

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are 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.

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

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Aylesbury Vale on 5 September 2000.

- **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 Aylesbury Vale:

- **in 18 of the 38 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation 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 23 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 13 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 191-192) are that:

- **Aylesbury Vale District Council should have 59 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 36 wards, instead of 38 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 35 of the existing wards should be modified, and three 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 24 of the proposed 36 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in 34 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for Aylesbury and Buckingham town councils;**
- **new warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Aston Abbots Parish Council.**

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 2001. 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 2 July 2001:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
1	Aston Clinton	3	Aston Clinton ward (Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp parishes); Weston Turville ward (part – Weston Turville parish and Stoke Mandeville Village ward of Stoke Mandeville parish as proposed)	Map 2
2	Aylesbury Central	1	Aylesbury Central (part – Central ward of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
3	Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	Bedgrove ward (Bedgrove ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Grange ward (part – Bedgrove ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
4	Bierton	1	Bierton ward (part – Bierton Village ward of Bierton with Broughton parish as proposed and Hulcott parish)	Map 2 and Large Map
5	Brill	1	Brill ward (part – Boarstall, Brill and Chilton parishes); Oakley ward (part – Oakley parish)	Map 2
6	Buckingham North	2	Buckingham North ward (part – Buckingham parish (part)); Buckingham South ward (part – Buckingham parish (part))	Map 2 and A2
7	Buckingham South	2	Buckingham South ward (part – Buckingham parish (part))	Map 2 and A2
8	Cheddington	1	Cheddington ward (part – Cheddington and Marsworth parishes); Edlesborough ward (part – Slapton parish)	Map 2
9	Coldharbour	3	Stone ward (part – Coldharbour parish); Southcourt ward (part – Oxford Road ward of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
10	Edlesborough	1	Edlesborough ward (part – Edlesborough parish); Pitstone ward (part – Ivinghoe Aston ward of Ivinghoe parish)	Map 2 and A3
11	Elmhurst (in Aylesbury)	3	Aylesbury Central ward (part – Elmhurst ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Elmhurst ward (Elmhurst ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed and Watermead parish (part)); Bierton ward (part – Oldhams Meadow ward of Bierton with Broughton parish as proposed and Watermead parish (part))	Large Map
12	Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	Gatehouse ward (Gatehouse ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Meadowcroft ward (part – Gatehouse ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
13	Great Brickhill	1	Great Brickhill ward (Great Brickhill, Soulbury and Stoke Hammond parishes); Stewkley ward (part – Drayton Parslow parish)	Map 2
14	Great Horwood	1	Great Horwood ward (part – Great Horwood, Little Horwood, Nash and Whaddon wards); Luffield Abbey ward (part – Thornborough parish)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
15	Grendon Underwood	1	Brill ward (part – Dorton parish); Grendon Underwood ward (part – Edgcott, Grendon Underwood, Kingswood, Ludgershall, Westcott, Woodham and Wotton Underwood parishes)	Map 2
16	Haddenham	3	Haddenham ward (Aston Sandford, Haddenham and Kingsey parishes); Stone ward (part – Dinton-with-Ford & Upton and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parishes)	Map 2
17	Long Crendon	2	Long Crendon ward (Long Crendon parish); Oakley ward (part – Ickford, Shabbington and Worminghall parishes); Stone ward (part – Chearsley and Cuddington parishes)	Map 2
18	Luffield Abbey	1	Buckingham North ward (part – Maids Moreton parish); Great Horwood ward (part – Beachampton parish); Luffield Abbey ward (part – Akeley, Foscott, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Dayrell with Luffield Abbey, Lillingstone Lovell, Stowe and Thornton parishes)	Map 2
19	Mandeville (in Aylesbury)	3	Grange ward (part – Mandeville ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Mandeville ward (part – Mandeville ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Weston Turville ward (part – Stoke Grange and Stoke Leys wards of Stoke Mandeville parish as proposed)	Large Map
20	Marsh Gibbon	1	Marsh Gibbon ward (part – Charndon, Hillesden, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Preston Bissett and Twyford parishes)	Map 2
21	Newton Longville	1	Newton Longville ward (Newton Longville parish); Stewkley ward (part – Mursley parish)	Map 2
22	Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Oakfield ward of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
23	Pitstone	1	Pitstone ward (part – Pitstone parish and Ivinghoe ward of Ivinghoe parish)	Map 2 and A3
24	Quainton	1	Hogshaw ward (part – Hogshaw and North Marston parishes); Quainton ward (part – Oving, Pitchcott and Quainton parishes)	Map 2
25	Quarrendon (in Aylesbury)	2	Meadowcroft ward (part – Quarrendon ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Southcourt ward (part - Quarrendon ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Waddesdon ward (part – Quarrendon parish)	Map 2 and Large Map
26	Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	2	Mandeville ward (part – Southcourt ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Southcourt ward (part – Southcourt ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed)	Large Map
27	Steeple Claydon	1	Hogshaw ward (part – East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes); Steeple Claydon ward (part – Steeple Claydon parish)	Map 2
28	Stewkley	1	Hogshaw ward (part – Granborough and Swanbourne parishes); Stewkley ward (part – Dunton, Hoggston and Stewkley parishes)	Map 2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
29 Tingewick	1	Buckingham South ward (part – Gawcott with Lenborough parish); Marsh Gibbon ward (part – Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes); Tingewick ward (Biddlesden, Radclive-cum-Chackmore, Shalstone, Tingewick, Turweston, Water Stratford and Westbury parishes)	Map 2
30 Waddesdon	1	Grendon Underwood ward (part – Ashendon parish); Waddesdon ward (part – Fleet Marston, Lower Winchendon, Upper Winchendon and Waddesdon parishes)	Map 2
31 Walton Court (in Aylesbury)	2	Mandeville ward (part – Walton Court ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Southcourt ward (part – Walton Court ward (part) of Aylesbury Town as proposed); Weston Turville ward (part – Hawkslade ward of Stoke Mandeville parish as proposed)	Large Map
32 Weedon	1	Bierton ward (part – Hardwick and Weedon parishes); Quainton ward (part – Creslow and Whitchurch parishes)	Map 2
33 Wendover	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Halton and Wendover parishes)	Map 2
34 Wing	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wing parish)	Map 2
35 Wingrave	1	Cheddington ward (part – Mentmore parish); Wingrave ward (Aston Abbots, Cublington and Wingrave with Rowsham parishes)	Map 2
36 Winslow	2	Winslow ward (Addington, Adstock and Winslow parishes); Steeple Claydon ward (part – Padbury parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The proposed warding arrangements for Aylesbury Vale reflect the provisions of The Aylesbury Vale (Parishes) Order 2000 which came into effect in May 2001. This Order made a number of boundary amendments to existing parishes and established new parishes for Aylesbury, Coldharbour and Watermead areas. The whole district is now 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 Aylesbury Vale

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1 Aston Clinton	3	6,957	2,319	15	6,920	2,307	9
2 Aylesbury Central	1	1,912	1,912	-5	2,066	2,066	-2
3 Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	6,993	2,331	16	6,762	2,254	6
4 Bierton	1	1,405	1,405	-30	2,016	2,016	-5
5 Brill	1	2,095	2,095	4	2,082	2,082	-2
6 Buckingham North	2	4,669	2,335	16	4,506	2,253	6
7 Buckingham South	2	3,244	1,622	-20	4,151	2,076	-2
8 Cheddington	1	2,334	2,334	16	2,318	2,318	9
9 Coldharbour	3	3,753	1,251	-38	5,904	1,968	-7
10 Edlesborough	1	2,248	2,248	12	2,231	2,231	5
11 Elmhurst (in Aylesbury)	3	6,448	2,149	7	6,363	2,121	0
12 Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	4,126	2,063	2	4,410	2,205	4
13 Great Brickhill	1	2,306	2,306	14	2,290	2,290	8
14 Great Horwood	1	2,235	2,235	11	2,222	2,222	5
15 Grendon Underwood	1	1,913	1,913	-5	1,903	1,903	-10
16 Haddenham	3	6,381	2,127	6	6,439	2,146	1
17 Long Crendon	2	4,125	2,063	2	4,097	2,049	-3
18 Luffield Abbey	1	2,161	2,161	7	2,134	2,134	1
19 Mandeville (in Aylesbury)	3	6,014	2,005	-1	6,029	2,010	-5
20 Marsh Gibbon	1	1,850	1,850	-8	2,257	2,257	7
21 Newton Longville	1	1,980	1,980	-2	1,967	1,967	-7
22 Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	3,911	1,956	-3	4,065	2,033	-4
23 Pitstone	1	2,099	2,099	4	2,407	2,407	14
24 Quainton	1	1,919	1,919	-5	1,901	1,901	-10

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
25 Quarrendon (in Aylesbury)	2	3,703	1,852	-8	4,509	2,255	6
26 Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	2	3,997	1,999	-1	3,984	1,992	-6
27 Steeple Claydon	1	2,074	2,074	3	2,058	2,058	-3
28 Stewkley	1	2,171	2,171	8	2,154	2,154	2
29 Tingewick	1	2,297	2,297	14	2,283	2,283	8
30 Waddesdon	1	1,867	1,867	-7	1,856	1,856	-12
31 Walton Court (in Aylesbury)	2	4,227	2,114	5	4,151	2,076	-2
32 Weedon	1	1,255	1,255	-38	2,068	2,068	-2
33 Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-7	5,883	1,961	-7
34 Wing	1	2,149	2,149	7	2,130	2,130	1
35 Wingrave	1	2,014	2,014	0	2,004	2,004	-5
36 Winslow	2	4,441	2,221	10	4,422	2,211	4
Totals	59	118,923	-	-	124,942	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,016	-	-	2,118	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Aylesbury Vale 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 Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the four districts in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes unitary authority 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 Aylesbury Vale. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report No. 58). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in 1982 (Report No. 438). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (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* (fourth edition published in December 2000). 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 to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. 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, ie in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 5 September 2000, when we wrote to Aylesbury Vale District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, the local authority associations, the County of Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, 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 South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2000 .

