

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Hinckley & Bosworth in Leicestershire

January 2002

© Crown Copyright 2002

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

CONTENTS

	page
WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?	v
SUMMARY	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	5
3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED	9
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	11
5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	25
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth: Detailed Mapping	27
B Code of Practice on Written Consultation	31

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the urban areas of Hinckley and Burbage is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission for England. The Boundary Committee for England will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify, or reject the Boundary Committee for England's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Hinckley & Bosworth's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001.

- **This report summarises the submissions we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Hinckley & Bosworth:

- **in nine of the 18 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 10 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main proposals for Hinckley & Bosworth's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 79 – 80) are that:

- **Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council should have 34 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, instead of 18 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 11 of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for the parishes of Burbage and Groby, including the redistribution of councillors for the parish of Burbage.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 15 January 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, with effect from 1 April 2002, will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 11 March 2002:

**Review Manager
Hinckley & Bosworth Review
LGCE
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ambien	1	the parishes of Higham on the Hill, Stoke Golding and Sutton Cheney; part of Sheepy parish (the existing parish wards of Sibson, Upton and Wellsborough); part of Trinity ward	Maps 2 and A2
2	Bagworth & Thornton with Newbold Verdon	2	the parishes of Bagworth & Thornton and Newbold Verdon	Map 2
3	Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Barlestone, Nailstone and Osbaston	Map 2
4	Barwell	3	part of Ambien ward; part of Barwell ward	Map 2 and large map
5	Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone	1	the parishes of Cadeby, Carlton, Market Bosworth and Shackerstone	Map 2
6	Castle & Clarendon	2	part of Burbage ward; part of Castle ward; part of Clarendon ward	Map 2 and large map
7	De Montfort	3	part of Barwell ward; part of Burbage ward; De Montfort ward; part of Trinity ward	Map 2 and large map
8	Desford, Peckleton & Ratby	3	the parishes of Desford, Peckleton and Ratby	Map 2
9	Earl Shilton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Earl Shilton	Map 2
10	Groby	2	part of Groby parish (the proposed Groby parish ward)	Maps 2 and A3
11	Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead	2	the parishes of Markfield and Stanton-under-Bardon; part of Groby parish (the proposed Fieldhead parish ward)	Maps 2 and A3
12	St Catherines & Lash	2	part of Burbage parish (the proposed Lash Hill and St Catherines parish wards)	Map 2 and large Map
13	St John's	3	part of Burbage ward; part of Clarendon ward	Map 2 and large Map
14	Sketchley & Stretton	3	part of Burbage parish (the proposed Sketchley and Stretton parish wards); part of Clarendon ward	Map 2 and large map
15	Trinity	2	part of Ambien ward; part of Trinity ward	Map 2 and large Map
16	Twycross & Witherley with Sheepy	1	the parishes of Twycross and Witherley; part of Sheepy parish (the existing Sheepy parish ward)	Maps 2 and A2

Notes: 1 The urban areas of Hinckley and Barwell are the only unparished parts of the borough.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A1 – A3 in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of the report.

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

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ambien	1	2,713	2,713	17	2,734	2,734	10
2	Bagworth & Thornton with Newbold Verdon	2	3,930	1,965	-15	4,494	2,247	-10
3	Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston	1	2,501	2,501	8	2,552	2,552	2
4	Barwell	3	6,632	2,211	-5	6,933	2,311	-7
5	Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone	1	2,644	2,644	14	2,772	2,772	11
6	Castle & Clarendon	2	4,658	2,329	1	4,881	2,441	-2
7	De Montfort	3	7,389	2,463	6	7,618	2,539	2
8	Desford, Peckleton & Ratby	3	6,758	2,253	-3	7,573	2,524	1
9	Earl Shilton	3	6,982	2,327	1	7,684	2,561	3
10	Groby	2	5,293	2,647	14	5,394	2,697	8
11	Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead	2	4,681	2,341	1	4,734	2,367	-5
12	St Catherines & Lash	2	4,849	2,425	5	4,866	2,433	-2
13	St John's	3	5,380	1,793	-23	7,581	2,527	1
14	Sketchley & Stretton	3	6,794	2,265	-2	7,260	2,420	-3
15	Trinity	2	4,972	2,486	7	5,126	2,563	3
16	Twycross & Witherley with Sheepy	1	2,536	2,536	10	2,575	2,575	3
	Totals	34	78,712	-	-	84,777	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,315	-	-	2,493	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth in Leicestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven two-tier districts in Leicestershire and Leicester unitary authority as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Hinckley & Bosworth. Hinckley & Bosworth's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1979 (Report no. 354). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report no. 441). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary

to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half of the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when we wrote to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Constabulary, the local authority associations, Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, 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 Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 3 September 2001.

12 At Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 15 January 2002 and will end on 11 March 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public

consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Hinckley & Bosworth borough is situated in the west of Leicestershire, bordered by the districts of North West Leicestershire to the north, Charnwood to the north-east, Blaby to the east and Harborough to the south-east. It is bordered by the county of Warwickshire to the west. Covering some 29,785 hectares, and with a population of some 97,696, Hinckley & Bosworth has a population density of around three persons per hectare. The borough contains 23 parishes, although the more urban Hinckley and Barwell areas are unparished. The unparished area comprises approximately 37 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

16 The electorate of the borough is 78,712 (February 2001). The Borough Council presently has 34 members who are elected from 18 wards, six of which are relatively urban in Barwell, Burbage and Hinckley, with the remainder being mainly rural. Six of the wards are each represented by three councillors, four are each represented by two councillors and eight are single-member wards. The Borough Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,315 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,493 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in nine of the 18 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, six wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Twycross & Shackerstone ward where the councillor represents 47 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Hinckley & Bosworth

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ambien	1	2,393	2,393	3	2,411	2,411	-3
2	Bagworth	1	1,383	1,383	-40	1,933	1,933	-22
3	Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston	1	2,501	2,501	8	2,552	2,552	2
4	Barwell	3	6,639	2,213	-4	6,940	2,313	-7
5	Burbage	3	8,539	2,846	23	9,022	3,007	21
6	Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth	1	2,033	2,033	-12	2,124	2,124	-15
7	Castle	3	5,389	1,796	-22	5,584	1,861	-25
8	Clarendon	3	7,753	2,584	12	10,094	3,365	35
9	De Montfort	3	7,382	2,461	6	7,611	2,537	2
10	Desford & Peckleton	2	3,785	1,893	-18	4,244	2,122	-15
11	Earl Shilton	3	6,982	2,327	1	7,684	2,561	3
12	Groby	2	5,747	2,874	24	5,852	2,926	17
13	Markfield	2	4,227	2,114	-9	4,276	2,138	-14
14	Newbold Verdon	1	2,547	2,547	10	2,561	2,561	3
15	Ratby	1	2,973	2,973	28	3,329	3,329	34
16	Sheepy & Witherley	1	2,229	2,229	-4	2,249	2,249	-10
17	Trinity	2	4,972	2,486	7	5,014	2,507	1
18	Twycross & Shackerstone	1	1,238	1,238	-47	1,297	1,297	-48
	Totals	34	78,712	-	-	84,777	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,315	-	-	2,493	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Twycross & Shackerstone ward were relatively over-represented by 47 per cent, while electors in Ratby ward were relatively under-represented by 28 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

19 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and its constituent parish councils.

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

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

21 The Borough Council proposed retaining the current council size of 34 members serving 16 wards, two less than at present. There would continue to be a mixed pattern of single, two and three-member wards. The Borough Council proposed retaining four of the existing wards and proposed changes to some ward names. In order to facilitate its proposals, the Borough Council proposed parish warding in five areas, with three parishes being divided between borough wards in the more rural area. The Borough Council's scheme provided for improved electoral equality, with no ward estimated to vary by more than 9 per cent from the borough average by 2006. The Borough Council's submission also contained copies of representations received from interested parties during its own consultation period.

