

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire

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

*May 2000*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 2000

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationer Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 157

# CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>33</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood: Detailed Mapping	<i>35</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood (December 1999)	<i>43</i>

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Newark-on-Trent is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

16 May 2000

Dear Secretary of State

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

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 127) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Newark & Sherwood.

We recommend that Newark & Sherwood District Council should be served by 46 councillors representing 26 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be hold elections every four years.

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

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

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

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Newark & Sherwood:

- **in 22 of the 30 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 20 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 12 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 127-128) are that:

- **Newark & Sherwood District Council should have 46 councillors, eight fewer than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of four, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections of the whole council should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 22 of the proposed 26 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, and the number of electors per councillor in all but one ward would vary by no more than 20 per cent.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to remain constant over the next five years.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Balderton, Blidworth, Clipstone and Rainworth, and the towns of Southwell and Newark-on-Trent.**

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

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



Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Balderton North	2	Milton Lowfield ward (part – Lowfield ward (part) and Milton ward (part) of Balderton parish)	Map 2 and A2
2	Balderton West	2	Bullpit Pinfold ward (part – Bullpit ward of Balderton parish, Pinfold ward (part) of Balderton parish) and Milton Lowfield ward (part – Milton ward (part) of Balderton parish)	Map 2 and A2
3	Beacon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	Beacon ward (part – Harcourt and Hilltop wards of Newark-on-Trent town and Ransome ward (part) of Newark-on-Trent town)	Large Map
4	Bilsthorpe	2	Bilsthorpe ward (part – Bilsthorpe parish); Rufford ward (Rufford parish and Rainworth North ward of Rainworth parish as proposed)	Map 2 and Map A5
5	Blidworth	2	Blidworth ward (Blidworth parish); Rainworth ward (part – Blidworth parish (part))	Map 2
6	Boughton	2	Boughton ward (parishes of Kirton and Walesby, and Boughton ward of Ollerton & Boughton parish)	Map 2
7	Bridge (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	Bridge ward (part – Bishop Alexander, Fosse and Gilstrap wards of Newark-on-Trent town and Lovers Lane ward (part) of Newark-on-Trent town); Beacon ward (part – Ransome ward (part) of Newark-on-Trent town)	Large Map
8	Castle (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	Castle ward (part – Ossington, Sconce and Windsor wards of Newark-on-Trent town); Bridge ward (part – Lovers Lane ward (part) of Newark-on-Trent town)	Large Map
9	Caunton	1	Caunton ward (part – the parishes of Caunton, Hockerton, Kersall, Kneesall, Laxton & Moorhouse, Maplebeck, Ompton and Winkburn); Boughton ward (part – Wellow parish); Sutton-on-Trent ward (part – the parishes of Egmanon and Ossington)	Map 2
10	Clipstone	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Clipstone parish)	Map 2 and A4
11	Collingham & Meering	2	Collingham ward (Collingham parish); Meering ward (the parishes of Besthorpe, Girton, Harby, Meering, North Clifton, South Clifton, South Scarle, Spalford, Thorney and Wigsley)	Map 2
12	Devon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cardinal Hinsley, Gopher, Grange and St Mary's wards of Newark-on-Trent town)	Large Map
13	Edwinstowe	2	Edwinstowe ward (part – Edwinstowe parish)	Map 2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
14 Farndon	2	Farndon ward (Farndon parish); Elston ward (the parishes of Alverton, Cotham, East Stoke, Elston, Hawton, Kilvington, Staunton, Syerston and Thorpe); Bullpit Pinfold ward (part – Pinfold ward (part) of Balderton parish); Milton Lowfield ward (part – Lowfield ward (part) of Balderton parish)	Map 2 and A2
15 Farnsfield	2	Farnsfield ward (the parishes of Edingley, Farnsfield, Halam, Kirklington and Oxton); Bilsthorpe ward (part – Eakring parish)	Map 2
16 Lowdham	2	Dover Beck ward (the parishes of Bulcote, Caythorpe, Epperstone, Gonalston, Gunthorpe and Hoveringham); Lowdham ward (Lowdham parish)	Map 2
17 Magnus (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	Magnus ward (Bowbridge, Byron and Clumber wards of Newark-on-Trent town); Castle ward (part – Lilley & Stone ward of Newark-on-Trent town)	Large Map
18 Muskham	1	Muskham ward (part – the parishes of Averham, Bathley, Kelham, North Muskham, South Muskham and Staythorpe); Southwell East ward (part – Upton parish)	Map 2
19 Ollerton	3	Ollerton North ward; Ollerton South ward; Edwinstowe ward (part – Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish)	Map 2
20 Rainworth	2	Rainworth ward (part – Lindhurst parish and Rainworth South ward of Rainworth parish as proposed)	Map 2 and A5
21 Southwell East	1	Southwell East ward (part – Southwell East ward of Southwell town (part))	Maps 2, A6 and A7
22 Southwell North	1	Southwell East ward (part – Southwell East ward of Southwell town (part)); Southwell West ward (part – Southwell West ward of Southwell town (part))	Maps 2, A6 and A7
23 Southwell West	1	Southwell West ward (part – Halloughton parish and Southwell West ward of Southwell town (part)); Southwell East ward (part – Southwell East ward of Southwell town (part))	Maps 2, A6 and A7
24 Sutton-on-Trent	1	Sutton-on-Trent ward (part – the parishes of Grassthorpe, Sutton-on-Trent and Weston); Caunton ward (part – the parishes of Carlton-on-Trent and Norwell); Muskham ward (part – Cromwell parish)	Map 2
25 Trent	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bleasby, Fiskerton cum Morton, Rolleston and Thurgarton)	Map 2
26 Winthorpe	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Barnby in the Willows, Coddington, Holme, Langford and Winthorpe)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Balderton North	2	3,545	1,773	-1	3,824	1,912	-2
2	Balderton West	2	4,259	2,130	18	4,227	2,114	9
3	Beacon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,430	1,715	-5	4,222	2,111	8
4	Bilsthorpe	2	3,867	1,934	8	4,187	2,094	8
5	Blidworth	2	3,304	1,652	-8	3,455	1,728	-11
6	Boughton	2	3,866	1,933	8	3,920	1,960	1
7	Bridge (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,510	1,755	-2	4,025	2,013	3
8	Castle (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	4,919	1,640	-9	5,520	1,840	-5
9	Caunton	1	1,742	1,742	-3	1,880	1,880	-3
10	Clipstone	2	2,645	1,323	-26	3,074	1,537	-21
11	Collingham & Meering	2	3,684	1,842	2	3,860	1,930	-1
12	Devon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,740	1,870	4	3,709	1,855	-5
13	Edwinstowe	2	3,907	1,954	9	4,139	2,070	6
14	Farndon	2	3,082	1,541	-14	4,400	2,200	13
15	Farnsfield	2	3,681	1,841	2	3,910	1,955	0
16	Lowdham	2	3,613	1,807	0	3,782	1,891	-3
17	Magnus (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,726	1,863	4	3,718	1,859	-4
18	Muskham	1	1,919	1,919	7	2,090	2,090	12
19	Ollerton	3	5,320	1,773	-1	5,525	1,842	-5
20	Rainworth	2	3,908	1,954	9	4,037	2,019	4
21	Southwell East	1	1,765	1,765	-2	1,873	1,873	-4
22	Southwell North	1	1,826	1,826	2	1,930	1,930	-1
23	Southwell West	1	1,808	1,808	1	2,027	2,027	4
24	Sutton-on-Trent	1	2,013	2,013	12	2,099	2,099	8

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
25 Trent	1	1,770	1,770	-2	1,934	1,934	-1
26 Winthorpe	1	1,855	1,855	3	2,056	2,056	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>82,704</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>89,516</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,798</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,946</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newark & Sherwood 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 Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire. We have now reviewed eight districts in Nottinghamshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Newark & Sherwood. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1976 (Report No. 126). The electoral arrangements of Nottinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in May 1980 (Report No. 383). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in due course.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish [and town] councils in the district.

