

# Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire

Further electoral review

February 2007

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# What is the Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones CBE  
Ann M. Kelly  
Professor Colin Mellors

Director:

Archie Gall

When conducting reviews 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 and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.



## Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of Basingstoke & Deane is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the borough. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each borough councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee for England to undertake this review on 12 May 2005.

## Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 17 wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the borough average. Development forecast during the previous review was not realised, particularly in Popley West and Rooksdown wards, which has resulted in them having variances of 32% and 55% fewer electors than the borough average.

This review will be conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	27 February 2007	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	22 May 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Submissions received

At Stage One we received 43 submissions. The Council submitted four schemes, with Option C being its preferred and formally adopted option. Two respondents supported its Option A, eight supported its Option C and 18 supported or generally supported its Option D. A local resident, Mr Markham put forward proposals for a 30-member council with wards based on Hampshire county divisions. Nine respondents requested the retention of their existing wards or put forward general comments.

## Further consultation

During Stage Two the Committee requested further evidence from all parties on the potential impact of a Mr Markham's proposal to reduce the council size to 30 members. We received 48 submissions. Five expressed support for Mr Markham's proposals, while the remainder generally opposed them.

## Analysis and draft recommendations

### Electorate figures

Since the last review, the electorate in Basingstoke & Deane has decreased by 1%, despite the Council's predictions of 9% growth over the five year forecast period of

the last review. At the start of this review, the Council continued to predict a growth rate of 7% over the next five years, arguing that this included the development that had not occurred since the last review. During Stage One the Conservative Group queried the Council's projections, but following consultation with the Council, we remain satisfied that these are the best figures available

## Council size

Following the further consultation on Mr Markham's proposal for a 30-member council, the Committee did not consider that there was sufficient evidence of how members would be able to fulfil their representational role under a reduced council. The Committee is therefore retaining the existing council size of 60 members.

## General analysis

We are generally adopting the Council's Option C proposals, but amended to take account of some variations of our own proposals and of proposals put forward by other respondents. Our draft recommendations result in six single-member, 18 two-member and 6 three-member wards. As a result of these proposals, it is predicted that by 2009 no ward would have a variance of over 9% from the borough average.

## What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane contained in the report. We welcome views from all parts of the community and believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 21 May 2007. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane and welcome comments from interested parties. We would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Review Manager  
Basingstoke & Deane Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**[reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk)**

The full report is available to download at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

**Table 1: Draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Basing	3	6,014	2,005	5	5,862	1,954	-4
2	Baughurst & Tadley North	2	4,167	2,084	9	4,424	2,212	9
3	Bramley & Sherfield	2	3,694	1,847	-3	4,068	2,034	0
4	Brighton Hill North	2	3,842	1,921	1	3,792	1,896	-7
5	Brighton Hill South	2	3,849	1,925	1	3,770	1,885	-7
6	Brookvale	2	3,306	1,653	-13	4,054	2,027	-1
7	Buckskin	2	3,673	1,837	-4	3,903	1,952	-4
8	Burghclere & Bourne	1	2,187	2,187	15	2,168	2,168	6
9	Chineham	3	5,200	1,733	-9	6,543	2,181	7
10	East Woodhay & Highclere	2	3,501	1,751	-8	3,719	1,860	-9
11	Eastrop	2	3,622	1,811	-5	3,958	1,979	-3

**Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
12	Grove	2	4,417	2,209	16	4,294	2,147	5
13	Hatch Warren & Beggarwood	3	5,783	1,928	1	6,055	2,018	-1
14	Kempshott	3	5,915	1,972	3	5,624	1,875	-8
15	Kingsclere	2	4,248	2,124	11	4,329	2,165	6
16	Norden	3	5,603	1,868	-2	5,930	1,977	-3
17	North Waltham & The Candovers	1	1,946	1,946	2	1,890	1,890	-7
18	Oakley	2	4,315	2,158	13	4,251	2,126	4
19	Overton	2	3,446	1,723	-10	3,755	1,878	-8
20	Pamber & Silchester	2	3,629	1,815	-5	3,710	1,855	-9
21	Popley East	2	3,687	1,844	-3	4,108	2,054	1
22	Popley West	2	2,163	1,082	-43	4,386	2,193	8

**Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
23	Rooksdown	1	851	851	-55	2,158	2,158	6
24	Sherborne St John	1	2,030	2,030	7	2,211	2,211	9
25	South Ham	3	6,422	2,141	12	6,267	2,089	3
26	Tadley Central	1	2,216	2,216	16	2,230	2,230	9
27	Tadley South	2	4,268	2,134	12	4,406	2,203	8
28	Upton Grey	1	1,857	1,857	-3	2,050	2,050	1
29	Whitchurch	2	3,842	1,921	1	4,090	2,045	0
30	Winklebury	2	4,617	2,309	21	4,245	2,123	4
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>114,310</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>122,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,905</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,038</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

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



# 1 Introduction

1 This report contains our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Basingstoke & Deane, on which we are now consulting.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 the Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a periodic electoral review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average, or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Basingstoke & Deane. Basingstoke & Deane's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in 25 July 2000. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on March 2001 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 2002.

5 In carrying out our work, the Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.<sup>1</sup> This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure effective and convenient local government
- achieve equality of representation

In addition we are required to work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of Basingstoke & Deane is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by the Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful in both understanding the approach taken by the Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission 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

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962)

any parish and town councils in the borough. We cannot consider changes to the external boundaries of either the borough or of parish areas as part of this review.

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

11 As indicated in its *Guidance*, the Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence for this.

12 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

14 The review is in four stages (see Table 2, below).

**Table 2: Stages of the review**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	27 February 2007	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	22 May 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 6 September 2005, when we wrote to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Association of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Authorities, parish and town councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, 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 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 December 2005.

16 During Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One. In light of the proposals received for a 50% reduction in council size, we undertook further consultation between 27 September and 15 November 2006. We have now considered the responses to that consultation and the submissions received during Stage One.

17 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 27 February 2007 and will end on 21 May 2007, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation about them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

## Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

## National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The Borough of Basingstoke & Deane is situated in northern Hampshire, comprising 51 parishes and the unparished urban settlement of Basingstoke. Ninety per cent of the borough's area comprises agricultural land, woodland or other green-field uses. Basingstoke is the largest town in the area, containing approximately 60% of the borough's population. The second largest settlement is the Tadley, Baughurst and Pamber Heath area

22 The electorate of the borough is 114,310 (December 2004). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 30 wards. There are currently eight single-member wards, 14 two-member wards and eight three-member wards. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough by the total number of councillors representing them on the council. At present, each councillor represents a borough average of 1,905 electors (114,310 divided by 60), which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,038 by the year 2009 if the present number of councillors is maintained (122,250 divided by 60).

23 During the last review of Basingstoke & Deane, the Council forecast that the electorate would increase from 115,0006 to 125,330 by 2004, a projected growth of 8%. However, this level of growth has not been realised, resulting in a significant amount of electoral inequality between wards. To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the borough average in percentage terms.

24 Data from the December 2004 electoral register showed that under these arrangements, electoral equality across the borough met the criteria that the Electoral Commission agreed would warrant further investigation. The number of electors per councillor in 17 of the 30 wards (33%) varies by more than 10% from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Rooksdown ward where the councillor represents 55% fewer electors than the borough average. Having noted that this level of electoral inequality is unlikely to improve, the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council on 12 May 2005.

**Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Basing	3	6,384	2,128	12	6,354	2,118	4
2	Baughurst	1	1,917	1,917	0	2,006	2,006	-2
3	Brighton Hill North	2	3,544	1,772	-7	3,505	1,753	-14
4	Brighton Hill South	2	3,971	1,986	4	3,882	1,941	-5
5	Brookvale & Kings Furlong	2	3,790	1,895	-1	4,477	2,239	10
6	Buckskin	2	3,246	1,623	-15	3,308	1,654	-19
7	Burghclere	1	1,957	1,957	3	1,974	1,974	-3
8	Calleva	2	4,363	2,182	15	4,722	2,361	16
9	Chineham	3	5,200	1,733	-9	6,543	2,181	7
10	East Woodhay	1	2,173	2,173	14	2,374	2,374	17
11	Eastrop	2	3,138	1,569	-18	3,535	1,768	-13
12	Grove	2	4,417	2,209	16	4,294	2,147	5

**Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
13	Hatch Warren & Beggarwood	3	6,590	2,197	15	6,839	2,280	12
14	Highclere & Bourne	1	2,325	2,325	22	2,329	2,329	14
15	Kempshott	3	6,099	2,033	7	5,925	1,975	-3
16	Kingsclere	2	3,767	1,884	-1	3,827	1,914	-6
17	Norden	3	5,603	1,868	-2	5,930	1,977	-3
18	Oakley & North Waltham	3	5,584	1,861	-2	5,511	1,837	-10
19	Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon	2	3,604	1,802	-5	3,907	1,954	-4
20	Pamber	1	2,161	2,161	13	2,249	2,249	10
21	Popley East	2	3,276	1,638	-14	3,722	1,861	-9
22	Popley West	2	2,574	1,287	-32	4,597	2,299	13
23	Rooksdown	1	851	851	-55	2,333	2,333	15

**Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2009)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
24	Sherborne St John	1	2,389	2,389	25	2,556	2,556	25
25	South Ham	3	5,607	1,869	-2	5,452	1,817	-11
26	Tadley North	2	4,466	2,233	17	4,648	2,324	14
27	Tadley South	2	4,268	2,134	12	4,406	2,203	8
28	Upton Grey & The Candovers	1	2,160	2,160	13	2,210	2,210	8
29	Whitchurch	2	3,842	1,921	1	4,090	2,045	0
30	Winklebury	3	5,044	1,681	-12	4,745	1,582	-22
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>114,310</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>122,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,905</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,038</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

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

### 3 Submissions received

25 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

26 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met with officers and members from the Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 42 representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Council, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

#### Stage One consultation

##### Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

27 The Council submitted four proposals, Options A, B, C and D, but stating that Option C was the 'Council's preferred option'. Option A was for a 56-member council representing 25 wards. Option B was for a 60-member council representing 25 wards. Option C was for a 60-member council representing 30 wards. Finally Option D was also for a 60-member council, but representing 25 wards.

28 The Council did not provide any supporting evidence of local community identity to support its favoured option, or any of the other options.

##### Borough councillors

29 Councillor Gurden (Brighton Hill North ward) and Councillor Rowland (Brighton Hill North ward) both expressed support for the Council's Option C, with particular reference to the Brighton Hill wards. Councillor Barnes (Brighton Hill South ward) requested minimal change from the existing electoral arrangements. Councillor Lovegrove (Tadley North ward) expressed support for the Council's Option C proposal, with particular reference to the Tadley area.

30 Councillors Hood, James and Harvey (Norden ward) expressed support for Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals (Option D), with particular reference to Norden ward. Councillor P Frankum (Popley West ward), Councillor J Frankum (Popley West ward) and Councillor McCormick (Popley East ward) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals (Option D). Councillors Traynor, Keating (South Ham ward) also expressed support for Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals (Option D) for the South Ham area. Councillor G Watts (South Ham Ward) objected to the Option A proposal to reduce the number of councillors. Councillors Potter and Jones (Buckskin ward) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals for the Buckskin ward. Councillor Connor (Winklebury ward) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals.

## Political groups

31 Representations were received from 13 political groups. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Party expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals, providing some supporting evidence of local community identities. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward an identical submission to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals, but with some minor amendments. It provided some supporting evidence of local community identities.

32 Basingstoke Conservative Association expressed support for the Council's Option A proposals, providing limited supporting evidence of local community identities.

33 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party expressed support for the Council's Option B proposals, providing some supporting evidence for local community identities. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Popley Branch, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Norden Branch and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party South Ham Branch all expressed support for Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal (Option D), with particular reference to their local areas.

34 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party North West Branch, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Loddon Branch and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Southern Branch also expressed support for Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal (Option D), with particular reference to their local areas. Basingstoke & Deane Labour Party Local Government Committee also expressed support for Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal (Option D). Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Buckskin and Kempshott Branch expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal (Option D) proposals, but proposed a minor amendment to its proposed Kempshott ward.

