

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 385

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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To the Rt Hon William Whitelaw, CH, MC, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT
OF SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the District of South Oxfordshire in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that district.
2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 1 April 1977 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the District Council, copies of which were circulated to Oxfordshire County Council, parish councils and parish meetings in the district, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from interested bodies.
3. South Oxfordshire District Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. In doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were asked also to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. In accordance with section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council have exercised an option for a system of whole council elections.

5. On 24 August 1977, the District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. The Council proposed to divide the area of the district into 34 wards, each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors to form a council of 56 members.

6. From the correspondence we had received, and from that forwarded to us by the District Council when submitting their scheme, we noted that the Council's proposals had attracted considerable opposition. Eight parish councils, one parish meeting and four local residents, urged that the existing arrangements should be retained because they recognised strong local ties and community interests. In addition ten parish councils made specific objections to the draft scheme wards of Hagbourne, Cholsey, Benson, Woodcote and Shiplake. Several representations included suggestions for alternative wards in certain areas. Two local councillors, a parish council and a local political organisation proposed alternative groupings for the parishes within the Marston, Forest Hill, Wheatley, and Risinghurst and Sandhill wards. Two other local political organisations and four local councillors put forward identical submissions with regard to warding arrangements for Didcot. Another local political association and a local resident suggested that the parish of Thame should be warded, although the Town Council opposed this view. A further local political association proposed two options for warding arrangements in the south eastern part of the district centred around Sonning Common. Six parish councils and one local political association supported the draft scheme.

7. We considered the draft scheme together with the comments and alternative suggestions which had been submitted. We saw that the draft scheme showed some unevenness in the standard of representation and that it was possible to make modifications which would both meet many of the objections raised and secure a better standard of representation. Accordingly we decided to regroup the parishes

in the north west of the district to form four new wards named: Marston, comprising the parish of Marston, returning 1 councillor; Forest Hill, comprising the parishes of Woodeaton, Elsfield, Beckley and Stowood, Stanton St. John, and Forest Hill with Shotover, returning 1 councillor; Wheatley, comprising the parishes of Wheatley, Horton, Waterperry, Thomley, and Waterstock, returning 2 councillors; and Risinghurst comprising the parishes of Risinghurst and Sandhills, and Horspath, returning 2 councillors.

8. We also concluded that we should regroup the parishes in the draft scheme wards of Chalgrove, Stadhampton, Benson, and Woodcote to form four revised wards: Chalgrove, comprising the parishes of Chalgrove, Stadhampton, Newington, Britwell, Brightwell Baldwin, and Cuxham with Easington, returning 2 councillors; Benson comprising the parishes of Benson, Berrick Salome, and Ewelme, returning 2 councillors; Crowmarsh comprising the parishes of Crowmarsh, Ipsden, Stoke Row, and Checkenden, returning 1 councillor; Woodcote comprising the parish of Woodcote, returning 1 councillor.

9. We recognised that the draft scheme ward of Thame, comprising the parishes of Thame and Towersey, was entitled to more than 3 councillors. We therefore considered the suggestion, referred to in paragraph 6 above, that the parish of Thame should be warded and decided to propose two district wards: South Thame, comprising a new South ward of Thame parish, and North Thame, comprising a new North ward of Thame parish and the parish of Towersey, each returning 2 members.

10. We noted that the draft scheme preserved the existing electoral arrangements for Henley and that this resulted in the generous representation of Henley South ward in comparison with Henley North ward. We decided to propose two new wards named Henley North and Henley South, returning 3 and 2 councillors respectively.

11. We accepted the suggestion put forward by five parishes in the suggested wards of Cholsey and Hagbourne that the parishes of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe should be transferred from the suggested Cholsey ward to the suggested Hagbourne ward as there was no direct communication between those two parishes and Cholsey.

12. On the recommendation of Ordnance Survey we adopted some minor boundary alterations, in order to secure boundaries which were more readily identifiable on the ground.

13. Subject to the changes in paragraphs 7 to 12 above, we decided that the District Council's draft scheme provided a reasonable basis for the future electoral arrangements of the district in compliance with the rules in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act and having regard to our guidelines. We formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

14. On 9 December 1977, we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the District Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying map, which illustrated the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies. We asked for comments to reach us by 10 February 1978.

