

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Charnwood in Leicestershire

Report to The Electoral Commission

June 2002

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Report no: 299

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

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Charnwood.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Charnwood's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 15 January 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

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

- **in 19 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and 11 wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is not expected to significantly improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 15 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 11 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 98-99) are that:

- **Charnwood Borough Council should have 52 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards, instead of 29 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 23 of the proposed 28 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to improve, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Mountsorrel, Rothley, Shepshed, Sileby, Syston and Thurmaston.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, to arrive no later than July 18 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Anstey	2	The parish of Anstey	Map 2
2	Barrow & Sileby West	2	The parish of Barrow-upon-Soar; part of Sileby parish (the proposed Sileby West parish ward)	Map 2
3	Birstall Wanlip	2	Part of Birstall parish (the proposed Birstall Goscote parish ward; Birstall Greengate parish ward); the parish of Wanlip	Map 2
4	Birstall Watermead	2	Part of Birstall parish (the proposed Birstall Netherall parish ward; Birstall Riverside parish ward; Birstall Stonehill parish ward)	Map 2
5	East Goscote	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of East Goscote	Map 2
6	Forest Bradgate	1	The parishes of Newtown Linford, Ulverscroft and Woodhouse	Map 2
7	Loughborough Ashby	2	Part of Ashby ward; part of Garendon ward	Map 2 & Large Map
8	Loughborough Dishley & Hathern	2	The parish of Hathern and an unparished part of Loughborough	Map 2 & Large Map
9	Loughborough Garendon	2	Part of Ashby ward; part of Garendon ward	Map 2 & Large Map
10	Loughborough Hastings	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – Hastings ward	Map 2 & Large Map
11	Loughborough Lemyngton	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – Lemyngton ward	Map 2 & Large Map
12	Loughborough Nanpantan	2	Part of Nanpantan ward; part of Ashby ward	Map 2 & Large Map
13	Loughborough Outwoods	2	Part of Outwoods ward; part of Southfields ward; part of Woodthorpe ward	Map 2 & Large Map
14	Loughborough Shelthorpe	2	Part of Outwoods ward; part of Woodthorpe ward	Map 2 & Large Map
15	Loughborough Southfields	2	Part of Southfields ward; part of Storer ward; part of Woodthorpe ward	Map 2 & Large Map
16	Loughborough Storer	2	Part of Hathern ward; part of Storer ward	Map 2 & Large Map
17	Mountsorrel	2	Part of Mountsorrel parish (the proposed Mountsorrel parish ward)	Map 2
18	Queniborough	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Barkby, Barkby Thorpe, Beeby, Queniborough and South Croxton	Map 2
19	Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle	2	The parish of Quorn; part of Mountsorrel parish (the proposed Mountsorrel Castle parish ward)	Map 2
20	Rothley & Thurcaston	2	The parishes of Rothley, Swithland and Thurcaston & Cropston	Map 2
21	Shepshed East	2	Part of Shepshed parish (the proposed Shepshed East parish ward)	Map 2
22	Shepshed West	2	Part of Shepshed parish (the proposed Shepshed West parish ward)	Map 2
23	Sileby	2	Part of Sileby parish (the Sileby St Gregory's and Sileby St Mary's parish wards)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
24	Syston East	2	Part of Syston parish (the proposed Merton and St Peter's East parish wards)	Map 2
25	Syston West	2	Part of Syston parish (the proposed New Barkby and St Peter's West parish wards)	Map 2
26	The Wolds	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Burton on the Wolds, Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Walton on the Wolds and Wymeswold	Map 2
27	Thurmaston	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Thurmaston	Map 2
28	Wreake Villages	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Cossington, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Rearsby, Seagrave and Thrussington	Map 2

Notes: 1 Loughborough is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the 10 wards of Loughborough Ashby, Loughborough Garendon, Loughborough Hastings, Loughborough Lymington, Loughborough Nanpantan, Loughborough Outwoods, Loughborough Shelthorpe, Loughborough Southfields, Loughborough Storer and part of the ward of Loughborough Dishley & Hathern.

2 Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above. We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail.

