

**Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
For England  
Report No.555**

**Review of Non-Metropolitan Counties**

COUNTY OF  
HERTFORDSHIRE  
BOUNDARY WITH  
BEDFORDSHIRE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 555

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN

Mr G J Ellerton CMG MBE

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mr J G Powell CBE FRICS FSVA

Members

Professor G E Cherry BA FRTPI FRICS

Mr K F J Ennals CB

Mr G R Prentice

Mrs H R V Sarkany

Mr B Scholes OBE

THE RT HON NICHOLAS RIDLEY MP  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

REVIEW OF NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES  
THE COUNTY OF HERTFORDSHIRE: BOUNDARY WITH BEDFORDSHIRE

COMMISSION'S FINAL PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

1. On 2 September 1986 we wrote to Hertfordshire County Council announcing our intention to undertake a review of Hertfordshire under section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Copies of our letter were sent to all the local authorities in Hertfordshire and in the adjoining counties. Copies were also sent to the Members of Parliament with constituency interests, the headquarters of the main political parties, to Government Departments which might have an interest, as well as to the Thames North West Regional Health Authority, British Telecom, the Eastern Electricity and Gas Boards, the Thames and Anglian Water Authorities, the English Tourist Board, local television and radio stations serving the area, the local government press and the National and County Associations of Local Councils.
2. The County Council was requested, in co-operation as necessary with the other local authorities concerned, to publish a notice for two successive weeks in appropriate local newspapers so as to give wide publicity to the start of the review. The County Council was also asked to use its best endeavours to ensure that the issue of the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of those concerned with services such as the administration of justice and police, in respect of which it has a statutory function.

3. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the adjoining counties, and any body or person interested in the review, to submit to us their views in detail on whether changes in the county boundary were desirable and, if so, what those changes should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government. It was subsequently learnt that Hertfordshire County Council had waited until January 1987 before advertising the start of the Hertfordshire review, thus allowing only two months, instead of six, for the formulation and submission of any views on whether or not change to the county boundary were desirable. Our Secretary wrote on 2 February 1987 to inform the County Council, that, in our view, the period of consultation allowed by the council's advertisement was inadequate, and that it had therefore been decided to defer the closing date for the submission of any proposals until 1 June 1987.

#### THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US

4. We received responses from the County Councils of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire; from the District Councils of North Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield, Aylesbury Vale, Mid Bedfordshire and South Cambridgeshire, and the Borough Council of Luton; from the town and parish councils of Arlsey, Kings Walden, Lilley and Offley; and from other interested organisations and residents of Hertfordshire. Proposals received concerning the boundaries between Hertfordshire and Essex, and between Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, are being dealt with in our reviews of Essex and Buckinghamshire. Similarly, proposals for changes to Hertfordshire's boundary with Cambridgeshire were considered in the review of the latter county and are covered in our Report number 546.

5. During the course of our review of Bedfordshire two suggestions had been put forward for alterations to the boundary with Hertfordshire. We have decided to incorporate our conclusions on these issues within the text of this report.

#### BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE BOROUGH OF LUTON

6. Luton Borough Council proposed changes to five areas of the county boundary between the district of North Hertfordshire and the unparished area of Luton, with the stated objective of establishing a more easily defined boundary. The areas affected were, with one exception, uninhabited.

7. The Borough Council suggested the transfer of two areas from the parish of Offley to the borough of Luton. The first comprised woodland, the substantial properties of the Putteridge Bury Estate and Home Farm, and a small number of other dwellings; it was argued that as Bedfordshire Education Authority already owned and administered a proportion of the Putteridge Bury Estate (which formed Luton College of Higher Education), it would be logical to incorporate all of the land within Bedfordshire. The second area sought by the Borough Council was part of a playing field divided by the existing county boundary. A reciprocal transfer of a small area of uninhabited land into the parish of Offley was also proposed.

