

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Test Valley in Hampshire

February 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective 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, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the borough.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Test Valley in Hampshire.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Andover is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

1 SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Test Valley on 20 July 1999.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

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

- **in 15 of the 23 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 17 wards and by more than 20 per cent in nine wards (more than 90 per cent in one ward).**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 72 and 73) are that:

- **Test Valley Borough Council should have 48 councillors, four more than at present;**
- **there should be 24 wards, instead of 23 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 15 of the proposed 24 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average and 20 by no more than 20 per cent.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for Romsey and Chilworth parishes.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 22 February 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 17 April 2000:

**Review Manager
Test Valley Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Abbey	2	Abbey ward (the proposed Abbey parish ward of Romsey parish)	Map A3
2	Alamein (in Andover)	3	Alamein ward (part - the parish of Smannell and unparished area (part))	Large map
3	Ampfield & Braishfield	1	Field ward (the parishes of Ampfield and Braishfield)	Map 2
4	Amport	1	Anna ward (part - the parish of Monxton); Weyhill ward (part - the parishes of Amport, Grateley and Quarley)	Map 2
5	Anna	2	Anna ward (part - the parishes of Abbots Ann, Goodworth Clatford and Upper Clatford)	Map 2
6	Blackwater	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Awbridge, Melchet Park & Plaitford, Sherfield English and Wellow)	Map 2
7	Bourne Valley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Faccombe, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Linkenholt, Tanglely and Vernhamss Dean)	Map 2
8	Broughton & Stockbridge	2	Harewood ward (part - the parish of Chilbolton); Nether Wallop & Broughton ward (the parishes of Broughton and Nether Wallop); Stockbridge ward (the parishes of Bossington, Houghton, Leckford, Longstock and Stockbridge)	Map 2
9	Charlton (in Andover)	1	Harroway ward (part - the parish of Charlton)	Large map
10	Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams	3	Chilworth & Nursling ward (part - the parish of Nursling & Rownhams and the proposed Chilworth parish ward of Chilworth parish)	Map 2 and Map A2
11	Cupernham	2	Cupernham ward (the proposed Cupernham parish ward of Romsey parish)	Map A3
12	Dun Valley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Buckholt, East Dean, East Tytherley, Frenchmoor, Lockerley, Mottisfont and West Tytherley)	Map 2
13	Harewood	1	Harewood ward (part - the parishes of Barton Stacey, Bullington, Longparish and Wherwell)	Map 2
14	Harroway (in Andover)	3	Harroway ward (part); Alamein ward (part)	Large map
15	Kings Somborne & Little Somborne	1	Kings Somborne & Michelmersh ward (the parishes of Ashley, Kings Somborne, Little Somborne and Michelmersh)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
16	Millway (in Andover)	3	Millway ward (part)	Large Map
17	North Baddesley	3	North Baddesley ward (part – the Fleming and Mountbatten parish wards of North Baddesley parish)	Map 2 and Map A2
18	Over Wallop	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Over Wallop)	Map 2
19	Penton Bellinger	2	Tedworth ward (the parishes of Fyfield, Kimpton, Shipton Bellinger and Thruxton); Weyhill ward (part - the parishes of Appleshaw, Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey)	Map 2
20	Romsey Extra	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Romsey Extra)	Map 2
21	St Mary's (in Andover)	3	Millway ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Winton ward (part)	Large Map
22	Tadburn	2	Tadburn ward (the proposed Tadburn parish ward of Romsey parish)	Map A3
23	Valley Park	3	Chilworth & Nursling ward (part - the proposed Chilworth North parish ward of Chilworth parish); North Baddesley ward (part - the Valley Park parish ward of North Baddesley parish)	Map 2 and Map A3
24	Winton (in Andover)	3	Millway ward (part); Winton ward (part)	Large map

*Notes: 1 Andover is only partly parished and comprises the six wards indicated above.
2 Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Test Valley