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Charnwood

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Anstey	2	4,664	2,332	0	4,621	2,311	-5
2	Barrow & Sileby West	2	4,532	2,266	-3	4,543	2,272	-6
3	Birstall Wanlip	2	4,122	2,061	-12	4,937	2,469	2
4	Birstall Watermead	2	5,192	2,596	11	5,171	2,586	7
5	East Goscote	1	2,176	2,176	-7	2,289	2,289	-6
6	Forest Bradgate	1	2,570	2,570	10	2,586	2,586	7
7	Loughborough Ashby	2	4,898	2,449	5	4,895	2,448	1
8	Loughborough Dishley & Hathern	2	4,500	2,250	-4	4,658	2,329	-4
9	Loughborough Garendon	2	4,967	2,484	4	4,922	2,461	0
10	Loughborough Hastings	2	4,039	2,020	-14	4,438	2,219	-8
11	Loughborough Lemyngton	2	4,091	2,046	-13	4,428	2,214	-9
12	Loughborough Nanpantan	2	4,703	2,352	0	4,673	2,337	-4
13	Loughborough Outwoods	2	4,543	2,272	-3	4,505	2,253	-7
14	Loughborough Shelthorpe	2	4,355	2,178	-7	5,128	2,564	6
15	Loughborough Southfields	2	4,568	2,284	-2	5,062	2,531	4
16	Loughborough Storer	2	4,730	2,365	1	4,710	2,355	-3
17	Mountsorrel	2	5,077	2,539	8	5,062	2,531	4
18	Queniborough	1	2,417	2,417	3	2,438	2,438	1
19	Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle	2	4,907	2,454	5	5,043	2,522	4
20	Rothley & Thurcaston	2	4,759	2,380	2	4,968	2,484	3
21	Shepshed East	2	5,172	2,586	10	5,226	2,613	8
22	Shepshed West	2	5,192	2,596	11	5,263	2,632	9
23	Sileby	2	4,874	2,437	4	5,265	2,633	9
24	Syston East	2	4,587	2,294	-2	4,989	2,495	3
25	Syston West	2	4,643	2,322	-1	4,733	2,367	-2
26	The Wolds	1	2,243	2,243	-4	2,246	2,246	-7

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27	Thurmaston	3	7,116	2,372	1	7,053	2,351	-3
28	Wreake Villages	1	2,240	2,240	-4	2,218	2,218	-8
	Totals	52	121,803	-	-	126,014	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,342	-	-	2,423	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Charnwood Borough Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 Charnwood's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1980 (Report no. 372). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report no. 441). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Charnwood was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 The LGCE were not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Charnwood is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but were willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and any proposal for an increase in council size needed to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Charnwood Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end

of Stage One, was 3 September 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 15 January 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Charnwood in Leicestershire*, and ended on 11 March 2002. During this period it sought comments from the public and any other interested parties on its preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four it reconsidered its draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations agreed by the LGCE. We are content to adopt these final recommendations as our own.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The borough of Charnwood is in North Leicestershire and comprises rural and urban areas. Road and rail links that run north-west to south-west through Charnwood provide connections to Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. The borough has a population of 157,770 and covers an area of 27,930 hectares. The university town of Loughborough is the most populous area within the north of the borough, while in the south the urban areas of Birstall and Thurmaston border Leicester. The borough contains 33 civil parishes, but Loughborough town itself is unparished. Loughborough town comprises 36 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

11 The electorate of the borough is 121,803 (February 2001). The Council presently has 52 members who are elected from 29 wards. Five of these wards each represented by three councillors, 13 are each represented by two councillors and 11 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

12 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,342 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,423 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, in 11 wards by more than 20 per cent and in three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Birstall Netherall ward, where the councillor represents 34 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

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

Map 1: Existing Wards in Charnwood

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashby	2	6,064	3,032	29	6,064	3,032	25
2	Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon	3	8,114	2,705	15	8,188	2,729	13
3	Birstall Goscote	1	1,863	1,863	-20	1,847	1,847	-24
4	Birstall Greengate	1	2,139	2,139	-9	2,121	2,121	-12
5	Birstall Netherall	1	1,557	1,557	-34	1,542	1,542	-36
6	Birstall Riverside	1	1,655	1,655	-29	2,517	2,517	4
7	Birstall Stonehill	1	2,100	2,100	-10	2,081	2,081	-14
8	Bradgate	3	5,580	1,860	-21	5,528	1,843	-24
9	East Goscote	1	2,176	2,176	-7	2,289	2,289	-6
10	Garendon	2	5,199	2,600	11	5,151	2,576	6
11	Hastings	2	4,039	2,020	-14	4,438	2,219	-8
12	Hathern	2	5,714	2,857	22	5,855	2,928	21
13	Lemyngton	2	4,091	2,046	-13	4,428	2,214	-9
14	Mountsorrel & Rothley	3	8,801	2,934	25	9,111	3,037	25
15	Nanpantan	2	3,231	1,616	-31	3,201	1,601	-34
16	Outwoods	2	4,417	2,209	-6	4,387	2,194	-9
17	Queniborough	1	2,417	2,417	3	2,438	2,438	1
18	Shepshed East	2	5,303	2,652	13	5,355	2,678	10
19	Shepshed West	2	5,061	2,531	8	5,134	2,567	6
20	Sileby	2	5,298	2,649	13	5,682	2,841	17
21	Six Hills	1	2,240	2,240	-4	2,218	2,218	-8
22	Southfields	2	3,664	1,832	-22	3,814	1,907	-21
23	Storer	2	4,888	2,444	4	5,225	2,613	8
24	Syston	3	9,230	3,077	31	9,722	3,241	34
25	The Wolds	1	2,243	2,243	-4	2,246	2,246	-7

