

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Gedling in Nottinghamshire

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

May 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Gedling in Nottinghamshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Arnold and Carlton is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

16 May 2000

Dear Secretary of State

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

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 118) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Gedling.

We recommend that Gedling Borough Council should be served by 50 councillors representing 22 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that elections for the Council should continue to take place every four years.

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

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

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

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

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

- **in 11 of the 24 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and four wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 11 wards and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 118-119) are that:

- **Gedling Borough Council should have 50 councillors, seven fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, instead of 24 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 20 of the proposed 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor expected to vary by no more than 8 per cent from the average in all wards in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for the parishes of Bestwood St Albans and Calverton.**

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

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Bestwood Village	1	Bestwood Park ward (part – the proposed Bestwood Village parish ward of Bestwood St Albans parish); St Marys ward (part)	Map 2 and A2
2	Bonington (in Arnold)	3	Bestwood Park ward (part – the proposed Top Valley parish ward of Bestwood St Albans parish); Bonington ward (part); Oxclose ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Large map and A2
3	Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph	2	Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward; Netherfield ward (part)	Map 2
4	Calverton	3	Calverton ward; St Marys ward (part)	Map 2 and A3
5	Carlton (in Carlton)	3	Carlton ward (part); Carlton Hill ward (part); Cavendish ward (part); Conway ward (part)	Large map
6	Carlton Hill (in Carlton)	3	Carlton ward (part); Carlton Hill ward (part); Cavendish ward (part)	Large map
7	Daybrook (in Arnold)	2	Bonington ward (part); Oxclose ward (part)	Large map
8	Gedling (in Carlton)	3	Conway ward (part); Gedling ward (part); Porchester ward (part)	Large map
9	Killisick (in Arnold)	1	Killisick ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Large map
10	Kingswell (in Arnold)	2	Kingswell ward (part); Woodthorpe ward (part)	Large map
11	Lambley	1	Lambley ward; Gedling ward (part); Porchester ward (part)	Map 2
12	Mapperley Plains (in Arnold)	3	Mapperley Plains ward; Killisick ward (part)	Large map
13	Netherfield & Colwick (in Carlton)	3	Netherfield ward (part)	Large map
14	Newstead	1	Newstead ward; St Marys ward (part)	Map 2
15	Phoenix (in Carlton)	2	Gedling ward (part); Phoenix ward (part); Priory ward (part)	Large map
16	Porchester (in Carlton)	3	Porchester ward (part); St James ward (part)	Large map
17	Ravenshead	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Ravenshead parish)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
18	St James (in Carlton)	2	Phoenix ward (part); Priory ward (part); St James ward (part)	Large map
19	St Marys (in Arnold)	3	Killisick ward (part); St Marys ward (part)	Large map
20	Valley (in Carlton)	2	Carlton ward (part); Cavendish ward (part); Conway ward (part); Gedling ward (part)	Large map
21	Woodborough	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Woodborough parish)	Map 2
22	Woodthorpe (in Arnold)	3	Kingswell ward (part); Woodthorpe ward (part)	Large map

Notes: 1 The towns of Arnold and Carlton – except Colwick parish – are unparished.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Gedling

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Bestwood Village	1	1,260	1,260	-28	1,883	1,883	3
2	Bonington	3	5,314	1,771	1	5,463	1,821	0
3	Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph	2	3,052	1,526	-13	3,363	1,682	-8
4	Calverton	3	5,411	1,804	3	5,911	1,970	8
5	Carlton	3	5,245	1,748	-1	5,337	1,779	-3
6	Carlton Hill	3	5,495	1,832	4	5,530	1,843	1
7	Daybrook	2	3,785	1,893	8	3,808	1,904	4
8	Gedling	3	5,272	1,757	0	5,338	1,779	-3
9	Killisick	1	1,885	1,885	7	1,896	1,896	4
10	Kingswell	2	3,741	1,871	6	3,773	1,887	3
11	Lambley	1	1,709	1,709	-3	1,775	1,775	-3
12	Mapperley Plains	3	5,661	1,887	7	5,746	1,915	5
13	Netherfield & Colwick	3	5,145	1,715	-3	5,412	1,804	-1
14	Newstead	1	1,638	1,638	-7	1,858	1,858	2
15	Phoenix	2	3,683	1,842	5	3,702	1,851	1
16	Porchester	3	5,414	1,805	3	5,459	1,820	0
17	Ravenshead	3	4,812	1,604	-9	5,022	1,674	-8
18	St James	2	3,584	1,792	2	3,617	1,809	-1
19	St Marys	3	5,273	1,758	0	5,527	1,842	1
20	Valley	2	3,241	1,621	-8	3,450	1,725	-6
21	Woodborough	1	1,621	1,621	-8	1,690	1,690	-7
22	Woodthorpe	3	5,735	1,912	9	5,771	1,924	5
	Totals	50	87,976	-	-	91,331	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,760	-	-	1,827	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Gedling in Nottinghamshire. We have now reviewed eight districts in Nottinghamshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Gedling. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 71). The electoral arrangements of Nottinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in May 1980 (Report No. 383). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie 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 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

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

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Nottinghamshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 18 May 1999, when we wrote to Gedling Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Nottinghamshire Local Councils Association, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 17 September 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 14 December 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Gedling in Nottinghamshire*, and ended on 21 February 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of Gedling lies immediately to the north-east of the city of Nottingham, and contains a mixture of suburban and rural communities, covering 12,003 hectares. It is bordered by Sherwood Forest to the north, while the River Trent forms its southern boundary. It is primarily residential, with the two major towns in the borough being Arnold and Carlton, comprising 33 per cent and 35 per cent of the borough's total electorate respectively. There are 11 parishes in the borough, all of which are situated in rural areas, except for the urban parish of Colwick.

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

15 The electorate of the borough is 87,977 (February 1999). The Council presently has 57 members who are elected from 24 wards, seven of which are relatively rural, the remainder being predominantly suburban. 13 of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and four are single-member wards. Whole-council elections take place every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Gedling borough, with around 16 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increase has been in Bestwood Park ward.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,543 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,602 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. Due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 11 of the 24 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, of which four wards vary by more than 20 per cent and two wards vary by more than 30 per cent. The worst electoral imbalance is in Bestwood Park ward, where the councillor represents 136 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Gedling

