

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire

Report to the Secretary of State for the
Environment, Transport and the Regions

May 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire.

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Local Government Commission for England

16 May 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 18 May 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Broxtowe under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 100) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Broxtowe.

We recommend that Broxtowe Borough Council should be served by 44 councillors representing 21 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be elected every four years.

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Broxtowe on 18 May 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements in December 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Broxtowe:

- **in 14 of the 21 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and in five wards varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 100-101) are that:

- **Broxtowe Borough Council should have 44 councillors, five fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified and one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each borough councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In all but one of the proposed 21 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in no ward expected to vary by more than 8 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Eastwood and Stapleford;**
- **new warding arrangements for the parishes of Nuthall and Greasley.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 26 June 2000:

**The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Attenborough	1	Attenborough ward (part); Chilwell East ward (part)
2	Awsorth	1	Awsorth & Cossall ward (part - Awsorth parish)
3	Beeston Central	2	Beeston Central ward (part); Beeston North East ward (part)
4	Beeston North	2	Beeston North East ward (part)
5	Beeston Rylands	2	Beeston Rylands ward; Beeston Central ward (part)
6	Beeston West	2	Beeston Central ward (part); Beeston North East (part); Beeston North West ward (part); Chilwell East ward (part)
7	Bramcote	3	Beeston North West ward (part); Bramcote ward (part); Stapleford East ward (part)
8	Brinsley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Brinsley parish)
9	Chilwell East	2	Attenborough ward (part); Bramcote ward (part); Chilwell East ward (part)
10	Chilwell West	3	Attenborough ward (part); Chilwell West ward
11	Cossall & Kimberley	3	Awsorth & Cossall ward (part - Cossall parish); Kimberley ward (Kimberley parish)
12	Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale)	2	Eastwood East ward (part - part Eastwood parish); Eastwood North ward (part - part Eastwood parish); Greasley ward (part - part Greasley parish)
13	Eastwood South	3	Eastwood South ward (part - part Eastwood parish); Eastwood East ward (part - part Eastwood parish); Eastwood North ward (part - part Eastwood parish)
14	Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe)	3	Greasley ward (part - part Greasley parish)
15	Nuthall East & Strelley	2	Nuthall ward (part - part Nuthall parish); Strelley & Trowell ward (part - Strelley parish)
16	Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall)	2	Greasley ward (part - part Greasley parish); Nuthall ward (part - part Nuthall parish)
17	Stapleford North	2	Stapleford North ward (part - part Stapleford parish)
18	Stapleford South East	2	Stapleford East ward (part - part Stapleford parish); Stapleford North ward (part - part Stapleford parish); Stapleford West ward (part - part Stapleford parish)

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
19	Stapleford South West	2	Stapleford West ward (part - part Stapleford parish)
20	Toton & Chilwell Meadows	3	Toton ward; Attenborough ward (part); Bramcote ward (part)
21	Trowell	1	Strelley & Trowell ward (part - Trowell parish)

Notes: 1 Beeston Town, Chilwell and part of Stapleford are the unparished parts of the borough and comprise the nine existing wards indicated above.

2 Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Broxtowe

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Attenborough	1	1,932	1,932	-1	1,926	1,926	-3
2 Awsworth	1	1,777	1,777	-9	1,930	1,930	-3
3 Beeston Central	2	4,029	2,015	3	4,014	2,007	1
4 Beeston North	2	4,177	2,089	7	4,140	2,070	4
5 Beeston Rylands	2	4,126	2,063	6	4,196	2,098	5
6 Beeston West	2	4,075	2,038	5	4,033	2,017	1
7 Bramcote	3	6,235	2,078	7	6,236	2,079	4
8 Brinsley	1	1,998	1,998	3	2,000	2,000	0
9 Chilwell East	2	4,018	2,009	3	4,109	2,054	3
10 Chilwell West	3	6,326	2,109	8	6,266	2,089	5
11 Cossall & Kimberley	3	5,434	1,811	-7	5,512	1,837	-8
12 Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale)	2	3,905	1,953	0	4,048	2,024	1
13 Eastwood South	3	5,954	1,985	2	5,858	1,953	-2
14 Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe)	3	5,036	1,679	-14	5,500	1,833	-8
15 Nuthall East & Strelley	2	3,583	1,792	-8	3,651	1,826	-8
16 Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall)	2	3,534	1,767	-9	4,094	2,047	3
17 Stapleford North	2	3,959	1,980	2	4,165	2,083	4
18 Stapleford South East	2	3,845	1,923	-1	4,043	2,022	1
19 Stapleford South West	2	4,138	2,069	6	4,186	2,093	5

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Toton & Chilwell Meadows	3	5,567	1,856	-5	5,769	1,923	-4
21 Trowell	1	2,014	2,014	3	2,080	2,080	4
Totals	44	85,662	-	-	87,756	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,947	-	-	1,994	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Broxtowe Borough Council.*

Notes: *1 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.*

2 The total electorate for 1999 varies from that shown in Figure 3 by 28 electors which would have a negligible impact on electoral variances.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire. We have now reviewed eight districts in Nottinghamshire 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 currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Broxtowe. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1975 (Report No. 73). The electoral arrangements of Nottinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in May 1980 (Report No.383). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie 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 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* which sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. 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 general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district 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 a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *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, ie in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half 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 areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 18 May 1999, when we wrote to Broxtowe Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Nottinghamshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and 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 the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 20 September 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 14 December 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire*, and ended on 21 February 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of Broxtowe extends across the southwest corner of Nottinghamshire, and is bordered to the south by the River Trent, the districts of Amber Valley and Erewash in Derbyshire to the west, the district of Ashfield to the north and the City of Nottingham to the east. The borough has a population of approximately 112,000 within an area of 8,055 hectares. Broxtowe has four main centres of population in the towns of Beeston and Stapleford in the south and Eastwood and Kimberley in the north.