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Thurcaston	1	1,742	1,742	-26	1,725	1,725	-29
27 Thurmaston	3	7,116	2,372	1	7,053	2,351	-3
28 Woodhouse & Swithland	1	1,848	1,848	-21	1,872	1,872	-23
29 Woodthorpe	2	4,013	2,007	-14	4,782	2,391	-1
Totals	52	121,803	-	-	126,014	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,342	-	-	2,423	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Charnwood Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Birstall Netherall ward were relatively over-represented by 34 per cent, while electors in Ashby ward were relatively under-represented by 29 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received six submissions, including a borough-wide scheme from Charnwood Borough Council, and representations from the Conservative Group on the Council, Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association and three parish councils. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions that were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Charnwood in Leicestershire*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and generally provided a pattern of two-member wards. However, it moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting six wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, together with some of its own proposals. It proposed that:

- Charnwood Borough Council should be served by 52 councillors, the same as at present, representing 28 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Mountsorrell, Rothley, Shepshed, Sileby and Syston.

Draft Recommendation

Charnwood Borough Council should comprise 52 councillors, serving 28 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 28 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward having a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average by 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received 101 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Charnwood Borough Council.

Charnwood Borough Council

18 The Borough Council generally supported the LGCE's draft recommendations subject to amendments in the Mountsorrel and Rothley area and with regard to the parish arrangements for Sileby and Thurmaston parishes. It also put forward alternative ward names.

Leicestershire County Council

19 The County Council suggested that the County town name of Loughborough should be included as a prefix to ward names within the town.

Local Conservative Associations

20 The Charnwood Conservative Association opposed the LGCE's draft proposal that part of Rothley parish be included in a ward with part of Mountsorrel parish. It also commented on ward names.

21 The Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association reiterated its support for the scheme put forward at Stage One by the Conservative Group on the Council. It further stated that it had consulted its members widely before making its comments.

22 The Thurcaston & Cropston Branch of the Charnwood Conservative Association objected to the use of the name Forest Latimer as a ward name and also opposed the LGCE's draft proposal that part of Rothley parish be included in a ward with part of Mountsorrel parish.

Parish Councils

23 During Stage Three submissions were received from eleven parish councils. The parish councils of Cossington, Rearsby, Seagrave and Thrussington all expressed support for the draft recommendations.

24 Mountsorrel Parish Council welcomed the inclusion of the northern part of Rothley in a ward with part of Mountsorrel, but opposed proposals to divide Mountsorrel parish between borough wards. It also made comments on the proposed distribution of parish councillors. Rothley Parish Council objected to the LGCE's alternative proposal for the area and expressed support for the Borough Council's Stage One scheme for Rothley.

25 Sileby Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations to ward the parish and commented on the proposals for parish council electoral arrangements. Thurmaston & Cropston Parish Council commented on the names of the proposed wards.

26 Birstall Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations that two two-member wards represent the area. Alternatively it supported instead a pattern of four single-member wards. Newton Lindford Parish Council requested that the parish form part of a three-member ward with Anstey parish. Hathern Parish Council stated a preference for a single-member ward covering the parish and the area north of the Blackbrook stream.

Other Representations

27 A further 85 representations were received in response to the LGCE's draft recommendations from a parish councillor, a local organisation and individual residents.

28 Of these submissions, 81 expressed opposition to the LGCE's proposal to ward Rothley parish and place part of it in a ward with part of Mountsorrel parish.

29 Two local residents commented on ward names, while one respondent of Loughborough made alternative proposals for boundaries in the town. One resident opposed the draft recommendation to amend the boundary between the wards of Shepshed East and Shepshed West.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

34 Since 1975 there has been a 21 per cent increase in the electorate of Charnwood borough from 95,871 to 121,803. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 3 per cent from 121,803 to 126,014 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expected most of the growth to be in Birstall Riverside ward, although a significant amount was also expected in the wards of Hastings, Lemyngton, Sileby, Syston and Woodthorpe. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

Council Size

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

37 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the Council's proposal for a council of 52 members, no change to the current number.

38 During Stage Three no comments were received concerning the issue of council size. Given all the evidence received during the review, we are confirming proposals for no change to the current council size.

Electoral Arrangements

39 The LGCE's draft recommendations were generally based on the scheme developed by the Borough Council. It considered that this scheme balanced the statutory criteria and had a degree of public support.

40 In response to the LGCE's draft recommendations report, the majority of respondents commented on proposals for the Rothley and Mountsorrel areas. The issue of ward names has also been raised during Stage Three.

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

- (a) Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemyngton wards;
- (b) Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon, East Goscote, Sileby, Six Hills and The Wolds wards;
- (c) Bradgate, Mountsorrel & Rothley, Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards;
- (d) Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate, Birstall Netherhall, Birstall Riverside, Birstall Stonehill, Thurmaston, Syston and Queniborough wards.

