

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for South Bucks in Buckinghamshire

Report to the Secretary of State for
Transport, Local Government and the Regions

November 2001

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WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of South Bucks in Buckinghamshire.

SUMMARY

We began a review of South Bucks electoral arrangements on 5 September 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 2001. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore, the closing date for the receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001.

- **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 arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in South Bucks:

- **in eight of the 19 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and four wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2005 this situation 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 eight wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

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

- **South Bucks District Council should have 40 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 19 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In all of the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Hedgerley & Fulmer, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross and Iver.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing them before 2 January 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Map reference |
|----|---|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1 | Beaconsfield North | 3 | part of Beaconsfield parish (the proposed Beaconsfield North parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A2 |
| 2 | Beaconsfield South | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> (the Beaconsfield South parish ward of Beaconsfield parish) | Map 2 and Map A2 |
| 3 | Beaconsfield West | 2 | part of Beaconsfield parish (the proposed Beaconsfield West parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A2 |
| 4 | Burnham Beeches | 1 | part of Burnham parish (the proposed Burnham Beeches parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A3 |
| 5 | Burnham Church | 3 | part of Burnham parish (the proposed Burnham Church parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A3 |
| 6 | Burnham Lent Rise | 3 | part of Burnham parish (the proposed Burnham Lent Rise parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A4 |
| 7 | Denham North | 2 | part of Denham parish (the proposed Denham North parish ward) | Map 2 and large map |
| 8 | Denham South | 2 | part of Denham parish (the proposed Denham South parish ward) | Map 2 and large map |
| 9 | Dorney & Burnham South | 1 | the parish of Dorney; part of Burnham parish (the proposed Burnham South parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A4 |
| 10 | Farnham Royal | 3 | part of Farnham Royal parish (the proposed Farnham Royal North parish ward) | Map 2 and Map A5 |
| 11 | Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West | 1 | part of Denham parish (the proposed Denham South West parish ward); part of Gerrards Cross parish (the proposed Gerrards Cross East parish ward) | Map 2 and large map |
| 12 | Gerrards Cross North | 2 | part of Gerrards Cross parish (the proposed Gerrards Cross North parish ward) | Map 2 and large map |
| 13 | Gerrards Cross South | 3 | part of Gerrards Cross parish (the proposed Gerrards Cross South parish ward) | Map 2 and large map |
| 14 | Hedgerley & Fulmer | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer) | Map 2 |
| 15 | Iver Heath | 3 | part of Iver parish (the proposed Iver Heath parish ward) | Map 2, Maps A6 and A7 |
| 16 | Iver Village & Richings Park | 3 | part of Iver parish (the proposed Iver Village & Richings Park parish ward) | Map 2, Maps A6 and A7 |
| 17 | Stoke Poges | 3 | part of Farnham Royal parish (the proposed Farnham Royal South parish ward); the parish of Stoke Poges | Map 2 and Map A5 |

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Map reference |
|----|--------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 18 | Taplow | 1 | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Taplow) | Map 2 |
| 19 | Wexham & Iver West | 2 | part of Iver parish (the proposed Iver West parish ward); the parish of Wexham | Map 2 and Map A6 |

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for South Bucks

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Beaconsfield North | 3 | 3,540 | 1,180 | -3 | 3,609 | 1,203 | -2 |
| 2 Beaconsfield South | 2 | 2,404 | 1,202 | -1 | 2,505 | 1,253 | 2 |
| 3 Beaconsfield West | 2 | 2,316 | 1,158 | -4 | 2,378 | 1,189 | -3 |
| 4 Burnham Beeches | 1 | 1,124 | 1,124 | -7 | 1,134 | 1,134 | -7 |
| 5 Burnham Church | 3 | 3,679 | 1,226 | 1 | 3,709 | 1,236 | 1 |
| 6 Burnham Lent Rise | 3 | 3,423 | 1,141 | -6 | 3,587 | 1,196 | -2 |
| 7 Denham North | 2 | 2,407 | 1,204 | -1 | 2,411 | 1,206 | -2 |
| 8 Denham South | 2 | 2,658 | 1,329 | 10 | 1,206 | 1,324 | 9 |
| 9 Dorney & Burnham South | 1 | 1,173 | 1,173 | -3 | 1,167 | 1,167 | -5 |
| 10 Farnham Royal | 3 | 4,005 | 1,335 | 10 | 4,019 | 1,340 | 9 |
| 11 Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West | 1 | 1,203 | 1,203 | -1 | 1,203 | 1,203 | -2 |
| 12 Gerrards Cross North | 2 | 2,370 | 1,185 | -2 | 2,386 | 1,193 | -3 |
| 13 Gerrards Cross South | 2 | 2,378 | 1,189 | -2 | 2,428 | 1,214 | -1 |
| 14 Hedgerley & Fulmer | 1 | 1,092 | 1,092 | -10 | 1,087 | 1,087 | -11 |
| 15 Iver Heath | 3 | 3,446 | 1,149 | -5 | 3,480 | 1,160 | -5 |
| 16 Iver Village & Richings Park | 3 | 3,739 | 1,246 | 3 | 3,733 | 1,244 | 2 |
| 17 Stoke Poges | 3 | 3,876 | 1,292 | 7 | 3,866 | 1,289 | 5 |
| 18 Taplow | 1 | 1,273 | 1,273 | 5 | 1,269 | 1,269 | 4 |
| 19 Wexham & Iver West | 2 | 2,358 | 1,179 | -3 | 2,363 | 1,182 | -4 |
| Totals | 40 | 48,464 | - | - | 48,981 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,212 | - | - | 1,225 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Bucks District 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of South Bucks in Buckinghamshire. We have now reviewed the four districts in Buckinghamshire 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 finish in 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of South Bucks. The last review of South Bucks was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1979 (Report no. 366). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1982 (Report no. 438). 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, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

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

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 also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should

automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half 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 were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 5 September 2000, when we wrote to South Bucks District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2001. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 May 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Bucks in Buckinghamshire*. During this period we sought comments from the public and other interested parties on our preliminary conclusions. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore, the closing date for the receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001. 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

12 South Bucks district is bounded by Chiltern, Three Rivers and Wycombe districts to its north, by Slough to its south, by Windsor & Maidenhead to its west and by the Greater London boroughs to its east. The district is an area of the Thames Valley just to the south of the Chiltern Hills and boasts fine woodland, open countryside and attractive villages and settlements. The largest settlements are the town of Beaconsfield in the north-west of the district and the parish of Burnham in the south-west of the district. The district is entirely parished and contains 12 parishes.

