

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Staffordshire Moorlands

*May 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)  
Peter Brokenshire  
Kru Desai  
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 district.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Staffordshire Moorlands.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Biddulph, Brown Edge and Endon is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Staffordshire Moorlands on 28 September 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 Staffordshire Moorlands:

- **In 19 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and six 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 seven wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 112 –113) are that:

- **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council should have 56 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 27 wards, instead of 28 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 25 of the proposed 27 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 26 of the proposed 27 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Biddulph, Cheadle, Cheddleton, Endon & Stanley, Leek and Werrington.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 May 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 3 July 2000:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Alton	1	Alton ward (part – Alton and Farley parishes)	Map 2
2 Bagnall & Stanley	1	Endon & Stanley ward (part – Bagnall parish and Endon & Stanley parish (part))	Large map and Map 2
3 Biddulph East	3	Biddulph East ward (Biddulph East ward of Biddulph town); Biddulph South ward (part – Biddulph South ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph West ward (part – Biddulph West ward (part) of Biddulph town)	Large map and Map 2
4 Biddulph Moor	1	Biddulph Moor ward (part – Biddulph Moor ward (part) of Biddulph town)	Large map and Map 2
5 Biddulph North	3	Biddulph North ward (part – Biddulph North ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph Moor ward (part – Biddulph Moor ward (part) of Biddulph town)	Large map and Map 2
6 Biddulph South	1	Biddulph Moor ward (part – Biddulph Moor ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph South ward (part – Biddulph South ward (part) of Biddulph town)	Large map and Map 2
7 Biddulph West	3	Biddulph North ward (part – Biddulph North ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph South ward (part – Biddulph South ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph West ward (part – Biddulph West ward (part) of Biddulph town)	Large map and Map 2
8 Brown Edge & Endon	3	Brown Edge ward (Brown Edge parish); Endon & Stanley ward (part – Endon & Stanley parish (part))	Large map and Map 2
9 Caverswall	1	Caverswall ward (Caverswall and Dilhorne parishes); Werrington ward (part – Werrington parish (part))	Maps 2, A3 and A4
10 Cellarhead	2	Cheddleton ward (part – Wetley Rocks ward (part) of Cheddleton parish); Werrington ward (part – Werrington parish (part))	Maps 2, A3 and A4
11 Cheadle North East	2	Cheadle North East ward (Cheadle North East ward of Cheadle parish); Cheadle South East ward (part - Cheadle South East ward (part) of Cheadle parish)	Maps 2 and A2
12 Cheadle South East	2	Cheadle South East ward (part – Cheadle South East ward (part) of Cheadle parish)	Maps 2 and A2
13 Cheadle West	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cheadle West ward of Cheadle parish)	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
14	Checkley	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Checkley and Draycott in the Moors parishes)	Map 2
15	Cheddleton	3	Cheddleton ward (part – Cheddleton ward of Cheddleton parish); Wetley Rocks ward (part – Consall parish and Wetley Rocks ward (part) of Cheddleton parish)	Maps 2 and A4
16	Churnet	2	Kingsley ward (Kingsley and Oakamoor parishes); Alton ward (part – Cotton parish)	Map 2
17	Dane	1	Leekfrith ward (part – Heaton, Leekfrith and Tittesworth parishes); Longnor ward (part – Heathlyee, Hollinsclough and Quarnford parishes)	Map 2
18	Forsbrook	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Forsbrook parish)	Map 2
19	Hamps Valley	1	Waterhouses ward (Blore with Swinscoe and Waterhouses parishes); Warslow ward (part – Alstonefield, Ilam and Wetton parishes)	Map 2
20	Horton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Horton, Longsdon and Rushton parishes)	Map 2
21	Ipstones	1	Ipstones ward (Ipstones parish); Leekfrith ward (part – Bradnop parish)	Map 2
22	Leek East	3	Leek South East ward (part – Leek South East ward (part) of Leek town)	Maps 2 and A6
23	Leek North	3	Leek North East ward (Leek North East ward of Leek town); Leek North West ward (part – Leek North West ward (part) of Leek town)	Maps 2 and A5
24	Leek South	3	Leek South East ward (part – Leek South East ward (part) of Leek town); Leek South West ward (part – Leek South West ward (part) of Leek town)	Maps 2, A5 and A6
25	Leek West	3	Leek North West ward (part – Leek North West ward (part) of Leek town); Leek South West ward (part – Leek South West ward (part) of Leek town)	Maps 2 and A5
26	Manifold	1	Leekfrith ward (part – Onecote parish); Warslow ward (part – Butterson, Grindon and Warslow & Elkstones parishes)	Maps 2
27	Werrington	2	Werrington ward (part – Washerwall ward of Werrington parish as proposed)	Maps 2, A3 and A4

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Staffordshire Moorlands

	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	Alton	1	1,208	1,208	-11	1,208	1,208	-10
2	Bagnall & Stanley	1	1,465	1,465	8	1,390	1,390	4
3	Biddulph East	3	3,870	1,290	-5	4,098	1,366	2
4	Biddulph Moor	1	1,481	1,481	9	1,402	1,402	5
5	Biddulph North	3	4,409	1,470	8	4,248	1,416	6
6	Biddulph South	1	1,451	1,451	7	1,396	1,396	4
7	Biddulph West	3	4,245	1,415	4	4,083	1,361	2
8	Brown Edge & Endon	3	3,865	1,288	-5	3,715	1,238	-8
9	Caverswall	1	1,423	1,423	5	1,382	1,382	3
10	Cellarhead	2	2,824	1,412	4	2,656	1,328	-1
11	Cheadle North East	2	2,783	1,392	2	2,835	1,418	6
12	Cheadle South East	2	2,786	1,393	2	2,811	1,406	5
13	Cheadle West	3	3,820	1,273	-6	4,005	1,335	0
14	Checkley	3	4,246	1,415	4	4,314	1,438	7
15	Cheddleton	3	3,678	1,226	-10	3,870	1,290	-4
16	Churnet	2	2,674	1,337	-2	2,564	1,282	-4
17	Dane	1	1,253	1,253	-8	1,197	1,197	-11
18	Forsbrook	3	4,264	1,421	4	4,042	1,347	1
19	Hamps Valley	1	1,356	1,356	0	1,295	1,295	-3
20	Horton	1	1,477	1,477	9	1,401	1,401	5
21	Ipstones	1	1,469	1,469	8	1,453	1,453	8
22	Leek East	3	3,891	1,297	-5	4,136	1,379	3
23	Leek North	3	4,178	1,393	2	3,982	1,327	-1
24	Leek South	3	3,849	1,283	-6	3,736	1,245	-7
25	Leek West	3	3,883	1,294	-5	3,684	1,228	-8
26	Manifold	1	1,509	1,509	11	1,441	1,441	8
27	Werrington	2	2,830	1,415	4	2,704	1,352	1
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>76,187</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,048</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Staffordshire Moorlands District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Staffordshire Moorlands in Staffordshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the eight districts in Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent 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 Staffordshire Moorlands. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1975 (Report No. 114). The electoral arrangements of Staffordshire County Council were last reviewed in July 1980 (Report No. 386). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly after completion of the district reviews to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State in time for the 2005 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 District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We 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 district 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 district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 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 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Staffordshire 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 October 1999 *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 28 September 1999, when we wrote to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the West

Midlands Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 10 January 2000.

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

14 Stage Three began on 9 May 2000 and will end on 3 July 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 district of Staffordshire Moorlands covers the north-eastern part of the county of Staffordshire. The district is bounded by the boroughs of East Staffordshire and Stafford to the south, Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle under Lyme to the west, Derbyshire to the east and Cheshire to the north. The district contains an area of around 58,000 hectares and is largely rural, with one third of its area falling within the Peak District National Park. The population of the district is just under 98,000, nearly half of whom live in the three main towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek.

17 The district is entirely parished and contains 42 parishes, including the three town councils of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek. The parishes range in size from an electorate of 88 in Blore with Swinscoe to almost 16,000 in Leek town, although only 10 parishes have populations over 1,500.