15. Five parish councils, a local branch of a political party and a local resident writing on behalf of the residents of Elsfeld village supported our draft proposals.

16. South Oxfordshire District Council accepted the draft proposals subject to certain modifications. They suggested that the proposed Crowmarsh and Woodcote wards should be combined to form one ward, named Woodcote, returning 2 councillors. However, three parish councils, a local political association and a local branch of a political party opposed this suggestion. The political association did, however, indicate that the proposed Crowmarsh ward appeared to be rather too large for one councillor to serve adequately. A parish councillor considered that the representation of the area should be increased and offered suggestions as to how this could be achieved.

17. South Oxfordshire District Council also considered that the parish of Berrick Salome should be transferred to the proposed Chalgrove ward. In addition the local political association referred to in paragraph 16 above submitted that the proposed Chalgrove ward was over-represented with 2 councillors.

18. South Oxfordshire District Council, Henley-on-Thames Town Council and the local political association opposed the proposed Henley North and Henley South wards, returning 3 and 2 councillors respectively. They considered that the existing ward boundary should be retained and that Henley South should continue to return 3 councillors.

19. A local political constituency party wrote in support of the alternative scheme of warding for the Didcot area, referred to in paragraph 6 above, under which some of the existing ward boundaries would be redrawn to form three new wards, named Northbourne, Greenmore and Manor, returning 1, 2 and 3 councillors respectively.

20. The local political association referred to earlier in paragraphs 16 and 17 supported our proposals for two wards, named Thame North and Thame South but suggested that it would be preferable to join the parish of Towersey with the southern part of the parish of Thame rather than with the north as in our draft proposals.

21. Horton Parish Council submitted that it would be in their best interest to be transferred from the proposed Wheatley ward to the proposed Forest Hill ward, where they would be grouped with parishes of similar size and type.

22. In view of these comments we decided that we need further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2) of the 1972 Act and at our request Mr J Whatley was appointed an Assistant Commissioner. He was asked to hold a local meeting and to report to us. The Assistant Commissioner held the meeting at Wallingford on 31 May 1978 and subsequently visited those parts of the district to which references had been made.

A copy of his report to us of the meeting is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

23. In the light of the discussions at the meeting and his inspection of the areas concerned, the Assistant Commissioner recommended that our draft proposals be adhered to subject to one modification; that the parish of Berrick Salome should be transferred from the proposed Benson ward to the proposed Chalgrove ward.

24. Shortly after the local meeting the newly elected Checkendon Parish Council wrote to us urging that we consider some different arrangements for the Crowmarsh and Woodcote wards, under which one councillor could represent, at most, two or occasionally three villages. They suggested that the parish of Checkendon might be transferred from the proposed Crowmarsh ward, comprising four parishes to the proposed Woodcote ward, comprising one parish.

25. We reviewed our draft proposals in the light of the comments we had received including that referred to in paragraph 24, above and of the report of the Assistant Commissioner. We were disposed to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and adhere to our draft proposals with the one amendment he had suggested. Since these depended on the making of orders to re-ward ~~the parish of Henley-on-Thames~~ and to ward Thame parish we wrote to the District Council inviting them to make the necessary warding orders. The Council indicated their willingness to ward Thame parish but stated that they were unwilling to disturb the two existing wards in Henley, which are at present represented by three members each. As we had already indicated to the Council, we saw no justification for retaining 6 members for Henley; in view of the Council's unwillingness to re-ward Henley we decided to amend our draft proposals further by proposing a 5-member ward for Henley, which we considered to be the level of representation appropriate to the size of electorate. The warding order in relation to the parish of Thame was made on 22 May 1980 and we have formulated our final proposals accordingly.

26. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedules 2 and 3 to this report. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each. Schedule 3 is a description of the area of the new wards. The boundaries of the new wards are shown on the attached map.

PUBLICATION

27. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the map are being sent to South Oxfordshire District Council and will be available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without the map) are being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments.