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

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. For example, we will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are

willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Nottinghamshire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 18 May 1999, when we wrote to Newark & Sherwood District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Nottinghamshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 20 September 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 14 December 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire*, and ended on 21 February 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 Newark & Sherwood district is geographically the largest district in Nottinghamshire, covering nearly one third of the county. It contains 83 parishes and is entirely parished. The district is one of contrasts, with the parishes in the east sharing an agricultural heritage, and parishes in the west and north linked by a mining tradition. The majority of residents live in Newark-on-Trent, Southwell and colliery towns in the west of the district. The rest of the district is rural and contains Sherwood Pines Forest Park.

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

15 The electorate of the district is 82,704 (February 1999). The Council currently has 54 members who are elected from 30 wards, six of which are represented by three councillors, 12 by two councillors, while the remaining 12 wards are each represented by a single councillor. The Council holds whole-council elections every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate of Newark & Sherwood district, with around 13 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in the wards covering Balderton and Newark-on-Trent, with approximately 2,000 and 3,000 more electors respectively than 20 years ago.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,532 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,658 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 30 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in nine wards by more than 20 per cent and in three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Collingham ward where the councillor represents 52 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Newark & Sherwood*



Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Beacon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,648	1,824	19	4,448	2,224	34
2	Bilsthorpe	2	2,680	1,340	-12	2,999	1,500	-10
3	Blidworth	3	3,304	1,101	-28	3,383	1,128	-32
4	Boughton	3	4,254	1,418	-7	4,346	1,449	-13
5	Bridge (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	4,267	1,422	-7	4,924	1,641	-1
6	Bullpit Pinfold	2	3,724	1,862	22	4,957	2,479	50
7	Castle (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	4,959	1,653	8	5,402	1,801	8
8	Caunton	1	1,630	1,630	6	1,686	1,686	1
9	Clipstone	2	2,645	1,323	-14	3,074	1,537	-8
10	Collingham	1	2,325	2,325	52	2,389	2,389	44
11	Devon (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	3,845	1,282	-16	3,813	1,271	-24
12	Dover Beck	1	1,752	1,752	14	1,805	1,805	8
13	Edwinstowe	3	4,047	1,349	-12	4,281	1,427	-14
14	Elston	1	1,045	1,045	-32	1,099	1,099	-34
15	Farndon	1	1,954	1,954	28	2,019	2,019	21
16	Farnsfield	2	3,356	1,678	10	3,576	1,788	7
17	Lowdham	1	1,861	1,861	22	1,977	1,977	19
18	Magnus (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	2,606	1,303	-15	2,607	1,304	-22
19	Meering	1	1,359	1,359	-11	1,471	1,471	-12
20	Milton Lowfield	2	4,163	2,082	36	4,448	2,224	34
21	Muskham	1	1,741	1,741	14	1,973	1,973	19
22	Ollerton North	2	2,516	1,258	-18	2,512	1,256	-25
23	Ollerton South	2	2,664	1,332	-13	2,871	1,436	-14
24	Rainworth	2	3,908	1,954	28	4,037	2,019	21
25	Rufford	1	1,512	1,512	-1	1,522	1,522	-9
26	Southwell East	2	3,206	1,603	5	3,332	1,666	0

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
27 Southwell West	2	2,524	1,262	-18	2,875	1,438	-14
28 Sutton-on-Trent	1	1,584	1,584	3	1,700	1,700	2
29 Trent	1	1,770	1,770	16	1,934	1,934	16
30 Winthorpe	1	1,855	1,855	21	2,056	2,056	24
<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>82,704</b>	–	–	<b>89,516</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>1,532</b>	–	–	<b>1,658</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newark & Sherwood 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, electors in Ollerton North ward are relatively over-represented by 18 per cent, while electors in Bullpit Pinfold ward are relatively under-represented by 22 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received a district-wide scheme from Newark & Sherwood District Council, and a representation from Thorney Parish Council. The District Council also forwarded representations that it had received from 18 parish and town councils, and 10 local residents and groups. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Newark & Sherwood in Nottinghamshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were substantially based on the District Council's proposals, which would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting nine wards, using an option generated by the Council during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Newark & Sherwood District Council should be served by 46 councillors, compared with the current 54, representing 26 wards, four fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a decrease of four, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Balderton, Blidworth, Clipstone and Rainworth, and the towns of Newark-on-Trent and Southwell.

**Draft Recommendation**

Newark & Sherwood District Council should comprise 46 councillors, serving 26 wards. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 26 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, with the number of electors per councillor in all but one ward varying by less than 20 per cent from the average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to further improve, with only two wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004. However, one ward would continue to have an electoral imbalance of more than 20 per cent from the average.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 34 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Newark & Sherwood District Council and the Commission by appointment.

### **Newark & Sherwood District Council**

22 The District Council welcomed our draft recommendations, which it noted had substantially reflected its Stage One submission. However, it objected to our proposed Blidworth and Rainworth wards and reiterated its initial proposal for both wards. It accepted that Newark-on-Trent should be represented by 11 councillors, rather than the 10 councillors as proposed in their original submission. However, it proposed a number of boundary modifications to our proposed Castle, Devon and Magnus wards in Newark-on-Trent.

### **Nottinghamshire County Council**

23 The County Council expressed concern regarding our proposal to reduce the number of councillors representing the district from 54 to 46, but supported our draft recommendation to retain Newark & Sherwood District Council's existing electoral cycle.

### **Members of Parliament**

24 Paddy Tipping MP broadly supported our draft recommendations, but objected to our proposal to include part of Blidworth parish in a revised Rainworth ward.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

25 Balderton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to include parts of Balderton in three district wards. Bathley and North Muskham parish councils argued that Bathley should continue to form part of Muskham ward, while Blidworth Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to combine parts of Blidworth and Rainworth parishes in a revised Rainworth ward. Edwinstowe and Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish councils objected to our proposal to transfer Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish to the new Ollerton ward.

26 Lowdham Parish Council proposed that Dover Beck and Lowdham wards should be retained. Rufford Parish Council proposed that Rufford parish should form part of Edwinstowe ward. Thorney Parish Council supported the retention of the existing electoral arrangements in its local area, and Thurgarton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. In addition, Upton Parish Council objected to our draft recommendation to remove Upton parish from Southwell East ward.

## **Other Representations**

27 We received a further 20 representations from local residents, councillors and groups. Sherwood Constituency Liberal Democrats and a county councillor proposed that Southwell town should be represented in a three-member ward. Newark & Sherwood NHS Primary Care Group welcomed our proposal, noting that it would provide a much improved level of electoral equality. Muskham Playgroup, North Muskham & District Women's Institute, North Muskham Brownies, North Muskham Local History Society, North Muskham Methodist Church, North Muskham Parochial Church Council, South Muskham Parochial Church Council and seven local residents proposed that Bathley parish should continue to form part of Muskham ward. In addition, we also received a petition with 17 signatures objecting to our draft recommendation to include Bathley parish in Caunton ward.

