

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Harborough in Leicestershire

Report to the Electoral Commission

*June 2002*

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



# WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

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



## SUMMARY

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

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

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in 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 final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 91-92) 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 21 of the proposed 25 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Misterton, expected to vary by 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 reduction and redistribution of councillors serving the parish of Broughton;**
- **revised warding arrangements, an increase and redistribution of councillors serving the parish of Lutterworth.**

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

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Billesdon	1	The parishes of Billesdon, Cranoe, Frisby, Gaulby, Glooston, Goadby, Illston on the Hill, King's Norton, Noseley, Rolleston, Slawston, Stonton Wyville 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, Thorpe Langton, 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 – Arden	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 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 Allexton, Blaston, Bringhurst, Drayton, Great Easton, Hallaton, Horninghold, Medbourne, Nevill Holt and Stockerston	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
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 Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Table 2: Final 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	1,416	1,416	-13	1,591	1,591	-7
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	4,810	1,603	-2	5,109	1,703	-1
11	Lubenham	1	1,698	1,698	4	1,753	1,753	2
12	Lutterworth Brookfield	1	1,715	1,716	5	1,846	1,846	8
13	Lutterworth Orchard	1	1,781	1,781	9	1,772	1,772	3
14	Lutterworth Springs	1	1,726	1,726	6	1,830	1,830	7
15	Lutterworth Swift	1	1,408	1,408	-14	1,771	1,771	3
16	Market Harborough – Arden	3	5,159	1,720	5	5,212	1,737	1
17	Market Harborough – Little Bowden	2	2,758	1,379	-16	3,144	1,572	-8
18	Market Harborough – Logan	2	3,219	1,610	-2	3,239	1,620	-6
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

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 %
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>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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Harborough in Leicestershire. We have now reviewed 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 Harborough's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 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 begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692), i.e. the need to:
  - a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

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

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

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

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Harborough District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European

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

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

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The 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.

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

12 The electorate of the district is 60,504 (February 2001). The Council presently has 37 members who are elected from 26 wards. 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.

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

14 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,635 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 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	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

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 %
23 Scraftoft	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>-</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. For example, in 2001, electors in Langton ward were relatively over-represented by 41 per cent, while electors in Broughton ward were significantly under-represented by 96 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

15 During Stage One the LGCE received 19 representations, 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. It also received representations from an MP, seven parish councils, two local political parties, four councillors and two local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Harborough in Leicestershire*.

16 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the District Council's 37-member proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, it proposed two minor warding amendments in the east of the district and based its proposals in Broughton Astley on the District Council's 35-member proposals. It proposed that:

- Harborough District Council should be served by 37 councillors, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Broughton and Lutterworth.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Harborough District Council should comprise 37 councillors, serving 25 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

17 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 25 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

18 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received 30 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Harborough District Council.

### **Harborough District Council**

19 The District Council generally supported the draft recommendations but argued that the proposed Billesdon ward was too large geographically to be represented by a single councillor. It proposed that the parish of Thorpe Langton be transferred to the proposed Kibworth ward. It also proposed that Market Harborough – St Lukes ward be renamed Arden ward.

### **Leicestershire County Council**

20 Leicestershire County Council stated that there would be considerable difficulties in using the draft proposals across the county as building blocks in its periodic electoral review.

### **Harborough Conservative Association**

21 Harborough Conservative Association proposed boundary amendments and ward name changes in Market Harborough and proposed that Lubenham ward be renamed Fernie ward.

### **Parish Councils**

22 Great Bowden Parish Council objected to the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward name. The parish councils of Billesdon, Houghton on the Hill and Hungarton objected to the proposals in their areas. Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council supported the draft proposals.

### **Other Representations**

23 A further 22 representations were received in response to the LGCE's draft recommendations from the Market Harborough District Council Members, two local organisations, three district councillors, one county councillor and 15 local residents. Market Harborough District Council Members supported the draft proposals in Market Harborough. Market Harborough Civic Society generally supported the draft recommendations in Market Harborough but objected to a ward boundary in the town and proposed a ward name change. Councillor Taylor generally supported the proposals but suggested two minor amendments in Market Harborough. Councillor Totten stated that the Liberal Democrat Group on the District Council supported the proposal for a council size of 37 and the proposals for Market Harborough but proposed a boundary amendment in the town and proposed a ward name change. County Councillor Feltham proposed alternative configurations in the Kibworth area and proposed a ward name change. Councillor Sleath objected to the draft proposals in the Houghton area. The Parochial Church Council of St John The Baptist Hungarton objected to the proposals in their area. Representations were received from 11 local residents who objected to the proposals in the Houghton/Hungarton area, three local residents who supported the proposals in the Kibworth area and from one local resident who commented on the review as a whole.



## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

28 Since 1975 there has been a 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. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

### **Council Size**

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

31 Harborough District Council presently has 37 members. At Stage One 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.