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Abbey	2	3,522	1,761	1	3,954	1,977	6
2	Alamein	3	5,685	1,895	9	5,611	1,870	0
3	Ampfield & Braishfield	1	1,750	1,750	1	1,756	1,756	-6
4	Amport	1	1,789	1,789	3	1,862	1,862	-1
5	Anna	2	2,909	1,455	-16	3,664	1,832	-2
6	Blackwater	2	4,048	2,024	17	4,026	2,013	7
7	Bourne Valley	1	1,701	1,701	-2	1,796	1,796	-4
8	Broughton & Stockbridge	2	3,654	1,827	5	3,697	1,849	-1
9	Charlton	1	1,679	1,679	-3	1,730	1,730	-8
10	Chilworth, Nursling & Rowhams	3	5,053	1,684	-3	4,970	1,657	-12
11	Cupernham	2	3,961	1,981	14	3,965	1,983	6
12	Dun Valley	1	1,726	1,726	-1	1,799	1,799	-4
13	Harewood	1	1,795	1,795	3	1,738	1,738	-7
14	Harroway	3	4,825	1,608	-7	5,719	1,906	2
15	Kings Somborne & Little Somborne	1	1,905	1,905	10	1,942	1,942	4
16	Millway	3	5,448	1,816	5	5,802	1,934	3
17	North Baddesley	3	5,131	1,710	-1	5,561	1,854	-1
18	Over Wallop	1	1,148	1,148	-34	1,840	1,840	-2
19	Penton Bellinger	2	3,423	1,712	-1	3,555	1,778	-5
20	Romsey Extra	2	2,536	1,268	-27	4,044	2,022	8
21	St Marys	3	5,926	1,975	14	5,884	1,961	5
22	Tadburn	2	4,259	2,130	23	4,015	2,008	7
23	Valley Park	3	3,990	1,330	-23	5,397	1,799	-4

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
24 Winton	3	5,926	1,975	14	6,128	2,043	9
Totals	48	83,789	-	-	90,455	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,735	-	-	1,873	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Test Valley Borough Council's submission.*

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Test Valley in Hampshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 11 districts in Hampshire and Portsmouth and Southampton as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Test Valley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 70). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in October 1980 (Report No. 397). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly after completion of the district and borough reviews to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State in time for the 2002 county elections.

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

- the statutory criteria in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. For example, we will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that borough but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a borough’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other boroughs.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Hampshire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals are now being taken forward in a local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Test Valley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with

constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 25 October 1999.

13 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

14 Stage Three began on 22 February 2000 and will end on 17 April 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on 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 our draft recommendations.**

15 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Test Valley is situated in the north-west of Hampshire, with the districts of New Forest to the south-west, Winchester, Basingstoke & Deane and Eastleigh to the east and the counties of Berkshire to the north, Wiltshire to the west and the unitary authority of Southampton to the south. The borough covers an area of nearly 64,000 hectares and with a population of more than 100,000 has a population density of less than two persons per hectare. The area has experienced considerable growth in the last 25 years and is served by the M27, M3 to Southampton and London, and A303 to the West Country. It also has good rail links to surrounding towns (such as Basingstoke, Salisbury and Southampton) and London. The borough is divided by the River Test, famous for its trout fishing. The river valley is a designated Heritage Area, the north of the borough is also designated an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

17 The administration of the borough is divided between the towns of Andover in the north and Romsey in the south, with the rest of the borough comprising smaller settlements. The borough contains 57 parishes, but Andover town itself is largely unparished. Andover comprises 35 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

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

19 The electorate of the borough is 83,791 (February 1999). The Council presently has 44 members who are elected from 23 wards, five of which are relatively urban in Andover, three of which in Romsey and the remainder are predominantly rural. Six of the wards are each represented by three councillors, nine are each represented by two councillors and eight are single-member wards. The whole council is elected every four years.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Test Valley borough, with around 42 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been around Andover, North Baddesley and Chilworth.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,904 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,056 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 23 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, nine wards by more than 20 per cent and eight wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Chilworth & Nursling ward where the councillor represents 50 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Test Valley

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	2	3,173	1587	-17	3,605	1,803	-12
2 Alamein	3	5,874	1,958	3	6,324	2,108	3
3 Anna	2	3,151	1,576	-17	3,883	1,942	-6
4 Blackwater	2	4,048	2,024	6	4,026	2,013	-2
5 Bourne Valley	1	1,701	1,701	-11	1,796	1,796	-13
6 Chilworth & Nursling	2	5,698	2,894	50	5,683	2,842	38
7 Cupernham	2	5,004	2,502	31	5,008	2,504	22
8 Dun Valley	1	1,726	1,726	-9	1,788	1,788	-13
9 Field	1	1,750	1,750	-8	1,756	1,756	-15
10 Harewood	2	2,612	1,306	-31	2,593	1,297	-37
11 Harroway	3	6,315	2,105	11	6,736	2,245	9
12 Kings Somborne & Michelmersh	1	1,905	1,905	0	1,942	1,942	-6
13 Millway	3	6,488	2,163	14	6,818	2,273	11
14 Nether Wallop & Broughton	1	1,523	1,523	-20	1,531	1,531	-26
15 North Baddesley	3	8,476	2,825	48	10,234	3,411	66
16 Over Wallop	1	1,148	1,148	-40	1,823	1,823	-11
17 Romsey Extra	1	2,536	2,536	33	4,044	4,044	97
18 St Mary's	3	5,512	1,837	-4	5,470	1,823	-11
19 Stockbridge	1	1,314	1,314	-31	1,311	1,311	-36
20 Tadburn	2	3,565	1,783	-6	3,360	1,680	-18