Other Representations

22 We received a submission from Councillor Collins, Borough Councillor for Groby (which had been sent to the Prime Minister originally and forwarded to us by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions). He objected to the Borough Council's proposals for Groby parish, under which the existing Fieldhead parish ward of Groby parish would be transferred to the neighbouring Markfield borough ward, and the remainder of the parish (the existing Groby parish ward) would form a new two-member ward. He instead proposed that part of the existing Markfield ward be added to Groby parish to form a three-member ward.

23 Councillor Mrs Sherwin, parish, borough and county councillor for Burbage, supported two wards for Burbage, opposing any proposal for five single-member wards. A local resident proposed that the name of the north-eastern Burbage ward be St Catherines/Lash ward instead of Burbage St Catherines ward as proposed by the Borough Council, to recognise the Lash Hill area as a constituent part of the ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

25 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Hinckley & Bosworth is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

29 Since 1975 there has been an increase of approximately 32 per cent in the electorate of Hinckley & Bosworth borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 8 per cent from 78,712 to 84,777 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Clarendon ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Earl Shilton and Bagworth wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Borough 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. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

31 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

32 Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council presently has 34 members. The Borough Council proposed retaining the current council size. It stated that “The Working Group felt that the current 34 seats allowed an appropriate level of representation, even allowing for some redistribution to achieve acceptable variations from the overall average.” No other comments were received on council size.

33 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by retaining a council of 34 members.

Electoral Arrangements

34 In view of the consultation exercise which the Borough Council undertook with interested parties, and the improvement in electoral equality which has been achieved, we have broadly based our recommendations on the Borough Council’s scheme. We consider that these proposals would significantly improve electoral equality, secure a degree of local support and, for the most part, reflect local communities. However, we have noted that the scheme was predominantly based on combining whole polling districts to form wards which, in some instances, has resulted in some illogical boundaries. Furthermore, we have noted that the Borough Council proposed dividing some parishes between borough wards in order to secure a high level of electoral equality albeit, in our view, to the detriment of reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. We are therefore proposing some modifications to secure more identifiable boundaries and a better reflection of local communities in five areas (other than minor boundary amendments in order to tie boundaries to ground detail). For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Ambien, Sheepy & Witherley and Twycross & Shackerstone wards
- (b) Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston and Cadeby, Carlton and Market Bosworth wards
- (c) Bagworth, Groby, Markfield and Ratby wards
- (d) Desford & Peckleton, Earl Shilton and Newbold Verdon wards
- (e) Barwell, Clarendon, De Montfort and Trinity wards
- (f) Burbage and Castle wards

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

Ambien, Sheepy & Witherley and Twycross & Shackerstone wards

36 The three single-member wards of Ambien, Sheepy & Witherley and Twycross & Shackerstone are situated in the west of the borough. Ambien ward comprises the parishes of Higham on the Hill, Stoke Golding and Sutton Cheney. There is a slight boundary anomaly in that a small part of Stoke Golding parish is actually in Trinity ward and part of the unparished area is in Ambien ward. Sheepy & Witherley and Twycross & Shackerstone wards each contain the two parishes of the same names. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent above the borough average in Ambien ward (3 per cent below by 2006), 4 per cent below in Sheepy & Witherley ward (10 per cent below by 2006) and 47 per cent below in Twycross & Shackerstone ward (48 per cent below by 2006).

37 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed extending the existing Ambien ward north-westwards to include the existing Sibson and Upton parish wards of Sheepy parish, currently in Sheepy & Witherley ward, also noting the existing boundary anomaly between Stoke Golding parish and Trinity ward. It proposed that that part of Stoke Golding parish currently in Trinity ward should be transferred to the revised Ambien ward. This revised ward would retain its existing name. The Borough Council proposed that the remainder of the existing Sheepy & Witherley ward be extended northwards to include Twycross parish and the existing Bilstone parish ward of Shackerstone parish. This revised ward would be renamed Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward. Both wards would each continue to be represented by a single member. Shackerstone parish would be further warded and divided between two other borough wards, in order to facilitate the Borough Council's scheme, discussed below.

38 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 13 per cent above the borough average in Ambien ward (6 per cent above by 2006) and 15 per cent above in Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward (9 per cent above by 2006).

