

**Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.202**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 202.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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To the Rt Hon Meryln Rees, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT
OF SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE 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 South Staffordshire 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 South Staffordshire District Council, copies of which were circulated to the Staffordshire County Council, Parish Councils 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. South Staffordshire 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)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972. The provisions of 7(6) will therefore apply and the elections of all district councillors will held simultaneously.

5. On 12 December 1974 South Staffordshire District Council presented their draft scheme of representation. The Council proposed to divide the area into 30 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 members to form a Council of 52, four more than at present.

6. The District Council received no comment in response to the publication of their draft scheme other than a copy of a letter sent to us by the Kinver Parish Council, requesting that the parish be left undivided in one district ward. We noted that the parish has sufficient electors, both now and as forecast by the District Council in five years' time, to justify the allocation of four councillors. We could find no reason in the case of Kinver for departing from our guidelines, as set out in our Report No 6, that the number of members representing a ward should not exceed three save in the most exceptional circumstances. Accordingly we decided to accept the District Council's proposals that the parish should be divided into two separate parish wards to be known as Stourton and Kinver, which would also serve as district wards, returning one district councillor and three district councillors respectively.

7. We received one other comment, from a local political party, submitting proposals for the reorganisation of all but 13 of the wards in the District Council's draft proposals. The suggested alternative arrangements provided for 32 wards returning a total of 53 councillors instead of the 30 wards returning 52 councillors proposed by the District Council.

8. The District Council sent us copies of their correspondence with parish councils during the period when the scheme was being prepared. In a number of

instances there were requests submitted by parish councils which had not been accepted by the Council. We considered these requests and in each case we concluded that the suggestions offered no advantage over the proposals submitted by the District Council.

9. We studied the draft scheme and noted that it showed some unevenness in the standard of equality of representation. We thought that, because of the character of the district and the pattern of local ties, some degree of imbalance was inevitable. We considered a number of possible improvements. In most instances we concluded that no change should be made. We decided however, that there would be some advantage, in terms of equality of representation, if the parishes of five wards proposed by the District Council were to be regrouped into three new district wards, namely the Featherstone ward, comprising the parishes of Featherstone, Hilton, and Shareshill returning 2 councillors; the Huntington ward, comprising the parishes of Huntington Hatherton and Saredon returning 2 councillors; and the Trysull & Seisdon ward, comprising the parishes of Bobbington, Enville, and Trysull & Seisdon returning one councillor.

10. We noted that the parish of Wrottesley, and thus the present ward comprising that parish, was split into two parts, and that the District Council proposed to retain the ward unchanged. In order to avoid a ward made up of areas not contiguous, we decided to propose the creation of the two separate parts of the proposed Wrottesley ward as separate district wards. This was also in accord with a suggestion submitted by the local political party mentioned in paragraph 7 above. The new wards were the Bilbrook ward returning 2 councillors, and the Perton ward returning one councillor.

11. We considered the names proposed by the District Council and noted that in a number of instances they had suggested 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 with the largest electorate in each of the proposed wards.

12. Subject to the changes referred to above, we decided that the District Council's draft scheme provided a reasonable basis for the future electoral arrangements 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.

13. On 15 July 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter. The District Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying map, which illustrated the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies. We asked for comments to reach us by 12 September 1975.

14. In response to our draft proposals we received representations from the District Council objecting to the proposals for the Huntington ward and the Featherstone ward on the grounds of affinity and the size of the area. They also objected to the Trysull and Seisdon ward on the grounds of size plus the special problems relating to the airfield at Bobbington. These objections were supported by five of the parish councils involved.

15. The District Council, supported by Wrottesley Parish Council, also objected to the Commission's draft proposals for the Bilbrook and Perton wards. The creation of Perton as a separate ward was considered to be premature.

16. Support for the District Council's objections was expressed by Staffordshire County Council, three individuals (of whom two were district councillors), and a local

political association as well as two of its branches.

17. The local political party which had written to us earlier suggesting the reorganisation of some of the wards proposed by the District Council wrote again welcoming the modifications made by the Commission but regretting that no changes were introduced in Wombourne, Penkridge, Codsall and Essington.

18. Codsall Parish Council wished the parish to remain unwarded.

19. Pattingham Parish Council requested an additional councillor in expectation of development.

20. Blymhill Parish Council objected to the name of the proposed Bishopswood ward and suggested "Blymhill Weston and Bishopswood" to avoid the parishes losing their identity.