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 Tedworth	2	2,275	1,138	-40	2,395	1,198	-42
22 Weyhill	2	2,695	1,348	-29	2,803	1,402	-32
23 Winton	3	5,302	1,767	-7	5,526	1,842	-10
Totals	44	83,791	–	–	90,455	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,904	–	–	2,056	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Test Valley Borough Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Tedworth ward were relatively over-represented by 40 per cent, while electors in Chilworth & Nursling ward were relatively under-represented by 50 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Test Valley Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

23 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 11 representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission.

Test Valley Borough Council

24 The Borough Council proposed a council of 48 members, four more than at present, serving 24 wards, compared to the existing 23. It proposed that a mixed pattern of single- and multi-member wards be retained, with multi-member wards predominant in the more urban parts of the borough. The Council considered that this mix of single- and multi-member wards would not easily facilitate annual elections and therefore proposed that the system of whole-council elections be retained. It used whole parishes as building blocks, except in Romsey town where the existing parish wards would be amended in order to be the same as the borough wards. The Borough Council's proposals would provide for improved electoral equality with all wards varying by no more than 34 per cent from the average, improving to 16 per cent by 2004.

Parish Councils

25 We received representations from three parish councils. Romsey Extra Parish Council proposed that the parish continue to form the borough ward of the same name and that the ward be represented by two councillors, an increase of one, to "allow for the likely future population growth". Braishfield Parish Council proposed that the parishes of Braishfield and Ampfield remain part of Field borough ward, but that the ward be re-named Ampfield & Braishfield as the current ward name is "meaningless". North Baddesley Parish Council proposed an increase in borough councillors representing the Valley Park and North Baddesley areas to "ensure a more appropriate number of electors per councillor". It also expressed support for parish and borough councillors being elected at the same time.

Other Representations

26 We received a further six representations from Michael Colvin MP, local political parties and local residents. Michael Colvin, Member of Parliament for Romsey, supported the submission made by Romsey Conservative Association and objected to proposals for a uniform pattern of representation across the borough and more frequent voting. He expressed a preference for retaining the existing mixed pattern of single- and multi-member wards and whole-council elections.

27 Romsey Conservative Association submitted a scheme for 14 borough wards in the southern part of the borough and this scheme had many similarities with the Borough Council's submission. The Association did not propose a scheme for the north-west of the borough. It also stated its support for whole-council elections, considering that more frequent elections could lead to "voter fatigue", and for a mixture of single- and multi-member wards, stating that a uniform pattern of three-member wards "would result in vast disparate wards in rural areas".

28 North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party submitted a joint scheme with Andover Branch Labour Party (hereafter referred to as the Labour Party). Its scheme covered 10 wards in the northern part of the borough only, and proposed increasing the number of wards representing this area to 11. The Labour Party stated that it had aimed to place urban expansion "within urban wards whenever possible", and had tried to avoid creating wards mixing rural and urban areas. It also proposed that elections by thirds should be held with a view to achieving annual elections which would provide a "more constant accountability for the local authority, for the electorate and council tax payer".

29 North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposals for Test Valley stating that, while the Borough Council's proposals were "not numerically perfect in achieving electoral equality ... they do represent strong, identifiable community boundaries". It specifically supported the proposals for a mixed pattern of single- and multi-member wards and to retain whole-council elections, considering that elections by thirds "results in apathy".

30 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats objected to the Borough Council's Stage One proposal, noting that "significant disparities between wards will continue to exist". It also objected to the retention of whole-council elections, preferring elections by thirds. However, it did not put forward a more detailed scheme, other than stating that Knights Enham and Alamein should be combined in a new two-member ward. It proposed that the remainder of the current Alamein ward should be renamed Andover Extra.

31 A resident of Valley Park submitted a borough-wide scheme based on a 43-member council, highlighting the electoral discrepancies in the Valley Park area in particular. He proposed a mix of single- and multi-member wards, but did not put forward specific warding arrangements for Andover and Romsey. These proposals were based on forecast electorates only. A resident of Redenham (in Fyfield parish) objected to the existing warding arrangements. She proposed that Redenham should be placed in a ward with Appleshaw parish, as they shared community identity, rather than with Thruxton and Shipton Bellinger parishes with whom they have "nothing in common".