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Bestwood Park	1	3,635	3,635	136	4,370	4,370	173
2	Bonington	3	3,925	1,308	-15	3,968	1,323	-17
3	Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph	2	3,052	1,526	-1	3,363	1,682	5
4	Calverton	3	5,361	1,787	16	5,861	1,954	22
5	Carlton	3	4,677	1,559	1	4,771	1,590	-1
6	Carlton Hill	3	4,794	1,598	4	4,830	1,610	0
7	Cavendish	2	2,732	1,366	-11	2,891	1,446	-10
8	Conway	2	2,967	1,484	-4	3,057	1,529	-5
9	Gedling	3	4,428	1,476	-4	4,451	1,484	-7
10	Killisick	2	3,351	1,676	9	3,370	1,685	5
11	Kingswell	3	4,568	1,523	-1	4,587	1,529	-5
12	Lambley	1	1,043	1,043	-32	1,076	1,076	-33
13	Mapperley Plains	3	4,500	1,500	-3	4,579	1,526	-5
14	Netherfield	3	5,145	1,715	11	5,412	1,804	13
15	Newstead	1	1,582	1,582	2	1,802	1,802	12
16	Oxclose	2	2,663	1,332	-14	2,680	1,340	-16
17	Phoenix	2	2,321	1,161	-25	2,334	1,167	-27
18	Porchester	3	4,322	1,441	-7	4,380	1,460	-9
19	Priory	2	2,255	1,128	-27	2,272	1,136	-29
20	Ravenshead	3	4,812	1,604	4	5,022	1,674	4
21	St James	3	4,105	1,368	-11	4,144	1,381	-14
22	St Marys	3	5,210	1,737	13	5,462	1,821	14

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
23 Woodborough	1	1,621	1,621	5	1,690	1,690	5
24 Woodthorpe	3	4,908	1,636	6	4,957	1,652	3
Totals	57	87,977	–	–	91,329	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,543	–	–	1,602	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Gedling 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 1999, electors in Lambley ward were relatively over-represented by 32 per cent, while electors in Bestwood Park ward were relatively under-represented by 136 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received nine representations, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Gedling Liberal Democrats, and representations from Gedling Borough Labour Group, Vernon Coaker MP, two parish councils, a local Labour Party, a borough councillor and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Gedling in Nottinghamshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of single, two and three-member wards across the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting ten wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals, in order to provide better levels of electoral equality and to better reflect community identity. We proposed that:

- Gedling Borough Council should be served by 50 councillors, compared with the current 57, representing 22 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a decrease of two, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Bestwood St Albans and Calverton parish councils.

Draft Recommendation

Gedling Borough Council should comprise 50 councillors, serving 22 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 20 of the 22 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 15 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Gedling Borough Council and the Commission.

Gedling Borough Council

22 Gedling Borough Council supported our draft recommendations in their entirety, stating that they “provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria throughout the borough”.

Nottinghamshire County Council

23 The County Council expressed concern regarding our proposal to reduce the number of councillors representing the borough from 57 to 50. It argued that “the United Kingdom already has one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of the population in Europe”, contending that our draft recommendations for Gedling would “worsen that position”.

24 The County Council welcomed our recommendation that there be no change to the electoral cycle of the borough, stating that members of the County Council are “satisfied with existing arrangements”.

Gedling Borough Labour Group

25 The Labour Group on the Borough Council expressed concern regarding the proposed Killisick ward and suggested that the boundary between the proposed Killisick and Mapperley Plains wards should be amended to form two two-member wards. It also requested that the Borough Council should have elections on a two-yearly cycle.

Gedling Liberal Democrats

26 Gedling Liberal Democrats suggested minor amendments to the proposed boundaries of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Carlton, Carlton Hill, Gedling, Lambley, Netherfield & Colwick, Phoenix, St James and Valley wards, stating that the proposed boundaries would be more clear.

Parish Councils

27 We received two representations from parish councils in response to our draft recommendations. Calverton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations and Papplewick Parish Council supported them with regard to Papplewick. It also proposed changes to the external boundaries of Papplewick parish which are beyond the remit of this review.

Other Representations

28 A further nine representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local Members of Parliament, political groups, councillors and local residents.

29 Vernon Coaker MP expressed concern regarding the proposed Killisick ward and argued that it should have increased representation due to the significant levels of social deprivation and unemployment within this ward. He also supported two-yearly elections. Paddy Tipping MP commented that he did not consider that our draft recommendations were designed for the possibility of more frequent elections being introduced in future.

30 Carlton Hill Ward Labour Party proposed amendments to the proposed boundary of Carlton Hill ward in order to retain the community spirit. Nottingham Green Party endorsed our draft recommendations. It also proposed that a referendum should be held for residents of Arnold regarding the re-establishment of parish and town councils; however, this does not fall within the remit of this review.

31 A county councillor supported the proposed reduction in council size and the retention of the existing electoral cycle. He supported our draft recommendations for Bestwood but argued that they might have an adverse effect on county warding arrangements and parliamentary constituency boundaries in future. He also proposed the extension of the boundaries of Bestwood and Papplewick parishes, which is beyond the remit of this review. As Chair of Ravenshead Parish Council he also noted the Parish Council's support for our draft recommendations for Ravenshead ward. A borough councillor opposed our proposals for Bonington and Killisick wards. Another borough councillor proposed amendments to the proposed Valley ward, suggesting that all wards should be represented by two councillors and that half-council elections should be held every two years. He also proposed that the current number of councillors should be retained or increased.

32 A local resident made suggestions regarding the relationship between borough councillors and parishes, which is beyond the remit of this review. Another local resident raised concerns regarding electoral projections and opposed our draft recommendations for Bonington ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

33 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Gedling 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 statutory criteria set out in 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 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

36 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

37 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 4 per cent from 87,977 to 91,329 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Bestwood Park ward. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

38 At Stage Three, a local resident raised concerns regarding the Borough Council’s electoral projections. He argued that the electorate forecasts seemed to reflect building developments that are still under consideration and which, therefore, might be “seriously flawed”. He raised particular concerns regarding projected electoral increases in the Redhill area of the proposed Bonington ward. In response, the Borough Council noted that there is “an element of uncertainty”

regarding future developments in the area, however, it argued that its projections were based on the Commission's advice that it should take account of "likely development" before 2004. The Borough Council emphasised that the impact of the Local Plan on projections would be "minimal", given that the Local Plan is mainly concerned with more long-term developments. Having considered the Borough Council's response, we remain satisfied that the electorate projections which it put forward at Stage One represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

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

40 Gedling Borough Council is presently served by 57 members. At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a reduction in council size to 50. The Liberal Democrats proposed a reduction in council size to 51 members and the Labour Group supported a council size of between 56 and 58 members. In our draft recommendations report we considered that the Borough Council's proposal for a council size of 50 members would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

41 At Stage Three Nottinghamshire County Council expressed concern regarding the reduction in council size from 57 to 50, arguing that this would be "undesirable" given that "the United Kingdom already has one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of population in Europe". A county councillor supported our proposal to reduce the size of the council. A borough councillor proposed that either the current council size should be retained, or the size of the council should be increased, in line with the "Government's current thinking of greater community development and involvement" but did not demonstrate support for this view, or specify an ideal size.

42 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that there has been no significant opposition to our proposed council size at Stage Three. We do not accept the argument that, in determining council size for a given area, the number of elected members in other European countries is a significant consideration, as political systems and cultures vary across Europe. Therefore, we consider that the proposed council size of 50 members should form the basis of our final recommendations.

