

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.114

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 114

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN

Sir Edmund Compton, GCB, KBE.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mr J M Rankin, QC.

MEMBERS

The Countess Of Albemarle, DBE.

Mr T C Benfield.

Professor Michael Chisholm.

Sir Andrew Wheatley, CBE.

Mr F B Young, CBE.

To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF STAFFORDSHIRE
MOORLANDS IN THE COUNTY OF STAFFORDSHIRE

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the District of Staffordshire Moorlands 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 3 June 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, copies of which were circulated to the Staffordshire County Council, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the district, the Member of Parliament for the constituency 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 any interested bodies.
3. Staffordshire Moorlands 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. The Council have not passed a resolution under section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The provisions of section 7(6) will therefore apply and the elections of all district councillors will be held simultaneously.
5. On 16 December 1974 the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. The Council proposed to divide the area of the district into 29 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors to form a Council of 56 members.
6. Following the publication by the District Council of their draft scheme we received a letter from Kingsley Parish Council requesting two councillors to represent the proposed district ward comprising that parish. There were also comments from a district councillor suggesting that the parish of Oakamoor should be included in the proposed Kingsley ward which should then be represented by two councillors instead of one, and from Oakamoor Parish Council who supported the councillor's submission.
7. The District Council sent us copies of representations which they had received from Biddulph and Leek Town Councils when the draft scheme was being prepared. In both cases the District Council had agreed to the suggestions which had been submitted and incorporated them in the draft scheme.
8. We studied the draft scheme and noted that, in terms of equality of representation it was somewhat uneven. We considered whether there were modifications which could be made to secure a more even standard. We noted that the five proposed wards making up the parish of Biddulph would be over-represented by at least one member. We decided to reduce by one the number of district councillors representing East ward of the parish where the electorate, as forecast by the District Council in five years' time, was insufficient to warrant the allocation of three councillors as the district council had proposed.

9. We noted that the parish of Consall forms a detached part of the present ward comprising that parish and the Werrington Windmill ward of the parish of Caverswall and that the District Council proposed to retain the ward unchanged. In order to avoid a ward made up of areas which are not contiguous, and also to achieve a more even standard of representation in some of the neighbouring wards, we decided to propose the regrouping of a number of parishes or parish wards in the area into three new district wards. These were the Endon and Stanley wards comprising the parish of Endon and Stanley returning 2 councillors; the Wetley Rocks ward comprising the parishes of Bagnall and Consall and the Wetley Rocks ward of the parish of Cheddleton returning 2 councillors; and the Werrington ward comprising the Werrington Windmill and Ash Hall wards of the parish of Caverswall returning 3 councillors.

10. We decided there would be some advantage, in terms of equality of representation, if the parish of Cotton were to be transferred to the proposed ward comprising the parishes Waterhouses and Blore with Swinscoe and we resolved to modify the draft scheme accordingly.

11. We considered the proposals from the Kingsley and Oakamoor parish councils and the district councillor concerning the proposed Kingsley ward and decided that the proposed arrangements would be improved by the transfer of the parish of Oakamoor from the proposed Cheadle North East ward to the proposed Kingsley ward and by the allocation of an additional member to the latter ward.

12. We considered the names proposed by the District Council and noted that in a number of instances they had proposed that the name of a district ward should include the names of all the parishes included within it. The resulting names were cumbersome and we decided to propose their abbreviation using the name of the parish in the proposed ward with the largest electorate. We decided also that the four proposed district wards in Leek which the District Council proposed to name Leek North 1, Leek North 2, Leek South 1

and Leek South 2, should be known as Leek North East, Leek North West, Leek South East and Leek South West respectively.

13. Subject to the changes referred to in paragraphs 8 to 12 above we decided that the District Council's draft scheme provided a reasonable basis for the district in compliance with the rules in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act and our guidelines and we formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

14. On 12 June 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying maps, which defined 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 that any comments should reach us by 8 August 1975.

15. In response to our draft proposals we received representations from the District Council and from a number of other sources objecting to the proposals to include the parish of Bagnall in the proposed Wetley Rocks ward and the parish of Cotton in the proposed Waterhouses ward. It was said that the parish of Bagnall should be warded with the parish of Endon and Stanley and that the parish of Cotton should be included in the proposed Alton ward.