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 district 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 district is 76,187 (February 1999). The Council presently has 56 members who are elected from 28 wards, 12 of which are relatively urban in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek, and the remainder are predominantly rural. Eleven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are each represented by two councillors and 11 are single-member wards. Elections are of the whole council.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Staffordshire Moorlands district, with around 10 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Brown Edge and Cheadle West wards.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,360 electors, which the District Council forecasts will decrease to 1,340 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 19 of the 28 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in six wards by more than 20 per cent and in three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Brown Edge ward where the councillor represents 48 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Staffordshire Moorlands*

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	Alton	1	1,474	1,474	8	1,463	1,463	9
2	Biddulph East	2	3,039	1,520	12	3,295	1,648	23
3	Bidulph Moor	1	1,667	1,667	23	1,578	1,578	18
4	Biddulph North	3	4,524	1,508	11	4,362	1,454	8
5	Biddulph South	3	3,571	1,190	-13	3,431	1,144	-15
6	Biddulph West	2	2,655	1,328	-2	2,568	1,284	-4
7	Brown Edge	1	2,009	2,009	48	1,963	1,963	46
8	Caverswall	1	1,217	1,217	-11	1,176	1,176	-12
9	Cheadle North East	2	2,407	1,204	-12	2,460	1,230	-8
10	Cheadle South East	3	3,162	1,054	-23	3,187	1,062	-21
11	Cheadle West	2	3,820	1,910	40	4,006	2,003	49
12	Checkley	3	4,246	1,415	4	4,316	1,439	7
13	Cheddleton	2	3,010	1,505	11	3,222	1,611	20
14	Endon & Stanley	3	3,321	1,107	-19	3,141	1,047	-22
15	Forsbrook	3	4,264	1,421	4	4,043	1,348	1
16	Horton	1	1,477	1,477	9	1,401	1,401	5
17	Ipstones	1	1,219	1,219	-10	1,216	1,216	-9
18	Kingsley	2	2,408	1,204	-12	2,300	1,150	-14
19	Leek North East	3	3,394	1,131	-17	3,242	1,081	-19
20	Leek North West	3	4,027	1,342	-1	3,802	1,267	-5
21	Leek South East	3	3,980	1,327	-2	4,225	1,408	5
22	Leek South West	3	4,400	1,467	8	4,269	1,423	6
23	Leekfrith	1	1,160	1,160	-15	1,095	1,095	-18
24	Longnor	1	1,210	1,210	-11	1,147	1,147	-14

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (1999)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
25	Warslow	1	1,104	1,104	-19	1,040	1,040	-22
26	Waterhouses	1	893	893	-34	889	889	-34
27	Werrington	3	4,965	1,655	22	4,705	1,568	17
28	Wetley Rocks	1	1,564	1,564	15	1,506	1,506	12
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>76,187</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,048</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>-</b>

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council*

*Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Waterhouses ward were relatively over-represented by 34 per cent, while electors in Brown Edge ward were relatively under-represented by 48 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 Staffordshire Moorlands District 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 District Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 19 representations during Stage One, including three district-wide schemes from the District Council, Staffordshire Moorlands Labour Party and Staffordshire Moorlands Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

#### **Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

24 The District Council proposed a council of 56 members, as at present, serving 27 wards, compared to the existing 28. It proposed redrawing ward boundaries in Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle, creating a single-member Cellarhead ward and combining Brown Edge and most of Endon to form a three-member Brown Edge & Endon ward. Under its proposals the number of councillors representing the rural eastern area of the district would be reduced by one.

25 The Council's proposed warding arrangement would result in an improved level of electoral equality in the district. In 25 of the proposed 27 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. By 2004, one ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent, and no ward would vary by more than 11 per cent. The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

#### **Staffordshire Moorlands Labour Party**

26 Staffordshire Moorlands Labour Party ('the Labour Party') proposed a council size of 45, 11 fewer than at present, and a pattern of 15 three-member wards for the district. They argued that the downward trend in the electorate of the area and a decline in the number of services directly provided by the District Council justified a significant reduction in council size. In preparing their scheme, the Labour Party stated that they had endeavoured to retain communities within one ward, without dividing parish and town council areas.

27 Their proposals would result in a significant redrawing of warding arrangements throughout the district. In particular, they proposed creating a three-member ward in the rural east of the district, containing the existing four single-member wards of Horton, Leekfrith, Longnor and Warslow. The Labour Party's proposed warding arrangement would result in an improved level of electoral equality in the district. Under the Labour Party's proposals no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent currently or by 2004. The Labour Party's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

## **Staffordshire Moorlands Liberal Democrats**

28 Staffordshire Moorlands Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') proposed a reduction in council size from 56 to 52. They argued that the declining population of the district and Government aims to modernise local government justified a reduction in council size. The Liberal Democrats proposed significant changes to existing warding arrangements in the rural areas of the district and a redistribution of councillors in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek, although they did not provide detailed warding arrangements for these areas.

29 The Liberal Democrats' proposed warding arrangement would result in an improved level of electoral equality in the district. Under their proposals, no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the district average currently or in five years' time. The Liberal Democrats' proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

30 We received representations direct from seven parish and town councils. Longsdon Parish Council strongly opposed any changes to its boundaries and expressed support for the District Council's proposals, which would result in no change to the parish. Longnor Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's proposed Manifold ward. Biddulph Town Council supported the District Council's submission and proposed revised parishing arrangements for the town council area. Alstonefield and Bradnop parish councils strongly opposed the District Council's proposals for their respective areas. Endon with Stanley Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposals for their area and proposed creating a two-member Brown Edge & Bagnall ward and a two-member Endon ward. Cheddleton Parish Council "grudgingly" accepted the District Council's proposal for district wards in Cheddleton but favoured retaining the existing parish wards.

## **Other Representations**

31 We received a further 12 representations from local political parties and local residents. The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, Biddulph Liberal Democrats, Endon Liberal Democrats and Leek Liberal Democrats argued that the existing council size of 56 is too large and expressed support for the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a reduction in council size to 52. In addition, Leek and Biddulph branches of the Liberal Democrats provided detailed warding arrangements for their areas. Endon Liberal Democrats also provided alternative parish warding arrangements for Endon & Stanley. Cheadle Branch of Stone Constituency Conservative Association expressed support for the District Council's proposals for their area. Three local residents opposed the Council's proposals for the parishes of Endon & Stanley, Bagnall and Brown Edge and one local resident favoured decreasing the total number of district and parish councillors in Staffordshire Moorlands.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Staffordshire Moorlands 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 District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a marginal decrease in the electorate of 1 per cent from 76,187 to 75,048 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. However, growth is projected for some parts of the district. In particular, the Council expects some growth in Biddulph East, Cheadle West and Cheddleton wards. 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 and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## Council Size

38 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council presently has 56 members. During Stage One we received three district-wide schemes based on different council sizes. The Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 56, while the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats proposed reductions in council size to 45 and 52 respectively.

39 The District Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 56, which it argued “was the optimum number necessary to deliver effective and convenient local government”. In formulating its scheme, the Policy and Resources Committee of the Council had given consideration to alternative council sizes. It considered that any reduction in council size, which would result in an increased number of electors per councillor, would have the effect of increasing to an unacceptable level the geographical size of rural wards in the north and east of the borough. It also argued that a reduction in council size “would run the risk of eroding democratic representation in this rural area beyond that which would be effective”. It argued that, in the rural areas, even the existing council size of 56 was at the very margins of acceptably reflecting community identities and interests.

40 The Labour Party proposed a significant reduction in council size, from 56 to 45. They argued that the downward trend in the electorate of the area and the decline in the number of services directly provided by the District Council justified a reduction in council size. They also stated that such a change “would allow for modest savings in expenses whilst ensuring a continuation of adequate representation of all local communities”. The Labour Party also referred to new styles of internal political management and argued that a reduction in the number of councillors “would facilitate more efficient decision making”.