39 We note that in response to the Borough Council's consultations, Sutton Cheney Parish Council expressed a desire for the existing arrangements for the parish be retained. Twycross Parish Council expressed satisfaction that the Borough Council did not propose to ward the parish. However, it did express concern over whether the borough councillor would be able to work with three parish councils. Shackerstone Parish Council stated that it was "strongly opposed" to the proposal to ward the parish between three borough wards.

40 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. We propose modifying the Borough Council's Ambien ward in order to tie the southern boundary to ground detail and in order to give a better reflection of communities within Sheepy parish. Firstly we propose further correcting the existing boundary anomalies between Stoke Golding parish and Barwell and Trinity wards so that the borough ward boundary follows all of Stoke Golding parish's southern and eastern boundary. Furthermore, we propose including the existing Wellsborough parish ward of Sheepy parish in the Borough Council's proposed Ambien ward. We consider that this modification better reflects community identity in this area as, under the Borough Council's proposals, Wellsborough parish ward would not have reasonable road access to the remainder of its proposed ward, Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley. Our proposed Ambien ward would continue to be represented by a single member.

41 We propose further modifying the Borough Council's proposed Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward by removing the existing Bilstone parish ward of Shackerstone parish from

the proposed Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward, so that the whole of Shackerstone parish is included in the proposed Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward, as detailed below. We have noted the views expressed by Shackerstone Parish Council and agree that dividing the parish between three borough wards would not provide for a good reflection of local communities. As a consequence of our modifications, and in order to better reflect the constituent parts of the proposed ward, we propose naming the revised Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward as Twycross & Witherley with Sheepy, due to the fact that Twycross and Witherley parishes are wholly contained in the ward with only part of Sheepy parish. This would continue to be a single-member ward.

42 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 17 per cent above the borough average in Ambien ward (10 per cent above by 2006) and 10 per cent above in Twycross & Witherley with Sheepy ward (3 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2.

Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston and Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth wards

43 The two single-member wards of Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston and Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth are situated in the north and centre of the borough. Both wards contain the parishes of the same names. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent above the borough average in Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and 12 per cent below in Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth ward (15 per cent below by 2006).

44 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that the existing Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward be extended to include the existing Odstone parish ward of Shackerstone parish. The borough ward would retain its existing name and continue to be represented by a single councillor. It also proposed that the existing Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth ward be extended to include the remainder of Shackerstone parish (the existing Barton, Congerstone and Shackerstone parish wards). It proposed that this ward be named Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward and that it continue to be represented by a single councillor.

45 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent above the borough average in Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward (5 per cent above by 2006) and 9 per cent above in Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward (7 per cent above by 2006).

46 We note that in the Borough Council's consultations, Carlton Parish Council had stated that "In any regrouping of electoral wards the Parish Council would prefer Carlton to remain grouped with Market Bosworth." With regard to the rest of the borough, it urged the Borough Council "to adopt a conservative approach to this review, and to make as few changes as possible." As detailed earlier, Shackerstone Parish Council objected to the division of the parish between borough wards. Osbaston Parish Council stated that it would "be content with the proposal to include Odstone...in ward 12".

47 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As discussed earlier, we consider that the warding of Shackerstone parish to divide it between three

borough wards is unnecessary and does not provide for a good reflection of local communities. We therefore propose that the whole of Shackerstone parish form part of a new Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward. As a consequence, we propose retaining the existing Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward. This amendment would mean that Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward would be under-represented by 11 per cent by 2006. However, we consider that reflecting the community identity of Shackerstone parish outweighs the potentially negative effect of the electoral imbalance which would occur as a result of our draft recommendations. Retaining the existing Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward would result in improved electoral equality, as the ward would vary by only 2 per cent by 2006. Both wards would be represented by a single councillor.

48 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the borough average in Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and 14 per cent above in Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward (11 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Bagworth, Groby, Markfield and Ratby wards

49 These four wards are situated in the north-eastern corner of the borough. Bagworth and Ratby wards are each represented by a single councillor, while Groby and Markfield are both two-member wards. Groby and Ratby wards are each coterminous with the parishes of the same names. Bagworth ward is coterminous with Bagworth & Thornton parish. Markfield ward comprises the parishes of Markfield and Stanton-under-Bardon. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 40 per cent below the borough average in Bagworth ward (22 per cent below by 2006), 24 per cent above in Groby ward (17 per cent above by 2006), 9 per cent below in Markfield ward (14 per cent below by 2006) and 28 per cent above in Ratby ward (34 per cent above by 2006).