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

35 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. We consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective 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 start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

Electorate Forecasts

36 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 12 per cent from 83,791 to 90,455 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Andover, North Baddesley and Romsey Extra. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

37 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science. Officers at the council have confirmed that the projected decreases in electorate in Harewood, Blackwater and Chilworth & Nursling wards over the next five years are the best electorate forecasts currently available and we are content that the Borough Council’s borough-wide figures represent the best estimates currently available at this time. We would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

38 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

39 Test Valley Borough Council presently has 44 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 48 members due to the pockets of housing development which have occurred, and propose allocating more councillors to these areas, to minimise disruption to the remainder of the borough that would occur if councillors were redistributed throughout the borough and provide more effective and convenient local government. This proposal received a degree of support from other respondents at Stage One, although a resident of Valley Park provided alternative warding arrangements throughout the borough under a council size of 43, but did not provide detailed warding arrangements for the towns of Romsey or Andover.

40 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

Electoral Arrangements

41 The Borough Council put forward the only detailed borough-wide scheme for Test Valley, and its proposals build on the current warding arrangements. It put forward a mixture of single- and multi-member wards. A mixed-member ward pattern was supported by Michael Colvin, Member of Parliament for Romsey.

42 The Romsey Conservative Association put forward a scheme for the southern part of the borough, much of which would appear to support the Borough Council's scheme, but did not provide detailed warding arrangements. The borough-wide scheme put forward by the resident of Valley Park provided only limited evidence in support of his proposals, making it difficult for us to understand fully the reasons why particular warding arrangements had been proposed. We also sought clarification from the Borough Council on the electorate figures provided by the Labour Party for its warding arrangements in the north of the borough.

43 North Baddesley Parish Council proposed that the Valley Park parish ward of Chilworth parish be transferred to North Baddesley parish. However, the alteration of external parish boundaries does not fall within the remit of this review. Under the provisions of the Local and Government Rating Act 1997 the borough councils have the power to conduct reviews and make recommendations direct to the Secretary of State for the creation, abolition and alteration of parish areas.

44 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, and the degree of support that its scheme received at Stage One, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other

schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away slightly from the Borough Council's proposals in the two towns of Andover and Romsey. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Andover (five wards);
- (b) Romsey (three wards);
- (c) Anna, Bourne Valley, Tedworth and Weyhill wards;
- (d) Harewood, Nether Wallop & Broughton, Over Wallop and Stockbridge wards;
- (e) Blackwater, Dun Valley and Kings Somborne & Michelmersh wards;
- (f) Chilworth & Nursling, Field, North Baddesley and Romsey Extra wards.

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

Andover (five wards)

46 The town of Andover, the largest in the borough, is situated in the north of the borough and is currently divided into five three-member wards. At present, Alamein, Harroway and Millway wards have 3 per cent, 11 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 9 per cent and 11 per cent in 2004). St Mary's and Winton wards currently have 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (11 per cent and 10 per cent in 2004).

47 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed increasing the number of wards representing the town from five to six, five represented by three councillors and a new Charlton ward represented by a single councillor. It proposed a minor change to the boundary between Winton and St Mary's wards, so that all the properties in the Picket Twenty development would be united within St Mary's ward. It proposed amending the boundary between Winton and Millway wards, with the boundary running to the rear of the properties on the north side of Salisbury Road and to the west of Mead Close and Cress Gardens, thereby uniting the Redbridge Drive development within Winton ward. It proposed creating a new single-member Charlton ward, with the same boundaries as Charlton parish, and transferring that part of the Saxon Way housing development which is currently in Alamein ward to Harroway ward in order to unite the housing estate within a single ward. This would result in Alamein, Millway, St Mary's and Winton wards having 9 per cent, 13 per cent, 6 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal, 11 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more in 2004), while Charlton and Harroway wards would have 3 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors respectively (8 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2004).

48 The Labour Party also proposed six wards for the town, with five three-member wards and one two-member ward. However, it used slightly different boundaries to those proposed by the Borough Council. It proposed combining the entire Saxon Way development, currently divided between Harroway and Alamein wards, in a new two-member Charlton ward. It proposed that the parish of Smannell, currently in Alamein ward, should be transferred to Bourne Valley ward, that the Picket Piece and Andover Down developments currently in St Mary's ward, should be

transferred to Harewood ward and that the boundary between Harroway ward and Millway ward should run along the railway line in its entirety. It argued that the villages of Smannell and Little London have more common interests with Bourne Valley ward than Alamein ward where they are currently situated, and similarly that the villages of Picket Piece and Andover Down share more in common with the more rural Harewood ward than the rest of Andover town. Its proposals would result in Alamein, Harroway and Winton wards having 4 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer in 2004). Charlton, Millway and St Mary's ward would have 26 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors respectively (15 per cent, 6 per cent and 9 per cent in 2004).