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

13 Stage Three began on 9 May 2001 and will end on 2 July 2001. 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.**

14 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

15 The district of Aylesbury Vale covers an area of some 90,360 hectares in central Buckinghamshire, and is bounded by Milton Keynes borough and South Northamptonshire district to the north, Dacorum borough and South Bedfordshire district to the east, Chiltern and Wycombe districts to the south, and Cherwell and South Oxfordshire districts to the west. Aylesbury Vale has a population of 156,000, with the main town and administrative centre of the district being Aylesbury itself. The remainder of the district is predominantly rural, with the exception of the towns of Buckingham, Wendover and Winslow and the large villages of Haddenham and Stoke Mandeville. The district contains 110 parishes, and is entirely parished.

16 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'.

17 The electorate of the district is 118,923 (February 2000). The Council presently has 58 members who are elected from 38 wards. Nine wards cover the town of Aylesbury, two wards cover the town of Buckingham and the remainder cover the predominantly rural area. Four wards are each represented by three councillors, 12 wards are each represented by two councillors and 22 wards are each represented by a single councillor. The whole council is elected every four years.

18 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Aylesbury Vale district, with around 46 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Elmhurst and Weston Turville wards.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,050 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,154 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 18 of the 38 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in eight wards by more than 20 per cent and in five wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Weston Turville ward where the councillors each represent 60 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Aylesbury Vale

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1 Aston Clinton	2	3,353	1,677	-18	3,345	1,673	-22
2 Aylesbury Central	1	2,181	2,181	6	2,335	2,335	8
3 Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	5,173	1,724	-16	5,002	1,667	-23
4 Bierton	1	2,207	2,207	8	3,629	3,629	68
5 Brill	1	1,398	1,398	-32	1,389	1,389	-36
6 Buckingham North	2	3,465	1,733	-16	3,297	1,649	-23
7 Buckingham South	2	5,690	2,845	39	6,593	3,297	53
8 Cheddington	1	2,153	2,153	5	2,138	2,138	-1
9 Edlesborough	1	2,552	2,552	24	2,535	2,535	18
10 Elmhurst (in Aylesbury)	2	5,908	2,954	44	5,823	2,912	35
11 Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	2,645	1,323	-36	2,975	1,488	-31
12 Grange (in Aylesbury)	2	4,115	2,058	0	3,979	1,990	-8
13 Great Brickhill	1	1,854	1,854	-10	1,842	1,842	-14
14 Great Horwood	1	1,875	1,875	-9	1,865	1,865	-13
15 Grendon Underwood	1	1,987	1,987	-3	1,976	1,976	-8
16 Haddenham	2	3,915	1,958	-5	3,961	1,981	-8
17 Hogshaw	1	1,701	1,701	-17	1,687	1,687	-22
18 Long Crendon	1	1,934	1,934	-6	1,921	1,921	-11
19 Luffield Abbey	1	1,787	1,787	-13	1,762	1,762	-18
20 Mandeville (in Aylesbury)	3	5,947	1,982	-3	5,979	1,993	-7
21 Marsh Gibbon	1	1,968	1,968	-4	2,373	2,373	10
22 Meadowcroft (in Aylesbury)	2	5,147	2,574	26	5,064	2,532	18
23 Newton Longville	1	1,524	1,524	-26	1,515	1,515	-30

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
24 Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	3,911	1,956	-5	4,065	2,033	-6
25 Oakley	1	2,128	2,128	4	2,114	2,114	-2
26 Pitstone	1	2,248	2,248	10	2,553	2,553	19
27 Quainton	1	2,086	2,086	2	2,076	2,076	-4
28 Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	3	5,905	1,968	-4	6,096	2,032	-6
29 Steeple Claydon	1	2,320	2,320	13	2,303	2,303	7
30 Stewkley	1	2,319	2,319	13	2,299	2,299	7
31 Stone	2	4,227	2,114	3	6,191	3,096	44
32 Tingewick	1	1,671	1,671	-19	1,663	1,663	-23
33 Waddesdon	1	1,696	1,696	-17	2,530	2,530	17
34 Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-8	5,883	1,961	-9
35 Weston Turville	2	6,581	3,291	60	6,524	3,262	51
36 Wing	1	2,149	2,149	5	2,130	2,130	-1
37 Wingrave	1	1,742	1,742	-15	1,734	1,734	-20
38 Winslow	2	3,811	1,906	-7	3,796	1,898	-12
Totals	58	118,923	-	-	124,942	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,050	-	-	2,154	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Gatehouse ward were relatively over-represented by 36 per cent, while electors in Weston Turville ward were relatively under-represented by 60 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

20 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 Aylesbury Vale District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 35 representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association. All submissions received may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Aylesbury Vale District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 59 members, one more than at present, representing 37 wards, one fewer than at present. The Council's scheme provided for a mixed pattern of 20 single-member, 12 two-member and five three-member wards. It argued that its proposed wards are based upon existing wards and would provide good electoral equality. Under its proposals, five wards would retain their existing boundaries. In particular, it proposed incorporating the new parishes of Coldharbour and Watermead and Quarrendon parish (where the Berryfields development area is located) within Aylesbury town wards. It proposed that Maids Moreton parish be transferred from Buckingham North ward to a revised Luffield Abbey ward and that a two-member Long Crendon ward be formed. It proposed a revised Winslow ward comprising Addington, East Claydon, Middle Claydon and Winslow parishes. The Council also proposed consequential revised warding arrangements for Aylesbury and Buckingham town councils. The Council undertook an extensive consultation exercise attracting 68 representations, copies of which were sent to us.

23 Under the Council's proposals, 11 of the proposed 37 wards would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average, with one ward expected to vary by more than 20 per cent. By 2005, five wards are expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average. The Council's proposal is summarised in Appendix B.

Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association

24 Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association ('the Conservatives') proposed retaining the existing council size of 58, representing 36 wards, two fewer than at present. They proposed a mixed pattern of 20 single-member, 10 two-member and six three-member wards and proposed retaining the three existing wards. They stated that their proposals recognised "the twin requisites of equality of representation and preservation of community interest to the maximum effect". They proposed incorporating the new parishes of Coldharbour and Watermead together with new developments on the fringes of Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes within Aylesbury town wards. In the rural area, they proposed that Maids Moreton and Gawcott with Lenborough parishes be combined with surrounding rural parishes rather than with Buckingham,

that the current single-member Long Crendon ward be retained and that Winslow be combined with Addington, Adstock and Padbury parishes.

25 Under the Conservatives' proposals, 13 of the proposed 36 wards would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average, with three wards varying by more than 20 per cent. By 2005, this level of electoral equality is projected to have improved, with 34 of the proposed 36 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.

Members of Parliament

26 One submission was received from a Member of Parliament. David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury constituency area. He argued that the Conservatives' proposals would provide an improved balance between electoral wards and actual local communities, while meeting our published objectives. He expressed concern that the future development areas which the Council proposed to incorporate in the Aylesbury town area are still subject to a public inquiry and may not take place.

Parish and Town Councils

27 We received representations from seven parish councils. Ivinghoe Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to divide the parish between two district wards, arguing that it would affect the common identity of the parish. Quainton Parish Council and Drayton Beauchamp Parish Meeting requested no change to their existing warding arrangements. Mursley Parish Council opposed its inclusion in a revised Newton Longville ward, arguing that its links lie with Drayton Parslow and Stewkley. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council opposed being divided between parish wards, although it supported the areas of Hawkslade and Stoke Grange forming separate parishes in future. Aston Abbots Parish Council requested that the number of its parish councillors be increased by two to seven. Swanbourne Parish Council requested the retention of seven parish councillors, or an increase of one or two.

Other Representations

28 We received 25 representations from district councillors, local residents and local groups. Councillor Ashenden (Winslow ward), Councillor Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward) and Councillor Glover (Wing ward) broadly supported the Conservatives' proposals. Councillor Polhill (Quainton ward) also expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals, and opposed the Council's proposal to combine East Claydon and Middle Claydon with Winslow. Councillors Brandis and Stuart (Haddenham ward) opposed the Council's proposed three-member Haddenham ward, arguing that the proposed ward would cover too large an area. Councillor Brandis also expressed broad support for the Conservatives' proposals for other wards. Councillor Cadd (Buckingham South) suggested that Buckingham North retain Maids Moreton parish and Buckingham South ward Gawcott with Lenborough parish, and that the Buckingham town boundary be based on the River Great Ouse. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association argued that a single-member ward pattern should be adopted for the whole district. It argued that such a structure would reduce political swings in the authority and would increase accountability. It also proposed that the number of town councillors for Aylesbury should be increased to 38 (from 25).

29 Some 13 local residents supported the Conservatives' proposals, three of whom argued that the Berryfields development in Quarrendon parish is subject to local inquiry and should not be included with Aylesbury.

30 A local resident argued that Watermead parish should be combined with the proposed Weedon ward to form a two-member ward as it is similar to the new development planned for Weedon Hill. Two local residents argued that Steeple Claydon parish should be combined with East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes in a new ward as they form part of the same ecclesiastical parish, and share community and transport links. One local resident argued that there should be higher representation for the rural areas as compared with Aylesbury, that there should be single-member wards in rural areas and that new developments on the edge of towns should be included in the towns.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

32 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 next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

33 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.

34 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, 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 and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five year period.

Electorate Forecasts

35 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 5 per cent from 118,923 to 124,942 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Stone ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Bierton and Buckingham South 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. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

36 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

37 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

38 Aylesbury Vale District Council presently has 58 members. The District Council considered that a small increase in council size to 59 members would provide for a district warding structure that would both improve levels of electoral equality and facilitate the most equitable distribution of councillor numbers between the primary areas of the district. It also argued that a ratio of one councillor for every 2,000 electors would have "regard to the characteristics of the district with a mix of rural and urban areas". In preparing its proposals, it consulted widely locally, outlining its proposed change in council size.

39 The Conservatives proposed the retention of the existing council size of 58. They argued that there was wide support in the district for the retention of the existing council size. They considered that a 58 member council would more readily facilitate the transfer of areas of urban overspill, that currently lie in predominately rural parishes, into the district wards of Aylesbury town. Councillors Cartwright and Ashenden also supported retaining the current council size of 58.

40 We note that there was no support for a radical change in council size in Aylesbury Vale and that, while the District Council's and the Conservatives' proposals differed in relation to their preferred council size, the difference between the two proposals was marginal. The differing council sizes can largely be explained by whether areas of new development were included with the town of Aylesbury. The Conservatives included Coldharbour and Watermead parishes and parts of Berton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes with Aylesbury and allocated 22 councillors for the town and 36 councillors for the remainder of the district. The Council, on the other hand, included Coldharbour, Quarrendon and Watermead parishes with Aylesbury and allocated 21 councillors to the town and 38 councillors for the remainder of the district. As a result of changes in electorate, by 2005 both proposals would result in both Aylesbury town and the rural area having the appropriate proportion of councillors.