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

14 The electorate of the district is 48,464 (February 2000). The Council presently has 40 members who are elected from 19 wards. Seven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and five are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

15 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in South Bucks district, with around 6 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,212 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,225 by the year 2005 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 eight of the 19 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, four wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Dorney ward where the councillor represents 51 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in South Bucks

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Beaconsfield North | 3 | 3,395 | 1,132 | -7 | 3,465 | 1,155 | -6 |
| 2 Beaconsfield South | 2 | 2,404 | 1,202 | -1 | 2,505 | 1,253 | 2 |
| 3 Beaconsfield West | 2 | 2,461 | 1,231 | 2 | 2,522 | 1,261 | 3 |
| 4 Burnham Beeches | 2 | 2,320 | 1,160 | -4 | 2,318 | 1,159 | -5 |
| 5 Burnham Church | 2 | 2,433 | 1,217 | 0 | 2,479 | 1,240 | 1 |
| 6 Burnham Lent Rise | 3 | 4,049 | 1,350 | 11 | 4,211 | 1,404 | 15 |
| 7 Denham North | 3 | 2,842 | 947 | -22 | 2,846 | 949 | -23 |
| 8 Denham South | 2 | 2,600 | 1,300 | 7 | 2,589 | 1,295 | 6 |
| 9 Dorney | 1 | 597 | 597 | -51 | 594 | 594 | -51 |
| 10 Farnham Royal | 3 | 4,288 | 1,429 | 18 | 4,302 | 1,434 | 17 |
| 11 Gerrards Cross North | 2 | 2,400 | 1,200 | -1 | 2,416 | 1,208 | -1 |
| 12 Gerrards Cross South | 3 | 3,174 | 1,058 | -13 | 3,220 | 1,073 | -12 |
| 13 Hedgerley & Fulmer | 1 | 1,092 | 1,092 | -10 | 1,087 | 1,087 | -11 |
| 14 Iver Heath | 3 | 3,589 | 1,196 | -1 | 3,623 | 1,208 | -1 |
| 15 Iver Richings Park | 1 | 1,471 | 1,471 | 21 | 1,464 | 1,464 | 20 |
| 16 Iver Village | 2 | 2,704 | 1,352 | 12 | 2,701 | 1,351 | 10 |
| 17 Stoke Poges | 3 | 3,593 | 1,198 | -1 | 3,583 | 1,194 | -2 |
| 18 Taplow | 1 | 1,273 | 1,273 | 5 | 1,269 | 1,269 | 4 |
| 19 Wexham | 1 | 1,779 | 1,779 | 47 | 1,787 | 1,787 | 46 |
| Totals | 40 | 48,464 | - | - | 48,981 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,212 | - | - | 1,225 | - |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Bucks District 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 2000, electors in Dorney ward were relatively over-represented by 51 per cent, while electors in Wexham ward were significantly under-represented by 47 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received ten representations, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and Councillors Rigby and Cooper, and representations from five parish and town councils, a local Conservative Association and two district councillors. 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 South Bucks in Buckinghamshire*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the proposals from Councillors Rigby and Cooper, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards across the district. However, we moved away from Councillors Rigby and Cooper's scheme in three areas, using our own proposals. We proposed that:

- South Bucks District Council should be served by 40 councillors, the same as at present, representing 18 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross and Iver.

Draft Recommendation

South Bucks District Council should comprise 40 councillors, serving 18 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. An improved level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with only Hedgerley & Fulmer ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 172 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of South Bucks District Council.

South Bucks District Council

21 The District Council resolved that “no formal response be made to the Local Government Commission for England’s draft recommendations and parishes be recommended to respond directly”.

Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper

22 Councillors Rigby and Cooper largely supported our draft proposals. However, they objected to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward, and our proposals for the parishes of Denham, Gerrards Cross and Farnham Royal.

Members of Parliament

23 Dominic Grieve MP objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward.

Parish and Town Councils

24 We received representations from the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils and ten parish councils. The Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils objected to our proposals for Denham parish. The parishes of Fulmer, Gerrards Cross, Beaconsfield, Wexham, Taplow and Hedgerley supported our draft recommendations for their respective wards. Stoke Poges Parish Council accepted our proposals for its area. The parishes of Denham and Burnham objected to our proposals for their respective areas. Denham Parish Council proposed three alternative warding arrangements which were supported by Hedgerley Parish Council. Burnham Parish Council proposed that a ward be created comprising the parishes of Taplow and Dorney. Iver Parish Council objected to our proposals for their parish.

Other Representations

25 A further 158 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from two local political groups, five local organisations, a county councillor, ten councillors and 140 residents.

26 Councillors Lidgate, Mallowan, Mountford and County Councillor Webber objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. Councillors Lidgate, Mallowan and Webber supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward. Councillors Lidgate, Mallowan, Mountford and Webber objected to our proposals to include Palmers Moor Lane in Iver Heath ward. Councillor Burry supported our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. Councillor Jones objected to our recommendation to combine Iver Village and Richings Park in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park ward.

27 Councillors Hollis, Kverndal, Temple, Whitehouse and Winterbourn objected to our recommendations for Denham parish. Councillor Hollis proposed that Denham parish be represented by four councillors in order to maintain the integrity of the parish. Councillor Temple supported our

recommendations for a 40-member council and our proposals for Beaconsfield, but objected to our proposals for Farnham parish. Councillor Whitehouse proposed a number of alternative warding arrangements in the Iver area. Councillor Winterbourn proposed that Denham parish be represented by four councillors.

28 The Iver Branch Liberal Democrats supported our recommendations for a 40-member council, but objected to our recommendations for Iver parish, proposing an alternative warding arrangement for the area. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to our recommendations for the parishes of Denham, Gerrards Cross, Burnham, Dorney, Farnham Royal, Stoke Poges, Iver and Wexham.

29 Bakers Wood Residents Association, Denham Green Residents' Association and the Higher Denham Community Association objected to our recommendations for Denham parish and supported the proposals of Denham Parish Council. We received representations from 59 residents who objected to our proposals for Denham parish, 23 of whom specifically supported Denham Parish Council's proposals for alternative warding arrangements.

30 Five residents made representations supporting our recommendations for Hedgerley & Fulmer ward, four of whom opposed the District Council's Stage One proposal for reducing the council size and one who supported our recommendation for a 40-member council. Two residents made representations concerning our recommendations for Burnham parish: one objected to our recommendation to combine part of Burnham parish with Dorney parish; both made suggestions for amendments to our recommended arrangements in the area.

31 Richings Park Residents' Association objected to our proposals to combine Richings Park and Iver Village in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park ward, proposing that they remain separate. Wood Lane Close Residents Association objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. We received 73 representations from local residents who objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, two of whom objected to our proposal to include Palmers Moor Lane within our proposed Iver Heath ward, and supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for South Bucks is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

35 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 minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

36 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 1.5 per cent from 48,464 to 49,226 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. However, on reconsideration the District Council revisited their forecast electorate. As a result the District Council resubmitted their forecast electorate based on a 0.5 per cent reduction from its original projection across the district, based on the Buckinghamshire Local Population Survey. Its revised forecast projected an increase of some 1 per cent from 48,464 to 48,981 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. As part of our draft recommendations, we accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and were satisfied that the Council’s revised estimates were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

37 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that these estimates are the best that can reasonably be made.

Council Size

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

39 At Stage One the District Council proposed a council of 36 members, a reduction of four. It argued that its preferred political management arrangements option was for a Leader/Cabinet model and that under a 40-member council “it would be difficult to find a full and meaningful role for every councillor”, while a council size as low as 33 would overburden the councillors. It argued that a 10 per cent cut was reasonable and would allow “some leeway above the minimum necessary to operate whilst not building in spare capacity”. It argued further that a scheme based on 36 members would “provide as close to electoral equality as can be reasonably achieved”, that the district’s councillor:elector ratio would be brought more into line with other Buckinghamshire districts and that a 36-member scheme “provides the best way of addressing electoral imbalances, [takes into account] identities and interests of local communities and secures effective and convenient local government”.