16. Comments were also received objecting to the proposed allocation of only two councillors to the proposed Longnor and Warslow wards and to the proposal to reduce from three to two the number of councillors assigned to the proposed Biddulph East ward.

17. In view of these comments, we decided that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2) of the 1972 Act and at our request, you appointed Mr W Liddell Hann as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

18. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at the Town Hall, Leek on 7 October 1975. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us of the meeting is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

19. In the light of the discussion at the meeting and of his inspection of those areas concerned the Assistant Commissioner recommended that the draft proposals be modified so as to transfer the parish of Bagnall from the proposed Wetley Rocks ward to the proposed Endon and Stanley ward. In consequence it was recommended that the proposed Wetley Rocks ward should be represented by one councillor (instead of two) and that the proposed Endon and Stanley ward should be represented by three councillors (instead of two). He also recommended that the draft proposals be amended so as to leave the parish of Cotton in the same ward as the parishes of Alton and Farley.

20. We considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we had received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We concluded that the alterations recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted and, subject to these amendments, we decided that our draft proposals should be confirmed as our final proposals.

21. 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 defines the areas of the new wards. The boundaries of the new wards are illustrated on the attached map.

PUBLICATION

22. 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 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and will be available for public inspection at the

Council's main offices. Copies of this report are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

6 November 1975

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND.

REPORT OF A MEETING

to inquire into

THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

for

THE DISTRICT OF STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS.

W. Liddell Hann,
Assistant Commissioner,
"Green Pastures",
Hemingford Abbots.

18th October, 1975.

FE18 9AS.

To: THE SECRETARY,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND.

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
DISTRICT OF STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS.

Pursuant to my appointment by the Secretary of State for the Home Office as Assistant Commissioner to hold a local inquiry or carry out any consultation or investigation with respect to the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of the electoral arrangements for the District of Staffordshire Moorlands, I conducted a local meeting at the Town Hall, Market Street, Leek on Tuesday, the 7th October 1975.

Attendance.

A list of the persons who attended the meeting and showing the capacity in which they did so, is attached. (Appendix 1).

Preliminaries.

I opened the proceedings by introducing myself, submitting my personal appointment as Assistant Commissioner, explaining briefly the purpose of the meeting and the points to be discussed and emphasised that to facilitate the expression and discussion of views on the Draft Scheme I intended to proceed as informally as possible. I reminded the meeting that certain rules had to be observed in carrying out electoral reviews and that these rules were set out in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and required (inter alia) that the ratio of the number of electors to the number of councillors shall be, as near as may be, the same in every district ward, taking account of any likely changes in the number or distribution of electorate in the succeeding 5 years; that regard shall be had to the desirability of fixing boundaries

which are and will be easily identifiable; and that account should be taken of local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary.

Mr. J. H. Davis, Secretary to the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, proved the publication of the statutory notices of the meeting.

Commission's Draft Proposals.

Appendix II contains a copy of the District Council's draft scheme of representation. This submission included letters received by the District Council from the Biddulph and Leek Town Councils during the preparation of their scheme. The Commission considered this correspondence together with the following letters which they received direct from:-

1. Kingsley Parish Council requesting two councillors to represent the parish;
2. Councillor H. L. Richardson suggesting that the parish of Oakamoor should be included in the proposed Kingsley ward which should then be represented by two councillors instead of one;
3. Oakamoor Parish Council supporting Councillor Richardson's submission.