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

Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemyngton wards

43 The wards of Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Southfields and Lemyngton together cover the unparished town of Loughborough and are each represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 29 per cent above the borough average in Ashby ward (25 per cent above the average by 2006), 11 per cent above the borough average in Garendon ward (6 per cent above the average by 2006), 14 per cent below the borough average in Hastings ward (8 per cent below the average by 2006), 31 per cent below the borough average in Nanpantan ward (34 per cent below the average by 2006), 6 per cent below the borough average in Outwoods ward (9 per cent below the average by 2006), 4 per cent above the borough average in Storer ward (8 per cent above the average by 2006), 14 per cent below the borough average in Woodthorpe ward (1 per cent below the average by 2006), 22 per cent below the borough average in Southfields ward (21 per cent below the average by 2006) and 13 per cent below the borough average in Lemyngton ward (9 per cent below the average by 2006).

44 Hathern ward is located to the north-west of Loughborough and comprises the parish of Hathern and an unparished area of Loughborough known as Dishley. The number of electors per councillor is 22 per cent above the borough average in Hathern ward (21 per cent above the average by 2006).

45 Shepshed East and Shepshed West wards together comprise the parish of Shepshed. The number of electors per councillor is 13 per cent above the borough average in Shepshed East ward (10 per cent above the average by 2006) and 8 per cent above the borough average in Shepshed West ward (6 per cent above the average by 2006).

46 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Loughborough town be represented by 10 two-member wards, retaining the general ward pattern of the area. In Shepshed town the Council proposed retaining two two-member wards. Under the Council's proposals Hathern & Dishley ward would continue to comprise Hathern parish and the unparished area of Dishley.

47 The LGCE adopted the Borough Council's proposals as the basis of its draft recommendations for the area. However, it proposed alternative boundaries between the wards of Ashby and Nanpantan, and between the wards of Shelthorpe and Outwoods.

48 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern & Dishley, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Shelthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemington wards would be 3 per cent above, 6 per cent above, 14 per cent below, 4 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 8 per cent below, 10 per cent above, 11 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 13 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent below, 2 per cent above, 8 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 8 per cent above, 9 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 9 per cent below by 2006).

49 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the LGCE's recommendations for all the wards above. However, within the town of Loughborough, it proposed that the ward names should all be prefixed with the name "Loughborough". This proposal was supported by submissions from both Leicestershire County Council and Councillor Max Hunt, member for Garendon ward.

50 Hathern Parish Council stated that the Council should remain in a single-member ward and that Blackbrook Stream should provide the southern boundary for the ward. One resident expressed opposition to the LGCE's proposal to amend the current boundary between the Shepshed East and Shepshed West wards stating that they should remain as at present. He also argued that future development would take place in Shepshed West, although no evidence was provided in support of this.

51 Another resident proposed a number of amendments to the boundaries recommended by the LGCE in the Ashby, Garendon, Hathern & Dishley, Nanpantan, Outwoods and Shelthorpe wards. This resident proposed the transfer of around 380 electors from the areas including Lansdowne Drive, Beacon Drive, Parklands Drive and Park Road from the proposed Shelthorpe ward to the proposed Outwood ward. He also proposed that the boundary between Nanpantan and Outwoods should be altered to follow along the Wood Brook. He argued that this amendment would ensure the area of Nanpantan would then not be split between Nanpantan and Outwoods wards.

52 He also proposed transferring the area adjoining Mount Grace Road from the proposed Garendon ward to Hathern & Dishley ward. He argued that this area was separated from the rest of the ward by a strip of woodland and that it would "more properly belong in Hathern & Dishley to which it does have road access".

53 This resident further proposed an amendment to the proposed boundaries between Garendon and Ashby wards with the houses on the north side of Garendon Road, backing onto the Burleigh Brook, being transferred into the proposed Ashby ward. He argued that the boundary proposed by the LGCE would split Garendon Road and left the houses on the north side of the street separated from the rest of Garendon ward by an area of open ground, the brook and a fire and ambulance station.

54 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the majority of the LGCE's draft recommendations for the above wards, as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received local support. In light of the proposals for ward name changes received from the Borough Council, the County Council and a local resident we also recommend that within Loughborough town and Hathern & Dishley all the wards be prefixed with the name "Loughborough".

55 We have also considered the proposals for amendments within the Loughborough area. Having consulted the Borough Council we have decided to move away from the draft recommendations and modify the proposed boundary between Loughborough Ashby and Loughborough Garendon wards. However, in the light of the Borough Council's future development of the site situated at the back of houses on Beacon Road and Beacon Drive we do not consider that boundary amendments between Loughborough Shelthorpe and Loughborough Outwoods would meet the statutory criteria.

56 The Borough Council did not support the amendment to the Garendon and Hathern & Dishley wards. It argued that the Blackbrook provided a "very definitive boundary" between these wards. The Borough Council also argued that although there was road access along Maxwell Drive to the estate surrounding Mount Grace Road this estate has no particular affinity with houses on the northern side of the Blackbrook and sits quite comfortably in Garendon ward. We are not, therefore, adopting this alternative proposal. With regard to the proposed amendment to Nanpantan and Outwoods wards again we consider that the LGCE's draft recommendations using Nanpantan Road would meet our statutory criteria and provides a definitive boundary between the wards.