L.S.

Signed:

NICHOLAS MORRISON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

PHYLLIS BOWDEN

TYRELL BROCKBANK

G E CHERRY

D P HARRISON

R R THORNTON

LESLIE GRIMSHAW (Secretary)

5 June 1980

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REPORT ON ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

DISTRICT OF SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

J. WHATLEY
July 1979

TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REPORT of a local meeting held at The Council Chamber, St. Georges House, Wallingford, Oxfordshire at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday, 31st May, 1979 to consider the Commission's draft proposals concerning the electoral arrangements for the South Oxfordshire District

PRESENT :

Name	Organisation Represented
Major T. S. Davies	South Oxfordshire District Council
Mr. B. R. Brewster (District Secretary)	-ditto-
Mr. J. E. Busfield	-ditto-
Mr. H. T. Nosworthy	Crowmarsh Parish Council
Mr. A. J. Dawes	South Oxfordshire District Council
Mr. J. L. Ralley	Woodcote Parish Council
Mr. L. R. Vines	Swyncombe
Mr. J. H. Phipps	Swyncombe
Mr. P. J. Floyd (County Secretary)	Oxfordshire County Council
Mr. A. E. Crook (Councillor for Henley Rural No. 2 Division)	-ditto-
Mr. R. B. Blond	West Hagbourne
Mr. I. Brook	South Oxfordshire Liberal Association
Mr. R. Sparrow	Crowmarsh Parish Council
Mr. J. H. Hardwicke	Oxon Association of Local Councils
Mr. D. R. Davis	Goring Heath Parish Council
Mr. R. E. Haycraft	Berrick Salome Parish Council
Mr. R. L. O'Kill	Cholsey and Moulsoford
Ms Nancy E V Odd	Goring Heath Parish Council
Ms K. S. Bourke Cockran	-ditto-
Mrs. A. Lidiard	Woodcote Parish Council
Ms Gwenda Millin	-ditto-
Mrs. D. M. Baty (Clerk)	-ditto-
Mr. J. Carson-Bury	South Oxfordshire District Council/ Henley Town Council
Major A. Clewes	South Oxfordshire District Council/ Didcot Town Council
Mrs. B. Brook	Thame

COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS

The Commission's draft proposals were issued on 9th December, 1977
and are as follows:-

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS</u>
ASTON ROWANT	1
BENSON	2
BERINSFIELD	1
BRIGHTWELL	1
CHALGROVE	2
CHINNOR	2
CHOLSEY	2
CLIFTON HAMPDEN	1
CROWMARSH	1
DIDCOT NORTH	2
DIDCOT NORTHBOURNE	1
DIDCOT SOUTH	3
DORCHESTER	1
FOREST HILL	1
GARSINGTON	1
GORING	2
GORING HEATH	1
GREAT MILTON	1
HAGBOURNE	1
HENLEY NORTH	3
HENLEY SOUTH	2
KIDMORE END	1
LITTLEMORE	3
MARSTON	2
NETTLEBED	1
RISINGHURST	2
ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD	1
SHIPLAKE	1
SONNING COMMON	2
THAME NORTH	2
THAME SOUTH	2
WALLINGFORD	3
WATLINGTON	1
WHEATLEY	2
WOODCOTE	1

A description of the boundaries of the wards proposed is attached as Annexe A

RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS

The draft proposals met with considerable approval. However, a number of adverse comments were received and these were directed at the Commission's proposals for six areas within the District, as follows:-

Crowmarsh/Woodcote

South Oxfordshire District Council suggested that the proposed wards of Crowmarsh and Woodcote should be combined to form one ward, named Woodcote, returning two members. The numerical effect of this suggestion is as follows :-

Council's alternative proposal

Ward	No of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Woodcote	2	3,653	2.23	3,724	2.19

Commission's Draft Proposals

Woodcote	1	1,459	.89	1,530	.90
Crowmarsh	1	2,194	1.34	2,194	1.29

The resulting entitlements are acceptable but the District Council's suggestion was strongly opposed by the parish councils concerned and was questioned by the Liberal Association.