40 Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper proposed a council size of 40 members, the same as at present. They argued that there was no substantive case for altering the present council size. They argued further that the Leader/Cabinet model of political management had only been agreed informally and such matters as number and size of committees had not been agreed, stating further that there is “no suggestion that there will be less for members to do”.

41 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. Although we noted the Council’s proposal for a decrease in council size from 40 to 36, we did not consider that there was sufficient evidence to justify such a decrease. We were not convinced by the Council’s argumentation in relation to the new management structure as there appears to be no formal adoption as yet of a Leader/Cabinet style arrangement by the council. We did not consider that there was sufficient analysis of how the council would function under this structure. We also noted that there appeared to be wider support for the alternative proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper to maintain the current council size and a fair degree of opposition to the District Council’s proposal to reduce the council size to 36 members. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by the existing council size of 40 members.

42 During Stage Three Councillors Rigby and Cooper, Kverndal, Temple and Winterbourn, the Iver Branch Liberal Democrats, the parish councils of Denham and Fulmer and four local residents supported our proposals to maintain a council size of 40-members. Gerrards Cross Parish Council stated that it did not wish to oppose our proposed council size.

43 Councillor Whitehouse objected to our proposal to maintain the current council size and supported the District Council’s Stage One proposal for a council size of 36. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association also objected to our proposed council size and argued that 36 members would be sufficient, “noting that there are also 8 County Councillors and 141 Parish/Town Councillors”.

44 As stated in our draft recommendations, given the support for the retention of the current council size and the fact we were not convinced by the District Council’s argumentation for a reduction to a council size of 36 members, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by the existing council size of 40 members. We have noted the continued support at Stage Three for a retention of the current council size and remain unconvinced that a 36-member council would better meet the statutory criteria. Therefore, we are confirming our draft recommendations for a council size of 40.

Electoral Arrangements

45 We gave careful consideration to the views which we received at Stage One, and in particular the two district-wide schemes received from the District Council and Councillors Rigby and Cooper. We noted the general lack of consensus between the two schemes across the district and also that despite good levels of electoral equality under a 36-member council, under a 40-member council the majority of the District Council's proposals would have achieved relatively high levels of electoral inequality, which we were not persuaded to adopt in the light of alternative options available. Therefore, we based our draft proposals on the scheme submitted by Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper, which we considered would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or the other scheme submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further, have a greater regard to local community identities and interests and utilise better boundaries, we decided to move away from Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposals in three areas: Denham, Farnham and Gerrards Cross. Where possible we respected and used parish boundaries. However, we found that we were unable to allocate whole numbers of councillors to each separate area without a high degree of under- or over-representation. Therefore, in the interests of electoral equality we had to propose some warding arrangements which, while not ideal, we considered to be the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

46 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three and judge that modifications should be made to the boundary between our proposed Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards, to the boundaries between our proposed Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards, and to our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards;
- (b) Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards;
- (c) Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards;
- (d) Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards.

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

Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards

48 These three wards are situated in the north-west of the district and make up the parish of Beaconsfield. Beaconsfield North ward is currently represented by three councillors while Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards are each represented by two councillors. Under the current arrangements Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards have, respectively, 7 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 3 per cent more in 2005).

49 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards should be combined to form a three-member Beaconsfield South ward. It also proposed a three-member Beaconsfield North ward based largely on its existing boundary. Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that under their 40-member scheme the current warding arrangements should be maintained in the town, subject to a boundary amendment between the current Beaconsfield North and Beaconsfield West wards. They proposed that all the properties on Stratton Road and Gregories Road,

in the current Beaconsfield West ward, be transferred to their proposed Beaconsfield North ward. They argued that it was “logical that the whole of Gregories Road, should be united in the same ward”. Beaconsfield Town Council objected to the District Council’s proposals for the area, proposing that the current arrangements be maintained and supporting the alternative proposal for a 40-member council. Councillor Henry supported the proposals of Councillors Rigby and Cooper.

50 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. Given the support we received for the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper at Stage One, and also given that we were proposing a council size of 40 members, we were content to adopt Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper’s proposals for Beaconsfield in their entirety. We considered that their proposals provided for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we were persuaded that they reflected the local communities within the area. We also considered that their boundary amendment between the current Beaconsfield North and Beaconsfield West wards, uniting the properties on Gregories Road within a single ward, would provide for a more identifiable boundary.

51 At Stage Three Beaconsfield Town Council and Councillor Temple fully supported our proposals for the area. We received no other specific comments on this area.

52 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation for Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards as it would achieve reasonable electoral equality and has received some local support.

53 Under our final recommendations, our proposed Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards would have 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards

54 These five wards are situated in the south-west of the district. Burnham Lent Rise ward is represented by three councillors, and Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards are each represented by two councillors, the three wards comprising the parish of Burnham. Dorney ward (comprising the parish of the same name) and Taplow ward (comprising the parish of the same name) are each represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements, Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards have 4 per cent fewer, equal to, 11 per cent more, 51 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 15 per cent more, 51 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more in 2005).

55 At Stage One the District Council proposed warding Taplow parish, and combining the current Burnham Beeches ward with the northern area of Taplow parish to form a two-member Burnham Beeches & Taplow North ward. It proposed slightly modifying the boundary between the existing Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards in order to improve electoral equality in the area and it proposed that Dorney ward be combined with the southern part of the current Taplow ward to form a single-member Dorney & Taplow South ward. Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that the rural area of the current Burnham Beeches ward should be combined with that part of the current Farnham Royal ward to the south of Kingsway and Victoria Road, to form a two-member Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward. They also proposed that the southern part of the current Burnham Beeches ward should be combined with the current Burnham Church ward to form a new three-member Burnham Church ward. They proposed a modified three-member Burnham Lent Rise ward, that the area

of Burnham parish to the south of its proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward should be combined with Dorney parish to form a single-member Dorney & Burnham South ward and further proposed that the current single-member Taplow ward be maintained on its current boundaries. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposals.

56 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We noted that under a 40-member council the District Council's proposals would have resulted in an unacceptable level of electoral inequality. We therefore proposed maintaining Taplow ward on its current boundaries, in the light of the objections to splitting the parish of Taplow between two district wards. Under a 40-member scheme this ward already secured a good level of electoral equality. Given that the parish centres around the main street which runs through the centre of the parish, we considered that the statutory criteria would be better reflected by retaining the parish within a single ward, rather than by splitting the parish and combining the southern part of Taplow parish with Dorney parish. We noted that Dorney Parish Council proposed that it should be considered a "special case" but also noted that Dorney ward had over 50 per cent fewer electors than the district average currently and did not consider that this level was justified in the light of the alternative proposals available that provided for improved levels of electoral equality. We therefore proposed a single-member Dorney & Burnham South ward based on the proposals put forward by Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper. However, we proposed amending their proposed boundary in order to better reflect community identity in the area by uniting Conway Road and Briar Close (which has access onto Lent Rise Road) within Burnham Lent Rise ward. Therefore, we proposed that the boundary run eastwards behind the properties on Bath Road and to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Fern Drive, Rambler Close, Minton Rise, Hurstfield Drive and Huntercombe Close as far as the district boundary. We accepted that our proposals linked both rural and urban areas in the same ward but considered that they would provide for an acceptable level of electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria.