50 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed combining Bagworth and Ratby wards to form a new two-member Ratby, Bagworth & Thornton ward. It proposed dividing Groby parish so that the existing Fieldhead parish ward of Groby parish be transferred to the existing Markfield ward. The remainder of Groby parish (the existing Groby parish ward) would form a revised two-member Groby ward. The revised Markfield ward would also continue to be served by two councillors, and would be named Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead ward.

51 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above the borough average in Groby ward (8 per cent above by 2006), 1 per cent above in Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead ward (5 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent below in Ratby, Bagworth & Thornton ward (6 per cent above by 2006).

52 Councillor Collins (Groby ward), in his letter to the Prime Minister which was forwarded to us, objected to the Borough Council's proposals to ward the parish, stating that "Fieldhead was once rejected by Markfield and has no affinity to that Parish." Instead, he proposed that part of the existing Markfield ward be transferred to the existing Groby ward to be represented by three councillors. However, he acknowledged that this would mean that the ward would be over-represented by 16 per cent and so would be unlikely to be acceptable. Councillor Collins also wrote to the Borough Council as part of its consultation period, commenting on the Borough Council's publicity of the review.

53 We note that in the Borough Council's consultation, Bagworth & Thornton Parish Council objected to the proposal that it form a ward with Ratby parish. It stated that "Ratby is several villages 'away' and has few links with us." It stated that Bagworth & Thornton had a link with Nailstone parish. Ratby Parish Council also objected to the Borough Council's proposal, stating that "The map supplied by the Borough Council looks very convenient but in reality Ratby is several miles away from Bagworth." It considered that the parish had "close ties with Markfield and Groby and to a lesser extent with Desford". A local resident wrote in during the Borough Council's consultation, proposing that Ratby parish remain in a ward on its own.

54 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. We have noted Councillor Collins' objections to the Borough Council's proposals for Groby parish. However, officers from the Commission having visited the area, we consider that the existing Fieldhead parish ward is similar in nature to and shares close links with Markfield parish. We therefore propose adopting the Borough Council's proposed Groby and Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead wards. However, we propose modifying the boundary between Fieldhead parish ward and Groby parish ward so that the boundary follows the centre of Bradgate Hill and then a path as far as Markfield parish boundary in order to create a more identifiable boundary. This amendment does not affect any electors.

55 We have noted the objections from Bagworth & Thornton and Ratby parish councils regarding the Borough Council's proposal that the two parishes form a ward. Having visited the area, we are aware that electors in Ratby parish do not have direct road access to Bagworth & Thornton parish. We therefore propose that Bagworth & Thornton parish form a ward with Newbold Verdon parish, and that Ratby parish should be joined with the existing Desford & Peckleton ward in order to better reflect the identities and interests of local communities. These wards will be discussed in detail below.

56 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals for Groby and Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead wards. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on Map A3 in Appendix A.

Desford & Peckleton, Earl Shilton and Newbold Verdon wards

57 These three wards are situated in the east of the borough. Desford & Peckleton ward is coterminous with the parishes of the same name, as are Earl Shilton and Newbold Verdon wards. Desford & Peckleton ward is represented by two councillors, Earl Shilton ward by three councillors, and Newbold Verdon by a single councillor. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 18 per cent below the borough average in Desford & Peckleton ward (15 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Earl Shilton ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 10 per cent above in Newbold Verdon ward (3 per cent above by 2006).

58 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing three-member Earl Shilton ward. It proposed combining the existing Desford & Peckleton and Newbold Verdon wards to form a new three-member ward, to be named Newbold Verdon with Desford & Peckleton.

59 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the borough average in Earl Shilton ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 9 per cent below in Newbold Verdon with Desford & Peckleton ward, both initially and by 2006.