Benson/Chalgrove

South Oxfordshire District Council suggested that the parish of Berrick Salome should be transferred from the proposed Benson ward to the proposed Chalgrove ward. The relevant entitlements are given below.

Council's suggestion

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Benson	2	2,925	1.79	3,091	1.82
Chalgrove	2	2,634	1.61 (G)	2,836	1.67 (G)

Commission's Draft Proposals

Benson	2	3,024	1.85	3,190	1.87
Chalgrove	2	2,534	1.54 (G)	2,737	1.61 (G)

However, earlier correspondence suggested that Berrick Salome had local ties with Benson

The Liberal Association observed that the number of councillors proposed for this ward seemed rather high.

Henley

South Oxfordshire District Council stated that they were unwilling to make the necessary warding orders to divide Henley as proposed in the Commission's draft proposals. Henley on Thames Town Council and the Liberal Association also objected to the proposals for Henley and wished to retain the existing ward boundaries. In common with the District Council they considered that South Henley should return three councillors. A numerical analysis of the various possibilities is given below :-

Commission's draft proposals

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Henley North	3	5,064	3.09	5,130	3.01
Henley South	2	3,687	2.25	3,713	2.18

Ward.	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement

District Council's suggestion (57 member council)

Henley North	3	4,562	2.83	4,605	2.75
Henley South	3	4,189	2.60 (G)	4,238	2.53 (G)

Existing wards - decreased representation

Henley North	3	4,562	2.78	4,605	2.70 (G)
Henley South	2	4,189	2.56 (U)	4,238	2.49 (M)

Didcot

In commenting on the Commission's draft proposals, the Abingdon Constituency Labour Party requested that an alternative warding scheme for Didcot, previously submitted by Didcot Labour Party, should be reconsidered. The position is as follows.

At present, Didcot has five wards, namely All Saints, Georgetown, Northbourne, Greenmere and Park. The Commission's draft proposals would combine All Saints and Georgetown in a new North ward, would combine Greenmere and Park in a new South Ward and leave Northbourne unaffected.

The Labour Party suggested first that there should be an alteration of the boundary between the Park and Greenmere wards by taking a few roads from Park and putting them in Greenmere. Secondly, that Georgetown, All Saints and the diminished Park should be combined to form a new ward to be called Manor Ward. Thirdly, that the augmented Greenmere should constitute a second ward, and lastly that Northbourne should continue to constitute the third ward.

The essential difference between the two points of view therefore appeared to be whether Park should be combined with Greenmere, or, subject to an alteration in its boundaries, with All Saints and Georgetown.

The resulting entitlements on the basis of the Commission's proposals are as follows:-

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Didcot North	2	3,473	2.12	3,620	2.12
Didcot Northbourne	1	1,448	.88	1,850	1.09
Didcot South	3	4,804	2.93	4,930	2.89

The only electorate figures available to me at the time of the local meeting were those submitted by the Labour Party, and on that basis the entitlements resulting from their proposals are as follows:-

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Northbourne	1	1,448	.88	1,764	1.03
Greenmere	2	2,946	1.78	3,000	1.76
Manor	3	5,371	3.27	5,471	3.21

Thame North

The Liberal Association accepted the draft proposals for two Thame wards but suggested that the parish of Towersey should be excluded from the proposed Thame North Ward. In support of their suggestion they stated that the inclusion of Towersey makes Thame North larger than Thame South. However, the 1982 electorate for Thame North and Thame South is 3,414 and 3,314 respectively. This does not seem a significant difference. Furthermore, the Liberal Association did not indicate to which ward Towersey might be added if it were not included in Thame North, although presumably they had Chinnor in mind.

Forest Hill/Wheatley

Holton Parish Council asked for the parish to be transferred from the proposed Wheatley ward to the proposed Forest Hill ward. They considered that it was in their best interests to be grouped with parishes of a similar size and type. The numerical effect would be :-

Ward	No. of Cllrs	1977		1982	
		Electorate	Entitlement	Electorate	Entitlement
Wheatley	2	2,694	1.64 (G)	2,764	1.63 (G)
Forest Hill	1	1,734	1.06	1,754	1.03

Commission's Draft Proposals

Wheatley	2	2,985	1.82	3,055	1.79
Forest Hill	1	1,443	.88	1,463	.86

In addition to the foregoing, West Hagbourne Parish Council supported the draft proposals but suggested that their closest links lay with two other parishes in the Vale of White Horse District. Prior to the local meeting they had accepted that this suggestion was outside the scope of the present electoral review.