57 In the north of Burnham parish we based our draft recommendations on our own proposals. We carefully considered Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward but did not consider that it best reflected community identity in the area. We were of the view that Farnham Royal parish was orientated north to south along Beaconsfield Road and was a self-contained community. Therefore, we proposed a modified single-member Burnham Beeches ward comprising the majority of the current Burnham Beeches ward and part of the current Burnham Church ward. We proposed that the boundary between our proposed Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards run to the rear of the properties on Shenstone Drive and north along Hogfair Lane, to the rear of no.1 Green Lane, Green Lane Court and The Grange, to the north and to the rear of the properties on the western side of Green Lane, The Fairway and Hazlehurst Road, then west to the north of Cheveley Gardens, as we considered that the area to the east of this boundary was well connected to the rest of our proposed Burnham Beeches ward and already formed part of the existing ward. We then proposed that the boundary run to the north of the properties on the northern side of Poyle Lane and Bowmans Close as far as the district boundary, as we considered that these properties look towards our proposed Burnham Church ward. We also proposed a modified three-member Burnham Church ward and a modified three-member Burnham Lent Rise ward. We proposed that the boundary between the two wards run east along the path to the south of Hitcham House Farm, south along Lent Rise Road and along the centre of Alice Lane, south along Opendale Road and then east along Stomp Road as far as the district boundary, as this would improve electoral equality, provide for an identifiable boundary and reflect the statutory criteria.

58 Under our draft recommendations for a council of 40 members, our proposed Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney & Burnham South and Taplow wards would have 1 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per

councillor than the district average currently (equal to, 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more in 2005).

59 At Stage Three Councillors Rigby and Cooper supported our proposed Taplow and Dorney & Burnham South wards. They stated that “since it is not reasonable for Dorney to retain its own district councillor, nor for Taplow to be divided, the only remaining solution is for Dorney to be combined with a section of Burnham of roughly the same electoral strength”. They stated that they also accepted our proposed wards in the remainder of Burnham parish.

60 Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to our proposed Dorney & Burnham South ward.

61 In response to our draft recommendations Burnham Parish Council requested that the Commission use “natural boundaries where possible and ... seek to maintain the integrity of local communities”, particularly with regard to our proposed Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards. It stated further that it was concerned that our proposed Dorney & Burnham South ward would not effectively represent the residents of the two areas, and would not maintain the integrity of the two parishes concerned. It proposed that we give consideration to a ward comprising the parishes of Dorney and Taplow, arguing that there would possibly be development at the Cliveden site in Taplow parish. Taplow Parish Council and Hedgerley Parish Council supported our proposed Taplow ward.

62 Councillor Temple supported our proposed Taplow ward. She also supported our proposed Dorney & Burnham South ward, arguing that it was the least damaging solution and that the “electors of Dorney [would] not be numerically overwhelmed”. Councillor Kverndal supported our proposed Taplow ward.

63 A local resident proposed that Hatchgate Gardens and The Pound be transferred from our proposed Burnham Beeches ward to our proposed Burnham Church ward, arguing that these areas have a greater affinity with the village area. He also proposed that St Peters Close and The Precincts be transferred from Burnham Church ward to Burnham Lent Rise ward, arguing that it would unite a whole area that views Burnham Park as its centre. He objected to our proposed Dorney & Burnham South ward, arguing that the areas are different and that the parishes of Dorney and Taplow “share far more in terms of geography”. Another local resident also objected to our proposed Dorney & Burnham South ward and proposed that The Precincts, St Peters Close and the whole of Alice Lane be transferred to our proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward. She also proposed that the boundary between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards run along Britwell Road and Hogfair Lane and incorporate Hatchgate Gardens and The Pound in our proposed Burnham Church ward. A local resident supported our proposed Taplow ward.

64 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received. We have considered the proposal that Dorney parish be combined with part of Taplow parish but note that our proposed Dorney & Burnham South and Taplow wards have received some support. We also remain unconvinced that the statutory criteria would be better met by a ward combining the parishes of Dorney and Taplow and note that in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality we would be required to ward Taplow parish between two district wards. As stated in our draft recommendations we noted that Taplow centres around the main street which runs through the centre of the parish and we remain of the view that the statutory criteria would be better reflected by containing Taplow parish within a single ward. Therefore we confirm our proposed Taplow and Dorney & Burnham South wards as final. We have also carefully considered the alternative proposals for Burnham parish. Despite the worsened levels of electoral equality that would result from the proposals of the two local residents within our proposed Burnham Beeches ward we have been persuaded that the residents on The Pound and Hatchgate Gardens look towards our proposed Burnham Church ward rather than towards our proposed Burnham Beeches ward. Therefore we propose that the eastern boundary between these two

wards be amended to run to the rear of Hatchgate Gardens and along the northern boundary of Burnham Grammar School. However, we have not been persuaded to amend the boundary to run along Britwell Road as we note that it would further worsen electoral equality in our proposed Burnham Beeches ward and we are of the view that Britwell Road shares good links with the remainder of the ward.

65 We have also considered the proposal that St Peters Close and The Precinct be transferred from our proposed Burnham Church ward to our proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward. However, we were not convinced that the statutory criteria would be better served by this proposal and are of the view that the areas shares closer links with the remainder of our proposed Burnham Church ward than with our proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward. However, we propose that both sides of Alice Lane and those properties on Lent Green Lane within the current Burnham Lent Rise ward should be transferred from our proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward to our proposed Burnham Church ward. We are of the view that uniting these roads within a single ward would better reflect community identity in the area without impacting on electoral equality.

66 Under our final recommendations our proposed Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney & Burnham South and Taplow wards would have 7 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (7 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards

67 These five wards are situated in the north-east of the district. Denham North ward (comprising Denham North parish ward of Denham parish) and Gerrards Cross South ward (comprising Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish) are each represented by three councillors. Denham South ward (comprising Denham South parish ward of Denham parish) and Gerrards Cross North ward (comprising Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish) are each represented by two councillors. Hedgerley & Fulmer ward (comprising the parishes of the same names) is represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards have 22 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 13 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (23 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 12 per cent fewer and 11 per cent fewer respectively in 2005).

68 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward should be combined with that part of the current Gerrards Cross South ward to the west of Fulmer Road to form a three-member Fulmer, Gerrards Cross South & Hedgerley ward. It also proposed that the current Gerrards Cross North ward should be combined with that part of the current Gerrards Cross South ward to the east of Fulmer road to form a two-member Gerrards Cross North ward and that the current Denham North and Denham South wards should be maintained on their existing boundaries. Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward should be maintained on its current boundaries. They stated that, as both Denham and Gerrards Cross parishes merited four and a half councillors each, it seemed “sensible to arrange matters so that between them they elect nine councillors”. They proposed a revised two-member Gerrards Cross North ward and a revised Gerrards Cross South ward. They proposed that part of Gerrards Cross parish be combined with part of the current Denham South ward to form a two-member Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward. They proposed that the remainder of the current Denham South ward be combined with the current Denham North ward to form a three-member Denham North ward.