28 Thoresby Estates Management and a local resident opposed our draft recommendation to transfer Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish to Ollerton ward. The local resident also supported our proposal to include the whole of Edwinstowe parish in a single district ward.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Newark & Sherwood is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

32 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. We consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

33 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 8 per cent from 82,704 to 89,516 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to occur in Bullpit Pinfold ward, as a result of residential development on the former site of the Balderton Hospital. 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. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

34 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## Council Size

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

36 Newark & Sherwood District Council currently has 54 councillors. At Stage One the District Council proposed a council of 45 members, arguing that the Council is “currently undergoing major change” in response to the Government’s *Modernising Local Government* White Paper. It stated that it has reduced the cycle of meetings each year from seven to four, and that this had resulted in a large reduction in the number of meetings that members attend. It stated that it intended to implement further management changes in the light of new legislation.

37 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that there was merit in the Council’s proposal to reduce the number of councillors representing the district. We noted that there appeared to be a consensus on the Council that a reduced council size would provide more effective and convenient local government than the existing arrangements, and that the Council had undertaken a significant public consultation exercise.

38 However, under a council size of 45, Newark-on-Trent merits representation by 10.6 councillors, as opposed to the 10 councillors allocated to the town by the District Council. We were not persuaded that the high levels of electoral imbalance resulting from this under-representation were appropriate, and proposed that Newark-on-Trent should be represented by 11 councillors. We therefore concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 46 members.

39 During Stage Three the District Council supported the proposed reduction in council size from 54 to 46. However, the County Council expressed concern regarding this reduction in council size, arguing that this is “undesirable” as the United Kingdom has “one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of population in Europe”.

40 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, and note that the County Council has not supported our proposed council size. However, no alternative warding arrangements for a larger council size were put forward at either Stage One or Stage Three. We do not accept the argument that, in determining council size for a given area, the number of elected members in other European countries is a significant consideration, as political systems and cultures vary across Europe.

41 Accordingly, we remain persuaded that the balance of evidence supports reducing the number of councillors in Newark & Sherwood to 46, which we consider would achieve the best balance between the number of members required to facilitate effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 46 as final.



## **Electoral Arrangements**

42 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide scheme from the District Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

43 The Council's proposals were for a reduction in council size from 54 to 45. The proposals resulted in some improvement to electoral equality, with the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average reducing from 22 to six, and further to three in 2004. However, the Council's proposals would result in a high level of electoral imbalance in Clipstone ward.

44 We recognised the improved electoral equality achieved by the District Council's scheme, compared to the existing arrangements. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered that Newark-on-Trent merited representation by 11 councillors, giving a council size of 46, and we therefore made changes to ward boundaries in Newark-on-Trent in order to improve the balance of representation, as indicated previously. In addition, we moved away from the District Council's proposal in relation to four wards in the west of the district to provide for improved levels of electoral equality.

45 We have reviewed our draft recommendations 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) Clipstone, Edwinstowe, Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards;
- (b) Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, Farnsfield, Rainworth and Rufford wards;
- (c) Boughton, Caunton and Sutton-on-Trent wards;
- (d) Collingham, Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe wards;
- (e) Newark-on-Trent (five wards);
- (f) Southwell East and Southwell West wards;
- (g) Dover Beck, Lowdham and Trent wards;
- (h) Bullpit Pinfold, Elston, Farndon and Milton Lowfield wards.

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

### **Clipstone, Edwinstowe, Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards**

47 The wards of Clipstone, Edwinstowe, Ollerton North and Ollerton South are situated in the north-west of the district. Clipstone, Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards are each represented by two councillors, while Edwinstowe ward is represented by three councillors. Edwinstowe comprises Edwinstowe and Perlethorpe cum Budby parishes, while Clipstone ward comprises the parish of the same name. Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards cover part of

Ollerton & Boughton parish. Under current arrangements for a council size of 54, the number of electors per councillor in Clipstone, Edwinstowe, Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards vary by 14 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 13 per cent less than the district average respectively, under a council size of 54.

48 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Ollerton North and Ollerton South wards should be combined to form a new three-member Ollerton ward. It also proposed retaining the existing ward boundaries of Edwinstowe and Clipstone, each to be represented by two councillors. It recognised that its proposal for these wards would result in a high level of electoral imbalance, on the basis of a reduced council size. However, it argued that its proposals would achieve a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

49 The District Council also forwarded representations it had received from local residents and groups. Edwinstowe Parish Council and a local resident objected to a proposal put forward in the District Council's initial consultation document, which proposed combining the southern part of Edwinstowe with Clipstone ward. Another resident organised a 903-signature petition also opposing the District Council's preliminary proposal for Clipstone and Edwinstowe wards. Ollerton & Boughton Town Council accepted the District Council's proposed Ollerton ward.

50 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that while the District Council's proposal would result in a high degree of electoral imbalance in Clipstone ward, we considered that it had merit and we were content to substantially endorse it as our draft recommendation. We considered that Clipstone and Edwinstowe are separate, cohesive communities, some three miles apart, and that Clipstone is bounded to the west by the district boundary with Mansfield and to the south by Rufford parish, which is sparsely populated and contains Sherwood Pines Forest Park.

51 In addition, we examined a number of alternative electoral arrangements, including the District Council's initial proposal put forward in its consultation document that the southern part of Edwinstowe parish should be combined with Clipstone ward. However, we noted that this proposal would also result in a degree of electoral imbalance, with the number of electors per councillor in Clipstone and Edwinstowe wards varying by 1 per cent and 16 per cent from the average respectively. More importantly, as was shown at Stage One, such a proposal had no local support and did not appear to reflect the interests and identities of communities

52 However, we proposed modifying the District Council's proposed Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards, with Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish being included in the proposed Ollerton ward, in order to achieve a better level of electoral equality in both the proposed Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards.

53 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Clipstone and Ollerton wards would initially vary by 26 per cent and 1 per cent less than the district average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Edwinstowe ward would vary by 9 per cent more than the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Clipstone and Ollerton wards is projected to vary by 21 per cent and 5 per cent less than the average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Edwinstowe ward is expected to vary by 6 per cent more than the average.

54 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Clipstone, Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards. Edwinstowe and Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish councils, the Thoresby Estates Management and a local resident objected to our proposal to transfer Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish from Edwinstowe ward to Ollerton ward, arguing that it has strong “historical and religious links” with Edwinstowe ward. Perlethorpe-cum-Budby Parish Council also forwarded a petition of 83 signatures supporting its view, while a local resident supported our proposal that Edwinstowe parish should be wholly represented in a single ward.

55 Under the proposal to retain Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish in Edwinstowe ward, the number of electors per councillor in Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards would vary by 13 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, Edwinstowe ward would be projected to have an electoral imbalance of 10 per cent more than the average, while Ollerton ward would have 8 per cent fewer than the average.