8. Luton Borough Council's remaining suggestions affected its boundary with the parish of King's Walden. It recommended the realignment of a small stretch of the boundary just to the north of Luton Airport, thereby transferring a small area of woodland to the parish of King's Walden. It also proposed that 49 acres of land immediately to the north and east of the end of the runway of Luton Airport be transferred into the borough. The Borough Council contended that this land, part of which formed the runway end safeguard area, was an integral part of the airport and should therefore fall within the borough's administrative boundary.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE

9. Luton Borough Council had also recommended three changes to the county boundary between the districts of North Hertfordshire and South Bedfordshire. The Borough Council's scheme concerned a stretch of the boundary, much of it undefined or defaced, between the parishes of King's Walden and Kimpton, in North Hertfordshire, and the parish of Hyde in South Bedfordshire. These suggestions involved the exchange of small areas of land between the two districts; two properties would be affected.

10. Hertfordshire County Council and North Hertfordshire District Council objected to all Luton Borough Council's submissions, arguing that the various

proposals would not improve the operation of local government. The parish councils of King's Walden, Offley and Lilley added their opposition, stating that there was much local concern about Luton Borough Council's intentions to develop those areas sought for transfer to the borough. Representations were received from Mr Ian Stewart MP, the Hon R Pleydell-Bouverie, Mr James Tuckey (acting on behalf of the Putteridge Bury Estate), the Lilley Society, the Hertfordshire Society, the Kimpton Protection Group, and the National Farmers Union; some of these objectors speculated as to whether the Borough Council's purpose was to secure land for development.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE DISTRICT OF MID BEDFORDSHIRE

11. North Hertfordshire Conservative Association suggested that part of the parish of Shillington in the district of Mid Bedfordshire should be transferred to the parish of Hexton in the district of North Hertfordshire. The Association argued that the area, which included the village of Pegsdon, formed a natural link with Hexton. The Association also suggested a realignment of the boundary between the parish of Stondon (district of Mid Bedfordshire) and the parish of Holwell (district of North Hertfordshire) thereby transferring into North Hertfordshire the properties of Holwell Bury House and several smaller dwellings. It was claimed that the residents of the area had a greater affinity with Holwell.

12. Neither Hertfordshire nor Bedfordshire County Council supported the proposed transfers. Mid Bedfordshire District Council contended there was no justification for altering an old, established boundary; North Hertfordshire District Council said it had no comment to make. The parish councils of Shillington and Stondon opposed the scheme. Support for the Holwell/Stondon proposal came from Mr Ian Dixon, a former chairman of the Conservative Association, who claimed that the residents of the area affected used Holwell's facilities; he also said that there had been problems with regard to the provision of services to the area.

OUR DRAFT PROPOSAL AND INTERIM DECISIONS

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND THE BOROUGH OF LUTON

13. We considered the various proposals put forward by Luton Borough Council for changes to the boundary between the unparished area of Luton and the parishes of Offley and King's Walden. We noted that much of the existing boundary was poorly defined, but in general were inclined to agree with the contention of the Hertfordshire local authorities that there was nothing to justify the changes recommended by the Borough Council in terms of the provision of more effective and convenient local government. We therefore reached an interim decision not to make most of the proposals suggested for these areas. The only exception, we felt, concerned the recommendation to alter the stretch of the boundary in the vicinity of Luton Airport; the existing alignment cut through part of the runway end safeguard area and was tied to no identifiable ground features. We accepted that in the interests of airport management it would be desirable for the whole of the airport runway and the nearby safeguard area in the east to be encompassed within the borough of Luton. We saw no sufficient case however for transferring into Luton that part of the parish of King's Walden lying to the north of the airport's runway end. We decided to publish a draft proposal based in part on the Borough Council's suggestion.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICTS OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE

14. The stated case for the three minor changes to the North Hertfordshire/South Bedfordshire boundary which Luton Borough Council had suggested seemed to us insufficient, in terms of effective and convenient local government, to justify draft proposals. We therefore decided to make no proposals.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICTS OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE AND MID BEDFORDSHIRE

15. We examined the suggestions put forward by North Hertfordshire Conservative Association to transfer parts of the parishes of Shillington and Stondon, from the district of Mid Bedfordshire, to the district of North Hertfordshire. We

felt, however, that in the absence of any evidence of difficulties in the provision of local government services, there were insufficient grounds for change. We therefore took an interim decision to make no proposals.

