

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Harborough in Leicestershire

*January 2002*

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# CONTENTS

	page
WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?	v
SUMMARY	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	5
3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED	11
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	13
5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	31
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Harborough : Detailed Mapping	33
B Code of Practice on Written Consultation	35

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Broughton Astley, Lutterworth and Market Harborough is inserted inside the back cover of this report.



# WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.



## SUMMARY

We began a review of Harborough's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001.

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

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

- **In 15 of the 26 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;**
- **By 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 17 wards and by more than 20 per cent in nine wards.**

Our main proposals for Harborough's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 83-84) are that:

- **Harborough District Council should have 37 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of 26 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and three 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 district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 22 of the proposed 25 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in 24 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements, the redistribution of councillors and a reduction in the number of councillors serving the parish of Broughton;**
- **revised warding arrangements, the redistribution of councillors and an increase in the number of councillors serving the parish of Lutterworth.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 15 January 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, subject to Parliamentary approval, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 11 March 2002:

**Review Manager  
Harborough Review  
LGCE  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Billesdon	1	The parishes of Billesdon, Cranoe, Frisby, Gaulby, Glooston, Goadby, Illston on the Hill, King's Norton, Noseley, Rolleston, Slawston, Stonton Wyville, Thorpe Langton and Welham	Map 2
2	Bosworth	1	The parishes of Husbands Bosworth, Knaptoft, Mowsley, North Kilworth and South Kilworth	Map 2
3	Broughton Astley – Astley	1	Part of Broughton Astley parish (the proposed Astley parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
4	Broughton Astley – Broughton	1	Part of Broughton Astley parish (the proposed Broughton parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
5	Broughton Astley – Primethorpe	1	Part of Broughton Astley parish (the proposed Primethorpe parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
6	Broughton Astley – Sutton	1	Part of Broughton Astley parish (the proposed Sutton parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
7	Dunton	1	The parishes of Ashby Magna, Ashby Parva, Dunton Bassett, Frolesworth and Leire	Map 2
8	Fleckney	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Fleckney)	Map 2
9	Glen	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Burton Overy, Carlton Curlieu, Great Glen, Little Stretton and Wistow)	Map 2
10	Kibworth	3	The parishes of East Langton, Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, Shangton, Smeeton Westerby, Tur Langton and West Langton	Map 2
11	Lubenham	1	The parishes of Foxton, Gumley, Laughton, Lubenham, Saddington and Theddingworth	Map 2
12	Lutterworth Brookfield	1	Part of Lutterworth parish (the proposed Brookfield parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
13	Lutterworth Orchard	1	Part of Lutterworth parish (the proposed Orchard parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
14	Lutterworth Springs	1	Part of Lutterworth parish (the proposed Springs parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
15	Lutterworth Swift	1	Part of Lutterworth parish (the proposed Swift parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
16	Market Harborough – St Lukes	3	Part of Market Harborough North ward; part of Market Harborough Bowden ward; the parish of Great Bowden	Map 2 and large map
17	Market Harborough – Little Bowden	2	Part of Market Harborough Bowden ward	Map 2 and large map
18	Market Harborough – Logan	2	Part of Market Harborough North ward; part of Market Harborough West ward	Map 2 and large map
19	Market Harborough – Welland	3	Part of Market Harborough Bowden ward; Market Harborough South ward; part of Market Harborough West ward	Map 2 and large map
20	Misterton	1	The parishes of Catthorpe, Cotesbach, Gilmorton, Misterton with Walcote, Shawell, Swinford and Westrill & Starmore	Map 2
21	Nevill	1	The parishes of Allextan, Blaston, Bringhurst, Drayton, Great Easton, Hallaton, Horninghold, Medbourne, Nevill Holt and Stockerston	Map 2
22	Peatling	1	The parishes of Arnesby, Bruntingthorpe, Kimcote & Walton, Peatling Magna, Peatling Parva, Shearsby and Willoughby Waterleys	Map 2
23	Thurnby & Houghton	3	The parishes of Houghton on the Hill, Scraftoft, Stoughton and Thurnby & Bushby	Map 2

24	Tilton	1	The parishes of Cold Newton, East Norton, Hungarton, Keyham, Launde, Loddington, Lowesby, Marefield, Owston & Newbold, Skeffington, Tilton on the Hill, Tugby & Keythorpe and Withcote	Map 2
25	Ullesthorpe	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bittesby, Bitteswell, Claybrooke Magna, Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe)	Map 2

*Notes: 1 Market Harborough is the only unparished part of the district and comprises the four wards indicated above.*