49 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats supported the proposal combining the Saxon Way development currently in Alamein ward in a new Charlton ward, as put forward by the Labour Party, and also propose including the villages of Knights Enham and Alamein in this new ward. North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposals for the area.

50 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and are content to base our draft recommendations on the scheme put forward by the Borough Council as we consider that it provides the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we recognise that the scheme put forward by the Labour Party utilises more easily identifiable boundaries and combines the more rural parts of Andover with surrounding rural wards, we consider that the resulting high levels of electoral equality in Charlton and Harewood ward are unjustified in the light of the alternative warding arrangements. We therefore propose adopting the scheme put forward by the Borough Council, subject to one amendment. We propose that the boundary between Millway and St Mary's wards run to the rear of the properties on the west side of Windsor Road, south side of Osborne Road, north side of Queens Avenue and along the footpath on the east side of Junction Road before rejoining the existing boundary on Western Avenue. We consider that this would improve the balance of electoral equality between the two wards while combining communities with similar interests. We would particularly welcome further views on these proposals from interested parties during Stage Three.

51 Our draft recommendations would result in Alamein, Millway, St Mary's and Winton wards having 9 per cent, 5 per cent, 14 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 9 per cent in 2004). Charlton ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent in 2004).

Romsey (three wards)

52 The town of Romsey is situated in the south of the borough and comprises three two-member wards. Abbey and Tadburn wards are currently over-represented by 17 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (12 per cent and 18 per cent in 2004). Cupernham ward is currently under-represented by 31 per cent decreasing to 22 per cent in 2004.

53 The Borough Council proposed that the existing boundary along the railway line between Abbey and Cupernham wards should be retained, except in the north where it would follow the centre of Greatbridge Road, thereby uniting Budds Lane within Abbey ward. It proposed retaining

the existing boundary between Tadburn and Abbey wards. However, in order to take into account the extensive development that has occurred in Cupernham ward, the Council proposed that the boundary between Cupernham and Tadburn wards run along the centre of Winchester Hill. This would result in Abbey ward having 8 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (3 per cent in 2004), while Cupernham and Tadburn wards would have 14 per cent and 32 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively (6 per cent and 16 per cent in 2004). These proposals were supported by the Romsey Conservative Association, North West Hampshire Conservative Association and Michael Colvin, MP.

54 We received no other detailed proposals for Romsey at Stage One, and are content to put forward the Council's scheme for Romsey subject to one minor amendment. We consider that the boundary between Abbey and Tadburn wards should be amended to include those properties on Tadfield Road, Tadfield Crescent, Rosedale Avenue and Queen's Close in Abbey ward. This would improve the balance of electoral equality between the two wards, and given the good road links between this area and Abbey ward, we do not consider that this proposal would have an adverse effect on community ties and links. Our draft recommendations would result in Abbey, Cupernham and Tadburn wards having 1 per cent, 14 per cent and 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent, 6 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004).

Anna, Bourne Valley, Tedworth and Weyhill wards

55 These four wards are situated in the north of the district and are over-represented on both the existing and forecast figures. Anna ward, represented by two councillors and comprising the parishes of Abbotts Ann, Goodworth Clatford, Monxton and Upper Clatford, currently has 17 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (6 per cent in 2004) and Bourne Valley ward, represented by a single councillor and comprising the parishes of Faccombe, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Linkenholt, Tangle and Vernhamss Dean, currently has 11 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (13 per cent in 2004). Tedworth ward, represented by two councillors and comprising the parishes of Fyfield, Kimpton, Shipton Bellinger and Thruxton, currently has 40 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (42 per cent in 2004) while Weyhill ward, represented by two councillors and comprising the parishes of Amport, Appleshaw, Gratley, Penton Grafton, Penton Mewsey and Quarley currently has 29 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (32 per cent in 2004).