41 The Liberal Democrats proposed a reduction in council size to 52, four fewer than at present. They argued that larger wards would reduce the chances of having uncontested elections and would reflect the district’s declining population. They also argued that “the role of the councillor has diminished since the last review” and that “cabinet-style government, if implemented, is likely to reduce the role of councillors even further”. Finally, they argued that the average number of electors per councillor in Staffordshire Moorlands is low compared with similar authorities. The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, Biddulph Liberal Democrats, Endon Liberal Democrats and Leek Liberal Democrats expressed support for the Liberal Democrats’ proposed reduction in council size to 52.

42 A local resident favoured a general reduction in the number of district and parish councillors, but did not provide any further details.

43 As previously explained, the Commission’s starting point in its PER work is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government. We will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size, but as our *Guidance* makes clear we will be prepared to consider the case for change where there are both persuasive arguments and supporting evidence, particularly of a degree of local consensus in favour of change.

44 We have carefully considered the representations received, and have noted the lack of consensus regarding the appropriate council size for Staffordshire Moorlands. Notwithstanding the reasonable levels of electoral equality achieved by the schemes submitted by the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats, we consider that there is insufficient evidence to warrant their proposed reductions in council. In particular, it is difficult to ascertain from the submissions whether as a result of a reduction to 52 members, or a more considerable reduction to 45, the effectiveness of the council would be adversely affected and community ties reflected less well than under the current council size.

45 Furthermore, we have received no evidence to suggest that there is significant support for such a radical change in council size for the district. We consider that the District Council's proposals would achieve levels of electoral equality comparable to those of the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats and, moreover, would have the advantage of building on a principle of least change. We are satisfied that the Council has conducted an extensive consultation exercise, involving all the parish and town councils in the district and through the establishment of a cross-party working group. We note that the Council has sought to canvass opinion on its proposals throughout the district and has built on a degree of local consensus. We have received no evidence that either of the proposals submitted by Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats were consulted upon locally, or command any degree of support beyond their own party.

46 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 56 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

47 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the District Council, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. From these representations, some considerations have emerged which have informed our draft recommendations.

48 First, as outlined above, our proposals for Staffordshire Moorlands are based on a council size of 56 which we consider to be the most appropriate council size for the district having regard to the evidence submitted and to the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area.

49 Second, we note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-member wards, while the Labour Party proposed a pattern consisting entirely of three-member wards. We consider that maintaining a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-member wards would best reflect the diverse nature of the borough, electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we are not persuaded that community identities and convenient and effective local government in the rural north-eastern part of the district would be facilitated by a pattern of entirely three-member wards, as proposed by the Labour Party.

50 In view of our draft recommendations for a council size of 56 and our preference for a mixed pattern of wards, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District 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 provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, we have decided to move away from the District Council's proposals in several areas.

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

- (a) Alton, Checkley, Forsbrook and Kingsley wards;
- (b) Cheadle (three wards);
- (c) Caverswall, Cheddleton, Werrington and Wetley Rocks wards;
- (d) Brown Edge, Endon & Stanley and Horton wards;
- (e) Biddulph (five wards);
- (f) Leek (four wards);
- (g) Ipstones and Leekfrith wards;
- (h) Longnor, Warslow and Waterhouses wards.

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

### **Alton, Checkley, Forsbrook and Kingsley wards**

53 The four wards of Alton, Checkley, Forsbrook and Kingsley are located in the south of the district, adjacent to Stafford and East Staffordshire districts. Alton ward contains the three parishes of Alton, Cotton and Farley. Checkley and Forsbrook wards each comprise the parish of the same name and Kingsley ward contains Kingsley and Oakamoor parishes. Under existing arrangements Alton is represented by one councillor and has 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Checkley and Forsbrook wards are both represented by three councillors and have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Kingsley ward, which is represented by two councillors, has 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. The level of electoral equality in each of these wards is not expected to improve significantly by 2004.

54 The District Council proposed retaining the existing Checkley and Forsbrook wards. It argued that Forsbrook ward would have "almost the ideal" electoral variance by 2004 (1 per cent above the district average) and that the level of electoral equality in Checkley ward would deteriorate by changing its boundaries with the adjoining wards to the north and east. The Council also proposed a revised Alton ward, containing Alton and Farley parishes, and proposed combining Cotton parish (currently in Alton ward) with the existing Kingsley ward to create a new two-member Churnet ward. The Council argued that while better electoral equality could be achieved by combining Kingsley and Alton wards in a new three-member ward, "it would be difficult to establish community identity between the two settlements". Under the Council's proposed warding arrangements, Alton, Checkley, Churnet and Forsbrook wards would have 11 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

55 The Labour Party proposed creating a three-member Alton & Tean ward comprising the existing Checkley ward, Farley and Alton parishes (currently in Alton ward) and Oakamoor parish (currently in Kingsley ward). They proposed combining Kingsley and Cotton parishes with Ipstones and Waterhouses wards, Consall parish (currently in Wetley Rocks ward) and Dilhorne parish (currently in Caverswall ward) to create a three-member Moorlands Rural South ward. They also put forward a revised three-member Forsbrook ward containing the existing ward and Draycott in the Moors parish (currently in Checkley ward). Under their proposed council size of 45, Alton & Tean, Forsbrook and Moorlands Rural South wards would have 1 per cent more, 1 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer by 2004).

56 In their submission, the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing Alton, Checkley and Forsbrook wards. They proposed combining Kingsley ward with Ipstones ward and the majority of Wetley Rocks ward to create a new three-member Ipstones, Kingsley & Wetley Rocks ward. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed council size of 52, Alton, Checkley, Forsbrook and Ipstones, Kingsley & Wetley Rocks wards would have 1 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more, equal to the average, 7 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer by 2004).

57 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose endorsing the District Council's proposals for this area. In the context of our proposed council size of 56, we consider that its proposals provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we consider that the existing Checkley and Forsbrook wards represent community ties well and note that the Liberal Democrats also supported retaining these wards. Under our draft recommendations, Alton, Checkley, Churnet and Forsbrook wards would have 11 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

### **Cheadle (three wards)**

58 The town of Cheadle is located in the south of the district and contains the three wards of Cheadle North East, Cheadle South East and Cheadle West. Cheadle North East and Cheadle West wards are each represented by two councillors and have 12 per cent fewer and 40 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Cheadle South East ward is represented by three councillors and has 23 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. The level of electoral equality in each ward is not projected to improve significantly by 2004.

59 At Stage One the District Council proposed broadly retaining the existing ward boundaries in Cheadle, with the exception of a minor boundary change between Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards. It proposed transferring the area to the north of Well Street (Sun Street, Leeking Road, Robina Drive and Queen Street), containing 399 electors, from Cheadle South East ward to Cheadle North East ward. The Council proposed retaining the existing Cheadle West ward, arguing that the ward has clearly defined boundaries, with the A522 trunk road acting as a significant division between it and the other wards in Cheadle. However, it noted that Cheadle West ward is currently the fastest growing ward in the district and proposed that

increasing its representation from two to three councillors would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality by 2004. Under the Council's proposals, Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards would have 3 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent and 4 per cent more by 2004). Cheadle West ward would initially have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to equal to the average by 2004. Cheadle Branch of the Stone Constituency Conservative Association expressed support for the District Council's proposals for this area.

60 The Labour Party proposed creating two three-member wards for Cheadle town: Cheadle West and Cheadle East. Under their proposals, Cheadle West ward would comprise the existing Cheadle West ward together with an area containing 1,300 electors around the A522 (Tea Road), currently in Cheadle South East ward. Its proposed Cheadle East ward would contain the remaining part of Cheadle South East ward together with the whole of Cheadle North East ward, thereby uniting the town centre in one ward. The Labour Party argued that their proposals "aimed at providing for a more balanced electorate per ward throughout the area". Their proposed Cheadle West and Cheadle East wards would have 5 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 7 per cent fewer by 2004), based on a council size of 45.

61 The Liberal Democrats proposed that, based on a council size of 52, the Cheadle town area should be represented by seven councillors divided between three wards (two two-member wards and one three-member ward), but did not provide any detailed warding arrangements for this area.