69 Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association argued that Councillor Rigby and Cooper's proposed Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward combined areas that are "quite different and in fact quite separate". Denham Parish Council stated that it would have "concerns about any alternative warding arrangement that had effects on the unity of the parish" and stated that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward works well. Hedgerley Parish Council supported the proposals of Councillors Rigby and Cooper and objected to the District Council's proposals in the area. Councillor Temple also supported the proposals put forward by Councillors Rigby and Cooper.

70 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. We noted the argumentation in support of maintaining Hedgerley & Fulmer ward on its current boundaries but also that it would have 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor by 2005. However, we were convinced that combining the area with Gerrards Cross South ward would not best reflect community identity in the area, as the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer are largely rural while Gerrards Cross South is more urban. We were therefore content to endorse a single-member Hedgerley & Fulmer ward as part of our draft recommendations. We noted that the District Council's proposals secured good levels of electoral equality, maintained Denham North and Denham South wards on their current boundaries and provided identifiable boundaries in the rest of the area, but we also noted that under a 40-member council size its proposals would lead to an unacceptable level of electoral inequality in the area. We also considered the proposals put forward by Councillors Rigby and Cooper for this area but although their proposals secured a good level of electoral equality, we were not persuaded that they best reflected community identity in the area. Therefore, we put forward our own proposals for the remainder of this north-eastern area.

71 Given that under a 40-member scheme Gerrards Cross and Denham would, between them, be entitled to 4.5 councillors each, we agreed with Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper that these two areas should be allocated a total of nine councillors. However, given that each area warrants a half councillor, this meant that part of Gerrards Cross parish would have to be placed in a ward with part of Denham parish. However, we were not persuaded that the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper best reflected the statutory criteria and noted that the south-east corner of their proposed Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward was isolated from the rest of the ward. We proposed modifying the current Denham North and Gerrards Cross North wards, creating a new two-member Denham South ward and combining the current Gerrards Cross South ward with the eastern part of the current Denham South ward in a new three-member ward. Our proposed two-member Gerrards Cross North ward would comprise the area to the east of Oxford Road, to the south of and including the properties on Morelands Drive and Beech Waye, to the west of the A413 and to the north of the railway line. We noted that the current three-member Denham North ward had 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average and we therefore proposed that it should be represented by two councillors and modified to secure a more acceptable level of electoral variance, and to better reflect community identity in the area. We proposed that its southern boundary run east along the railway as far as Tilehouse Lane; we then proposed that the boundary run south along the centre of Tilehouse Lane, north along North Orbital Road and then east along the railway line as far as the district boundary. We considered that this utilised easily identifiable boundaries, while linking areas that are well connected and share community interests. We proposed that the area to the south of the railway line in the current Denham North ward, except for the properties on Tilehouse Lane, be transferred to our proposed two-member Denham South ward.

72 We proposed splitting the current Denham South ward between our proposed Denham South and Gerrards Cross South wards in order to secure a good level of electoral equality in the area while having regard to the statutory criteria. We proposed that the boundary between the two wards run east along the M40 before heading north to the east of Field Road, north along Blacksmith's Lane and west along Oxford Road. We then proposed that the boundary run to the rear of the properties on Bakers Wood and to the north of the properties on Broken Gate Lane and then west as far as the parish boundary. We

recognised that our proposed three-member Gerrards Cross South ward was not ideal and stated that we generally try to avoid combining rural and urban areas within the same ward wherever possible. However, we considered that the two rural areas to the east and west of Gerrards Cross shared similar interests and should therefore be combined in a ward with the southern part of Gerrards Cross, in order to offer a reasonable level of electoral equality.

73 Under our draft proposals for a council of 40 members, our proposed Denham North ward, Denham South ward, Gerrards Cross North ward, Gerrards Cross South ward and Hedgerley & Fulmer ward would have 1 per cent fewer, 10 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 11 per cent fewer in 2005).

74 At Stage Three Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that the parishes of Denham and Gerrards Cross remain intact in the interests of community identity. They proposed that Denham parish be represented by a total of four district councillors and that Gerrards Cross parish be represented by five. As an alternative they proposed a single-member ward “which straddles the boundary between Denham and Gerrards Cross” made up of an equal number of electors from each parish. They proposed that this be achieved by transferring those electors “outside of urban New Denham, Denham Village, and Higher Denham”. They proposed that the ward be based on their Stage One proposal but that the boundary “go less far down Fulmer Road” in order that the number of electors from both parishes be more equal. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward.

75 Denham Parish Council objected to our draft proposals for their parish. It argued that the “integrity of this parish is paramount” and stated that although the parish was formed from several communities the “sense of Denham as a whole community” had been achieved. It proposed three alternative options for the Denham area. Its favoured option combined Willowbank, New Denham, Tatling End and the area of smallholdings to the south of Oxford Road in a single-member Denham South ward, and the Bakers Wood, Denham Village, Higher Denham and Denham Green areas in a three-member Denham North ward. Its second option, which it stated was “considered suitable”, combined the whole of Denham parish in a four-member Denham ward. It argued that the parish merited representation in a four-member district ward because “the special problems faced by trying to ensure balanced variances in a place like Denham with its separate communities should be counted as exceptional”. Its third option combined the Higher Denham and Denham Green areas in a two-member Denham North ward and the remainder of the parish in a two-member Denham South ward. However, it stated that it had looked at several ways of reducing the high electoral variance in its proposed Denham North ward but stated that “none are practical in terms of retaining communities”. It stated further that it could not recommend the option as it assumed that the Commission would not accept an electoral variance as high as 15 per cent. Gerrards Cross Parish Council stated that it did not object to our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward but commented that it had noted that “our Denham colleagues are not happy with the proposed district ward boundary changes”. Hedgerley Parish Council supported our proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer ward but also supported Denham Parish Council’s proposals for the Denham area. The Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils objected to our proposals for Denham, fully supporting the “request of Denham Parish Council for its boundary to remain unbreached for whatever purpose”. Fulmer Parish Council requested that we consider their request to South Bucks District Council that 17 properties around Fulmer Common Road be transferred from Wexham parish to Fulmer parish.

76 Councillor Hollis objected to our proposals for Denham and proposed that the parish be treated as a ward and that the number of district councillors representing the parish be reduced by one if necessary, arguing that there was a “strong feeling of political awareness and identity in Denham”. Councillor Kverndal objected to our proposal to combine parts of the parishes of Denham and Gerrards Cross in our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward. She argued that the two areas were different in

character, stating that Gerrards Cross was part of the commuter belt while the Tatling End area of Denham had “mediaeval origins”. She also stated that if “cross-parish wards must be created, could they be of equal numbers from each parish and of a similar socio-economic mix” and that the ward name should reflect both parishes. She stated further that she supported Denham Parish Council’s proposals for the area, and that she supported our proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer ward. Councillor Temple objected to our proposals for Denham and supported Denham Parish Council’s proposals for the area. She argued that the retention of community identity secured by Denham Parish Council’s proposals justified a higher level of electoral imbalance. She supported our proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer ward. Councillor Winterbourn also objected to our proposals for Denham parish, arguing that our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward would leave little opportunity for a councillor from the Denham area to be elected due to the uneven split between electors from the two parishes. He proposed that the whole of Denham parish be represented by a four-member ward.

77 Bakers Wood Residents Association, Denham Green Residents’ Association and Higher Denham Community Association all objected to our proposals for Denham Parish and all supported Denham Parish Council’s proposals.