56 Rufford Parish Council proposed that Rufford should be included in a revised Edwinstowe ward, stating that both communities share “problems that arise from the impact of tourism” on the communities adjoining Sherwood Pines Forest Park. Under Rufford Parish Council’s proposal, Bilsthorpe and Edwinstowe wards would have 3 per cent fewer and 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

57 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that our proposal that Clipstone and Edwinstowe parishes should each form a separate district ward has achieved a measure of local support, although we note that a number of respondents have expressed concern regarding our proposal to include Perlethorpe-cum-Budby in a new Ollerton ward. We have re-examined our proposals for Clipstone and Edwinstowe wards, given the relatively high degree of electoral imbalance in both wards, but remain content that our draft recommendations would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than alternative proposals, as indicated in our draft recommendations report. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final.

58 We have considered the concern expressed regarding the representation of Perlethorpe-cum-Budby parish and, while we note that Perlethorpe-cum-Budby has religious and social ties with Edwinstowe, we have not been persuaded that Perlethorpe-cum-Budby’s interests and identities would be unsatisfactorily represented in the proposed Ollerton ward. In our judgement, the alternative proposal would result in a higher level of electoral inequality than would be justified.

59 In addition, we have considered Rufford Parish Council’s proposal to include Rufford in Edwinstowe ward, but have not been persuaded that the resulting level of electoral inequality is merited. Neither have we been persuaded that Rufford shares particularly strong community interests and identities with Edwinstowe parish. We note that no other respondent suggested that Rufford should be included in Edwinstowe ward at Stage Three.

60 Under our final recommendations, Clipstone and Ollerton wards would have 26 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, while Edwinstowe ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average. By 2004, the number

of electors per councillor in Clipstone, Edwinstowe and Ollerton wards would vary by 21 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent from the average respectively.

### **Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, Farnsfield, Rainworth and Rufford wards**

61 The wards of Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, Farnsfield, Rainworth and Rufford lie in the west of the district. Bilsthorpe, Farnsfield and Rainworth wards are each represented by two councillors, while Blidworth ward is represented by three councillors, and Rufford ward by one councillor. Bilsthorpe comprises the two parishes of Bilsthorpe and Eakring, Blidworth ward comprises the parish of the same name, and Farnsfield ward comprises Edingley, Farnsfield, Halam and Kirklington parishes. Rufford ward contains Rufford parish and part of Rainworth parish (North parish ward) and Rainworth ward contains Lindhurst parish and the remaining part of Rainworth parish (South parish ward). Under current arrangements for a council size of 54, the number of electors per councillor in Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Rufford wards vary by 12 per cent, 28 per cent and 1 per cent less than the district average respectively, while Farnsfield and Rainworth wards vary by 10 per cent and 28 per cent more than the average.

62 At Stage One the District Council suggested warding Rainworth parish, with the proposed Rainworth North parish ward being combined with the parishes of Bilsthorpe and Rufford to form a revised Bilsthorpe ward, and the proposed Rainworth South parish ward being combined with Lyndhurst parish to form Rainworth ward. It also suggested that the existing Blidworth ward should be retained. In addition, the District Council proposed including Eakring parish in a revised Farnsfield ward. It proposed that all four wards should each be represented by two councillors.

63 Under the District Council's Stage One proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Bilsthorpe and Rainworth wards would vary by 5 per cent and 6 per cent more than the district average respectively, while Blidworth would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. This level of electoral imbalance was not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

64 The District Council forwarded submissions it had received relating to this area. Blidworth Parish Council opposed a proposal in the District Council's preliminary consultation document to include part of Blidworth in the proposed Rainworth ward, while Blidworth Tenants' Association forwarded a petition of 293 signatures objecting to any proposal to "merge" the parishes of Blidworth and Rainworth. Rufford Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to include the parish in a district ward with Bilsthorpe parish.

65 In our draft recommendations report, we were content to endorse the District Council's proposed Bilsthorpe and Farnsfield wards, as we considered that they achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. However, we were not persuaded, on the basis of the evidence received at Stage One, that the District Council's proposals for Blidworth and Rainworth wards would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We therefore considered alternative electoral arrangements for the two wards and, on balance, were persuaded that the proposal on which the District Council had initially consulted

would provide a better warding arrangement. However, we stated that we would welcome further views and evidence on this matter at Stage Three.

66 Under our draft recommendations for a council size of 46, the number of electors per councillor in Bilsthorpe and Blidworth wards would initially vary by 7 per cent and 2 per cent from the district average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Rainworth ward would be equal to the average. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

67 In response to our draft recommendations report, the District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for Blidworth and Rainworth wards, arguing that Blidworth and Rainworth villages are separate communities divided by “an exclusively rural landscape” and are only linked by a minor road. Paddy Tipping MP also objected to our proposal to include part of Blidworth parish in a revised Rainworth ward, describing Blidworth and Rainworth as “different and identifiable communities”. Blidworth Parish Council argued that the boundary between the proposed Blidworth and Rainworth wards would be “artificial”, and suggested that Blidworth should continue to form a separate district ward, to be represented by two councillors. Under these proposals, Blidworth and Rainworth wards would have 8 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor respectively than the district average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Blidworth and Rainworth wards is projected to vary by 11 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more than the average respectively.

68 Rufford Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to combine Bilsthorpe and Rufford parishes in a revised Bilsthorpe ward. As indicated previously, it proposed that Rufford should be included in a revised Edwinstowe ward, arguing that Rufford does not have strong community ties with Bilsthorpe. Under Rufford Parish Council’s proposal, Bilsthorpe and Edwinstowe wards would have 3 per cent fewer and 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

69 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and note that our proposal to include part of Blidworth parish in Rainworth ward has not been supported by local people and groups. In the light of the evidence received at Stage Three, we have been persuaded to depart from our draft recommendations in this area. We have been persuaded that Blidworth is a cohesive community and that, while the north of the town has communication links with Rainworth parish, it does not share strong community ties with Rainworth.

70 We therefore propose that Blidworth parish should be wholly represented in a single district ward. While we note that this proposal would result in a marginally higher degree of electoral imbalance, we accept that Blidworth and Rainworth are separate and self-contained communities, and that this proposal would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We are therefore content to put forward the District Council’s Stage One proposal in this area as our final recommendations.

71 However, as discussed previously, we have not been persuaded that Rufford parish should be included in Edwinstowe ward. We note that this proposal would result in a high degree of

electoral inequality and, on the evidence received at Stage Three, do not consider that this proposal would necessarily enjoy a higher degree of support than our draft recommendations. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendation for Bilsthorpe ward as final.

72 Under our final recommendations, Bilsthorpe and Rainworth wards would have 8 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, while Blidworth ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Rainworth wards projected to vary by 8 per cent, 11 per cent and 4 per cent from the average respectively.

### **Boughton, Caunton and Sutton-on-Trent wards**

73 Caunton and Sutton-on-Trent wards are each represented by one councillor, while Boughton ward is represented by three councillors. Boughton ward comprises part of Operton & Boughton town and Kirton, Walesby and Wellow parishes. Caunton contains 10 parishes: Carlton-on-Trent, Caunton, Hockerton, Kersall, Kneesall, Laxton & Moorhouse, Maplebeck, Norwell, Ompton and Winkburn. Sutton-on-Trent ward comprises the five parishes of Egmanton, Grassthorpe, Ossington, Sutton-on-Trent and Weston. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Boughton ward varies by 7 per cent less than the average, while Caunton and Sutton-on-Trent wards have an electoral imbalance of 6 per cent and 3 per cent more than the district average, based on a council size of 54.