57 The final proposal for amendment of Ashby and Garendon wards received the support of the Borough Council. Given this support, we have decided to adopt this proposal and to amend the boundary between the proposed Loughborough Ashby and Loughborough Garendon wards as we consider that it would better reflect the statutory criteria.

58 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Loughborough Ashby, Loughborough Dishley & Hathern, Loughborough Garendon, Loughborough Hastings, Loughborough Lemyngton, Loughborough Nanpantan, Loughborough Outwoods, Loughborough Shelthorpe, Loughborough Southfields wards Loughborough Storer, Shepshed East and Shepshed West, would be 5 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 4 per cent above, 14 per cent below, 13 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 3 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 10 per cent above and 11 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, 4 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 8 per cent below, 9 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 6 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 8 per cent above and 9 per cent above by 2006). Our proposals are illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon, East Goscote, Sileby, Six Hills and The Wolds wards

59 These five wards are located in the centre and north-east of the borough. Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon ward is represented by three councillors and comprises of the parishes of Barrow upon Soar and Quorndon. East Goscote, Six Hills and The Wolds wards are each represented by a single councillor. East Goscote ward is coterminous with East Goscote parish. Six Hills

ward comprises the parishes of Cossington, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Rearsby, Thrussington and Seagrave. The Wolds ward comprises the parishes of Burton on the Wolds, Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Walton on the Wolds and Wymesfold. Sileby ward is represented by two councillors and is coterminous with Sileby parish. The number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the borough average in Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon ward (13 per cent above by 2006), 7 per cent below the borough average in East Goscote ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 13 per cent above the borough average in Sileby ward (17 per cent above by 2006), 4 per cent below the borough average in Six Hills ward (8 per cent below by 2006) and 4 per cent below the borough average in The Wolds ward (7 per cent below by 2006).

60 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that these wards be represented by a pattern of three single-member wards and two two-member wards, a total of seven councillors. It proposed that the current ward boundaries of East Goscote, Six Hills and The Wolds wards should remain unchanged, but that Six Hills ward should be renamed Wreake Villages. The Council further proposed warding Sileby parish. It proposed a new Barrow & Sileby West borough ward comprising Barrow upon Soar parish and a new parish ward of Sileby West, and a modified Sileby. The Council proposed that Sileby ward, comprising the remainder of Sileby parish.

61 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Barrow & Sileby West, East Goscote, Sileby, The Wolds and Wreake Villages wards would be 3 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 4 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 4 per cent below the borough average respectively (6 per cent below, 6 per cent below, 9 per cent above, 7 per cent below and 8 per cent below by 2006).

62 In response to the LGCE's draft recommendations the Borough Council expressed support for these recommendations. However, the Borough Council proposed revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors within Sileby parish.

63 Sileby Parish Council objected to the proposed Barrow and Sileby West ward, arguing that Cossington, Seagrave and Sileby were linked historically and geographically, and that these villages should be represented in a three-member ward.

64 Cossington, Rearsby, Seagrave and Thrussington parish councils all supported the LGCE's recommendations for the Six Hills Villages. However Cossington Parish Council did not support the change of ward name to Wreake Villages. Rearsby Parish Council proposed the change of ward name to "Wreake Valley Villages". One resident proposed the proposed Wreake Villages ward be renamed "The Wreake" ward.

65 We have given careful consideration to the representations and evidence received at Stage Three. We note the objections of Sileby Parish Council. However we cannot consider an area in isolation. In order to facilitate good electoral equality across the whole of borough this area provided the best option for warding, we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

66 The levels of electoral equality in these wards would be the same under draft recommendations and our proposals are illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

Bradgate, Mountsorrel & Rothley, Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards

67 These four wards are located in the south-west of the borough. Bradgate and Mountsorrel & Rothley wards are each represented by three councillors. Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards are each represented by a single councillor. Bradgate ward comprises the parishes of Anstey, Newtown Linford and Ulverscroft. Mountsorrel & Rothley ward comprises the parishes of Mountsorrel and Rothley. Thurcaston ward is coterminous with the parish of Thurcaston & Cropston. Woodhouse & Swithland ward comprises the parishes of Woodhouse

and Swithland. The number of electors per councillor is 21 per cent below the borough average in Bradgate ward (24 per cent below by 2006), 25 per cent above in Mountsorrel & Rothley ward (25 per cent above by 2006), 26 per cent below in Thurstaston ward (29 per cent below by 2006) and 21 per cent below in Woodhouse & Swithland ward (23 per cent below by 2006).

68 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by a pattern of one single-member ward, three two-member wards and one three-member ward. It proposed that Bradgate ward be composed of the parishes of Newton Linford, Ulverscroft and Woodhouse and be renamed Forest Bradgate. The Council further proposed that a new ward of Forest Latimer should be created, consisting of the parishes of Thurstaston & Cropston, Swithland and Rothley. The Council also proposed that Anstey parish should constitute a two-member ward.