Having studied the District Council's draft scheme and the correspondence referred to the Commission decided to adopt the District Council's draft scheme as their draft proposals but with the following modifications:-

- (a) The adoption of abbreviated names using the name of the parish or parish ward with the largest electorate;
- (b) The adoption of the following names for the proposed wards in the parish of Leek:-

<u>Council's Proposed Name.</u>	<u>Amended Name.</u>
Leek North 1	Leek North East
Leek North 2	Leek North West
Leek South 1	Leek South East
Leek South 2	Leek South West

- (c) The allocation of only 2 members to the proposed Biddulph East ward instead of three as proposed by the District Council;
- (d) The transfer of the parish of Oakamoor from the proposed Cheadle North East ward to the proposed Kingsley ward and the allocation of an additional member to the latter ward;
- (e) The regrouping of the following parishes or parish wards into three new wards:-

<u>Ward.</u>	<u>No. of Councillors.</u>	<u>Name.</u>
(i) The parish of Endon and Stanley	2	Endon & Stanley
(ii) The parishes of Bagnall and Consall and the Wetley Rocks ward of the parish of Cheddleton	2	Wetley Rocks
(iii) The Werrington (Windmill) and Werrington (Ash Hall) wards of the parish of Caverswall	3	Werrington
(f) The transfer of the parish of Cotton to the proposed Waterhouses ward, the size of the Council to remain unchanged at 56 members.		

Written Comments on Draft Proposals.

The Commission's Draft Proposals were advertised locally and comments invited. Written comments were received and copies of these are attached in Appendix III. The comments can be summarised as follows:-

Longnor and Warslow Wards.

The Moorland Parishes Ratepayers' Association (A) and the Staffordshire Moorlands Ratepayers Executive (B) object to the proposed allocation of only two councillors to the proposed Longnor and Warslow wards. The Secretary of the latter body suggested that the number should be six.

Endon & Stanley Ward and Wetley Rocks Ward.

The Bagnall Parish Council (C), the Endon with Stanley Parish Council (D), Stockton Brook & District Resident's Association (E), Mr. Wallace Williams (F), and Councillor Crupton (G) all object to the proposal to include the parish of Bagnall in the proposed Wetley Rocks ward. The District Council also received letters from these sources and from Mary Welch, Philip Barnard, Mrs. N. C. Audley, Mrs. Nancy Robertson and Mr. T. J. Leese.

Alton and Waterhouses Wards.

Cotton Parish Council (H), Farley Parish Council (J), and the Headmaster of Cotton College (K) all object to the proposal to include the parish of Cotton in the proposed Waterhouses ward.

Biddulph Ward.

Biddulph Town Council (L) object to the proposal to reduce from three to two the number of Councillors assigned to the proposed Biddulph East ward. This reduction was the subject of an earlier letter from Biddulph Labour Party (M) who asked for the reason for the reduction. The Commission replied (N).

Kingsley Ward.

Kingsley Parish Council (O), Councillor H. L. Richardson (P) and Oakamoor Parish Council (Q) have all written in support of the proposal to include the parish of Oakamoor in the proposed Kingsley ward.

General.

The Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (R) have written objecting to the proposal to include Bagnall in the proposed Wetley Rocks ward and the proposal to include the parish of Cotton in the proposed Waterhouses ward. They do not however support the Biddulph Town Council in their objection to the proposed reduction in the number of Councillors assigned to the proposed Biddulph East ward from three to two. The Council attached to their letter copies of the correspondence received by them in connection with the Draft Proposals.

ISSUES CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING.

It was agreed that the issues under discussion were adequately summarised in Paragraph 7 of the Commission's letter to the District Council dated 28th August 1975 relating to the Meeting (Appendix IV) and should be dealt with in that order. Mr. J. H. Davis, the Secretary to the District Council, handed round a type written statement which he proposed to read (Appendix V) and it was agreed that this should be dealt with in sections at the appropriate times. He thereupon read the introduction and general comments. The statement was fair and constructive and contained much valuable information. I was most grateful to him for it and at the end of the Meeting several members expressed their appreciation.

A. Whether the area comprised in the proposed Longnor and Warslaw wards should be allocated additional councillors on the District Council.

Before the Meeting I was handed a letter from Councillor Mrs. Joan Levitt (Appendix VI) and at this point I read it to the Meeting. The letter was expressed to be written on behalf of the seventeen councillors who form the Labour Group on the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and opposed any increase in representation in the Longnor-Warslaw area. The letter claimed that the rural community was already very well represented. The letter also expressed the view that nothing should be done to increase the size of the District Council and that if it were accepted that there was a just claim for an additional councillor in the Biddulph area, which the group supported, then there should be a corresponding reduction elsewhere.