74 At Stage One the District Council proposed that a revised Boughton ward should comprise the parishes of Boughton, Kirton and Walesby, and be represented by two councillors. It proposed that the parishes of Bathley, Egmanton, Ossington and Wellow should be combined with the majority of Caunton ward to form a revised single-member Caunton ward. The District Council also proposed that the parishes of Carlton-on-Trent and Norwell should be included with Cromwell parish and the majority of the existing Sutton-on-Trent ward to form a revised Sutton-on-Trent ward, to be represented by one councillor. In addition, it proposed that Hockerton parish should be combined with parishes to its east in a revised Muskham ward, as detailed below.

75 The District Council forwarded correspondence from several respondents regarding this area. Bathley Parish Council and Newark & Retford Conservative Association opposed the District Council's proposal to include Bathley parish in the revised Caunton ward, while North Muskham and South Muskham parish councils proposed that Bathley and Hockerton parishes be retained in Muskham and Caunton wards respectively.

76 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the District Council's proposals for this area, as we considered that they achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also considered that its proposed Boughton and Sutton-on-Trent wards achieved a relatively high level of local support. We noted the concerns expressed by the parish councils of Bathley, North Muskham and South Muskham, together with Newark & Retford Conservative Association, regarding the inclusion of Bathley parish in the proposed Caunton ward. However, on the balance of evidence received at Stage One, we were not persuaded that they offered better alternative electoral arrangements, although we stated that we would welcome further evidence from local people and groups during Stage Three.

77 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. Bathley and North Muskham parish councils, Muskham Playgroup, North Muskham & District Women's Institute, North Muskham Brownies, North Muskham Local History Society, North Muskham Methodist Church, North Muskham Parochial Church Council, South Muskham Parochial Church Council, a petition of 17 signatures and seven local residents argued that Bathley should not be included in the revised Caunton ward, as it has no shared community ties with parishes in Caunton ward. They all proposed that Bathley parish should continue to be included in Muskham ward. Under these proposals, Caunton and Muskham wards would have 9 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor respectively than the district average. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to be largely unchanged in Caunton ward over the next five years, while Muskham ward would have 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2004.

78 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period, and note that our proposed Boughton and Sutton-on-Trent wards have been broadly supported at Stage Three, and are content to endorse both of the proposed wards as part of our final recommendations. However, we note that there has been significant local opposition to our proposal to include Bathley parish in Caunton ward. We have therefore revisited our initial proposals and, in the light of the evidence put forward at Stage Three, have been persuaded that Bathley parish has strong community ties with other parishes in Muskham ward. However, we consider that the levels of electoral inequality resulting from the proposal to include Bathley in Muskham ward are not acceptable, and we have therefore considered alternative warding arrangements in this area.

79 We propose that Bathley parish should be retained in Muskham ward and that, in order to improve electoral equality, Hockerton parish should continue to form part of Caunton ward as proposed by North Muskham and South Muskham parish councils at Stage One. We consider that this proposed modification would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendation, by better reflecting local ties.

80 Under our final recommendations, Boughton and Sutton-on-Trent wards would have 8 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 1 per cent and 8 per cent more by 2004. Caunton ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, both now and in five years' time.

### **Collingham, Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe wards**

81 The wards of Collingham, Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe are situated in the east of the district, and are each represented by a single councillor. Meering ward contains the 10 parishes of Besthorpe, Girton, Harby, Meering, North Clifton, South Clifton, South Scarle, Spalford, Thorney and Wigsley, while Muskham ward comprises the seven parishes of Averham, Bathley, Cromwell, Kelham, North Muskham, South Muskham and Staythorpe. Winthorpe ward comprises Barnby-in-the-Willows, Coddington, Holme, Langford and Winthorpe parishes. Under current arrangements for a 54-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Collingham, Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe wards varies by 52 per cent, 11 per cent, 14 per cent and 21 per cent respectively from the district average.

82 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Collingham and Meering wards should be combined to form a revised two-member Collingham ward. It proposed that the majority of Muskham ward should be combined with the parishes of Hockerton and Upton to form a revised single-member Muskham ward. The District Council also proposed transferring Bathley parish to a revised Caunton ward, and Cromwell parish to a revised Sutton-on-Trent ward, as outlined previously. In addition, it proposed retaining the existing Winthorpe ward.

83 Under the District Council's proposals for a 45-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Muskham ward would vary by 1 per cent from the district average, while the number of electors per councillor in Collingham and Winthorpe wards would be equal to the average.

84 Thorney Parish Council supported the retention of the existing Meering ward. The District Council forwarded a submission it had received from Collingham Parish Council, supporting the District Council's proposal to combine the existing Collingham and Meering wards. As indicated previously, Bathley Parish Council and Newark & Retford Conservative Association opposed the District Council's proposal to include Bathley parish in the revised Caunton ward, while North Muskham and South Muskham parish councils proposed that Bathley and Hockerton parishes be retained in Muskham and Caunton wards respectively.

85 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the District Council's proposal for this area, without modification. We considered that it achieved an improved level of electoral equality, and would not have an adverse impact on the representation of the interests and identities of communities. However, as indicated previously, we noted the concern expressed by Bathley, North Muskham and South Muskham parish councils and Newark & Retford Conservative Association regarding the proposed Muskham ward. However, we decided that, on balance, the District Council's proposal achieved a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, but stated that we would welcome further evidence from local people and groups at Stage Three.

86 In response to our draft recommendations report, the District Council supported our proposed Collingham, Muskham and Winthorpe wards. However, as described previously, Bathley and North Muskham parish councils, Muskham Playgroup, North Muskham & District Women's Institute, North Muskham Brownies, North Muskham Methodist Church, South Muskham Parochial Church Council, a petition of 17 signatures and seven local residents argued that Bathley should continue to form part of Muskham ward.

87 In addition, Thorney Parish Council supported the retention of Meering ward. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Collingham and Meering wards would each vary by more than 20 per cent from the district average both initially and over the next five years.

88 In view of the representations we received during Stage Three, we have reconsidered our draft recommendations. We note that our proposed Winthorpe ward would provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and has achieved a measure of local support at Stage Three. We therefore propose endorsing our draft recommendation for Winthorpe ward as final.



89 However, our proposal to transfer Bathley parish from Muskham ward has not been broadly supported by local residents and groups. As indicated previously, we have been persuaded that Bathley parish has strong community ties with other parishes in Muskham ward, but we have not been persuaded that the levels of electoral inequality resulting from the proposal to include Bathley in Muskham ward are acceptable. We propose therefore that Bathley parish should be retained in Muskham ward and that, as a consequence, Hockerton parish should continue to form part of Caunton ward, as proposed by North Muskham and South Muskham parish councils at Stage One. We consider that this proposed modification would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendation, and therefore propose endorsing it as our final recommendation.

90 We have also considered Thorney Parish Council's proposal to retain Meering ward's existing electoral arrangements. We note that this proposal would provide a high degree of electoral inequality in both Collingham and Meering wards and, on the balance of the evidence received at Stage Three, we have not been persuaded that this proposal would better reflect the interests and identities of communities than our draft recommendations. However, we consider that our proposed Collingham ward should be renamed Collingham & Meering ward, to better reflect the new ward's constituent communities. We understand that the District Council supports this proposal.

91 Under our final recommendations, Collingham & Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe would have 2 per cent, 7 per cent and 3 per cent more electors than the average for the district. Over the next five years this level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally, with Collingham & Meering, Muskham and Winthorpe wards projected to have electoral imbalances of 1 per cent, 12 per cent and 6 per cent from the average by 2004.