PROPOSALS ADVANCED AT THE MEETING

Major T. S. Davies, a member of the South Oxfordshire District Council, presented the views of the Council at the meeting. In relation to Crowmarsh and Woodcote, he stated that the Commission's proposals were not sensible. Crowmarsh would be the largest ward in the district, not only in regard to population figures but also in regard to its area. He stated that any population figures which he would mention would be those for the 1982 forecast.

The Commission proposed that one councillor should be responsible for a population of 2,194. The distance across the ward, from the boundary north of Crowmarsh Gifford, following the A423 and A4075 through Ipsden and Stoke Row, was 7½ miles. He compared another large ward as proposed by the Commission, namely Clifton Hampden with a population of 1910, where a comparable route from Sandford on Thames to the southern boundary was only 4½ miles.

The District Council proposed to unite Crowmarsh and Woodcote into a two councillor ward. This would have the advantage of reducing the representation per councillor by 332 to 1,862. In view of the large area, two councillors would be necessary to serve the Ward.

Major Davis also made a reference to the difficulties attendant upon serving a rural as opposed to an urban area by virtue of the greater distances and scattered population.

Mr. A. J. Dawes, the District Councillor for the existing Crowmarsh Ward, opposed the District Council's stated views. To combine Crowmarsh and Woodcote would join the growing urban area of the latter with a few small villages. If both councillors for the ward suggested by the District Council came from Woodcote they would not understand the village problems. He stated that all the parishes concerned were in disagreement with the District Council on this matter. Major Davis had made great play with the unwieldy size of Crowmarsh and then in the next breath he made it even bigger. The size of the area was not really important since most councillors had motor cars. If any change were needed, then he supported the Commission's proposals.

Mr. I. Brook spoke for the South Oxfordshire Liberal Association.

He echoed Mr. Dawes. Woodcote and the surrounding villages were disparate areas, respectively urban and rural and should not be combined.

Mr. H. T. Nosworthy, representing Crowmarsh Parish Council said that he supported Mr. Dawes and Mr. Brook.

Mrs. Lidiard, speaking for Woodcote Parish Council said that from the outset Woodcote wanted its own representative. Last year there were 1,459 names on the electoral roll, this year there were 1,535. Since the present roll was prepared another 49 houses, containing an estimated 98 persons, had been erected which would bring the total to 1,633. Detailed planning permission for 72 more houses had been granted, and construction was on the point of starting. This would add 144, making a total of 1,777. There was a possibility of another 40 houses being built. Woodcote was a very particular and peculiar area, with its own particular problems, arising largely from the fact that it was a rapidly growing area of high density, set in comparative isolation.

Mr. Robert Sparrow said that he was a Parish Councillor for Crowmarsh. Geographical conveniences must be taken into account, and the present arrangements were convenient. He was opposed to the creation of a two councillor ward including Woodcote. It would break natural ties and result in more remote local government. If the present ward had to be increased, it was acceptable to include Checkendon, but if the District Council's proposals were implemented, both members might come from Woodcote, which would not be satisfactory.

Major Davis next addressed me on the subject of Benson and Chalgrove. He could not understand why the Commission had included Berrick Salome in Benson instead of Chalgrove. The new Chalgrove Ward included all the parishes of the existing wards 11 and 14, except Berrick Salome. There was no logic in the draft proposal. It increased the size of the new Benson Ward to 3,190 or 1982 per councillor.

The new Chalgrove Ward had 1,368 per councillor. There were only 99 electors in Berrick Salome Parish. It would be more sensible to add those to Chalgrove, which was mostly the old ward 11 than to add them to Benson.