32 Councillor Fewkes, in a proposal forwarded by the District Council, proposed that the council be represented by 32 councillors, a reduction of five. Andrew Robathan MP supported a "slight reduction" in council size while Harborough District Council Liberal Democrat Group stated that it hoped the LGCE would consider "maintaining the status quo of 37 members". Blaby Conservative Association supported the proposals of the Conservative Group. Councillor Roeber objected to a reduction in the size of the council while Councillor Tooley did not support the District Council's 35-member proposals. Stoughton Parish Council argued that the District Council's 35-member proposals had been accepted without consultation with the parish councils in the district while East Langton Parish Council entirely supported the Conservative Group proposals. A number of local residents supported the District Council's proposal to reduce the number of councillors serving the district.

33 The LGCE noted the lack of consensus as to the appropriate council size for the district. It considered that there was a lack of argumentation in support of a 32-member council and, given the lack of consultation, was not convinced that there would be widespread support for such a decrease. It also 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 did not appear to have been widely consulted upon, and a reduction in council size did not appear to enjoy wide support throughout the council. It 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 it was not convinced that a 35-member council would provide for any better fit in the district than a scheme based on 37 members. Given the lack of consensus and the lack of any strong evidence to indicate that the current council size was not facilitating convenient and effective government the LGCE therefore based its draft recommendations on the current council size of 37 members.

34 During Stage Three the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council supported the proposal for a council size of 37. A local resident submitted a district-wide scheme based on a council size of 40 members, an increase of three. However, this scheme did not appear to have been widely consulted upon and we were not convinced that an increase in council size would secure widespread support. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 37 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

35 At Stage One, careful consideration was given to the views received. Given that the District Council's 37-member proposals were consulted upon and amended in the light of comments received, the LGCE based its proposals on this scheme in the majority of the district. However,

the LGCE proposed modifications to this scheme in Lutterworth, Broughton Astley, Billesdon and Kibworth.

36 At Stage Three a number of respondents objected to the proposals in the north of the district while a number proposed minor amendments in Market Harborough. A local resident expressed concern over the reduced representation for the rural area. However, under a 37-member council both rural and urban areas have been allocated the correct number of councillors, 18 and 19 respectively.

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

- (a) 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).

### **Broughton ward**

38 Broughton ward is situated on the western 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).

39 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. Under the District Council's 37-member scheme its proposed boundaries varied only slightly from those of its 35-member scheme. 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.

40 Having considered all of the evidence received during the initial consultation stage, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area subject to a number of minor boundary amendments.

41 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the 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).

42 At Stage Three a local resident suggested that the proposed wards be renamed Broughton South, Broughton East, Broughton West and Broughton North arguing that this would make sense due to the location of the proposed wards. No other submissions were received specifically concerning this area.

43 We have carefully considered the proposal received at Stage Three regarding ward names in the town. However, we have not been convinced that the proposed ward name changes have widespread support. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations in the area as final.

44 Under our final recommendations, the 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 proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

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

45 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).

46 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. 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.

47 The LGCE based its draft proposals on the District Council's scheme. However, it proposed a minor boundary amendment between its proposed Lutterworth Swift and Lutterworth Springs wards in order to better reflect community identity in the area.

48 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations 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).

49 At Stage Three a local resident proposed that Lutterworth Swift ward be renamed Lutterworth Dunley ward and that Lutterworth Springs ward be renamed Lutterworth Rye ward arguing that the names Swift and Springs were too similar.

50 We have carefully considered the proposal received at Stage Three regarding ward names in the town. However, we found no evidence of widespread support for these proposals and have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations in the area as final.

51 Under our final recommendations 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 proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

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

52 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).

53 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).

54 At Stage One the District Council proposed that, under both its schemes for a 35-member council and 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.

55 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.

56 The LGCE noted that the proposals of the District Council for both 35- and 37-member schemes and the proposals of the Conservative Group were, with the exception of one ward name, identical in this area. It noted 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. Although the LGCE considered alternative configurations for the area it concluded that they would not better reflect the statutory criteria. Therefore it adopted the

proposals of the District Council and Conservative Group, subject to renaming the District Council's proposed Husbands Bosworth ward as Bosworth ward.

57 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the 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).

58 At Stage Three Harborough Conservative Association, also on behalf of Foxton, Gumley and Lubenham Conservative Branch, suggested that the proposed Lubenham ward be renamed Fernie. No other specific representations were received.

59 We have carefully considered Harborough Conservative Association's proposals in the area but have not been convinced that they would secure widespread support. Therefore we are confirming the draft recommendations as final. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

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

60 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, Bringham, 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).

61 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, Allexton, 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.

62 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.

63 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 Allexton 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.

64 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 Allexton, 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. 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.