Electoral Arrangements

43 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we considered carefully all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

44 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals would represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and were content to endorse its proposals substantially. In particular, we considered that the Borough Council's scheme would provide the optimum warding arrangements within the existing Bestwood Park ward and that, as a

consequence, we were restricted as to the extent to which we were able to reflect the Liberal Democrats' proposals elsewhere. Similarly, we considered that the Borough Council's scheme would provide a better reflection of the interests and identities of communities in the town of Carlton. Nevertheless, we noted that there was a degree of consensus throughout the borough between the two schemes, and where possible, we reflected elements of the Liberal Democrats' proposals in our draft recommendations.

45 We departed from the Borough Council's scheme in relation to the proposed wards of Bestwood Village, Bonington, Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Gedling, Killisick, Lambley, Netherfield & Colwick, Newstead, and St Marys wards, in the interests of better reflecting the interests and identities of communities and using more easily identifiable boundaries.

46 It has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe that ward patterns and sizes should be such that they would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be an approach the Commission should take. As a Commission we rely heavily on local authorities and others to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved. We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria and achieve a high level of electoral equality.

47 Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and borough wards is likely to be conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of county council electoral arrangements.

48 It has been argued that ward boundaries should be coterminous with parliamentary boundaries; however, we are not required to have regard to parliamentary constituency boundaries in formulating recommendations for borough warding arrangements. In fact, any new borough ward boundaries will be taken into account by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission when it undertakes a review of parliamentary constituencies.

49 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that minor modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries in Carlton, based on the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

The urban areas

- (a) Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards (in Arnold);
- (b) Bonington, Kingswell, Oxclose and Woodthorpe wards (in Arnold);
- (c) Gedling, Phoenix, Porchester, Priory and St James wards (in Carlton);
- (d) Carlton, Carlton Hill, Cavendish, Conway and Netherfield wards (in Carlton).

The rural areas

- (e) Bestwood Park, Newstead and Ravenshead wards;
- (f) Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough wards.

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

The urban areas

Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards (in Arnold)

51 The existing wards of Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Marys cover the northern area of Arnold town. Killisick ward is represented by two councillors, while Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards are each represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 9 per cent, 3 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Killisick ward, to vary by 5 per cent, while it is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards, to vary by 5 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

52 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by three wards, with the proposed Killisick ward being represented by a single councillor, and the proposed Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards each being represented by three councillors. It proposed that the whole of Worrall Avenue and the area bounded by Bonington Drive, Brookfield Road, Hallams Lane and Arnot Hill Road should be transferred from Killisick ward to the proposed St Marys ward. It proposed transferring that part of the existing Killisick ward, bounded by the northern edge of the new development on Killisick Lane and by Killisick and Coppice roads to Mapperley Plains ward. It also proposed transferring that part of St Marys ward bounded by Church Street, Cross Street and Mellors Road to the proposed Bonington ward.

53 The Liberal Democrats proposed that this area should be divided between three wards, with the proposed Killisick and Plains wards each being represented by two members, and the proposed St Marys ward being represented by three members. They proposed that Killisick ward should comprise parts of the existing Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards, while Plains ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Mapperley Plains ward. They suggested that St Marys ward should comprise parts of the existing Killisick and St Marys wards, and that the rural part of the existing St Marys ward should be divided between the proposed rural wards of Bestwood, Calverton and Newstead. They recommended that the remainder of the existing St Marys ward should be transferred to the proposed Bonington ward. They also suggested an alternative scheme for St Marys ward to incorporate a greater part of the existing Bonington ward.

54 The Labour Group proposed that this area should be represented by three wards, with the proposed Killisick ward being represented by two councillors and the proposed Mapperley Plains and St Marys wards each being represented by three councillors. It proposed that Killisick ward should comprise parts of the existing Killisick, Kingswell and St Marys wards, while Mapperley Plains ward should combine the existing Mapperley Plains ward with the remainder of the existing Killisick ward. It recommended that St Marys ward should comprise the remainder of the existing St Marys ward.

55 At Stage One, Vernon Coaker MP and a borough councillor both opposed the Borough Council's proposal to create a single-member Killisick ward. They argued that this would fail to encourage local participation in politics, and that one councillor would not adequately represent the area.

56 Having given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One, we recognised that the proposed warding arrangements in this area are influenced by the proposed ward boundaries in the existing Bestwood Park ward. However, we noted that there was broad agreement over some warding arrangements in this area, and we were able to reflect this in our draft recommendations. On balance, we decided to endorse the Borough Council's proposals substantially in this area, which we considered would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to establish a larger Killisick ward and a more compact Plains ward had some merit, we considered that the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements for the existing Bestwood Park ward would offer a better warding arrangement than that put forward by the Liberal Democrats. Our decision to endorse the Borough Council's proposals for Bestwood Park, as already indicated, restricted the extent to which we were able to reflect the Liberal Democrats' proposals elsewhere in Arnold. Also, while we considered carefully the Labour Group's proposed boundaries between Killisick and St Marys wards and Killisick and Mapperley Plains wards, we were not persuaded that these proposals would better reflect the identities and interests of communities in this area.

57 However, we departed from the Borough Council's scheme in two areas. First, we noted that Birchfield Road would be split between two wards under the Borough Council's proposals, and we were not persuaded that this would satisfactorily reflect the identities and interests of communities in this area. We therefore proposed retaining the whole of Birchfield Road in Killisick ward, as put forward by the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Group. Second, we proposed adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal to divide the rural part of the existing St Marys ward between the wards of Bestwood Village, Calverton and Newstead in order to better reflect the identities and interests of the constituent communities in this area. We noted that the existing ward currently comprises urban and rural areas with little common identity, and we considered that those parts of St Marys ward to the north of Lime Lane and to the east of Mansfield Road should be incorporated in adjoining wards to better reflect community links.

58 At Stage Three, the Labour Group, Vernon Coaker MP and a borough councillor opposed our proposal to create a single-member Killisick ward, arguing that the high levels of social deprivation in the area demand a higher level of representation, which could not be adequately met by a single councillor. The Labour Group proposed that the boundary between Killisick and Mapperley Plains wards should be amended to create two two-member wards; however, it did not put forward specific proposals for change.

59 Having considered carefully the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for the wards of Killisick, Mapperley Plains and St Marys. While we recognise that our proposal for a single-member Killisick ward has met with opposition at Stage Three, we have not received any alternative schemes for this ward which would give comparable levels of electoral equality. We are unable to give higher levels of representation to areas of high deprivation. At Stage One, we considered creating a two-member Killisick ward. However, we concluded that the proposed single-member Killisick ward would offer the best balance between

electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We were also constrained by our decision to endorse the Borough Council's proposals for Bestwood Park.

60 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Killisick and Mapperley Plains wards would vary by 7 per cent from the borough average, while St Marys ward would be equal to the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve generally over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the average by 4 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively by 2004.

Bonington, Kingswell, Oxclose and Woodthorpe wards (in Arnold)

61 The existing wards of Bonington, Kingswell, Oxclose and Woodthorpe cover the southern area of Arnold town. Bonington, Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards are each represented by three councillors, while Oxclose ward is represented by two councillors. Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the borough average by 15 per cent, 1 per cent, 14 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Bonington, Kingswell and Oxclose wards, to vary by 17 per cent, 5 per cent and 16 per cent by 2004, while improving marginally in Woodthorpe ward, to vary by 3 per cent.