21. In view of these comments we considered 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, Mr Derek Leigh was appointed an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

22. Prior to the meeting the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned wrote in support of the District Council's objections to the proposed ward changes. A copy of his letter was sent to the Assistant Commissioner.

23. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at Penkridge on 26 November 1975, and thereafter visited the areas which were the subject of dispute. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us of the meeting is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

24. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that our draft proposals should remain unaltered except for the areas of the proposed Featherstone and Huntington

wards, where he recommended that the parishes should be regrouped and represented as submitted in the District Council's draft scheme. This provided for a 2-member Featherstone ward comprising the parishes of Featherstone and Hilton; a single-member Huntington ward comprising the parish of Huntington; and a single-member Shareshill ward comprising the parishes of Hatherton, Saredon and Shareshill.

25. We reviewed our draft proposals in the light of the comments which had been received and of the Assistant Commission's Report. We concluded that the alterations recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted but having considered the latest forecast of electorates we decided to allocate one councillor to the proposed Featherstone ward. Subject to these modifications, we decided that our draft proposals should be confirmed and that we should formulate our final proposals when the District Council had finalised their orders under Section 50(4) of the Act to establish parish wards in the parishes of Codsall, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Wombourne and Wrottesley corresponding to the district wards we intended to recommend. In due course the District Council sent us copies of the orders, and we then formulated our final proposals.

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

PUBLICATION

27. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the map are being sent to South Staffordshire District Council and will be available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without the map) 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)

PHYLLIS BOWDEN

J T BROCKBANK

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

R R THORNTON

ANDREW WHEATLEY

NEIL DIGNEY (Secretary)

24 March 1977

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

REPORT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Assistant Commissioner :

Mr. Derek Leigh

Date of Meeting :

26th November 1975

File No:

LGBC/D/34/6

1.1 On the 26th November 1975 I held a meeting at the Council Offices, Penkridge to hear representations on the draft proposals published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for revised electoral arrangements for the district of South Staffordshire.

1.2 On the 28th November 1975 I visited areas discussed at the meeting.

1.3 A list showing those attending the meeting and the interests they represented is attached. (Document 1)

Commission's Proposals

- 2.1 Under the Commission's proposals Trysull and Seisdon Ward comprises the parishes of Trysull and Seisdon, Bobbington and Enville and returns one district councillor.

Representations

- 2.2 Mr. A. Roebuck, Chief Executive Officer and Clerk, representing South Staffordshire District Council said that in submitting their draft scheme the District Council had taken into account the desirability of keeping to old and well understood boundaries, the large area of the district and the case for a smaller electorate per member in rural parts, the need for adequate representation of the smaller villages especially where large scale development was expected and their wish to produce a realistic ward structure, regardless of political considerations. He had prepared the draft scheme, which had been adopted without alteration, to give effect to the two principles of equality of representation and of having regard to local ties. Under their scheme Trysull and Seisdon would form one ward returning one district councillor and Bobbington and Enville a second ward also returning one district councillor. Trysull and Seisdon were about half a mile apart but separated from Bobbington and Enville by 4 - 5 miles. Halfpenny Green Airfield, situate in Bobbington, had special planning problems as to its future development. Because of the distances involved and lack of community of interest the Commission's proposals were unrealistic. Mr. N. Holland District Councillor representing Bobbington supported the District Council's proposal. In the interest of the electorate he considered that more centralisation made the district councillor too remote. When Bobbington was joined with Enville he had found it difficult to cover both and under the Commission's proposal distances of 8 and more miles would

have to be travelled over an area of 1100 acres. The airfield presented special problems and was the subject of much controversy. These considerations outweighed any advantages of administrative tidiness. Mr. T. Hopper representing the South West Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party regarded the ratio of members to electorate as the fundamental criterion. A variation of more than 20% from the average was unacceptable and in this case the variation would be of the order of 50%. Travel in urban areas could also be difficult and other wards also had special problems e.g. in connection with the M54 development. He supported the Commission's proposals. Mr. C.E. Bolland representing Trysull Parish Council, a district councillor for Trysull and Seisdon, said that the Commission's proposed ward accounted for 10% of the area and one-thirtieth of the rateable value of the District. It would be 20% larger than the average. He lived in Trysull and would find it impossible to represent all four villages. Mr. H.J. Carter, Staffordshire County Councillor for the Wrottesley division, considered that the Commission's proposal would cause problems with regard to the County Council's electoral divisions as it amalgamated areas represented by different county councillors.

Assessment

2.3 The following table shows, for purposes of comparison, the Commission's proposals and those of the District Council's draft scheme.