### **Newark-on-Trent (five wards)**

92 The five wards of Beacon, Bridge, Castle, Devon and Magnus wards cover the Newark-on-Trent town area. Bridge, Castle and Devon wards are each represented by three councillors, while Beacon and Magnus wards are each represented by two councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Beacon and Castle wards vary by 19 per cent and 8 per cent more than the district average respectively, while Bridge, Devon and Magnus wards have an electoral imbalance of 7 per cent, 16 per cent and 15 per cent fewer than the average respectively, based on a council size of 54.

93 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining five wards for the town, but proposed that it should be represented by 10 councillors, three fewer than at present. It proposed uniting the commercial centre in Castle ward, with the area bounded by Appleton Gate and the East Coast Main Line being transferred from Bridge ward to Castle ward. The District Council proposed revised two-member Beacon and Bridge wards and a revised single-member Magnus ward. It proposed transferring the part of Byron town council ward to the south of Carlton Road and west of Bowbridge Road from Magnus ward to a two-member Devon ward. Under the District Council's proposal for a 45-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Beacon, Bridge, Castle, Devon and Magnus wards would vary by 16 per cent, 5 per cent, 8 per cent, 15 per cent and 18 per cent from the district average respectively.

94 In our draft recommendation report, we noted that the District Council's proposals would result in a relatively high level of electoral inequality in Newark-on-Trent. Under a council size of 45, Newark-on-Trent merits 10.6 councillors, whereas the District Council proposed that it should be represented by 10 councillors. We were not persuaded that Newark-on-Trent should be represented by one fewer councillor than it is entitled, and we therefore considered alternative electoral arrangements in this area, to facilitate representation by 11 councillors.

95 Our proposal for Newark-on-Trent was substantially based on the District Council's submission but utilised a number of alternative ward boundaries. We proposed that a revised two-member Beacon ward should comprise Harcourt and Hilltop town wards together with the part of Ransome town ward to the east of Cross Street and south of Barnby Gate. A revised two-member Bridge ward should include Bishop Alexander, Fosse and Gilstrap town wards together with the part of Lovers Lane town ward to the east of Appleton Gate and the rest of Ransome town ward.

96 We proposed that a revised Castle ward should be represented by three councillors and comprise Lilley & Stone, Ossington and Windsor town wards, together with the part of Lovers Lane town ward to the west of Appleton Gate. We also considered that a revised two-member Devon ward should include Cardinal Hinsley, St Mary's and Sconce town wards, together with the part of Grange town ward to the west of Lindsay Avenue, while the rest of Grange town ward should be included in a two-member Magnus ward which would include the town wards of Bowbridge, Byron, Clumber and Gopher.

97 Under our draft recommendations for a council size of 46, the number of electors per councillor in Beacon, Bridge and Castle wards would vary by 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 9 per cent fewer than the district average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Devon and Magnus wards would each vary by 4 per cent more than the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly in Bridge, Devon and Magnus wards over the next five years, and is expected to improve in Castle ward, with an electoral imbalance of 5 per cent from the average by 2004. However, the number of electors per councillor in Beacon ward is projected to vary by 8 per cent more than the average by 2004, due to residential development.

98 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendation that Newark-on-Trent should be represented by 11 councillors and supported our proposed Beacon and Bridge wards, but put forward boundary modifications to the remaining wards in Newark-on-Trent. It suggested that Ossington, Sconce and town wards, together with the part of Lovers Lane town ward to the west of Appleton Gate, the part of Windsor town ward to the south of Boundary Road, and the part of Lilley & Stone town ward to the west of Albert Street, should be included in a revised Castle ward, while Devon ward should comprise Cardinal Hinsley, Gopher, Grange and St Mary's town wards, as at present. It proposed that a revised Magnus ward should include Bowbridge, Byron and Clumber town wards, together with the part of Lilley & Stone town ward to the east of Albert Street and the part of Windsor town ward to the north of Boundary Road. Under the District Council's proposed modifications, all five wards in Newark-on-Trent would have an electoral imbalance of no more than 10 per cent from the average, both now and in 2004.

99 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations, subject to the modifications put forward by the District Council at Stage Three. We note that these proposed modifications would provide an equivalent level of electoral equality to our draft recommendations, while appearing to better reflect the identities and interests of communities in the south of the town. In the absence of any other views being put forward at Stage Three, we consider that the District Council's modifications would achieve the optimum balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

100 Under our final recommendations, Beacon, Bridge and Castle wards would have 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, Devon and Magnus wards would each have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the average. By 2004, Beacon and Bridge wards would each have 8 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average, while Castle, Devon and Magnus wards would each have 5 per cent, 5 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average.

### **Southwell East and Southwell West wards**

101 Southwell town is located in the west of the district, and is currently represented by two two-member wards, Southwell East and Southwell West. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Southwell East and Southwell West wards varies by 5 per cent more and 18 per cent less than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 14 per cent fewer by 2004), based on a council size of 54.

102 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Southwell should be divided between three single-member wards. It proposed that Southwell East ward should comprise "a substantial part" of the main commercial centre, together with the more rural area in the east of the parish, and would be bounded by the Southwell Trail/Robin Hood Way, Station Road, Lower Kirklington Road and The Ropewalk. It proposed that Southwell West ward should include the area bounded by Kirklington Road, Queen Street, Westgate and Church Street, while Southwell North ward would comprise the area to the north of the commercial centre. Southwell Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for the town, provided that other wards were "treated in exactly the same way".

103 In our draft recommendation report, we considered that the District Council's proposal had merit and endorsed it without modification. Under our draft recommendation for a 46-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Southwell East, Southwell North and Southwell West wards would each vary by no more than 2 per cent from the district average respectively. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

104 At Stage Three the District Council supported our proposed district warding arrangements for Southwell town, while Sherwood Constituency Liberal Democrats and a county councillor objected to our proposal that Southwell be represented by three single-member wards, and proposed that the town should be covered by a three-member ward. Under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Southwell ward would be equal to the average both initially and over the next five years.

105 In addition, Upton Parish Council proposed that Upton parish should continue to be represented in a district ward with Southwell, rather than being included in the proposed Muskham ward, arguing that Upton “has many close links with Southwell”. It suggested that its proposals would not result in a high degree of electoral imbalance in the proposed Muskham ward, if we adopted the proposal put forward by several respondents to retain Bathley parish in Muskham ward.

106 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that the consensus that appeared to exist at Stage One regarding warding arrangements in Southwell has not been maintained. However, we do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence at Stage Three to merit departing from our draft recommendations, given the substantially higher electoral equality which would result, and therefore propose endorsing them as final.

107 We note that, in light of our proposed modification to include Bathley parish in Muskham ward, as detailed above, Upton Parish Council’s proposal would result in Muskham and Southwell East wards having 12 per cent fewer and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. While we note that Upton Parish Council’s proposal would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality in both these wards, we do not consider that it would provide better electoral arrangements than our draft recommendations. We consider that Upton has some community ties with other parishes in Muskham ward, and have not been persuaded that our draft recommendations would adversely affect the representation of Upton parish on the District Council.

108 We have considered the proposal put forward by Sherwood Constituency Liberal Democrats and a county councillor that the whole of Southwell should form a three-member ward. While we note that their proposal would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, we have not been persuaded that this proposal would better reflect community ties in Southwell than our draft recommendations. In particular, we consider that our proposed single-member wards in Southwell would better reflect the interests and identities of the rural areas adjoining Southwell town, while utilising strong and easily identifiable ward boundaries in the urban area.