62 We consider that, in the light of our proposed council size of 56, the existing arrangements for the Cheadle town council area reflect community ties well. We also note that the District Council's proposals would largely retain the existing wards in this area. We are content to endorse the Council's proposals for this area, subject to a minor amendment to the proposed boundary between Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards. We consider that the roads having sole access from Oakmoor Road (Goodwood Avenue, Mallory Way, Moor Lane, Oulton Road and Silverstone Avenue) would be isolated from the remainder of Cheadle South East ward under the District Council's proposal and propose that they should form part of a revised Cheadle North East ward rather than the area to the north of Well Street. To improve electoral equality further, we propose that the whole of Queen Street should be transferred to Cheadle North East ward, as also proposed by the Council.

63 Under our draft recommendations, Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards would both have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent and 5 per cent more respectively by 2004). Cheadle West ward would initially have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to equal to the average by 2004. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 at Appendix A.

### **Caverswall, Cheddleton, Werrington and Wetley Rocks wards**

64 Caverswall, Cheddleton, Werrington and Wetley Rocks wards are located in the south-west of the district. Caverswall ward comprises the two parishes of Caverswall and Dilhorne, while Werrington ward contains the parish of the same name. Cheddleton parish is divided between two district wards, Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks. Under existing warding arrangements, Caverswall,

and Wetley Rocks wards are each represented by one councillor and have 11 per cent fewer and 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (12 per cent fewer, and 12 per cent more by 2004). Cheddleton ward, represented by two councillors, and Werrington ward, represented by three councillors, have 11 per cent and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (20 per cent and 17 per cent more by 2004).

65 The District Council proposed significant changes to warding arrangements in this area. It proposed a revised Caverswall ward containing Caverswall and Dilhorne parishes together with the southern part of Werrington ward. The north-eastern boundary of its proposed ward would run to the south of the roads leading from Ash Bank Road, Chatsworth Drive and the eastern part of Cellarhead Road to the southern boundary of Cheddleton parish, which the Council argued would “incorporate the rural farm estates and the village of Hume ... which have more affinity with the more rural character of Caverswall than the suburban character of Werrington”.

66 The District Council argued that it was difficult to achieve clear ward boundaries in the Werrington area since it comprises one community with shared interests and “in many respects the ideal would be a four-member district ward”. Since this was not considered desirable, it proposed creating two two-member wards for the area. The Council proposed creating a new two-member Cellarhead ward, broadly comprising the Cellarhead area to the east of Washerwall Lane and Hill Side Road, currently located in Werrington ward, and the Withystakes area of Wetley Rocks ward. It argued that the creation of such a ward would formalise “the natural links that cross the lineal development of the A52 Ash Bank and [would provide] for an electoral balance close to the district average”. The Council proposed that the remaining area of Werrington ward should form a revised two-member Werrington ward.

67 Finally, it proposed a revised three-member Cheddleton ward comprising the existing ward and Wetley Rocks ward, less the area transferred to its proposed Cellarhead ward. The Council argued that the creation of a three-member ward for this area would provide for improved levels of electoral equality by 2004, as the electorate in the existing Cheddleton ward is projected to grow by 9 per cent over the next five years due to new housing developments. It also argued that Wetley Rocks village, Consall parish and Cheddleton share some communications links. Under the District Council’s proposals, Caverswall, Cellarhead, Cheddleton and Werrington wards would have electoral variances of no more than 10 per cent from the district average, improving to no more than 4 per cent from the average by 2004.

68 The Labour Party proposed creating two three-member wards for this area: Ash Bank and Cheddleton. Their proposed Ash Bank ward would contain Caverswall parish (currently in Caverswall ward) and the majority of Werrington parish (currently in Werrington ward). They proposed transferring the area to the east of Johnstone Avenue (currently in Werrington ward) to a revised three-member Cheddleton ward together with the whole of Cheddleton parish (currently divided between Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks wards). Under a council size of 45, the Labour Party’s proposed Ash Bank and Cheddleton wards would have 4 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

69 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised three-member Werrington ward containing the majority of the existing ward and a revised single-member Caverswall ward comprising the existing ward and the Hulme area of Werrington parish, containing around 250 electors. They also put forward a revised two-member Cheddleton ward containing the majority of the existing ward and proposed transferring an area containing 400 electors in the north of Cheddleton ward to a revised ward in Leek town. As previously discussed, the Liberal Democrats proposed combining the majority of Wetley Rocks ward with Ipstones and Kingsley wards in a new three-member Ipstones, Kingsley & Wetley Rocks ward. Their proposed Caverswall, Cheddleton and Werrington wards would have equal to, 1 per cent more and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than that district average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more by 2004)

70 In its submission, Cheddleton Parish Council “grudgingly” accepted the District Council’s proposal for Cheddleton.

71 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. In view of the high levels of electoral inequality which exist in this area, it cannot be considered a practical solution to maintain the existing electoral arrangements. The schemes submitted by the District Council, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats all proposed significant changes to warding arrangements in this area and would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality. However, our proposed council size of 56 limits the extent to which we are able to consider the Labour Party’s and the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, which were based on a council size of 45 and 52 respectively. Furthermore, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to combine part of Cheddleton parish with part of the Leek town council area would adequately reflect communities interests and identities in this area. We note that the Council’s proposals would provide separate representation for the settlement of Werrington and were accepted, albeit reluctantly, by Cheddleton Parish Council. We consider that, on balance, they would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations.

72 Under our draft recommendations, Caverswall, Cellarhead and Werrington wards would have 5 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004). Cheddleton ward would initially have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 4 per cent fewer by 2004. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A3 and A4 at Appendix A.

### **Brown Edge, Endon & Stanley and Horton wards**

73 These three wards are located in the west of the district, to the east and south of Biddulph town. Endon & Stanley is a three-member ward containing Endon & Stanley and Bagnall parishes and Horton is a single-member ward containing the three parishes of Horton, Longsdon and Rushton. Under existing arrangements, Endon & Stanley and Horton have 19 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Brown Edge ward, represented by one councillor, is coterminous with the parish of the same name and currently has 48 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. These electoral imbalances are not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

74 In formulating its proposals, the District Council identified two possible warding options for the Brown Edge and Endon areas. It considered creating two two-member wards, but found that it was unable to find suitable ward boundaries which would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality without dividing the main centres of population. Therefore, it proposed creating a three-member Brown Edge & Endon ward, comprising Brown Edge ward and the Endon area of Endon & Stanley ward, and a single-member Bagnall & Stanley ward, comprising Bagnall parish and the Stanley village area of Endon & Stanley ward. It proposed that the boundary between these wards should run eastwards along the southern boundary of Brown Edge parish, to the rear of the properties on Basnett's Wood Road, Spencer Avenue and Springbank Avenue, along Leek Road and eastwards along the Caldon Canal to the parish boundary. With respect to Horton ward, the District Council proposed no change to the existing arrangements, arguing that the existing boundaries reflected the statutory criteria well. The Council's proposed Bagnall & Stanley, Brown Edge & Endon and Horton wards would have 2 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more by 2004), based on a council size of 45..

75 The Labour Party proposed combining the existing wards of Endon & Stanley and Brown Edge to create a new three-member Brown Edge & Endon ward covering both these communities. They argued that their proposals "aimed at providing for a more balanced electorate per ward" and would take into account the downward trend in electorate throughout the area. The Labour Party proposed combining Horton ward with Leekfrith, Longnor and Warslow wards to create a new three-member Moorlands Rural North ward, as discussed later. The Labour Party's proposed Brown Edge & Endon ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently and 2 per cent more by 2004.

76 The Liberal Democrats proposed creating a new three-member Brown Edge & Endon with Stanley ward, comprising Brown Edge ward and Endon & Stanley parish (currently in Endon & Stanley ward). They proposed combining Bagnall parish (currently in Endon & Stanley ward) with the Cellarhead area of Wetley Rocks ward to create a new single-member Cellarhead & Bagnall ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing Horton ward. Under their proposed council size of 52, Brown Edge & Endon with Stanley, Cellarhead & Bagnall and Horton wards would have 7 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer by 2004).