62 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Bonington and Woodthorpe wards each being represented by three councillors and the proposed Daybrook and Kingswell wards each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Bonington ward should comprise the Top Valley area of Bestwood Park ward, that part of Bonington ward to the north of Acton Road and that part of St Marys ward bounded by Church Street, Cross Street and Mellors Road. It also proposed including in Bonington ward that part of the existing Oxclose ward to the west of Mansfield Road, north of the junction with Acton Road, up to, but not including Danes Close and Haworth Gardens. It argued that Daybrook ward should comprise the remainder of Bonington and Oxclose wards. It proposed that Kingswell ward should comprise the existing Kingswell ward less that part to the south of Arno Vale Road but excluding the school. It also proposed including that part of Woodthorpe ward to the north of Thackerays Lane. It proposed that Woodthorpe ward should comprise the remainder of Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards.

63 The Liberal Democrats proposed that this area should be represented by five wards, with the proposed Bonington, Daybrook, Kingswell and Warren Hill wards each being represented by two councillors and the proposed Woodthorpe ward being represented by three councillors. They proposed that Bonington ward should comprise parts of Bonington, Killisick, Kingswell and St Marys wards. As an alternative, they proposed including a further part of Bonington ward, which would have a marginal effect on electoral equality. They proposed that Daybrook ward should comprise the majority of the existing Oxclose ward and part of the existing Bonington and Kingswell wards. They proposed that Kingswell ward should comprise the majority of the existing Kingswell ward. As an alternative, they proposed including part of the existing Killisick ward, which would have a marginal effect on electoral equality. They also proposed that the Top Valley area of Bestwood Park ward should be linked with part of the existing Bonington and Oxclose wards to form a Warren Hill ward, while Woodthorpe ward should comprise the existing Woodthorpe ward and part of the existing Kingswell ward.

64 The Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area, with some boundary modifications. It proposed that Bonington ward should comprise parts of the existing Bonington and Oxclose wards, with the remainder of the existing Oxclose ward and the Top Valley area of Bestwood Park ward forming a revised Oxclose ward. It supported the Liberal Democrats' proposal for Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards.

65 At Stage One Vernon Coaker MP opposed the Borough Council's proposals for Daybrook ward and a borough councillor expressed concern about the Borough Council's proposals, particularly with regard to Bonington ward, stating that there are "no clear road links" between Top Valley and Bonington. A local resident supported the proposals to divide the Warren Hill area from the village of Bestwood and proposed that the Top Valley area should be combined with Oxclose ward.

66 On the evidence received at Stage One, we noted that the Borough Council, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats each addressed the poor level of electoral equality in the existing Bestwood Park ward by dividing the existing ward and combining the Top Valley area with the adjacent area of Arnold. We recognised that the Top Valley part of Bestwood has greater links with areas outside the borough but, given that Top Valley merits one and a half councillors under a council size of 50, combining it with adjoining areas was unavoidable in the interests of electoral equality. We did not consider that the proposal from the Labour Group, a borough councillor and a local resident, to include the Top Valley area in Oxclose ward, would facilitate convenient and effective local government, given that these areas only share a short length of boundary. Also, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' and Labour Group's proposals would satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities in this area. On balance, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals for Bonington ward would provide the better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and, as a consequence of endorsing the Borough Council's scheme for Bonington ward, the extent to which we were able to reflect proposals other than those of the Borough Council elsewhere in Arnold was restricted. Nevertheless, we noted that the Borough Council had proposed clear boundaries and good electoral equality throughout this area of Arnold, and we were content to endorse its proposals for these wards.

67 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for Bonington ward, arguing that they offered "clear arrangements" for the representation of the area. A borough councillor opposed our proposals for Bonington ward, arguing that there are no direct transport links between the Top Valley area of Bestwood Park ward and the existing Bonington ward, and that the areas which we propose combining are "disparate communities". A local resident opposed our proposals for Bonington ward, arguing that the proposed changes do not make sense "when considering the community textures involved".

68 Having given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for this area as final. We note that our proposals for Bonington ward have met with some opposition, however, no alternative schemes have been put forward for this area at Stage Three. In our draft recommendations report we considered carefully the options available in order to address electoral inequalities in the existing Bestwood Park ward and we concluded that our proposal would offer the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

69 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bonington, Daybrook, Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards would vary by 1 per cent, 8 per cent, 6 per cent and 9 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years to equal the borough average in Bonington ward, and to vary by 4 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent respectively from the borough average in Daybrook, Kingswell and Woodthorpe wards by 2004.

Gedling, Phoenix, Porchester, Priory and St James wards (in Carlton)

70 The existing wards of Gedling, Phoenix, Porchester, Priory and St James cover the north of Carlton town. Gedling, Porchester and St James wards are each represented by three councillors, while Phoenix and Priory wards are each represented by two councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the five wards varies from the borough average by 4 per cent, 25 per cent, 7 per cent, 27 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years to vary by 7 per cent, 27 per cent, 9 per cent, 29 per cent and 14 per cent in 2004.

71 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Gedling and Porchester wards each being represented by three councillors, and the proposed Phoenix and St James wards each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Arnold Lane, Gedling Road and Main Road should form the southern boundary of Gedling ward and that the main Nottingham to Lincoln railway line should form the eastern boundary of Gedling ward, thereby including that part of the existing Conway ward to the north of Manor Road and Station Road in Gedling ward. It proposed retaining the existing northern boundaries of Gedling ward.

72 It proposed that Phoenix ward should comprise the majority of the existing Priory ward, less that area to the west of Hartington Avenue, Westdale Lane East and Perlethorpe Avenue. It proposed that the new Phoenix ward should also include that part of the existing Phoenix ward to the east of Gedling School, Wollaton Avenue, Perlethorpe Avenue, Perlethorpe Drive and Thoresby Avenue. It recommended that Main Road and Gedling Road should form the eastern boundary of the ward, with Arnold Lane forming the northern boundary. It also proposed combining that part of the existing Porchester ward to the north of Arnold Lane with Lambley ward on the grounds that the Spring Lane area shares communication links and community interests with Lambley. The western part of the existing St James ward, bounded by Digby Avenue, Holyoake Road, Westdale Lane West and the edge of the golf course and college grounds would be included in Porchester ward, with the remainder of the existing Phoenix, Priory and St James wards forming a revised St James ward.