41 As stated in our *Guidance*, we are not prescriptive about the most appropriate council size for an authority. Indeed, in preparing proposals for our consideration, we encourage those interested parties preparing schemes to consider whether or not a small change to council size would facilitate a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We recognise that the Council has consulted widely on its proposed council size increase, and that the population of the area has grown significantly since the last review. We consider that the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria is provided by a combination of the proposals made to us. However, we consider that all the areas of new development in and around Aylesbury, including Coldharbour, Quarrendon and Watermead parishes and parts of Berton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes, should be incorporated with the town for district warding purposes. We have found that a small change in council size would best facilitate such awarding arrangement, and we consider that it would not impair the effectiveness or convenience of local government in Aylesbury Vale district.

42 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 59 members.

Electoral Arrangements

43 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Conservatives. From these representations, some considerations have emerged which have assisted us in preparing our draft recommendations.

44 We note that both district-wide schemes received at Stage One would provide for a significant improvement in the level of electoral equality for the district as a whole. The primary difference between the two schemes relates to the warding arrangements around Aylesbury. In particular, while the District Council proposed including Coldharbour, Quarrendon and Watermead parishes with the town, the Conservatives proposed including Coldharbour and Watermead parishes together with parts of Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes with the town.

45 Aylesbury town has grown beyond its boundaries, with the urban development now extending into a number of surrounding parishes. We consider that the areas of urban development on the fringe of Aylesbury town should be included in urban wards rather than rural wards. While we recognise that Coldharbour and Watermead parishes have, to an extent, separate identities, we consider they have a greater affinity with the town than with rural areas. The developments on the fringes of Stoke Mandeville and Bierton with Broughton parishes neighbour the town, and we consider that they are distinct and separate from the villages themselves. In the case of Quarrendon parish, we note that currently the area is rural in nature, but that it is anticipated to grow significantly over the next five years. We recognise that any warding arrangements put into place now are expected to stand the test of time, and therefore we consider that we should recognise the changing nature of the area and combine the parish with the town of Aylesbury. As a result, our draft recommendations for Aylesbury combine elements of the Council's and Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals.

46 In the rural area, we have also combined elements of the Council's and Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals. Our draft recommendation to include areas of urban development that have traditionally formed part of rural wards has a consequential effect on neighbouring rural wards. Our draft recommendations for rural wards to the south and east of Aylesbury town reflect the Conservatives' proposals for these areas, while our proposals reflect the District Council's proposals to the north-west and west of the town. In the north of the district our proposals broadly reflect the Conservatives' proposals, and in the west of the district they reflect the District Council's proposals. In the south-east of the district, we propose putting forward the Council's proposals, which were identical to the Conservatives' proposals.

47 We consider that our proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards;
- (b) Mandeville and Southcourt wards;
- (c) Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield wards;
- (d) Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville wards;
- (e) Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon wards;
- (f) Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley wards;
- (g) Bierton and Quainton wards;
- (h) Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards;
- (i) Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards;
- (j) Wing and Wingrave wards;
- (k) Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards;
- (l) Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards;
- (m) Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards;
- (n) Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards.

48 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.

Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards

49 The existing wards of Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft are situated in the central and northern part of Aylesbury, a town of some 63,000 persons located in the south of the district. Aylesbury Central ward is represented by a single councillor and has 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 8 per cent more by 2005. Elmhurst, Meadowcroft and Gatehouse wards are each represented by two councillors, and have 44 per cent more, 26 per cent more and 36 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (35 per cent more, 18 per cent more and 31 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

50 The Council proposed broadly retaining the existing Aylesbury Central and Elmhurst wards. It proposed that Elmhurst ward be expanded to include an area bounded by Cambridge Street, Park Street, Vale Park Drive and Upper Hundreds Way containing 269 electors and should be represented by three councillors instead of two as at present. It argued that Aylesbury Mosque acts as a focal point for a substantial part of the community in the south of the ward and that the transferred area has greater affinity with the neighbouring part of Elmhurst ward than with central Aylesbury from which it is divided by the dual carriageway, Upper Hundreds Way. It proposed three further changes to Elmhurst ward resulting from the recent parish review. It noted that the Oldhams Meadow estate is currently divided between Elmhurst and Bierton wards. It proposed that the area should be united within a revised Bierton ward reflecting the change made to parish boundaries in this area.

51 In the north, the Council proposed that the whole of the new Watermead parish area should form part of Elmhurst ward. Currently, a small area in the north of the parish (containing 12 electors) and an area in the west of the parish to the east of the A413 road (containing no electors) form part of Bierton ward. The Council recognised that as part of its consultation exercise the view had been expressed that a separate ward should be formed for Watermead. However, it considered that this was not feasible as the electorate is too small to warrant a single councillor.

In relation to the town centre area, it stated that it had considered creating a larger ward for the town centre. However, it considered that issues for the central part of the town were different from those in the rest of the town and that enlarging the ward would have detrimental effects on warding arrangements elsewhere in the town, leading to some wards having no coherent identity.

52 In order to improve electoral equality, the Council proposed enlarging the existing Gatehouse ward to include the Savernake estate and the area to the north of Coventon Road, east of Argyle Avenue and south of Meadowcroft from the existing Meadowcroft ward. The Council proposed that the remainder of the existing Meadowcroft ward be combined with Quarrendon parish from Waddesdon ward and the part of Southcourt ward to the north of Coldharbour Way and the new Coldharbour parish to form a two-member Quarrendon ward. It recognised that Quarrendon parish is still genuinely rural in nature. However, it argued that the large Berryfields development planned for the southern part of the parish will change the nature of the parish, resulting in the area becoming significantly more urban in character. It stated that the estate to the north of Bicester Road is also known as Quarrendon and that therefore a ward name change would better reflect the new area of the ward.

53 Under the Council's proposals, Aylesbury Central and Quarrendon wards would have 5 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 2 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more than average by 2005. Its proposed Elmhurst and Gatehouse wards would have 2 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more by 2005). Aylesbury Central ward would be represented by a single councillor, Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards would each be represented by two councillors and Elmhurst ward would be represented by three councillors.

54 The Conservatives proposed alternative arrangements for this area. They proposed a new three-member Manor Park & Central ward containing the existing Aylesbury Central ward and the part of Elmhurst ward to the south of Elmhurst Road and the part of Oakfield ward to the west of Douglas Road and Oakfield Road. They argued that this proposal would unite the older parts of the town. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Elmhurst ward (including the whole of the new Watermead parish) be combined with the part of Oakfield ward to the east of Douglas Road and the Oldhams Meadow estate, part of which forms part of the existing Bierton ward, in a new two-member Watermead & The Coppice ward.

55 They proposed that the parts of Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards to the east of Gatehouse Road and Bicester Road be combined to form a revised three-member Meadowcroft ward. They stated that the Berryfields development in Quarrendon parish is still subject to a planning enquiry and that until a street plan for the new development exists, it should not be combined with part of Aylesbury town. As discussed in more detail below, they proposed that the remainder of the existing Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards be combined with Coldharbour parish and the part of Southcourt ward to the north of Oxford Road in a new three-member Coldharbour & Haydon Hill ward.

56 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Manor Park & Central, Watermead & The Coppice and Meadowcroft wards would have 3 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more, 1 per cent more and equal to the average by 2005). Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis

(Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. Three of these local residents also argued that the proposed Berryfields development in Quarrendon parish are subject to local enquiry and should therefore not be included with Aylesbury town.

57 David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury constituency area. He argued that the proposed Manor Park & Central ward would unite the older parts of the town within one ward, and that the proposed Watermead & The Coppice ward would link two new estates. He argued that the Conservatives' proposed Meadowcroft ward would unite the Quarrendon and Meadowcroft estates in one ward and that the A41 and A413 act as natural ward boundaries.

58 We received two further representations for this area. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association argued that from its own experience in relation to the existing Aylesbury Central ward that single-member ward patterns operate successfully in urban areas, and advocated the adoption of a single-member ward pattern for the whole district. It argued that such a structure would reduce political swings in the authority and would increase accountability. One local resident argued that the proposed Elmhurst ward would be too large and diverse and consequently proposed that the new Watermead parish area should be combined with the proposed Weedon ward to form a two-member ward, as it is similar to the new development planned for Weedon Hill.

59 We have carefully considered the representations for this area. We note that the District Council and the Conservatives approached the issue of revised warding arrangements in this area very differently. The Council's proposals would broadly retain the existing warding pattern, would unite the Oldham Meadows area in a rural ward and would combine Quarrendon parish with the town. The Conservative proposals, on the other hand, make more significant changes to existing warding arrangements, including creating a two-member ward covering the town centre, would unite the Oldham Meadows area in an Aylesbury town ward, and would retain Quarrendon parish within a rural ward.

60 We consider that there is a case for combining Quarrendon parish with part of Aylesbury town. We recognise that the area is very sparsely populated at present, and that its residents share an affinity with the rural area. However, we consider that the major development planned for Berryfields will radically change Quarrendon parish, making it more urban in character. We recognise the concern expressed by the Conservatives and others that the Berryfields development is still subject to a planning enquiry, but we understand from the Council that in their view this area remains the most likely location for any new development. We recognise that any new warding arrangements are likely to remain in place for a considerable period, and it is therefore important that we consider the future pattern of development as well as the current one. On balance, we consider that Quarrendon parish should be combined with part of Aylesbury town to form a new ward.

61 We consider that, on balance, we should base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for this area. In particular, we have not been persuaded of the case for radical change to the existing warding arrangements, and consider that there is a case for retaining a separate ward for the town centre area. We consider that the proposed Aylesbury Central ward would

provide strong boundaries and a reasonable level of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests well, and have not been persuaded to enlarge the current ward significantly, as proposed by the Conservatives. We also consider that the Haydon Hill area, which currently forms part of Meadowcroft ward, is isolated from the Coldharbour area by the Rabans Lane industrial area and shares shopping facilities with areas to the north of Bicester Road. We recognise that Watermead provides some difficulty. It is a distinctive community on the fringe of the town with its own separate parish council and road access, but currently has too few electors to form a separate ward. In our view it must therefore be combined with neighbouring areas in a new ward. While we have considered a number of alternative options for the Watermead area, including combining a smaller area of Aylesbury with it, we consider that, on balance, the Council's proposals would provide the best available option in this area.