77 We received several further representations regarding this area at Stage One. Longsdon Parish Council opposed any change to the existing boundaries of Horton ward. Endon with Stanley Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposals for their area, which they argued would divide the parish "into arbitrary sections merely to achieve numerical equality". They proposed creating a two-member Brown Edge & Bagnall ward, comprising Bagnall parish, Brown Edge parish and an area containing 100 electors in Endon & Stanley parish (Ball Lane, Edgefields Lane, part of Moss Hill and Stanley Road), and a two-member Endon ward comprising the majority of Endon & Stanley parish. The Parish Council argued that their proposal would retain "the identity and interest of all three parishes". A local resident expressed support for their proposals.

78 Endon Branch Liberal Democrats opposed the proposal submitted by Endon with Stanley Parish Council and expressed a preference for the Liberal Democrats' proposal to create a three-member Brown Edge & Endon with Stanley ward and a single-member Cellarhead & Bagnall ward. They also stated that the District Council's proposal was their next preferred option for this area. The Liberal Democrat Group on the District Council also opposed Endon with Stanley Parish Council's proposal and expressed support for Endon Branch Liberal Democrats' proposals. Two local residents opposed transferring part of Endon parish to Brown Edge ward, arguing that they are distinct communities and should have separate representation.

79 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that there was a lack of consensus with regard to the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area. While the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats proposed uniting the whole of Brown Edge and Endon & Stanley parishes in one ward, the District Council and Endon with Stanley Parish Council differed with respect to the part of Endon which should be joined with Brown Edge ward. In the light of this lack of consensus and having regard for our proposed council size of 56, we propose largely adopting the District Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that its proposals would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, taking into account the projected growth in this area over the next five years.

80 We have not been persuaded to adopt Endon with Stanley Parish Council's proposal, as their proposed Endon ward would have a relatively high level of electoral inequality under a council size of 56 (12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2004) and we do not consider that two two-member wards would necessarily better represent community interests and identities in this area than alternative proposals based on a three-member ward and a single-member ward. Our proposed council size of 56 limits the extent to which we have been able to consider the Labour Party's and Liberal Democrats' proposals. However, we note that there was some support among the submissions received for retaining the existing Horton ward.

81 Nevertheless, we propose a minor change to the District Council's proposals to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary between the proposed Bagnall & Stanley and Brown Edge & Endon wards. We propose that the boundary should run eastwards along the southern boundary of Brown Edge parish, the south side of Basnett's Wood Road, along Leek Road, to the north of Greenmeadow Green and northwards along the railway line to the parish boundary. Our proposed boundary would retain the community to the west of Leek Road within one ward, Brown Edge & Endon ward, rather than transferring Basnett's Wood Road, Spencer Avenue and Springbank Avenue to Bagnall & Stanley ward, as proposed by the District Council. We recognise that there were a number of views expressed locally on warding arrangements, and also that our proposals depart to some extent from those proposed locally. We would therefore particularly welcome further views regarding this area from local residents and interested parties at Stage Three.

82 Under our draft recommendations, Brown Edge & Endon, Bagnall & Stanley and Horton wards would have 8 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more by 2004).

## **Biddulph (five wards)**

83 Biddulph is located in the west of the district and is the largest town in Staffordshire Moorlands. It contains five wards – Biddulph East, Biddulph Moor, Biddulph North, Biddulph South and Biddulph West. Under existing arrangements, Biddulph East and Biddulph West are each represented by two councillors and have 12 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Biddulph Moor is a single-member ward and has 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Biddulph North and Biddulph South, each represented by three councillors, have 11 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. The level of electoral equality in the each ward is not expected to improve significantly over the next five years.

84 The District Council proposed modifications to all of the existing wards in Biddulph town. It proposed a revised three-member Biddulph East ward, containing the existing ward and the part of Biddulph West ward to the east of John Street, which it argued would provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary, as well as improving the level of electoral equality in its proposed ward. The Council proposed transferring the area to the west of Tunstall Road, currently in Biddulph South ward, to a revised three-member Biddulph West ward, which would also contain the existing ward (less the area to the east of John Street) and the area to the south of Mow Lane, currently in Biddulph North ward. Its proposed three-member Biddulph North ward would comprise the remainder of the existing ward and a rural area containing around 200 electors, currently located in Biddulph Moor ward. It proposed a revised single-member Biddulph Moor ward comprising the remainder of the existing ward, excluding the area to the south of Crowborough Road. Finally, the Council proposed a revised single-member Biddulph South ward comprising the part of the existing ward to the east of Tunstall Road and the area to the south of Crowborough Road, currently in Biddulph Moor ward. Under the District Council's proposals, all five wards would have electoral variances of no more than 8 per cent from the district average currently, improving to no more than 6 per cent from the average by 2004.

85 The Labour Party proposed creating three three-member wards for the Biddulph town area: Biddulph North, Biddulph Central and Biddulph South. Their revised Biddulph North ward would comprise the existing ward, as well as an area containing around 1,000 electors to the north of Wharf Road, currently located in Biddulph West ward. They proposed combining the remaining part of Biddulph West ward with the existing Biddulph South ward in a revised Biddulph South ward. The Labour Party's proposed Biddulph Central ward would comprise the existing Biddulph East and Biddulph Moor wards, which they argued would maintain local community identities. Under the Labour Party's proposals, Biddulph North, Biddulph Central and Biddulph South wards would have electoral variances of no more than 11 per cent from the district average (8 per cent by 2004), based on a council size of 45.

86 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Biddulph town should be represented by 10 councillors in four wards (two two-member wards and two three-member wards). They did not provide any detailed warding arrangements for this area. Biddulph Branch Liberal Democrats expressed support for the Liberal Democrats' proposals and proposed specific warding arrangements for this area. They proposed a new three-member Biddulph South with Moor ward comprising parts of Biddulph South and Biddulph Moor wards. They proposed transferring around 200 electors from

the existing Biddulph Moor ward to a revised three-member Biddulph North ward, and transferring around 250 electors from the existing Biddulph South ward to a revised two-member Biddulph East ward. Their proposed two-member Biddulph West ward would comprise the existing ward and part of Biddulph East ward containing 500 electors. Under a council size of 52, Biddulph Branch Liberal Democrats' proposed Biddulph East, Biddulph North, Biddulph South with Moor and Biddulph West wards would have electoral variances of no more than 7 per cent from the district average (8 per cent by 2004).

87 Biddulph Town Council expressed support for the District Council's proposals in their area.

88 Having considered the representations received, we propose putting forward the District Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that, in the light of our draft recommendation for a council size of 56, its proposals for this area would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also note that its proposals were supported by Biddulph Town Council and would largely retain the existing wards in the town. While the Labour Party's and Liberal Democrats' submissions would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality, our proposal for a council size of 56 limits the extent to which we are able to consider their proposals. However, we propose a minor amendment to the boundary between Biddulph Moor and Biddulph North wards, affecting 18 electors, to retain the electors on Woodhouse Lane within one ward.

89 Under our draft recommendations, Biddulph Moor, Biddulph North, Biddulph South and Biddulph West wards would have 9 per cent, 8 per cent, 7 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 5 per cent, 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent by 2004. Biddulph East ward would initially have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 2 per cent more in five years' time. Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Leek (four wards)**

90 The town of Leek is the administrative centre for Staffordshire Moorlands district and is divided between four wards, each represented by three councillors. Under existing electoral arrangements, Leek North East, Leek North West and Leek South East wards have 17 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while Leek South West ward has 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the average. These electoral imbalances are not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

91 The District Council proposed some changes to the warding arrangements in Leek town. It proposed four new wards, each represented by three councillors: Leek North, Leek South, Leek East and Leek West. The Council's proposed Leek North ward would contain the existing Leek North East ward and the part of Leek North West ward to the north of the A523 (Macclesfield Road and Mill Street). The remaining part of Leek North West ward would form a new Leek West ward, together with the area to the west of Wallbridge Drive and the properties on Beggars Lane and Spring Gardens, currently located in Leek South West ward. The Council's proposed Leek South ward would contain the existing Leek South West ward, less the area transferred to Leek West ward, as well as the Cheddleton Heath area to the south of the disused railway line, currently located in Leek South East ward. Finally, it proposed that the existing Leek South East

ward, less the Cheddleton Heath area, should form a new Leek East ward. Under the Council's proposals, Leek North, Leek South, Leek East and Leek West ward would have electoral variances of no more than 6 per cent from the district average (8 per cent by 2004).