73 The Liberal Democrats proposed that this area should be represented by three wards, with the proposed All Hallows ward being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Phoenix and Porchester wards each being represented by three councillors. They proposed that All Hallows ward should comprise parts of the existing Conway, Gedling and Porchester wards. They proposed that the northern boundary of All Hallows ward should be drawn from Arnold Lane, to the east of Chase Farm to the spoil heap, east along the top of the ridge to Lambley Lane, and north along Lambley Lane to Spring Lane. They proposed that the boundary should then follow the existing boundary along the track to Gedling Wood, that it should cut across the wood to the

north of Gedling Wood Farm to traverse the fields and join Whitworth Drive between the boundaries of Gedling House and the poultry farm. This would ensure that any possible new development on the old Gedling Colliery site would be contained in the suburban ward of All Hallows. They also proposed an alternative boundary for All Hallows ward which would have a marginal effect on electoral equality. They proposed that Phoenix ward should comprise the existing Phoenix ward and parts of Gedling, Priory and St James wards. They also proposed that Porchester ward should comprise the majority of the existing Porchester ward and the remainder of St James ward.

74 The Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Carlton and, in particular, expressed support for the proposed division of central Carlton into three two-member wards.

75 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we considered that both the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area had merit, and would provide a significant improvement in electoral equality. There were also broad similarities with respect to a number of proposed boundaries including Mapperley Plains, Arnold Lane, Westdale Lane and the main Nottingham to Lincoln railway line. We were content to incorporate these in our draft recommendations as we considered that these were clear, strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

76 We considered that the Borough Council's proposal for Gedling ward would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we noted that the existing Conway ward, which is elongated and contains a number of disconnected areas, would be abolished. However, in the northern part of this ward, we considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposal had greater merit, as it combined much of the rural area of Gedling ward with Lambley ward, and proposed that the old colliery site should be retained in All Hallows ward. This would ensure that a possible area of future development would be included in a single suburban ward. The Liberal Democrats' proposal would also have abolished the existing boundary between Gedling and Porchester wards, which is not based on an identifiable ground feature. However, we proposed modifying the Liberal Democrats' proposals in order to utilise the identifiable boundary of the field edge and the disused railway line. We proposed retaining the name of Gedling for this ward as we were not persuaded that All Hallows would be a more appropriate name or that this name change would receive local support.

77 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals for Phoenix and St James wards would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Phoenix ward would create an extended ward which would include areas with little connection to each other, while the Borough Council proposed a more compact ward which better reflected the local community links.

78 We endorsed the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Porchester ward. In particular, we noted that their proposal to use the centre of Arnold Lane as a boundary and to include part of the existing St James ward would provide a clearly identifiable area with good electoral equality. Also, as previously indicated, we proposed that the Gedling colliery site should be transferred to the modified Gedling ward, while Chase Farm and the Spring Lane area, which shares transport links with Lambley ward, would be combined with Lambley ward.

79 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Gedling, Phoenix, Porchester and St James wards would vary by 2 per cent, 4 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent from the borough average, respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years to equal the borough average in Porchester ward, and to vary by 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average in Gedling, Phoenix and St James wards by 2004.

80 In response to our draft recommendations, Gedling Liberal Democrats proposed that the boundary of the proposed Gedling ward should be amended with regard to new development plans for the Gedling Colliery site, in order to include the whole of the planned area of development. They also argued that the “anomaly” of St Austins Drive being in a different ward to Gedling Road, from which it has access, would be avoided by transferring the Drive from the proposed Phoenix ward to Gedling ward, with which it is solely connected. They recommended that the boundary between the proposed Phoenix and St James wards should also be amended to include both sides of Hartington Avenue in St James ward, thereby creating a more clearly identifiable boundary.

81 Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Phoenix and St James wards would vary by 5 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average, while equalling the borough average in Gedling ward. This level of electoral equality would generally improve to vary by 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent from the borough average in Gedling, Phoenix and St James wards respectively by 2004.

82 We have considered carefully the representations received during the consultation period. As a result, we are largely confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final, with minor modifications. We consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposed amendments to the boundaries of the proposed Gedling, Phoenix and St James wards will provide more clear and easily identifiable boundaries and would result in marginally improved electoral equality. Therefore, we are proposing to adopt these amendments as our final recommendations. However, the Liberal Democrats’ proposed boundary between Gedling and Lambley wards was not based on any identifiable ground detail, therefore we are proposing to include a larger part of the Gedling Colliery site in Gedling ward, on the advice of Ordnance Survey, as illustrated on the large map. This alternative boundary would only affect three electors and would give a clearly identifiable boundary. In our draft recommendations report we welcomed further representations regarding our proposal to retain the name of Gedling ward. We have received no further submissions, therefore, we are content to retain this ward name.

83 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Phoenix, Porchester and St James wards would vary by 5 per cent, 3 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average respectively, while equalling the borough average in Gedling ward. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve generally over the next five years to equal the borough average in Porchester ward, while varying by 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent from the borough average in Gedling, Phoenix and St James wards respectively by 2004.

Carlton, Carlton Hill, Cavendish, Conway and Netherfield wards (in Carlton)

84 The existing wards of Carlton, Carlton Hill, Cavendish, Conway and Netherfield cover the south of Carlton town. Netherfield ward contains the urban parish of Colwick. Carlton, Carlton Hill and Netherfield wards are each represented by three councillors, while Cavendish and Conway wards are each represented by two councillors. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in each of the wards varies from the borough average by 1 per cent, 4 per cent, 11 per cent, 4 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years to vary by 1 per cent, 10 per cent, 5 per cent and 13 per cent in Carlton, Cavendish, Conway and Netherfield wards by 2004, while equalling the borough average in Carlton Hill ward.

85 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Carlton, Carlton Hill and Netherfield & Colwick wards each being represented by three councillors, and the proposed Valley ward being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Carlton ward should comprise the majority of Carlton ward less that part to the north of Carlton Hill, Garden Avenue, and Foxhill Road East. It also proposed including those parts of the existing Carlton Hill and Cavendish wards to the south of Carlton Hill and the part of Conway ward bounded by Burton Road, Foxhill Road East, Manor Road and Station Road. It recommended that Carlton Hill ward should comprise the majority of the existing Carlton Hill ward, less that part to the south of Carlton Hill, and to the north-east of Foxhill Road Central, Prospect Road and Ernest Road. It also proposed including those parts of Carlton and Cavendish wards between Foxhill Road and Carlton Hill, up to the school boundary, in the proposed Carlton Hill ward. It proposed that Netherfield & Colwick ward should retain the boundaries of the existing Netherfield ward.

86 The Borough Council proposed that Valley ward should comprise the majority of the existing Cavendish ward less that part to the west of Ernest Road and to the south of Foxhill Road. It also proposed that Valley ward should include that part of Carlton Hill ward to the east of Ernest Road and to the north of Foxhill Road and Prospect Road. It argued that the part of the existing Carlton ward to the north of Foxhill Road should also be included in the proposed Valley ward together with that part of Conway ward to the north of Foxhill Road and Burton Road. It proposed that the ward should also include parts of Redland Avenue and Redland Grove from Gedling ward.