109 In light of these considerations, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations, Southwell East, Southwell North and Southwell West wards would have 2 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2004).

### **Dover Beck, Lowdham and Trent wards**

110 Dover Beck, Lowdham and Trent wards form the district’s southern boundary with Gedling and Rushcliffe boroughs. All three wards are each represented by one councillor. Dover Beck contains the six parishes of Bulcote, Caythorpe, Epperstone, Gonalston, Gunthorpe and Hoveringham, while Lowdham ward comprises the parish of the same name. Trent ward contains Bleasby, Fiskerton -cum-Morton, Rolleston and Thurgarton parishes. Under current arrangements for a council size of 54, the number of electors per councillor in Dover Beck, Lowdham and Trent wards varies by 14 per cent, 22 per cent and 16 per cent more than the district average respectively.

111 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing Trent ward, and proposed combining Dover Beck and Lowdham wards to form a revised two-member Lowdham ward. It also forwarded submissions that it received from parish councils in this area, and we understand that Lowdham Parish Council and a local resident objected to the District Council's proposed Lowdham ward, while Fiskerton-cum-Morton and Thurgarton parish councils supported the District Council's proposal for Trent ward.

112 In our draft recommendation report, we adopted the District Council's proposal for this area without modification as we were content that it would provide a good balance between electoral equality and the representation of the interests and identities of communities. In addition, we noted that its proposed Trent ward enjoyed a measure of local support, while we were not persuaded that the proposal put forward by Lowdham Parish Council and a local resident to retain the existing Dover Beck and Lowdham wards would achieve better electoral arrangements, given the continuing high electoral equality which would result.

113 In response to our draft recommendations, the District Council supported our proposed Lowdham and Trent wards, while Thurgarton Parish Council supported our draft recommendation to retain the existing Trent ward. However, Lowdham Parish Council reiterated its view that Dover Beck and Lowdham wards should be retained.

114 After giving careful consideration to the representations received, we note that our draft recommendations in this area have a degree of local support. We remain content that our proposed Lowdham and Trent wards achieve a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and propose endorsing them as our final recommendations without modification. We have considered Lowdham Parish Council's proposal to retain the existing Dover Beck and Lowdham wards but, as indicated in our draft recommendations report, note that it would result in higher levels of electoral imbalances while not providing a significantly better representation of the interests and identities of communities in the proposed Lowdham ward.

115 Under our final recommendations, Lowdham and Trent wards would have equal to the average and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2004).

### **Bullpit Pinfold, Elston, Farndon and Milton Lowfield wards**

116 Bullpit Pinfold and Milton Lowfield are each represented by two councillors, and cover Balderton parish. Elston, represented by one councillor, contains the nine parishes of Alverton, Cotham, East Stoke, Elston, Hawton, Kilvington, Staunton, Syerston and Thorpe. Farndon ward is also represented by one councillor and covers the parish of the same name. Under existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Bullpit Pinfold, Farndon and Milton Lowfield wards varies by 22 per cent, 28 per cent and 36 per cent more than the district average respectively, while Elston ward has an electoral imbalance of 32 per cent less than the average.

117 This high level of electoral inequality is projected to be largely unchanged in Elston and Milton Lowfield wards over the next five years. However, the number of electors per councillor in Bullpit Pinfold ward is projected to deteriorate significantly over the next five years, with an

electoral imbalance of 50 per cent by 2004, while the level of electoral imbalance in Farndon ward is projected to improve, with an electoral imbalance of 21 per cent from the average by 2004.

118 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Balderton parish should be represented by three wards. The area to the east of London Road together with the area north of Grove Street would form a new Balderton North ward; the area to the west of London Road and to the south of Grove Street would form a new Balderton West ward, and the area of the former Balderton Hospital site would be combined with Elston and Farndon wards to form a revised two-member ward. The District Council forwarded a submission from Balderton Parish Council, which opposed the District Council's proposal to include the Balderton Hospital site in a ward with the existing Elston and Farndon wards.

119 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that while the District Council's proposal would result in a high level of electoral imbalance in Farndon ward, we consider that a degree of imbalance is unavoidable, given the development of the former Balderton Hospital site. We were content to adopt the District Council's proposal without modification as our draft recommendations in this area. We noted the concern expressed by Balderton Parish Council regarding the proposed warding arrangements in this area, but were not persuaded that the hospital site shared strong links with the rest of Balderton parish, and noted that no alternative electoral arrangements had been submitted.

120 Under our draft recommendation for a council size of 46, the number of electors per councillor in Balderton North and Farndon wards would vary by 1 per cent and 14 per cent less than the district average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Balderton West ward would vary by 18 per cent more than the average. However, as indicated above, this level of electoral imbalance would improve over the next five years. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Balderton North and Balderton West wards is each projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent, while the number of electors per councillor in Farndon ward would vary by 13 per cent more than the average, due to the high level of residential development within the ward.

121 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. Balderton Parish Council argued that Balderton should be united in a single district ward, stating that our proposed warding arrangements could "cause confusion" and thereby reduce the number of residents voting in local government elections.

122 In 1999, we note that under a council size of 46, Balderton parish would merit 4.4 district councillors and, by 2004, Balderton would merit 4.8 councillors. Under Balderton Parish Council's proposal, assuming a ward represented by four councillors, Balderton and Farndon wards would have 10 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively. By 2004, both wards would each have an electoral imbalance of 20 per cent from the average. Alternatively, if Balderton was represented by five councillors, the number of electors per councillor in Balderton and Farndon wards would vary by 10 per cent and 15 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, Balderton and Farndon wards would have 2 per cent and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively.

123 We have carefully considered the representations received. We have not been persuaded that Balderton should be wholly included in a single district ward. This proposal would result a four- or five- member ward covering Balderton and, as stated in our *Guidance*, we consider that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances because numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to persuade us that Balderton Parish Council's proposal is justified.

124 Furthermore, we note that its proposal would provide a high degree of electoral inequality in Farndon ward, which we do not consider is justifiable, as an alternative is available. In addition, as discussed in our draft recommendations report, we have not been persuaded that the residential development being built on the site of the former Balderton Hospital will necessarily share strong links with the rest of Balderton parish, while we do not consider that representing the rest of Balderton parish in two two-member wards would adversely affect the interests and identities of communities to a significant degree.

125 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Balderton North, Balderton West and Farndon wards as final.

## **Electoral Cycle**

126 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years. At Stage Three the District Council and the County Council supported our draft recommendation to retain the existing electoral cycle, and we are content to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

## **Conclusions**

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

- in Newark-on-Trent, the boundaries of three wards should be modified to better reflect the interests and identities of communities in the town;
- Blidworth ward should be coterminous with the boundaries of Blidworth parish, and the ward should be represented by two councillors;
- the boundary between our proposed Caunton and Muskham wards should be modified, so that Bathley parish can continue to be represented in Muskham ward. In order to improve electoral equality in both wards, we propose that Hockerton parish should be transferred from the proposed Muskham ward to the proposed Caunton ward;
- our proposed Collingham ward should be renamed Collingham & Meering ward.

128 We conclude that, in Newark & Sherwood:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 54 to 46;
- there should be 26 wards, four fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	54	46	54	46
Number of wards	30	26	30	26
Average number of electors per councillor	1,532	1,798	1,658	1,946
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	22	4	20	4
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	1	12	1

130 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 22 to four, with all but one ward varying by less than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would be largely unchanged over the next five years. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

Newark & Sherwood District Council should comprise 46 councillors serving 26 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and at Appendix A. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.



# Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

132 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Balderton Parish Council should be represented by 18 councillors, as at present, serving three parish wards. In order to reflect our suggested district warding arrangements, we proposed that Balderton North, Balderton South and Balderton West should return seven, three and eight councillors respectively. While we note that Balderton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations for district warding arrangements for Balderton, we have not been persuaded to modify our draft warding arrangements in this area, as detailed above, and therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
Balderton Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Balderton North (returning seven councillors), Balderton South (returning three councillors) and Balderton West (returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 at Appendix A.

133 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Blidworth parish should continue to be represented by 11 councillors, but that it be divided into two parish wards: Blidworth North (returning five councillors) and Blidworth South (returning six councillors). At Stage Three the District Council supported our proposed parish warding arrangements in Blidworth, while opposing our district warding arrangements, as detailed above. We did not receive any further representations about parish warding in Blidworth, and are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendation without modification.

**Final Recommendation**  
Blidworth Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Blidworth North (returning five councillors) and Blidworth South (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries are as illustrated and named on Map A3 at Appendix A.

134 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Clipstone parish should be represented by 10 councillors, as at present, and be covered by two parish wards: Kings Clipstone

(to be represented by one councillor) and New Clipstone (to be represented by nine councillors). We noted that our proposed district warding arrangements would not result in change to this area and that we were content to put forward this proposal for consultation. At Stage Three a local residents' group, A Celebration of Kings' Clipstone, supported our proposed parish warding arrangements. We remain satisfied that our draft recommendation in relation to this area reflects the interests and identities of communities, and endorse it as our final recommendation.

**Final Recommendation**  
Clipstone Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Kings Clipstone (returning one councillor) and New Clipstone (returning nine councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards is illustrated and named on Map A4 at Appendix A.

135 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that the town of Newark-on-Trent should continue to be represented by 18 councillors. However, we suggested that it should be covered by 16 wards, two fewer than at present, in order to facilitate our draft recommendation for district warding arrangements in Newark-on-Trent.

136 At Stage Three the District Council put forward a number of modifications to our draft recommendations in the town, which we propose adopting as our final recommendations. As a consequence, we propose further modifications to the boundaries of the proposed Fosse, Lilley & Stone, Ossington, Sconce and Windsor town wards. In addition, we propose retaining the town wards of Cardinal Hinsley, Gopher and Grange, which would all have been modified under our draft recommendations. We also propose that a new Welbeck town ward should comprise parts of the existing Fosse, Harcourt and Ransome town wards.

**Final Recommendation**  
Newark-on-Trent Town Council should comprise 18 parish councillors, as at present, representing 18 wards: Bishop Alexander, Bowbridge, Byron, Cardinal Hinsley, Clumber, Fosse, Gilstrap, Gopher, Grange, Harcourt, Hilltop, Lilley & Stone, Lovers Lane, Ossington, Ransome, St Mary's, Sconce and Welbeck (each returning one councillor). The boundaries between the town wards are as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

137 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that the parish of Rainworth should continue to be represented by 12 councillors. In order to facilitate our proposals for district warding in the area, we proposed that the parish should be covered by two parish wards: Rainworth North (to be served by three councillors) and Rainworth South (to be served by nine councillors).

138 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations for warding Rainworth parish. As indicated previously, we propose adopting our draft recommendation to include Rainworth parish in Bilsthorpe and Rainworth district wards, and therefore we propose endorsing our proposed Rainworth North and Rainworth South parish wards as our final recommendations.

**Final Recommendation**  
Rainworth Parish Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Rainworth North (returning three councillors) and Rainworth South (returning nine councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards is illustrated and named on Map A5 at Appendix A.

139 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Southwell town should continue to be represented by 15 councillors, but be divided into three town wards, one more than at present. We proposed that Southwell should be represented by revised Southwell East and Southwell West parish wards and a new Southwell North parish ward, each to be served by five members, to reflect our proposed district warding arrangements for the town.

140 At Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations, but Sherwood Constituency Liberal Democrats and a county councillor proposed that Southwell should be represented in a single district ward. As detailed earlier, we remain content that our draft recommendations for district warding arrangements in Southwell achieve an optimum balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and have adopted them as final. As a consequence, we propose endorsing our proposed town wards.

**Final Recommendation**  
Southwell Town Council should comprise 15 town councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Southwell East, Southwell North and Southwell West (each to be represented by five members). The boundary between the three parish wards is illustrated and named on Maps A6 and A7 at Appendix A.

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

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

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood*

## 6 NEXT STEPS

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

143 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Newark & Sherwood area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Balderton parish.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Blidworth parish.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed warding of Clipstone parish.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed warding of Rainworth parish.

**Maps A6 and A7** illustrate the proposed warding of Southwell town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Newark-on-Trent.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood: Key Map*



*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Balderton Parish*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Blidworth Parish*

*Map A4: Proposed Warding of Clipstone Parish*

*Map A5: Proposed Warding of Rainworth Parish*

*Map A6: Proposed Warding of Southwell Town*

*Map A7: Proposed Warding of Southwell Town*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of nine wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Beacon (in Newark-on-Trent)	Harcourt, Hilltop and Ransome wards as proposed of Newark-on-Trent town
Blidworth	Blidworth ward (Blidworth South ward as proposed of Blidworth parish)
Bridge (in Newark-on-Trent)	Bishop Alexander, Fosse and Gilstrap wards as proposed of Newark-on-Trent town
Castle (in Newark-on-Trent)	Lilley & Stone, Ossington and Windsor wards as proposed of Newark-on-Trent town
Caunton	Caunton ward (part – the parishes of Caunton, Kersall, Kneesall, Laxton, Maplebeck, Ompton and Winkburn); Boughton ward (part – Wellow parish); Muskham ward (part – Bathley parish); Sutton-on-Trent ward (part – the parishes of Egmanton and Ossington)
Devon (in Newark-on-Trent)	Cardinal Hinsley, St Mary's and Sconce wards as proposed of Newark-on-Trent town
Magnus (in Newark-on-Trent)	Bowbridge, Byron, Clumber and Gopher wards as proposed of Newark-on-Trent town
Muskham	Muskham ward (part – the parishes of Averham, Kelham, North Muskham, South Muskham and Staythorpe); Caunton ward (part – Hockerton parish); Southwell East ward (part – Upton parish)
Rainworth	Rainworth ward (Lindhurst parish and Rainworth South ward as proposed of Rainworth parish); Blidworth ward (Blidworth North ward as proposed of Blidworth parish)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Beacon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,430	1,715	-5	4,222	2,111	8
Blidworth	1	1,830	1,830	2	1,887	1,887	-3
Bridge (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,510	1,755	-2	4,025	2,013	3
Castle (in Newark-on-Trent)	3	4,919	1,640	-9	5,520	1,840	-5
Caunton	1	1,840	1,840	2	1,973	1,973	1
Devon (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,740	1,870	4	3,709	1,855	-5
Magnus (in Newark-on-Trent)	2	3,726	1,863	4	3,718	1,859	-4
Muskham	1	1,821	1,821	1	2,090	2,090	7
Rainworth	3	5,382	1,794	0	5,605	1,868	-4

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newark & Sherwood 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.*