69 In order to achieve a good balance between the levels of electoral equality and the statutory criteria within the whole borough, the Council proposed parish warding of one of the central area parishes. It identified the three parishes of Mountsorrel, Quorn and Rothley as three possible options for warding. It proposed that Mountsorrel parish be warded, comprising two parish wards of Mountsorrel and Mountsorrel Castle. It proposed that the new Mountsorrel parish ward should form a new Mountsorrel borough ward, and that the new Mountsorrel Castle parish ward be placed with Quorn parish to form a new Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle ward.

70 The Conservative Group proposed a three-member Mountsorrel & Rothley North ward. Mountsorrel Parish Council objected to the Council proposals to split the parish between two borough wards and proposals that the houses on the Rolls Royce and Fairclough Homes estates should be transferred from Rothley parish to form part of Mountsorrel ward.

71 The LGCE carefully considered the various options put forward for this area by the Borough Council and parish councils. Having visited the area it considered that the Borough Council's proposals provided the best balance between electoral equality and community identity. However, it did accept some of the arguments put forward by Mountsorrel Parish Council and the Conservative Group with regard to the Rolls Royce and Fairclough Homes estates. It proposed that the northern part of Rothley parish, adjoining the present Mountsorrel ward, should form a new parish ward and be transferred into Mountsorrel ward, as it considered that this would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

72 The LGCE noted the urban overspill of Mountsorrel ward into Rothley parish. To provide a clearer boundary it proposed that Rothley parish be warded. The proposed Rothley North parish ward would then be included in the proposed Mountsorrel ward. The LGCE further proposed that the more rural part of Rothley parish would form a new Rothley South parish ward which would then form part of Forest Latimer ward.

73 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Anstey, Forest Bradgate, Forest Latimer, Mountsorrel and Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle wards would be equal to the borough average, 10 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 8 per cent above, 14 per cent above and 5 per cent above respectively, (5 per cent below, 7 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 9 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2006).

74 At Stage Three the Borough Council objected to the LGCE's recommendations that proposed the warding of Rothley and including Rothley North parish ward in the proposed Mountsorrel ward. It restated a preference for its Stage One proposals for both Rothley and Mountsorrel parishes and proposed that Rothley Parish Council should retain ten members.

75 Charnwood Conservative Association objected to the warding of Rothley parish. It also objected to the use of Latimer as a ward name for the parishes of Rothley, Swithland, Thurstaston & Cropston. Alternatively it suggested the ward name Rothley and Thurstaston and also that Bradgate be used as a ward name for the proposed Forest Bradgate ward.

76 Thurcaston & Cropston Branch of the Charnwood Conservative Association also objected to the use of Forest Latimer as a ward name. Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association reiterated its support for the Stage One proposals of the Conservative Group with the exception of minor alterations regarding Six Hills and Sileby wards.

77 Mountsorrel Parish Council supported the proposed inclusion of Rothley North parish ward within the proposed Mountsorrel ward. It also stated support for a three-member ward comprising the Mountsorrel parish and the proposed Rothley North parish ward. It further proposed that Mountsorrel Castle and Mountsorrel parish wards be represented by two and 11 parish councillors respectively.

78 Rothley Parish Council opposed the LGCE's draft recommendations, arguing that it was possible to achieve electoral equality without warding Rothley parish, and therefore the transfer of Rothley North parish ward into the proposed Mountsorrel ward was not necessary. It also expressed support for Charnwood Borough Council's Stage One proposals for this area. The Parish Council further objected to the proposed ward name of Forest Latimer arguing that this name did not reflect local identity. It stated that it preferred to use a combination of "Rothley/Thurcaston" as an alternative ward name.

79 Councillor Hartshorn, a Rothley Parish Councillor, objected to the LGCE's proposed warding of Rothley parish. He argued that the residents in the north of Rothley parish boundary had more empathy with Rothley than the proposed Mountsorrel ward. He also stated that the inclusion of 250 electors within the Mountsorrel ward would worsen electoral equality and that this proposal would not provide good and convenient local government.

80 One resident objected to the recommendation to split Mountsorrel between separate wards. However, he did support Mountsorrel "including the new estates in Rothley North" being represented by its own members in a single ward.

81 We received a further 78 responses from local residents of Rothley, 66 of which submitted a standard letter, objecting to the warding of Rothley and the inclusion of the proposed Rothley North parish ward within the proposed Mountsorrel ward. One resident also submitted objections to this proposal and further objected to the use of Forest Latimer and Forest Bradgate as ward names. Alternatively he proposed the use of Rothley & Thurcaston and Bradgate as ward names respectively. Thurcaston & Cropston Parish Council objected to the use of Forest Latimer as a ward name. It also suggested "Thurcaston & Rothley" as an alternative ward name. This proposal was supported by a separate submission from one local resident.