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. 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 The LGCE noted that Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council had proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt be placed in separate wards. However, it also noted the results of the local consultation submitted by Councillor Roeber. In the light of that and the other evidence it received, and given the good levels of electoral equality secured by the District Council's proposed Kibworth ward under its 37-member scheme, the LGCE adopted it as part of its 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, it proposed that Shangton parish be combined with the proposed Kibworth ward.

68 It also proposed combining the parish of King's Norton with Billesdon ward, retaining the current Glen ward and adopting the District Council's proposed Nevill ward.

69 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the 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).

70 At Stage Three the District Council argued that the proposed Billesdon ward was "too large for one member to represent efficiently". It proposed that the parish of Thorpe Langton be

transferred to the proposed Kibworth ward arguing that the Langton parishes had historically been linked together. County Councillor Feltham argued that splitting the Langton parishes would split historically close communities and argued that a new ward retain the Langton name, for example Kibworth & Langton ward. He proposed that the parishes of Kibworth Harcourt and Kibworth Beauchamp be divided suggesting that the parishes of Carlton Curlieu, Shangton and the Langtons be combined with Kibworth Harcourt to form one ward, that Smeeton Westerby and the westerly part of Kibworth Beauchamp be combined to form another and that the remainder of Kibworth Beauchamp form a third ward. Alternatively, he proposed that Smeeton Westerby and Kibworth Beauchamp form a two-member ward while Kibworth Harcourt “with the outlying villages” form a single-member ward. He also proposed that the proposed Billesdon ward be renamed Noseley ward arguing that Noseley is a central parish with a strong local history.

71 Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. Billesdon Parish Council objected to the proposals for its area arguing that its links were with the villages east along the A47. Councillor Taylor supported the proposed Billesdon ward arguing that, although large, it grouped communities with much in common. Three local residents supported the LGCE’s proposed Kibworth ward while another argued that our proposed Tilton ward was too large.

72 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We noted the objections to the proposed Billesdon ward and the proposal of the District Council that the parish of Thorpe Langton be transferred to the proposed Kibworth ward. We have concluded that this proposal would reduce the geographic size of the proposed Billesdon ward, would group the Langton parishes within the same ward and would not have a detrimental affect on electoral equality in the area. We have considered County Councillor Feltham’s proposal that Billesdon ward be renamed Noseley ward and while we consider the proposal to have merit have not been convinced that it would secure widespread support. We have also considered the proposal to divide the parishes of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt between different wards. However, we note the opposition to this proposal at Stage One and the support received for the proposed Kibworth ward at Stage Three. Therefore we have decided to substantially confirm the proposed Kibworth ward subject to the addition of the parish of Thorpe Langton for reasons of community identity. We are also confirming the proposed Glen and Nevill wards as part of our final recommendations.

73 Under our final recommendations the proposed Billesdon ward (comprising the parishes of Billesdon, Cranoe, Frisby, Gaulby, Glooston, Goadby, Illston on the Hill, King’s Norton, Noseley, Rolleston, Slawston, Stonton Wyville and Welham), Glen ward, Kibworth ward (comprising the parishes of East Langton, Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, Shangton, Smeeton Westerby, Thorpe Langton, Tur Langton and West Langton) and Nevill ward would have 13 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (7 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer in 2006). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

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

74 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).

75 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.

76 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 Allextan parish, part of the current Tilton ward, would be placed in the proposed Nevill ward (mentioned earlier).

77 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 Scraftoft 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".

78 The LGCE noted the general lack of consensus over electoral arrangements for the area. It considered the proposal that Scraftoft and Thurnby & Bushby be combined in a two-member Scraftoft ward which, under a 37-member scheme, would result in an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, it stated that it could not view any area in isolation and noted that adopting such a proposal would seriously impact on the electoral equality in surrounding wards. Therefore, given the good levels of electoral equality that could be achieved under the District Council's 37-member scheme, the LGCE adopted the proposed Thurnby & Houghton and Tilton wards as part of its draft recommendations.

79 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the 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).

80 At Stage Three the parish councils of Houghton on the Hill and Hungarton, the Parochial Church Council of St John The Baptist Hungarton, Councillor Sleath and ten local residents objected to the LGCE's proposals in the area. It was argued that the parishes of Houghton on the Hill, Hungarton and Keyham were linked and that Hungarton and Keyham parishes did not share links with the proposed Tilton ward and that the parish of Houghton on the Hill did not share links with the remainder of the proposed Thurnby & Houghton ward. Indeed, it was argued that the parishes of Scraftoft and Thurnby & Bushby were "more like suburbs of Leicester" than the more rural remainder of the proposed Thurnby & Houghton ward.

