, and the lack of local opposition to the draft recommendations, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for these wards as final.

73 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Appleby, Measham, Moira and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

74 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

75 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse its draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- we propose renaming Castle, Holywell and Ivanhoe wards as Ashby Castle, Ashby Holywell and Ashby Ivanhoe respectively, in order to ensure the ward names are readily identifiable with the town in which they are situated.

76 We conclude that, in North West Leicestershire:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 40 to 38;
- there should be 20 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified.

77 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	40	38	40	38
Number of wards	22	20	22	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,715	1,806	1,752	1,844
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	9	2	9	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	4	0

78 As Table 4 shows, our final recommendations for North West Leicestershire District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from nine to two. By 2006, no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent. We conclude that our final recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

North West Leicestershire District Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

79 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In the LGCE's draft recommendations report, it proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Ravenstone with Snibston parishes to reflect the proposed district wards.

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

81 In its draft recommendations, the LGCE proposed adopting the District Council's revised district wards for Ashby-de-la-Zouch, albeit with some minor modifications to secure more identifiable boundaries. It therefore proposed consequential amendments to the warding arrangements for Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council to reflect the district ward boundaries. Furthermore, it proposed adopting Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council's proposals for an increase in the number of town councillors and a redistribution of councillors between town wards.

82 During Stage Three, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council stated that it wished to make no representations on the draft recommendations. No other representations were received in response to the electoral arrangements of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Town Council. We therefore propose confirming the draft recommendations for the warding arrangements in Ashby-de-la-Zouch as final.

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

83 The parish of Ravenstone with Snibston is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. In the light of the LGCE's draft recommendations for district wards in this area, it proposed creating two parish wards, Ravenstone and The Limes, in order to reflect the proposed district ward boundaries. The LGCE further proposed that Ravenstone parish ward should be represented by five councillors and The Limes parish ward should be represented by two councillors.

84 During Stage Three, the LGCE received 13 representations regarding this parish. North West Leicestershire District Council, North West Leicestershire Constituency Labour Party, Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council, a district councillor and nine residents all opposed the draft recommendations to create two parish wards within the parish in order that those electors in The Limes estate be represented in Snibston ward for district purposes. North West Leicestershire District Council further stated that The Limes parish ward being represented by only two parish councillors (out of a total of seven) would "be seen by some electors as being disenfranchised".

85 We note and acknowledge the general opposition to the creation of two parish wards in Ravenstone with Snibston parish. However, as detailed previously, we have confirmed the LGCE's draft recommendations for the district wards of Ravenstone & Packington and Snibston as final. We also note the District Council's concerns over the proposed allocation of only two parish councillors to The Limes parish ward. However, having reviewed the electorate within the parish of Ravenstone with Snibston, we found that two parish councillors is the correct allocation for those electors within The Limes parish ward. Consequently, we are confirming as final the draft recommendations of the creation of two parish wards, Ravenstone and The Limes, within the parish of Ravenstone with Snibston, in order to facilitate the district ward arrangements.

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

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

proposal had been “unanimously agreed” by the Parish Council. In view of the unanimous support and given that the proposal did not have consequential effects on its district ward proposals for the area, the LGCE was content to adopt the proposal as part of its draft recommendations.

87 During Stage Three, no representations were received regarding Worthington parish. We are therefore content to confirm the draft recommendations for Worthington parish as final.

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: Final Recommendations for North West Leicestershire

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

88 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in North West Leicestershire and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692).

89 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 18 July 2002.

90 Any further representations concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission at the address below, to arrive no later than 18 July 2002.

The Secretary
Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for North West Leicestershire: Detailed Mapping

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

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

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

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

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

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