14 The borough contains 10 parishes located in the northern part of the borough. Beeston town, Chilwell and part of Stapleford in the south of the borough are unparished. Beeston town comprises approximately one fifth of the borough's total electorate.

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

16 The electorate of the borough is 85,690 (February 1999). The Council presently has 49 members who are elected from 21 wards. Ten wards are each represented by three councillors, eight are each represented by two councillors and three are single-member wards. The Council is elected together every four years.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Broxtowe, with around 14 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increase has been in Greasley ward with approximately 2,600 more electors than 20 years ago.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,749 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,791 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 14 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, of which five wards vary by more than 20 per cent and four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Greasley ward where the councillor represents 58 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Broxtowe

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Attenborough	2	4,483	2,242	28	4,653	2,327	30
2 Awsworth & Cossall	2	2,288	1,144	-35	2,506	1,253	-30
3 Beeston Central	3	5,340	1,780	2	5,310	1,770	-1
4 Beeston North East	3	4,618	1,539	-12	4,580	1,527	-15
5 Beeston North West	2	2,866	1,433	-18	2,868	1,434	-20
6 Beeston Rylands	2	3,376	1,688	-3	3,360	1,680	-6
7 Bramcote	3	4,553	1,518	-13	4,630	1,543	-14
8 Brinsley	1	1,999	1,999	14	2,000	2,000	12
9 Chilwell East	3	4,744	1,581	-10	4,780	1,593	-11
10 Chilwell West	3	4,447	1,482	-15	4,424	1,475	-18
11 Eastwood East	2	3,420	1,710	-2	3,408	1,704	-5
12 Eastwood North	1	1,854	1,854	6	1,854	1,854	4
13 Eastwood South	2	3,450	1,725	-1	3,450	1,725	-4
14 Greasley	3	8,313	2,771	58	9,336	3,112	74
15 Kimberley	3	4,924	1,641	-6	4,936	1,645	-8
16 Nuthall	2	4,943	2,472	41	5,026	2,513	40
17 Stapleford East	3	4,533	1,511	-14	4,554	1,518	-15
18 Stapleford North	3	4,512	1,504	-14	4,958	1,653	-8

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Stapleford West	3	4,248	1,416	-19	4,230	1,410	-21
20 Strelley & Trowell	1	2,091	2,091	20	2,157	2,157	20
21 Toton	2	4,688	2,344	34	4,736	2,368	32
Totals	49	85,690	–	–	87,756	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,749	–	–	1,791	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Broxtowe 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Awsworth & Cossall ward were relatively over-represented by 35 per cent, while electors in Greasley ward were relatively under-represented by 58 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received nine representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Broxtowe Borough Council, and representations from the three parish councils, from four local residents and one local petition. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Broxtowe in Nottinghamshire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based largely on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved improved electoral equality, and provided a pattern of two-member wards in Beeston, and a mix of single- and multi-member wards in the rest of the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme substantially only in the Beeston area where we modified its proposals to achieve a higher level of electoral equality. We proposed that:

- Broxtowe Borough Council should be served by 44 councillors, compared with the current 49, representing 21 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Eastwood, Stapleford, Nuthall and Greasley parishes.

Draft Recommendation

Broxtowe Borough Council should comprise 44 councillors, serving 21 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all but one of the 21 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 48 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Broxtowe Borough Council and the Commission.

Broxtowe Borough Council

23 The Borough Council supported the majority of the draft recommendations, although it proposed a number of alternative boundaries in the Beeston area in order to better reflect community identities. Elsewhere, the Borough Council supported the retention of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close within Chilwell East ward.

Nottinghamshire County Council

24 The County Council expressed concern regarding our proposals to reduce the number of councillors representing the borough from 49 to 44. It stated that “the United Kingdom already has one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of the population in Europe”, contending that our draft recommendations for Broxtowe would “worsen that position”.

25 The County Council welcomed our recommendation that there be no change to the electoral cycle of the borough, contending that members of the County Council are “satisfied with existing arrangements”.

Parish Councils

26 We received representations from three parish councils. Cossall Parish Council did not support our proposal that it should form part of a ward along with Kimberley parish, instead proposing that it should remain in a ward with Awsworth parish. Greasley Parish Council opposed its inclusion with adjoining parishes to form borough wards although it did not submit alternative proposals. Trowell Parish Council supported the draft recommendations as they affected the parish.

Other Representations

27 A further 43 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents. Broxtowe Labour Party (Local Government Committee) and Beeston Labour Party both supported the Borough Council’s original Stage One proposals for the wards in Beeston, which we did not adopt in their entirety in our draft recommendations report. We received a representation from Attenborough Branch Conservative Association and Attenborough Village Environment Protection Association which both considered that the area around Charlton Grove should form part of the proposed Beeston Rylands ward for community identity reasons.

28 We received a joint representation from Bramcote ward councillors Heptinstall, Houldsworth and Yeoman and representations from three local residents, one of whom attached a petition signed by 38 residents, each of which proposed amending the external parish boundary of Stapleford parish along Valmont Road and Baulk Lane. Additionally, one resident supported the proposal that the unparished part of Stapleford should form part of a modified Bramcote ward.