I also referred to a letter dated the 2nd October 1975 which Mr. Davis^{had} received from the Secretary to the Moorland Parishes Ratepayers' Association (Appendix VII).

Before any discussion took place I made a statement as follows:-

"The objections which have been made on this issue suggest that the parishes making up these wards should have increased representation on the District Council, (a figure of six has been mentioned), because of their rural character, is really

a plea for 'rural weighting' to be incorporated into the scheme. This is not permitted by the Local Government Act, 1972, which requires that 'the ratio of the number of Local Government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as near as may be, the same in every ward of the District'. Whilst I shall listen sympathetically to any representations which may be made to me I have been asked to endeavour to ensure that everyone present understands that the question is governed by the law and neither I, nor the Commission, nor the Home Secretary has very much discretion in the matter so long as the law remains as it is. If anyone present today wishes to argue for a change in the law he or she should take up the issue through other channels. This Meeting is hardly the right forum."

Mr. A. Mellor, Chairman of the Moorland Parishes Ratepayers' Association, then made a strong plea for additional representation using the arguments already set out in the correspondence and making the points specified in the letter dated the 2nd October 1975 (Appendix VII). He emphasised the difficulty which electors had, in such a remote area, in making their representatives fully aware of their views.

Mr. Mellor was supported by Mrs. Bronfield, a Parish Councillor from Butterton in the Warslaw ward. She said that while she appreciated the legal position she felt that it was too much to expect that one representative from each ward would be able to look after the interests of the whole area. She suggested an entitlement of one additional representative who would be nominated alternatively from the residents of one of the wards.

Mr. E. Bourne, a resident in the Longnor ward, spoke on the same lines and expressed strong disagreement with the views expressed by Mrs. Levitt in her letter. I was asked to explain the meaning of 'rural weighting'.

Mr. W. G. Cruxton, the member on the District Council from Bagnall, also disagreed with Mrs. Levitt and spoke of the difficulties of electors in an area so scattered and remote at Longnor and Warslaw, securing adequate representation.

B. Whether the Parish of Bagnall should be included in the proposed Endon and Stanley ward rather than in the proposed Wetley Rocks ward.

Mr. J. H. Davis read paragraph (10) of his statement which clearly evoked the warm support of persons present.

Mr. W. G. Cruxton then spoke in his capacity as a representative for the existing Endon and Stanley ward on the District Council and also as a member of the Bagnall Parish Council. He made a strong and well reasoned plea for Bagnall to remain with Endon and Stanley. He emphasised that all the community life of Bagnall was bound up with Endon and Stanley and there was no community life with Wetley Rocks and he could not envisage there being any in the future. Bagnall was bound to Endon by many ties--schools, churches and shopping at Endon and Stockton Brook. He pointed out the difficulty in travelling by public transport between Bagnall and Wetley Rocks. By road this would involve catching a bus from Stanley or Bagnall to Hanley and then changing to another bus from Hanley to Wetley Rocks at a cost by return ticket of approximately £1.

Mr. T. Blakeman spoke on behalf of Wetley Rocks and Cheddleton Parish Council. He agreed with all that Mr. Cruxton had said and the Parish Council would prefer to remain as they are at present and also that Bagnall, Endon and Stanley be left alone. There was no direct road between Wetley Rocks and Bagnall and no garage or motor repair shop.

Mr. Fawcett spoke as a member of Bagnall Parish Council and also as the licensee of the Stafford Arms, Bagnall. Local people were all most eager that Bagnall should be left alone.

Mr. G.W. Robson spoke as "Father" of Endon and Stanley Parish Council. He entirely supported Bagnall and agreed with all that had been said on their behalf.