*2 Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Harborough

	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	Billesdon	1	1,559	1,559	-5	1,746	1,746	2
2	Bosworth	1	1,770	1,770	8	1,803	1,803	5
3	Broughton Astley – Astley	1	1,770	1,770	8	1,759	1,759	3
4	Broughton Astley – Broughton	1	1,547	1,547	-5	1,679	1,679	-2
5	Broughton Astley – Primethorpe	1	1,540	1,540	-6	1,601	1,601	-7
6	Broughton Astley – Sutton	1	1,545	1,545	-6	1,585	1,585	-8
7	Dunton	1	1,689	1,689	3	1,721	1,721	0
8	Fleckney	2	3,521	1,761	8	3,722	1,861	8
9	Glen	2	3,163	1,582	-3	3,411	1,706	-1
10	Kibworth	3	4,667	1,556	-5	4,954	1,651	-4
11	Lubenham	1	1,698	1,698	4	1,721	1,721	0
12	Lutterworth Brookfield	1	1,715	1,716	5	1,846	1,846	8
13	Lutterworth Orchard	1	1,781	1,782	9	1,772	1,772	3
14	Lutterworth Springs	1	1,726	1,727	6	1,830	1,830	7
15	Lutterworth Swift	1	1,408	1,409	-14	1,771	1,771	3
16	Market Harborough – St Lukes	3	5,104	1,701	4	5,151	1,717	0
17	Market Harborough – Little Bowden	2	2,758	1,379	-16	3,144	1,572	-8
18	Market Harborough – Logan	2	3,274	1,637	0	3,300	1,650	-4
19	Market Harborough – Welland	3	4,518	1,506	-8	4,837	1,612	-6
20	Misterton	1	1,886	1,886	15	1,923	1,923	12
21	Nevill	1	1,622	1,622	-1	1,676	1,676	-2
22	Peatling	1	1,778	1,778	9	1,825	1,825	6
23	Thurnby & Houghton	3	5,258	1,753	7	5,262	1,754	2
24	Tilton	1	1,552	1,552	-5	1,643	1,643	-4
25	Ullesthorpe	1	1,655	1,655	1	1,754	1,754	2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>60,504</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>63,468</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,715</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Harborough 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of Harborough in Leicestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven two-tier districts in Leicestershire and the unitary authority of Leicester City 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 expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Harborough. Harborough's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1979 (Report no. 315). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report no. 441). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements later this year.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 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.

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

*Table 3: Stages of the Review*

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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *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, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half of 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 wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000, which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when we wrote to Harborough District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Harborough District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 3 September 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 15 January 2002 and will end on 11 March 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 The district of Harborough borders Warwickshire to the west, Rutland to the east, Leicester City, Melton, Blaby and Oadby & Wigston to the north and Northamptonshire to the south. It is geographically the largest district in Leicestershire, covering nearly one-quarter of the county. The district is predominantly rural, with the towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth providing the main shopping and business services.

16 The district contains 92 civil parishes, but Market Harborough town itself is unparished and comprises 26 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 60,504 (February 2001). The Council presently has 37 members who are elected from 26 wards, nine of which are relatively urban in the towns of Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, with the remainder being mainly rural. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and 17 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,635 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,715 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 15 of the 26 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 Broughton ward where the councillor represents 96 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Harborough*



Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Billesdon	1	1,241	1,241	-24	1,399	1,399	-18
2	Bosworth	1	1,420	1,420	-13	1,449	1,449	-16
3	Broughton	2	6,402	3,201	96	6,624	3,312	93
4	Dunton	1	1,430	1,430	-13	1,453	1,453	-15
5	Easton	1	1,569	1,569	-4	1,621	1,621	-6
6	Fleckney	2	3,521	1,761	8	3,722	1,861	8
7	Gilmorton	1	1,510	1,510	-8	1,525	1,525	-11
8	Glen	2	3,163	1,582	-3	3,411	1,706	-1
9	Houghton	1	1,603	1,603	-2	1,597	1,597	-7
10	Kibworth	2	4,175	2,088	28	4,453	2,227	30
11	Kilworth	1	1,574	1,574	-4	1,613	1,613	-6
12	Langton	1	963	963	-41	1,011	1,011	-41
13	Lubenham	1	1,255	1,255	-23	1,298	1,298	-24
14	Lutterworth Linden	1	2,098	2,098	28	2,225	2,225	30
15	Lutterworth St Mary's	1	1,498	1,498	-8	1,544	1,544	-10
16	Lutterworth Sherrier	1	1,677	1,677	3	2,040	2,040	19
17	Lutterworth Wycliffe	1	1,357	1,357	-17	1,410	1,410	-18
18	Market Harborough Bowden	2	4,232	2,116	29	4,735	2,368	38
19	Market Harborough North	3	4,370	1,457	-11	4,414	1,471	-14
20	Market Harborough South	2	2,618	1,309	-20	2,612	1,306	-24
21	Market Harborough West	3	4,434	1,478	-10	4,671	1,557	-9

22	Peatling	1	1,632	1,632	0	1,687	1,687	-2
23	Scraptoft	1	1,142	1,142	-30	1,132	1,132	-34
24	Thurnby	2	2,831	1,416	-13	2,856	1,428	-17
25	Tilton	1	1,134	1,134	-31	1,212	1,212	-29
26	Ullesthorpe	1	1,655	1,655	1	1,754	1,754	2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>60,504</b>	-	-	<b>63,468</b>	-	-
	<b>Averages</b>	-	-	<b>1,635</b>	-	-	<b>1,715</b>	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Harborough District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Langton ward were relatively over-represented by 41 per cent, while electors in Broughton ward were relatively under-represented by 96 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Harborough District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 19 submissions during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council, the Conservative Group on the District Council and County Councillor Feltham. The District Council also forwarded three submissions including a district-wide scheme from Councillor Fewkes. All of these submissions may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

#### **Harborough District Council**

22 The District Council proposed a decrease in council size of two, from 37 to 35, serving 25 wards, a reduction of one. It proposed a combination of single- and multi-member wards throughout the district. However, it also included, as part of its submission, a 37-member scheme based on 25 wards, upon which it had consulted and two versions of a 37-member scheme prepared by the Harborough District Liberal Democrat Group.

23 Under the District Council's proposed 35-member scheme electoral equality would improve in the district, with two wards having an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent by 2006. Under its 37-member consultation scheme one ward would have a variance of more than 10 per cent from the district average by 2006.