29 We also received a separate joint submission from the three councillors in Bramcote and 34 representations from residents in the Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close area who opposed their inclusion in Chilwell East ward, preferring to remain in Bramcote ward for community identity reasons.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

30 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Broxtowe is, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same. 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 to the Local Government Act 1972.

31 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

32 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for 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.

33 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

34 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 2.5 per cent from 85,690 to 87,756 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects much of the growth to be in the existing Greasley ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Awsworth & Cossall ward. The Borough Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

35 In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

36 We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

37 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume 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.

38 Broxtowe Borough Council is at present served by 49 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a reduction in council size to 44 members. In our draft recommendations report we judged, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 44 members.

39 During Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the proposed reduction in council size from 49 to 44. However, the County Council expressed concern regarding this reduction in council size, arguing that this is “undesirable” as the United Kingdom has “one of the lowest ratios of elected councillors per head of population in Europe”.

40 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, and note that the County Council has not supported our proposed council size. However, no alternative warding arrangements for a larger council size were put forward at either Stage One or Stage Three. We do not accept the argument that, in determining council size for a given area, the number of elected members in other European countries is a significant consideration, as political systems and cultures vary across Europe.

41 Accordingly, we remain content that the balance of evidence supports reducing the number of councillors in Broxtowe to 44, which we consider would achieve the best balance between the number of members required to facilitate effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 44 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

42 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

43 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that there appeared to be a large degree of consensus behind elements of the Council’s proposals. The Council’s scheme would provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we therefore concluded that it should form the basis of our draft recommendations. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the Borough Council’s proposals in the Beeston area in order to achieve a better balance of electoral equality in the town.

44 We noted in our draft report that a number of respondents considered that the existing parish boundaries in the borough no longer reflect the settlement pattern in some areas as new

development now straddles these boundaries. As part of this review, the Commission is unable to make recommendations for changes to external parish boundaries, although in its Stage One submission, the Borough Council indicated its intention to conduct a parish review upon completion of this PER.

45 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations, although it proposed a number of boundary amendments in the Beeston area. We also received a number of comments from local residents concerning our proposed boundary between Bramcote and Chilwell East wards. We have carefully re-examined our draft recommendations in these areas, and elsewhere in the borough where we received comments on our draft recommendations. We have concluded that we should confirm the majority of our draft recommendations, although we are making a number of boundary modifications in the Beeston area in order to better reflect local community links and utilise clearer ward boundaries.

46 For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

The Parished Area

- Brinsley, Eastwood East, Eastwood North, Eastwood South and Greasley wards;
- Awsworth & Cossall and Kimberley wards;
- Nuthall and Strelley & Trowell wards;
- Stapleford East, Stapleford North and Stapleford West wards.

The Unparished Area

- Bramcote ward;
- Beeston Central, Beeston North East, Beeston North West and Beeston Rylands wards;
- Chilwell East and Chilwell West wards;
- Attenborough and Toton wards.

Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

The Parished Area

47 The north of the borough forms the parished area with 10 parishes - the three towns of Eastwood, Kimberley and Stapleford, and the seven parishes of Awsworth, Cossall, Greasley, Nuthall, Brinsley, Trowell and Strelley. It contains approximately 53 per cent of the borough's electorate.

Brinsley, Eastwood East, Eastwood North, Eastwood South and Greasley wards

48 These five wards are located in the north of the borough. The average number of electors per councillor in each of the two-member Eastwood East, one-member Eastwood North and two-member Eastwood South wards is less than 10 per cent from the borough average both under

existing and forecast electorate figures. The three wards together comprise the whole of the parish of Eastwood, which is currently warded for electoral purposes. The electoral variance in Brinsley ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is 14 per cent (12 per cent in 2004). The current three-member Greasley ward, comprising solely the parish of the same name, has the worst electoral equality in the borough with each of the three councillors representing 58 per cent more electors than the borough average (74 per cent more in 2004).

49 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed no change to the existing single-member ward of Brinsley and Brinsley Parish Council stated that it was “satisfied with the current electoral arrangements”. Under a council size of 44, the proposal for no change would result in an electoral variance in Brinsley ward of 3 per cent (equal to the average in 2004). We received no further comments on the existing Brinsley ward and, given the good level of electoral equality achieved, we proposed no change to its current arrangements as part of our draft recommendations. We received no further comments during Stage Three on our draft recommendation for Brinsley ward and we are therefore confirming it as unchanged as part of our final recommendations.

50 The parish of Eastwood is currently warded for electoral purposes and comprises three separate borough wards. Greasley parish currently forms a three-member borough ward and suffers the greatest electoral inequality in the borough. During Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a new Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward, comprising parts of the existing Eastwood North and Eastwood East wards, together with the north-western corner of Greasley parish. The new ward’s southern boundary in Eastwood parish would follow the rear of properties on the estate off Derby Road, cross Mansfield Road, then follow the rear of properties along Princes Street, Grange View and Garden Road before turning southwards at the rear of Walker Street to Nottingham Road where it would continue to the parish boundary. The Borough Council’s proposed southern boundary would continue from the junction of Abbey Road and Mill Road eastwards across open land to the rear of Beauvale and Moorgreen before following the dismantled railway line west to the M1 motorway and borough boundary. Under these proposals, Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward would have an electoral variance equal to the borough average (1 per cent above in 2004).