60 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. As stated earlier, we propose modifications to the Borough Council's Newbold Verdon with Desford & Peckleton ward as a consequence of not adopting the Borough Council's Ratby, Bagworth & Thornton ward. We propose that the parishes of Bagworth & Thornton and Newbold Verdon form a new two-member Bagworth & Thornton with Newbold Verdon ward, and that the parishes of Desford, Peckleton and Ratby form a new three-member Desford, Peckleton & Ratby ward. We consider that our alternative wards are a better reflection of community identity, provide for better local road links and acknowledge the preferences of both Bagworth & Thornton and Ratby parish councils as expressed during the Borough Council's own consultations. In the remainder of this area, we propose adopting the Borough Council's proposed Earl Shilton ward.

61 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 15 per cent below the borough average in Bagworth & Thornton with Newbold Verdon ward (10 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent below in Desford, Peckleton & Ratby ward (1 per cent above by 2006) and 1 per cent above in Earl Shilton ward (3 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Barwell, Clarendon, De Montfort and Trinity wards

62 These four wards are situated in the Hinckley area in the south of the borough, to the north of the railway line, and are unparished. Barwell, Clarendon and De Montfort wards are each represented by three councillors, while Trinity is represented by two councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 4 per cent below the borough average in Barwell ward (7 per cent below by 2006), 12 per cent above in Clarendon ward (35 per cent above by 2006), 6 per cent above in De Montfort ward (2 per cent above by 2006) and 7 per cent above in Trinity ward (1 per cent above by 2006).

63 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing three-member Barwell, three-member De Montfort and two-member Trinity wards, other than the proposed boundary amendment with Ambien ward, as detailed earlier. It further proposed that the existing Clarendon ward be split, so that polling districts EAC and EAD (broadly in the west of the ward) form a new two-member ward, to be named St John's ward. The remainder of the existing Clarendon ward (polling districts EAA and EAB, broadly in the east of the ward) would be joined with polling districts DAA and DAB (that area from the existing Castle ward to the north of the railway line, which will be discussed below). This ward would be represented by three councillors, and would be named Castle & Clarendon ward.

64 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the borough average in Barwell ward (7 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent below in Castle & Clarendon ward (6 per cent above by 2006), 6 per cent above in De Montfort ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 32 per cent below in St John's ward (7 per cent below by 2006) and 7 per cent above in Trinity ward (1 per cent above by 2006).

65 We note that in the Borough Council's consultation, Councillor Joy proposed that the name of the proposed Castle & Clarendon ward be changed to Castledon.

66 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. We propose adopting the Borough Council's Barwell and De Montfort wards, albeit with a number of small boundary amendments. First, we propose that the boundary of Stoke Golding parish form the western boundary of the proposed Barwell ward and also the northern boundary of the proposed Trinity ward, in order to correct an existing anomaly. Second, we propose that the Houston Kennels properties on Leicester Road be transferred from the proposed Barwell ward to the proposed De Montfort ward in order to provide a more identifiable boundary between the two wards. Finally, we propose that the boundary between De Montfort and Trinity wards follows the centre of the Normandy Way and Cloverfield before rejoining the existing boundary in order that the boundary adheres to ground detail. This amendment would not affect any electors.

67 We propose a further amendment to the proposed Trinity ward, so that the boundary between our proposed Trinity and St John's wards (to be discussed below) continues along Outlands Drive instead of cutting across fields near the A447. This affects a proposed development of 63 properties which would be transferred from St John's ward to our proposed Trinity ward.

68 In the Castle and Clarendon area, we note that the Borough Council's proposals to utilise whole polling districts as the building blocks for wards has resulted, in our view, in the Hollycroft estate being split quite arbitrarily between two borough wards. We do not consider this to be a good reflection of community identity. We therefore propose modifications to the Borough Council's proposed Castle & Clarendon and St John's wards, while also reflecting the modifications to Trinity ward as described above. We propose that the Borough Council's proposed St John's ward be extended to include the whole of the Hollycroft estate south of Outlands Drive and west of Clifton Way, and also that it takes in properties broadly to the north of the railway line and to the west of Northfield Road. We propose that St John's ward becomes a three-member ward, while Castle & Clarendon should be represented by two councillors and should reflect these modifications. We would welcome comments on the names of these two wards at Stage Three. The revised Trinity ward should continue to be represented by two councillors.