## County councillors

35 Councillor Kelly (Basingstoke Central division) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal (Option D), adding that Brookvale and Eastrop wards should remain unchanged.

## Parish and town councils

36 St John Parish Council expressed support for the Council's Option C proposal. Sheffield-on-Loddon Parish Council expressed support for the Council's Option D proposal as supported by Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party. Newnham, Monk Sherborne and Preston Candover & Nutley Parish Councils all asked to retain the existing electoral arrangements. Overton Parish Council put forward some general comments about council size and discussed local links.

## Other representations

37 A local resident, Mr Berwick-Gooding, put forward borough-wide proposals, based broadly on the Council's Option C proposals. However, he proposed

amendments to its Buckskin, Chineham, Kempshott, Popley North, Popley South and Winklebury wards, putting forward some good supporting evidence.

38 Another local resident, Mr Markham put forward proposals for a reduction in Council size from 60 to 30 members, providing persuasive evidence in support. Another local resident requested the retention of the existing wards and put forward some community identity evidence.

39 A local resident expressed support for the Council's Option A proposals, but provided no supporting evidence. Another local resident expressed support for the Council's Option C proposal, making particular reference to the Popley area. Four more local residents put forward general comments.

## Further consultation on council size

40 Following our consideration of the evidence received, in particular Mr Markham's proposals for a reduction to 30 councillors, we decided to go out to further consultation on the issue of council size. Further details of this are given in paragraph 77 below.

41 We received 48 representations during the period of further consultation, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. The representations may also be viewed on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

## Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

42 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council did not express support or objections to the proposal for a 30-member council. However, it did put forward details of how a 30-member council might work in practice.

## Political groups

43 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats, Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party, Overton & Laverstoke Branch Liberal Democrats, North West Hampshire Conservative Association and Basingstoke Conservative Association all objected to Mr Markham's proposals to reduce council size from 60 to 30 members, providing differing levels of supporting evidence.

## Borough councillors

44 We received nine submissions from borough councillors. Councillors Leek (Sherborne St John ward), Ruffell (Upton Grey & The Candovers) and Mitchell (Highclere & Bourne ward) all expressed support for proposals to reduce the council to 30-members, putting forward some supporting evidence.

45 Councillor Watts (South Ham ward), Councillor Jane Frankum (Popley West ward), Councillor Parker (Eastrop ward), Councillor Tilbury (Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward), Councillor David Potter (Buckskin ward), Councillor Shaw (Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward) all objected to Mr Markham's proposals to reduce council size from 60 to 30 members.

## Parish and town councils

46 Sherborne St John Parish Council expressed support for Mr Markham's proposals to reduce council size from 60 to 30 members. Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green, Pamber, Bramley, Silchester, Tadley, Old Basing & Lynchpit, Oakley & Deane, Kingsclere, Baughurst and St. Mary Bourne Parish Councils all objected to Mr Markham's proposals to reduce council size.

## County Council

47 Hampshire County Council objected to any proposal to reduce council size from 60 to 30 members.

## Other representations

48 Mr Markham expressed support for his own proposals to reduce council size from 60 to 30 members and provided additional information and evidence. Another respondent also expressed support for Mr Markham's proposals, providing a European perspective.

49 CTC – Hampshire Cycling objected to Mr Markham's proposals, providing some supporting evidence. Kempshott & District Residents Association, Overton Society, Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils and Basingstoke Heritage Society also objected to Mr Markham's proposals.

50 South View Residents Association and Basingstoke Alternative Action Group Community Initiatives Forum non-political NGO did not put forward any specific comments on council size.

51 Two local residents objected to a reduction in council size from 60 to 30 members, providing good supporting evidence. A further five local residents also objected to any reduction in council size, but only providing limited evidence. Finally, three local residents did not put forward any specific comments on council size.

## 4 Analysis and draft recommendations

52 Before finalising our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane we invite views on our initial thoughts as expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from all those interested relating to the number of councillors, proposed ward boundaries, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the Basingstoke Town area around Buckskin, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. We acknowledge that there may well be particular concerns about the proposals to transfer part of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott ward. At this stage, given the evidence received, we consider that this provides the best balance between securing good electoral equality while also reflecting local communities. However, we would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

53 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972

54 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing clearly identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

55 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

56 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 should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

57 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary

boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

## Electorate figures

58 As part of the previous review of Basingstoke & Deane, the Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 9% between 1999 and 2004. However, between 1999 and the start of this review the electorate has actually decreased slightly by 0.7%. The growth predicted in the Popley and Rooksdown areas has largely not been realised, which has had a knock-on effect on electoral equality across the borough. At the start of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 7% from 114,310 to 122,250 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009. It argued that much of this growth would be in the areas that had not grown as much as predicted during the last review.

59 During the preliminary period of the review, Councillor Shaw expressed reservations about the Council's projected electorate figures, arguing that the Council did not consider figures included on the 'Schedule of expected new housing from planning 2004 – 2009'. He also raised concerns about the impact of under-registration on the electorate forecasts.

60 We raised these concerns with the Council, which commented that the figures referred to by Councillor Shaw had been included in the data on which it had based its projections. It also acknowledged that voter under-registration was an issue for the borough, but that its methodology accurately reflected this, both now and in the future.

61 We also note the comments put forward by the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party about a further 300 properties being developed in the Buckskin and Old Kempshott Lane area.

62 We recognise that forecasting electorates is difficult and, although we consider the Council's electoral projections to be high, the concerns and potential impact of getting these figures wrong, i.e. the potential for yet another electoral review, were laid out clearly during our initial meeting with the Council's officers. The Council acknowledged these concerns and we consider that it put forward strong justification for its projections. Having considered the evidence we accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time

## Council size

63 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council presently has 60 members.

64 At Stage One the Committee received three different proposals for council size. The Council's Options B, C and D were all based on a council size of 60 members, the same as the existing council size. Its Option A was based on a council size of 56, and was supported by the Basingstoke Conservative Association. However, the Council only put forward evidence for a 60-member council. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party, Basingstoke Liberal Democrats, North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats, the Council's Liberal Democrat Group and Mr Berwick-Gooding

all put forward evidence for a 60-member council. Finally, Mr Markham put forward proposals for a 30-member council, a reduction of 30 councillors.

65 The Council briefly outlined its political management structure, highlighting the membership of the Cabinet, Overview Committees, Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Standards Committee. In addition to this, it briefly outlined its management structure of a Cabinet and Committees, a Chief Executive and three corporate directors who provide advice to the Council, Cabinet and Committees. We requested further information regarding its proposals on council size and the Council submitted comments from the Labour Group and Liberal Democrat Groups, both of which supported a 60-member council. These submissions went into slightly greater detail than the original submission.

66 The Council's Labour Group highlighted the issue of councillor workload, arguing that this would increase under a smaller council, which could deter people from standing. It also argued that increased workload would lead to poorer representation for electors.

67 The Council's Liberal Democrat Group put forward similar arguments. It stressed the importance of councillors being involved in casework, arguing that this is an increasingly important role. It argued that councillors are seen as 'Community Champions', adding that this role is being encouraged by the Government. It also argued that the Council's size enable it to have a broad range of councillors, from different backgrounds.

68 The Basingstoke Conservative Association did not provide any strong evidence in support of its proposed reduction by four members to 56 councillors.

69 Mr Markham put forward persuasive evidence for a reduction from 60 to 30 members. He highlighted changes in political management structure within the council and questioned how these would impact upon councillors' workload. He stated that the Cabinet system had reduced councillor involvement. He also argued that councillor workload varies greatly, depending on the role within the Council itself, involvement in external bodies and, finally, their involvement in political party work. He argued that the 'Council Duties' element of this is relatively small. He also questioned whether the work of a councillor should be 'done as a volunteer, or, is it (in a number of instances) a well paid career'.

70 Mr Markham also cited the 'Quality Parish & Town Council Scheme', arguing that it would 'enable [parish and town councils] to take on a stronger role in the governance of their communities' and support the Council and relieve 'Borough Councillors from onerous meetings'. He argued that parish councils and other groups should be encouraged to offer support to councillors.

71 Mr Markham also outlined the advent of technologies that help members stay in touch more easily and speed up work processes. He also argued that the Council's status as an 'Excellent Council' where 'Senior Management Team and Staff fulfil their role in an expeditious and timely manner', would also enable his proposed reduction in council size.

72 In supplementary evidence on council size, Mr Markham reiterated many of his earlier points. He argued that the reduced involvement in decision making and

increase use of technology would further reduce councillor workload. He argued that current council sizes reflect 'halcyon days of yore', adding that 'reality is expensive and councillors are very expensive, both in terms of personal salaries and also the labour intensive cost of officer time in the administration'.

73 He argued that members' representation of their electors also varies, from involvement in meetings, surgeries for electors and how 'e-enabled' they are. He also argued that attendance at external meetings is a vital role, but that they are not always well attended and that 'there is no system of reporting back to council'.

74 Finally, Mr Markham outlined his proposals for how a 30-member council might work including 'no overview committees; extended scrutiny committees, properly formulated briefing papers for consultation; consultation by email "with no let out for any councillor"; open and extended workshops to allow ideas to flow; and extended council meetings'.

75 We gave careful consideration to the evidence received during Stage One. We noted the support for Option A put forward by the Basingstoke Conservative Association, but did not consider that this was sufficiently strong or clear to justify its proposed reduction in council size to 56.

76 We considered that Mr Markham had put forward some persuasive evidence for a reduction in council size. However, we did have concerns and noted that no other respondent supported such a marked reduction. We also noted that there was no evidence that Mr Markham had consulted on his proposals.

77 At our meeting on 23 August 2006 we decided that Mr Markham had provided sufficient evidence to persuade us to carry out a further stage of public consultation on his proposals to reduce council size.

78 On 27 September 2006 the Committee wrote to the Chief Executive of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council inviting the Council to respond to Mr Markham's comments about the changing role of councillors; workload of individual members; better quality candidates; and tiers of government. We asked for details of how Mr Markham's proposals might actually be adopted and the impact that they might have on the Council's: political management; membership and frequency of any non-executive, select or other committees; scrutiny arrangements; local representation, including area forums or devolved local representational bodies and councillors' involvement in such bodies; partnership bodies and councillors' involvement with them; and the hours that councillors would be able to spend on their representation role as 'Community Champions'.

79 We circulated a copy of our letter to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council to all those whom we had consulted at the start of the review and all those who had responded during Stage One. The closing date for representations was 16 November 2006. It should be noted that this period of further consultation was only to request views on the proposal to reduce council size. It was not seeking comments or consulting on Mr Markham's proposal to base the borough wards on the Hampshire County Council divisions.

80 During this period of further consultation, we received 48 submissions of which five (including Mr Markham) expressed support for Mr Markham's proposals to reduce the council size from 60 members to 30, while the remainder opposed them.

81 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council did not express any opinion on the merits of Mr Markham's proposals. However, it did outline how a 30-member council might work, highlighting: theoretical political management structure; membership and frequency of scrutiny and meetings; local representation; partnerships; and community champions.

82 While the Council provided us with information on how a 30-member council might function, it also acknowledged a number of potential shortcomings. For example, it set out details of revised overview and scrutiny committee structures under a reduced council size, but stated that with fewer members the committees might need to meet more frequently. It stressed the importance of members' representational role, but acknowledged that fewer members might result in less borough council representation at parish council meetings. It proposed devolving some decision-making to area forums but did not put forward specific proposals, arguing that councillors would provide community leadership as opposed to more ward level concerns, but adding that it is also evident that with fewer members there is less opportunity for diverse representation. It also proposed devolving some decision-making responsibilities to officers.

83 As mentioned above, five respondents (including Mr Markham) supported the proposal to reduce the Council to 30 members.