56 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed reconfiguring the parishes in three of these four wards, proposing no change to the existing Bourne Valley ward. It proposed that Monxton parish, currently in Anna ward, should be combined in a new single-member Amport ward with the parishes of Amport, Gratley and Quarley from the current Weyhill ward. It proposed that the remainder of Weyhill ward (the parishes of Appleshaw, Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey) be combined with the existing Tedworth ward to form a new two-member Penton Bellinger ward, arguing that the parishes of Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey and the parishes of Fyfield and Appleshaw should not be divided "bearing in mind their physical relationship". The North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

57 The Labour Party proposed no change to the existing Anna ward. They argued that Smannell parish from the existing Alamein ward should be transferred to Bourne Valley ward, as both areas are rural in nature. They proposed that Thrupton parish be transferred from Tedworth ward to Weyhill ward, and that Tedworth ward be renamed Shipton Bellinger ward. This would result in Anna and Weyhill wards having 9 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent and 11 per cent in 2004). Bourne Valley ward would have 13 per cent more electors than the borough average (8 per cent in 2004) and Shipton Bellinger ward would have equal the borough average both now and in 2004. A resident of Redenham in Fyfield parish argued that Redenham has “nothing in common with Shipton Bellinger and Thrupton [parishes, and] should be in the same ward as Appleshaw”.

58 Having carefully considered all the representations received during Stage One, we are content to put forward the Borough Council’s proposals as our draft recommendations. We consider that they provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, have received support from other interested parties and involve the least disruption to the existing warding arrangements. Our draft recommendations would result in Ampport ward having 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer in 2004). Its proposed Anna, Bourne Valley and Penton Bellinger wards would have 16 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent, 4 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004).

Harewood, Nether Wallop & Broughton, Over Wallop and Stockbridge wards

59 These four wards lie across the middle of the borough. Harewood ward (comprising the parishes of Barton Stacey, Bullington, Chilbolton, Longparish and Wherwell) is currently represented by two councillors and has 31 per cent fewer electors than the borough average. Nether Wallop & Broughton ward (comprising the parishes of Nether Wallop and Broughton), Over Wallop ward (comprising the parish of Over Wallop) and Stockbridge ward (comprising the parishes of Bossington, Houghton, Leckford, Longstock and Stockbridge) are currently each represented by a single councillor and have 20 per cent, 40 per cent and 31 per cent fewer electors than the borough average respectively (26 per cent, 11 per cent and 36 per cent in 2004).

60 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that these four wards be reconfigured to create three wards covering the same area. It proposed that Over Wallop ward be retained on its existing boundaries, which are the same as the parish of Over Wallop, and continue to be represented by a single councillor, due to the considerable expected growth over the next five years. It proposed that Nether Wallop & Broughton ward be combined with Stockbridge ward and Chilbolton parish in the existing Harewood ward to create a two-member Broughton & Stockbridge ward. It argued that this would combine parishes which have “common interests and concerns”, all of which are situated in the valley of the River Test. This warding arrangement was also proposed by Romsey Conservative Association and supported by North West Hampshire Conservative Association.

61 The Labour party proposed alternative warding arrangements for Harewood ward, as discussed earlier. They proposed transferring the villages of Picket Piece and Andover Down from St Mary’s ward to Harewood ward, as they consider that all rural areas should be contained within rural wards. This would result in the two-member Harewood ward having 14 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (22 per cent in 2004).

62 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. While we recognise that the Labour Party's scheme places the more rural parts of Andover with surrounding rural wards, we consider that the resulting level of electoral inequality in Harewood ward is unjustified given the alternative warding pattern proposed by the Borough Council. We are therefore content to endorse the Borough Council's proposals for this area in the light of the resulting electoral equality and community links and interests between the parishes in each ward. However, we would welcome views from interested parties during Stage Three. Our draft recommendations would result in Broughton & Stockbridge and Harewood wards having 5 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent and 7 per cent fewer in 2004), while Over Wallop ward would have 34 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (2 per cent in 2004).

Blackwater, Dun Valley and Kings Somborne & Michelmersh wards

63 These three wards are situated in the south and west of the borough. Blackwater ward, comprising the parishes of Awbridge, Melchet Park & Plaitford, Sherfield English and Wellow, is currently represented by two councillors and has 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer in 2004). Dun Valley ward, comprising the parishes of Buckholt, East Dean, East Tytherley, Frenchmoor, Lockerley, Mottisfont and West Tytherley, is currently represented by a single councillor and has 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (13 per cent in 2004), while Kings Somborne & Michelmersh ward, comprising the parishes of Ashley, Kings Somborne, Little Somborne and Michelmersh, is currently represented by a single councillor and has equal the average number of electors per councillor (6 per cent fewer in 2004).