In view of the very strong feelings that had been expressed in favour of Bagnall remaining in the Endon and Stanley ward I pointed out that it is the Commission's policy that wards with detached parts are in principle undesirable and that they are not to be recommended unless there is a very strong case in terms of geography or local ties. For these reasons the Commission were opposed to the fact that in the District Council's scheme Consall formed a detached part of the proposed ward 16 (i.e., Consall and Werrington Windmill). If therefore Bagnall were to remain with Endon and Stanley the wards would have to be adjusted as follows:-

	<u>1974</u>			<u>1979</u>	
	<u>No. of</u> <u>Cllrs.</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Endon & Stanley and Bagnall.	3	3346	2.76	3434	2.57
Wetley Rocks and Consall.	1	1576	1.30	1760	1.32
Werrington	3	3443	2.84	3940	2.95

Although the figures are not very satisfactory such arrangement would avoid the location of a ward with a detached part. Those present at the Meeting (including Mr. Blakeman) agreed that this would be an acceptable solution.

I enquired about the other persons who had submitted written objections but who were not present at the Meeting. Mr. Wallace Williams had written a letter (Appendix VIII) which I read to the Meeting. In it he apologised for his absence and stated that he had spoken to many people about the Bagnall proposals and had found no one who wanted the existing electoral arrangements of Bagnall, Endon and Stanley to alter. He stated that some consideration should be given to the preservation of parish and community links. There was no affinity between Bagnall and Wetley Rocks; on the other hand there were social and geographical bonds between Endon, Stanley and Bagnall which should be retained.

It was explained to me that some of the objectors were prevented from attending the Meeting by reason of age and/or infirmity. Others could not afford to take the time off work. Nevertheless the hope was expressed that due regard would still be had to their objections and that their absence from the Meeting should not be construed as being due to apathy or lack of interest on their part.

C. Whether the Parish of Cotton should be included in the proposed Alton Ward rather than in the proposed Waterhouses ward.

Mr. Davis read and spoke on the remainder of his written

statement. This was warmly commended and supported by Monsignor Thomas J. Gavin, M.A., the Headmaster of Cotton College who spoke on behalf of the electors of Cotton. He stated that he was completely unbiassed in that Waterhouses was under his spiritual charge as well as Cotton, Farley and Alton.

Monsignor Gavin stated that Cotton was approximately 800 ft. above sea level and the hill behind the village rose in height to 1100 ft. It undoubtedly exerted considerable mental pressure on the inhabitants. For instance, one thought carefully before going up and over it, especially in winter. It formed a natural barrier and one seldom went to Waterhouses-- not even to visit a public house. The public houses in Cotton and Alton met the needs of the community. When "the faithful" of Waterhouses came to church at Cotton a special bus had to be hired. Historically, for centuries Cotton had been associated with Alton. They had been protected by the castle. In more recent times the Earls of Shrewsbury at Alton Towers had influenced the architecture of the district and had constructed and improved roads, all leading to Alton-- none to Waterhouses. Educationally Cotton was linked to Alton & Farley. It would be wholly wrong to transfer them to a completely different area like Waterhouses.

Mr. Roger F. Delf spoke as a member of Farley Parish Council and strongly supported all that Mr. Davis and Monsignor Gavin had said. He knew of no one who was not in favour of Cotton remaining with Farley.

Mr. P. Clowes spoke both as Chairman of Farley Parish Council and the representative of the existing ward. Everyone to whom he had spoken was in favour of retaining the existing ward. When I pointed out that the Commission had been motivated by concern over the rather generous standard of representation which the proposed Waterhouses ward would enjoy if the District Council's original proposals were to be adopted, he stated that Waterhouses was bound to grow. Four acres of land had recently been released for housing and a further 2 or 3 acres were likely to be available in the future. Although no representative of Waterhouses was present at the Meeting, Mr. Clowes had spoken to a member of the Parish Council recently, who had stated quite categorically that Waterhouses did not want to amalgamate with Cotton.

D. Whether the proposed Biddulph East Ward should be represented by three councillors instead of two.

Councillor Mrs. A. Simms, a representative of the present Biddulph East Ward on the District Council, referred to the correspondence with the Boundary Commission, and stated that the Council had asked for an additional representative for both North and South wards. Although this request had been granted it did not follow that the representation of the East ward should be reduced from three to two members. The East ward consisted chiefly of Council properties, which entailed full time attention and not forgetting the slight difference in population in all the wards, this third seat was necessary.