92 The Labour Party proposed three new three-member wards for the Leek town area: Leek North, Leek East and Leek West. They proposed combining the existing Leek North East ward with the parts of Leek North West and Leek South East wards to the north of the A523 (Macclesfield Road, Mill Street, Ashbourne Road) and the A53 (Brook Street and Haywood Street) to create a new Leek North ward. Their proposed Leek East ward would contain the remaining part of Leek South East ward and an area broadly to the east of the A53 (Newcastle Road) containing around 1,600 electors, currently in Leek South West ward. Under their proposals, the remaining parts of Leek South West and Leek North West wards would comprise a new Leek West ward. The Labour Party argued that their proposals in the Leek town council area would maintain local community identities. Under a council size of 45, their proposed Leek North, Leek East and Leek West wards would have electoral variances of no more than 8 per cent from the district average, both currently and in five years' time.

93 In their submission, the Liberal Democrats proposed that the Leek town council area should be represented by 11 councillors in four wards (one two-member ward and three three-member wards). They proposed including part of Cheddleton ward, containing 400 electors, in one of the Leek wards, but they did not provide any detailed warding arrangements for this area. Leek Branch Liberal Democrats expressed support for the Liberal Democrats' submission and proposed specific warding arrangements for this area. They proposed a revised three-member Leek South West ward comprising the existing ward and the part of Leek North West ward to the east of Spring Gardens and Beggars Lane. They proposed combining the remaining part of Leek North West ward with the part of Leek North East ward to the west of Prince Street in a revised three-member Leek North West ward. Their proposed Leek North East ward would comprise the remainder of the existing ward and Leek South East ward would contain the existing ward and 400 electors currently located in Cheddleton ward. Under a council size of 52, Leek Branch Liberal Democrats' proposed Leek North East, Leek North West, Leek South East and Leek South West wards would have electoral variances of no more than 1 per cent from the district average by 2004.

94 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One for this area. As stated previously, our proposed council size of 56 hinders the extent to which we are able to consider the proposed warding arrangements submitted by the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. In particular, as previously discussed, we have not been persuaded to merge part of Cheddleton with Leek, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, as we do not consider such a proposal would best reflect community ties.

95 Nevertheless, we have noted that there were some similarities among the submissions received. Both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed amending the boundary between Leek South West and Leek South East wards to follow the centre of Spring Gardens and Beggars Lane. Furthermore, the District Council and the Labour Party concurred with respect to utilising the A523 (Macclesfield Road and Mill Street) as a ward boundary.

96 We propose putting forward the District Council's proposals for the Leek town area, which would build on the existing arrangements with some boundary changes to provide for improved levels of electoral equality. However, we propose one minor amendment to the proposed boundary between Leek East and Leek South wards, which would affect no electors. We do not consider that the disused railway line, as proposed by the District Council, is the most suitably permanent ground feature in this area, and propose that the boundary should follow eastwards along the rear of the Basford Lane Industrial Estate to the town council boundary.

97 Under our draft recommendations, Leek East, Leek North, Leek South and Leek West wards would have 5 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer by 2004). Our proposals are illustrated in Maps A5 and A6 at Appendix A.

### **Ipstones and Leekfrith wards**

98 Leekfrith ward is situated largely within the boundaries of the Peak District National Park. It is represented by one councillor and comprises the parishes of Bradnop, Heaton, Leekfrith, Onecote and Tittesworth. Ipstones is a single-member ward located to the south-east of Leek town, in the central part of the district, and comprises the parish of the same name. Under existing arrangements, Ipstones and Leekfrith wards are over-represented, with 10 per cent and 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent and 18 per cent fewer by 2004).

99 The District Council proposed a revised single-member Ipstones ward and a new single-member Dane ward for this area. Its proposed Ipstones ward would contain the parishes of Ipstones and Bradnop, which it argued would unite two geographically similar areas sharing a lengthy common boundary adjacent to the A523. The Council's proposed Dane ward would contain Heaton, Leekfrith and Tittesworth parishes (currently in Leekfrith ward) and Heathylee, Hollinsclough and Quarnford parishes (currently in Longnor ward). The Council argued that the particular geography of this area made it difficult to propose warding arrangements which would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality and represent community ties well. However, it argued that its proposed Dane ward would retain Tittesworth and Leekfrith parishes, which share strong community links, in the same ward. Under the District Council's proposals, Dane and Ipstones wards would have 8 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (11 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more by 2004).

100 The Labour Party proposed including Ipstones ward within a new Moorlands Rural South ward, together with the parishes of Blore with Swinscoe, Consall, Cotton, Dilhorne, Kingsley and Waterhouses, as previously discussed. They proposed combining the four existing wards of Horton, Leekfrith, Longnor and Warslow to create a new three-member Moorlands Rural North ward. The Labour Party argued that their proposals for this area "aimed at providing for a more balanced electorate per ward" and that they maintained local community identities. Their proposed Moorlands Rural North ward would initially have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent fewer by 2004), based on a council size of 45.

101 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised single-member Leekfrith ward containing the parishes of Bradnop, Heaton, Leekfrith and Tittesworth (currently in Leekfrith ward) and Heathlyee, Hollinsclough and Quarnford (currently in Longnor parish). As discussed previously, they proposed transferring Ipstones ward to a new three-member Ipstones, Kingsley & Wetley Rocks ward. Under their proposed council size of 52, Leekfrith ward would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer by 2004).

102 Bradnop Parish Council stated that it wished to remain part of Leekfrith ward and argued that linking their community with Ipstones ward would be far from ideal. They argued that Ipstones is becoming an urbanised parish, while Bradnop consists of a largely rural community, and feared that they would lose their identity if joined in the same ward as the larger village of Ipstones.

103 Having considered the representations received and in the light of our proposed council size of 56, we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for this area. We consider that their proposals would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality and would represent community ties well in this sparsely populated, rural area of the district. We have noted the comments made by Bradnop Parish Council, but we have not been persuaded that the villages of Bradnop and Ipstones are so distinct as to preclude joining them in one ward for electoral purposes. Our proposed Dane and Ipstones wards would have 8 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (11 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more by 2004).

### **Longnor, Warslow and Waterhouses wards**

104 The three wards of Longnor, Warslow and Waterhouses are located in the rural north-eastern part of the district and are each represented by one councillor. Longnor comprises the parishes of Fawfieldhead, Heathlyee, Hollinsclough, Longnor, Quarnford and Sheen; Warslow ward contains the six parishes of Alstonefield, Butterton, Grindon, Ilam, Warslow & Elkstones and Wetton; while Waterhouses ward comprises the two parishes of Blore with Swinscoe and Waterhouses. Under existing arrangements, Longnor, Warslow and Waterhouses wards are all over-represented, with 11 per cent, 19 per cent and 34 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. The level of electoral equality in each ward is not projected to improve by 2004.

105 The District Council proposed creating two new single-member wards in this area, Manifold and Hamps Valley. Under its proposals, Manifold ward would contain Fawfieldhead, Longnor and Sheen parishes (currently in Longnor ward), Onecote parish (currently in Leekfrith ward) and Butterton, Grindon and Warslow & Elkstones parishes (currently in Warslow ward). Hamps Valley would contain the existing Waterhouses ward and the three parishes of Alstonefield, Wetton and Ilam (currently in Warslow ward). The Council argued that its proposal recognised the existing community links between Longnor and Sheen parishes and retained these within the same ward. It recognised that the proposed Manifold ward would initially have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, but it argued that it had considered all available

options in this area and had concluded that such a warding arrangement would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and community ties. The Council's proposed Hamps Valley and Manifold wards would initially have equal to and 11 more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more by 2004).