84 Mr Markham argued that smaller, more streamlined committees would free up members' time to represent electors. Councillor Ruffell supported this view, arguing that currently some members rarely speak at meetings and a smaller council would encourage all members to participate. Councillor Mitchell also supported this, arguing that the size of committee meetings often 'dilute[s] the value of discussion [and] leads to empty repetition'. Councillor Leek stated that '30 members should be an adequate number to provide a Leader and Cabinet and to fill the Overview, Scrutiny and regulatory committees'.

85 Drawing on the October 2006 Local Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, these respondents also argued that parishes should have a greater role in serving the community, adding that this would enable the Council to be run by fewer members. Councillor Ruffell argued that councillors should attend more parish meetings. This was contradicted by the Council who acknowledged that a smaller council might result in less council representation at parish council meetings.

86 Mr Markham and Councillor Ruffell also argued that new technology would speed up decision-making, enabling a smaller council more time to represent electors. Mr Markham also stressed the importance of the effective management of the Council, highlighting its 'Excellent Status'. Councillor Leek argued that having fewer councillors would reduce costs and therefore reduce the workload for officers. Sherborne St John parish council put forward general support for Mr Markham's proposals, but provided no specific comments.

87 The remaining 42 respondents (not including the Council) objected to Mr Markham's proposal to reduce the council from 60 to 30 members. A number of respondents, while opposing a reduction to 30 members, did express some support for the possibility of a smaller reduction in council size.

88 A number of respondents rejected the proposals for revised political management structures. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats and Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party both argued that reducing the size of the cabinet would affect the political composition and therefore reduce the scrutiny of decisions. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party also rejected any proposal that would seek to combine the overview and scrutiny function. CTC – Hampshire Cycling argued that cabinet governance had already reduced scrutiny and reducing the number of councillors would reduce this further. A local resident expressed similar concerns arguing that a smaller council may be easier for officers to deal with, but would not necessarily be easier for electors.

89 A number of respondents also questioned whether a 30-member council would be able to effectively undertake its representational role. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group argued Mr Markham's proposal was in direct contradiction to the White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' emphasis on the 'Community Champion' role and would actually increase councillors' workload. Councillors Watts, Frankum, Parker and Shaw broadly supported this view. Hampshire County Council also argued that Mr Markham's proposal would go against the 'localism' agenda and would increase members' workload.

90 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats, Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party, Overton & Laverstoke Branch Liberal Democrats rejected Mr Markham's proposal arguing that this would not allow members to carry out their representational role. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that a smaller council would have to spend more time managing itself through overview and scrutiny functions.

91 North West Hampshire Conservative Association and Basingstoke Conservative Association both rejected Mr Markham's proposals, but argued that councillors should be required to attend fewer external meetings. A local resident argued that the wards would cover larger more diverse areas, making it harder for councillors to represent them. Respondents also questioned whether council officers, parish councils and local forums could or should be able to take on some of the councillors' responsibilities. They also commented that the Basingstoke town area is unparished and therefore is not served by a parish council.

92 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group argued that parishes do not perform the same role as the Council and therefore cannot be expected to take on its responsibilities. Councillor Tilbury supported this, stating that parish councils were not sufficiently competent to deal with all the issues, adding that it would be unfair to expect, the often unpaid, parish representatives to take on additional work. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats argued that councillors were often expected to support parishes, but parishes did not expect to have to support borough councillors. A local resident argued that parish councils are not sufficiently uniform to take on council responsibilities.

93 CTC – Hampshire Cycling expressed concerns about council officers being asked to exercise more council powers. Councillor Shaw stated that residents often take concerns to councillors before contacting council officers.

94 A number of respondents expressed the view that new communication methods actually increase workload, rather than decrease it as Mr Markham argued. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats supported this view, but added that electronic communication should not replace face-to-face communication. Councillor Tilbury argued that Mr Markham's suggestion that costs would decrease by having fewer councillors would not be realised if their workload increased and they sought higher pay. St Mary Bourne Parish Council commented that although there may be cost savings this would be at the expense of greater workload for members.

95 While Mr Markham said that a smaller council would mean fewer, but better quality candidates, a number of respondents argued that this would lead to a reduction in the breadth of skills and knowledge that different members bring to the Council's work. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group and Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party both argued that the increased workload would put people off running for Council and reduce diversity, a view supported by CTC – Hampshire Cycling.

96 Baughurst, Bramley, Kingsclere, Old Basing & Lynchpit, Oakley & Deane Pamber, Silchester and Tadley parish councils and Kempshott & District Residents Association, Overton Society, Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, South View Residents Association, Basingstoke Heritage Society, Basingstoke Alternative Action Group Community Initiatives Forum non-political group all objected to the proposal to reduce council size to 30, but did not put forward any specific comments. Five local residents also objected to Mr Markham's proposal, but did not provide any specific grounds for doing so.

97 We have given careful consideration to the further evidence received. We note that of the 48 submissions received during the consultation on council size, only five expressed support for Mr Markham's proposals, including Mr Markham himself. In addition, we consider that the respondents objecting to the proposed reduction have generally put forward persuasive evidence.

98 We note that the Council did not put forward any views on whether a 30-member council would work, but did provide details of how the political management structure could change to accommodate the reduction. We note that the Council put forward three options and suggested that these would enable more streamlined and improved decision making. However, we also note its concerns that the new structures might reduce scrutiny. We share these concerns, as did a number of other respondents.

99 We note that the Council and Mr Markham's supporters argue that a smaller streamlined decision making process would give councillors more time to concentrate on their representational role. They contend that the White Paper proposals and that parish councils, local area forums and council officers should take on additional responsibilities to give councillors additional time for their representational role.

100 However, we also note that the Council acknowledges that Basingstoke town area is unparished and that it has not fully considered how this area would be

represented. In addition, we note the concerns of a number of respondents that a smaller council would actually mean increased workload for members and therefore less time to carry out the 'Community Champion' role. We also note that some respondents argue that parishes, local area forums and council officers should not and could not be expected to take on additional responsibilities. We share some of the concerns expressed.

101 We note that both those supporting Mr Markham's proposals and those objecting to them have taken a lead from the White Paper, Strong & Prosperous Communities, but have drawn very different conclusions from it. We consider that while the White Paper does argue that parishes should play a stronger role in local communities, it also stresses that councillors will continue to have a vital representation role to play as leaders of their communities and champions.

102 We consider there are significant shortcomings in the level of evidence provided to argue a smaller council would enable councillors to carry out their current or, potentially for the future, enhanced representational role as 'Community Champions'. We do not consider that respondents have put forward sufficiently robust evidence to explain how, in the short to medium term, parish councils and other parties would be able to take on additional responsibilities to provide borough councillors with more time to take on other roles.

103 We also note that some supporters of Mr Markham's proposals argued that a smaller council would secure cost savings. However, others questioned whether these savings would be realised if councillors had greater workload or indeed their responsibilities were passed on to other parties. We do not consider that respondents have provided sufficiently robust evidence of how or where the cost savings would be met if council size was reduced and whether parish councils, local forums or council officers should or could take on more responsibilities. In any event, any savings resulting from a reduced council size are likely to be minimal when set against the Council's overall budget.

104 The Committee acknowledges the views of Mr Markham and considers that he is effectively proposing a complete review and re-evaluation of members' role within the Council and of the Council's supporting functions. Unfortunately, we consider that while Mr Markham has gone some way to describing how this might be realised, the other respondents have identified a number of significant shortcomings.

105 We note that a number of respondents suggested that, while they opposed a reduction to 30 members, they might support a smaller reduction. However, these respondents did not put forward specific proposals or provide well evidenced submissions as to how any such proposals might work. The Committee considers that Mr Markham's proposals polarised opinion given the large reduction he proposed. It is possible that a smaller reduction might have drawn greater support. However, as mentioned above there was insufficient evidence in support of alternative council size to persuade us to consider an option other than 60 or 30 members. Therefore, on balance, the Committee does not propose reducing the council to 30 members.

106 As a result of rejecting Mr Markham's proposal for a 30-member council, the Committee has reconsidered the Stage One evidence for a council size of 60 members.

107 In light of the evidence received during Stage One and the concerns outlined in the further consultation on council size, we consider there to be sufficient evidence for retaining the existing council size of 60 members. We consider that this will enable the Council to continue to carry out its functions effectively through the existing arrangements. We also consider that it will enable members to continue to fulfil their representational role. We are therefore proposing to retain the existing council size of 60 members. Whether that council size might need to be reviewed again in the light of the White Paper proposal and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill which was introduced to Parliament in December 2006 is open to question. However, it is not for us to pre-empt Parliament's decision on the Bill or to consider at this stage any potential implications for the future role of councillors.

108 Finally, it should also be noted that during the further consultation on Mr Markham's proposed council size, Councillor Potter (Buckskin ward) submitted a number of email exchanges between Councillor Ruffell and Conservative Group members, and between Councillor Rhatigan and Conservative Group members. The email from Councillor Ruffell discussed the possibility of wards based on the existing county council division, as proposed in Mr Markham's submission. However, Councillor Potter drew particular attention to Councillor Rhatigan's email, which discussed the potential impact of a reduction in council size to 30 members on the Council's political composition.

109 On 23 October 2006 we wrote to Councillor Rhatigan to inform him that we had received copies of his email exchange and invited him to indicate what significance we should attach to the content of his email in the context of the review. We received no response from Councillor Rhatigan.

110 We noted Councillor Ruffell's comments and their implications. However, we would stress that as stated in paragraph 79, the further consultation on Mr Markham's proposals was limited to the proposal to reduce the council size to 30 members. The consultation was not considering or requesting evidence on Mr Markham's proposed warding pattern based on county divisions. Therefore, any suggestions that the warding pattern could possibly be determined by the consultation on council size, was premature and incorrect.

111 In addition, we stress in the strongest terms that we are an independent apolitical body. We give no thought or consideration to and take no account of any potential impact of ward changes on the political composition of the area under review. All our decisions are taken in the light of the statutory criteria which govern our work (as set out in paragraph 52) and on the evidence received.

## Electoral equality

112 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. Therefore, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where inadequate justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as

is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

113 Our draft recommendations in Basingstoke & Deane generally secure good electoral equality and no ward is forecast to have a variance of over 9% from the borough average by 2009.

114 The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough 114,310 by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 60 under our draft proposals. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,905.

## General analysis

115 At Stage One the Council submitted four different borough-wide proposals, Option A, Option B, Option C and Option D. However, Option C was submitted as the Council's official scheme following a vote by its members. Three of the four schemes (except Option B) were supported by a number of the respondents, although a number of respondents also proposed amendments to these options. Option A was supported by the Basingstoke Conservative Association, Option C was supported by the Basingstoke Liberal Democrats and other Liberal Democrat groups and councillors, while Option D was supported by the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Group and other Labour groups and councillors. We also received Mr Markham's proposals for a 30-member council.

116 As stated in the council size section, we are not adopting either Mr Markham or the Council's Option A proposals (as supported by the Conservative Association) for a reduction in council size. Since we are adopting a 60-member council and given that these proposals are based on a different council size, we have been unable to consider them further.

117 Of the remaining borough-wide schemes, the Council's Option B did not receive any support, and it also secured worse electoral equality than the Council's Option C or Option D. Ten of Option B's wards would have variances of over 5% and one over 10% by 2009. Given the lack of support, lack of community identity evidence and poor levels of electoral equality, we are not pursuing Option B further.

118 We have, however, given careful consideration to Options C and D and the submissions that expressed support or opposition for these options. We have also given consideration to the other responses received.

119 We note that the Basingstoke town area of the borough is unparished and none of the Options or other responses received propose wards that cross into the surrounding rural area. We have therefore based our draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane on the discrete areas of Basingstoke town and the rural area.

120 In the Basingstoke town area, the Council's Option C and Option D put forward a number of identical wards and we have generally adopted these. In the remaining area, our proposals are generally based on Option C, but subject to a number of amendments designed to produce the best balance between good electoral equality and the community identity.