87 The Liberal Democrats proposed that this area should be represented by six wards, with the proposed Carlton Forum, Carlton Hill, Old Carlton, Southcliffe and Southview wards each being represented by two councillors and the proposed Netherfield & Colwick ward being represented by three councillors. They proposed that Carlton Forum ward should include parts of the existing Carlton Hill and Cavendish wards. They also proposed a slight variation on this proposal which would have a marginal effect on electoral equality but would incorporate a greater part of the existing Carlton Hill ward. They recommended that Carlton Hill ward should comprise parts of Carlton, Carlton Hill and Cavendish wards while Netherfield & Colwick ward should comprise the majority of the existing Netherfield ward, with minor amendments to its boundary with Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward. They also proposed that Old Carlton ward should include the majority of Conway ward and parts of the existing Carlton and Gedling wards. They suggested that Southcliffe ward should comprise the majority of the existing Carlton ward, with the remainder of Carlton Hill and Cavendish wards, while Southview ward should comprise the

remainder of Carlton, Conway, Priory and St James wards. At Stage One, the Liberal Democrats also suggested an alternative scheme for Carlton for two three-member wards, but they did not provide electoral data for this option.

88 At Stage One, the Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for these wards.

89 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we considered that both the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals had merit. Both schemes provided an improved level of electoral equality, and utilised strong boundaries based on major roads in the area. We also noted that there was broad agreement in relation to proposed ward boundaries. However, on balance, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would offer the better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we had reservations regarding the Liberal Democrats' proposed Old Carlton and Southview wards, both of which would appear to combine areas with little common identity and limited communication links. Additionally, we considered the Liberal Democrats' alternative warding arrangements for two three-member wards in this area, but we shared their view that this would create a "difficult" ward geographically.

90 As a consequence of substantially endorsing the Borough Council's proposals in this area, we were limited in the extent to which we were able to reflect the Liberal Democrats' proposals where they depart from the Borough Council's. However, we recommended modifying the Borough Council's proposals for Netherfield & Colwick ward in order to resolve an anomaly in the present Netherfield boundary. While we concurred with the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals that Netherfield & Colwick ward should generally retain the existing boundaries of Netherfield ward, we proposed modifying the ward boundary with Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph in order that the whole of Stoke Lane should be contained within this ward.

91 We also considered the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the lagoons area of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward to the proposed Netherfield & Colwick ward. While this appeared to be a sensible proposition, we were unable to transfer part of a parish without first creating a parish ward and, given the fact that this area is uninhabited, we were unable to create a parish ward in an area that contains no electors. Nevertheless, we noted in our draft recommendations report that this is an issue which may be addressed by the Borough Council as part of any future parishing review.

92 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Carlton, Carlton Hill and Netherfield & Colwick wards would vary by 1 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent, from the borough average respectively, while being equal to the borough average in Valley ward. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years to vary by 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average by 2004.

93 At Stage Three the Borough Council noted its particular support for the boundaries of the proposed Netherfield & Colwick ward. Gedling Liberal Democrats suggested that the boundary between the proposed Carlton and Valley wards should be amended to follow Foxhill Road East to the junction with Cavendish Road and Cavendish Road to Carlton Square. This amendment

would not affect any electors but would ensure that the boundary did not cut across a car park, without any existing ground detail. They also argued that the proposed boundary between Carlton Hill ward and Valley ward should follow Foxhill Road Central from the junction with Second Avenue to the junction with Ernest Road in order to provide “a clearer boundary” and to help to address the electoral variance of the wards. They suggested that the boundary between Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph and Netherfield wards should be amended in order to take account of a future planned development on the edge of Carlton, which they considered would best be included in a town ward. This proposal would not affect any electors by 2004. As a result of the Liberal Democrats’ proposals the level of electoral equality in Carlton Hill and Valley wards would be marginally worse than under our draft recommendations, varying from the borough average by 4 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

94 Carlton Hill Ward Labour Party recommended that the part of Carlton ward west of the recreation ground and south of Carlton Hill, should be transferred to Carlton Hill ward because it is “an integral part of the Carlton Hill community”, while that part of Carlton Hill ward to the east of Forest Grove, should be transferred to Carlton ward to balance the electoral equality of the wards. It also argued that the proposed boundaries of Carlton Hill ward should be amended to transfer that part of Carlton Hill ward to the north of Prospect Road to Valley ward, and that part of Valley ward to the south of Prospect Road and Valley Road, to Carlton Hill ward. As a result of these proposals the electoral variance of Carlton and Valley wards would be worse than under our draft recommendations, at 8 per cent and 11 per cent respectively from the borough average, while Carlton Hill ward would have improved electoral equality, to vary by 1 per cent from the borough average.

95 A borough councillor suggested that the proposed boundaries of Valley ward should be amended to create a two-member ward which includes that part of Carlton Hill ward to the north of Prospect Road, while excluding that part to the south of Hill Crest View and Valley Road. He also proposed transferring that area to the north of Cavendish Road and east of Garden City from Valley ward. He argued that this would combine areas of “common identity” which share leisure and community facilities, shopping areas, schools and are of a similar character. He noted that this proposal would use main roads as boundaries where possible. These proposals would result in significantly higher electoral variances than our draft recommendations in Carlton Hill, Phoenix and Valley wards, to vary by 7 per cent, 11 per cent and 14 per cent from the borough average,

96 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage Three, we note that there is considerable support for amendments to be made to the boundaries of the proposed Valley ward. We consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to clarify the south-eastern boundary of Valley ward, so as to exclude the Police Station, would offer a more clearly identifiable boundary, and we propose adopting this amendment. The Liberal Democrats, Carlton Hill Ward Labour Party and a borough councillor supported transferring that part of Valley ward to the south of Hill Crest View and Valley Road to Carlton Hill ward, and we have been persuaded that this would offer a stronger boundary between communities, while having a minimal effect on electoral equality. While we note that Carlton Hill Ward Labour Party’s proposals for Carlton, Carlton Hill and Valley wards would respect community boundaries, this scheme would have an adverse effect on electoral equality, creating a Valley ward with 13 per cent electoral variance by 2004, and we do not consider that these proposals would provide the best balance currently

available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Similarly, the proposals for Valley ward put forward by a borough councillor would result in Carlton Hill, Phoenix and Valley wards each having an electoral variance of 10 per cent or more by 2004. We recognise that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to amend the boundary between Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph and Netherfield & Colwick wards would have value, by ensuring that an area of future housing development would be included in the more suburban ward. However, we are unable to transfer part of a parish without first creating a parish ward and, given the fact that this area currently contains no electors, we are unable to create a parish ward in this area.

97 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Carlton, Carlton Hill, Netherfield & Colwick and Valley wards would vary by 1 per cent, 4 per cent, 3 per cent and 8 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve generally over the next five years to vary by 3 per cent, 1 per cent, 1 per cent and 6 per cent from the borough average by 2004.