County Councillor George Humphries spoke in support of Mrs. Simms. He is at present a member of the District Council and represented the East ward on the former Biddulph Urban District Council for thirteen years. He drew attention to the number of electors for the three wards as follows:-

East 3171

South 3294

North 3228.

The members of the District Council had agreed to ask for one extra councillor for each of the North and South wards and so as to bring the number up to that in the East ward. Now because of the numbers they were being asked to reduce the representation of the East ward. He considered that it was unreasonable to expect one councillor to look after the interests of 1600 electors. I suggested that one way over the difficulty would be to re-draw the ward boundaries but this did not meet with much response. It was clear that Biddulph were pressing for twelve representatives. I pointed out that if their demand were granted Biddulph would be over-represented by more than one councillor while Leek would be subject to a rather meagre standard of representation. Mr. Humphries stated that Biddulph was growing at a much faster rate than Leek and by 1979 the population was likely to be 22,000.

Mr. W.G. Cruyton, the member from Bagnall, stated that

at the meeting of the District Council when the draft scheme was being considered, he had supported the request of Biddulph for an extra two members. Geographically, Biddulph was very different from Leek. Leek is compact whereas Biddulph is more spread out and cars have to travel quite a distance. The population of Leek had not increased whereas as a member of the Housing Committee he knew that there are plans for extensive development in Biddulph -- it is a growing town. He still supported the request for twelve members.

Mr. A.S. Farrell, a member of the Chief Planning Officer's Department, was then questioned by me with regard to the draft Structure Plan and potential population growth. He gave the following figures:-

Biddulph.	Present estimated population	17,390.
	Proposed by County Council in 1991	21,270.
	(This figure may be reduced as it was agreed at a time of high population growth.)	
Leek.	Present population	19,450.
	In 1991	22,960.

Mr. Farrell agreed that Leek was growing, but at a slower rate than Biddulph.

Kingsley.

Although there was no one present from the Kingsley Ward I raised the question of Oakamoor being included in the ward and being given another representative. There was a general indication that everyone was quite happy with this proposal.

Leek.

In the absence of anyone present from Leek I raised the question of the amended names for the 4 wards. Mr. Davis assured me that there was no objection to the Commission's proposals.

Inspections.

Longnor and Warslow.

From Leek I visited both Warslow and Longnor. They are situated amid delightful scenery. Longnor is a small town and very remote. It has a market place and clearly is a centre

for a scattered rural population. Warslow and Butterton are smaller and also isolated. It is easy to imagine that in winter they can be well nigh "cut off". This is certainly difficult terrain for a representative to keep in close contact with his or her electors although the roads along which I travelled were good.

Bagnall & Wetley Rocks.

I first went to Wetley Rocks along the road leading from Ashbourne. Bagnall is not signposted from Wetley Rocks. One has to travel South along the A 520 until the junction with the A 52 at Werrington. Travelling West along the A 52 one arrives at a road with a signpost pointing the way to Bagnall. Alternatively one can travel to the same point via the road which passes very near to Rownall Hall. From there one proceeds to Bagnall, a total distance of approximately 4 miles with nothing to connect or relate the two villages to each other. After leaving Bagnall the road descends to Stockton Brook and then north-east along the A 53 to Endon. One clearly obtains the impression that geographically Bagnall is associated with this side of the watershed.

Alton and Waterhouses.

I approached the area from Alton, crossing the river and then making the quite steep ascent past Alton Towers to Farley and thence, still climbing, to Cotton and Cotton College. The road continues to ascend to Upper Cotton and until one joins the A 52 which at this point is crossing high altitude cattle grazing country. The road appears to divide the two different types of community. One turns off to the North and descends slightly to Cauldon. From Cauldon the road descends quite sharply, past a very large cement works and then reaches Waterhouses on the A 523. One obtains the impression of being in entirely different country and completely removed from Alton, Farley and Cotton.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Longnor & Warslow Wards.