62 We do, however, propose to depart from the Council's proposals for this part of Aylesbury in two areas. First, we have given consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements for the Oldham Meadows area. We note that, as part of the recent parishing review, this area was united within Bierton with Broughton parish. However, we also note that the area's have a closer geographical proximity to Aylesbury town than Bierton village. We consider that the area would appear to have a greater affinity with the town of Aylesbury than with Bierton with Broughton parish, and therefore, for the purpose of our draft recommendations, propose that the area be included within a revised Elmhurst ward for the purpose of our draft recommendations. We would, however, particularly welcome views on this issue from local residents or interested parties at Stage Three.

63 We also propose amending the Council's proposed boundary between Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards in the Argyle Avenue area. We recognise that providing a good balance between electoral equality and community identities and interests in this area is difficult, but we consider that a better boundary is achievable in this area. We propose that the boundary between the two wards be revised to run to the rear of 275 Bicester Road and Stonehaven Road and along the centre of Holland Road and Quarrendon Avenue. This change would, in our view, better reflect community ties and provide a comparable level of electoral equality to the Council's proposals.

64 Under our draft recommendations, Aylesbury Central would have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 2 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposed Quarrendon and Gatehouse wards would have 8 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent and 4 per cent more than average by 2005). Elmhurst ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than average currently, improving to equal to the average by 2005. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Mandeville and Southcourt wards

65 The existing ward of Mandeville is situated in the south-west of Aylesbury town and is currently represented by three councillors. Southcourt ward is situated in the west of Aylesbury and is also represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Mandeville and Southcourt wards have 3 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

66 The Council proposed a new Coldharbour ward containing the new Coldharbour parish which covers the new Fairford Leys development and currently forms part of Stone ward. It argued that while the new parish “would make a logical and self-contained ward”, it recognised that its projected electorate makes it too large for a single-member and too small for a two-member ward. It therefore proposed that the area be combined with the neighbouring Hartwell estate area and the new development to the south of Oxford Road from the existing Southcourt ward to form a new two-member Coldharbour ward.

67 The Council proposed the retention of a three-member Southcourt ward on revised boundaries. As outlined above, it proposed that the Hartwell estate and the new development to the south of Oxford Road should form part of a new Coldharbour ward and that the part of Southcourt ward to the north of Coldharbour Way should form a two-member Quarrendon ward. However, it proposed that the ward should expand southwards to include the Old Southcourt area and the newer developments to the north of, and including, Hannon Road from Mandeville ward. It proposed that the remainder of Mandeville ward form a revised two-member ward. It argued that while these areas do not form a single community, they fit together better than with neighbouring areas of Aylesbury. It stated that it had explored the potential for including the adjoining urban areas from Stoke Mandeville parish but that this option was opposed locally.

68 Under the Council’s proposals, Mandeville and Southcourt wards would have 6 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, both improving to 3 per cent more than average by 2005. Its proposed Coldharbour ward would currently have 55 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. However, due to continuing development in the area, it is projected to have 5 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

69 The Conservatives put forward significantly different warding arrangements for this part of Aylesbury town. Their proposals would unite the new parish of Coldharbour and the areas of urban development in Stoke Mandeville parish neighbouring Aylesbury with the town. They proposed that the part of Southcourt ward to the north of Oxford Road be combined with Coldharbour parish and with the parts of the existing Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards to the west of Bicester Road and Gatehouse Road to form a new three-member Coldharbour & Haydon Hill ward. They argued that the proposed ward would have natural boundaries of Bicester Road and Oxford Road and that the two areas of development are linked by Coldharbour Way. They proposed that the part of Southcourt ward to the south of Oxford Road be combined with the part of Mandeville ward to the north of Taylor Road and east of Churchill Avenue to form a revised two-member Southcourt ward. They argued that this would reflect community ties by preserving the Prebendal Avenue and Carrington Road areas in one ward.

70 They proposed that the part of Mandeville ward to the west of the Aylesbury to High Wycombe railway line be combined with the Hawkslade area of Stoke Mandeville parish to form a two-member Hawkslade ward. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Mandeville ward, the area to the east of the Aylesbury to High Wycombe railway line, be combined with the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas of Stoke Mandeville parish and the part of Grange ward to the west of Wendover Road in a new Mandeville & Elm Farm ward. They recognised that while this proposed ward was not ideal, the current Mandeville ward is no better as it is also divided by a railway line.

71 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Southcourt and Hawkslade wards would have 1 per cent and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent and 8 per cent more than average by 2005). The proposed Mandeville & Elm Farm ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 7 per cent fewer by 2005. Their proposed Coldharbour & Haydon Hill ward would have 26 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently but, due to the extensive development in the area, is projected to contain 1 per cent more than average by 2005. Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quinton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

72 David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury constituency area. He stated that the Conservatives' proposed Hawkslade ward would unite the Hawkslade estate, currently divided between Mandeville and Weston Turville wards, as well as "the heart of the Walton Court estate". He noted that the Haydon Hill estate has its own residents' association and community centre, and argued that it has a distinct identity separate from the Quarrendon area with which it is currently linked for district warding purposes. He argued that the area of the proposed Mandeville & Elm Farm ward is almost coterminous with the catchment area of the William Harding Schools.

73 We received three further submissions in relation to this area. Councillor Stuart (Haddenham ward) opposed the Council's proposed Haddenham ward, and suggested that Stone and Coldharbour parishes continue to form a distinct ward in their own right. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council opposed being divided between parish wards, arguing that this "would not be conducive to the democratic nature of the Council". However, it did support the areas of Hawkslade and Stoke Grange forming separate parishes in future. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association argued that from its own experience, single-member ward patterns operate successfully in urban areas and advocated the adoption of a single-member ward pattern for the whole district. It argued that such a structure would reduce political swings in the authority and would increase accountability.

74 We have carefully considered the representations for this area at Stage One and note that there was a divergence of opinion on the issue of whether or not to combine urban developments on the fringes of Aylesbury with the town. We note that while both the Council and the Conservatives have proposed combining the Coldharbour area, currently in Stone ward, with part of Aylesbury, Councillor Stuart argued that Stone and Coldharbour parishes should continue to form a ward. Similarly, while the Conservatives proposed combining parts of Stoke Mandeville parish with the town, the Council proposed retaining the existing boundary in this area.

75 We note that there is a degree of support for combining Coldharbour with part of Aylesbury. The area is rapidly developing and is urban in nature, adjoins part of the existing Southcourt ward and shares access from Oxford Road with it. In relation to the areas of Stoke Mandeville parish abutting Aylesbury, we recognise that any change would lead to warding of the parish, but consider that our primary concern must be to provide the best balance between electoral equality and community identities. These areas of Stoke Mandeville are in close geographical proximity with the town of Aylesbury, and their primary road access is from Aylesbury, and we are not

persuaded that they share a significant degree of affinity with Stoke Mandeville village. We consider that, on the basis of evidence presented to us at Stage One, these areas of urban development on the fringe of Aylesbury town should be included in urban wards rather than rural wards.

76 Our draft recommendations for this area are based on elements of both the Conservatives' and the Council's proposals, alongside our own. We are putting forward our own proposals for the Coldharbour area. In considering the Conservatives' proposals, we have not been persuaded that the Haydon Hill area, which currently forms part of Meadowcroft ward, has a greater affinity with the Coldharbour area than with the other parts of the existing ward. We considered that the Council's proposed Coldharbour ward, on the other hand, would divide established areas either side of Fowler Road and that the area to the east of the road would be relatively isolated from the remainder of its proposed Southcourt ward to the south of Oxford Road. We propose creating a new Coldharbour ward represented by three councillors containing the new Coldharbour parish (from Stone ward) together with the area to the north of Oxford Road and the new developments accessed from Ellen Road. The boundary of the ward would follow the existing Southcourt ward boundary to Ellen Road then northwards along Ellen Road, to the rear of properties on Lavric Road and Russell Avenue, along the centre of Oxford Road to the railway line, then northwards along the railway line and westwards along Coldharbour Way.

77 We consider that this review provides us with the opportunity to unite the whole of the Southcourt area, which is currently divided between Southcourt and Mandeville wards. We consider that this area is distinct and that, in order to best reflect community ties, it should form a separate ward rather than being combined with neighbouring parts of the town. We therefore propose a two-member Southcourt ward broadly containing the part of Southcourt ward to the

south of Oxford Road and east of Russell Avenue and the part of Mandeville ward to the east of the Hannon Road shopping area, Grenville Road and Churchill Avenue.

78 We propose a new Walton Court ward represented by two councillors which would combine the Walton Court and Hawkslade areas. The new ward would cover the part of Mandeville ward to the west of the Aylesbury to High Wycombe railway line and south of Churchill Avenue and Grenville Road, the part of Southcourt ward to the south of Lavric Road and the Hawkslade area of Stoke Mandeville parish from Weston Turville ward. We consider that this proposal would unite communities currently divided between wards and which share access from Ellen Road. We note that the Conservatives' proposals were similar in this area, and that they proposed that the ward be named Hawkslade rather than Walton Court. We recognise that the new ward will contain both areas and that either name could be appropriate. We would therefore particularly welcome views on the most appropriate ward name for this area at Stage Three.

79 Finally, we propose a revised Mandeville ward represented by three councillors combining parts of the existing Mandeville and Grange wards with the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas of Stoke Mandeville parish from Weston Turville ward. Our proposed ward is identical to the Conservatives' proposed Mandeville & Elm Farm ward, as detailed above, as we consider this would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. While we note that the new ward would be divided by the Aylesbury to Amersham railway line,

we note that the current ward is also similarly divided by the Aylesbury to High Wycombe railway line. We have, for the purposes of our draft recommendations, proposed retaining the current ward name for this area. However, we would welcome any views on the most appropriate ward name for this area at Stage Three.

80 Under our draft recommendations, Coldharbour ward would have 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 7 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposed Mandeville and Southcourt wards would both have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Walton Court ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than average currently, improving to 2 per cent more than average by 2005. Our proposals for this area are illustrated in the large map at the back of this report.

Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield wards

81 The existing wards of Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield are situated in the town of Aylesbury. Bedgrove ward is currently a three-member ward, and Grange and Oakfield are currently each represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Bedgrove and Oakfield wards have 16 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Grange ward currently contains equal to the average number of electors per councillor, and is forecast to contain 8 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

82 The Council noted that the current Bedgrove ward has too few electors to warrant three councillors and argued that therefore either the size of ward needed to be enlarged or areas needed to be transferred to neighbouring wards and its representation reduced to two councillors. It argued that if these areas were transferred from this ward, the revised ward would better reflect the Bedgrove estate. It therefore proposed that the area to the north of Northumberland Avenue and Limes Avenue be transferred to the neighbouring Grange ward which would otherwise remain unchanged and would continue to be represented by two councillors. It also proposed retaining the existing two-member Oakfield ward which it argued is a relatively self-contained ward with clear boundaries which is located between the A41 and A418 roads.

83 Under the Council's proposals, Bedgrove and Grange wards would have 16 per cent and 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, both improving to 6 per cent more than average by 2005. Oakfield ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent fewer by 2005.

84 The Conservatives proposed that the existing Oakfield ward be divided between three wards. As outlined above, they proposed that the part of Oakfield ward to the west of Douglas Road and Oakfield Road be combined with the existing Aylesbury Central ward and part of Elmhurst ward to form a new three-member Manor Park & Central ward, and that the part of Oakfield ward to the east of Douglas Road be combined with the northern part of Elmhurst ward and the Oldhams Meadow estate in a new two-member Watermead & The Coppice ward. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Oakfield ward, to the east of Oakfield Road, be combined with the part of Bedgrove ward to the east of Limes Avenue, Brentwood Way and Bedgrove Brook to form a

revised two-member Bedgrove ward. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Bedgrove ward be combined with the part of Grange ward to the east of Wendover Road in a new Turnfurlong Grange ward represented by two councillors. As outlined above, the Conservatives proposed that the part of Grange ward to the west of Wendover Road be combined with part of the existing Mandeville ward in a new Mandeville & Elm Park ward.

85 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Bedgrove and Turnfurlong Grange wards would have 2 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

86 David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury constituency area. He argued that the proposed Bedgrove ward would combine two similar residential areas, and would be an improvement on the current Oakfield ward which "is an artificial creation". He argued that the proposed Turnfurlong Grange ward has strong physical boundaries of main roads, Bedgrove Brook and a large open area covered by three schools.

87 Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association advocated the introduction of a single-member ward pattern for the whole district to increase accountability and reduce political instability within the district.

88 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One in relation to this area. We have not been persuaded that the existing Oakfield ward should be abolished, as proposed by the Conservatives and propose retaining the existing ward as put forward by the Council. While the ward is divided into two by the Grand Union Canal, we note that both sides are connected by Oakfield Road and Douglas Road as well as Park Street, that the ward has clear boundaries and provides reasonable electoral equality.

89 As outlined above, we propose a new Mandeville ward combining the eastern part of Mandeville ward, the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas of Stoke Mandeville parish from Weston Turville ward and the part of Grange ward to the west of Wendover Road. We propose that the part of Grange ward to the east of Wendover Road be combined with the whole of the existing Bedgrove ward to form a revised Bedgrove ward, represented by three councillors. We note that this proposal would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality and a ward with clear and logical boundaries of the town boundary, Wendover Road, Walton Road and Tring Road.

90 Our proposed Bedgrove ward would contain 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 6 per cent more than average by 2005. Oakfield ward would contain 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville wards

91 The existing wards of Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville are situated to the south of Aylesbury town. Aston Clinton and Weston Turville wards are currently each represented by two councillors, while Wendover ward is represented by three councillors. Aston Clinton ward contains the parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp. Wendover ward contains the parishes of Halton and Wendover, and Weston Turville ward contains the parishes of Stoke Mandeville and Weston Turville.

92 Under existing arrangements, Aston Clinton and Wendover wards have 18 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (22 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Weston Turville ward has 60 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (51 per cent more than average by 2005).

93 The Council noted that warding arrangements in this part of the district are constrained by the boundaries with Hertfordshire County and Wycombe district. It proposed that the existing Wendover ward remain unchanged. It argued that Wendover and Halton parishes have close links and interests, most notably RAF Halton which straddles the parish boundary. It stated that it had considered dividing the ward but noted that this was opposed locally during its own consultation on its proposals. It proposed that the existing Aston Clinton ward be enlarged to include Weston Turville parish which, it argued, has as many links with Aston Clinton as with Stoke Mandeville to its west and should be represented by three councillors instead of two. It proposed that the remaining part of the existing Weston Turville ward, Stoke Mandeville parish, form a new two-member Stoke Mandeville ward. It argued that dividing Stoke Mandeville between wards would mean that the parish would also have to be warded and that residents from all parts of the parish use the facilities of the village.

94 Under the Council's proposals, Aston Clinton and Wendover wards would have 9 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively currently, and 14 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Stoke Mandeville ward would have 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 4 per cent more by 2005.

95 The Conservatives also supported the retention of the existing Wendover ward, arguing that Halton and Wendover parishes "must be kept together if at all possible". Unlike the Council, the Conservatives proposed that the urban areas of Stoke Mandeville parish adjoining Aylesbury which currently form part of Weston Turville ward should be combined with the town. As outlined above, it proposed that the Hawkslade area be combined with part of Mandeville ward in a new Hawkslade ward and that the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas be combined with parts of Grange and Mandeville wards in a new Mandeville & Elm Farm ward. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Weston Turville ward – Stoke Mandeville village and Weston Turville parish – be combined with the existing Aston Clinton ward to form a revised three-member Aston Clinton ward.

96 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Aston Clinton and Wendover wards would have 13 per cent more and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district

average currently (7 per cent more and 9 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

97 David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury constituency area. In particular, in relation to this area, he stated that he supported the continuing link at district ward level between the two communities of Wendover and Halton. He also argued that the Conservatives' proposed Aston Clinton ward would "preserve the link between electoral wards and natural communities".

98 We received a further three submissions in relation to this area. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council opposed being divided between parish wards, as previously stated. Drayton Beauchamp Parish Meeting requested no change to the existing warding arrangements. A local resident suggested that, if it was necessary to ward Stoke Mandeville parish, Mandeville village should join Wendover ward and Halton should be combined with Aston Clinton ward.

99 We have carefully considered the differing views we received in relation to this area. As outlined in more detail above, we consider that the best balance between electoral equality and community ties in the areas of Stoke Mandeville parish abutting Aylesbury would be provided by combining them with the town. We consider that these areas of Stoke Mandeville are essentially areas of urban overspill, in close geographical proximity with and with their primary road access from the town of Aylesbury. As outlined above, we propose that the Hawkslade area of Stoke Mandeville parish form part of a two-member Walton Court ward, and that the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas of Stoke Mandeville parish should form part of a revised Mandeville ward.

100 We note that there is considerable support for retaining the existing Wendover ward. Both the Council and the Conservatives proposed that the current ward should be retained as part of their district-wide proposals, and this was also supported by David Lidington MP and in the Council's own consultation exercise on its own proposals. We recognise that the two parishes of Halton and Wendover share a great deal of affinity and that the existing ward would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. While we recognise that this proposal limits the options available for neighbouring wards, we are content to retain the existing Wendover ward as part of our draft recommendations as we consider that it would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area.

101 We propose putting forward the Conservatives' proposed Aston Clinton ward. This would combine Stoke Mandeville village and Weston Turville parish from the existing Weston Turville ward and the parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp from the existing Aston Clinton ward and would be represented by three councillors. We note that, given the geography of the district, the proximity of Aylesbury town and our proposals for neighbouring wards, there are limited options available for this area. We also note that the Conservatives' proposed ward would by 2005 provide better electoral equality than either the Council's proposal or the existing warding arrangements.

102 Under our draft recommendations, Aston Clinton ward would have 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 9 per cent more than average by 2005. Our proposed Wendover ward would have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both now and in 2005.

Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon wards

103 The existing wards of Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon are situated in the south of the district and to the west of Aylesbury town. Haddenham and Stone wards are both currently represented by two councillors, while Waddesdon ward is currently a single-member ward. Haddenham ward contains the parishes of Aston Sandford, Haddenham and Kingsey. Stone ward contains the parishes of Chearsley, Coldharbour, Cuddington, Dinton with Ford & Upton and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell. Waddesdon ward contains the parishes of Fleet Marston, Lower (or Nether) Winchendon, Upper Winchendon, Quarrendon and Waddesdon.

104 Under existing arrangements, Haddenham ward has 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 8 per cent fewer by 2005. Stone and Waddesdon wards have 3 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the current district average respectively. However, due to significant development over the next five years, they are forecast to contain 44 per cent and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than average respectively by 2005.

105 The Council proposed that the existing Haddenham ward be combined with Dinton with Ford & Upton parish and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parish (based on its revised boundaries) from Stone ward to form a three-member Haddenham ward. It recognised that a three-member ward would be unusual in such an area, but considered that this warding arrangement would ensure that the current links between Aston Sandford, Kingsey and Haddenham would be maintained as well as the links between Dinton and Stone. It proposed that Chearsley and Cuddington parishes be combined with the existing Long Crendon ward and part of Oakley ward in a revised Long Crendon ward, as discussed below. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Stone ward, the new Coldharbour parish, should be combined with the Hartwell estate area and the new development to the south of Oxford Road from Southcourt ward to form a new two-member Coldharbour ward, as detailed above. It argued that, if such a warding arrangement was not acceptable to the Commission, it would prefer that the current Haddenham ward be combined with Dinton-with-Ford and Upton parish, and that Stone with Bishopstone & Upton parish be combined with the new Coldharbour parish in a new ward.

106 The Council proposed relatively few changes to the existing Waddesdon ward. As outlined above, the Council proposed that Quarrendon parish from Waddesdon ward should be combined with parts of Meadowcroft and Southcourt to form a two-member Quarrendon ward. While it recognised that Quarrendon parish is still genuinely rural in nature, it argued that the large Berryfields development planned for the southern part of the parish will change the nature of the parish, resulting in the area becoming significantly more urban in character. The remainder of the existing ward – Fleet Marston, Lower Winchendon, Upper Winchendon and Waddesdon parishes – would be combined with Ashendon parish from Grendon Underwood ward to form a revised Waddesdon ward. The Council stated that it had also considered combining the parishes of Fleet

Marston, Upper Winchendon and Waddesdon from Waddesdon ward with Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parish from Stone ward. However, it noted that this proposal had been opposed by Waddesdon Parish Council which considered that it has no links with Stone.