51 The Borough Council proposed a new Eastwood South ward to the south of its proposed Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward, comprising parts of Eastwood East and Eastwood South wards and a small area of Eastwood North ward. The Borough Council proposed a modified Greasley ward, to be called Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) which would comprise the Newthorpe and Giltbrook areas of the parish and would return three councillors. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor in Eastwood South ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average while in Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) ward it would be 14 per cent below the average (2 per cent below and 8 per cent below respectively in 2004). The Watnall area of Greasley parish would form part of an adjacent ward detailed later.

52 In formulating our draft recommendations, we carefully considered the Borough Council’s proposals for Eastwood and Greasley parishes. We noted comments from Greasley Parish Council which were appended to the Council scheme, stating its preference for retaining the external parish boundaries as borough ward boundaries, but given the large electoral imbalances under the current arrangements and the reduced council size proposed, significant change is inevitable in this area.

53 We concluded that the dispersed settlement pattern within Greasley and the need to have regard to achieving good electoral equality in all areas of the borough warranted the warding of Greasley parish and changes to the warding of Eastwood parish. We judged the Borough Council's proposals would achieve good electoral equality and would reflect closely the settlement pattern in the area and therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposed Eastwood North and Greasley (Beauvale), Eastwood South and Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) wards.

54 During Stage Three, we received a representation from Greasley Parish Council, which opposed the draft recommendations that the parish should form part of borough wards with parts of adjoining parishes. The Parish Council was also concerned that, under the draft recommendations, Greasley parish would be represented by seven borough councillors from three borough wards which it considered was "too many".

55 We have carefully considered the representations for this area. While we acknowledge Greasley Parish Council's suggestion that the whole parish should form coterminous borough wards, in order to achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria, we cannot look at one area in isolation. Greasley is a large parish and, as noted in our draft recommendations report, has a dispersed settlement pattern which does not lend itself to the retention of a borough warding pattern set solely within the parish. Having carefully examined our draft recommendations, we remain of the view that there is no viable alternative which would facilitate good electoral equality in this and the surrounding area while achieving coterminous borough wards for Greasley parish. We therefore consider our draft recommendations continue to provide a good balance between the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria and confirm them as final. Our proposals for each of these wards are shown on the large map in the back of this report.

Awsorth & Cossall and Kimberley wards

56 These two wards are located on the western side of the borough with Awsorth & Cossall ward returning two councillors and Kimberley ward returning three councillors. Awsorth & Cossall ward (comprising the parishes of Awsorth and Cossall) currently has an electoral variance of 35 per cent (30 per cent in 2004) and Kimberley ward, comprising the parish of the same name, has a variance of 6 per cent (8 per cent in 2004).

57 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that Awsorth parish should form a new single-member Awsorth ward with an electoral variance of 9 per cent (3 per cent in 2004). The Council also proposed that Cossall and Kimberley parishes should form a three-member ward with an electoral variance of 7 per cent (8 per cent in 2004). The Council stated that in response to its consultation process, Cossall Parish Council had objected to its proposal because it would no longer form part of a ward with Awsorth parish. The Borough Council noted the Parish Council's concerns but considered that retaining Cossall with Awsorth parishes in a single-member ward would adversely impact upon electoral equality in the area. The Borough Council noted it had also considered proposing that both the parishes of Awsorth and Cossall should form part of a three-member ward along with the Babbington area of Kimberley parish. However, this would have resulted in significant electoral variances in the area, and it did not therefore put this forward in its submission. In our draft recommendations for this area, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals, which would achieve good electoral equality and an appropriate

balance between the statutory criteria. Furthermore, having examined alternatives, we did not consider that a more suitable alternative warding pattern was available in the area which would not adversely impact upon electoral equality and the achievement of the statutory criteria in the borough as a whole.

58 During Stage Three we received a submission from Cossall Parish Council which stated it wished “to remain with Awsworth as far as the electoral boundaries are concerned”. The Parish Council stated it did not share community ties with Kimberley parish, but had greater affinity with Awsworth parish. We received no further representations for this area during Stage Three.

59 We have carefully considered the representations for this area. However, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations secure the best balance of electoral equality in the borough, while having regard to the statutory criteria. We do not consider that an alternative warding pattern is available in the area which would facilitate Awsworth and Cossall parishes forming a ward together that would achieve comparable electoral equality while meeting the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Awsworth and Cossall & Kimberley wards as final, as illustrated on the large map at the rear of this report.

Nuthall and Strelley & Trowell wards

60 Nuthall and Strelley & Trowell wards span the centre of the borough and are currently represented by two councillors and a single councillor respectively. Nuthall ward is currently under-represented with 41 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average and Strelley & Trowell ward is also under-represented with 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (40 per cent and 20 per cent more in 2004).

61 During Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating a new two-member Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) ward which would comprise the south-eastern part of Greasley parish around the Watnall settlement and part of Nuthall parish, broadly west of the M1 motorway and north of the Kimberley/Eastwood bypass. The remaining part of Nuthall parish, together with all of Strelley parish, would form a new two-member Nuthall East & Strelley ward. Under the Borough Council’s proposals, the average number of electors in Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) ward would be 9 per cent below the borough average and 8 per cent below in Nuthall East & Strelley ward (3 per cent below and unchanged respectively in 2004). The Borough Council also proposed a new single-member Trowell ward consisting solely of the parish of Trowell. The ward would have an electoral variance of 3 per cent (4 per cent in 2004). We also received a representation from Trowell Parish Council supporting the Borough Council’s proposals.

62 We considered that the proposals from the Borough Council in this area would utilise clear ward boundaries, facilitate a high degree of electoral equality and reflect the local settlement pattern. We therefore adopted the Borough Council’s proposals for these three wards in our draft recommendations.