64 The Borough Council proposed retaining these three wards on their existing boundaries as they have "worked well for the past twenty years and the projected electorate illustrates that they will continue to be viable in 2004." However, it proposes that Kings Somborne & Michelmersh ward be renamed Kings Somborne & Little Somborne ward. Romsey Conservative Association and North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported these proposals.

65 We consider that the current warding arrangements for these three wards reflect community ties, and achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality. We are therefore content propose no change to the existing arrangements in our draft recommendations other than Kings Somborne & Michelmersh ward being renamed Kings Somborne & Little Somborne ward. Under a 48-member council this would result in Blackwater and Kings Somborne & Little Somborne wards having 17 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent and 4 per cent in 2004) while Dun Valley ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (4 per cent in 2004).

Chilworth & Nursling, Field, North Baddesley and Romsey Extra wards

66 These four wards lie to the south-east of the borough, with Romsey Extra encircling the town of Romsey. The two-member ward of Chilworth & Nursling (comprising the parishes of Chilworth and Nursling & Rownhams) is currently under-represented by 50 per cent (38 per cent in 2004) and considerable growth is forecast in this area over the next five years. The single-

member wards of Field (comprising the parishes of Ampfield and Braishfield) and Romsey Extra (comprising the parish of Romsey Extra) currently have 8 per cent fewer and 33 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively (15 per cent fewer and 97 per cent more in 2004). The three-member ward of North Baddesley (comprising the parish of North Baddesley) currently has 48 per cent more electors than the borough average (66 per cent in 2004).

67 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the Valley Park parish ward of North Baddesley parish and the Valley Park parish ward of Chilworth parish be combined to create a new three-member ward encompassing the Valley Park housing development which has grown extensively over the last 20 years. It proposed that the remainder of North Baddesley parish should form an amended three-member North Baddesley ward and that the remainder of Chilworth parish should continue to be in a ward with Nursling & Rownhams parish to form an amended three-member Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams ward. It proposed that Field ward retain its existing boundaries, but in the light of local opposition to the current ward name, that it should be renamed Ampfield & Braishfield ward. The Borough Council proposed retaining Romsey Extra ward on its current boundaries, and increasing the number of borough councillors to two in the light of the anticipated housing development which, it argues, will “adequately support the creation of a two-member ward”.

68 The Romsey Conservative Association put forward the same warding arrangement as the Borough Council for this area and North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported these proposals. Braishfield Parish Council stated that the name Field ward is “meaningless and does not describe the ward in any way”, proposing that it be renamed Ampfield & Braishfield ward. Romsey Extra Parish Council proposed increasing the number of borough councillors representing the ward to two, but proposed no other changes to the parish or borough warding arrangements. North Baddesley Parish Council proposed that the Valley Park area should have separate representation at borough ward level. The resident of Valley Park who submitted the borough-wide scheme based on a 43-member council stated that his main concern was “the inadequacy of existing arrangements at Valley Park to reflect existing communities”.

69 Having considered the proposals received during Stage One we are content to endorse the Borough Council’s proposals for these four wards in the light of the improved levels of electoral equality and the better reflections of community identity resulting from this scheme subject to one minor modification. We propose the Valley Park parish ward of Chilworth parish be renamed Chilworth North parish ward in order to avoid any confusion between the two existing Valley Park parish wards that would form the proposed Valley Park borough ward. While we recognise that there would be relatively poor electoral equality in the proposed Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams ward based on the forecast electorate figures (12 per cent), we consider that the Valley Park area should be united within a single ward, and given the support received during Stage One for the proposals put forward by the Borough Council, we are content to put this scheme forward. Our draft recommendations would result in Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams, North Baddesley and Romsey Extra wards having 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (12 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more in 2004), while Ampfield & Braishfield ward would have 1 per cent more electors than the borough average (6 per cent fewer in 2004).

Electoral Cycle

70 The Borough Council, Romsey Conservative Association, North West Hampshire Conservative Association and Michael Colvin MP all supported the retention of the existing electoral cycle of whole-council elections every four years for the Borough Council.

71 The Labour Party and North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats proposed a system of elections by thirds “as it provides a more constant accountability for the local authority, for the electorate and council tax payer”. While we have considered carefully all the representations received, at present, there appears to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained. We therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the Borough Council.

Conclusions

72 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be an increase in council size from 44 to 48;
- there should be 24 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

73 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council’s proposals, except for two minor boundary amendments in Andover and Romsey towns, and the Valley Park parish ward in Chilworth parish being renamed Chilworth North parish ward.