82 Newtown Linford Parish Council stated that it would prefer to remain in a ward in Anstey parish.

83 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and noted the general opposition to the proposed boundary between Mountsorrel and Forest Latimer wards. We noted that although achieving acceptable electoral equality, this proposal was adopted in order to provide a clearer ward boundary in this area. We have noted that in other areas the inclusion of urban overspill in a ward with parts of an urban area often receives strong local support. However, we acknowledge that this has not been the case here.

84 We are grateful for the feedback concerning the statutory criteria that has been received during Stage Three. As a number of respondents have stated, levels of electoral equality would be better if the whole of Rothley parish was placed in a ward with the parishes of Thurcaston & Cropston and Swithland. We also noted the views on the focus of community for residents of the area in the north of Rothley parish.

85 We have therefore decided to modify the draft recommendations and to propose a new Mountsorrel ward comprising Mountsorrel parish ward and a new Quorndon & Mountsorrel Castle ward comprising Quorn parish and Mountsorrel Castle parish ward. We also propose renaming Forest Latimer ward Rothley & Thurcaston. This ward would comprise the parishes of Rothley, Swithland and Thurcaston & Cropston.

86 The levels of electoral equality in Mountsorrel and Rothley & Thurcaston wards would be 8 per cent above and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent above and 3 per cent above by 2006). The levels of electoral equality for the remaining wards in this area are the same as under our draft recommendations and our proposals are illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate, Birstall Netherhall, Birstall Riverside, Birstall Stonehill, Queniborough, Syston and Thurmaston wards

87 These eight wards are located in the south-east of the borough. The Birstall wards and Queniborough ward are each represented by a single councillor. Syston and Thurmaston wards are both represented by three councillors. Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate and Birstall Netherall wards are coterminous with parish wards of the same names. Birstall Riverside ward consists of Wanlip parish and Birstall Riverside parish ward. The number of electors per councillor is 20 per cent below the borough average in Birstall Goscote ward (24 per cent below the average by 2006), 9 per cent below in Birstall Greengate ward (12 per cent below by 2006), 34 per cent below in Birstall Netherall ward (36 per cent below by 2006), 29 per cent below in Birstall Riverside ward (4 per cent above by 2006), 10 per cent below in Birstall Stonehill ward (14 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent above in Queniborough ward (1 per cent above by 2006) 31 per cent above in Syston ward (34 per cent above by 2006) and 1 per cent above in Thurmaston ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

88 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Birstall town be represented by two two-member wards. It proposed that Birstall Wanlip ward should consist of Wanlip parish and the current Birstall Goscote and Birstall Greengate parish wards of Birstall parish. It also proposed that the current Birstall Netherall, Birstall Riverside and Birstall Stonehill parish wards of Birstall parish be combined in a new Birstall Watermead ward.

89 It further proposed that Syston parish be divided into a two-member Syston East ward and a two-member Syston West ward. Syston East ward would comprise the new parish wards of St Peter's East and Merton. It proposed that Syston West ward should then be coterminous with the proposed New Barkby and St Peter's West parish wards. The Council also proposed that the wards of Thurmaston and Queniborough should remain unchanged.

90 The Conservative schemes both proposed four single-member wards for the Birstall and Wanlip areas but did not provide any argumentation or evidence to support their proposals.

91 Having considered the different proposals submitted at Stage One, the LGCE considered that the Borough Council's proposals for this area provided the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and were therefore content to adopt them without amendment.

92 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Birstall Wanlip, Birstall Watermead, Syston East, Syston West, Queniborough and Thurmaston wards would be 12 per cent below, 11 per cent above, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent above, 7 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 3 per cent below by 2006).

93 The Borough Council supported for the LGCE's draft recommendations for the above wards. However, it also proposed alternative arrangements for Thurmaston Parish Council, discussed below.

94 Birstall Parish Council opposed the LGCE's draft recommendations for two two-member wards and stated that it preferred the present pattern of four single-member wards for Birstall parish. It stated that the parish would soon receive an "influx of 900 new houses" however no evidence was submitted to support this proposal.

95 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three, and noted the opposition to the LGCE's proposals from Birstall Parish Council. However, in light of the evidence submitted we have not been persuaded to move away from the LGCE's draft recommendations that in our view, provide the best balance between the statutory criteria.

96 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for these wards would be same as under the draft recommendations and our proposals are illustrated on Map A4 in Appendix A.

Electoral Cycle

97 In conducting its review the LGCE sought views in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. However, by virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

Conclusions

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

- in Loughborough town – we propose minor boundary amendments between the proposed Loughborough Ashby and Loughborough Garendon wards;
- in Forest Latimer ward - we propose including the whole of Rothley parish in this ward and renaming it Rothley & Thurcaston.

99 We conclude that, in Charnwood:

- there should be a no change to the current council size of 52 members;
- there should be 28 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	52	52	52	52
Number of wards	29	28	29	28
Average number of electors per councillor	2,342	2,342	2,423	2,423
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	19	5	15	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	11	0	11	0

101 As Table 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 19 to five, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. We conclude that our recommendations would best reflect the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Charnwood Borough Council should comprise 52 councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

103 The parish of Rothley is currently served by 10 councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, the LGCE proposed that Rothley be warded for parish council purposes.