<u>Commission's Proposals</u>	(51 member Council) <u>Councillors</u>	1974		1979	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Trysull and Seisdon)	1	1472	1.22	1525	1.03
Bobbington)					
Enville)					

<u>District Council's Scheme</u>	(52 member Council)				
Trysull and Seisdon	1	735	0.62	750	0.52
Bobbington)	1	739	0.63	775	0.53
Enville)					

It is accepted that this is a large ward territorially but its area is not exceptionally great for a rural part of the country. Neither this factor, nor the planning problems associated with Halfpenny Green Airfield would, in my view, justify the heavy over-representation that would result from the adoption of the District Council's proposals. These produce entitlements of 0.62 and 0.63 on 1974 electorates falling to 0.52 and 0.53 on the 1979 forecast. The revised forecasts supplied by the District Council (Document 2) do not materially alter the position. It will be noted that the Staffordshire County Council, in their letter of the 2nd October to the Commission, make no comment on the proposed ward.

In the circumstances I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposal for the
Trysull and Seisdon Ward remain
unaltered.

Commission's Proposals

- 3.1 Under the Commission's proposals Huntington Ward comprises the parishes of Huntington, Hatherton and Saredon and returns 2 district councillors and the Featherstone Ward comprises the parishes of Featherstone, Hilton and Shareshill and also returns 2 district councillors.

Representations

- 3.2 Mr. A. Roebuck, Chief Executive Officer and Clerk, representing South Staffordshire District Council, said that the District Council objected strongly to the Commission's proposal, which had caused concern. Huntington, which under the District Council's Scheme would have been a separate ward returning one district councillor, was a mining village and a separate community. Saredon was some four miles from Huntington and to reach it one passed through Cannock, a town of some 60,000 population. Featherstone and Hilton, which were grouped to form one ward returning one district councillor in the District Council's Scheme, went well together and formed a natural unit. The Commission's proposal should be reconsidered. Mr. E. Kerry, representing Huntington Parish Council said that they accepted the Commission's proposals. Mr. R. Hood, of Highfields, School Lane, Shareshill supported the District Council's Scheme. Mrs. S. Burns representing Featherstone Parish Council said that they had no objection to amalgamating with Shareshill or to the Commission's proposal. Mr. T. Hopper representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party, stressed the importance of equality of representation. It was for the Commission to decide whether there was an affinity between Hatherton and Shareshill. If Huntington could return a second district councillor he would not

object to the District Council's Scheme but if it could return only one he preferred the Commission's proposal. Mr. J. Greenaway Parish Clerk, Huntington, Hatherton, Sharesill and Featherstone Parishes, said that Huntington agreed with the Commission's proposal but would accept the District Council's Scheme if the ward could return two district councillors. Hatherton objected to the Commission's proposal on the grounds of lack of affinity and communication while Sharesill and Featherstone had no objection to the Commission's proposals. Mr. J.B. Hayward representing Hatherton Parish Council objected to the Commission's proposal because Hatherton had nothing in common with Huntington which was a built up area and an extension of Cannock. Mr. J. Rowe, District Councillor for Hatherton, Saredon and Sharesill also supported the District Council's Scheme.

Assessment

3.3 There is a marked division of opinion about the electoral arrangements for these wards. A comparison between the Commission's proposals and the District Council's draft Scheme may be drawn from the following table.

Commission's Proposal

	<u>Councillors</u>	1974		1979	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Featherstone) Hilton) Shareshill)	2	2448	2.04	2728	1.84
Huntington) Hatherton) Saredon)	2	2252	1.87	2252	1.52

District Council's Alternative

Featherstone) Hilton)	2	1920	1.60	2200	1.48
Hatherton) Saredon) Shareshill)	1	1186	0.99	1410	0.95
Huntington	1	1594	1.33	1750	1.18

9

The entitlement under the Commission's proposals are somewhat more equal than those under the District Council's draft Scheme but there are two factors that, in my view, weigh in the latter's favour. First, Huntington is a mining village with a character distinct from that of the rural parishes of Hatherton and Saredon with which, under the Commission's proposal, it would be joined to form Huntington Ward. This is recognised in the South West Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party's submission (Document 3) and is clearly to be seen upon inspection. Secondly, two of the three constituent parishes, Hatherton and Saredon, have strong objections to the union. On the other hand Sharesill parish support the District Council's Scheme under which they would be joined with Hatherton and Saredon. I am reluctant to advocate the creation of a ward containing a majority of unwilling partners, especially as there exists an alternative which is agreeable to all three constituent parishes of Hatherton, Saredon and Sharesill. Finally, however, in view of the statutory requirements of Schedule II to the Local Government Act, 1972, the decision must depend upon whether the ratio of electors to councillors under the District Council Scheme is tolerable or not. On 1974 figures it would appear to me that although Featherstone/Hilton is over-represented and Huntington under-represented the entitlements are acceptable. The 1979 and 1980 projections do not improve the entitlements either under the Commission's proposals or the District Council's Scheme. They do not support the suggestion for an additional councillor for Huntington Ward. While recognising the difficulty of assessing the balance of advantage in this matter, nonetheless, in all the circumstances I