74 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	44	48	44	48
Number of wards	23	24	23	24
Average number of electors per councillor	1,904	1,735	2,056	1,873
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	9	17	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	4	9	0

75 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Test Valley Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from 15 to 9. By 2004 only one ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average.

Draft Recommendation

Test Valley Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

76 The parish of Chilworth is currently served by nine councillors representing two wards. Chilworth ward is currently represented by six councillors and Valley Park ward is currently represented by three councillors. We propose that this level of representation should be retained, but that Valley Park parish ward be renamed Chilworth North parish ward in order to avoid confusion with the Valley Park ward of North Baddesley parish, as these parish wards will be combined to form the proposed Valley Park parish ward.

Draft Recommendation

Chilworth Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Chilworth parish ward returning six councillors and Chilworth North parish ward returning three councillors as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

77 The town of Romsey is currently served by total of 15 councillors representing three parish wards; Abbey, Cupernham and Tadburn, each represented by five councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed amending the parish wards to reflect the boundaries of the proposed borough wards and we are content to put this forward as part of our draft recommendations.

Draft Recommendation
Romsey Parish Council should continue to comprise 15 parish councillors. Abbey parish ward should have the same boundaries as Abbey borough ward and should be represented by five councillors. Cupernham parish ward should have the same boundaries as Cupernham borough ward and should be represented by five councillors. Tadburn parish ward should have the same boundaries as Tadburn borough ward and should be represented by five councillors as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

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

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

79 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Test Valley and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Test Valley

5 NEXT STEPS

80 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Test Valley. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 17 April 1999. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

81 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Test Valley Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

82 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to 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 Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Test Valley: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Test Valley area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Valley Park ward.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Romsey town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Andover.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Test Valley: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Valley Park ward.

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Romsey town.

APPENDIX B

Test Valley Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Borough Council only in four wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

Figure B1: Test Valley Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Abbey	Abbey ward (the proposed Abbey parish ward of Romsey parish)
Millway	Millway ward (part)
Tadburn	Tadburn ward (the proposed Tadburn parish ward of Romsey parish)
Winton	Millway ward (part); Winton ward (part)

Figure B2: Test Valley Borough Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Abbey	2	3,189	1,595	-8	3,621	1,811	-3
Millway	3	5,860	1,953	13	6,214	2,071	11
Tadburn	2	4,592	2,296	32	4,348	2,174	16
Winton	3	5,926	1,975	14	6,128	2,043	9

Source: Electorate figures are based on Test Valley Borough Council's submission.

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

The Labour Party's Proposal

The following tables illustrate the joint scheme submitted by the North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party and Andover Branch Labour Party for Northern Test Valley.

Figure B3: The Labour Party's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Alamein	Alamein ward (part)
Anna	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Abbots Ann, Goodworth Clatford and Upper Clatford)
Bourne Valley	Alamein ward (part - the parish of Smannell); Bourne Valley ward (the parishes of Facombe, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Linkenholt, Tangle and Vernhams Dean)
Charlton	Alamein ward (part); Harroway ward (part - the parish of Charlton and unparished area (part))
Harroway	Harroway ward (part); Millway ward (part)
Harewood	Harewood ward (the parishes of Barton Stacey, Bullington, Longparish and Wherwell); St Mary's ward (part)
Millway	Millway ward (part)
Shipton Bellinger	Tedworth ward (part - the parishes of Fyfield, Kimpton and Shipton Bellinger)
St Mary's	St Mary's ward (part)
Weyhill	Tedwoth ward (part - the parish of Thruxton); Weyhill ward (the parishes of Amport, Appleshaw, Grateley, Penton Grafton, Penton Mewsey and Quarley)
Winton	<i>Unchanged</i>

Figure B4: The Labour Party's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Alamein	3	5,427	1,809	4	5,380	1,793	-4
Anna	2	3,151	1,576	-9	3,883	1,797	-4
Bourne Valley	1	1,959	1,959	13	2,027	2,027	8
Charlton	2	2,565	1,283	-26	3,185	1,593	-15
Harroway	3	5,322	1,774	2	5,795	1,932	3
Harewood	2	2,976	1,488	-14	2,912	1,456	-22
Millway	3	5,105	1,702	-2	5,287	1,762	-6
Shipton Bellinger	1	1,736	1,736	0	1,865	1,865	0
St Mary's	3	5,148	1,716	-1	5,108	1,703	-9
Weyhill	2	3,234	1,617	-7	3,333	1,667	-11
Winton	3	5,302	1,767	2	5,526	1,842	-2

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Labour Party's submission and have been confirmed by the Borough Council.

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

¹ The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.