16. Our draft proposal and interim decisions to make no proposals were published in a letter to Hertfordshire County Council on 9 December 1987. Copies were sent to the County Councils of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex, to the District, Borough and Parish Councils affected, and to other organisations and individuals who had made representations to us or who may have had an interest in the boundary issues. Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire County Councils were asked to arrange publication of a notice giving details of our draft proposal and to place copies of it at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our draft proposal letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 3 February 1988.

#### RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSAL/INTERIM DECISIONS

17. We received representations from 19 sources to our draft proposal/interim decisions letter. These included comments from Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire County Councils; North Hertfordshire District Council and the Borough Councils of Stevenage and Luton; the Parish Councils of King's Walden and Lilley, Mr Ian Stewart MP and other interested bodies and individuals.

18. The majority of the representations objected to our draft proposal. Hertfordshire County Council argued there was no compelling reason for any change to its boundary with Bedfordshire. King's Walden Parish Council contested whether the proposed boundary change would improve safety at the airport. It also claimed that if the area in question were transferred into Luton, it would encourage Luton Borough Council to extend the length of the airport runway. North Hertfordshire District Council supported the opposition of Hertfordshire County Council and King's Walden Parish Council. Stevenage Borough Council and Lilley Parish Council objected to the draft proposal

although neither were directly affected by it. The Hertfordshire Society supported their County Council's opposition. Mr Ian Stewart MP argued that Luton Borough Council was constantly trying to extend its boundaries and that the proposal would give encouragement to an expansion which was strongly opposed by people in Hertfordshire.

19. We received six letters from local groups and residents of Breachwood Green, in the parish of King's Walden, all objecting to our draft proposal. The writers feared that Luton Borough Council would extend the length of the runway to the very limit of the new boundary in order to increase the frequency and capacity of air traffic using Luton Airport.

20. Only three of the representations supported our draft proposal. Bedfordshire County Council had no objection in the interests of safety and administrative convenience. Luton Borough Council confirmed their support but submitted that a small stretch of land immediately to the north of the runway end safeguard area should also be transferred; the Council argued this was already owned by Luton Airport and had been identified as operational land which should properly be included within the borough's administrative boundary. North Bedfordshire Health Authority supported the draft proposal.

21. Eastern Electricity Board and East Hertfordshire Health Authority both confirmed they had no comments to make on the draft proposal.

22. We received two comments on our interim decisions to make no proposals. Luton Borough Council said they accepted that the land in the Putteridge Bury area should remain as part of Hertfordshire. The Lilley Society supported our interim decisions.

#### OUR FINAL PROPOSAL AND DECISIONS

23. As required by section 60(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, we have carefully considered the representations made to us in response to our draft proposal.

24. We have taken account of the concern expressed by the local residents about Luton Borough Council's intention to extend the airport runway to facilitate an increase in both the flow and capacity of air traffic. Discussions with the Department of Transport, the Civil Aviation Authority, Luton Borough Council and Luton Airport International Limited suggest to us that no firm plans exist. The Civil Aviation Authority have told us that any extension of the runway to accommodate bigger aircraft would need to go well beyond the new boundary. We cannot foresee what policy might evolve in the future but we are satisfied that the small change that we have proposed is unlikely to influence current policies. The objections of the local authorities in Hertfordshire offer nothing by way of new information which might cause us to abandon or amend our draft proposal. However, we understand that our draft proposal would simplify arrangements for routine maintenance on the land affected. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal as our final proposal.

25. We have considered Luton Borough Council's request to transfer into Bedfordshire further land to the north of the runway end safeguard area, but we are satisfied that this is of no operational value to the airport. We have concluded that the Borough Council has failed to make out a satisfactory case and have decided not to incorporate this additional area as part of our final proposal.