RECOMMEND that the proposals for Huntington,

~~Featherstone~~ and Sharesill Wards as

submitted in the District Council's draft

Scheme be adopted.

BILLBROOK AND PERTON WARDSCommission's Proposals

- 4.1 Under the Commission's proposals Billbrook Ward consists of that part of the parish of Wrottesley which lies to the east of the parish of Codsall and returns two district councillors. Perton Ward consists of that part of the parish of Wrottesley which lies to the south of the parish of Codsall and returns one district councillor.

Representations

- 4.2 Mr. A. Roebuck, Chief Executive Officer and Clerk, representing the South Staffordshire District Council said that under the District Council's draft Scheme the two detached parts of the parish of Wrottesley formed one Wrottesley Ward returning three district councillors. The division of the parish proposed by the Commission was acceptable as the long term solution but was premature at present. Planning permission for the residential development of 500 acres on the airfield at Perton over the next 15 years had been granted and the first houses were expected to be available for occupation in approximately 12 months. The Spring 1975 electorate of Perton was only 360 and in view of the expected rate of residential development separation into wards would not be justified before 1977. Mr. R.J.D. Lawrence representing the Codsall Labour Party stated that Perton and Billbrook were separate and different communities. Billbrook consisted mainly of Council housing and did not use the same schools. The houses to be built in Perton were already in the hands of agents. He supported the Commission's proposals as did Mr. T. Hopper, representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party who felt that the

figures supported the creation of two wards. Mr.H.J. Carter Staffordshire County Councillor for the Wrottesley division said that the County Council had taken the view that this was a district matter. Perton was too small to have its own district councillor and the Commission's proposal would prejudice consideration of whether Perton should be a separate parish. Warding of Wrottesley might be appropriate about 1979. Mr. K.S. Bott, Wrottesley Parish Councillor and South Staffordshire District Councillor, said that he had lived all his life in the locality. He did not agree that Perton and Billbrook were different societies. Mr. G.A. Walley, Wrottesley Parish Councillor and South Staffordshire District Councillor agreed and also supported the District Council's draft Scheme. Perton was an agricultural community. Warding of Wrottesley would be justifiable in about 7 years time.

Assessment

- 4.3 There is widespread agreement that Perton and Billbrook, the two detached parts of Wrottesley parish which are divided from each other by Codsall parish, should at some time be made into separate wards on the lines of the Commission's proposal. The question is when this should take place. Under the rules in Schedule II to the Local Government Act, 1972, regard must be had to any likely change in the number or distribution of the electorate in the five years succeeding the consideration of the electoral arrangements. Looking at the 1979 forecast of the electorate the position will be:

Commission's proposal

	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
		1979	
Billbrook	2	2900	1.95
Perton	1	2100	1.41

The District Council's revised forecast is for 1980, making a direct comparison difficult, but puts the Perton electorate in that year at 3742 producing an entitlement of more than 2 councillors. However, even the 1979 figure of 2100 gives an entitlement of 1.41 and it seems to me inadvisable to defer the division of Wrottesley parish into two wards. I therefore

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposal for the creation of Billbrook and Perton Wards remain unaltered.

PENKRIDGE WARDSCommission's Proposals

- 5.1 Under the Commission's proposals Penkridge North East Ward consists of the North East Ward of the Parish of Penkridge and returns one district councillor. Penkridge South East Ward consists of the South East Ward of the parish of Penkridge and returns two district councillors. Penkridge West Ward consists of the West Ward and the Gailey Ward of the parish of Penkridge and returns one district councillor.