107 Under the Council's proposals, the revised Waddesdon ward would have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor currently, and 12 per cent fewer by 2005. The proposed Haddenham ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the average currently, and 1 per cent more than average by 2005.

108 The Conservatives also supported the new Coldharbour parish being transferred from the existing Stone ward and being combined with part of Aylesbury town to form a new ward, but argued that Quarrendon parish should remain part of a rural ward. As outlined in more detail above, they proposed that Coldharbour parish be combined with the part of Southcourt ward to the north of Oxford Road and the parts of the existing Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards to the west of Bicester Road and Gatehouse Road to form a new three-member Coldharbour & Haydon Hill ward. They proposed that Fleet Marston, Quarrendon and Waddesdon parishes, which currently form part of Waddesdon ward, be combined with Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parish from Stone ward to create a two-member Waddesdon & Stone ward. They stated that moving Coldharbour parish, while logical, "creates a ripple effect down the western side" of the district. They also considered that placing Stone with any other parish would have a significant effect on neighbouring wards to its west, and that there are considerable historical linkages between Stone and Waddesdon because of the Rothschild estate at Eythrope and Waddesdon.

109 The Conservatives proposed that the existing Haddenham ward be enlarged to include Dinton-with-Ford & Upton parish from Stone ward to form a revised two-member Haddenham ward. As detailed below, the Conservatives proposed that the remainder of the existing Stone ward – Chearsley and Cuddington parishes – be combined with the existing Brill ward to form a revised single-member Brill ward. They also proposed that the remainder of the existing Waddesdon ward – Lower Winchendon and Upper Winchendon parishes – should be combined with the whole of the existing Grendon Underwood ward less Edgcott parish to form a revised single-member Grendon Underwood ward.

110 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Haddenham ward would have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 8 per cent more than average by 2005. Waddesdon & Stone ward would have 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

111 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quinton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. Three local residents specifically argued that the proposed Berryfields development in Quarrendon parish is still subject to local enquiry and should not be included with Aylesbury town. Councillor Brandis specifically opposed the Council's proposed three-member Haddenham ward, arguing that it would cover too large an area. Councillor Stuart (Haddenham ward) also opposed the Council's proposed Haddenham ward, suggesting that Stone and Coldharbour parishes continue to form a distinct ward in their own right.

112 We have carefully considered the representations received in relation to this area. We propose to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for this area, which we consider would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. As outlined above, we are persuaded that Quarrendon and Coldharbour parishes should be combined with part of Aylesbury town. We note that Coldharbour parish is a rapidly developing urban area neighbouring Aylesbury and consider that it has greater affinity with the town than neighbouring rural areas. We consider that, in the case of Quarrendon parish, while the area is very sparsely populated at present, the major development planned for Berryfields will radically change the parish, making it more urban in character. We recognise that any new warding arrangements are likely to remain in place for a considerable period, and it is therefore important that we consider the future pattern of development as well as the current one.

113 While the proposed Haddenham ward would cover a relatively large area and would be one of few very rural wards represented by three councillors, we have not been able to find a better alternative in this area. We consider that the proposed ward would retain the existing links between Aston Sandford and Kingsey with Haddenham and also those between Dinton with Ford & Upton and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell. On the basis of the evidence presented to us, we are not persuaded that these are significant community ties between Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parish and Waddesdon parish to its north, and have therefore not been persuaded to adopt the Conservatives' alternative proposal for this area.

114 We have considered the proposed warding arrangements for the Waddesdon area. The Council's proposed Waddesdon ward would combine communities along the A41 and to the north of the River Thames, and we consider it would reflect community identities and interests well. While we note that the ward is forecast to contain 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2005, we are persuaded that the Council's proposals are the best achievable. We note that, in order to improve electoral equality, both the Council and the Conservatives have proposed combining Cuddington and Chearsley parishes from Stone ward with areas to their west. We concur with this view, and our proposed warding arrangements for the neighbouring wards of Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley are outlined below.

115 Our proposed Haddenham ward would be represented by three councillors and would contain 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 1 per cent more than average by 2005. Waddesdon ward would be represented by one councillor and would contain 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than average currently, and 12 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley wards

116 The existing wards of Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley are situated in the south-west of the district and are all single-member wards. Brill ward contains the parishes of Boarstall, Brill, Chilton and Dorton, and Oakley ward contains the parishes of Ickford, Oakley, Shabbington and Worminghall. Long Crendon ward is coterminous with the parish of Long Crendon. Under existing arrangements, Brill and Long Crendon wards have 32 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (36 per cent and 11 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Oakley ward has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district

average currently, and is projected to contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than average by 2005.

117 The Council proposed that the existing Oakley ward should be divided between revised Brill and Long Crendon wards. The revised Long Crendon ward would be expanded to include neighbouring areas and would be represented by two councillors rather than one as at present. The revised Long Crendon ward would contain the existing ward (Long Crendon parish) together with Ickford, Shabbington and Worminghall parishes from Oakley ward and Chearsley and Cuddington parishes from Stone ward. It also proposed that the existing Brill ward be amended and its representation increased to two councillors. The revised ward would comprise Boarstall, Brill and Chilton parishes from the existing ward together with Oakley parish from Oakley ward. The remaining part of the existing Brill ward, Dorton parish, would be combined with areas to its north in a revised Grendon Underwood ward, as outlined below.

118 The Council stated that a number of options had been considered for this area, but that parish electorates and the district boundary constrained alternative options. It noted that its proposals would retain existing ties between Boarstall, Brill and Chilton parishes, and would reflect local views opposed to the inclusion of the parishes of Chearsley and Cuddington in the same ward as Brill. Under the Council's proposals, Brill and Long Crendon would currently have 4 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, and 2 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

119 The Conservatives proposed relatively minor changes to ward boundaries in this area. They proposed that the existing single-member Long Crendon and Oakley wards be retained, and that the existing Brill ward be expanded to include Chearsley and Cuddington parishes from the existing Stone ward. Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quanton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

120 The Conservatives' proposed Long Crendon ward would, based on a council size of 58, have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average currently and 11 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Their proposed Brill and Oakley wards would have 7 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average currently, improving to 1 per cent and 3 per cent more than average by 2005.

121 The Council and the Conservatives differed considerably in relation to this area. The Conservatives proposed retain three single-member wards for this area, proposing to retain the existing Long Crendon and Oakley wards and to enlarge Brill ward to include Chearsley and Cuddington parishes from Stone ward. The Council, however, proposed a two-member Long Crendon ward incorporating Ickford, Shabbington and Worminghall parishes from Oakley ward and Chearsley and Cuddington parishes from Stone ward and a revised Brill ward containing the existing ward less Dorton parish and Oakley parish. We note that both proposals would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, and we consider that each option has merit. On balance, however, we consider that the Council's proposals would better reflect community identities and interests overall than the Conservative scheme. While the Conservatives' proposals would have the advantage of largely maintaining the existing warding structure, we are not persuaded to put

forward their proposed Brill ward as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we are not persuaded that Chearsley and Cuddington parishes share significant local ties with much of the proposed ward. We consider that these parishes have a greater affinity with Long Crendon to the south-west than with Brill to their north-west, although we recognise that the areas also have some community ties with Dinton and Haddenham to their south.

122 Under our draft recommendations, Long Crendon ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 3 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposed Brill ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 2 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

Bierton and Quainton wards

123 The existing wards of Bierton and Quainton are situated towards the centre of the district, to the north and west of Aylesbury town, and are both currently single-member wards. Bierton ward contains the parishes of Bierton with Broughton, Hardwick, Hulcott and Weedon, while Quainton ward contains the parishes of Creslow, Oving, Pitchcott, Quainton and Whitchurch. Under existing arrangements, Bierton and Quainton wards have 8 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (68 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

124 The Council noted that the existing Bierton ward is forecast to grow significantly over the next five years due to the proposed development at Broughton Stocklake, resulting in the ward being significantly under-represented by 2005. The Council proposed that the ward should remain represented by a single councillor, and cover only Bierton with Broughton and Hulcott parishes. It stated that it had considered incorporating the proposed development at Broughton Stocklake with Aylesbury, but the area has too few electors to form a separate parish ward currently and this option was opposed by the parish council as part of its consultation. The Council proposed that the new ward should reflect the revised parish boundaries. This would result in the whole of the Oldhams Meadow estate forming part of Bierton ward rather than being divided between Elmhurst and Bierton wards. In addition, the small area which now forms part of the new Watermead parish (containing 12 electors) would be transferred from Bierton ward to Elmhurst ward, and the area with no electors transferred from Hulcott parish to Wingrave with Rowsham parish would form part of a revised Wingrave ward.

125 The Council proposed a new single-member Weedon ward comprising part of the existing Bierton and Quainton wards. As with the Bierton area, Weedon is also subject to major development over the next five years which, the Council argued, would result in the area justifying a separate ward. It proposed that the new ward should combine the parishes of Weedon and Hardwick from Bierton ward together with Creslow, Oving, Pitchcott and Whitchurch parishes from Quainton ward. It argued that this option would provide a much more natural grouping of parishes than the existing arrangements. In particular, it argued that the villages of Hardwick, Weedon and Whitchurch are linked by the A413, and the parishes of Oving and Creslow look to Whitchurch for services. The Council proposed that the remainder of the current Quainton ward, Quainton parish itself, should be combined with the neighbouring parishes of Granborough, Hogshaw and North Marston from Hogshaw ward to form a revised Quainton

ward. It proposed two further changes in this area resulting from the parish review. It proposed that a small area forming part of the new Watermead parish to the east of the A413 should form part of Elmhurst ward, and that the property transferred from North Marston parish to Oving parish should form part of the new Weedon ward.

126 Under the Council's proposals, Bierton and Weedon wards would have 17 per cent and 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the current district average respectively. However, due to significant development over the next five years, they are forecast to have 8 per cent and 16 per cent more than average by 2005. Quainton ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 7 per cent fewer by 2005.