Mr. R. E. Haycraft stated that he was the District Councillor for the existing ward 11 and Parish Clerk for Berrick Salome. Berrick wanted to remain with the present group of parishes and not to go with Benson. The other parishes were similar in size, composition and problems to Berrick. Benson was more urban and built up. Natural ties should not be disturbed. Berrick and the other parishes would like one district councillor as at present. The Benson councillor had a heavy responsibility for its relatively urban area. If Berrick were added to Benson it would take second place.

Mr. Brook said that he supported the views expressed on this topic. He would like to see two District Councillors representing different interest groups in this area.

Major Davis then went on to deal with the question of Henley. The District Council was opposed to the Commission's proposal to reduce Henley's representatives from 6 to 5. If one proceeded on the numbers basis, then Henley with an average of 1,413 electors per councillor

was at the bottom end of the scale, but he asked the Commission to consider the numbers in two other wards proposed by them similar in nature to Henley. These were Marston, with 1,389 electors per councillor, and Sonning Common with 1,420.

Henley had a long and proud history. Henley Regatta was regarded as the start of organised rowing. To remove one member would be a slur on the town. By accepting the District Council's proposals that the status quo should be maintained, one increased the number of members of the District Council from 56 to 57. South Oxfordshire was one of the largest non-urban districts in England and Wales and 57 was a not unreasonable number.

It was possible that old Boroughs were used to more local government than rural districts and that demands on councillors' time and energy were greater.

I asked Major Davis if the District Council would be prepared to alter the ward boundaries to enable the Commission's proposals to be implemented. He replied that this was very unlikely. Elections had recently been held and he could not be categorical, but he thought that the District Council was not likely to be co-operative on this point.

Mr. Brook said that the Liberal Association supported the District Council. The present arrangement whereby each ward in Henley had 8 town councillors, 3 district councillors and 1 county councillor was satisfactory. It would be a retrograde step to change the boundaries.

Mr. J. Carson-Bury, speaking for Henley Town Council, while admitting that the Boundary Commission must have a criterion by which to work, said that he did not want to get caught up in the numbers game. The numbers of the electorate should not be the only interest to be served. One of the possible criticisms which might be levelled at the Commission's proposals would be the reduction in the numbers of councillors. Since 1974 there had been a significant increase in the work load of elected representatives. The individual District Councillor's work became increasingly important, because one could not so easily reach the offices of the local authority.

The Commission's proposals would involve the alteration of a convenient and well-known ward boundary in Henley, which is the line of Grays Road and its continuation.

Major Davies said that the District Council had no views to offer on the Commission's proposals for Didcot, other than to say that they were satisfactory.

Major A. Clewes introduced himself by saying that he was a member of the District Council, the Deputy Mayor of Didcot, the immediate past Mayor and the leader of the majority group on the Town Council (Conservative).

He had no criticism of the Commission's proposals. I invited him to comment on the possibility of confusion arising were one ward to be called Didcot North, and another one Didcot Northbourne. He said that Northbourne was the name of a village which was added to Didcot more than twenty years ago. One could call the proposed ward Didcot East, but Didcot people were used to the name Northbourne

and confusion with Didcot North was unlikely. The Didcot Town Council preferred the Commission's suggested arrangement.

Major Davies' last observation related to Thame. He said that the District Council accepted the proposals in principle, but without prejudice to their right at some future date to raise the question of the boundary shown on the Commission's map between Thame North and Thame South.

Mr. J. E. Busfield, a member of the District Council, observed that if Holton were taken out of Forest Hill ward the ward would be split.

Mrs. Odd, of Goring Heath Parish Council, expressed herself as satisfied with the Commission's proposals for that area.

Mr. Brook, on behalf of the Liberal Association asked whether, in view of the high turn out at the last District Council elections, it would in all cases be necessary to hold elections next year, but was informed, and readily agreed, that this was not a matter for the meeting to consider.