121 In the rural area, the Council's Option C and Option D proposed identical Basing, Overton and Whitchurch wards. However, in the remainder of the rural area, Option D proposed multi-member wards as a matter of principle. Although in a few areas, these multi-member rural wards secure better electoral equality, in others they do not. We do not consider that the supporters of Option D have provided sufficient evidence to warrant us rejecting the use of single-member wards where appropriate, particularly given support for them from other respondents. Therefore we have not adopted the Council's Option D multi-member ward principle.

122 Our proposals for the whole Basingstoke & Deane area are primarily based on Option C (and Option D where it is identical to Option C) and elements of Option D and Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals

## Warding arrangements

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

- Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop, Grove and Norden wards (page 35)
- Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards (page 37)
- Buckskin, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards (page 39)
- Chineham, Popley East, Popley West and Rooksdown wards (page 47)
- Basing, Oakley & North Waltham and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards (page 51)
- Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon and Whitchurch wards (page 53)
- Burghclere, East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Kingsclere wards (page 54)
- Baughurst, Tadley North and Tadley South wards (page 57)
- Calleva, Pamber and Sherborne St John wards (page 59)

124 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table 1 (on pages 9–11), and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop, Grove and Norden wards

125 There are no parishes in these wards. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

126 At Stage One the Council's Option C proposed retaining the existing Grove and Norden wards, which would have 5% more and 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively. It also proposed modifications to the existing Brookvale & Kings Furlong and Eastrop wards. It proposed transferring an area of the existing Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward (to the south of Winchester Road) to Eastrop ward and transferring an area of the existing Eastrop ward (to the south of

Sarum Hill and east of Penrith Road and Winchester Road) to Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward. As a result, Brookvale ward would have 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009, while the proposed Eastrop ward would have 3% fewer electors by 2009. The Council did not provide any community identity evidence to support these proposals.

127 The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Party put forward identical proposals for these wards. It argued that while the boundary of the Eastrop and Brookvale area as a whole is clearly defined, 'there is no recognised and distinct boundary between [them]'. It said that Grove ward has 'clear boundaries in all directions. The M3 to the south, the dual carriageway from the Black Dam Roundabout to the M3' to the east, the southern ring road to the north and Winchester Road to the west'. It added that 'Hackwood Road is more a centre than a boundary of a community'. Finally, it commented that Norden also has 'clear boundaries', adding that 'It has shared facilities such as doctors, shops, schools and community centres'.

128 The North West Hampshire Liberal Democrat Party put forward an identical submission to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward identical proposals for these wards as the Council's Option C, but provided only limited new evidence.

129 Two local residents expressed support for the proposals to retain the existing Grove and Norden wards and for the Council's Option C proposal to amend the boundary between Brookvale & Kings Furlong and Eastrop wards.

130 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward identical proposals to the Council's Option C for these wards. It argued that Brookvale & Kings Furlong and Eastrop area is self contained, but acknowledged that it was necessary to make an amendment to the boundary between them to improve electoral equality. It also argued that Norden ward is 'a well defined area north of the railway line containing all the populated areas inside the ring road'. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party, Norden Branch expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, with particular support for its proposal to retain the existing Norden ward. Councillors Hood, James and Harvey (Norden ward) also expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, with particular support for its proposal to retain the existing Norden ward. Councillor Kelly (Basingstoke Central division) also expressed support for retaining the external boundary for the two Brookvale & Kings Furlong and Eastrop wards, but acknowledged that it was necessary to move some electors between them to improve electoral equality.

131 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note that there is agreement for the proposals in this area. We note that the Council's Option C proposals, and the identical proposals put forward by other parties, secure good levels of electoral equality. The proposals secure wards with strong boundaries that appear to reflect local communities. We are therefore adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

132 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provide details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop, Grove and Norden wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

## Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards

133 There are no parishes in these wards. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

134 At Stage One the Council's Option C proposed broadly retaining the external boundary to the Brighton Hill area, subject to small amendment to the boundary between the Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards within this area. It proposed transferring Hatch Warren Lane, Birches Crest and The Beeches from Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Brighton Hill South ward. It also proposed transferring an area of the existing Brighton Hill South ward (to the east of Strauss Road and north of Gershwin Road) to Brighton Hill North ward. Its modified Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would both have 7% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. The Council did not provide any evidence to support this proposal.

135 The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party put forward identical proposals for these wards. It argued that the 'whole of Brighton Hill has clear natural boundaries [... and] shares a community affinity'. It acknowledged that its proposals are 'a minimum change one, with just a few electors being moved to help achieve reasonable electoral equality', adding that 'There is no recognised and distinct boundary between the Brighton Hill wards'. It also acknowledged that the area contains too many electors to justify three councillors, but that 'The creation of two two-member wards was very popular and could be easily understood'. It also argued that the area of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood that it proposed transferring has 'access onto Hatch Warren Lane and Gershwin Road and the Brighton Hill community facilities'.

136 The North West Hampshire Liberal Democrat Party put forward an identical submission to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward proposals identical to the Council's Option C. It also put forward very similar argument to support them.

137 Councillor Gurden (Brighton Hill North ward) expressed support for the Council's Option C for these wards, expressing concern about any proposal that would transfer part of the Brighton Hill area to a Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward. He also stated that 'any alternative division from North/South (ie East West) would not help materially and would smack of change for changes sake'. Councillor Barnes (Brighton Hill South ward) argued that the existing boundaries should be retained 'as closely as possible', objecting to any proposal that would transfer electors to Hatch Warren & Beggarwood. He did not put forward support for any particular proposal or any specific amendment to the existing wards. Councillor Rowland (Brighton Hill North ward) also expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals for the Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards. She also rejected the Council's Option D (as supported by the Labour groups).

138 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward proposals identical to the Council's Option D, providing limited supporting evidence. The Council's Option D proposals agreed with the Council's Option C for the external boundary of the area, including the transfer of part of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to the Brighton Hill area, but completely redrew the internal boundary of the area, proposing an

east/west split rather than the existing north/south split. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party supported the Option D proposal to transfer an area of the existing Brighton Hill South ward (to the south east of Chopin Road and Manor Field County Junior School and the north east of Brighton Way) to its Brighton Hill East. It also supported the transfer of an area of the existing Brighton Hill North ward (to the north east of Brighton way) to its Brighton Hill West ward. Its Brighton Hill East would have 5% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009 and Brighton Hill West would have 10% fewer electors. It stated 'There is no really natural way of splitting the area', adding that 'we have used a different dividing line, which we believe better represents the community'.

139 The Basingstoke & Deane Constituency Labour Party Southern Branch expressed support for the Basingstoke & Deane Constituency Labour Party's proposal for an east/west split in the Brighton Hill area. It stated that this proposal reflected the 'slightly different character' of the housing between the two areas. It also expressed support for the proposal to transfer an area of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood to the Brighton Hill area.

140 A local resident, Mr Berwick-Gooding, put forward modifications to the Council's Option C proposals for the Brighton Hill area. He proposed broadly retaining the existing wards, but transferring only Boyce Close from Brighton Hill North to Brighton Hill South. He also proposed transferring Byrd Gardens, Lennon Way, McCartney Walk and Mitchell Gardens to Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, but rejected the proposal to transfer an area of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood to Brighton Hill. Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposed Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have 11% and 8% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively. Another local resident requested the retention of the existing Brighton Hill North ward, arguing that the area has a strong sense of community.

141 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that most respondents generally agree on the external area of the Brighton Hill area, although a number object to proposals to transfer part of the existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood to the Brighton Hill area. However, the majority of respondents support this proposal. We also note that transferring this area improves the overall levels of electoral equality in the Brighton Hill wards. In addition, we note that this area of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood has good access into Brighton Hill. We are therefore adopting the proposal to transfer this area to the Brighton Hill wards.

142 We also notice the differences between the Council's Option C and Option D proposals for the Brighton Hill wards. All respondents generally agree that while the area as a whole can be defined, there is disagreement over how to define different communities within it and therefore disagreement over how to divide the ward. We do not consider that any party has put forward strong evidence to justify its proposed division of the area. However, we do note the Basingstoke & Deane Labour Constituency Party proposes substantially redrawing the existing boundaries, while also securing worse levels of electoral equality than Option C. Therefore, on balance, we do not propose adopting the Council's Option D proposals as supported by The Basingstoke & Deane Constituency Labour Party.

143 We also note Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals for retaining, or only making very minimal change to, the existing Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards. However, we also note that these proposals secure significantly worse levels of

electoral equality than the Council’s Option C proposals. We do not consider that Mr Berwick-Gooding has provided sufficient evidence of the local communities to justify the worse levels of electoral equality that would result. Therefore, we are not adopting these proposals.

144 We are adopting the Council’s Option C Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards as we consider these provide the best levels of electoral equality for the area, while recognising the distinct boundary of the area as a whole.

145 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

**Buckskin, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards**

146 There are no parishes in these wards. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

147 At Stage One in this area we received three different area-wide proposals (excluding the proposals from the Council’s Option A proposals, as supported by the Conservative Group, Mr Markham’s proposals and the Council’s Option B proposals). The Council’s Option C proposed a number of significant amendments to the existing electoral arrangements (Table 4).

**Table 4: The Council’s Option C**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from a average % by 2009</b>
Buckskin	The existing Buckskin ward; part of the existing Winklebury ward (the area to the south of the railway line and Tiverton Road)	2	-7
Hatch Warren & Beggarwood	The existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward (less Birches Crest, Hatch Warren Lane and The Beeches)	3	9
Kempshott	The existing Kempshott ward (less Abbott Way, Shipton Way, Widmore Street and Woodroffe Drive)	3	-8

**Table 4 (continued): The Council's Option C**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
South Ham	The existing South Ham wards and part of the existing Kempshott ward (Abbott Way, Shipton Way, Widmore Street and Woodroffe Drive)	3	-6
Winklebury	part of the existing Winklebury ward, (less the area to the south of the railway line and Tiverton Road)	2	4

148 The Council did not provide any evidence to support its proposals. However, The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party did provide evidence to support the Council's Option C proposals. It argued that the three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, based broadly on the existing ward, 'includes the Beggarwood Lane development [that] has always been seen as part of Hatch Warren and will provide services for the whole of Hatch Warren'. It also supported the transfer of Birches Crest, Hatch Warren Lane and The Beeches to Brighton Hill South ward, arguing that they have good links to the rest of Brighton Hill.

149 It argued that its Kempshott ward has 'very clear boundaries to the south, the M3 and to the west, the parish boundary of Oakley, which should not be broken', but added that the 'north boundary is less clear'. It therefore supported the transfer of Abbott Way, Shipton Way, Widmore Street and Woodroffe Drive to South Ham ward. It also argued that the 'Southern end of Old Kempshott Lane has similar houses to those in Kempshott Lane, while those houses in the south-eastern end of Buckskin Lane have more in common with Pack Lane than those in Buckskin'. It commented that the South Ham ward also has 'clear boundaries [along] the ring road, the A30 and the railway', adding that the 'western boundary is less clear' and therefore proposed transferring part of the 'Berg Estate' (Abbott Way, Shipton Way, Widmore Street and Woodroffe Drive) from the existing Kempshott ward. It said that 'The facilities in Buckland Parade are shared with residents from Pack Lane, Stag Hill, Western Way and the Berg Estate'.

150 The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party also argued that the transfer of the West Ham Lane area enabled it to use the 'clear natural boundary' of the railway line boundary to the north. However, it also stated that 'The village of Worting straddles both Buckskin and Winklebury, which links the area with some shared facilities such as shops and pubs', adding that 'There are both road and footpath links, such as the link between Roman Road and Old Kempshott Lane' and that 'This proposal unites the old village into one ward'. It argued that the Winklebury area has clear boundaries but that, as described above, its amendment to the Worting village area unites the village, adding that 'this area of old Winklebury ward shares facilities such as the library, schools and doctors with Buckskin'.