127 The Conservatives also proposed that these two wards be divided between three new wards, albeit on differing boundaries. Their proposed Bierton ward was identical to the Council's proposed ward with the exception that they proposed that the Oldhams Meadow area of Bierton with Broughton parish should be united in a new Watermead and Coppice ward, as detailed above. The resulting ward would therefore contain Bierton with Broughton parish, less the Oldham Meadows estate, and Hulcott parish based on its revised boundaries. They proposed a new Whitchurch with Weedon ward which was similar to the Council's proposed Weedon ward although it would incorporate less of the current Quainton ward. Their proposed Whitchurch with Weedon ward would be represented by one councillor, and would contain Hardwick and Weedon parishes from the current Bierton ward and Creslow and Whitchurch parishes from Quainton ward. They argued that their proposed ward would be centred on the main village of Whitchurch and would incorporate villages which share an affinity with the village. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Quainton ward – Oving, Pitchcott and Quainton parishes – be combined with Hogshaw, East Claydon, Middle Claydon and North Marston parishes from the existing Hogshaw ward.

128 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' proposed Bierton and Whitchurch with Weedon wards would currently have 31 per cent and 39 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. However, due to significant development over the next five years, these wards are forecast to contain 6 per cent and 4 per cent fewer than the average number of electors per councillor by 2005. Quainton ward would have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 6 per cent more than average by 2005.

129 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. Three of these local residents also argued that the proposed Broughton Stocklake development in Bierton with Broughton parish is subject to local enquiry and should therefore not be included with Aylesbury town. Councillor Polhill argued that the Conservatives' proposed Whitchurch with Weedon ward would combine parishes of a similar type. Quainton Parish Council requested no change to its existing warding arrangements. One local resident suggested that the proposed Weedon ward be combined with the new Watermead parish area to form a two-member ward, as stated previously.

130 We have carefully considered the representations received in relation to this area, and note that there was a degree of agreement between the Council and the Conservatives in this area. Both

of these proposals would significantly improve electoral equality, would enlarge the existing Quainton ward to include part of the existing Hogshaw ward to its north, and would divide the existing Bierton ward between new wards based around Bierton to the east of Aylesbury town and Weedon to its north. The difference between the two proposals is relatively minimal and relates to the composition of the proposed new wards.

131 The Conservatives and the Council put forward identical proposals for a revised Bierton ward based on Bierton and Hulcott parishes, with the exception that the Council's proposed ward would contain the Oldhams Meadow area and the Conservatives' proposed ward would not. As outlined above, we concur with the Conservatives' view that the area should be united with part of Aylesbury town and we propose that it should form part of a revised Elmhurst ward. While we recognise that, as part of the recent parishing review, this area was united within Bierton with Broughton parish, we note that the area has a closer geographical proximity to Aylesbury town than Bierton village. We note that the Council also considered combining the Broughton Stocklake development with the town, but decided that such a change was impractical and was not locally supported. We are content to endorse that view.

132 The Conservatives' proposed Whitchurch with Weedon ward would contain only Creslow, Hardwick, Weedon and Whitchurch parishes, while the Council's proposed Weedon ward would also include Oving and Pitchcott parishes. We propose putting forward the Conservatives' proposals for this area, subject to a ward name change. While we consider that both proposals would reasonably reflect community ties, we note that the Conservatives' proposals would have significantly better electoral equality by 2005 than either the existing arrangements or the Council's proposals. We have considered the most appropriate ward name for this area, and consider that for the purposes of our draft recommendations, the new ward name should reflect what is forecast to be the largest settlement, Weedon. We would, however, particularly welcome further views on this issue at Stage Three from local residents or interested parties.

133 We propose to base our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposed Quainton ward, subject to some modifications. We propose that the new ward should contain Oving, Pitchcott and Quainton parishes from the existing ward together with Hogshaw and North Marston parishes from Hogshaw ward. We consider that East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes have greater affinity with the Steeple Claydon area than with the areas to their south, and have therefore not been persuaded that they should form part of a revised Quainton ward as proposed by the Conservatives.

134 Under our draft recommendations, Bierton and Weedon wards would have 30 per cent and 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the currently district average respectively. However, due to significant development planned for the next five years, they are forecast to contain 5 per cent and 2 per cent fewer than average respectively by 2005. Our proposed Quainton ward would both have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 10 per cent fewer by 2005.

Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards

135 The existing wards of Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon abut the western boundary of the district and are both single-member wards. Grendon Underwood ward contains the parishes

of Ashendon, Edgcott, Grendon Underwood, Kingswood, Ludgershall, Westcott, Woodham and Wotton Underwood. Marsh Gibbon ward contains the parishes of Barton Hartshorn, Chetwode, Charndon, Hillesden, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Preston Bissett and Twyford. Under existing arrangements, Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards have 3 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent fewer and 10 per cent more than average by 2005).

136 The Council proposed to largely retain the existing warding arrangements for this area. It proposed that the existing Grendon Underwood ward be retained with the exception of Ashendon parish which it proposed should form part of a revised Waddesdon ward, and the inclusion of Dorton parish from Brill ward. While it noted the preference of Dorton Parish Meeting to remain linked with parishes to its west in Brill ward, it argued that Dorton has as much association with Wotton Underwood and Westcott to its north. It proposed that Marsh Gibbon ward be retained with the exception of Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes which it proposed should form part of a revised Tingewick ward as discussed further below. It argued that Marsh Gibbon forms an effective centre for the ward and that its proposals would lead to an improved level of electoral equality in five years' time with the development of the former Calvert Brickworks in Charndon parish. The Council's proposed Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards would have 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the current district average respectively. (10 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more by 2005).

137 The Conservatives proposed that the current Grendon Underwood ward less Edgcott parish be combined with Lower Winchendon and Upper Winchendon parishes from Waddesdon ward to form a revised single-member Grendon Underwood ward. They also proposed a revised single-member Marsh Gibbon ward containing Edgcott parish from Grendon Underwood ward together with Charndon, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon and Twyford parishes from the existing Marsh Gibbon ward. As discussed in more detail below, they proposed that the remainder of the current Marsh Gibbon ward be divided between revised Steeple Claydon and Tingewick wards. Under their proposals, Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes would form part of a revised Tingewick ward and Hillesden and Preston Bissett parishes would form part of a revised Steeple Claydon ward.

138 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' Grendon Underwood ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 9 per cent fewer by 2005. Their proposed Marsh Gibbon ward would have 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 3 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

139 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. A local resident suggested a one-member ward combining part of Marsh Gibbon ward (Hillesden and Preston Bissett parishes) with parts of Buckingham South ward (Gawcott with Lenborough parish), Steeple Claydon ward (Padbury parish) and Winslow ward (Addington and Adstock parishes), stating that these adjoining villages have good communications and similar interests.

140 We note that both the Conservatives and the Council proposed broadly similar warding arrangements based largely upon retaining the existing wards in this area. We propose to put forward the Council's proposals in this area which we consider would provide the best balance

between the need for electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and would reflect our proposed warding arrangements in neighbouring areas. Our proposed Grendon Underwood ward would contain 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 10 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposed Marsh Gibbon ward would contain 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 7 per cent more than average by 2005.

Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards

141 The existing wards of Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone are situated in the south-east of the district and are all single-member wards. Edlesborough ward contains the parishes of Edlesborough and Slapton. Cheddington ward contains the parishes of Cheddington, Marsworth and Mentmore, and Pitstone ward contains the parishes of Ivinghoe and Pitstone. Under existing arrangements, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards have 24 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent more and 19 per cent more than average by 2005). Cheddington ward has 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and is forecast to have 1 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

142 The Council noted that the electorate of the current Pitstone ward is predicted to increase by over 300 over the next five years with the development of the former cement works site. Therefore, in order to achieve reasonable electoral equality by 2005, it argued that some change to warding arrangements is necessary. It noted that Pitstone and Ivinghoe parishes actually adjoin, while Ivinghoe Aston is a separate village “recently warded for parish council elections to reflect their separate identities”. It therefore proposed that Ivinghoe parish ward and Pitstone parish form a revised Pitstone ward, and that Ivinghoe Aston parish ward be combined with Edlesborough parish to form a revised Edlesborough ward. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Edlesborough ward, Slapton parish, be combined with Cheddington and Marsworth parishes in a revised Cheddington ward. Mentmore parish, which currently forms part of Cheddington ward, would be combined with Wingrave ward, as discussed further below. It recognised that, as part of its own consultation, Cheddington, Marsworth and Mentmore parish councils all wanted Mentmore parish to remain part of Cheddington ward. However, it argued that, in order to create a sensible warding pattern for this area, its replacement by Slapton parish is necessary.

143 Under the Council’s proposals, Cheddington and Edlesborough wards would currently have 16 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. However, electoral equality is forecast to improve over the next five years, so that the wards would have 9 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than average by 2005. Pitstone ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, deteriorating to 14 per cent more than average by 2005.

144 The Conservatives proposed identical warding arrangements to the Council in this area. They argued that these three wards “have a geographical entity” as they are surrounded on three sides by the county of Hertfordshire. They noted that a three-member ward, rather than three single-member wards, would provide a feasible solution and would improve electoral equality. However, they argued that this proposal would run contrary to community identity and interests in the area. Under the Conservatives’ proposed council size of 58, Cheddington and Edlesborough wards would currently have 14 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the

district average respectively. (8 per cent and 4 per cent more than average by 2005). Pitstone ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, deteriorating to 12 per cent more by 2005.

145 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quinton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. Ivinghoe Parish Council opposed the District Council's and the Conservatives' proposal to divide the parish between the proposed Edlesborough and Pitstone wards, arguing that it would affect the quality of local administration and the common identity of the parish.