There being no further representations or appearances, the meeting then closed. The Secretary to the Commission has subsequently forwarded to me a letter dated 28th May 1979, addressed to him by the Secretary of the Whitchurch, Woodcote and Goring Branch of the Labour Party, which covers the parishes of Mapledurham, Whitchurch, Goring, Goring Heath, South Stoke and Woodcote. The Branch is satisfied with the Commission's proposals for Goring

Heath, Mapledurham, Whitchurch and Woodcote. They would have preferred that the 'urban' village of Goring should not be linked with any 'rural' parish such as South Stoke, but recognised that in view of the size of the Goring electorate it needed more than one representative but did not qualify for two on its own.

INSPECTION

Subsequent to the meeting, I inspected those parts of the District to which references had been made and where I felt that some visual evidence would assist me in making my recommendations.

ASSESSMENT OF THE WEIGHT OF ARGUMENTS ADVANCED AT THE MEETING

Crowmarsh-Woodcote

The only objection to the Commission's proposals came from Major Davies, representing the District Council. His suggestion that Woodcote, a built-up area, should be combined in one ward with a surrounding area of small villages and scattered population, the whole to be served by two councillors, is similar to those which have been widely adopted in many parts of the country in recent years. The resultant entitlement of councillors would be acceptable. However, in the present instance its advantages are, in my opinion, outweighed by two factors. First, the considerable local opposition which it has aroused and secondly the fact that Woodcote is an area of recent, rapid and continuing growth. In these circumstances the Commission's proposals are, in my opinion, to be preferred.

Benson-Chalgrove

I was impressed by the arguments addressed to me in favour of including the parish of Berrick Salome in Chalgrove rather than in Benson ward. There was evidence of local ties with the other parishes in the Chalgrove ward and none of any ties with Benson. The effect of transferring an electorate of 99 was marginal. I therefore consider that the Commission's proposals should not be followed, and that Berrick Salome should be included in Chalgrove Ward.

Henley

At first sight, the reasons put forward at the meeting for rejecting the Commission's proposals and leaving the representation of Henley unaltered are attractive. The comparisons with other similar wards, the recognition of Henley's history, the work load on District Councillors and the desire to leave familiar boundaries unaltered constitute cogent arguments. They must, however, be measured against the Commission's duty, emphasised in Enfield London Borough Council -v- Local Government Boundary Commission for England, to ensure that the ratio of the number of electors to the number of councillors shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every district ward.

To adopt the District Council's suggestion and to allot 3 members each to Henley North Ward and Henley South Ward would give an excessively generous representation to the latter. If one leaves the wards as they are, and allots only 2 councillors to Henley South this results in meagre representation for that Ward.

The Commission's proposals, on the other hand, give a resultant entitlement for each ward which is within the accepted tolerances.

The Commission's proposals are therefore preferable. There is, however, one difficulty in securing their implementation in that the readiness of the District Council to make the Orders necessary to alter the boundary between the two Wards in question cannot be relied on. Indeed, Major Davies stated that he thought, in all probability, that the District Council would not be co-operative. An approach to the District Council by the Commission on this point would appear to be desirable. I recommend that the Commission's proposals be adopted, subject to the necessary co-operation of the District Council.

Didcot

Prior to the Meeting I had studied the Labour Party's proposals for electoral arrangements in Didcot and had failed to detect any marked improvement upon the Commission's draft proposals. The Labour Party was not represented at the local meeting, and since local opinion appeared to be satisfied with the Commission's proposals, including the naming of the Didcot Wards, I consider they should be adopted.

Thame North and Forest Hill/Wheatley

The only observations made to me on these two matters were favourable to the Commission's proposals, as were the observations made in respect of Goring Heath, Goring, Mapledurham and Whitchurch. I therefore consider that the Commission's draft proposals in regard to all these areas should be adopted.

S U M M A R Y O F R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

I recommend :

- (1) That the Parish of Berrick Salome be included in Chalgrove Ward.

- (2) That, subject to South Oxfordshire District Council being prepared to make the necessary Order altering the boundary between Henley North Ward and Henley South Ward, the Commission's draft proposals for those wards be adopted.