81 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We have noted the objections to the proposals in the area and have considered a number of alternative configurations. However, we note that while the current Houghton ward would secure an acceptable level of electoral equality we note that the electoral variances in the surrounding wards would be unacceptable. Indeed, we note that the proposed Tilton ward would have 24 per cent fewer electors per councillor were the parishes of Hungarton and Keyham to remain as part of the current Houghton ward. We also considered two two-member wards for the area but noted that combining Houghton parish with the proposed Tilton ward and combining the current Scraftoft and Thurnby wards would result in both wards varying by more than 10 per cent. In

the light of this, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for the proposed Thurnby & Houghton and Tilton wards as final. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

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

82 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).

83 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 a new three-member Market Harborough Bowden & North ward, a three-member Market Harborough Little Bowden & South ward and a revised Market Harborough West ward which would comprise the majority of the current ward.

84 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. 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. Great Bowden Parish Council stated that the parish wished to remain linked to Market Harborough.

85 The LGCE adopted the District Council's 37-member proposals as part of its draft recommendations.

86 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the 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).

87 At Stage Three the District Council proposed that Market Harborough – St Lukes ward be renamed Arden ward arguing that the name had local connections to the area. Harborough Conservative Association proposed that the ward be renamed St Mary-in-Arden ward or Arden ward. It also proposed that Logan ward be renamed West ward arguing that the current ward is in the County Division of West Gartree while the remainder of the town is not. Councillor Totten on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group and Market Harborough Civic Society proposed that the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward be renamed Arden ward. They also objected to the proposal to include the properties on both sides of Leicester Road within the proposed Logan ward. Market Harborough District Council Members supported the proposals for the town. Great Bowden Parish Council objected to the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward name and proposed that it be renamed as Great Bowden & North Harborough ward. Councillor Taylor proposed that Market Harborough – St Lukes ward be renamed Great

Bowden & Arden ward. He also proposed that the boundary between the proposed Market Harborough – Logan and Market Harborough – St Lukes wards be amended to run along the centre of Leicester Road. He argued that our proposed boundary would cut off Victoria Avenue and Park Drive from the remainder of St Lukes ward. A local resident proposed that St Lukes ward be renamed Burnmill and Little Bowden be renamed Glebe.

88 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We have noted the proposal that the boundary between our proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes and Market Harborough – Logan wards should run along the centre of Leicester Road. We note that the current proposals would cut off a number of roads in the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward from the remainder of the ward. We also note that amending the boundary to run along the centre of Leicester Road would not significantly affect electoral equality in the area. We have therefore decided to adopt this proposal as part of our final recommendations. We have also noted the objections to the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward name and the alternative options submitted. We have noted that the name Arden has secured a degree of support and have therefore decided to adopt this proposal subject to it being prefixed by the name Market Harborough. We have also considered Harborough Conservative Association's proposal that Logan ward be renamed West ward. However, we do not take account of county divisions as part of this review and were not convinced that the proposal would secure widespread support. We also considered the ward name change proposals put forward by the local resident but, again, remain unconvinced that they would secure widespread support.

89 Under the our final recommendations the proposed Market Harborough – Arden, Market Harborough – Little Bowden, Market Harborough – Logan and Market Harborough – Welland wards would initially have 5 per cent more, 16 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer in 2006). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

90 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

## **Conclusions**

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

- The parish of Thorpe Langton be transferred from the proposed Billesdon ward to the proposed Kibworth ward;
- The boundary between the proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes and Market Harborough – Logan wards be amended;
- The proposed Market Harborough – St Lukes ward be renamed Market Harborough – Arden ward.

92 We conclude that, in Harborough:

- A council of 37 members should be retained;
- there should be 25 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

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

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	37	37	37	37
Number of wards	26	25	26	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,635	1,635	1,715	1,715
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	4	17	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	0	9	0

94 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 15 to four, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with only one ward, Misterton, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 12 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best reflect the statutory criteria.

#### **Final 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 in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover.

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

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

96 The parish of Broughton Astley is currently served by 18 councillors representing three wards: Astley, Broughton and Primethorpe. At Stage One 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.

97 The LGCE proposed 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. It proposed modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the proposed district wards in the parish.

98 At Stage Three we no specific comments were received regarding parishing arrangements in the area. In the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we confirm the draft recommendations for parish warding in Broughton Astley as final.

**Final 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.

99 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.

100 The LGCE proposed that in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements Lutterworth parish should comprise four parish wards: Brookfield, Orchard, Springs and Swift, each returning four councillors. It proposed modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the proposed district wards.

101 At Stage Three no specific comments were received regarding parishing arrangements in the area. In the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the town, we confirm the draft recommendations for parish warding in Lutterworth as final.

**Final 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.

*Map 2: Final Recommendations for Harborough*





## 6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

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

104 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission to arrive no later than 18 July 2002:

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



## APPENDIX A

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

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Harborough area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the 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 at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Broughton Astley, Lutterworth and Market Harborough.

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