63 During Stage Three, we received a submission from Trowell Parish Council which expressed support for the proposed single-member Trowell ward. In the light of this support, and the

absence of any further representations, we are confirming as final our draft recommendations for Trowell ward.

64 As noted above, we also received a submission from Greasley Parish Council which opposed our draft recommendations for the warding pattern in the area as it affected Greasley parish. As stated previously, we have concluded that Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) and Nuthall East & Strelley wards achieve a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and that a comparable alternative which would provide for the borough warding to be contained solely within the parish could not be found without an adverse affect on the scheme for the borough as a whole. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) and Nuthall East & Strelley wards as final, which are illustrated on the large maps at the back of the report.

Stapleford East, Stapleford North and Stapleford West wards

65 These three three-member wards are located in the south-west of the borough and together comprise the whole of Stapleford parish, which for electoral purposes is currently warded. Stapleford East ward also contains part of the adjoining unparished area of Bramcote. The current electoral variances are 14 per cent in Stapleford East, 14 per cent in Stapleford North and 19 per cent in Stapleford West (15 per cent, 8 per cent and 21 per cent respectively in 2004).

66 In its Stage One submission, the Borough Council proposed re-warding the parish of Stapleford to create a modified two-member Stapleford North ward, comprising most of the existing Stapleford North ward except for properties along the south of Hickings Lane. These properties, along with that part of Stapleford parish within Stapleford East ward and properties on the east side of Toton Lane (currently part of Stapleford West ward) would form part of a new Stapleford South East ward. The unparished area of the existing Stapleford East ward would form part of a modified Bramcote ward (detailed later). A modified two-member Stapleford South West ward would comprise most of the present Stapleford West ward apart from properties to the east of Toton Lane. Under the Borough Council's proposals, the electoral variance in Stapleford North, Stapleford South East and Stapleford South West wards would be 2 per cent, 1 per cent and 6 per cent (4 per cent, 1 per cent and 5 per cent respectively in 2004).

67 We received no further comments on the proposed warding pattern in Stapleford during Stage One. We judged that the Borough Council's proposals would achieve reasonable electoral equality and utilise clear ward boundaries and therefore included them as part of our draft recommendations.

68 At Stage Three, we received a submission from the three existing Bramcote ward councillors and submissions from three local residents proposing that the parish boundary should follow the centre of Baulk Lane. We also received a petition signed by 38 residents of Valmont Road and Baulk Lane supporting this modification.

69 As noted earlier, as part of this PER, we are unable to modify external parish boundaries. While we note the defaced nature of this parish boundary, and in a number of areas elsewhere in the borough, under the 1997 Local Government and Rating Act, the remit for such a review rests

with Broxtowe Borough Council. Officers at the Council have indicated that the Council intends to undertake such a parish review upon completion of this review.

70 In the absence of any other comments, we are therefore confirming as final our draft recommendations for Stapleford North, Stapleford South East and Stapleford South West wards. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

The Unparished Area

71 The unparished area of the borough comprises the areas of the former Beeston and Stapleford UDC, less the Stapleford area that became a parish following the Borough Council's last parish review in 1986. The area includes the settlements of Beeston and Chilwell and has an electorate of nearly 40,500 or nearly half the borough's total electorate.

Bramcote ward

72 The three-member Bramcote ward is located to the east of Stapleford parish. Under the existing arrangements, the average number of electors per councillor in the ward is 13 per cent below the borough average (14 per cent below in 2004).

73 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a modified Bramcote ward, comprising most of the existing ward with the exception of properties on Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close. The ward would also include the unparished part of the current Stapleford East ward and an area of the current Beeston North West ward, broadly around the Cemetery. Under this proposal, the electoral variance in Bramcote ward would be 7 per cent (4 per cent in 2004). We also received a petition signed by 89 electors from residents of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close opposing the Borough Council's proposal. Three local residents made submissions at Stage One supporting the Borough Council's proposal to include the unparished area of the current Stapleford East ward in the modified Bramcote ward, which they considered would better reflect local community links. In our draft recommendations, we considered the proposals for this area and concluded that the Borough Council's proposed warding pattern achieved the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and it therefore formed part of our draft recommendations.

74 At Stage Three, we received comments from the Borough Council which supported the draft recommendations that Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close should form part of Chilwell East ward. The Council stated it "is of the opinion that for electoral purpose the area [Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close] should be within Chilwell East ward. Although electoral wards are being changed throughout the borough, the boundaries of the ecclesiastical parishes remain unaltered."

75 We also received a submission from a local resident supporting the draft recommendation that the unparished area of the existing Stapleford East ward should form part of Bramcote ward for community identity reasons. As mentioned earlier, we also received a number of comments on the boundary between Stapleford East and Bramcote ward which would utilise the present parish boundary of Stapleford parish.

76 We also received a submission from the three borough councillors for the existing Bramcote ward who opposed the inclusion of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close in Chilwell East ward stating, “The residents have expressed ... their very strong ties with Bramcote.” Additionally, we received a further 34 representations from residents of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close opposing the draft recommendations. One resident specifically stated, “We feel very much part of the Bramcote community; the church is here, the kids nursery and all our friends and neighbours.” These arguments were reflected by a number of respondents and a number of residents also commented that were the two roads to form part of a modified Bramcote ward, the electoral variance would be below 10 per cent from the average.

77 We have carefully considered the representations on our draft recommendations for Bramcote ward. We have noted the views of the Borough Council together with the opposing views of the local residents. First, it is worthwhile to clarify that the primary purpose of this Periodic Electoral Review is to achieve, so far as is practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. In doing so, we must also have regard to the statutory criteria to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and secure effective and convenient local government. We adopted the Borough Council’s proposals for Bramcote and Chilwell East wards in our draft recommendations because they achieved a good balance of electoral equality between the two wards while facilitating a suitable borough warding pattern elsewhere in the borough, which would meet the various criteria of the review.

78 In looking at the submissions from residents of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close, a large proportion of the comments made fell outside the remit of this PER. As part of this review, we do not have regard to, nor have any impact upon, school catchment areas, council tax valuations, ecclesiastical boundaries, post codes or property valuations. Therefore, it is our view that many respondents who expressed their community links with Bramcote did so with the impression that school catchment areas etc. would be modified as a result of our proposals. Additionally, having visited the area, we note that the streets concerned are separated from those to the north by a significant area of green space. We found that the area could equally look to the south, with which it forms a continuous area, as to the north without adversely affecting community identity.

79 We therefore remain of the view that Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close should form part of Chilwell East ward for electoral purposes. This recommendation would achieve better electoral equality in Bramcote ward at 7 per cent (4 per cent in 2004) which would worsen to 9 per cent (7 per cent in 2004) were the two roads to form part of Bramcote ward. Additionally, we consider that the northern boundary of Chilwell East ward, as proposed in our draft recommendations, is clearly defined and takes account of future development to the north of Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close.

80 We are therefore confirming as final our draft recommendations for Bramcote ward. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Beeston Central, Beeston North-East, Beeston North-West and Beeston Rylands wards

81 These four wards cover the town of Beeston, located in the far south-east of the borough. Beeston Central and Beeston North East wards each return three councillors and have electoral

variances of 2 per cent and 12 per cent respectively (1 per cent and 15 per cent in 2004). Beeston North West and Beeston Rylands wards each return two councillors and have electoral variances of 18 per cent and 3 per cent respectively (20 per cent and 6 per cent in 2004).

82 In its Stage One submission, the Borough Council proposed four revised wards for the Beeston area, each returning two councillors. A new Beeston North ward would comprise the existing Beeston North East ward apart from the Salthouse Lane/Cloisters area which, together with part of the existing Beeston Central ward broadly east of Dovecote Lane, would form a modified Beeston Central ward. Under these proposals, Beeston North and Beeston Central wards would have electoral variances of 13 and 4 per cent respectively (9 and 1 per cent in 2004).

83 Under the Borough Council's proposals, a new Beeston West ward would comprise part of the existing Beeston Central ward, west of Dovecote Lane, along with most of the existing Beeston North-West ward south of Old Drive and Bramcote Drive. An area of the existing Chilwell East ward, broadly west of Park Road and east of properties to the rear of Grove Avenue, would also form part of the Council's proposed Beeston West ward. The Borough Council's revised Beeston Rylands ward would comprise all of the existing Beeston Rylands ward together with an area of the existing Beeston Central ward south of Queens Road, west of Dovecote Lane, north of the railway line and to the east of Marina Avenue. Under the Borough Council's proposal, Beeston West and Beeston Rylands wards would have electoral variances of 11 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (both 7 per cent in 2004).

84 We carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals for Beeston town and noted the improvement to electoral equality achieved. However, we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals for Beeston North, Beeston West and Beeston Rylands wards could be further improved in order to achieve a better balance of electoral equality across the town. We therefore proposed transferring an area of the Council's proposed Beeston North ward around the town centre (south of Abbey Road and west of Muriel Road and Derby Street) to a modified Beeston West ward. We also proposed transferring an area broadly south of West End/Middle Street, east of Dovecote Lane and west of Station Road into a modified Beeston Rylands ward. We judged that these modifications would further improve the balance of electoral equality across the town while having regard to the statutory criteria and adopted them in our draft recommendations. We proposed that the Council's proposals for Beeston Central ward should be adopted unaltered as they would achieve a good degree of electoral equality and utilise clearly identifiable ward boundaries. Under our draft recommendations, the electoral variance in Beeston North ward would be 7 per cent, in Beeston West ward it would be 5 per cent and in Beeston Rylands ward it would be 6 per cent (3 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent respectively in 2004).

85 At Stage Three, the Borough Council proposed amended ward boundaries in the Beeston area which it considered would utilise "more clearly identifiable ward boundaries" while maintaining the improved electoral equality in the area. It proposed that an area of our proposed Beeston Central ward south of Queen's Road, east of Station Road and west of properties along Mona Street should form part of Beeston Rylands ward. Additionally, it proposed that an area of our proposed Beeston Rylands ward, north of Queen's Road south of West End/Middle Street, east of Dovecote Lane and west of Station Road should form part of a modified Beeston Central ward. The Council noted it considered the northern boundary of Beeston Rylands ward should not extend beyond Queen's Road which would be "to the detriment of the community" were it to do

so. The Council also noted that the areas it proposed should form part of Beeston Central were already part of the existing Beeston Central ward. The Council also proposed modifying the boundary between Beeston North and Beeston West wards in order that the whole of Muriel Road should fall within Beeston North ward. It considered that if Muriel Road were included in two different borough wards, as in the draft recommendations, this would cause “unnecessary confusion”.

86 Under the Council’s modified proposals in the Beeston area, Beeston North, Beeston West, Beeston Rylands and Beeston Central wards would have electoral variances of 7 per cent, 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 3 per cent (4 per cent, 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent in 2004).

87 Beeston Labour Party and Broxtowe Labour Party (Local Government Committee) both opposed the draft proposals in Beeston and supported the Borough Council’s original Stage One scheme as it affected the town.

88 We have carefully considered the representations we received for Beeston. In our draft recommendations report, we concluded that the Borough Council’s original Stage One scheme for the town, as supported by the two Labour Party submissions at Stage Three, would not achieve an acceptable balance in electoral equality across the town and we have not been provided with further evidence to persuade us otherwise during Stage Three. However, having carefully considered the Borough Council’s alternative Stage Three proposals, we have been persuaded that these modifications would achieve the same high degree of electoral equality as under our draft recommendations and would additionally utilise more easily identifiable ward boundaries, in particular, Queen’s Road. We are therefore adopting the Council’s Stage Three alternative warding pattern in Beeston as part of our final recommendations, as illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Chilwell East and Chilwell West wards

89 The two wards of Chilwell East and Chilwell West each return three councillors and are located in the south of the borough. The average number of electors per councillor in Chilwell East ward is 10 per cent below the borough average and in Chilwell West ward 15 per cent below (11 per cent and 18 per cent below in 2004).

90 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a new two-member Chilwell East ward comprising that part of the existing ward broadly west of Grove Avenue, north of Queen’s Road/Bye Pass Road, east of Chilwell Lane/Bramcote Lane and Attenborough Lane and south of open land to the north of Kingsbridge Way and Cliffe Grove Avenue. The remaining parts of the existing Chilwell East ward would be included in a modified Attenborough ward (detailed later), and a modified Beeston West ward (detailed above). It also proposed that the boundaries of the existing three-member Chilwell West ward should be modified with an area of the existing Attenborough ward, north of Carter Road/Chetwynd Road and High Road, forming part of the ward, together with the Haddon Crescent and Burgh Hall Close areas.

91 Under the Borough Council’s proposed Chilwell East and Chilwell West wards, the electoral variances would be 3 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (3 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004). As noted above, we received a Stage One submission and a petition from residents of Kingsbridge

Way and Turnberry Close who opposed their inclusion in the proposed Chilwell East ward for community identity reasons. However, as noted earlier, we concluded that in order to achieve a good balance of electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria, our draft recommendations should include these two roads within the proposed Chilwell East ward. We received no further direct comments on the Chilwell area during Stage One and we judged that the Borough Council's proposals, subject to a number of minor boundary modifications affecting no electors, would achieve good electoral equality, reflect the statutory criteria and utilise clear ward boundaries where possible and therefore should form part of our draft recommendations.

92 During Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations in this area. We also received a number of representations from residents in Kingsbridge Way and Turnberry Close who opposed their inclusion in Chilwell East ward as detailed above. We carefully considered the representations we received for this area and we concluded that in order to achieve the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, we should confirm our draft recommendations as final. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Attenborough and Toton wards

93 The two two-member wards of Attenborough and Toton are located in the far south-west of the borough. Under existing arrangements, Attenborough ward is under-represented by 28 per cent and Toton ward by 34 per cent (30 per cent and 32 per cent respectively in 2004).

94 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a new three-member Toton & Chilwell Meadows ward which would comprise the whole of the existing Toton ward along with part of the existing Attenborough ward, including the former Ministry of Defence Ordnance Depot. The Borough Council also proposed modifying the existing two-member Attenborough ward to form a new single-member ward. An area of the existing ward north of the Queen's Road/Bye Pass Road and Nottingham Road would form parts of the modified Chilwell East, Chilwell West and Toton & Chilwell Meadows wards, with the River Erewash and borough boundary forming the southern and western ward boundaries. The eastern boundary would follow a line between the allotment gardens and the Nottingham Rugby Football Club ground. Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Toton & Chilwell Meadows ward would be 5 per cent below the borough average and in Attenborough ward, 1 per cent below (4 and 3 per cent below respectively in 2004). We received no further representations at Stage One regarding these two wards and we were satisfied that the Borough Council's proposed Toton & Chilwell Meadows and Attenborough wards would achieve a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore adopted them as part of our draft recommendations.

95 At Stage Three, we received representations from Attenborough Village Environment Protection Association which suggested that the area of housing around Charlton Grove in the north east corner of the borough should form part of Beeston Rylands ward for community identity reasons. Similarly, Attenborough Branch Conservative Association stated the draft recommendations in this area were "not in the best interests of the voters concerned". We received no further representations at Stage Three for this area.

96 We have carefully re-examined our proposals for the area in the light of representations received during Stage Three. We noted, however, that we did not receive any representations from residents in the area around Charlton Grove commenting on our draft recommendations. Moreover, we found that if this area were to form part of Attenborough ward, as suggested by the Attenborough associations, the electoral variance would worsen to 10 per cent (12 per cent in 2004). We do not consider, on the available evidence, that such a warding pattern would facilitate good electoral equality. Furthermore, we conclude that there is an absence of widespread support for an alternative warding pattern which would facilitate the Charlton Grove area forming part of Beeston Rylands ward. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Attenborough ward as final, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

97 We received no comments on our proposed Totton & Chilwell East ward at Stage Three and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for this ward as final, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

98 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole council elections every four years.

99 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

100 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendment:

- in Beeston, we are amending our proposals and adopting those proposed by the Borough Council in its Stage Three submission, which we consider would better reflect ground features and local community ties in the area while not adversely impacting upon electoral equality.