- (3) That in all other respects the Commission's draft proposals for the future election of District Councillors for the South Oxfordshire District and the relevant ward boundaries be as set out earlier in this report

DATED this

11th

day of

July

1979



J. WHATLEY

Assistant Commissioner

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL :
 NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO OF COUNCILLORS</u>
Aston Rowant	1
Benson	2
Berinsfield	1
Brightwell	1
Chalgrove	2
Chinnor	2
Cholsey	2
Clifton Hampden	1
Crowmarsh	1
Didcot North	2
Didcot Northbourne	1
Didcot South	3
Dorchester	1
Forest Hill	1
Garsington	1
Goring	2
Goring Heath	1
Great Milton	1
Hagbourne	1
Henley	5
Kidmore End	2
Littlemore	3
Marston	2
Nettlebed	2
Risinghurst	2
Rotherfield Peppard	1
Shiplake	1
Sonning Common	2
Thame North	2
Thame South	2
Wallingford	3
Watlington	1
Wheatley	2
Woodcote	1

Cuxham with Easington

Newington

Stadhampton

CHINNOR WARD

The parish of Chinnor

CHOLSEY WARD

The parishes of Cholsey

Moulsford

CLIFTON HAMPDEN WARD

The parishes of Clifton Hampden

Culham

Nuneham Courtenay

Marsh Baldon

Sandford-on-Thames

Toot Baldon

CROWMARSH WARD

The parishes of Checkendon

Crowmarsh

Ipsden

Stoke Row

DIDCOT NORTH WARD

The All Saints Ward and Georgetown Ward of the parish of Didcot.

DIDCOT NORTHBOURNE WARD

The Northbourne Ward of the parish of Didcot.

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT - DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARIES

ASTON ROWANT WARD

The parishes of	Adwell
	Aston Rowant
	Crowell
	Lewknor
	Stoke Talmage
	Sydenham
	Tetsworth
	Wheatfield

BENSON WARD

The parishes of	Benson
	Ewelme

BERINSFIELD WARD

The parish of	Berinsfield
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BRIGHTWELL WARD

The parishes of	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell
	Little Wittenham
	Long Wittenham

CHALGROVE WARD

The parishes of	Berrick Salome
	Britwell
	Brightwell Baldwin
	Chalgrove

DIDCOT SOUTH WARD

The Greenmere Ward and Park Ward of the parish of Didcot.

DORCHESTER WARD

The parishes of Dorchester
 Drayton St Leonard
 Warborough

FOREST HILL WARD

The parishes of Beckley and Stowood
 Elsfield
 Forest Hill with Shotover
 Stanton St John
 Woodeaton

GARSINGTON WARD

The parishes of Cuddesdon and Denton
 Garsington

GORING WARD

The parishes of Goring
 South Stoke

GORING HEATH WARD

The parishes of Goring Heath
 Mapledurham
 Whitchurch

GREAT MILTON WARD

The parishes of Great Haseley
 Great Milton

Little Milton
Tiddington-with-Albury

HAGBOURNE WARD

The parishes of Aston Tirrold
 Aston Upthorpe
 East Hagbourne
 North Moreton
 South Moreton
 West Hagbourne

HENLEY WARD

The parish of Henley-on-Thames

KIDMORE END WARD

The parishes of Eye and Dunsden
 Kidmore End

LITTLEMORE WARD

The parish of Littlemore and the detached part of the parish of Littlemore.

MARSTON WARD

The parish of Marston

NETTLEBED WARD

The parishes of Bix
 Nettlebed
 Nuffield
 Pishill with Stonor
 Swyncombe

RISINGHURST WARD

The parishes of Horspath
 Risinghurst and Sandhills

ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD WARD

The parishes of Highmoor
 Rotherfield Greys
 Rotherfield Peppard

SHIPLAKE WARD

The parishes of Harpsden
 Shiplake

SONNING COMMON WARD

The parish of Sonning Common

THAME NORTH WARD

The parish of Towersey and the North Ward of the parish of Thame

THAME SOUTH WARD

The South Ward of the parish of Thame

WALLINGFORD WARD

The parish of Wallingford

WATTLINGTON WARD

The parishes of Pyrton
 Shirburn
 Watlington

WHEATLEY WARD

The parishes of

Holton

Thomley

Waterperry

Waterstock

Wheatley

WOODCOTE WARD

The parish of

Woodcote