151 The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party also objected to a number of elements of the Council's Option D (identical to those put forward by the Basingstoke & Deane Constituency Labour Party) proposals for this area. It objected to proposals to transfer part of the Berg Estate to Buckskin ward 'because it is separated from the

rest of the ward'. It also objected to proposals to transfer the Kempshott Rise area from Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott ward, arguing that 'the A30 is a clear recognised boundary' and that 'Kempshott Rise also shares facilities with the rest of Hatch Warren such as shops, doctors and community centre[s]'. It also objected to the proposal to transfer the Worting Village area of the existing Winklebury ward to Kempshott ward, commenting that it is separate and 'divides the old village of Worting'.

152 The North West Hampshire Liberal Democrat Party put forward an identical submission to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward a proposal identical to the Council's Option C, offering limited, but similar argument.

153 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward proposals identical to the Council's Option D, which made a number of significant amendments to the existing electoral arrangements (Table 5).

**Table 5: The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposals**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
Buckskin	The existing Buckskin ward (less Hampshire Close, Highlands Road, Kempshott Grove, Old Kempshott Lane and Westbrook Court); part of the existing Kempshott ward (Brackely Way, Challis Close, Denham Drive, Pitman Close and Seymour Road); part of the existing Winklebury ward (the area to the south of the railway line)	2	-9
Hatch Warren & Beggarwood	The existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward (less Birches Crest, Hatch Warren Lane and The Beeches and the Kempshott Rise area, to the north of Hatch Warren Lane)	3	-1
Kempshott	The existing Kempshott ward (less the area to the rear of the properties on Pack Lane); part of the existing Buckskin ward (Hampshire Close, Highlands Road, Kempshott Grove, Old Kempshott Lane and Westbrook Court); and part of the existing Winklebury ward (the area to the west of Roman Road)	3	2

**Table 5 (continued): The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposals**

Ward name	Constituent parts	Number of councillors	Variance from average %
South Ham	The existing South Ham ward; and part of the existing Kempshott Road Abbott Way, Shipton Way, Widmore Street and Woodroffe Drive)	3	-6
Winklebury	The existing Winklebury ward (less area to the south of the railway line and the area to the west of Roman Road)	2	6

154 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party commented that it proposed transferring Birches Crest, Hatch Warren Lane and The Beeches from Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to its Brighton Hill West ward to improve electoral equality, but only provided limited evidence to justify this. It also argued that the boundary along the Old Kempshott Road between Buckskin and Kempshott wards 'is entirely arbitrary', adding 'Recently, residents of the Buckskin ward part of Old Kempshott Lane have chosen to take their problems to councillors other than those who represent them'. It also suggested that a new development may provide a further 300 properties that the Council did not consider in its figures (see paragraph 61).

155 It said that the South Ham area is currently split between three wards, adding that its proposals improve this by only dividing it between two wards, South Ham and Buckskin. It therefore proposed removing the part of the Berg Estate in Kempshott ward and transferring part to South Ham ward and the other part to Buckskin ward. However, it acknowledged that 'Ideally [the Berg Estate] would all be in one ward or the other'. It also argued that its proposals removed the West Ham Lane area from Winklebury ward as 'There was no justification for this in the past, other than to improve the relative number of electors'.

156 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party South Ham Branch supported the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals for this area. It stated that 'the Berg Estate should either be in South Ham ward, or at the very least in Buckskin ward', adding that it 'certainly should not be in Kempshott ward as it has no connection to the remainder of that ward'.

157 Councillors Traynor and Keating (South Ham ward) also supported the transfer of the Berg Estate back to South Ham and Buckskin wards, but stated that they consider 'this area is really part of South Ham'. Councillor Watts (South Ham ward) objected to any proposal to reduce the South Ham ward to two members. Councillor Kelly (Basingstoke Central division) also supported proposals to 'bring the Berg Estate back into South Ham and/or Buckskin wards'.

158 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Buckskin & Kempshott Branch expressed broad support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, but proposed an amendment. It argued that the 609 electors in the Kempshott Rise area of the existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward (Gloucester Drive, Paterson Close, Exeter Close, Norwich Close, Durham Way, Worcester Avenue, York Close, Rochester Close, Canterbury Close, Truro Place, Lincoln Close, Coventry Close and

Westminster Close) should be moved to Kempshott ward. It argued that ‘not only would it improve the size of the electorate for both wards concerned, it would also further emphasise community ties’. It acknowledged that the A30 may be a division between the areas, but stated that there is a ‘pedestrian crossing of that road [...] directly adjacent to Kempshott Rise’.

159 Councillors Potter and Jones (Buckskin ward) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party’s proposals for the Buckskin ward. They expressed support for transferring the Old Kempshott Lane out of Buckskin ward. They stated that they ‘had no problem’ with the proposal to transfer part of the Berg Estate to Buckskin ward, but added that ‘the Berg estate is really part of South Ham’. Councillor Connor (Winklebury ward) expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party’s proposal arguing that the existing ward has ‘reasonable boundaries apart from that section of Worting Road south of the railway line’. He also acknowledged that in order to secure electoral equality it would be necessary to remove the Worting village area from Winklebury.

160 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party North West Branch also supported the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party’s proposals. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Southern Branch supported Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party’s proposals, but also expressed support for the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Buckskin & Kempshott Branch’s proposal to transfer Kempshott Rise from Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott Rise. It stated that ‘the Kempshott Rise development is stand-alone, and so we would not have any objections as to which side of a boundary line it might fall’, adding ‘Its name does indicate that it has a link with Kempshott’.

161 A local resident, Mr Berwick-Gooding also put forward a number of significant amendments to the existing electoral arrangements in this area (Table 6).

**Table 6: Mr Berwick-Gooding’s proposals**

Ward name	Constituent parts	Number of councillors	Variance from average %
Buckskin	The existing Buckskin ward; part of the existing Kempshott ward (Buckskin Lane, Melford Gardens and Old Kempshott Lane); and part of the existing Winklebury ward (the area to the west of Roman Way)	2	-9
Hatch Warren	The existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward	3	12
Kempshott	The existing Kempshott ward (less Buckskin Lane, Melford Gardens and Old Kempshott Lane) and part of the existing South Ham ward (the even numbered properties on High Drive)	3	-5

**Table 6 (continued): Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals**

Ward name	Constituent parts	Number of councillors	Variance from average %
South Ham	The existing South Ham ward (less even numbered properties on High Drive)	3	-12
Winklebury	The existing Winklebury ward (less the area to the west of Roman Way)	2	11

162 Mr Berwick-Gooding argued that his proposed Hatch Warren ward has strong boundaries and that the 12% variance is justified because of 'its strong sense of identity', adding that it shares 'facilities such as shops, schools and a community centre'.

163 Mr Berwick-Gooding acknowledged that his proposed Kempshott ward was different from the others put forward, but commented that it shares the boundaries of the A30 to the south and Oakley parish to the west. He argued that his proposal to remove part of the existing Kempshott ward reflected the fact 'Old Kempshott Lane and Melford Gardens have no direct road access to the rest of Kempshott'. He added that 'These areas share the same facilities with the rest of Buckskin such as schools and shops'. He argued that moving the boundary behind the even numbered houses on High Drive would provide a stronger boundary between Kempshott and South Ham wards.

164 Mr Berwick-Gooding's Buckskin ward was similar to the Council's Option C, but with a number of significant amendments. As indicated above, he proposed transferring part of Kempshott ward to Buckskin ward to reflect local road links. His proposals also reflected the Council's Option C to transfer Worting Village from Winklebury ward to Buckskin ward, but excluding the area to the east of Roman Way. He argued that 'the railway bridge in Worting Road links the western part of Worting Village with the eastern part', adding 'the residents of eastern Worting Road share the church St Thomas of Canterbury off the western side of Worting Road. The residents of western Worting Road use the shops and pubs of eastern Worting Road and send their children to Worting Primary School'. He argued that his Winklebury ward 'will have clear boundaries [...] and shared facilities such as schools, doctors, dentist, shops and community centres'.

165 Another local resident argued that the level of electoral equality in the existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward could be justified given the area's strong boundaries. She also agreed that the Worting village area should be transferred from Winklebury ward to Buckskin ward as the area has some shared facilities, adding that 'I do not feel that [...] Worting village shares any affinity, interest or facilities with Kempshott'. Finally, the local resident objected to the proposal to transfer any area of South Ham to Kempshott ward.

166 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that this area has attracted a number of different and often conflicting proposals. The Council's Option C and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party (the same as the Council's Option D proposals) put forward different proposals for the area and Mr

Berwick-Gooding put forward a number of amendments to the Council's Option C proposals.

167 We note that the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals secured better electoral equality than the Council's Option C proposals. Its proposals also avoided the high opposing variances between Hatch Warren & Beggarwood and Kempshott wards (1% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2009 respectively under Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposals, and 9% more and 8% fewer respectively under Option C). However, we have serious concerns over its proposals to transfer part of the Berg Estate to its Buckskin ward. We note that this area of the Berg Estate does not actually have any direct road links to the Buckskin ward and would effectively be detached from the remainder of the ward. We do not consider that this would reflect local communities and have therefore decided against adopting the proposal. Unfortunately, being unable to consider this aspect of its proposals would have a significant knock-on effect on the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals for the remainder of the area, either worsening electoral equality or requiring substantial redrawing of its proposals. We are therefore unable to adopt any of its proposals for this area. However, in our proposals for this area we have sought to reflect, where possible, the community identity argument that it put forward.

168 We also note that Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposal for this area secured significantly worse electoral equality than either Option C or the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, retaining the majority of the existing Hatch Warren & Beggarwood and Kempshott wards. Mr Berwick-Gooding did provide some reasonable evidence of local community links, but given the significantly worse levels of electoral equality we are not adopting his proposals. However, as with the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, we also propose, where possible, trying to reflect the community identity argument that he put forward in our proposals for this area.

169 We have therefore based our proposals for this area on the Council's Option C, but with a number of amendments to improve electoral equality, reflect communities and to reflect arguments put by the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party and Mr Berwick-Gooding.

170 As stated above, we note that the Council's Option C secured high opposing variances between Hatch Warren & Beggarwood and Kempshott wards and have examined ways to address this. We also note the strong argument received for both Option C and in support of the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals that the Berg Estate should no longer be divided between three wards as it currently is, and that a better option would be to divide it between two wards. Indeed, we note that much of the evidence argued that the Berg Estate should wholly be in the South Ham ward, to which it is said to have strong community links. We have therefore also examined ways to address this.

171 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party North West Branch proposed transferring the Kempshott Rise area (609 electors) out of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott ward. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Buckskin & Kempshott Branch supported this proposal, but acknowledged that the proposal breaches the A30 boundary. However, it argued that the area does not have strong links to Hatch Warren and could access Kempshott ward via the A30

roundabout. We also note that there are strong concerns that the area does not have links to Kempshott. However, while we acknowledge these concerns, we consider that the links via the roundabout are reasonable. We also note that adopting this amendment would improve electoral equality in Hatch Warren & Beggarwood to 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. In addition it significantly improves electoral equality in Kempshott ward from 8% fewer electors to 2% more than the borough average by 2009.

172 The improvement in electoral equality in Kempshott ward enables us to improve electoral equality elsewhere in the area and reflect the strong community links of the Berg Estate, albeit, by actually worsening the electoral equality again in Kempshott ward. We are therefore adopting the amendment supported by Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Buckskin & Kempshott Branch and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party North West Branch to transfer Kempshott Rise from Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott ward.

173 We note the strong argument about community links in the Berg Estate, links to South Ham and that it is divided from Kempshott by Pack Lane. We also note that it is possible to transfer 492 from the Berg Estate under Option C's Kempshott ward to South Ham ward. While this proposal would worsen electoral equality in our modified Kempshott ward (from the 2% more electors proposed in paragraph 167 above to 6% fewer by 2009), it improves it in South Ham ward (from 6% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009 to 3% more). We consider that this proposal reflects what has been said to us about local communities in the area, without significantly worsening electoral equality and therefore propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations.