101 We conclude that, in Broxtowe:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 49 to 44;
- there should be 21 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

102 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	49	44	49	44
Number of wards	21	21	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	1,749	1,947	1,791	1,994
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	14	1	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	6	0

103 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 14 to one, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would further improve in 2004, with no wards varying by more than 8 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Broxtowe Borough Council should comprise 44 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

104 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Greasley, Eastwood, Nuthall and Stapleford parishes to reflect the proposed borough wards. The parish of Eastwood is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Eastwood East, Eastwood North and Eastwood South, each returning five councillors.

105 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed re-warding the parish of Eastwood to reflect its reconfigured borough wards. Under these proposals, each of the two proposed borough wards containing parts of Eastwood parish would also form parish wards, with Eastwood North parish ward (containing that part of Eastwood parish within the proposed borough ward of Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale)) returning four councillors and Eastwood South parish ward (coterminous with the proposed borough ward of Eastwood South) returning 11 councillors.

106 Having adopted the Borough Council's proposed borough wards for Eastwood, we proposed the same two wards for Eastwood parish in our draft recommendations.

107 We received no comments at Stage Three on our proposed warding in Eastwood and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final. Our final proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Final Recommendation

Eastwood Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning four councillors) and South (11 councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as named on Map 2 and on the large map at the rear of the report.

108 The parish of Greasley is currently served by 15 councillors and is unwarded. At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed warding the parish to reflect its proposed borough ward boundaries between Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) and Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) and between this latter ward and the proposed ward of Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall). Under the Borough Council's proposals, one parish ward, to be called Greasley Beauvale would cover that part of Greasley parish with the proposed Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale) ward, returning two councillors. A second parish ward, Greasley Giltbrook & Newthorpe, would return nine councillors and cover that part of the parish contained within the proposed Greasley (Giltbrook & Newthorpe) ward. A third parish ward, Greasley Watnall, would return four councillors and cover that part of the parish contained within the proposed Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) ward.

109 Having adopted the Borough Council's proposed borough wards in the Greasley area, we recommended the adoption of the Borough Council's proposed consequential warding of Greasley parish in our draft report.

110 At Stage Three, Greasley Parish Council stated it was "not opposed, in principle, to the warding of the parish", although as detailed earlier, the Parish Council did not support the proposed borough warding pattern. However, having confirmed our draft recommendations for Borough wards in the Greasley area, we are confirming our proposed parish electoral arrangements as final.

Final Recommendation

Greasley Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Watnall (returning four councillors), Giltbrook & Newthorpe (nine councillors) and Beauvale (two councillors). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the rear of the report.

111 The parish of Nuthall is currently served by 13 councillors and is unwarded. At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed warding the parish to reflect its proposed borough wards in the area. It proposed a ward, Nuthall West, which would contain that part of Nuthall parish within Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) borough ward and would return four councillors, and a second parish ward containing that part of Nuthall parish within Nuthall East & Strelley ward, which would return 11 councillors. Nuthall Parish Council in its Stage One submission stated it had “no objections” to the Borough Council’s proposals as they affected the parish. As we adopted the Borough Council’s proposals for Nuthall West & Greasley (Watnall) and Nuthall East & Strelley borough wards, we therefore also recommended the adoption of the Borough Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries in the area as part of our draft recommendations.

112 At Stage Three, we received no comments on our proposed warding arrangements in Nuthall parish and, as we are confirming our draft borough warding pattern in the area as final, we are also confirming our draft parish electoral arrangements as final.

Final Recommendation

Nuthall Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Nuthall East (returning nine councillors) and Nuthall West (returning four councillors), as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

113 The parish of Stapleford is currently served by 18 parish councillors from three wards: Stapleford East (returning four councillors), Stapleford North (seven councillors) and Stapleford West (seven councillors). Each parish ward is coterminous with the existing borough ward of the same name.

114 At Stage One, we proposed re-warding the parish in order to reflect its proposed borough wards in the area. We proposed three new wards of Stapleford North (returning six councillors), Stapleford South West (six councillors) and Stapleford South East (six councillors), each coterminous with its proposed borough wards in the area.

115 At Stage Three, we received a representation from the three local borough councillors, three local residents together with a petition signed by 39 residents who proposed that the eastern edge of Stapleford parish boundary should be modified to better reflect the housing pattern in the borough. As mentioned earlier in this report, we are unable to modify external parish boundaries as part of this PER, although the Borough Council has indicated to us its intention to carry out

a parish review upon the completion of this review. We therefore are confirming as final our draft recommendations for Stapleford.

Final Recommendation

Stapleford Town Council should comprise 18 town councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Stapleford North, Stapleford South West and Stapleford South East, each returning six town councillors, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

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

Final Recommendation

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the Borough Council.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Broxtowe

6 NEXT STEPS

117 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Broxtowe and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

118 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made until six weeks after he receives our final recommendations.

119 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Broxtowe

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only four wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

Figure A1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Beeston Central	Beeston Central ward (part); Beeston North East ward (part)
Beeston North	Beeston North East ward (part)
Beeston Rylands	Beeston Rylands ward; Beeston Central ward (part)
Beeston West	Beeston Central ward (part); Beeston North East (part); Beeston North West ward (part); Chilwell East ward (part)

Figure A2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Beeston Central	2	4,043	2,022	4	4,028	2,014	1
Beeston North	2	4,154	2,077	7	4,118	2,060	3
Beeston Rylands	2	4,112	2,056	6	4,178	2,089	5
Beeston West	2	4,098	2,049	5	4,059	2,030	2

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Broxtowe 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.