104 In response to the LGCE's consultation report, the Borough Council, Rothley Parish Council, three local political organisations, a parish councillor and 79 local residents all objected to this proposal. Having considered all the evidence received, we have decided to amend the draft recommendations and propose no change to the parish arrangements for Rothley.

Final Recommendation

Rothley Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors and should not be warded.

105 Mountsorrel parish is currently served by 13 councillors and is not warded. In order to achieve a balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria the Borough Council proposed that the town be divided into two parish wards: Mountsorrel Castle and Mountsorrel.

106 In response to the LGCE's consultation report we received comments from the Borough Council proposing that Mountsorrel should comprise the parish wards of Mountsorrel Castle parish ward returning two councillors and Mountsorrel parish ward returning 11 councillors. Mountsorrel Parish Council supported this proposal. However, it opposed the recommendation to divide Mountsorrel parish between two borough wards. We therefore propose endorsing the draft recommendations to ward Mountsorrel parish into two parish wards: Mountsorrel Castle and Mountsorrel.

Final Recommendation

Mountsorrel Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors as at present. Representing two parish wards: Mountsorrel Castle parish ward (returning two councillors) and Mountsorrel parish ward (returning 11 councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

107 Syston parish currently returns 20 councillors representing five wards: Central East (returning five councillors), Central West, New Barkby and St Peter's East (all returning four councillors) and St Peter's West (returning three councillors). The Borough Council proposed that the parish be divided between four new parish wards. It proposed that New Barkby and St Peter's West parish wards be placed together in the proposed Syston West borough ward and that the proposed Merton and St Peter's East parish wards be placed together in the proposed Syston East borough ward. It proposed that each parish ward should be served by five councillors.

108 At Stage Three we received no further comments concerning warding within Syston parish. We therefore propose endorsing the LGCE's draft recommendations for Syston Parish Council.

Final Recommendation

Syston Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four parish wards: New Barkby, St Peter's East, St Peter's West and Merton, (each returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

109 Sileby parish currently returns 15 councillors and is divided into two parish wards: St Gregory's returning eight parish councillors, and St Mary's returning seven parish councillors. In order to achieve a balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria at borough level the Borough Council proposed that Sileby parish be warded. The proposed new parish ward of Sileby West would form part of Barrow & Sileby West borough ward. The parish wards of Sileby St Mary's and Sileby St Gregory's, would comprise the proposed Sileby borough ward.

110 In response to the LGCE's consultation report we received comments from the Borough Council proposing that Sileby Parish Council comprise of 15 councillors representing three parish wards: Sileby St Gregory's parish ward returning eight councillors, Sileby St Mary's parish returning six councillors and Sileby West parish ward returning one councillor. In the light of these proposals we recommend the adoption of these parish arrangements in this area as part of our final recommendations.

Final Recommendation

Sileby Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors representing three parish wards: Sileby West (returning one councillor), Sileby St Mary's (returning eight councillors) and Sileby St Gregory's (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

111 Shepshed Town Council is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Shepshed East parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Shepshed West parish ward (returning eight councillors). The Borough Council proposed a minor amendment to the borough ward boundaries in the town. We propose that in the light of our proposed borough warding arrangements Shepshed Town Council should continue to comprise two parish wards. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the borough wards within the parish.

112 In response to the LGCE's consultation report the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for Shepshed Town Council. One resident opposed the amendment to the borough ward boundaries between Shepshed East and Shepshed West and stated they should remain as at present. He argued that future development would take place in Shepshed West, however he provided no evidence to support this proposal. Having considered these proposals, we recommend the adoption of the LGCE's draft proposals for parish arrangements in this area as part of our final recommendations.

Final Recommendation

Shepshed Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors as at present, representing two wards: Shepshed East parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Shepshed West parish (returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

113 Thurmaston Parish Council comprises 19 councillors representing four wards: Central parish ward returning six councillors, East parish ward returning five councillors, North parish ward returning three councillors and South parish ward returning five councillors.

114 At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed modifying the representation between the parish wards. It proposed that Thurmaston Parish Council be comprised of 19 councillors representing four wards: Central parish ward returning five councillors, East parish ward returning seven councillors, North parish ward returning three councillors and South parish ward returning four councillors. In the light of these proposals we recommend the adoption of these parish arrangements in this area as part of our final recommendations. These proposals would not alter the current parish wards.

Final Recommendation

Thurmaston Parish Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Central parish ward (returning five councillors), East parish ward (returning seven councillors), North parish ward (returning three councillors) and South parish ward (returning four councillors).

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Charnwood

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

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

117 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission at the address below, to arrive no later than 18 July 2002:

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Charnwood: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Charnwood 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 Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Mountsorrel parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Sileby parish.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Syston parish.

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

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Charnwood: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Mountsorrel Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Sileby Parish

Map A4: Proposed Warding of Syston Parish