174 We note Mr Berwick-Gooding argued that the proposals to place Melford Gardens, Old Kempshott Lane and Buckskin Lane in Kempshott ward did not reflect communities, as the areas do not have access into the ward. We also note that he proposed transferring the 175 electors in these roads to Buckskin ward. However, transferring all 175 electors would worsen electoral equality in our modified Kempshott ward further, to -9% by 2009, but improve it in Buckskin to -2%.

175 We concur with Mr Berwick-Gooding's argument that Melford Gardens and Old Kempshott Lane run into a cul-de-sac and cannot access south to Kempshott ward. However, we do not agree that Buckskin Lane has poor access into the ward. We note that transferring just Melford Gardens and Old Kempshott Lane (75 electors in total) would worsen electoral equality in Kempshott ward from 6% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009 to 8% fewer (after taking into consideration the two amendments outlined above paragraphs 171 and 173) but improve it in Buckskin from 7% fewer electors to 4% fewer.

176 Although this amendment worsens the variance in Kempshott ward to the level of the Council's original Option C ward, we consider it enables us to reflect strong community identity evidence in the Berg Estate and improve electoral equality elsewhere in the area. We therefore propose adopting part of Mr Berwick-Gooding's modification.

177 Finally, we note that Option C, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party and Mr Berwick-Gooding all agreed that the West Ham Lane and Worting area of the existing Winklebury ward have strong community links into Buckskin ward. Mr Berwick-

Gooding on the other hand, argued for the transfer of the Wykeham Drive area (205 electors) to Winklebury ward. However, we note that transferring this area would worsen electoral equality in our modified Buckskin ward from 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009 to 9% fewer. It would also worsen the variance in Winklebury ward from 4% more electors than the borough average by 2009 to 9% more. It should be noted that this effectively creates high opposing variances of 9% fewer electors in Buckskin ward and 11% more in Winklebury ward.

178 While we consider that Mr Markham provides some evidence that the Wykeham Drive area has links into Winklebury, we note that it also has good road links on to the Worting Road and into West Ham Lane and Worting. Therefore, given the significant worsening to electoral equality, we do not propose adopting Mr Berwick-Gooding's amendment.

179 As stated above, we note that this area attracted a number of significantly different and often conflicting proposals. We consider that our draft recommendations for this area provide the best balance between the community identity evidence received, while also securing improved electoral equality. We do however acknowledge that there may be some concerns about the proposals, particularly in the Kempshott Rise area. Therefore, we would welcome local comments on our proposals.

180 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Buckskin, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

## Chineham, Popley East, Popley West and Rooksdown wards

181 Under the existing arrangements Popley East ward contains no parishes. Chineham ward comprises Chineham parish and Taylors Farm parish ward of Sheffield on Loddon parish. Popley West ward comprises an unparished area of Basingstoke town and Popley Fields parish ward of Sherborne parish. Rooksdown ward comprises an unparished area of Basingstoke town and Rooksdown parish. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

182 At Stage One the Council's Option C and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward broadly similar proposals for the Popley wards and Chineham ward. However, they put forward different proposals for Rooksdown ward. A local resident, Mr Berwick-Gooding put forward substantially different proposals for the whole area.

183 In the Popley area, Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party and the Council's Option C both proposed a minor amendment between Popley East and Popley West wards to improve the level of electoral equality between them. They both proposed transferring an area of the existing Popley West ward, to the east of Chineham Lane and Tewkesbury Close, to Popley East ward.

184 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party expressed support for Option C, arguing that the existing Popley area has distinct boundaries, but that its proposed

amendment would improve electoral equality between the wards, while retaining the distinct boundaries. It also proposed transferring a small area of Rooksdown ward to Popley East ward arguing that when it is developed the properties will access into Popley East ward. Its Popley East and Popley West wards would have 1% more and 8% more electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively.

185 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats and the Council's Liberal Democrat Group expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals, as supported by the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. A local resident also expressed support for these proposals.

186 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party also argued for the retention of the existing Chineham ward, stating that the Taylors Farm development 'has always been seen as part of Chineham and will provide services for the whole of Chineham'. Its Chineham ward would have 7% more electors than the borough average by 2009.

187 In the Rooksdown area, Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward substantially different proposals. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party supported the Council's Option C and the retention of a single-member Rooksdown ward, while Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposed transferring Rooksdown to its Priory ward.

188 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party supported the retention of the existing single-member Rooksdown ward stating during the last review 'everyone agreed that Rooksdown would be urban in nature looking towards Basingstoke, sharing little with the rural area to the north'. It argued that the area has strong boundaries, including the A339 and highlighted that during the last review of Basingstoke & Deane, the Local Government Commission for England actually 'separated the new development at Rooksdown from Sherborne St John [...] and ruled against proposals to link Rooksdown with Winklebury'. As stated above, Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party also proposed transferring a small area of Rooksdown ward to Popley East ward arguing that when it is developed the properties will access into Popley.

189 The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also expressed support for retaining the single-member Rooksdown ward, providing only limited evidence. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward identical comments to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. Sherborne St John Parish Council expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals, as supported by Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party.

190 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party also supported the Council's proposed amendment between Popley East and Popley West wards and the retention of Chineham ward. However, it did not propose transferring part of Rooksdown into Popley East ward. It did not put forward any strong evidence to support this. Its Popley East and Popley West wards would have 1% more and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2009 respectively.

191 Councillor Paul Frankum (Popley West ward) and Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Popley Branch both expressed support for the small amendment between Popley East and Popley West wards. Councillor Jane Frankum (Popley West ward) and Councillor McCormick (Popley East ward) also expressed support

for the Council's Option C. Councillor Jane Frankum stated that 'it is reasonable to consider the two Popley wards together', but acknowledged that the amendment to the boundary between them was necessary to improve electoral equality.

192 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party also proposed retaining the existing Chineham ward. Its Chineham ward would have 7% more electors than the borough average by 2009.

193 The Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposed transferring the Rooksdown area to its Priory ward, expressing concerns that the development proposed for the area 'has not taken place yet', adding 'There still seems no guarantee that this development will begin soon'. It also argued that placing Rooksdown in a ward with Sherborne St John meant 'merely returning to historical boundaries'.

194 As stated above, Mr Berwick-Gooding put forward substantially different proposals. He proposed moving away from the east/west split in the Popley area in favour of a north/south split utilising Popley Way. His Popley North and Popley South wards would have 7% more and 6% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively. Mr Berwick-Gooding argued that his proposals had strong boundaries. He also argued that his proposals reflect the fact that 'Residents of eastern Popley Fields will share more facilities such as shops and schools with the residents of Popley East north of Popley Way than with those residents south of Popley way'.

195 Mr Berwick-Gooding also proposed an amendment to the existing Chineham ward. He proposed transferring the Chineham Business Park out of Popley East ward and into Chineham ward, stating that 'The railway is not a natural boundary between the Business Parks and the parish of Chineham because there are road links from Crockford Lane and Lime Tree Way to Hanmore Road and Cufaude Lane'. He acknowledged that this proposal was rejected during the last review by the Local Government Commission for England as it combines an unparished area with the parish of Chineham. However, he argued that this is 'inconsistent because the new Rooksdown ward [...] does combine an unparished part of Basingstoke Town [...] with the parish of Rooksdown'. Mr Berwick-Gooding's modification does not affect any electors and therefore does not affect the levels of electoral equality of the existing ward.

196 Mr Berwick-Gooding also proposed an amendment to the existing Rooksdown ward, transferring an area of Popley West ward to north of Ringway North and west of Aldermaston roundabout to Rooksdown ward. He argued that this would provide stronger boundaries, but did acknowledge that it would have 21% more electors than the borough average by 2009.

197 A local resident also put forward comments for this area, supporting the proposal to move the boundary between Popley East and Popley West to improve electoral equality. She also supported the retention of the existing Rooksdown ward arguing that the area has strong boundaries.

198 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that, excepting Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals, there was broad agreement for Popley Easy and Popley West ward. While we note that Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposed

Popley North and Popley South wards use strong boundaries, we also note that they give high opposing variances of 7% more and 6% fewer electors than the borough average. In addition, he did not provide strong evidence for how his proposals would better reflect local communities. Finally, we note that there was strong support for broadly retaining the existing electoral arrangements, subject to a minor amendment. We therefore do not propose adopting Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals.

199 As stated above, there was a minor difference between the Option C proposal (as supported by Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party) and those of the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party for the Popley area. We note that the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals secure better electoral equality than the Council's Option C proposals by transferring a small area of future development (177 electors) into the Rooksdown area. We also note that there is some disagreement over which way this area will be accessed when it is built. However, despite the uncertainty over access and the improved electoral equality in Popley East ward under the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals, we are unable to adopt them given our proposals for the Rooksdown area (discussed below). The transfer of these 177 electors would worsen the variance in our proposed Rooksdown ward from 6% to 14%. We therefore propose adopting the Council's Option C proposals for Popley East and Popley West wards without amendment.

200 We note the general support for retaining the existing Chineham ward, but that Mr Berwick-Gooding proposes a minor amendment to transfer the Chineham Business Park area from Popley East ward to Chineham ward. We also note that the business park area does not contain any electors and has reasonable links to Chineham across the railway line, while only linking to Popley East via the Crockford Lane. We would concur with his argument that rejecting the proposal on the basis of transferring an unparished area to a ward that contains a parish is inconsistent with the approach elsewhere. Finally, we note that it would create a more compact Popley East ward. We therefore propose adopting this amendment as part of our draft recommendations.

201 Finally, we note the proposals for the Rooksdown area. We do not consider that the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal to transfer the Rooksdown area to its Priory ward reflects the local communities. We concur with the alternative arguments that this area is predominantly urban and looks towards Basingstoke, rather than the surrounding rural area. Therefore, we do not propose adopting Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals.

202 We also note the minor differences between the proposal put forward by Council's Option C and Mr Berwick-Gooding. While Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals may have some merit in terms of strong boundaries, we do not consider that this can be justified given the resulting variance of 21%. We do not consider that he has provided sufficient evidence of local communities to justify such a large electoral imbalance. We are therefore adopting the Council's Option C proposal for Rooksdown ward.

203 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Chineham, Popley East, Popley West and Rooksdown wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

## Basing, Oakley & North Waltham and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards

204 Under the existing arrangements Basing ward comprises Mapledurwell & Up Nately, Newnham and Old Basing parishes. Oakley & North Waltham ward comprises Deane, Dummer, North Waltham, Oakley, Popham and Wootton parish ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish. Upton Grey & The Candovers ward comprises Bradley, Candovers, Cliddesden, Ellisfield, Farleigh Wallop, Herriard, Nutley, Preston, Tunworth, Upton Grey, Weston Corbett, Weston Patrick and Winslade. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

205 At Stage One the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party supported the Council's Option C proposals. The Council did not put forward any evidence to support of its proposals, but Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party did provide some comments. It supported the modification to the existing Basing ward to transfer Mapledurwell and Up Nately parish to Upton Grey ward. Its three-member Basing ward would comprise Newnham and Old Basing parishes and have 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. Its single-member Upton Grey ward would comprise Cliddesden, Ellisfield, Herriard, Mapledurwell & Up Nately, Tunworth, Upton Grey, Weston Corbett, Weston Patrick and Winslade parishes and have 1% more electors. It proposed a two-member Oakley ward comprising Oakley parish with 4% more electors. Its single-member North Waltham & The Candovers ward would comprise Bradley, Candovers, Deane, Dummer, Farleigh Wallop, North Waltham, Nutley, Preston Candover and Steventon and have 7% fewer electors.

206 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that its Basing ward retained the more urban parishes of the existing ward, adding that 'Newnham has good road links with Basing and is similar to the village of Old Basing and shares some facilities [...] such as shops and schools'. It stated that its Upton Grey & Mapledurwell ward groups villages that 'are south of the M3 with road links between them that have shared interests such as keeping the rural nature of their villages and facilities such as primary schools'. As with Upton Grey & Mapledurwell, Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that its North Waltham & The Candovers ward created a ward that 'share interests'. It argued that its Oakley ward was 'a more compact urban ward with a unified and shared community interest'.