78 We received representations from 59 local residents objecting to our proposals in Denham parish, 23 of whom specifically supported the proposals of Denham Parish Council. Five local residents supported our proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer ward.

79 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We have considered the proposals that Denham be represented by four councillors and that Gerrards Cross be represented by five. As stated in our draft recommendations, we noted that each area merited 4.5 councillors and that in order to secure the correct allocation in the area we would be required to combine parts of both parishes within one ward. We note that Denham Parish Council’s proposals would significantly worsen the levels of electoral equality in the area, not only in Denham but also in Gerrards Cross given that the area would consequentially be over-represented. We also note the proposal that Denham parish be represented by a four-member Denham ward, however, as outlined in our guidance, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from a ward should not exceed three, other than in exceptional circumstances. We are of the view that numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, in any of our reviews to date, found such circumstances. Therefore, we do not consider that we can recommend Denham Parish Council’s proposals as part of our final recommendations. We therefore confirm our proposed Denham North, Denham South and Gerrards Cross North wards as final.

80 However, we note the argumentation received at Stage Three regarding the imbalance in the number of electors from each parish represented within our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward. Therefore we propose splitting our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward between a two-member Gerrards Cross South ward and a single-member Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West ward, as we have been persuaded that this would better reflect the statutory criteria. However, we have not been convinced that Councillors Rigby and Cooper’s proposals would best reflect the statutory criteria and while we acknowledge that our proposed Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West ward does not provide for equal numbers of electors from each parish we note that Councillor Rigby and Cooper’s proposals would transfer areas of Denham parish that we do not consider share good links with the remainder of our proposed ward and that our proposed wards reduce the disparity in numbers of electors. Therefore we propose that the boundary between our proposed Gerrards Cross South and Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West wards should run along the centre of Dukes Lane as far as Dukes Wood Avenue where it should run behind the properties on the western side of the road. The boundary should then run to the rear of the properties on the western side of Dukes Ride and St Huberts Close as far as Fulmer Road where it should run south as far as the parish boundary.

81 We note the support we have received at Stage Three for our proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer ward and are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this ward as final. We have also considered Fulmer Parish Council's proposal that we consider the 17 properties currently within Wexham parish on Fulmer Common Road, Cherry Tree Lane and Alderbourne Lane when formulating our proposals. We considered creating a new parish ward for these properties but note that there are only 56 electors in the area and are therefore of the view that a new parish ward which was so small would not secure effective and convenient local government at a parish level. However, we would recommend that the District Council consider undertaking a parish review in order to consider this anomaly.

82 Under our final recommendations our proposed Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards would have 1 per cent fewer, 10 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 11 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report.

Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards

83 These six wards are situated in the south and south-east of the district. Farnham Royal ward (comprising the parish of the same name), Stoke Poges ward (comprising the parish of the same name) and Iver Heath ward (comprising Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish) are each represented by three councillors. Iver Village ward (comprising Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish) is represented by two councillors. Iver Richings Park ward (comprising Iver Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish) and Wexham ward (comprising the parish of the same name) are each represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards have 18 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 21 per cent more, 12 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 47 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (17 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 20 per cent more, 10 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 46 per cent more in 2005).

84 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current three-member Farnham Royal ward be maintained on its current boundaries and that the current Stoke Poges ward be combined with Wexham Street parish ward in a three-member Stoke Poges & Wexham Street ward. It also proposed a new single-member Wexham ward, comprising the existing Wexham George Green and Wexham Middle Green parish wards and proposed that Iver parish be split between two three-member wards, Iver Heath and Iver South wards. Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that Farnham Royal parish be warded between a two-member Farnham Royal North ward and a two-member Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward. They proposed that Stoke Poges ward be maintained on its current boundaries and that the current Wexham ward be combined with the area to the south of and including Uxbridge Road, west of and including Wood Lane from the current Iver Heath ward and the area to the west of Wood Lane in the current Iver Village ward, to form a two-member Wexham & Iver West ward. They proposed that the remaining area of Iver parish be split into three new wards, a three-member Iver Heath ward, a two-member Iver Village ward and a single-member Iver Richings Park ward.

85 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed endorsing Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed two-member Wexham & Iver West ward as it would secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. In the remainder of Iver parish we proposed adopting Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed three-member Iver Heath ward. However, we proposed combining their proposed Iver Village and Iver Richings Park wards to form a three-

member Iver Village & Richings Park ward as we considered that this would secure an improved level of electoral equality and would be less disruptive to the electorate.

86 We considered the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper for warding Farnham Royal parish, and although these proposals secured a good level of electoral equality we did not consider that they best reflected community identity in the area. We noted that Farnham Royal parish is a compact community that focuses on Beaconsfield Road, which runs north/south through the parish. We did not, therefore, consider that those electors in the south of the parish would share community identity with electors in Burnham Beeches. However, we noted that under a 40-member council Farnham Royal parish would merit 3.5 councillors. We proposed that an area to the south of and including the properties on Park Road and including Bishops Orchard be transferred to a three-member Stoke Poges ward from the current Farnham Royal ward. We considered that this area had links to Stoke Poges and it would avoid the necessity of combining a larger area of the parish with the current Burnham Beeches ward. We proposed a new three-member Farnham Royal ward comprising the area to the north of Park Road and Bishops Orchard, which secured an acceptable level of electoral equality and kept the greater part of Farnham Royal parish within a single ward.

87 At Stage Three Councillors Rigby and Cooper supported our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward and the boundary between our proposed Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards. However, they reiterated their Stage One proposals for a separate single-member Iver Richings Park ward, arguing that their proposed Iver Richings Park ward is different in character from the remainder of our proposed ward. They also proposed that the current Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges wards be maintained, arguing that this would not compromise the community identity of Farnham Royal parish.

88 The Iver Branch Liberal Democrats objected to our proposals for the Iver area arguing that the parish “divides very clearly into three separate communities; viz Iver Heath, Iver Village and Richings Park”. They proposed that Wood Lane Close, Uxbridge Road and part of Wood Lane be transferred to our proposed Iver Heath ward from our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward and that Sutton Lane, and possibly Billet Lane and Bellswood be transferred from our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that Wood Lane Close and the northern part of Wood Lane are “very much part of Iver Heath”. They argued further that they were concerned about the effect on political representation our proposals may have and that our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward would “broadly disenfranchise the Liberal Democrats of Iver Village”. Therefore they proposed that Thorney Lane South and Thorney Mill Road be included within a two-member Iver Village ward and that the Richings Park area be represented by a single councillor. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward.

89 Iver Parish Council objected to our proposals for their area and stated that “Iver Heath ward should not change its boundaries” and that Iver Village and Iver Richings Park should remain separate. Wexham Parish Council supported our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. Stoke Poges Parish Council accepted our draft recommendations but stated that the electorate of the current Stoke Poges ward was already large enough to support three councillors and questioned the necessity of transferring part of the current Farnham Royal ward to our proposed Stoke Poges ward. They argued that a higher level of electoral variance should be accepted for Farnham Royal ward.