Nothing transpired at the Meeting that was not already

referred to in the correspondence and written objections. This is a large scattered area on the edge of a National Park with very few local government electors. This would be an appropriate area in which to apply 'rural weighting' were this permissible. I fully understand the feelings of those who spoke at the Meeting but as I told them at the beginning, as the law stands at the present time, the Local Government Boundary Commission are powerless to do anything to remove their sense of grievance. One member for each ward is well within their entitlement under the scheme. Accordingly

I RECOMMEND that the area comprised in the proposed Longnor and Warslaw wards be not allowed additional councillors on the District Council.

Endon & Stanley Ward and Wetley Rocks Ward.

I was impressed by the strength of feeling displayed by the objectors and particularly by the arguments put forward by Mr. W.G. Cruxton as well as by his long experience and sincerity. It was clear that no one at the Meeting wished to see Bagnall transferred to the Wetley Rocks ward, including the representative from Wetley Rocks. My inspection convinced me that the objectors had a strong case and that Bagnall has nothing in common with Wetley Rocks either geographically or socially.

There seems to be no reason why Consall & Werrington (Windmill) should not be joined with Werrington so as to avoid having a detached part to ward 16.

I RECOMMEND that the Commission's Draft Proposals be modified so as to transfer the parish of Bagnall from the proposed Wetley Rocks ward to the proposed Endon & Stanley Ward with the following results:-

		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Electorate</u>
		<u>1974</u>	<u>1979</u>
Endon & Stanley and Bagnall	3 Cllrs.	3346	3434
Wetley Rocks and Consall	1 Cllr.	1576	1760
Werrington	3 Cllrs.	3443	3940

I consider that the strong local ties which exist between

the parishes of Bagnall and Endon and Stanley are sufficient to justify acceptance of councillor/elector ratios which are not as satisfactory as one would have preferred.

Alton and Waterhouses Wards.

The case for Cotton remaining with Farley and Alton is even more convincing than that for Bagnall being left with Endon and Stanley. Geographically the range of hills to the North of Cotton forms a natural barrier and it is clear that the residents in the village must look to Farley and Alton for everything and can have little or no connection with Waterhouses.

I was most impressed, not only by the statement made by Mr. Davis, but by the most lucid and well informed presentation of the case for Cotton made by Monsignor Gavin and this despite the fact that Waterhouses are also under his spiritual charge. There is no doubt that local ties in this neighbourhood are particularly strong. It would appear too that as in the case of Wetley Rocks, Waterhouses are content to remain on their own. Although the Commission's proposals give better numerical balance, in the light of all that I have seen and heard I consider that in this case also, one must give added weight to local ties.

I RECOMMEND therefore that the Commission's proposals be amended so as to leave Cotton in the same ward as Alton and Farley.

Biddulph.

If one were to look at Biddulph in isolation from the rest of the District there would seem to be grounds for giving them an additional member. The difference between the numbers of electors in the three wards is very small and one can appreciate the feelings of the electors of the East ward that they should have an additional representative. The persons who spoke were in my view tending to think solely of Biddulph and were not paying sufficient regard to the effect which ^{the} granting of their request would have on the entire Scheme. If one looks at Biddulph as a whole, they are only entitled to eleven members. If the number were increased to twelve Leek would have a genuine grievance.

The projected population figures would seem to show that both towns are growing but despite the fact that Biddulph is developing at a faster rate than Leek the figures in the draft Structure Plan show Leek as still the larger of the two towns in 1997. To grant Biddulph an additional representative therefore would completely upset the numerical balance of the Scheme. A possible solution would be to re-draw the ward boundaries but this suggestion was not received with much enthusiasm by the objectors who were determined to press for the additional representative for the East ward. Until this be done however one ward has to be under represented in comparison with the other two, and as the Scheme is drawn at present this happens to be the East ward.

I RECOMMEND that the proposed Biddulph East ward be represented by two councillors as proposed by the Commission.

Kingsley Ward and Leek Wards.

As there was no opposition to the Commission's proposals I am not sure whether I am expected to express any opinions. I did however raise the matter at the end of the Meeting although no persons were present from these proposed wards. The general feeling was one of satisfaction.

I RECOMMEND that Oakmoor be transferred to Kingsley ward and be allowed one additional councillor and also that the amended names for the Leek wards be confirmed.