207 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward argument identical to those of the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party.

208 The Council's Liberal Democrat Group proposed a minor modification to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party's proposals. It proposed transferring Mapledurwell & Up Nately and Newnham parishes from the existing Basing ward to Upton Grey ward. The resulting Basing ward would have 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. To offset the transfer of additional electors to its Upton Grey ward, it proposed transferring Cliddesden parish to its North Waltham & The Candovers ward. Finally, it proposed transferring Steventon and Deane parishes out of North Waltham & The Candovers ward to Overton and Oakley wards, respectively. Its North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey wards would have 1% and 3% more electors than the borough average by 2009.

209 Mr Berwick-Gooding put forward proposals identical as the Council's Option C proposals for Basing and Upton Grey wards. However, he proposed a minor amendment to North Waltham & The Candovers ward, transferring Deane parish to Oakley ward arguing that it 'create[s] a more compact mainly urban ward'. He argued that Newnham should be in the same ward as Basing as they share shops and have good road links. He also argued that his North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey proposals created wards with 'shared interests such as keeping the rural nature of their villages and facilities such primary schools'. His North Waltham & The Candovers, Oakley and Upton Grey wards would have 11% fewer, 6% more and 1% more electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively.

210 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward an identical Basing ward to the Council's Option C, but proposed combining the Option C North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey wards to create a two-member Candovers ward with 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. It argued that it had created a two-member Candovers ward as 'single member wards are undesirable and unnecessary', but provided no further argument. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Southern Branch supported the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposal stating that 'We think it inappropriate that the residents of this ward should only have one councillor to call on'.

211 Newnham Parish Council requested the retention of the existing electoral arrangements, but did not put forward any supporting evidence.

212 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note the general support for the modified Basing ward. We note that Newnham Parish Council requested the retention of the existing electoral arrangements, but that there is also good support for moving away from this. Therefore given the support for the modified Basing ward and the need to address electoral equality elsewhere in the area we are not retaining the existing ward. We also note the Council's Liberal Democrat Group's modification to the Council's Option C proposal and while this improves electoral equality in North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey wards, it significantly worsens it in Basing ward to 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. We do not consider that the Council's Liberal Democrat Group have provided sufficient evidence of community identity to justify this level of electoral equality. We are therefore adopting the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party's single-member Basing ward.

213 In the remainder of the area, we note the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals for a two-member Candovers ward. However, we do not consider that it has provided any evidence for creating a large rural ward comprising a large number of rural parishes. We note Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party Southern Branch's comments about the area having insufficient councillors, but do not consider that it has provided any evidence to support this contention. Moreover, many electors often argue the opposite; they prefer single-member wards because accountability is clearer. Therefore given the alternative options, we do not consider that this proposal would reflect local communities and do not propose adopting it.

214 We note that there is general support for the Council's Option C Upton Grey ward. We note that this ward secures reasonable electoral equality and consider that it has good road links and combines a number of rural parishes. We are therefore adopting it as part of our draft recommendations.

215 Finally, we note Mr Berwick-Gooding's modification to North Waltham & The Candovers ward to transfer Deane parish to Oakley ward, but also note that this worsens electoral equality from 7% fewer to 11% fewer electors than the borough average. We do not consider that he has provided sufficient evidence to justify this worsening of electoral equality and also note that including Deane parish would create a less 'compact' Oakley ward than under Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party's proposals.

216 We therefore propose adopting the Council's Option C proposals for this area without amendment.

217 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Basing, Oakley, North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 4 accompanying this report.

## Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon and Whitchurch wards

218 Under the existing arrangements Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward comprises Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon parishes. Whitchurch ward comprises Hurstbourne Priors and Whitchurch parishes. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

219 At Stage One the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party supported the Council's Option C proposals for a two-member Overton ward comprising Laverstoke and Overton parishes and a two-member Whitchurch ward comprising Hurstbourne Priors and Whitchurch parishes. As stated earlier (General analysis section) the Council did not provide any evidence of community identities to support its proposals. These wards would have 8% fewer and less than 1% more electors than the borough average by 2009. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that the Laverstoke and Overton parishes are joined by the B3400 and 'share facilities such as shops and primary schools', adding 'Steventon parish has been removed because it shares more with the parishes to its east [...] and] does not lie on the B3400'. It stated that Whitchurch ward should retain its existing electoral arrangements and that they are 'the south-western parishes of the Borough and they share facilities such as shops and schools'.

220 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward an identical argument to that of the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local party Party. Mr Berwick-Gooding also supported these proposals, putting forward very similar evidence. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party also put forward proposals identical to Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party's, but provided very limited supporting evidence.

221 The Council's Liberal Democrat Group proposed an amendment to the Council's Option C to retain Steventon parish in Overton ward as per the existing electoral arrangements. It did not put forward any strong evidence to support its proposal. It supported the Council's Option C proposal to retain Whitchurch ward. Overton Parish Council proposed retaining the existing electoral arrangements, arguing that the B4300 provides good links, but rejecting any proposal that would link it with Oakley and North Waltham to the east or Whitchurch to the west.

222 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note the general support for the Council's Option C. We note the Council's Liberal Democrat Group and Overton Parish Council's proposals to retain Steventon parish in Overton ward. We also note that the Council's Option C Overton ward actually secures worse electoral equality than the existing ward. However, given our proposals to adopt the Council's Option C proposals for Basing, North Waltham & The Candovers and Upton Grey wards, we are unable to retain the existing Overton ward given the knock-on effect this would have, including the creation of a Basing ward with 11% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. In addition to this, we note Overton Parish Council's comments about links along the B4300 in the existing ward, but would point out that while the B4300 links Laverstoke and Overton parishes, it does not run through Steventon parish; only running along its north boundary. Therefore, we do not propose retaining the existing Overton ward and are adopting the Council's Option C Overton ward.

223 We also note the broad support for retaining the existing Whitchurch ward. This ward secures good electoral equality and we therefore are retaining it as part of our draft recommendations.

224 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Overton and Whitchurch wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

**Burghclere, East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Kingsclere wards**

225 Under the existing arrangements Burghclere comprises Burghclere, Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green, Litchfield & Woodcott and Newton parishes. East Woodhay ward comprises East Woodhay parish. Highclere & Bourne ward comprises Ashmansworth, Highclere and St Mary Bourne parish. Finally, Kingsclere ward comprises Ashford Hill with Headley, Hannington and Kingsclere parishes. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

226 At Stage One the Council's Option C proposals put forward revised proposals for this area. Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party supported the Council's Option C for this area. As stated earlier (General analysis section) the Council did not provide any evidence of community identities to support its proposals. Its proposals are outlined in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: The Council's Option C proposals**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from average 2009 (%)</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>
Burghclere & Bourne	1	6	Burghclere, Litchfield & Woodcott, Newton and St Mary Bourne parishes

**Table 7 (continued): The Council's Option C proposals**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from average 2009 (%)</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>
East Woodhay & Highclere	2	-9	Ashmansworth, East Woodhay and Highclere parishes
Kingsclere	2	6	Ashford Hill with Headley, Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green and Kingsclere parishes

227 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that 'St Mary Bourne and Stoke Villages have better road links to the village of Woodcote and Litchfield than to Ashmansworth', adding that they have 'shared interests and views'. It argued that the parishes comprising East Woodhay & Highclere ward 'look northwards towards Newbury and therefore share a common interest', adding that 'they share some facilities such as schools'. It also highlighted the road links in the area. The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party argued that parishes in its Kingsclere ward 'have shared interests facilities such as shops, primary and secondary schools', adding that 'There are good road links between the villages'.

228 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward identical argument to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward identical proposals, but offered limited supporting evidence.

229 Councillor Lovegrove (Tadley North ward) expressed support for the Council's Option C proposal, as supported by Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. He rejected 'the suggestion that Baughurst has more in common with Kingsclere than with Tadley'.

230 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward alternative electoral arrangements for this area. Its proposals are outlined in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Variance from average 2009 (%)</b>	<b>Constituent parts</b>
Clere	3	9	Ashmansworth, Burghclere, East Woodhay, Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishops Green, Highclere, Litchfield & Woodcote, Newton and St Mary Bourne parishes
Kingsclere	2	0	Ashford Hill with Headley, Wolverton parish ward of Baughurst & Heath End, Hannington and Kingsclere parishes and Wolverton parish ward of Baughurst & Heath End parish

231 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposed merging the three existing single-member East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Burghclere wards to create a three-member Clere ward. It argued that it is 'not in favour of single member wards', adding that 'they are already merged as part of the Whitchurch & Clere County Division'. It proposed transferring Wolverton parish ward of Baughurst & Heath End parish to the existing Kingsclere ward arguing that it has 'more in common' and 'has the desirable side-effect of making our revised Kingsclere exactly the right size'.

232 Mr Berwick-Gooding proposed retaining the existing Burghclere, East Woodhay and Highclere & Bourne wards (see Table3). He argued that the constituent parishes of Burghclere ward 'share interests and facilities such as shops and schools including the Clere (secondary) school in Burghclere'. He stated that the East Woodhay ward 'is relatively isolated with few links to the rest of the Borough, looking north to Newbury'. He also argued that development in the parish scheduled to be completed after 2009 would mean that East Woodhay would have a variance of 8%. Mr Berwick-Gooding argued he did not consider that a variance of 10% should not 'force [the existing Highclere & Bourne ward] to be included in a larger rural ward'. Finally he stated that the existing Kingsclere ward contains parishes that 'have shared interests and facilities such as shops, primary and secondary schools', adding 'there are good road links between all the villages'.

233 A local resident also requested the retention of the existing Highclere & Bourne ward arguing that the current variance was acceptable. She also objected to the creation of large ward combining Kingsclere and Baughurst.

234 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note Mr Berwick-Gooding proposals to retain the existing electoral arrangements. We consider that he provided some reasonable evidence of local community links. However, we do not consider that this evidence is sufficiently strong to justify the retention of East Woodhay ward with 17% more electors in it than the borough average by 2009. Such a proposal would only be adopted in exceptional circumstances where considerable evidence of community identity was provided. In addition, we note his comments about future development within the area. However, the legislation does not enable us to consider development beyond the five-year forecast period. Therefore, on balance, we are not adopting Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

235 We also note the proposals put forward by Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party and that they secure some improvement in electoral equality. However, we also note that it proposes combining the three existing single-member wards to create a large three-member ward. We do not agree with its argument for creating this multi-member ward simply because it does not 'favour' single-member wards. As stated earlier, we do not consider objections simply to the principle of single-member wards to be valid argument. In addition, there is no evidence of local support for these proposals. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party has not provided any evidence on how these proposals would impact on the local communities. Therefore, when taken into consideration with the alternative arrangements put forward by the Council's Option C and supported by the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party, we do not propose adopting them as part of our final recommendations.

236 Finally, we note that the Council's Option C proposals secure some improvement in electoral equality. We also note the support of the other Liberal Democrat groups. We consider that they put forward reasonable evidence for the links between the constituent parishes of the proposed wards, including shared facilities and road links. While we acknowledge that the variance in Option C's proposed East Woodhay & Highclere ward is somewhat high, we also note that it is at the edge of the district. Unfortunately, this factor combined with the size of the parishes and the links between them mean we have been unable to find alternative arrangements to improve electoral equality further. We are therefore adopting the Council's Option C proposals without amendment.

237 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Burghclere & Bourne, East Woodhay & Highclere and Kingsclere wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

## Baughurst, Tadley North and Tadley South wards

238 Under the existing arrangements Baughurst ward comprises Baughurst parish, Tadley North ward comprises Tadley Central and Tadley North parish wards of Tadley parish and Tadley South ward comprise Tadley East and Tadley South parish ward of Tadley parish. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

239 At Stage One the Council's Option C proposed a two-member Baughurst & Heath End ward comprising Baughurst parish and part of the existing Tadley North ward (the proposed Tadley North parish ward of Tadley parish). It proposed a single-member Tadley Central ward comprising the proposed Tadley Central parish ward of Tadley parish and a two-member Tadley South ward comprising the proposed Tadley South parish ward of Tadley Parish. Its Baughurst & Heath End, Tadley Central and Tadley South wards would have 9% more, 9% more and 8% more electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively. The Council did not provide any evidence to support its proposals.