Representations

- 5.2 Mr. T. Hopper representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party referred to their written submission (Document 3) setting out their altered proposals which accepted the Commission's proposals for the North East and West Wards. They would split the South East Ward into a Penkridge South East Ward and a Penkridge Central Ward as shown on the plan submitted (Document 4). Penkridge traditionally had one member seats. The Commission's South East Ward covered a large area and two single-member wards would make it easier for councillors to discharge their responsibilities. The South East and Central Wards they proposed would each embrace electors of different affinities. Their South East Ward consisted mainly of new private housing and farms while Central Ward was an industrial area and contained a large Council housing estate.
- Mr. R.S. Caswell Clerk of the Penkridge Parish Council said that in 1974 the Council had asked for the South East Ward to be split into two wards but they had made no comment. on the Commission's

proposal. Mr. A. Roebuck Chief Executive Officer and Clerk representing the South Staffordshire District Council said that in formulating their draft scheme the Council had looked at geographical areas rather than at types of housing. He felt that a single South East Ward electing two councillors afforded greater flexibility in the light of expected growth in the size of the electorate. The boundary between the Labour Party's suggested Central and South East Wards was not satisfactory.

Assessment

5.3 The Labour Party proposal would result in the following division of the electorate of the Commission's South East Ward, based on the District Council's 1975 electorate figures (Document 2)

	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>1975 Entitlement</u>
Penkrige South East	1	974	0.80
Penkrige Central	1	1371	1.13

On the interpretation of the District Council's 1980 forecast of the electorate for Penkrige South East Ward (3110 as compared with their earlier 1979 forecast of 3500) the position would become

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Penkrige South East Ward	1473	1.03
Penkrige Central Ward	1582	1.11
	<u>3055</u>	

It will be noted that there is a small discrepancy between the Labour Party's and the District Council's total figures. By way of comparison, the Commission's proposal for a single South East Ward

returning two district councillors gives 1975 and 1980 entitlements of 1.93 and 2.18 respectively. It does not appear to me that the creation of two single member wards offers a better solution than the Commission's proposal, which is not now opposed by Penkrige Parish Council and I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals for
the three Penkrige Wards remain
unaltered.

ESSINGTON WARDCommission's Proposals

- 6.1 Under the Commission's proposals Essington Ward consists of Essington Parish and returns two district councillors.

Representations

- 6.2 Mr. T. Hopper, representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party referred to their written submission (Document 3). In view of the District Council's revised forecast no objection was now taken to the Commission's proposal. While in sympathy with Essington Parish Council's desire for warding of the parish their proposal was not acceptable because it would result in inequality of representation. Mr. B.L. Whitehouse representing Essington Parish Council put in a written analysis and plan (Document 5) Essington was a widely spread out parish. The Parish Council had produced a scheme for the district wards based upon five parish wards as indicated on the plan. Mr. H.C. Mountfield, Essington Parish Councillor and Essington Labour Party supported the Parish Council's scheme. The parish was $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide and there was no close affinity between the Parish Council's two proposed district wards. Mr. A. Roebuck Chief Executive and Clerk representing South Staffordshire District Council expressed concern about the warding suggested by the Parish Council which would not fit in with polling districts. The size of Essington Ward was not exceptional but was comparable with Bishopswood. The District Council did not agree with two wards for this parish.

Assessment

6.3 Under the Commission's proposals the position is as shown below:

1974		1979	
<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
2869	2.39	3400	2.29

The District Council's forecast for 1980 is 3089 giving an entitlement of 2.16. The Parish Council's Scheme produces the following result based on their figures for the electorate (2854).

	1974	
	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Essington East Ward	1075	0.89
Essington West Ward	1779	1.48

These entitlements are markedly inferior to those for the single district ward. The size of the parish is not unusually great and I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals for the
Essington Ward remain unaltered.

CODSALL WARDSCommission's Proposals

- 7.1 Under the Commission's proposals Codsall North Ward consists of the North Ward of the parish of Codsall as proposed by South Staffordshire District Council and returns 2 district councillors. Codsall South Ward consists of the South Ward of the parish of Codsall as proposed by South Staffordshire District Council and returns 3 district councillors.