The rural areas

Bestwood Park, Newstead and Ravenshead wards

98 The existing wards of Bestwood Park, Newstead and Ravenshead cover the north-west of the rural area of Gedling borough. Bestwood Park ward comprises the parish of Bestwood St Albans; Newstead ward comprises the parishes of Linby, Newstead and Papplewick; and Ravenshead ward comprises the parish of Ravenshead. Bestwood Park and Newstead wards are each represented by a single councillor, while Ravenshead ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Bestwood Park ward varies from the borough average by 136 per cent due to recent development, and in Newstead and Ravenshead wards varies by 2 per cent and 4 per cent from the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively stable in Ravenshead ward over the next five years, but is projected to deteriorate in Bestwood Park and Newstead wards, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by 173 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

99 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by three wards, with the proposed Bestwood Village and Newstead wards each being represented by one councillor, and Ravenshead ward being represented by three councillors. It proposed that Bestwood Park ward should be divided between two new wards, Bestwood Village and Bonington, and that Bestwood Village ward, should comprise the majority of the existing Bestwood Park ward, while the southern area, should be linked with parts of the existing Bonington, Oxclose and St Marys wards to form a new Bonington ward, as previously indicated. It also proposed that Newstead and Ravenshead wards should retain their existing ward boundaries.

100 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the area should be represented by three wards, with Bestwood and Newstead wards each being represented by a single councillor and Ravenshead ward being represented by three councillors. They proposed dividing Bestwood Park ward into two wards, with the Top Valley area being combined with the adjacent part of Arnold to form a Warren Hill ward, as previously indicated, and the remainder of the existing Bestwood Park ward being combined with that part of the existing St Marys ward to the south of the Leapool

roundabout and to the west of Mansfield Road to form a Bestwood ward. They proposed that Newstead ward should include the whole of the existing Newstead ward plus that part of the existing St Marys ward to the north-west of the Leapool roundabout and Ollerton Road. They proposed that Ravenshead ward should retain its existing boundaries.

101 At Stage One, the Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area with the exception that they proposed linking the Top Valley area with the existing Oxclose ward. Bestwood St Albans Labour Party supported the proposal to increase the borough council representation of the Bestwood area, but argued that the parish boundaries should remain intact.

102 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we noted that significant boundary modifications in this area were unavoidable given the high level of electoral imbalance in the existing Bestwood Park ward. As previously indicated, we adopted as our draft recommendation the Borough Council's proposal to divide the existing Bestwood Park ward between two new wards, with the Top Valley area being combined with part of Arnold, and the rural area forming a new Bestwood Village ward. However, we also proposed combining part of the existing St Marys ward with the proposed Bestwood Village and Newstead wards, in the interests of better reflecting the interests and identities of the communities in the St Marys area. As already indicated, we were persuaded that there was compelling evidence supporting the inclusion of part of St Marys ward in a revised Newstead ward. We noted that both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Ravenshead ward, and we concurred with this view which, in our judgement, would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area.

103 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the proposed Bonington ward, which it argued addressed "in an equitable manner" the "long term under-representation" of electors in the Top Valley area. It also expressed particular support for our proposal to retain the existing boundaries of Ravenshead ward. Papplewick Parish Council supported our proposal to include part of St Marys ward in Newstead ward, arguing that "many" consider the Burntstump Country Park area to be "naturally" linked to the parish of Papplewick. A county councillor argued that our recommendations for Bestwood "seem sensible", saying that this addresses the current "unsatisfactory level of representation" and that the division of Bestwood Village from Top Valley "is geographically very logical". As chair of Ravenshead Parish Council, he noted that the Parish Council supported the retention of the existing ward boundaries under three councillors.

104 We note that our draft recommendations for this area have received widespread support and we are content to endorse our proposals as final.

105 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bestwood Village, Newstead and Ravenshead wards would vary by 28 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve significantly over the next five years to vary by 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 8 per cent from the borough average by 2004.

Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton, Lambley, and Woodborough wards

106 The existing wards of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough cover the eastern, rural area of Gedling borough. Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph

ward comprises the parishes of Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph while Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough wards comprise the parishes of the same names. Calverton ward is represented by three councillors, Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward is represented by two councillors and Lambley and Woodborough wards are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough wards varies by 1 per cent, 16 per cent, 32 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years, to vary by 5 per cent, 22 per cent, 33 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004.

107 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Calverton ward being represented by three councillors, the proposed Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Lambley and Woodborough wards each being represented by one councillor. It supported retaining the existing boundaries of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton and Woodborough wards. However, in the interests of electoral equality, it proposed that Lambley ward should include that part of the existing Porchester ward to the north of Arnold Lane, as previously indicated.

108 The Liberal Democrats proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed Calverton ward being represented by three councillors, the proposed Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Lambley and Woodborough wards each being represented by one councillor. As previously indicated, they proposed that the boundary between Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph and Gedling and Netherfield wards should be modified. They also proposed that Calverton ward should comprise the existing Calverton ward plus that part of St Marys ward to the north-east of Lime Lane and Ollerton Road, as detailed above. They proposed transferring rural areas of the existing Porchester and Gedling wards to the proposed Lambley ward, as previously indicated, and argued that this proposed boundary would have the merit of excluding the old Gedling Colliery site from Lambley ward, which may be developed in coming years and would be “distinctly suburban” in character. They also proposed that Woodborough ward should retain its existing boundaries.

109 At Stage One, the Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for this area.

110 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we supported the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats in suggesting minimal change in this area. We proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward, subject to a minor boundary modification with the new ward of Netherfield & Colwick, as previously indicated. We were unable to transfer part of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward to Netherfield ward, as proposed by the Borough Council, without first creating a parish ward and, given the fact that this area contains no electors, we were unable to create a parish ward in this area. While we considered the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to modify the boundary between Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph ward and Gedling ward, we noted that the proposed new ward boundary would not be tied to firm ground detail nor would it offer improvements to electoral equality, and we were not therefore persuaded to endorse this proposal. As already indicated, we proposed largely retaining the existing boundaries of Calverton ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, subject to including part of St Marys ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

111 There was broad similarity between the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Lambley ward at Stage One, with both proposing to include the northern part of Porchester ward in a revised Lambley ward. However, as already indicated, the Liberal Democrats additionally proposed including the spoil heaps, which are currently contained within Gedling ward, in Lambley ward. On balance, we were persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposal to include the northern parts of Gedling and Porchester wards in Lambley ward, except for the Gedling Colliery site, which would remain in Gedling ward. We considered that this proposal had merit, as it would ensure that any future development on the colliery site would be contained within the suburban ward of Gedling, while the uninhabited part of the ward would be transferred to the rural ward of Lambley. We also proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for Woodborough ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats.

112 At Stage Three the Borough Council noted its particular support for the proposed boundaries of Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough wards, arguing that they offered "clearly identified and easily recognisable boundaries". As detailed above, Gedling Liberal Democrats proposed amendments to the proposed boundary between Gedling and Lambley wards, in order to include a larger area of the Gedling Colliery site in Gedling ward. It also proposed that part of Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph should be transferred to Netherfield ward, as described above. Calverton Parish Council approved our draft recommendations.