Conclusion of Meeting.

After giving an opportunity for any other comments or observations to be made I closed the Meeting and in concluding this Report I should like to thank the ladies and gentlemen who attended the Meeting for the courteous and informative way in which they made their observations and the Secretary of the Staffordshire Moorlands District

Council and his staff for the assistance they gave me and the arrangements they made for the Meeting.

Whidell Hann

"Green Pastures",
Hemingford Abbots,
Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire.
PE18 9AS.

Assistant Commissioner,
Local Government Boundary
Commission for England.

18th October, 1975.

DISTRICT OF STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND
NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO OF COUNCILLORS</u>
ALTON	1
BIDDULPH EAST	2
BIDDULPH MOOR	1
BIDDULPH NORTH	3
BIDDULPH SOUTH	3
BIDDULPH WEST	2
BROWN EDGE	1
CAVERSWALL	1
CHEADLE NORTH EAST	2
CHEADLE WEST	2
CHEADLE SOUTH EAST	3
CHECKLEY	3
CHEDDLETON	2
ENDON & STANLEY	3
FORSBROOK	3
HORTON	1
IPSTONES	1
KINGSLEY	2
LEEK NORTH EAST	3
LEEK NORTH WEST	3
LEEK SOUTH EAST	3
LEEK SOUTH WEST	3
LEEKFRITH	1
LONGNOR	1
WARSLOW	1
WATERHOUSES	1
WERRINGTON	3
WETLEY ROCKS	1

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT : DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED
WARD BOUNDARIES

BIDDULPH MOOR WARD

The Biddulph Moor Ward of the parish of Biddulph

BIDDULPH EAST WARD

The Biddulph East Ward of the parish of Biddulph

BIDDULPH NORTH WARD

The Biddulph North Ward of the parish of Biddulph

BIDDULPH SOUTH WARD

The Biddulph South Ward of the parish of Biddulph

BIDDULPH WEST WARD

The Biddulph West Ward of the parish of Biddulph

LEEK NORTH EAST WARD

The Leek North No 1 Ward of the parish of Leek

LEEK NORTH WEST WARD

The Leek North No 2 Ward of the parish of Leek

LEEK SOUTH EAST WARD

The Leek South No 1 Ward of the parish of Leek

LEEK SOUTH WEST WARD

The Leek South No 2 Ward of the parish of Leek

CHEDDLETON WARD

The Cheddleton Ward of the parish of Cheddleton

WETLEY ROCKS WARD

The parish of Consall and the Wetley Rocks Ward of the parish of Cheddleton

IPSTONES WARD

The parish of Ipstones

WATERHOUSES WARD

The parishes of Blore with Swinscoe and Waterhouses

CAVERSWALL WARD

The parishes of Dilhorne and the Caverswall Ward of the parish of Caverswall and Werrington

WERRINGTON WARD

The Ash Hall Ward and the Windmill Ward of the parish of Caverswall and Werrington

KINGSLEY WARD

The parishes of Kingsley and Oakamoor

FORSBROOK WARD

The parishes of Forsbrook

CHEADLE NORTH EAST WARD

The North East Ward of the parish of Cheadle

CHEADLE SOUTH EAST WARD

The South East Ward of the parish of Cheadle

CHEADLE WEST WARD

The North West and South West Wards of the parish of Cheadle

CHECKLEY WARD

The parishes of Checkley, and Draycott in the Moors

ALTON WARD

The parishes of Alton, Cotton and Farley

HORTON WARD

The parishes of Horton, Longsdon and Rushton

LEEKFRITH WARD

The parishes of Bradnop, Heaton, Leekfrith, Onecote and Tittesworth

LONGNOR WARD

The parishes of Fawfieldhead, Heathyles, Hollinsclough, Longnor, Quarnford
and Sheen

WARSLOW WARD

The parishes of Alstonfield, Butterton, Ilam, Grindon, Warslow & Elkstones
and Wetton

BROWN EDGE WARD

The parish of Brown Edge

ENDON AND STANLEY WARD

The parishes of Bagnall and Endon & Stanley