106 As previously discussed, the Labour Party proposed combining Longnor and Warslow wards with Horton and Leekfrith wards to create a new three-member Moorlands Rural North ward, which would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent fewer by 2004), based on a council size of 45.

107 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new single-member Longnor & Warslow ward comprising Onecote parish (currently in Leekfrith ward), Fawfieldhead, Longnor and Sheen parishes (currently in Longnor ward) and Butterton, Grindon and Warslow & Elkstones parishes (currently located in Warslow ward). They also proposed combining the existing Waterhouses ward with the parishes of Alstonefield, Ilam and Wetton (currently in Warslow ward) to create a revised single-member Waterhouses ward. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Longnor & Warslow and Waterhouses wards would have 3 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 10 per cent fewer by 2004), based on a council size of 52.

108 Longnor Parish Council expressed support for the District Council's proposals for this area, arguing that Longnor parish has a much stronger affinity with the parishes in the Council's proposed Manifold ward than those in its proposed Dane ward. Alstonefield Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposed Hamps Valley ward, arguing that it would be "totally inappropriate to the needs, aspirations and wishes of the community". They stated that Alstonefield has longstanding historical connections with Ilam and Wetton parishes, but very little in common with Waterhouses parish. They also opposed the District Council's proposed new ward name, arguing that Alstonefield is not located in the Hamps Valley.

109 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats are in agreement as to the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area. We recognise that in a sparse rural area it is particularly difficult to reconcile the achievement of electoral equality with the reflection of community interests and identities. However, we consider that, on balance, these proposals provide the best balance between these criteria and are therefore content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations. We recognise that there was some disagreement as to the most appropriate ward names for this area and, in the absence of such agreement, have put forward the District Council's proposed ward names of Manifold and Hamps Valley. However, we would particularly welcome the views of local residents and interested parties on this issue at Stage Three.

110 Under our draft recommendations, Hamps Valley ward would have equal to the district average number of electors per councillor (3 per cent fewer by 2004), while Manifold ward would have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 8 per cent above the average by 2004.

## Electoral Cycle

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

## Conclusions

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

- a council of 56 members should be retained;
- there should be 27 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

113 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following three areas:

- We propose modifying the boundary between Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards to include the roads having sole access from Oakmoor Road (Goodwood Avenue, Mallory Way, Moor Lane, Oulton Road and Silverstone Avenue) within a revised Cheadle North East ward.
- We propose modifying the boundary between Brown Edge & Endon and Bagnall & Stanley wards to follow the rear of properties on Basnett's Wood Road, along Leek Road and westwards along the railway line to the Endon & Stanley parish boundary.
- We propose a minor modification to the boundary between Leek East and Leek South wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary.

114 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	56	56	56	56
Number of wards	28	27	28	27
Average number of electors per councillor	1,360	1,340	1,360	1,340
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	19	2	17	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	0	7	0

115 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 19 to two. By 2004 only one ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council should comprise 56 councillors serving 27 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**

116 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Biddulph, Endon & Stanley, Cheadle, Cheddleton, Leek and Werrington to reflect the proposed district wards.

117 The town of Cheadle is currently served by 21 town councillors, representing three wards: Cheadle North East (represented by six councillors), Cheadle South East (eight councillors) and Cheadle West (seven councillors). At Stage One, in order to reflect its proposed district warding arrangements, the District Council proposed revised parish warding arrangements and a

redistribution of councillors representing Cheadle town. It proposed that the revised Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards should each be represented by six town councillors. It also proposed that Cheadle West ward should remain unchanged, but that the number of councillors representing it should be increased from seven to nine.

118 In our draft recommendations we proposed modifications to Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards and retaining the existing Cheadle West ward. Our draft recommendations were broadly similar to those put forward by the District Council. As a consequence, we are content to put forward for consultation the District Council’s proposed redistribution of town councillors and warding arrangements for Cheadle town, subject to the modification outlined above.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Cheadle Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East (each returning six councillors) and Cheadle West ward (returning nine councillors). The boundary between the revised Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated on Map A2 in Appendix A.

119 The parish of Werrington is currently represented by 14 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parish should be divided between three district wards. As a consequence, it proposed that Werrington parish also be divided into three parish wards: Saltway (returning one councillor), Washerwall (returning eight councillors) and Windmill (returning five councillors).

120 In our draft recommendations we put forward the District Council’s proposals for this area, which would result in the creation of a new Cellarhead ward and revised Caverswall and Werrington wards. As a consequence of our draft recommendations, we are content to put forward the District Council’s proposed changes to parish electoral arrangements for consultation.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Werrington Parish Council should comprise 14 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Saltway (returning one councillor), Washerwall (eight) and Windmill (five). The Werrington parish council ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

121 The parish of Cheddleton is currently divided between two parish wards, Cheddleton parish ward (returning 11 councillors) and Wetley Rocks parish ward (returning six councillors). At Stage One, the District Council proposed that Cheddleton ward be expanded to include Consall parish and a larger part of Cheddleton parish, and that a Cellarhead ward be formed combining

parts of Werrington and Cheddleton parishes. As a result, it also proposed modifying parish ward boundaries in this area. It proposed retaining two parish wards of Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks but modifying the boundary between them to reflect the new district ward boundary. As a result it also proposed that the parish councillors be redistributed so that Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks parish wards would be represented by 14 and three parish councillors respectively.

122 Cheddleton Parish Council accepted the District Council’s proposals but argued that no changes should be made to the Parish Council’s electoral arrangements as the current parish wards form “a natural balance with the natural communities that exist”.

123 In our draft recommendations we proposed a revised Cheddleton ward and a new Cellarhead ward, as proposed by the District Council. As a consequence of our proposals, under the provisions set out in Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act we are required to ensure that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. We are therefore unable to agree to Cheddleton Parish Council’s request for no change to parish wards, and propose putting forward the District Council’s proposal for consultation. An alternative approach could be to divide the parish into three parish wards instead of two. In this way, the current Cheddleton parish ward could remain unchanged. In the absence of any evidence of local support for such an option, however, we do not propose to putting forward this option as part of our draft recommendations. We would, however, particularly welcome views of local residents and interested parties at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Cheddleton Parish Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Cheddleton parish ward (returning 14 councillors) and Wetley Rocks (returning three). The boundaries of Cheddleton and Wetley Rocks parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Map A4 in Appendix A.

124 The parish of Endon & Stanley is currently represented by 15 parish councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, the District Council proposed dividing the parish between two district wards. In relation to the parish council, it proposed retaining the existing number of parish councillors and creating two wards: Endon parish ward (represented by 10 councillors) and Stanley parish ward (represented by five councillors). Endon Branch Liberal Democrats argued that Endon & Stanley parish should be warded, as proposed by the District Council. They also favoured a reduction in the number of councillors representing the parish from 15 to 13 (nine for Endon parish ward and four for Stanley parish ward), arguing that the community is rarely able to generate the necessary number of electoral candidates.

125 In our draft recommendations we proposed creating two new wards for this area, Brown Edge & Endon ward and Bagnall & Stanley ward , as broadly put forward by the District Council. As a consequence of our proposed warding arrangements, we propose retaining 15 councillors for Endon & Stanley parish council and creating two parish wards, Endon ward (returning 10 councillors) and Stanley ward (returning five councillors). We have, however, noted Endon Branch Liberal Democrats’ preference for a reduction in council size and would welcome further views regarding the most appropriate council size for Endon & Stanley parish at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**

Endon & Stanley Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Endon parish ward (returning 10 parish councillors) and Stanley ward (returning five councillors). The Endon & Stanley parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

126 The town of Biddulph is currently served by 22 councillors representing five wards. Biddulph East, Biddulph North, Biddulph South and Biddulph West wards are each represented by five town councillors, while Biddulph Moor ward is represented by two town councillors. At Stage One, the District Council proposed a number of modifications to district ward boundaries in this area. As a result, it proposed re-warding the town council area and a redistribution of the number town councillors representing each ward. It proposed that the new parish wards should reflect the amended district wards. The proposed Biddulph East, Biddulph North and Biddulph West town council wards would return six councillors each, while Biddulph Moor and Biddulph South would each return two town councillors. Biddulph Town Council supported the District Council's parish warding proposals for the town council area.