26. There has been no opposition to our interim decisions to make no proposals for changes to the district of North Hertfordshire's boundaries with the borough of Luton and the districts of South Bedfordshire and Mid Bedfordshire. We have therefore concluded that in the interests of effective and convenient local government, it would be right to confirm our interim decisions as final.

#### BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF DACORUM AND THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE

27. As mentioned in paragraph 5 of this report, we had received two proposals for changes to Hertfordshire's boundary with Bedfordshire during the initial consultation phase of the Bedfordshire review.

28. South Bedfordshire District Council suggested the transfer of land containing two properties from the parish of Markyate, in the borough of Dacorum, to the parish of Caddington and Slip End, in South Bedfordshire. The District Council argued that the revised boundary would remove anomalies, better

reflect patterns of community life and lead to more effective provision of local government services. The proposed change was opposed by Bedfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Markyate Parish Council and a private individual who would be affected. These bodies refuted the assertion that services could be more easily provided if the change took place and argued that the present boundary adequately conformed with the pattern of community life. In the absence of any overwhelming reasons for change we did not consider the existing boundary to be so anomalous as to require adjustment and decided to take an interim decision to make no proposals for change.

29. Our interim decision was published in a letter to Bedfordshire County Council on 29 October 1986. Copies were sent to the County Councils of Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire, to the District and Parish Councils affected, and to other organisations, and individuals who had made representations to us or who might have had an interest in the boundary issues. Comments were invited by 24 December 1986.

30. In response to our interim decision, South Bedfordshire District Council and Caddington and Slip End Parish Council put forward a revised scheme which would transfer a small area of land to that district and parish. Bedfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Markyate Parish Council still opposed any changes; the occupier of the only property affected by the reduced proposal also objected. After due consideration we conclude that there is no reason to justify overturning our earlier decision and confirm our interim decision as final.

31. South Bedfordshire District Council and Studham Parish Council proposed the transfer of a property known as 'Rose Cottage' from the parish of Flamstead, in the borough of Dacorum, to the parish of Studham in the district of South Bedfordshire, on the basis that the property was closer to the latter village. We took account of the views expressed by Bedfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council, which were that they saw no reason for change in

the area. We noted that the property in question did appear to lie slightly nearer to Studham than to any other settlement, but in the absence of any views of the occupier, and bearing in mind that there appeared to be no difficulties experienced by the principal authorities in providing services in the area, we concluded that we should make no proposals.

32. Our interim decision was published in a letter to Bedfordshire County Council on 29 October 1986. Copies were sent to all those interested bodies and individuals who are referred to in paragraph 29. Comments were invited by 24 December 1986.

33. Our interim decision to make no proposal attracted only one comment. South Bedfordshire District Council stated that they had now consulted the occupier of the property affected who wished the status quo to be retained. We noted this and decided to confirm our interim decision as final.

#### PUBLICATION

34. A separate letter enclosing copies of this report is being sent to the County Councils of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire asking them to deposit copies at their main offices for inspection over a six-month period. The County Councils are also being asked to co-operate in putting notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. The text of the notice will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in this matter, and that it now falls to you to make an Order implementing the proposal, if you think fit, after the expiry of six weeks from the date it is submitted to you. Copies of this report, which also includes small scale maps, are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who responded in writing.