24 Councillor Fewkes, in a submission forwarded by the District Council, proposed a 32-member scheme, a reduction of five councillors. In two further submissions forwarded by the District Council, King's Norton Parish Council objected to the District Council's consultation proposals, stating that its links were with the parishes of Gaulby, Illston and Billesdon. Shangton Parish Meeting and Village Society proposed that the parish be combined in a ward with the parish of Tur Langton.

#### **Conservative Group on the District Council**

25 The Conservative Group on the District Council submitted an almost identical scheme to that proposed by the District Council. However, it proposed minor alterations to the proposals for Broughton Astley and the proposed Billesdon ward.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

26 We received responses from seven parish and town councils. Broughton Astley Parish Council supported the District Council's consultation proposals subject to "some fine tuning". East Langton Parish Council supported the Conservative Group's proposals. Foxtan Parish Council supported the District Council's consultation proposals. Great Bowden Parish Council stated that it wished to remain in a ward with Market Harborough. Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth

Beauchamp be separated into different district wards. Lutterworth Town Council supported the District Council's initial proposals for the town. Stoughton Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals and proposed that the parishes of Stoughton and Thurnby remain linked in a district ward.

## **Other Submissions**

27 We received a further ten submissions, from an MP, two local political parties, four councillors, a county councillor and two local residents. Andrew Robathan MP supported the District Council's proposals for the area. The Liberal Democrat Group on the District Council objected to the District Council's proposals. Blaby Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's proposals for the district. County Councillor Feltham proposed a 35-member scheme for the district which was similar to both the District Council and Conservative Group schemes; however, he proposed alternative warding arrangements in the central, eastern and south-western areas. Councillor Hart submitted population density information in support of the District Council's proposals. Councillor King, writing on behalf of the Market Harborough Members of Harborough District Council, supported either of the two 37-member proposals that had been consulted upon which ensured the retention of four wards in the town. Councillor Tooley objected to the District Council's proposals, proposing that the parishes of Stoughton and Thurnby remain in the same district ward. Councillor Roeber submitted results of local consultation with regard to the Kibworth area and objected to a reduction in council size. A local resident stated in a letter signed by a further six local residents that the District Council's proposals were acceptable, based on the understanding that the parish of Stoughton would be combined with the current Houghton ward. A local resident supported a reduction in the number of councillors serving on the council.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

29 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Harborough is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 of 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 estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and maintaining local ties.

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

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

33 Since 1975 there has been a 31 per cent increase in the electorate of Harborough district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 5 per cent from 60,504 to 63,468 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Lutterworth. 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.

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

## Council Size

35 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

36 Harborough District Council presently has 37 members. The District Council proposed a council size of 35, a reduction of two. It stated that the scheme was proposed “partly in the light of advice from the Commission for Councils to check whether a small addition or reduction in councillor numbers creates a scheme of ‘best fit’”, that is to say, provides the best balance of representation across the whole of the district while also reflecting community identities and interests. Included within the District Council’s submission was a district-wide proposal for a 37-member council upon which it had consulted with parish councils in the district and two versions of a 37-member scheme prepared by the Harborough District Liberal Democrat Group. The Conservative Group proposed a council size of 35 members, a slight variation on the District Council’s 35-member scheme. They argued that a 35-member scheme best suited the warding of rural east Leicestershire and that a reduction in the number of councillors would contain, if not reduce the “costs of servicing elected members”. County Councillor Feltham proposed a council size of 35 members.

37 Councillor Fewkes, in a proposal forwarded by the District Council, proposed that the council be represented by 32 councillors, a reduction of five. He argued that “in future years” powers and responsibilities would be removed from local authorities, describing the future role of local authorities as “enablers”. He argued further that a smaller number of councillors on the council would create more co-operation between councillors, that councillors would take more of an interest in matters outside their own ward, that it would create a “full-time commitment” for some councillors and that it would create a more “meaningful ratio between Executive and Scrutiny”.

38 Andrew Robathan MP supported a “slight reduction” in council size, arguing that it would save costs. Harborough District Council Liberal Democrat Group stated that it hoped we would consider “maintaining the status quo of 37 members as ... electoral equality [could] be achieved by doing this” and argued that the final submission for a council size of 35 was passed in council by a slim margin. Blaby Conservative Association supported the proposals of the Conservative Group and argued that a 35-member council would restrain the costs of local government. Councillor Roeber objected to a reduction in the size of the council. She argued that it was already difficult to find enough members for panels or working parties on the council, and that savings accrued would be “negligible compared to the loss of good representation”. Councillor Tooley did not support the District Council’s 35-member proposals, stating that it had been endorsed by a slim margin of councillors. Stoughton Parish Council argued that the District Council’s 35-member proposals had been accepted without consultation with the parish councils in the district. East Langton Parish Council entirely supported the Conservative Group proposals. A local resident stated that the number of councillors on the council should be reduced, arguing that the views of the general public could be represented by fewer councillors and that costs have been escalating due to an increase in allowances. Another local resident, in a letter signed by a further six local residents, supported the District Council’s proposal to reduce the number of councillors serving the district, arguing, that under a new political structure councillors “have a

significant remuneration package” and that it made sense to reduce the number in order to save costs.

39 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One and note the lack of consensus as to the appropriate council size for the district. We have considered the proposal that the council size be reduced to 32, a decrease of five councillors. However, we consider that there is a lack of argumentation in support of a 32-member council, and given the lack of consultation we have not been convinced that there would be widespread support for such a decrease in council size. We have noted that the District Council’s 37-member scheme was subject to consultation with the parishes of the district throughout Stage One of the review and had been amended as a result of this consultation. The District Council and Conservative Group’s 35-member options do not appear to have been widely consulted upon, and a reduction in council size does not appear to enjoy wide support throughout the council. We have also carefully considered the assertions that a 35-member scheme would provide the “best fit” in the district or that it would provide for the most suitable warding arrangements in the east of the district. However, having critically examined all of the schemes and having considered the representations received as part of the District Council’s consultation and the representations received during Stage One we have not been convinced that a 35-member council would provide for any better fit in the district than a scheme based on 37 members. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 37 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

40 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received at Stage One, and in particular the district-wide schemes we have received. We have noted that the District Council’s 37-member proposals were consulted upon and amended in the light of comments received and so propose basing our proposals on this scheme in the majority of the district. We have noted that the District Council’s 35- and 37-member proposals and those of the Conservative Group propose identical warding arrangements in Lutterworth Town and in the rural areas in the west of the district. Therefore, given the consensus in the area, we are proposing to base our proposals in this area on all three proposals. However, we are proposing a minor boundary amendment within Lutterworth in order to better reflect community identity in the area. In the rural areas in the east of the district we are proposing to base our proposals on the District Council’s 37-member proposals as we consider that they would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One however, we propose two warding amendments in this area in order to better reflect community identity. We are also proposing that in Broughton Astley we base our draft proposals on the District Council’s 35-member scheme as it provides for an acceptable level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria however, we propose a number of minor amendments in order to improve electoral equality in the area. In the Market Harborough and Great Bowden area we propose endorsing the District Council’s 37-member proposals as we consider that they provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Broughton ward;
- (b) Lutterworth (four wards);
- (c) Bosworth, Dunton, Gilmorton, Fleckney, Kilworth, Lubenham, Peatling and Ullesthorpe wards;
- (d) Billesdon, Easton, Glen, Kibworth and Langton wards;
- (e) Houghton, Scraftoft, Thurnby and Tilton wards;
- (f) Market Harborough (four wards)

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

## **Broughton ward**

42 Broughton ward is situated on the eastern boundary of the district, comprises the parish of Broughton Astley and is represented by two councillors. Due to sustained growth it currently has 96 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (93 per cent more in 2006).

43 At Stage One the District Council, as part of its proposed 35-member scheme, proposed that the parish of Broughton Astley be divided between four single-member wards. Its proposed Broughton Astley – Astley ward would comprise an area to the east of Frolesworth Road, to the south of Old Mill Road, Millers Grange, Berford Close, Station Road and Richardsons Close, and to the west of Speedwell Drive. Its proposed Broughton Astley – Broughton ward would comprise the area to the north of and including Speedwell Drive, Station Road, Richardsons Close, Berford Close, Millers Grange and Old Mill Road and the area to the east of Cosby Road. Its proposed Broughton Astley – Sutton ward would comprise the area to the west of and including the properties on Cosby Road, to the north of Brooklands Close, School Close, Main St and Green Road and to the north of and including the properties on The Avenue and Coventry Road. Its proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe ward would comprise the area to the south of Coventry Road and The Avenue, to the south of and including the properties on Green Road, Main St, School Close and Brooklands Close and to the west of and including the properties on Old Rectory Close and Frolesworth Road. It stated that Broughton Astley Parish Council proposed that Broughton Astley – Sutton ward be renamed Broughton Astley – Suttone ward; however, it did not support this alternative as the names of all the other wards had modern spellings.

44 Under the District Council’s 37-member scheme the proposed ward boundary between its proposed Broughton Astley – Broughton and Broughton Astley – Primethorpe wards varied slightly from its proposals for a 35-member council. The Conservative Group proposed a number of amendments to the District Council’s 35-member proposals in the area in order to achieve an improved level of electoral equality. It proposed that School Close and Brooklands Close be transferred from the District Council’s proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe ward to its proposed Broughton Astley – Sutton ward. It proposed that Old Mill Road be transferred from the proposed Broughton Astley – Broughton ward to the proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe ward and that Byre Crescent, Sitch Close, Cotton Close and Harris Close be transferred from the proposed Broughton Astley – Astley ward to the proposed Broughton Astley – Broughton ward.

45 County Councillor Feltham did not provide any detailed proposals for the area. Blaby Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's proposals for the area. Broughton Astley Parish Council stated that they agreed in principle to the District Council's original proposals for the area subject to some "fine tuning".

46 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We noted that the District Council's and Conservative Group's proposals would not secure a good level of electoral equality under a 35-member council. However, we note that under a 37-member scheme they would secure a better level of electoral equality in the area. We also note that the proposals, under the District Council's 37-member scheme, would result in its proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe and Broughton Astley – Sutton wards having 10 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. We note that although the proposals of the Conservative Group would, under a 37-member council, secure better levels of electoral equality, we have not been convinced that they provide for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in the area. Therefore we propose basing our draft recommendations on the 35-member proposals of the District Council, subject to a number of minor amendments in order to improve electoral equality. We consider that, under a 37-member scheme, these proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard for the statutory criteria. We propose that the properties numbered 2-14 on Station Road be transferred from the proposed Broughton Astley – Broughton ward to the proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe ward and that the properties numbered 21-29, 28-36 and the properties Marjon, Al Dar and Woodcote be transferred from the proposed Broughton Astley – Primethorpe ward to the proposed Broughton Astley – Sutton ward.

47 Under our proposals for a 37-member council, our proposed Broughton Astley – Astley, Broughton Astley – Broughton, Broughton Astley – Primethorpe and Broughton Astley – Sutton wards would have 8 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Lutterworth (four wards)**

48 The town of Lutterworth is situated on the south-western boundary of the district. Lutterworth Linden, Lutterworth St Mary's, Lutterworth Sherrier and Lutterworth Wycliffe wards are each represented by a single councillor and currently have 28 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (30 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer, 19 per cent more and 18 per cent fewer in 2006).

49 At Stage One, the District Council's proposals for the town were identical for both the 35- and 37-member schemes. It proposed four single-member wards for the town, Lutterworth Brookfield, Lutterworth Orchard, Lutterworth Springs and Lutterworth Swift. It proposed that Lutterworth Orchard ward should comprise the area to the west of Rugby Road, Spring Road, to the west of and including the properties on St Marys Road, to the west of and including the properties on the southern part of Holly Drive, to the south of and including the properties on Linden Drive, Oakfield Avenue, Chestnut Avenue, Willowtree Crescent, and to the south of the properties numbered 19 and 20 on Greenacres Drive. It proposed that Lutterworth

Brookfield ward should comprise the area to the north of Coventry Road, Willowtree Crescent, Chestnut Avenue, Oakfield Avenue, Linden Drive, the Recreation Ground, Lutterworth Grammar School, and to the west of the northern end of Bitteswell Road. Its proposed Lutterworth Springs ward would comprise the area to the east of and including the properties on Rugby Road, Spring Close, the eastern part of Coventry Road and the Recreation Ground, to the east of Lutterworth Grammar School, to the east of and including the properties on New Street and Spencer Road, to the south of Wycliffe Industrial Estate and to the south of and including the properties on Gilmorton Road. Its proposed Lutterworth Swift ward would comprise the area to the north of Gilmorton Road, to the north of and including the properties on Crescent Road and to the east of and including the properties at the northern end of Bitteswell Road.

50 The Conservative Group supported the District Council's proposals for the area. County Councillor Feltham proposed that Lutterworth be represented by four district wards but did not provide detailed proposals. Blaby Conservative Association stated that they were "very pleased to see that Lutterworth continues to be warded on the basis of four one member wards". Lutterworth Town Council supported the District Council's proposals.

51 We have carefully considered the proposals received at Stage One and note that those of the District Council would achieve a good level of electoral equality and have received support locally. Therefore we propose basing our draft proposals on the District Council's scheme. However, we propose a minor boundary amendment between its proposed Lutterworth Swift and Lutterworth Springs wards in order to better reflect community identity in the area. We propose that the proposed Lutterworth Springs ward additionally include the properties numbered 35-51 and 40-58 on Bitteswell Road and that the boundary be amended to include Sherrier Primary School within the proposed Lutterworth Springs ward, as we note that the main access to the school is from the proposed Springs ward.

52 Under our proposals for a 37-member council the proposed Lutterworth Brookfield, Lutterworth Orchard, Lutterworth Springs and Lutterworth Swift wards would have 5 per cent more, 9 per cent more, 6 per cent more and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (8 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 7 per cent more and 3 per cent more in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Bosworth, Dunton, Gilmorton, Fleckney, Kilworth, Lubenham, Peatling and Ullesthorpe wards**

53 These eight wards are situated in the west and south of the district. Bosworth ward comprises the parishes of Husbands Bosworth, Laughton, Mowsley, Saddington and Theddingworth, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (16 per cent fewer in 2006). Dunton ward comprises the parishes of Ashby Parva, Dunton Bassett, Frolesworth and Leire, is represented by a single councillor and currently also has 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (15 per cent fewer in 2006). Gilmorton ward comprises the parishes of Gilmorton, Kimcote & Walton and Misterton with Walcote, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (11 per cent fewer in 2006). Fleckney ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is represented by two councillors and currently has 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (8 per cent more in 2006).

54 Kilworth ward comprises the parishes of Catthorpe, Cotesbach, North Kilworth, Shawell, South Kilworth, Swinford and Westrill & Starmore, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer in 2006). Lubenham ward comprises the parishes of Foxton, Gumley and Lubenham, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 23 per cent fewer electors than the district average (24 per cent fewer in 2006). Peatling ward comprises the parishes of Arnesby, Ashby Magna, Bruntingthorpe, Knaptoft, Peatling Magna, Peatling Parva, Shearsby and Willoughby Waterleys, is represented by a single councillor and currently has the same number of electors per councillor as the district average (2 per cent fewer in 2006). Ullesthorpe ward comprises the parishes of Bittesby, Bitteswell, Claybrooke Magna, Claybrooke Parva and Ullesthorpe, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more in 2006).

55 At Stage One the District Council proposed that under both its scheme for a 35-member council and that for a 37-member council the parish of Ashby Magna be combined with the current Dunton ward to form a revised single-member Dunton ward. It proposed that the current Ullesthorpe and Fleckney wards be maintained on their current boundaries. It also proposed that the parishes of Arnesby, Bruntingthorpe, Kimcote & Walton, Peatling Magna, Peatling Parva, Shearsby and Willoughby Waterleys be combined to form a single-member Peatling ward. It proposed combining the parishes of Gilmorton and Misterton with Walcote with the parishes of Catthorpe, Cotesbach, Shawell, Swinford and Westrill & Starmore to form a single-member Misterton ward, and proposed that the parishes of North Kilworth and South Kilworth be combined with the parishes of Husbands Bosworth, Knaptoft and Mowsley to form a single-member Husbands Bosworth ward; however, under its 37-member scheme it proposed that this ward be named Bosworth ward. Finally in this area, it proposed that the current Lubenham ward be combined with the parishes of Laughton, Saddington and Theddingworth to form a revised single-member Lubenham ward, although, under its 37-member proposals it proposed that the ward be named Foxton.

56 The Conservative Group's proposals for the area were identical to those of the District Council; however, it also proposed that the proposed Husbands Bosworth ward be renamed Bosworth ward. County Councillor Feltham made identical proposals to the District Council's proposed Dunton, Fleckney and Ullesthorpe wards, but he proposed that the District Council's proposed Misterton ward be named Gilmorton ward. He also proposed that the parishes of Arnesby, Bruntingthorpe, Kimcote & Walton, Peatling Magna, Peatling Parva and Willoughby Waterleys be combined to form a single-member Kimcote & Walton ward. He proposed that the parishes of Husbands Bosworth, Knaptoft, North Kilworth, Shearsby and South Kilworth be combined in a single-member Bosworth ward and that the parishes of Laughton, Mowsley, Saddington and Theddingworth be combined with the current Lubenham ward to form a revised single-member Lubenham ward. Foxton Parish Council supported the proposal that the current Lubenham ward be combined with the parishes of Laughton, Saddington and Theddingworth.

57 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the proposals of the District Council for both 35- and 37-member schemes and the proposals of the Conservative Group are, with the exception of one ward name, identical in this area. We also note that under a 37-member council these proposals generally achieve a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We also note that alternative schemes for the area would not, under a 37-member scheme, achieve acceptable levels of

electoral equality. Under these proposals the proposed Misterton ward would have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. However, we have considered alternative configurations for the area but do not consider that they would better reflect the statutory criteria in the area. Therefore we are adopting the proposals of the District Council and Conservative Group, subject to renaming the District Council's proposed Husbands Bosworth ward as Bosworth ward.

58 Under a 37-member council our proposed Bosworth, Dunton, Fleckney, Lubenham, Misterton, Peatling and Ullesthorpe wards would initially have 8 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 8 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 15 per cent more, 9 per cent more and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent more, equal to the district average, 8 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 12 per cent more, 6 per cent more and 2 per cent more in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Billesdon, Easton, Glen, Kibworth and Langton wards**

59 These four wards are located in the centre and on the eastern border of the district. Billesdon ward comprises the parishes of Billesdon, Frisby, Gaulby, Goadby, Illston on the Hill, King's Norton, Noseley, Rolleston and Skeffington, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 24 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (18 per cent fewer in 2006). Easton ward comprises the parishes of Blaston, Bringhurst, Drayton, Great Easton, Hallaton, Horninghold, Medbourne, Nevill Holt and Stockerston, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer in 2006). Kibworth ward comprises the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby, is represented by two councillors and currently has 28 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (30 per cent more in 2006). Langton ward comprises the parishes of Cranoe, East Langton, Glooston, Shangton, Slawston, Stonton Wyville, Thorpe Langton, Tur Langton, Welham and West Langton, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 41 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (41 per cent fewer in 2006).

60 At Stage One the District Council, as part of its proposed 35-member scheme, proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Smeeton Westerby be combined to form a two-member Beauchamp ward. It proposed that the parish of Kibworth Harcourt be combined with the majority of the current Langton ward (with the exception of the parish of Slawston) to form a single-member Harcourt ward. It proposed that the parishes of Slawston, Allextan, East Norton and Loddington be combined with the current Easton ward to form a revised single-member Easton ward, that the current Glen ward be combined with the parishes of Frisby, Gaulby, Illston on the Hill and King's Norton to form a two-member Great Glen ward, and that the parishes of Billesdon, Goadby, Launde, Marefield, Owston & Newbold, Noseley, Rolleston, Skeffington, Tilton on the Hill, Tugby & Keythorpe and Withcote be combined in a single-member Billesdon ward.

61 The Conservative Group proposed an almost identical ward pattern in the area to the proposals put forward as part of the District Council's 35-member scheme. However, it proposed that the parish of Frisby be included within the proposed Billesdon ward and that the proposed Great Glen ward be named Glen ward.

62 The District Council's 37-member scheme proposed that the current Kibworth ward be combined with the parishes of East Langton, Tur Langton and West Langton (part of the current Langton ward) to form a revised three-member Kibworth ward. It proposed that the remainder of the current Langton ward be combined with the parishes of Billesdon, Frisby, Gaulby, Goadby, Illston on the Hill, Noseley and Rolleston to form a single-member Billesdon ward. It further proposed that the current Easton ward be combined with the parish of Allextion to form a new single-member Nevill ward, and proposed that the parish of King's Norton be combined with the current Glen ward to form a revised two-member Glen ward.

63 County Councillor Feltham proposed that the current Kibworth and Langton wards be combined with the parish of Carlton Curlieu to form a three-member Kibworth ward. He proposed that the parishes of Allextion, East Norton and Loddington be combined with the current Easton ward to form a single-member Easton/Hallaton ward. He proposed an identical Billesdon ward to that proposed in the District Council's 35-member scheme. Councillor Feltham also proposed that the parishes of Burton Ovary, Frisby, Gaulby, Great Glen, Illston on the Hill, King's Norton, Little Stretton and Wistow be combined in a two-member Great Glen ward.

64 The Harborough District Council Liberal Democrat Group stated that it hoped the "very emotive issue" of the District Council's 35-member proposal to place the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt in separate wards would be carefully examined by the Commission.

65 Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council stated that although joint initiatives are frequently undertaken, the nature of the "two Kibworth villages [were] completely different" and that they would benefit from representation within separate wards. It proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt, East Langton, Tur Langton and West Langton be grouped in a ward to be named either Harcourt or Langton, and that the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Smeeton Westerby form a revised Kibworth ward. Councillor Roeber objected to the proposals of the District Council and Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council to divide the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt between separate wards, arguing that having councillors representing both villages was "logical in terms of local knowledge". She also forwarded the results of a local consultation on the issue, the results of which indicated a significant preference for the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt to remain in the same district ward. Councillor Roeber stated that 142 residents had opposed any split, while four had supported splitting the two parishes. East Langton Parish Council supported the Conservative Group's proposals for its area.

66 The District Council forwarded two submissions from King's Norton Parish Council and Shangton Parish Meeting and Village Society. King's Norton Parish Council objected to the parish being placed in a proposed Glen ward, arguing that its links were with the parishes of Billesdon, Gaulby and Illston on the Hill. Shangton Parish Meeting and Village Society stated that the parish had very close ties with Tur Langton and proposed that it be included within a ward with the Langton villages.

67 We have carefully considered the proposals for the Kibworth area and we note that Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council have proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt be placed in separate wards. However, we also note the results of the local consultation submitted by Councillor Roeber. In the light of that and the other evidence

we have received, and given the good levels of electoral equality secured by the District Council's proposed Kibworth ward under its 37-member scheme, we propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a minor amendment. Having regard to the submission from Shangton Parish Meeting and Village Society concerning its ties with Tur Langton parish, we propose that Shangton parish be combined with the proposed Kibworth ward. This would not affect electoral equality and would, in our view, better reflect community identities in the area.

68 We have also noted the submission from King's Norton Parish Council, forwarded by the District Council, that its ties are with the parishes of Gaulby, Illston and Billesdon. We therefore propose combining the parish of King's Norton with Billesdon ward. This would not affect electoral equality in the area and again would in our view better reflect community identity in the area. We are also therefore proposing that the current Glen ward be maintained on its current boundaries. We also propose adopting the District Council's proposed Nevill ward.

69 Under our proposals for a 37-member council our proposed Billesdon, Glen, Kibworth and Nevill wards would have 5 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Houghton, Scraftoft, Thurnby and Tilton wards**

70 These four wards are situated in the north of the district. Houghton ward comprises the parishes of Houghton on the Hill, Hungarton and Keyham, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent fewer in 2006). Scraftoft ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 30 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (34 per cent fewer in 2006). Thurnby ward comprises the parishes of Stoughton and Thurnby & Bushby, is represented by two councillors and currently has 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent fewer in 2006). Tilton ward comprises the parishes of Allexton, Cold Newton, East Norton, Launde, Loddington, Lowesby, Marefield, Owston & Newbold, Tilton on the Hill, Tugby & Keythorpe and Withcote, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 31 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (29 per cent fewer in 2006).

71 Under the District Council's 35-member scheme the parishes of Scraftoft and Thurnby & Bushby would be combined to form a two-member Scraftoft ward. It also proposed that the parishes of Cold Newton, Lowesby and Stoughton be combined with the current Houghton ward to form a revised single-member Houghton ward.

72 Under the District Council's 37-member scheme the parish of Houghton on the Hill would be combined with the current Scraftoft and Thurnby wards to form a three-member Thurnby & Houghton ward. It also proposed that the parishes of Hungarton, Keyham and Skeffington would be combined with the majority of the current Tilton ward, and Allexton parish, part of the current Tilton ward, would be placed in the proposed Nevill ward (mentioned earlier).

73 The schemes of the Conservative Group and County Councillor Feltham were identical to those of the District Council's 35-member scheme in the area. Harborough District Council Liberal Democrat Group stated that it hoped the proposal to place the parishes of Stoughton, Thurnby & Bushby and Scraptoft in separate wards would be carefully examined. Councillor Tooley and Stoughton Parish Council objected to the District Council's 35-member proposals for the area, stating that the parishes of Stoughton and Thurnby & Bushby should not be separated. A local resident, in a letter signed by a further six residents, objected to the District Council's 37-member proposals for the area. It supported the District Council's 35-member proposals "based on our understanding that Stoughton will be added to our Houghton on the Hill ward". It stated that the parishes of Scraptoft and Thurnby & Bushby were closer to and effectively "a suburb of Leicester".

74 We have carefully considered the proposals received at Stage One and again note the general lack of consensus over electoral arrangements for the area. We have considered the proposal that Scraptoft and Thurnby & Bushby be combined in a two-member Scraptoft ward which, under a 37-member scheme, would result in an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, we cannot view any area in isolation and note that adopting such a proposal would seriously impact on the electoral equality in surrounding wards. Therefore, given the good levels of electoral equality that can be achieved under the District Council's 37-member scheme, we have decided to adopt the proposed Thurnby & Houghton and Tilton wards as part of our draft recommendations.

75 Under our proposals for a 37-member council our proposed Thurnby & Houghton and Tilton wards would have 7 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 at the back of the report.

### **Market Harborough (four wards)**

76 The town of Market Harborough and the parish of Great Bowden are situated on the southern boundary of the district. Market Harborough is completely unparished. Market Harborough Bowden ward comprises the parish of Great Bowden and the unparished Little Bowden area of Market Harborough, is represented by two councillors and currently has 29 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (38 per cent more in 2006). Market Harborough North ward is represented by three councillors and currently has 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (14 per cent fewer in 2006). Market Harborough South ward is represented by two councillors and currently has 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (24 per cent fewer in 2006). Market Harborough West ward is represented by three councillors and currently has 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent fewer in 2006).

77 At Stage One the District Council, as part of its proposed 35-member scheme, proposed that Market Harborough and the parish of Great Bowden comprise three three-member wards. It proposed that Great Bowden parish be combined with the northern part of Market Harborough town in a new three-member Market Harborough Bowden & North ward. It proposed that its southern boundary run to the rear of the properties on Leicester Road and then east along the River Welland and Rockingham Road. The District Council also proposed a three-member Market Harborough Little Bowden & South ward in the south of the town. It proposed that the ward comprise the majority of the unparished part of the current Market

Harborough Bowden ward and the majority of the current Market Harborough South ward. It proposed a revised Market Harborough West ward which would comprise the majority of the current ward.

78 Under the District Council's 37-member scheme Market Harborough and the parish of Great Bowden would comprise four wards, two two-member wards and two three-member wards. Its proposed three-member Market Harborough – St Lukes ward comprised the parish of Great Bowden and the area to the north of and including the properties on the northern side of St Marys Road and Rockingham Road and the area to the north of Leicester Road. Its proposed Market Harborough – Little Bowden ward comprised the area to the south of St Marys Road and Rockingham Road and to the east of Northampton Road, Nithsdale Crescent and Auriga Street. Its proposed three-member Market Harborough – Welland ward comprised the area to the west of Northampton Road, to the west of and including the properties on Nithsdale Crescent and Auriga Street, to the south of the River Welland and to the south of and including the properties on Elm Drive and Willow Crescent. Its proposed two-member Market Harborough – Logan ward comprised the area to the north of the River Welland, Elm Drive and Willow Crescent, to the north of and including the properties on Farndale View and to the west of and including the properties on Leicester Road.

79 The Conservative Group supported the District Council's 35-member scheme for the area. County Councillor Feltham proposed that the Market Harborough and Great Bowden areas be represented by a total of nine councillors but did not submit detailed proposals. Harborough District Council Liberal Democrat Group stated that it hoped that the proposal to reduce the number of wards within Market Harborough from four to three would be carefully examined. Councillor King, on behalf of the Market Harborough Members of Harborough District Council, objected to the District Council's 35-member proposals for the area, supporting the schemes which maintained four wards for the area, arguing that they created wards of a more "homogeneous character". Great Bowden Parish Council stated that the parish wished to remain linked to Market Harborough.

80 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We are of the view that the District Council's 37-member proposals would provide for the best levels of electoral equality in the area, utilise better boundaries in the area and have a greater regard for the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or the alternative proposals received at Stage One. Therefore we propose endorsing the District Council's 37-member proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

81 Our proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes, Market Harborough – Little Bowden, Market Harborough – Logan and Market Harborough – Welland wards would initially have 4 per cent more, 16 per cent fewer, equal to the district average and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (equal to the district average, 8 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

82 The District Council stated that it had "not detected any demand to change the Council's electoral cycle from the one currently operated". Therefore we propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole council elections every four years.

## Conclusions

83 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- a council of 37 members should be retained;
- there should be 25 wards;
- the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

84 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's 37-member consultation scheme proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- we propose minor boundary amendments in Lutterworth;
- we propose adopting the District Council's 35-member scheme in Broughton Astley subject to minor boundary amendments;
- we propose that the parish of King's Norton be included as part of our proposed Billesdon ward;
- we propose that the parish of Shangton be included as part of our proposed Kibworth ward.

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

*Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	37	37	37	37
Number of wards	26	25	26	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,635	1,715	1,635	1,715
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	15	3	17	1
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	9	0	9	0

86 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Harborough District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 15 to three. By 2006 only one ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Harborough District Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

### **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

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

88 The parish of Broughton Astley is currently served by 18 councillors representing three wards: Astley, Broughton, and Primethorpe. Broughton Astley Parish Council proposed that the number of parish councillors be reduced by two from 18 to 16. It proposed further that the councillors be divided equally between four parish wards.

89 We propose that in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements Broughton Astley parish should comprise four parish wards: Astley, Broughton, Primethorpe and Sutton, each returning four councillors. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the district wards in the parish.

**Draft Recommendation**

Broughton Astley Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, two fewer than at present, representing four wards: Astley, Broughton, Primethorpe and Sutton (each returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

90 The parish of Lutterworth is currently served by 13 councillors representing four wards. Lutterworth Town Council proposed that the number of parish councillors be increased by three to 16. It further proposed that the councillors be divided equally between four parish wards.

91 We propose that in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements Lutterworth Town Council should comprise four parish wards: Brookfield, Orchard, Springs and Swift, each returning four councillors. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the district wards in the town.

**Draft Recommendation**

Lutterworth Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, three more than at present, representing four wards: Brookfield, Orchard, Springs and Swift (each returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

92 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

**Draft Recommendation**

Parish and town council elections should continue to take place every four years, at the same time as elections for the district ward of which they are part.

*Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Harborough*





## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

93 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Harborough contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 11 March 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

94 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Harborough Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Harborough : Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Harborough area.

**Map A1** illustrates the Commission's proposed boundaries for the Harborough area and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large map at the back of the report.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Broughton Astley, Lutterworth and Market Harborough.

*Map A1 : Draft Recommendations for Harborough : Key Map*

## Appendix B

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

*Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria*

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