69 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the borough average in Barwell ward (7 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Castle & Clarendon ward (2 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent above in De Montfort ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 23 per cent below in St John's ward (1 per cent above by 2006) and 7 per cent above in Trinity ward (3 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Burbage and Castle wards

70 These two three-member wards are situated in the very south of the borough. Castle ward is dissected by the railway line; the area to the north of the railway line is unparished, while that part of the ward which is situated to the south of the railway line comprises Lash Hill parish ward of Burbage parish. Burbage ward contains the remainder of Burbage parish, which comprises St Catherines, Sketchley and Stretton parish wards. Under the existing

electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 23 per cent above the borough average in Burbage ward (21 per cent above by 2006) and 22 per cent below in Castle ward (25 per cent below by 2006).

71 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that that part of the existing Castle ward situated to the south of the railway line (the existing Lash Hill parish ward of Burbage parish) be combined with the existing St Catherines parish ward of Burbage parish to form a new two-member Burbage St Catherines ward. It also proposed that the remainder of Burbage parish form a new three-member Sketchley & Stretton ward. As described earlier, that part of the existing Castle ward situated to the north of the railway line would be joined with part of the existing Clarendon ward.

72 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 9 per cent above the borough average in Burbage St Catherines ward (1 per cent above by 2006) and 5 per cent below in Sketchley & Stretton ward (6 per cent below by 2006).

73 Councillor Mrs Sherwin (Burbage) supported the proposed two wards for Burbage and opposed any proposal for five single-member wards. A local resident proposed that the proposed Burbage St Catherines ward be named St Catherines/Lash ward in order to reflect the constituent parish wards.

74 We note that in response to the Borough Council's consultation, Burbage Parish Council stated that "the majority" of councillors supported the recommendations for the parish, and requested that the historical names of Lash Hill & St Catherines and Sketchley & Stretton be retained. A parish councillor, Councillor Claridge, proposed that the two wards be named Burbage St Catherines and Burbage Stretton/Sketchley. Two other parish councillors, Councillor Hall and Councillor Mrs Hall, proposed that Burbage be divided into five single-member wards to improve community identity within the parish. "Burbage Matters" (a local community group) also proposed that there should be five single-member wards in Burbage.

75 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. We have noted the proposals for five single-member wards in Burbage, but consider that as the Borough Council's scheme has received some local support, both from representations made directly to us and as part of its own consultations, and in light of the improved electoral equality achieved by the Borough Council's scheme, the statutory criteria would best be met by adopting the Borough Council's proposed wards, albeit with minor modifications. As with the Castle and Clarendon area, the Borough Council's proposals to utilise whole polling districts as the building blocks for wards in Burbage has resulted in some roads being arbitrarily split between two borough wards and occasionally results in culs-de-sac not having vehicular access to the remainder of the proposed ward.

76 In the south-western area of the proposed Burbage St Catherines ward, we propose that the whole of The Ridgeway should be in the proposed Sketchley & Stretton ward to keep the whole of the road in the same ward. In the eastern part of the ward we propose transferring those properties on Forrester's Road which the Borough Council proposed be in Sketchley & Stretton ward to Burbage St Catherines ward. We propose that the boundary follows the rear of properties on Falconers Green, Swains Green and Bowman Green before rejoining the Borough Council's proposed boundary. Two further modifications to the Borough Council's proposed wards would be that 79 Twycross Road would be transferred from the Borough Council's proposed Burbage St Catherines ward to its proposed Sketchley & Stretton ward to

unite it with the remainder of Twycross Road. We also propose transferring De-la-Bere Crescent to the proposed Sketchley & Stretton ward to give the properties in this cul-de-sac access to the rest of its ward. We propose that the northern boundary of both Burbage wards follows the parish boundary rather than the railway line and canal, as proposed by the Borough Council, as we are of the view that this would provide the stronger boundary. Finally, we propose renaming the proposed Burbage St Catherines ward as St Catherines & Lash ward in order to acknowledge the Lash Hill area as a constituent part of this ward.