Signed:

G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

G E CHERRY

K F J ENNALS

G R PRENTICE

HELEN SARKANY

BRIAN SCHOLES

S T GARRISH

Secretary

12 May 1988

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND  
COUNTY BOUNDARY REVIEW

HERTFORDSHIRE

AFFECTING BEDFORDSHIRE

FINAL PROPOSAL

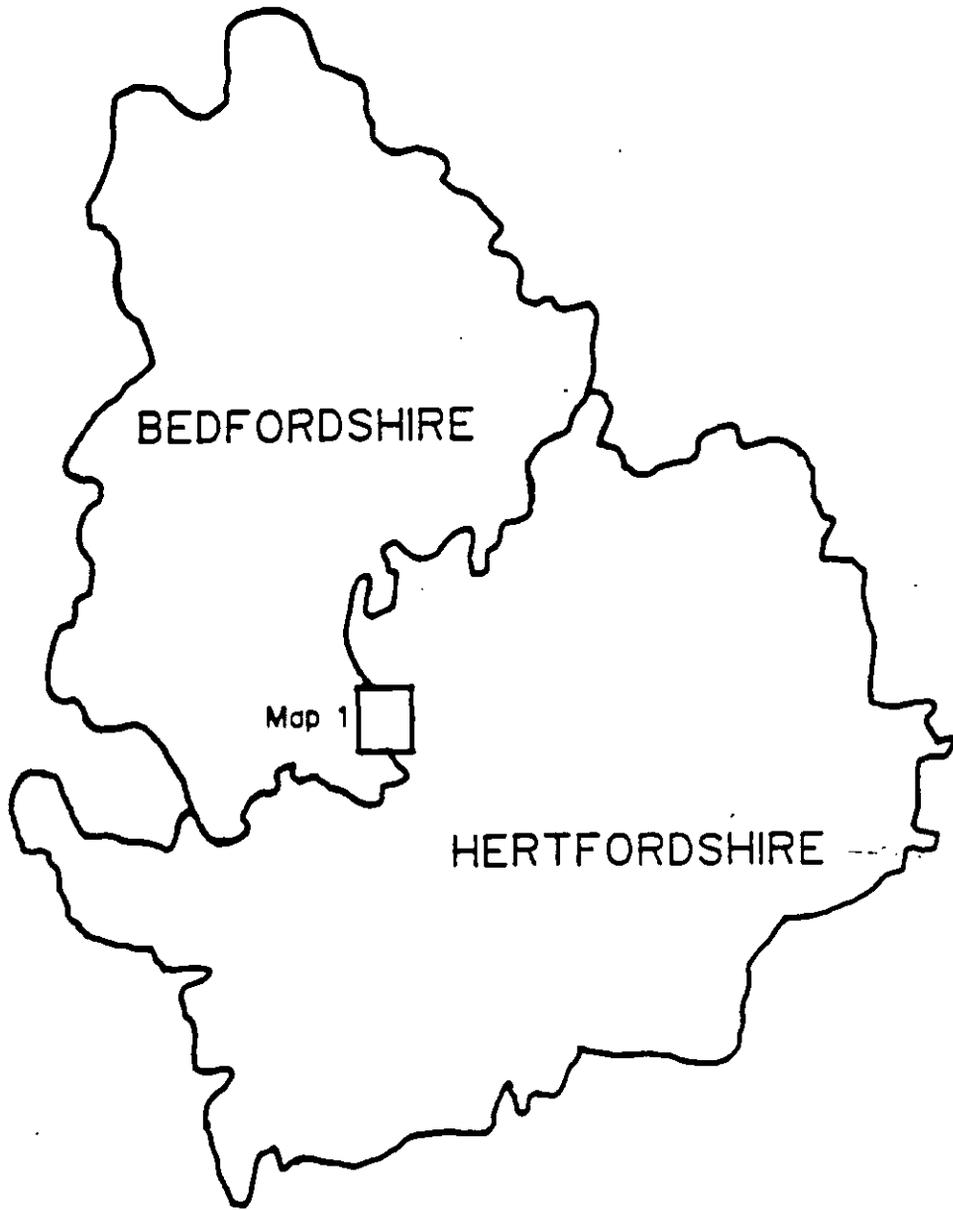