240 The Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party put forward proposals identical to the Council's Option C, but provided some supporting evidence. It argued that 'Baughurst parish includes urban areas that share community interest and facilities in Tadley North', adding that 'Heath End Road is more a focus of community interest than a natural boundary between Tadley and Baughurst'. It therefore proposed supporting the creation of a Baughurst & Heath End ward. It also argued that there is no natural boundary between Tadley North and Tadley South wards and argued that its two-member Tadley South ward reflected the 'slightly more rural' nature of the area.

241 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward identical argument to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward identical proposals. It argued that the Baughurst & Heath End ward 'recognises the strong links between this part of Tadley and Baughurst', adding 'Residents share many facilities for example, Burnham Copse Infant and Junior School in Tadley serves pupils from both Tadley and Baughurst'. It put forward

limited argument for its Tadley Central and Tadley South wards, but did state 'we would oppose [them] being combined'.

242 Councillor Lovegrove (Tadley North ward) expressed support for the Council's Option C, as supported by the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. He expressed support for the two-member Baughurst & Heath End ward arguing that 'Tadley North Town Council ward and Baughurst Parish do not have a distinct boundary'. He stated that 'They both share common facilities, for example churches, infant and secondary schools, the shopping Parades in Bishopswood Road and Franklin Avenue'. He also supported the proposed Tadley Central ward stating that 'It has its own identity, containing as it does the main facilities that serve Tadley and Baughurst'. Finally, he expressed support for Tadley South ward, arguing that it has a 'more rural feel and outlook', adding it 'cover[s] the oldest and most historic parts of Tadley'.

243 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party proposed a two-member Baughurst & Heath End ward (the same as the Council's Option C, but minus Wolverton parish ward of Baughurst & Heath End parish, which it transferred to its Kingsclere ward,) and a three-member Tadley ward. These wards would have 4% more and 7% more electors than the borough average by 2009. It argued that it had created a ward combining the urban area of Baughurst ward with the neighbouring part of Tadley. It did not provide any argument for creating a three-member Tadley ward.

244 Mr Berwick-Gooding proposed retaining the existing Baughurst ward and modifying the boundary between the existing Tadley North and Tadley South wards. These wards would have 2% fewer, 14% more and 8% more electors than the borough average by 2009, respectively. He argued against proposals to combine part of Baughurst with Tadley stating 'the people of north Baughurst share many facilities with Tadley, but the Wolverton area share many with Kingsclere, but all of them identify themselves as belonging to the community of Baughurst'. He put forward no community identity evidence for his proposed Tadley North and Tadley South wards.

245 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note Mr Berwick-Gooding's proposals to retain the existing electoral arrangements. However, we also note that his proposals retain a Tadley North ward that would have 14% more electors than the borough average by 2009. Therefore, given the level of support and evidence for alternative proposals that secure better electoral equality, we are not adopting his proposals.

246 We note that the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals secure better levels of electoral equality than either Mr Berwick-Gooding or the Council's Option C proposals. However, we also note that there are specific objections to such proposals. Although Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals do not combine the whole of Baughurst with Kingsclere, we note that Councillor Lovegrove objects to any proposals to combine Baughurst parish with Kingsclere. In addition, we consider that the Liberal Democrat groups and Councillor Lovegrove have provided strong evidence for joining Baughurst with the north part of Tadley. Finally, we note the objections to combining Tadley Central and Tadley South into a three-member ward and do not consider that Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party have provided sufficient evidence of community links to justify this. On balance, given the objections to its proposals and the support for alternative electoral arrangements, we are not adopting the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals in this area.

247 As stated above, we consider that there is strong evidence for the links between the urban area of Baughurst and the neighbouring north area of Tadley. The Liberal Democrat groups and Councillor Lovegrove give examples of schools and shops and argue that Heath End Road forms the focus of the community, rather than a barrier. In addition, while Mr Berwick-Gooding argues that Baughurst forms its own community, he also acknowledges that the urban area uses facilities in Tadley. Therefore, on balance we propose adopting the Council's Option C proposals for this ward.

248 We also note the Council's Option C proposals for Tadley Central and Tadley South wards and consider there to be reasonable evidence and good support for these wards. We consider that the proposed wards respectively reflect the more urban nature of the town centre area and the more rural southern area. We are therefore adopting the Council's Option C proposals for this area in its entirety.

249 We note that the three wards in this area do not secure very good levels of electoral equality and that all the wards contain more electors than the borough average. Unfortunately, the size of Tadley and Baughurst parishes only warrants giving the area as a whole five councillors. We consider that our draft recommendations give the best balance of electoral equality and representation of local communities.

250 Finally, we note that there is some disagreement and discrepancy over the name of the proposed Baughurst & Heath End ward. The Council's proposal refers to Baughurst & Heath End, while the Liberal Democrat groups refer variously to Tadley North & Baughurst or Baughurst & Tadley North. The Committee does not have strong opinions on ward names and notes that there is no agreement. It therefore proposes calling the ward Baughurst & Tadley North.

251 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Baughurst & Tadley North, Tadley Central and Tadley South wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

## Calleva, Pamber and Sherborne St John wards

252 Under the existing arrangements Calleva ward comprises Hartley Wespall, Mortimer West End, Sherfield on Loddon, Silchester, Stratfield Sturgis and Stratfield Saye parishes and Bramley East parish ward of Bramley parish. Sherborne St John ward comprises Monk Sherborne parish and Bramley West parish ward of Bramley parish, Sherborne St John parish ward of Sherborne St John parish and Ramsell parish ward of Wootton parish. Table 3 (on pages 18–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

253 At Stage One the Council's Option C proposed a two-member Bramley & Sherfield ward comprising Bramley parish and Sherfield on Loddon parish wards of Sherfield on Loddon parish. It proposed a two-member Pamber & Silchester ward comprising Hartley Wespall, Mortimer West End, Pamber, Sherfield on Loddon, Silchester, Stratfield Saye and Stratfield Turgis parishes. Finally, it proposed a single-member Sherborne St John ward comprising Hannington, Monk Sherborne, Wootton St Lawrence parishes and Sherborne St John parish ward of Sherborne parish.

These wards would have equal to 0%, 6% more and 9% more electors than the borough average by 2009. The Council did not provide any evidence to support its proposals.

254 Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party expressed support for the Council's Option C proposals and put forward some supporting evidence. It argued that its Bramley & Sherfield parish combines wards that share road and rail links into Reading and 'share some interests such as development and growth and facilities such as Bramley C of E Primary School and railway station'. It put forward limited evidence to justify its Pamber & Silchester ward, arguing that the areas share facilities such as schools. Finally, it argued that its Sherborne St John ward combined parishes with good road links. It also argued that it reunites Wootton St Lawrence in a single parish and combines it with neighbouring parishes, commenting that the existing electoral arrangements had been 'unpopular' during the last review.

255 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats put forward identical argument to the Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. The Council's Liberal Democrat Group also put forward identical proposals, but offered limited additional evidence to that put forward by Basingstoke Liberal Democrat Local Party. It did, however, object to the suggestion of a three-member Priory ward.

256 Mr Berwick-Gooding put forward proposals identical to the Council's Option C for Bramley & Sherfield and Pamber & Silchester wards, including similar arguments. However, his proposals for Sherborne St John ward were different and he proposed retaining Hannington parish in Kingsclere ward. He acknowledged that his ward was smaller than the Council's Option C proposal, but commented that it still contained sufficient electors to secure good electoral equality.

257 Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party put forward alternative arrangements, combining the existing Rooksdown parish in its three-member Priory ward. This would comprise Monk Sherborne, Pamber, Rooksdown and Wootton St Lawrence parish and Sherborne St John parish ward of Sherborne St John parish. This would have 6% more electors than the borough average by 2006. It also proposed a modified Calleva ward comprising Bramley, Hartley Wespall, Mortimer West End, Sherfield on Loddon, Silchester, Stratfield Saye and Strafield Turgis parishes. It would have 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2009. Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party provided only very limited evidence to support its proposals, arguing that it had sought to amend the Calleva ward by placing Bramley parish in it, to avoid the division of the parish.

258 Sherborne St John Parish Council expressed support for the Council's Option C. Monk Sherborne Parish Council requested the retention of the existing electoral arrangements. Both parishes only put forward limited evidence to support their views.

259 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals to create a three-member Priory ward and note that this ward includes Rooksdown parish. As stated in paragraph 201 above, we concur with the arguments that this area is predominantly urban and looks towards Basingstoke, rather than the surrounding rural area. Therefore, we do not propose adopting Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party's proposals. Rejecting its proposed Priory ward has a knock-on effect to its proposals in the remainder of this area. Therefore we are unable to consider them further.

260 We acknowledge that the Council’s Option C proposals have a number of fairly high variances. However, we have been unable to improve these further given the size and links between the parishes in the area. We note Monk Sherborne parish council’s request to retain the existing electoral arrangements. However, given the adoption of different electoral arrangements elsewhere, we are unable to retain the existing ward. Therefore, in light of the general support that they receive we are adopting the Council’s Option C proposals without amendment

261 Table 1 (on pages 9–11) provides details of the electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Bramley & Sherfield, Pamber & Silchester and Sherborne St John wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 2 and 4 accompanying this report.

**Conclusions**

262 Table 9 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2004 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2009.

**Table 9: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements**

	Current arrangements		Draft recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	30	30	30	30
Average number of electors per councillor	1,905	2,038	1,905	2,038
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	17	13	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	4	2	3	0

263 As shown in Table 9, our draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 17 to 11. By 2009 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose retaining the existing council size of 60 members.

**Draft recommendation**

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 30 wards, as detailed and named in Table 1, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

264 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the borough council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish and town councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements in FERs. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the borough council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an FER.

265 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies with borough councils.<sup>2</sup> If a borough council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

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

267 The parish of Tadley is currently served by 16 councillors representing four wards: Tadley Central, Tadley East, Tadley North and Tadley South. We propose changes to the electoral arrangements of the parish, in order to reflect our proposals for district wards in the area, and have allocated town councillors on the basis of the size of electorate represented in each ward

**Draft recommendations**

Tadley Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Tadley Central, (returning four councillors), Tadley East (four councillors), Tadley North (four councillors) and Tadley South (four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1 and 2.

268 Rooksdown parish is currently served by five councillors and is not warded. We are recommending retaining the existing arrangements for this parish.

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<sup>2</sup> Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

**Draft recommendations**

Rooksdown Parish Council should comprise five councillors, as at present.

269 Sherborne Parish Council is currently served by seven councillors representing two wards: Popley Fields and Sherborne St John. We are recommending retaining the existing arrangements for this parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Sherborne Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, representing two wards: Popley Fields (returning three councillors) and Sherborne St John (four wards) as at present. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 1, 2, 3 and 4.



## 5 What happens next?

270 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 21 May 2007. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

271 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the Basingstoke Town area around Buckskin, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. We acknowledge that there may well be particular concerns about the proposals to transfer part of Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward to Kempshott ward. At this stage, given the evidence received, we consider that this provides the best balance between securing good electoral equality while also reflecting local communities. However, we would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

272 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Manager  
Basingstoke & Deane Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**[reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk)**

Submissions can also be made online at  
[www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm).

273 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

274 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the

Electoral Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

## 6 Mapping

### Draft recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane

275 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Basingstoke & Deane Borough.

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Basingstoke & Deane Borough, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Tadley parish.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Basingstoke Town.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Basingstoke town and Old Basing.



# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the borough
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	<p>The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved;</li> <li>– access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided;</li> <li>– wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected;</li> <li>– established farming use is effectively maintained’</li> </ul>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors

Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single borough enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England

Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a cabinet with a leader, or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the [district/borough] average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the [district/borough] council

## Appendix B

### Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm)) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

**Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria**

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