90 Richings Park Resident’s Association objected to our proposal to combine the current Iver Village and Iver Richings Park wards in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park ward, arguing that the Richings Park area is a separate community and that they would be better represented by a “known councillor”. Wood Lane Close Residents Association objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that the Wood Lane area is cut off from Wexham, that the areas share no public transport links and that the Wood Lane area shares close links with Iver Heath. It also stated that the under the current arrangements the wards of Iver Heath, Iver Village, Richings Park and Wexham merit eight

councillors and not seven. Therefore, it was proposed that Wexham ward be allocated an extra councillor. It also proposed that those electors on the western side of Billet Lane should be included in Iver Heath ward, arguing that it was “ridiculous to place an electoral boundary down the middle of a lane” and that the boundary should follow the eastern edge of Langley Park. It also included a petition signed by 100 local residents objecting to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward.

91 Councillor Whitehouse objected to our proposals for Iver parish and proposed a number of alternative warding arrangements. His favoured alternative proposed that plans to create an Iver West parish ward should be abandoned. As his second alternative he proposed that Wood Lane Close and part of Wood Lane, in our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, remain as part of our proposed Iver Heath ward, and that Shreding Green Farm and two additional properties and the Sutton area of our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward should be transferred to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. He argued that although this proposal was not as preferable as the abandonment of our proposed Iver West parish ward it would retain Wood Lane and Wood Lane Close “within the community of Iver Heath”, it would keep Shreding Green Farm with Shreding Green and that it would acknowledge that Sutton identifies more closely with Langley than Richings Park and “as such has more in common with Shreding Green and Middle Green”. His third alternative proposed that properties to the west of Love Lane be transferred to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, in addition to those properties transferred as part of his second alternative, in order to improve electoral equality in the area. Councillor Whitehouse also noted that were the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer combined with his revised Wexham & Iver West wards, as proposed in alternatives two and three, all of the proposed wards in the district would secure an electoral variance below 10 per cent. He argued that the parishes of Hedgerley, Fulmer and Wexham should be combined in a ward whether or not the Commission adopted his proposed alternatives. He also proposed that Palmers Moor Lane be transferred from our proposed Iver Heath ward to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward, arguing that the area has no access to the remainder of Iver Heath ward. He supported our proposal to combine the current Iver Village and Iver Richings Park wards in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park ward, arguing that these “two existing wards definitely constitute one community”.

92 Dominic Grieve MP objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that the two areas are separated by Black Park and Langley Park. Councillor Burry supported our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that the two areas have a number of things in common and that the integrity of both areas would remain at a parish level. Councillor Jones objected to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward, arguing that they are separate communities divided by fields, an industrial estate, the Grand Union Canal and the main west country railway line from Paddington. He also argued that the political interests of the two areas was significantly different. Councillor Lidgate supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward but objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward arguing that the Wood Lane and Wood Lane Close areas are attached to Iver Heath and separated from Wexham. He also proposed that Palmers Moor Lane be transferred from our proposed Iver Heath ward to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward. Councillor Mallowan supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward, arguing that the areas already share a number of links. However, Councillor Mallowan proposed that Palmers Moor Lane be transferred from our proposed Iver Heath ward to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward and objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that the Iver West area has no ties with Wexham parish. Councillor Mountford objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that there is no local identity between the two areas. Councillor Mountford also stated that Palmers Moor Lane is physically isolated from our proposed Iver Heath ward. Councillor Temple objected to our proposals for Farnham Royal parish and proposed that the current Farnham Royal ward be maintained, arguing that the most historic part of the parish would be split from the rest of the community. County Councillor Webber objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, arguing that the areas do not share community identity. She also objected to our proposals for Palmers Moor Lane. However, she supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward.

93 We received 73 representations from local residents who objected to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, two of whom objected to our proposal to include Palmers Moor Lane within our proposed Iver Heath ward, and supported our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward. One of these residents also stated that the part of Billet Lane currently within Wexham Parish should more logically be included in Iver Heath ward.

94 We have noted the opposition to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. We have considered the representations that we abandon our proposal to combine part of Iver parish with the current Wexham ward. However, we note that maintaining the current Wexham ward would result in an electoral imbalance of 46 per cent by 2005 and do not consider that this level of electoral inequality is acceptable. We have also carefully considered the proposals of the Iver Branch Liberal Democrats and Councillor Whitehouse but note that the proposals of each suggest transferring the Sutton Lane area of the current Iver Richings Park ward to the proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. We are of the view that the Sutton Lane area shares better links with the Richings Park area of Iver parish and that it is physically remote from the remainder of our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward. We have also noted Wood Lane Close Residents Association's assertion that Iver Heath, Iver Village, Iver Richings Park and Wexham wards merit eight councillors between them and that Wexham ward should be allocated an extra councillor. However, we note that this would result in Wexham ward having 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006 and are of the view that such a large imbalance in the area cannot be justified. We also note its proposal that the western Iver Heath boundary run along the eastern edge of Langley Park, however, as this is a parish boundary and could only be changed as part of a parish review, it is not a matter which can be considered as part of this review. While we sympathise with the views expressed at Stage Three we consider that the electors in our proposed Iver West parish ward share better links with Wexham than those in the Sutton Lane area and therefore have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations. We do, however, propose a minor amendment between our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park and Wexham & Iver West wards. We propose that the area of Mansion Lane Caravan site to the south of the Grand Union Canal be transferred to our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward, as we note its only access is onto Mansion Lane.

95 We have carefully considered the representations received concerning Iver Heath during the consultation period. We have noted the representations regarding our proposals for the Palmers Moor Lane area of our proposed Iver Heath ward and have been convinced that its links lead directly to our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward and not to our proposed Iver Heath ward. Therefore we propose that the boundary between our proposed Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards should run to the north of the properties on Palmers Moor Lane. We have also considered the representations we have received regarding our proposed Iver Village & Richings Park ward. We note that there appears to be little consensus as to the best way of warding these two areas. We also note that maintaining the current Iver Richings ward would result in an electoral variance of 20 per cent by 2005 and that our proposals would secure better levels of electoral equality and more identifiable boundaries in the area than alternative proposals received. With regard to the local resident's suggestion that the area of Billet Lane currently within Wexham parish be transferred to Iver parish, as part of a Periodic Electoral Review we do not have the powers to recommend changes to parish boundaries. It may be helpful for the District Council to consider this issue as part of a separate parish review under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

96 We have considered proposals that the current Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges wards be maintained. However, although we note that the current Stoke Poges ward secures an electoral variance of only 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2005, Farnham Royal ward would have an unacceptable level of electoral imbalance by 2005 of 17 per cent. Therefore we are confirming our proposed Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges wards as final.

97 Under our final recommendations our proposed Farnham Royal, Stoke Poges, Iver Heath, Iver Village & Richings Park and Wexham & Iver West wards would have 10 per cent more, 7 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (9 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on Maps A5, A6 and A7.

Electoral Cycle

98 At Stage One the District Council stated that there was little evidence that the current cycle of whole-council elections needed to be changed. We received no other comments regarding the electoral cycle. Therefore, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

99 At Stage Three Councillors Rigby and Cooper, Councillor Temple and Denham Parish Council supported our proposals, 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 amendments:

- in Burnham we propose that there should be boundary amendments between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards, and between Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards;
- there should be a minor boundary realignment between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards and between Iver Village & Richings Park and Wexham & Iver West wards;
- the proposed Gerrards Cross South ward should be split between a two-member Gerrards Cross South ward and a single-member Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West ward.