Existing County Boundary

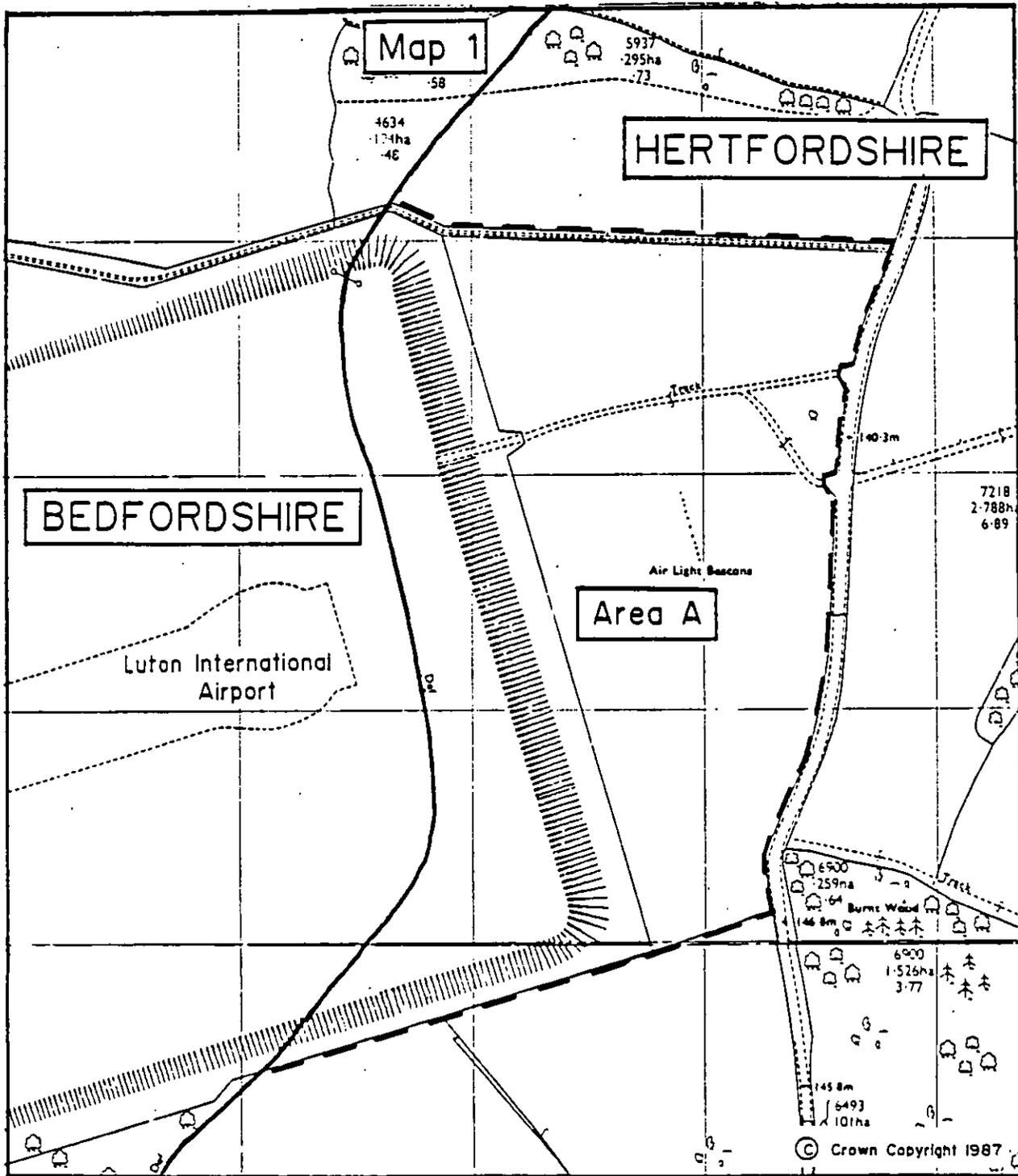


Proposed County Boundary



LOCATION DIAGRAM





## CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

MAP NO	AREA REF	FROM	TO
1	A	Hertfordshire North Hertfordshire District King's Walden CP Hoo Ward Offa ED	Bedfordshire Borough of Luton Non-Parished Area Crawley Ward Crawley ED