113 We have considered carefully the representations received during the consultation period. We note the general support our proposals have received and we are content to endorse our draft recommendations as final, with a minor amendment to the boundary between Gedling and Lambley wards. As detailed above, we considered that there was merit in the Liberal Democrats' proposed amendments to the boundary between the proposed Gedling and Lambley wards, in order to include an area of future housing development in the suburban ward of Gedling. However, this proposed boundary was not based on any identifiable ground detail, and we are proposing to include a larger part of the Gedling Colliery site in Gedling ward, on the advice of Ordnance Survey, as illustrated on the large map. This proposal would have a minimal effect on electoral equality, affecting only three electors. We recognise that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to amend the boundary between Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph and Netherfield & Colwick wards would have value by ensuring that an area of future housing development would be included in the more suburban ward. However, as explained above, we are unable to transfer part of a parish without first creating a parish ward and, given the fact that this area currently contains no electors, we are unable to create a parish ward in this area.

114 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Burton Joyce & Stoke Bardolph, Calverton, Lambley and Woodborough wards would vary by 13 per cent, 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 8 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively stable over the next five years, varying by 8 per cent, 8 per cent, 3 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average respectively by 2004.

Electoral Cycle

115 At Stage One, the Borough Council supported retaining the system of whole-council elections every four years. We received no other representations regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle at Stage One. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

116 At Stage Three, Nottinghamshire County Council supported our recommendation to retain the existing electoral cycle of the Borough Council, arguing that members of the County Council "are satisfied with existing arrangements". The Borough Council supported our proposal to retain the existing electoral cycle, while the Labour Group proposed that elections should be held on a two-yearly cycle in order to give "a more dynamic and responsive interaction with the electorate". Vernon Coaker MP argued that two-yearly elections should be considered in order to "keep the council more in touch with local people, encourage more frequent campaigning and help to bring local proposals and decisions to the fore in people's minds more often". Also, Paddy Tipping MP commented that he anticipated a move to "more regular" elections in future and argued that our draft recommendations were "not designed with this possibility in mind". A county councillor supported our recommendation to retain the existing electoral cycle.

117 We note that there is considerable support for two-yearly elections to be introduced. However, under current legislation the Commission does not have the power to recommend two-yearly elections. While the Government proposed introducing a pattern of elections every two years in its White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (July 1998), this proposal is currently being considered by Parliament as part of the Local Government Bill. Therefore, we confirm our draft recommendations, retaining the current system of whole-council elections every four years as final.

Conclusions

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

- (i) the boundary between the proposed Gedling and Lambley wards should be extended to include the whole of the Gedling Colliery site in Gedling ward;
- (ii) that part of Phoenix ward comprising St Austins Drive should be transferred to Gedling ward;
- (iii) the boundary between Phoenix and St James wards should be amended in order that the whole of Hartington Avenue should be contained in Phoenix ward;
- (iv) that part of Valley ward containing the police station should be transferred to Carlton ward;
- (v) that part of Valley ward to the south of Hillcrest View and Valley Road should be transferred to Carlton Hill ward.

119 We conclude that, in Gedling:

- (i) there should be a reduction in council size from 57 to 50;
- (ii) there should be 22 wards, two fewer than at present;
- (iii) the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (iv) whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

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

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	57	50	57	50
Number of wards	24	22	24	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,543	1,760	1,602	1,827
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	2	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	1	5	0

121 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 11 to two, with only one ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with no wards varying by more than 8 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Gedling Borough Council should comprise 50 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

122 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Bestwood St Alban's parish to reflect the proposed borough wards.

123 At Stage One, The Borough Council received a submission from Bestwood St Alban's Parish Council proposing that the parish should be divided into two wards, Village and Top Valley. The former would comprise the Village and Surprise View areas, and the latter the Top Valley development. It proposed that the boundary should be drawn along the existing polling district boundary with modifications, in order to include Bestwood Country Park, Big Wood and Warrenhill Plantation within the proposed Village ward. The Parish Council argued that the Country Park is part of Bestwood Village's heritage and should be warded with it. This proposal was supported by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats. The Parish Council proposed that there should be no change to the existing parish council size, and that Village ward should be represented by four councillors and Top Valley ward by five councillors. Having carefully considered the representations received, we decided that the proposed new warding arrangements would provide better representation and we proposed modifying the proposed borough ward boundary accordingly.

124 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the proposed warding of Bestwood St Albans Parish, stating that the proposed arrangements were "clear". As we did not receive any opposition to our draft recommendations for Bestwood St Albans Parish at Stage Three, we are content to confirm them as final.

Final Recommendation

Bestwood St Albans Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two new wards, with the proposed Village ward returning four councillors and the proposed Top Valley ward returning five councillors. The parish ward boundaries are illustrated on Map A2 in Appendix A.

125 At Stage One, Calverton Parish Council proposed that its parish wards should be modified in order to achieve greater electoral equality while retaining the existing level of representation in each ward. It suggested that the area between the school grounds and Flatts Lane should be transferred from No. 3 Parish Ward to No. 1 Parish Ward, and that the part of No. 2 Parish Ward, to the south-west of Bonner Hill, Bonner Lane, Crookdole Lane and Park Road East, should be transferred to No. 3 Parish Ward. The Borough Council did not comment on these proposals. We considered that the proposed ward boundary modifications would offer improved electoral equality within the parish, and we were content to accept the Parish Council's proposal.

126 In response to our consultation report, Calverton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. Therefore, we are content to confirm our draft recommendation for warding Calverton parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Calverton Parish Council should comprise three wards, as at present, the boundaries of which should be modified as illustrated on Map A3 in Appendix A.

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

Final Recommendation

For parish councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the Borough Council.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Gedling

6 NEXT STEPS

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

129 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 27 June 2000.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Gedling: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Maps A2 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Bestwood St Albans parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Calverton parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Arnold and Carlton.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Gedling: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Bestwood St Albans Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Calverton Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Gedling

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

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Carlton (in Carlton)	Carlton ward (part); Carlton Hill ward (part); Cavendish ward (part); Conway ward (part)
Carlton Hill (in Carlton)	Carlton ward (part); Carlton Hill ward (part); Cavendish ward (part)
Gedling (in Carlton)	Conway ward (part); Gedling ward (part); Porchester ward (part)
Lambley	Lambley ward; Gedling ward (part); Porchester ward (part)
Phoenix (in Carlton)	Gedling ward (part); Phoenix ward (part); Priory ward (part)
St James (in Carlton)	Phoenix ward (part); Priory ward (part); St James ward (part)
Valley (in Carlton)	Carlton ward (part); Carlton Hill ward (part); Cavendish ward (part); Conway ward (part); Gedling ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Carlton	3	5,245	1,748	-1	5,337	1,779	-3
Carlton Hill	3	5,223	1,741	-1	5,258	1,753	-4
Gedling	3	5,193	1,731	-2	5,259	1,753	-4
Lambley	1	1,712	1,712	-3	1,778	1,778	-3
Phoenix	2	3,660	1,830	4	3,679	1,840	1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
St James	2	3,683	1,842	5	3,716	1,858	2
Valley	2	3,513	1,757	0	3,722	1,861	2

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Gedling 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.