Representations

- 7.2 Mr. T. Hopper representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party referred to their written submission (Document 3) and to a plan (Document 6) showing their suggestion for a division of the parish into North East, North West, South East and South West Wards returning 1, 1, 1 and 2 district councillors respectively. It provided more permanent and more easily recognisable boundaries which followed main roads whereas the Commission's proposed boundaries, based on the District Council's draft scheme, followed, in part, the railway line and did not keep to the centre line of roads in all cases. Their suggestion paid more regard to the affinities of the areas. The District Council had discarded one of the alternative proposals for the parish prepared by the officers which would have divided the South Ward into two. One of the resulting wards, a North East Ward, would have closely corresponded with their suggested North East Ward. The discarded alternative was preferable to the Commission's proposal under which there was little affinity between housing types. The District Council's decision had been a political one and those whom he represented were not satisfied with it. Mr. R.J.D. Lawrence representing Codsall Labour Party said that in the long run Billbrook should be joined with Codsall. He supported Mr. Hopper

and felt that the District Council had been politically motivated in reaching their decision about the parish. Mrs. S. Lessar, Acting Agent, South West Staffordshire Conservative Association objected to any suggestions of political bias on the part of the District Council. Mr. A. Roebuck Chief Executive Officer and Clerk representing South Staffordshire District Council said that the Council considered alternative schemes for the parish and chose the one adopted by the Commission. The boundaries were in accordance with the Commission's general advice. The limited future growth of the parish had been taken into account and the proposal for two wards was a sensible one. The division of the parish into four wards would be unnecessarily confusing and would not lead to a better balance.

- 7.3 In her letter of the 15th August 1975 to the Commission the Clerk to the Codsall Parish Council stated that the Council were opposed to the introduction of warding for the parish. They could see no useful purpose in this nor did they think it would lead to any improvement in the representation of the electorate. Mr. A. Roebuck, Chief Executive Officer and Clerk, representing South Staffordshire District Council said that the parish, if undivided, would be too large a ward for 3 district councillors. Mr. G.A. Walley District and Parish Councillor for Wrottesley supported this view, as did Mr. R.J.D. Lawrence representing the Codsall Labour Party

Assessment

- 7.4 According to the table in the Labour Party's submission (Document 3) entitlement for their four suggested wards would be as follows:

	<u>Councillors</u>	1974		1980	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Codall NE	1	1250	1.04	1250	0.84
Codsall NW	1	1450	1.21	1561	1.09
Codsall SE	1	1562	1.31	1667	1.17
Codsall SW	2	2350	1.95	2357	1.65

By comparison the entitlements under the Commission's proposal would be:-

Codsall North	2	2875	2.39	3037	2.12
Codsall South	3	3751	3.12	3924	2.75

It does not appear that the four ward scheme produces more equal representation overall, nor does the boundary between the Codsall North and South Wards seem to me to lack clear definition.

There are many other multi-member wards proposed for this district and neither the size of the wards nor the expected growth in the electorate suggest that the Commission's proposals for the parish of Codsall are out of place.

7.5 As a single ward, Codsall parish would have an entitlement of five district councillors. It is an accepted guideline that a district ward should not return more than three councillors unless the circumstances are most exceptional. In this case the Codsall Parish Council's proposal would depart from this guideline to the extent of two extra members if reasonable equality of representation were to be achieved. I find no exceptional circumstances that would justify this. I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals for the
Codsall Wards remain unaltered.

Commission's Proposals

8.1 Under the Commission's proposals Wombourne North Ward consists of the North Ward of the parish of Wombourne as proposed by the South Staffordshire District Council and returns 3 district councillors, Wombourne South East Ward consists of the South East Ward of the parish of Wombourne as similarly proposed and returns 2 district councillors and Wombourne South West Ward consists of the South West Ward of the parish of Wombourne as similarly proposed and returns 3 district councillors.

Representations

8.2 Mr. T. Hopper representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party referred to their written submission (Document 3) and to a plan (Document 7) illustrating their scheme for the division of the parish into four wards. This had been revised in the light of the District Council's new figures and now envisaged a North West, a North East, a South West and a South East Ward returning 1, 2, 2 and 2 district councillors respectively. A second councillor for the North West Ward might be added if the growth in the electorate so required. Their boundaries were closer to the Commission's general recommendations than those of the District Council. They had consistently taken the centre line of roads used as boundaries and had also followed waterways and the old railway line which was a traditional ward boundary. Furthermore they had recognised affinity groups in the parish. In particular their proposed South West Ward consisted mainly of Council tenants and had little affinity with the neighbouring private housing at Pool House and Wombourne Park. It should return its own councillors. Mr. E. Waterfield, a member of South Staffordshire

District Council and Wombourne Parish Council supported the Commission's proposals. He objected to the distinction drawn between council and private housing. The Labour Party scheme did not consistently follow the railway as a boundary and he preferred the District Council's boundary. Mr. A. Roebuck, Chief Executive Officer and Clerk, South Staffordshire District Council said that the District Council had allowed for the substantial development expected in Pool House Road, some 80 acres between the road and the canal. He accepted that the boundary along School Road might need revision and the District Council would do this in the course of preparing their order under Section 50 of the Local Government Act, 1972. The Commission's proposals would be more flexible and better adapted to embrace future development.

Assessment

8.3 The revised proposals of the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party are reflected in the following table whose figures of the numbers of electors are taken from their written submission and do not appear to correspond exactly with the District Council's revised forecast.

	<u>Councillors</u>	1975		1980	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Wombourne NW	1 (2)	985	0.81	2342	1.64
Wombourne NE	2	2640	2.18	2759	1.93
Wombourne SW	2	2358	1.94	2448	1.71
Wombourne SE	2	2757	2.27	2894	2.02

Comparable figures for the Commission's proposal are as follows:

Wombourne North	3	3497	2.88	3967	2.78
Wombourne South West	3	3148	2.60	4399	3.08
Wombourne South East	2	2094	1.73	2269	1.59

Under the Commission's proposals the Wombourne South East Ward entitlements are not entirely satisfactory although it is difficult to know how much reliance should be placed on the 1980 forecast. On the District Council's earlier forecast the 1979 entitlement for this Ward was 1.68. On the other hand the Labour Party's alternative gives a poor entitlement of 1.64 for their Wombourne North West Ward on the 1980 projection. On the other points made, a mixture of private and local authority housing need not be regarded as a disadvantage. I do not think that the boundaries of the wards proposed in the District Council's draft scheme are in general unsatisfactory, although that along School Road may need to be revised. The Commission's proposal allows for the substantial development expected in the Pool House Road area. On the information before me I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals for the
Wombourne Wards remain unaltered.

PATTINGHAM WARDCommission's Proposals

- 9.1 Under the Commission's proposals Pattingham Ward comprises the parishes of Pattingham and Patshull and returns one district councillor.

Representations

- 9.2 Mr. F.R. Law Chairman, representing Pattingham Parish Council put in a statement (Document 8). The Parish Council considered that the proposed ward should return 2 district councillors. The 1974 electorate and the projected 1979 electorate justified this. Moreover since local government re-organisation district councils were becoming too remote from the electorate. The acreage of the proposed ward was more than double the district average and the centre of Patshull was some four miles from the centre of Pattingham. He believed that the electorate of 1835 estimated for 1980 by the District Council in their revised forecast (Document 2) would be reached by 1976. Mr. A. Roebuck Chief Executive Officer and Clerk representing the South Staffordshire District Council thought that it was a marginal case. Other parishes, such as Lapley, were similarly placed. Mr. T. Hopper representing the South Staffordshire Constituency Labour Party opposed an additional councillor for the proposed ward unless Pattingham were joined to Trysull and Seisdon. Mr. Law said that Pattingham would not wish to be so joined.

Assessment

9.3 On 1974 figures the electorate of the proposed Pattingham Ward was 1598 producing an entitlement, for a 51 member council, of 1.33. The original District Council forecast for the 1979 electorate was 1700, giving an entitlement of 1.15. Their revised forecast (Document 3) is for a 1980 electorate of 1835 but even this would produce an entitlement of only 1.28. The ward is a rural one and has a large area but the distances involved are not exceptional. I am not persuaded that there is a cogent case for an additional district councillor for this Ward and I

RECOMMEND that the proposed Pattingham Ward should
return one district councillor.

Commission's Proposals

- 10.1 Under the Commission's proposals the Bishopswood Ward comprises the parishes of Blymhill, Weston under Lizard and the Bishopswood Ward of the parish of Brewood.

Representations

- 10.2 In his letter of the 10th September 1975 to the Commission the Clerk to the Blymhill Parish Council requested that the proposed ward be named "Blymhill, Weston and Bishopswood Ward". No written representations were made to the Commission by Weston under Lizard or Brewood parishes and there were no appearances on behalf of any of the three parishes at the meeting. As a possible alternative, the name "Western Ward" was suggested by some of those present.

Assessment

- 10.3 A number of the Ward names proposed by the District Council in their draft scheme have been abbreviated to the name of the unit with the largest electorate without complaint from the parishes concerned. I do not think that parishes left out of the name of a district ward thereby lose their identity and it seems to me preferable to avoid cumbersome double and treble barrelled names for wards. The alternative suggested, "Western Ward", has not been considered by the constituent parishes and in any case might be confusing as there are other wards on the western perimeter of the district I

RECOMMEND that the name of the proposed Bishopswood
Ward remain unaltered.

Note on forecasts of the electorate

1. Mr. J.T. Perry of the South Staffordshire District Council Planning Department who produced their revised forecasts (Document 2) said that the 1980 population was arrived at by taking residential planning permissions and allocations within the district and, using existing comparable densities, calculating the number of new dwellings expected to be built by 1980. The occupation rate of each dwelling was assumed to be 3 persons and the electorate was assumed to be 75% of population. Their figure for the 1980 electorate was 72,901 as compared with their earlier forecast for the 1979 electorate of 75,675. The 1980 forecast was based on a more detailed examination.
2. He explained that the County Planning Department's forecast for 1980 was 65,400 but this was ~~to~~ a straight line extrapolation of previous growth and less reliable than the District Councils figures. The County Structure Plan foresaw a limited growth of population in the South Staffordshire District based on existing commitments up to 1991.
3. I am not in a position to judge the reliability of the District and County Council forecasts but the difference between them is considerable. The use of 1975 and 1980 figures in the revised District Council forecasts makes it difficult to draw a direct comparison with the earlier 1974 and 1979 figures.

SCHEDULE 2

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

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS</u>
ACTON TRUSSELL	1
BILBROOK	2
BISHOPSWOOD	1
BREWOOD	2
CHESLYN HAY	2
CODSALL NORTH	2
CODSALL SOUTH	3
COVEN	2
ESSINGTON	2
FEATHERSTONE	1
GREAT WYRLEY LANDYWOOD	3
GREAT WYRLEY NORTH	1
GREAT WYRLEY TOWN	3
GREAT WYRLEY WEST	1
HUNTINGTON	1
KINVER	3
LAPLEY	1
LOWER PENN	1
PATTINGHAM	1
PENKRIDGE NORTH EAST	1
PENKRIDGE SOUTH EAST	2
PENKRIDGE WEST	1
PERTON	1
SHARESHILL	1
STOURTON	1
SWINDON	1
TRYSULL & SEISDON	1
WOMBOURNE NORTH	3
WOMBOURNE SOUTH-EAST	2
WOMBOURNE SOUTH-WEST	3

DISTRICT OF SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED
WARD BOUNDARIES

ACTON TRUSSELL WARD

The parishes of Acton Trussell, ^{and} Bednall, Coppenhall, Dunston and Teddesley Hay.

BILBROOK WARD

The Bilbrook ward of the parish of Wrottesley

BISHOPSWOOD WARD

The parishes of Blymhill, and Weston under Lizard and the Bishopswood ward of the parish of Brewood.

BREWOOD WARD

The Brewood ward of the parish of Brewood.

CHESLYN HAY WARD

The parish of Cheslyn Hay.

CODSALL NORTH WARD

The North ward of the parish of Codsall.

CODSALL SOUTH WARD

The South ward of the parish of Codsall.

COVEN WARD

The Coven ward of the parish of Brewood.

ESSINGTON WARD

The parish of Essington.

FEATHERSTONE WARD

The parishes of Featherstone and Hilton.

GREAT WYRLEY LANDYWOOD WARD

The Landywood ward of the parish of Great Wyrley.

GREAT WYRLEY NORTH WARD

The North ward of the parish of Great Wyrley.

GREAT WYRLEY TOWN WARD

The Town ward of the parish of Great Wyrley.

GREAT WYRLEY WEST WARD

The West ward of the parish of Great Wyrley.

HUNTINGTON WARD

The parish of Huntington .

KINVER WARD

The Kinver ward of the parish of Kinver.

LAPLEY WARD

The parishes of Lapley and Stretton.

LOWER PENN WARD

The parish of Lower Penn.

PATTINGHAM WARD

The parishes of Pattingham and Patshull.

PENKRIDGE NORTH EAST WARD

The North East ward of the parish of Penkridge.

PENKRIDGE SOUTH EAST WARD

The South East ward of the parish of Penkridge.

PENKRIDGE WEST WARD

The West ward and the Gailey ward of the parish of Penkridge.

PERTON WARD

The Perton ward of the parish of Wrettesley

SHARESHILL WARD

The parishes of Hatherton, Saredon and Shareshill.

STOURTON WARD

The Stourton ward of the parish of Kinver.

SWINDON WARD

The parishes of Himley and Swindon.

TRYSULL & SEISDON WARD

The parishes of Bobbington, Enville and Trysull & Seisdon.

WOMBOURNE NORTH WARD

The North ward of the parish of Wombourne.

WOMBOURNE SOUTH EAST WARD

The South East ward of the parish of Wombourne.

WOMBOURNE SOUTH WEST WARD

The South West ward of the parish of Wombourne.