101 We conclude that, in South Bucks:

- a council size of 40 members should be retained;
- there should be 19 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

102 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

| | 2000 electorate | | 2005 forecast electorate | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| Number of wards | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 1,212 | 1,212 | 1,225 | 1,225 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 8 | 0 | 8 | 1 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

103 As Table 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 eight to none, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. By 2005, only one ward, Hedgerley & Fulmer, would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, at 11 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

South Bucks District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 19 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

104 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different 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 the parishes of Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross and Iver to reflect the proposed district wards.

105 Beaconsfield Town Council is currently served by 16 councillors representing three wards: Beaconsfield North, returning six councillors, and Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West, each returning five councillors. At Stage One Beaconsfield Town Council proposed that the current number of councillors be maintained. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Beaconsfield parish continue to comprise three parish wards, comprising 16 parish councillors.

106 In response to our consultation report, Beaconsfield Town Council supported our proposals in their area.

107 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Beaconsfield parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Beaconsfield Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Beaconsfield North (returning six councillors), Beaconsfield South (returning five councillors) and Beaconsfield West (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

108 The parish of Burnham is currently served by 19 councillors representing three wards: Burnham Beeches, returning five councillors, Burnham Church, returning six councillors, and Burnham Lent Rise, returning eight councillors.

109 At Stage One we received no comments relating directly to the parish council arrangements of Burnham parish. We therefore proposed that, in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements, Burnham parish should comprise four parish wards. We proposed modifying the parish ward boundaries of the remaining parish wards in order to correspond with those of the district wards within the parish. We proposed creating an additional Burnham South parish ward which would be included in the proposed Dorney & Burnham South district ward.

110 At Stage Three Burnham Parish Council objected to our proposals in the area. A local resident stated that the reduction in parish councillors in our proposed Burnham Beeches parish ward would make the job of the parish councillors much harder.

111 Having considered all the evidence received, we are proposing that the district boundaries between our proposed Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church and our proposed Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards should be amended. We therefore propose that the parish ward boundaries be amended accordingly. We note the comments of the local resident but also note that the parish council have made no specific comments regarding this issue. Therefore we confirm the distribution of councillors and the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation

Burnham Parish Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Burnham Beeches (returning three councillors), Burnham Church (returning seven councillors), Burnham Lent Rise (returning eight councillors) and Burnham South (returning a single councillor). The boundary between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

112 The parish of Denham is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Denham North, returning eight councillors, and Denham South, returning seven councillors. At Stage One we

received no proposals for change to the existing parish arrangements for Denham. However, at a district level, we proposed combining part of Denham parish with our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward. We proposed creating a new Denham South West parish ward which would incorporate that part of the existing Denham South parish ward that we proposed including in the Gerrards Cross South district ward. We therefore recommended that Denham parish should be divided into three parish wards.

113 In response to our consultation report, Denham Parish Council objected to our proposals for district warding in the area and submitted proposals for its parish, based on its three alternative options for district wards in the area. It supported our proposal to maintain 15 parish councillors for the parish, stating that “reducing the number would produce an unacceptable workload on individual members”. Councillor Temple supported Denham Parish Council.

114 We are proposing an amended Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West ward as part of our final recommendations. However, this does not impact on our proposals for parishing arrangements in Denham parish. Therefore we confirm our draft recommendations for warding Denham parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Denham Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Denham North (returning seven councillors), Denham South (returning seven councillors) and Denham South West (returning a single councillor). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

115 The parish of Farnham Royal is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One we received no comments regarding the parish council arrangements for Farnham Royal parish. However, at a district level, we proposed combining part of Farnham Royal parish with Stoke Poges parish to create an enlarged Stoke Poges district ward. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we proposed that Farnham Royal parish should be divided into two parish wards: Farnham Royal North (represented by 10 parish councillors) and Farnham Royal South (represented by a single councillor).

116 In response to our consultation report no specific comments were received from the District Council or the Parish Council.

117 Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Farnham Royal parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Farnham Royal Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Farnham Royal North (returning 10 councillors) and Farnham Royal South (returning one councillor). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A5 in Appendix A.

118 The parish of Gerrards Cross is currently served by 12 councillors representing two parish wards: Gerrards Cross North, returning five councillors, and Gerrards Cross South, returning seven councillors.

119 At Stage One we received no comments relating to the parish arrangements for Gerrards Cross parish. We proposed that, in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements, Gerrards Cross parish should continue to comprise two parish wards. However, we proposed that the parish ward boundaries be modified to correspond with those of the district wards within the parish.

120 At Stage Three we received no specific comments regarding our proposals for Gerrards Cross parish.

121 In response to the representations we received at Stage Three, we are proposing that our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward be divided between a two-member Gerrards Cross South district ward and a single-member Gerrards Cross East & Denham South West district ward. We therefore propose that Gerrards Cross parish be divided between three parish wards: Gerrards Cross East (represented by two councillors), Gerrards Cross North (represented by five councillors) and Gerrards Cross South (represented by five councillors).

Final Recommendation

Gerrards Cross Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Gerrards Cross East (returning two councillors), Gerrards Cross North (returning five councillors) and Gerrards Cross South (returning five councillors). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

122 The parish of Iver is currently served by 14 councillors representing three parish wards: Iver Heath (returning six councillors), Iver Richings Park (returning three councillors) and Iver Village (returning five councillors).

123 At Stage One we received no comments relating to the parishing arrangements for Iver parish. As part of our district level proposals, we proposed including part of Iver parish in our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward and proposed creating a new Iver West parish ward for this area. We also proposed combining Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed Iver Richings Park and Iver Village wards in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park district ward. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we proposed that Iver parish should be divided into three parish wards: Iver Heath parish ward (represented by six parish councillors), Iver Village & Richings Park ward (represented by seven councillors) and Iver West parish ward (represented by a single councillor).

124 In response to our consultation report Iver Parish Council objected to our district warding proposals in the area and stated that it did not "wish to see its warding arrangements changed (ie 6 parish councillors for Iver Heath and 3 for Richings Park and 5 for Iver) for Parish Council elections".

125 We are proposing that the district ward boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards and between Iver Village & Richings Park and Wexham & Iver West wards be amended. We therefore propose that the parish ward boundaries be amended accordingly. We confirm the redistribution of councillors and the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation

Iver Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Iver Heath (returning six councillors), Iver Village & Richings Park (returning seven councillors) and Iver West (returning one councillor). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on maps A6 and A7 in Appendix A.

126 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: Final Recommendations for South Bucks

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

128 It is now up to the Secretary of State to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 2 January 2002.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for South Bucks: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the South Bucks area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2-A7 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundaries for wards in Beaconsfield.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundaries between Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise and Dorney & Burnham South wards.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed parish warding arrangements for Farnham Royal parish.

Map A6 illustrates the revised warding arrangements for Iver parish.

Map A7 illustrates the proposed boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the parishes of Denham and Gerrards Cross.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for South Bucks: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed boundaries for wards in Beaconsfield

Map A3: Proposed boundary between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards

Map A4: Proposed boundaries between Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise and Dorney & Burnham South wards

Map A5: Proposed parish warding arrangements for Farnham Royal parish

Map A6: Revised parish warding arrangements for Iver parish

Map A7: Proposed boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards