

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Crawley in West Sussex

*February 2002*

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Crawley 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.

With effect from 1 April 2002, 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 Crawley's electoral arrangements on 10 July 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 Crawley:

- **in 11 of the 13 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to improve slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 11 wards and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main proposals for Crawley's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraph 54) are that:

- **Crawley Borough Council should have 37 councillors, five more than at present;**
- **there should be 15 wards, instead of 13 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of six of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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 10 of the proposed 15 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue with the number of electors per councillor in all of the proposed wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 February 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, 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 22 April 2002:

**Review Manager  
Crawley 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*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Bewbush	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Bewbush ward)	Large map
2	Broadfield North	2	part of Broadfield ward	Large map
3	Broadfield South	2	part of Broadfield ward	Large map
4	Furnace Green	2	part of Furnace Green ward; part of Tilgate ward	Large map
5	Gossops Green	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Gossops Green ward)	Large map
6	Ifield	3	part of Ifield ward	Large map
7	Langley Green	3	part of Ifield ward; Langley ward	Large map
8	Maidenbower	3	part of Furnace Green ward	Large map
9	Northgate	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Northgate ward)	Large map
10	Pound Hill North	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Pound Hill North ward)	Large map
11	Pound Hill South & Worth	3	part of Furnace Green ward; Pound Hill South ward	Large map
12	Southgate	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Southgate ward)	Large map
13	Three Bridges	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Three Bridges ward)	Large map
14	Tilgate	2	part of Tilgate ward	Large map
15	West Green	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (West Green ward)	Large map

*Notes: 1 The whole borough is unparished.*

*2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.*

*We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Crawley

	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	Bewbush	3	5,967	1,989	1	6,062	2,021	-3
2	Broadfield North	2	4,200	2,100	6	4,265	2,133	3
3	Broadfield South	2	4,326	2,163	9	4,351	2,176	5
4	Furnace Green	2	4,463	2,232	13	4,370	2,185	5
5	Gossops Green	2	3,946	1,973	0	3,907	1,954	-6
6	Ifield	3	6,494	2,165	10	6,722	2,241	8
7	Langley Green	3	5,430	1,810	-8	5,776	1,925	-7
8	Maidenbower	3	5,725	1,908	-3	6,358	2,119	2
9	Northgate	2	3,515	1,758	-11	3,918	1,959	-6
10	Pound Hill North	3	4,999	1,666	-16	6,030	2,010	-3
11	Pound Hill South & Worth	3	5,839	1,946	-2	5,921	1,974	-5
12	Southgate	3	6,015	2,005	1	6,315	2,105	1
13	Three Bridges	2	4,166	2,083	5	4,403	2,202	6
14	Tilgate	2	4,588	2,294	16	4,472	2,236	8
15	West Green	2	3,450	1,725	-13	3,932	1,966	-5
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>73,123</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,802</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,076</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Crawley 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Crawley in West Sussex, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven districts in West Sussex 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 Crawley. Crawley's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1977 (Report no. 183). The electoral arrangements of West Sussex County Council were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 473). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of 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.

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 borough 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*

Stage	Description
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 10 July 2001, when we wrote to Crawley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Member of Parliament with a constituency in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Crawley Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 15 October 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 26 February 2002 and will end on 22 April 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 borough of Crawley is bounded by Surrey to the north, Horsham to the south-west and Mid Sussex to the south-east. The area covers the new town of Crawley and includes Gatwick Airport. Crawley was one of the original eight new towns around London aimed at enticing people away from the capital, which had become overcrowded. The original idea for the town was to merge the villages of Three Bridges and Ifield with the small market town of Crawley by developing the areas between them. Nine residential neighbourhoods were envisaged, each based on a village concept, grouped around a town centre with an industrial estate in the north of the area. The borough is now home to 13 neighbourhood areas and has been growing since Crawley was designated a new town in 1947. In 1983 its boundaries were extended.

16 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 borough average. In the text which follows, this figure may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

17 The electorate of the borough is 73,123 (February 2001). The Council presently has 32 members who are elected from 13 wards. Six of the wards are each represented by three councillors, while the remaining seven wards are each represented by two councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,285 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,400 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 11 of the 13 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Furnace Green ward where the councillor represents 133 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Crawley*

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	Bewbush	2	5,967	2,984	31	6,062	3,031	26
2	Broadfield	3	8,526	2,842	24	8,616	2,872	20
3	Furnace Green	2	10,665	5,333	133	11,216	5,608	134
4	Gossops Green	2	3,946	1,973	-14	3,907	1,954	-19
5	Ifield	3	6,496	2,165	-5	7,063	2,354	-2
6	Langley Green	3	5,428	1,809	-21	5,434	1,811	-25
7	Northgate	2	3,518	1,759	-23	3,918	1,959	-18
8	Pound Hill North	3	4,999	1,666	-27	6,030	2,010	-16
9	Pound Hill South	2	5,338	2,669	17	5,403	2,702	13
10	Southgate	3	6,015	2,005	-12	6,315	2,105	-12
11	Three Bridges	2	4,166	2,083	-9	4,403	2,202	-8
12	Tilgate	3	4,609	1,536	-33	4,503	1,501	-37
13	West Green	2	3,450	1,725	-25	3,932	1,966	-18
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>73,123</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,802</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Crawley 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 Tilgate ward were relatively over-represented by 33 per cent, while electors in Furnace Green ward were relatively under-represented by 133 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

19 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 Crawley Borough Council.

20 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received three submissions during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

#### **Crawley Borough Council**

21 The Borough Council proposed a council of 37 members, five more than at present, serving 15 wards, compared to the existing 13. It proposed a mix of two- and three-member wards throughout the borough.

22 The Council argued that its proposals had the “unanimous support of all three political groups on the Council” and that they secured a greatly improved level of electoral equality than the existing arrangements. The Borough Council’s proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2006 with no ward varying by more than 8 per cent from the borough average.

#### **West Sussex County Council**

23 The County Council stated that “some areas are significantly less well democratically represented than others” and stated that county divisions were unlikely to “meet the coterminosity test”.

#### **Other Submissions**

24 We received one further submission from a local resident who, while recognising that some change was necessary, stated that he hoped it would be possible to maintain the “neighbourhood based structure of our wards”.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

26 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Crawley 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”.

27 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.

28 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.

29 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**

30 Since 1975 there has been a 44 per cent increase in the electorate of Crawley. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 5 per cent from 73,123 to 76,802 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Pound Hill North ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Furnace Green and Ifield wards. 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.

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

## **Council Size**

32 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.

33 Crawley Borough Council presently has 32 members. The Borough Council investigated the effect of different council sizes on the borough's network of neighbourhoods and considered a reduction in council size. However, it argued that the electorate and councillor workload had increased dramatically since the previous boundary review; that the Borough had been enlarged since the last review; and that a council size of 26, 28, 30 or 31 members would create large electoral imbalances if the neighbourhood principle was adhered to. It also investigated alternative increases of between 33 to 36 members. However, it concluded that the alternative options would not provide the best fit in the borough between electoral equality and community identity. The Borough Council proposed a council of 37 members, arguing that the workload of councillors is "significantly higher than when the current ward arrangements were first introduced in 1983". It stated that an independent panel had concluded that workload was of greater concern for members than remuneration, adding that if current workloads continued it would become increasingly more difficult to "attract and retain good councillors who reflect the local population in terms of age and gender". The Borough Council also stated that, due to increased workloads, it was increasingly difficult to find councillors to serve as school governors and listed 38 outside organisations to which the Council is invited to make nominations. It also argued that a council size of 37 members would best reflect and retain the communities in the area.

34 We noted that the Borough Council's proposals for a council size of 37 members had received the unanimous support of all three political parties on the Council and that its proposals as a whole had received the broad support of the majority of those who had responded to its consultation leaflet. 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**

35 We have given careful consideration to the views submitted at Stage One. In view of the cross-party support for the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have based our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. We note that the Borough Council's scheme utilises easily identifiable boundaries and secures good levels of electoral equality throughout the borough whilst having regard to the statutory criteria. Therefore we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposals in full. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards;
- (b) Bewbush, Broadfield, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards;
- (c) Furnace Green, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South wards.

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

### **Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards**

37 These five wards are located in the north, north-west and centre of the borough. Ifield and Langley Green wards are each represented by three councillors and currently have 5 per cent fewer and 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer and 25 per cent fewer in 2006). Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards are each represented by two councillors and currently have 23 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer and 25 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (18 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 18 per cent fewer in 2006).

38 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current two-member Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards be maintained on their current boundaries. It argued that all three wards were generally “consolidated and identifiable” and that they were all bounded by strong, identifiable boundaries. It stated that Northgate ward was bounded to the east by the A2004, which it stated has no frontage housing; that Three Bridges ward is bounded by railway lines to the south and east and by the A2004 to the west; and that West Green ward is bounded by a railway line, the A23 and the A2219. It proposed a minor boundary amendment between the current Ifield and Langley Green wards in order to secure an improved level of electoral equality. The Council proposed that the Apple Tree Farm Development to the south of Ifield Avenue, which separates the two wards, be transferred from Ifield ward to Langley Green ward. It argued that this was logical as vehicular access to the development would be from Ifield Avenue and that therefore the development would look towards Langley Green ward.

39 Under a 37-member council the Borough Council’s proposed Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards would have 10 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 11 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2006).

40 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note the Borough Council’s proposals that the current Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards be maintained and have been persuaded that they would best meet the statutory criteria whilst securing a good level of electoral equality and providing for identifiable boundaries in the area. We have also carefully considered its proposed Ifield and Langley Green wards and note that they would secure slightly higher levels of electoral equality. However, having visited the area we have been persuaded that, as the existing properties along both sides of Ifield Avenue look away from the main road, the road itself forms a natural boundary rather than providing a focus for these electors. However, we also note that the Apple Tree Farm Development would be directly accessed from Ifield Road and would face Langley Green ward and so have been persuaded that the Development would share a community of interest with the Council’s proposed Langley Green ward. We have therefore decided to adopt the Borough Council’s proposed Ifield and Langley Green wards as part of our draft recommendations.

41 Under our draft proposals Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards would have 10 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 11 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

### **Bewbush, Broadfield, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards**

42 These five wards are located in the south-west of the borough. Broadfield, Southgate and Tilgate wards are each represented by three councillors and currently have 24 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (20 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 37 per cent fewer in 2006). Bewbush and Gossops Green wards are each represented by two councillors and currently have 31 per cent more and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (26 per cent more and 19 per cent fewer in 2006).

43 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current Bewbush, Gossops Green and Southgate wards be maintained on their existing boundaries. However, it proposed that Bewbush ward be represented by three councillors instead of two as at present in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. It argued that Bewbush is separated from the surrounding area by a dual carriageway and the Arun Valley Railway and from neighbouring Gossops Green ward by “open space and a linear water area”. The Council argued that Gossops Green ward is also separated by the railway line from Ifield ward in the north and by dual carriageways to the south and east. It stated that Southgate ward is bounded by a railway line to the north and by the A23 and A2004.

44 The Borough Council proposed that the current Broadfield ward be divided between a new two-member Broadfield North ward and a new two-member Broadfield South ward in order to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality. It argued that the area as a whole was a “consolidated, identifiable area bounded by three dual carriageway A roads” and therefore proposed that the boundary between its two new wards run through the centre of the ward along main roads that, with only one minor exception, had no house frontages. It proposed that the boundary run south-west along the centre of Coachmans Drive, Broadfield Place, Creasys Drive and then to the rear of Abrahams Road as far as the borough boundary. The Borough Council proposed that the majority of the current Tilgate ward be maintained. However, it proposed that the number of councillors representing the ward be reduced from three to two in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. It also proposed that the boundary be amended and that Chelwood Close be transferred to a modified Furnace Green ward in order to secure a more identifiable ward boundary.

45 Under a 37-member scheme the Borough Council’s proposed Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards would have 1 per cent more, 6 per cent more, 9 per cent more, equal to, 1 percent more and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more and 8 per cent more in 2006).

46 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the Borough Council’s proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality in the area, utilise strong boundaries and unite entire communities within its proposed wards. We note

that its proposed Tilgate ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average in 2006 and have considered alternatives which might reduce this electoral variance. However, we noted that its proposed Tilgate ward is separated from its proposed Broadfield South and Southgate wards by busy A roads. We therefore considered transferring electors from its proposed Furnace Green ward but noted that any proposals would simply worsen the electoral variance in Furnace Green ward whilst impacting on community identity in the area. We are therefore content to adopt the Borough Council's proposed Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards as part of our draft recommendations.

47 Under our draft proposals Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards would have 1 per cent more, 6 per cent more, 9 per cent more, equal to, 1 per cent more and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more and 8 per cent more in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

### **Furnace Green, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South wards**

48 These three wards are situated in the east and south-east of the borough. Furnace Green and Pound Hill South wards are both represented by two councillors and currently have 133 per cent more and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (134 per cent more and 13 per cent more in 2006). Pound Hill North ward is represented by three councillors and currently has 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (16 per cent fewer in 2006).

49 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current Pound Hill North ward remain unchanged. It proposed that the current Pound Hill South ward be combined with the Worth area of the current Furnace Green ward, to the east of Balcombe Road, and that the area be represented by two councillors. It argued that the Worth area would then be united within one ward and that it "fits more logically with Pound Hill South" than with the area to its west. It proposed that the area to the west of Balcombe Road and to the east of the London to Brighton railway line in the current Furnace Green ward, form a three-member Maidenbower ward. The Council argued that this would encompass the entire Maidenbower neighbourhood, with the exception of the area to the east of Balcombe Road. It stated that Balcombe Road separates the Worth and Maidenbower areas, being "the busiest B class road in West Sussex and an access road to the M23". It proposed that the area of the current Furnace Green ward to the west of the London to Brighton railway line form a revised two-member Furnace Green ward. It argued that this would encompass the whole Furnace Green community area within one ward. However, it proposed that Chelwood Close in the current Tilgate ward be transferred to its proposed Furnace Green ward. It suggested that the new boundary should go straight down Loppets Road, thereby improving electoral equality in its proposed Tilgate ward.

50 Under a 37-member scheme the Borough Council's proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards would have 13 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 16 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer in 2006).

51 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the Borough Council's proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality in the area, utilise strong boundaries and unite entire communities within its proposed wards. We are therefore content to adopt the Borough Council's proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards as part of our draft recommendations.

52 Under our draft proposals our proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards would have 13 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 16 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

53 We received one response regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council itself stated that the council is "elected by thirds and it would be the Council's wish that this arrangement continues in the future". We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds for the Borough Council.

## **Conclusions**

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 32 to 37;
- there should be 15 wards;
- the boundaries of six of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

55 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect 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	32	37	32	37
Number of wards	13	15	13	15
Average number of electors per councilor	2,285	1,976	2,400	2,076
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	5	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	4	0

56 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Crawley Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 11 to five. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Crawley Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 15 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

*Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Crawley*

## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

57 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Crawley contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

58 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Crawley 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)

59 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

### 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 A1: 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.