127 As outlined above, we are putting forward the District Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, resulting in revised Biddulph East, Biddulph Moor, Biddulph South, Biddulph West and Biddulph North wards. Therefore, for the purpose of consultation we are content to put forward the District Council's proposed warding arrangements for Biddulph Town Council.

**Draft Recommendation**

Biddulph Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Biddulph East (returning six councillors), Biddulph Moor (returning two councillors), Biddulph North (returning six councillors), Biddulph South (returning two councillors) and Biddulph West (returning six councillors). The Biddulph town council ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

128 The town of Leek is currently represented by 12 councillors and is divided into four town council wards, Leek North East, Leek North West, Leek South East and Leek South West, each returning three town councillors. The District Council proposed four new district wards for this area, largely based on the existing wards but modified to improve electoral equality. As a result, it also proposed creating the new wards of Leek North, Leek South, Leek East and Leek West, each represented by three councillors.

129 In our draft recommendations we proposed revised warding arrangements in Leek town, as broadly proposed by the District Council. As a consequence of our proposals, we are content to put forward for the purpose of consultation the District Council's proposals for this area.

**Draft Recommendation**

Leek Town Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, as at present, and four wards, Leek North, Leek South, Leek East and Leek West, each returning three parish councillors. The Leek town council ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Maps A5 and A6 in Appendix A.

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

**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 District Council.

**131 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Staffordshire Moorlands and welcome comments from the District 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 Staffordshire Moorlands*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

132 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Staffordshire Moorlands. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 3 July 2000. 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 District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

133 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Staffordshire Moorlands 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](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

134 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 Staffordshire Moorlands: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Staffordshire Moorlands area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 to A6 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundary between Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East wards.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed boundary between Werrington and Caverswall wards.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed boundary between Cellarhead ward and Cheddleton and Werrington wards.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed warding in the northern part of Leek town.

**Map A6** illustrates the proposed warding in the southern part of Leek town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Biddulph town, Brown Edge and Endon.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Staffordshire Moorlands: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Boundary between Cheadle North East and Cheadle South East Wards*

*Map A3: Proposed Boundary between Werrington and Caverswall Wards*

*Map A4: Proposed Boundary between Cellarhead Ward and Cheddleton and Werrington Wards*

*Map A5: Proposed Warding Arrangements in the Northern Part of Leek Town*

*Map A6: Proposed Warding Arrangements in the Southern Part of Leek Town*



## APPENDIX B

### Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

*Figure B1: Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Proposals: Constituent Areas*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
Bagnall & Stanley	Endon & Stanley ward (part – Bagnall parish and Stanley ward of Endon & Stanley parish)
Biddulph Moor	Biddulph Moor ward (part – Biddulph Moor ward (part) of Biddulph town)
Biddulph North	Biddulph North ward (part – Biddulph North ward (part) of Biddulph town); Biddulph Moor ward (part – Biddulph Moor ward (part) of Biddulph town)
Brown Edge & Endon	Brown Edge ward (Brown Edge parish); Endon & Stanley ward (part – Endon ward of Endon & Stanley parish)
Cheadle North East	Cheadle North East ward (Cheadle North East ward of Cheadle parish); Cheadle South East ward (part – Cheadle South East ward (part) of Cheadle parish)
Cheadle South East	Cheadle South East ward (part – Cheadle South East ward (part) of Cheadle parish)
Leek East	Leek South East ward (part – Leek South East ward (part) of Leek town)
Leek West	Leek North West ward (part – Leek North West ward (part) of Leek town); Leek South West ward (part – Leek South West ward (part) of Leek town)

*Figure B2: Staffordshire Moorlands District 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 %
Bagnall & Stanley	1	1,391	1,391	2	1,316	1,316	-2
Biddulph Moor	1	1,463	1,463	8	1,384	1,384	3
Biddulph North	3	4,427	1,476	8	4,266	1,422	6
Brown Edge & Endon	3	3,939	1,313	-3	3,789	1,263	-6
Cheadle North East	2	2,806	1,403	3	2,859	1,429	7
Cheadle South East	2	2,763	1,382	2	2,788	1,394	4
Leek East	3	3,891	1,297	-5	4,134	1,378	3
Leek South	3	3,849	1,283	-6	3,738	1,246	-7

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Staffordshire Moorlands District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

## Staffordshire Moorlands Labour Party's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B3: Staffordshire Moorlands 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 %
1	Biddulph North	3	5,619	1,873	11	5,432	1,811	8
2	Biddulph Central	3	4,706	1,569	-7	4,873	1,624	-3
3	Biddulph South	3	5,131	1,710	1	5,215	1,738	4
4	Brown Edge & Endon	3	5,330	1,777	5	5,104	1,701	2
5	Leek North	3	5,320	1,773	5	5,193	1,731	3
6	Leek East	3	5,469	1,823	8	5,452	1,817	8
7	Leek West	3	5,012	1,671	-1	4,889	1,630	-3
8	Moorlands Rural North	3	4,951	1,650	-3	4,683	1,561	-7
9	Moorlands Rural South	3	4,724	1,575	-7	4,717	1,572	-6
10	Cheddleton	3	4,966	1,655	-2	5,093	1,698	1
11	Ash Bank	3	5,271	1,757	4	4,997	1,666	-1
12	Cheadle West	3	4,825	1,608	-5	5,001	1,667	0
13	Cheadle East	3	4,564	1,521	-10	4,652	1,551	-7
14	Alton & Tean	3	5,144	1,715	1	5,144	1,715	2
15	Forsbrook	3	5,155	1,718	1	4,934	1,645	-2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>76,187</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,379</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,693</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Labour Party'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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Staffordshire Moorlands Liberal Democrats' Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B4: Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Liberal Democrats' 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 %
1	Alton	1	1,474	1,474	1	1,463	1,463	1
2	Biddulph 1*	2	3,091	1,546	5	3,047	1,524	6
3	Biddulph 2*	2	3,091	1,546	5	3,047	1,524	6
4	Biddulph 3*	3	4,637	1,546	5	4,570	1,523	6
5	Biddulph 4*	3	4,637	1,546	1	4,570	1,523	6
6	Brown Edge & Endon with Stanley	3	4,704	1,568	7	4,504	1,501	4
7	Caverswall	1	1,467	1,467	0	1,426	1,426	-1
8	Cellarhead & Bagnall	1	1,486	1,486	1	1,460	1,460	1
9	Cheadle 1*	2	2,683	1,342	1	2,758	1,379	-4
10	Cheadle 2*	2	2,683	1,342	-8	2,758	1,379	-4
11	Cheadle 3*	3	4,023	1,341	-8	4,137	1,379	-4
12	Checkley	3	4,246	1,415	-3	4,316	1,439	0
13	Cheddleton	2	2,610	1,305	1	2,822	1,411	-2
14	Forsbrook	3	4,264	1,421	-3	4,043	1,348	-7
15	Horton	1	1,477	1,477	1	1,404	1,404	-3
16	Ipstones, Kingsley & Wetley Rocks	3	4,331	1,444	-1	4,162	1,387	-4
17	Leek 1*	3	4,418	1,473	1	4,346	1,449	0
18	Leek 2*	3	4,418	1,473	1	4,346	1,449	0
19	Leek 3*	3	4,418	1,473	1	4,346	1,449	0
20	Leek 4*	2	2,947	1,474	1	2,897	1,449	0

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 Leekfrith	1	1,502	1,502	1	1,435	1,435	-1
22 Longnor & Warslow	1	1,509	1,509	3	1,441	1,441	0
23 Waterhouses	1	1,356	1,356	-7	1,295	1,295	-10
24 Werrington	3	4,715	1,572	7	4,455	1,485	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>76,187</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,048</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>-</b>

*Source: Electorate figures are based on the Liberal Democrats' 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

*\* The figures shown are indicative as no detailed proposals were received for these areas.*



## 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 Wear<sup>1</sup>. 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:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.