77 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the borough average in St Catherines & Lash ward (2 per cent below by 2006) and 2 per cent below in Sketchley & Stretton ward (3 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

78 At Stage One we did not receive any comments relating to the electoral cycle of the borough. We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- a council of 34 members should be retained;
- there should be 16 wards;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

80 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- in the west of the borough we propose that Wellsborough parish ward of Sheepy parish be transferred from the Borough Council's proposed Twycross with Sheepy & Witherley ward to our proposed Ambien ward;
- in the north, we propose that all of Shackerstone parish be included in a new Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward;
- in the east we propose an alternative configuration of parishes to form wards, proposing new Bagworth & Thornton with Newbold Verdon and Desford, Peckleton & Ratby wards;

- in Hinckley we propose a modified Castle & Clarendon ward to be represented by two councillors, and a modified St John's ward to be represented by three councillors, to secure more identifiable boundaries in this area;
- we propose minor modifications to the two borough wards in Burbage in order to create more identifiable boundaries and to avoid some minor boundary anomalies.

81 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	34	34	34	34
Number of wards	18	16	18	16
Average number of electors per councillor	2,315	2,315	2,493	2,493
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	9	5	10	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	1	6	0

82 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from nine to five. By 2006 only one ward, Cadeby, Carlton & Market Bosworth with Shackerstone ward, is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council should comprise 34 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

83 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Burbage and Groby.

84 The parish of Burbage is currently served by 17 councillors representing the four parish wards of Lash Hill, St Catherines, Sketchley and Stretton, which are represented by five, three, five and four councillors respectively.

85 The Borough Council proposed that Burbage parish continue to be served by the four existing parish wards, as detailed above. The number and distribution of parish councillors was not proposed. We proposed broadly basing our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals in Burbage, but with amendments to the Borough Council's proposed boundaries in order to provide for more identifiable boundaries, as detailed earlier in the report.

86 Therefore, in light of our draft recommendations for borough warding in Burbage parish, (reflecting our proposed amendments to the Borough Council's scheme) we propose modifying the current parish ward boundaries accordingly, as described earlier, and redistributing parish councillors, in order to get a better balance of representation within the parish. However, we note that there was some support during the Borough Council's consultation for five single-member borough wards in Burbage and would welcome comments at Stage Three on our proposals for Burbage parish.

Draft Recommendation

Burbage Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Lash Hill (returning four councillors), St Catherines (three), Sketchley (five) and Stretton (five). The modified parish wards of Lash Hill and St Catherines together form the borough ward of St Catherines & Lash, and the modified parish wards of Sketchley and Stretton together form the borough ward of Sketchley & Stretton, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

87 The parish of Groby is currently served by 16 councillors representing the two parish wards of Fieldhead and Groby, which are represented by three and 13 councillors respectively. The Borough Council proposed that Groby parish be served by two borough wards and two parish wards: Groby ward would contain the existing Groby parish ward and Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead ward would contain the existing Fieldhead parish ward. The number and distribution of parish councillors was not proposed.

88 In light of our draft recommendations for borough warding in Groby parish, reflecting our minor modification to the Borough Council's scheme, we propose modifying the current parish ward boundary accordingly, as described earlier. We propose that our proposed Groby ward contains the modified Groby parish ward and that it continues to be represented by 13 councillors. We also propose that our proposed Markfield, Stanton & Fieldhead ward contains the modified Fieldhead parish ward and that Fieldhead parish ward continues to be represented by three councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Groby Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Fieldhead (returning three councillors) and Groby (13). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

89 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough.

Draft Recommendation

Parish council elections should continue to take place every four years, at the same time as elections for the borough ward of which they are part.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

90 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Hinckley & Bosworth contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 11 March 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

91 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Hinckley & Bosworth Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

92 In the light of responses received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Hinckley & Bosworth 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 this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Sheepy parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Groby parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the urban areas of Hinckley and Burbage.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Hinckley & Bosworth: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Sheepy Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Groby Parish

Appendix B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken..	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.