146 We note that the Conservatives and the Council put forward identical warding arrangements for this area. We consider that these proposals would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. While we note that, under these proposals, the proposed Pitstone ward would contain 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the average by 2005, we recognise that this area is relatively isolated from the remainder of the district and is effectively enclosed by the neighbouring county of Hertfordshire, thus reducing the number of alternative options. We also note the concern expressed by Ivinghoe Parish Council that it would be divided between wards, but we consider that the parish does contain two separate communities and that retaining the existing warding arrangements in this area would fail to provide reasonable electoral equality. We further note that their inclusion in separate district wards would not affect these areas continuing to form part of the same parish council. Our proposed Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards would currently contain 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, and 9 per cent, 5 per cent and 14 per cent more than average by 2005. The proposed boundary between Edlesborough and Pitstone wards, and between Ivinghoe and Ivinghoe Aston parish wards, is illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

Wing and Wingrave wards

147 The existing wards of Wing and Wingrave are situated in the east of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Wing ward is coterminous with Wing parish, and Wingrave ward contains the parishes of Aston Abbots, Cublington and Wingrave with Rowsham. Under existing arrangements, Wing and Wingrave wards have 5 per cent more and 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent and 20 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

148 The Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Wing ward. It argued that Wing is a relatively large parish with a self-contained community only two miles from Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. In order to improve electoral equality, it proposed that Wingrave ward be enlarged to include Mentmore parish from Cheddington ward. While it acknowledged that Mentmore probably has more in common with Cheddington, it considered that this proposal would achieve the best warding arrangement for the area as a whole. It proposed that the new wards reflect the revised parish boundaries. Only one of these changes would affect ward boundaries, the amended boundary between Hulcott and Wingrave with Rowsham parishes, resulting in the transfer of a small area from Bierton ward.

149 The Council's proposed Wing ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 1 per cent more than average by 2005. The proposed Wingrave ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor currently, and 5 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

150 The Conservatives proposed identical warding arrangements to the Council in this area. They argued that the geographical boundaries of this area limit the number of available options. Under the Conservatives' proposed council size of 58, their proposed Wing ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 1 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Their proposed Wingrave ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor currently, and 7 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

151 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

152 We note that the Conservatives and the Council put forward identical warding arrangements for this area. We consider that these proposals would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. They would retain the existing Wing ward, based on Wing parish, while addressing the level of over-representation in Wingrave ward by the inclusion of Mentmore parish from Cheddington parish. Our proposed Wing ward would contain 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 1 per cent more than average by 2005. The revised Wingrave ward would contain equal to the average number of electors per councillor currently, and 5 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards

153 The existing wards of Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley are situated in the north-east of the district and are all single-member wards. Great Brickhill ward contains the parishes of Great Brickhill, Soulbury and Stoke Hammond, and Stewkley ward contains the parishes of Drayton Parslow, Dunton, Hoggston, Mursley and Stewkley. Newton Longville ward is coterminous with Newton Longville parish. Under existing arrangements, Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards have 10 per cent fewer, 26 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent fewer, 30 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than average by 2005).

154 The Council proposed that the existing Great Brickhill ward be retained. It argued that the three parishes of Great Brickhill, Soulbury and Stoke Hammond have similar identities and characteristics, and that together they form a distinct grouping on the edge of the district neighbouring Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. It proposed that, in order to improve electoral equality, Newton Longville ward be enlarged to include Mursley parish from Stewkley ward. It also proposed a revised Stewkley ward containing the existing ward, less Mursley parish, together with Swanbourne parish from Hogshaw ward. It stated that it initially proposed including the parish of Drayton Parslow with Great Brickhill ward, but that as part of its consultation the parish council had opposed its inclusion, arguing that it has more affinity with Stewkley.

155 Under the Council's proposals, Great Brickhill and Newton Longville wards would currently have 8 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Electoral equality is forecast to deteriorate over the next five years, so that the wards would have 13 per cent fewer and 7 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Stewkley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 2 per cent more by 2005.

156 The Conservatives also proposed that Newton Longville ward be enlarged to include Mursley parish from the existing Stewkley ward. However, they did not concur with the Council's proposed Great Brickhill ward arguing that the current ward is undersized, so should be enlarged to include Drayton Parslow parish from Stewkley ward. Their proposed Stewkley ward also differed from the Council's proposed ward. Their proposed ward would contain Dunton, Hoggston and Stewkley parishes from the current ward together with Granborough and Swanbourne parishes from the existing Hogshaw ward.

157 Based on the Conservatives' proposed council size of 58, their proposed Great Brickhill ward would contain 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 6 per cent more than average by 2005. Their proposed Stewkley ward would initially contain 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, but is forecast to contain equal to the average number of electors per councillor by 2005. Newton Longville ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 9 per cent fewer by 2005.

158 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

159 We received one further submission in relation to this area. Mursley Parish Council opposed its linkage with Newton Longville parish, as proposed by the Council and the Conservatives, arguing that its connections are with Drayton Parslow and Stewkley parishes. It proposed combining Newton Longville with Stoke Hammond, arguing that both are influenced by the proximity of Milton Keynes and Bletchley.

160 We have carefully considered all the representations we have received in relation to this area. We propose to base our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals which we consider would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We consider that the level of electoral inequality in the existing Great Brickhill and Newton Longville wards should be addressed, and concur with the Conservatives that these wards should be enlarged to include Drayton Parslow and Mursley parishes from the existing Stewkley ward. As a result of these changes, Stewkley ward would not contain sufficient electors and therefore must expand in order to provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. We consider that the Conservative proposal to include Granborough and Swanbourne parishes has merit and are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

161 Under our proposals, Great Brickhill and Stewkley wards would currently contain 14 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 8 per cent and 2 per cent more than average by 2005. Our proposed Newton Longville ward

would contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 7 per cent fewer by 2005.

Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards

162 The existing wards of Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow are situated towards the centre of the district. Hogshaw and Steeple Claydon wards are each represented by a single councillor and Winslow ward is represented by two councillors. Hogshaw ward contains the parishes of East Claydon, Middle Claydon, Granborough, Hogshaw, North Marston and Swanbourne. Steeple Claydon ward contains the parishes of Padbury and Steeple Claydon, while Winslow ward contains the parishes of Addington, Adstock and Winslow. Under existing arrangements, Hogshaw and Winslow wards currently have 17 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (22 per cent and 12 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Steeple Claydon ward currently has 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, and is forecast to have 7 per cent more by 2005.

163 The Council proposed that the current Steeple Claydon ward be retained. It noted that electoral equality in the current ward is forecast to improve over the next five years, and that the two villages that form the current ward – Padbury and Steeple Claydon – are only three miles apart and are linked by road. It proposed that the current Hogshaw ward should be divided between three wards. As outlined above, it proposed that Granborough, Hogshaw and North Marston parishes be combined with Quainton parish to form a revised Quainton ward and that Swanbourne parish be combined with Drayton Parslow, Dunton, Hoggeston and Stewkley parishes in a revised Stewkley ward. It proposed that the remaining part of the ward, East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes, should be combined with Addington and Winslow parishes in a revised Winslow ward. It argued that Addington, East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes exhibit similar characteristics and identities and share considerable links with Winslow. Under the Council's proposals, the remaining part of the existing Winslow ward, Adstock parish, would form part of a revised Great Horwood ward, as discussed below.

164 Under the Council's proposals, Steeple Claydon ward would have 15 per cent more electors per councillor currently, improving to 9 per cent more than average by 2005. Its proposed Winslow ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 8 per cent fewer by 2005.

165 The Conservatives also proposed that the existing Hogshaw ward be abolished. However, they proposed that the current ward be divided between two wards. As outlined above, they proposed that Granborough and Swanbourne parishes form part of a revised Stewkley ward, and that Hogshaw, East Claydon, Middle Claydon and North Marston parishes form part of a revised Quainton ward. They proposed that the current Winslow ward be expanded to include Padbury parish from the existing Steeple Claydon ward, and should continue to be represented by two councillors. They argued that this proposal would minimise disturbance to the current Winslow ward while combining parishes grouped along the A413 arterial road. They proposed that the remainder of the existing Steeple Claydon ward, Steeple Claydon parish, should be combined with Hillesden and Preston Bissett parishes from the existing Marsh Gibbon ward to form a revised single-member Steeple Claydon ward.

166 Based on the Conservatives' proposed council size of 58, their proposed Winslow ward would contain 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 3 per cent more than average by 2005. Their proposed Steeple Claydon ward would initially contain 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, and 5 per cent fewer than by 2005.

167 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quainton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals. Councillor Polhill opposed the Council's proposal to combine East Claydon and Middle Claydon with Winslow, arguing that the needs of these small villages would not be fulfilled by combining them with a town. She argued that Addington, Adstock and Padbury parishes are less rural and are naturally linked to Winslow town by the A421.

168 Two local residents proposed that Steeple Claydon parish be combined with East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes in a single-member ward, arguing that they form part of the same ecclesiastical parish and share community and transport links. One of the local residents argued that the remainder of the current Steeple Claydon ward, Padbury parish, looks more to the towns of Buckingham and Winslow than to Steeple Claydon. He suggested that Winslow parish could form a separate ward, and that Padbury parish could be combined with Addington and Adstock parishes from Winslow ward, Gawcott with Lenborough parish from Buckingham South ward and also possibly Hillesden and Preston Bissett parishes from Marsh Gibbon ward. He argued that these adjoining villages have good communications and similar interests.

169 We have carefully considered all the representations received in relation to this area at Stage One. We consider that the best warding arrangements for the district as a whole would be achieved by abolishing the existing Hogshaw ward and dividing it between wards, as proposed by both the Council and the Conservatives. As detailed above, we consider that there is merit in the Conservatives' proposal to include Granborough and Swanbourne parishes from Hogshaw ward with Dunton, Hoggeston and Stewkley parishes in a revised Stewkley ward. In addition, as also outlined above, we propose to include Hogshaw and North Marston parishes from Hogshaw ward with Oving, Pitchcott and Quainton parishes from the existing Quainton ward in a revised Quainton ward.

170 We note that the Council and the Conservatives put forward significantly different proposals for the Winslow area. We consider that, on balance, the Conservatives' proposals for this area have greater merit and should be put forward as part of our draft recommendations. Their proposals would combine the existing Winslow ward with Padbury parish from Steeple Claydon ward, rather than combining Addington and Winslow parishes from the existing ward together with East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes from the existing Hogshaw ward. We consider that this proposal would minimise disturbance to the current Winslow ward while combining parishes with a great deal of affinity grouped along the A413 arterial road.

171 We also consider that East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes have greater affinity with Steeple Claydon parish than with the areas to their south. As outlined in representations to us at Stage One, they form part of the same ecclesiastical parish and share a number of community and

transport links. Together these three parishes would provide a relatively compact ward, would reflect community ties well and would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality.

172 Under our proposals, Steeple Claydon ward would contain 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 3 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposed Winslow ward would contain 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent more by 2005.

Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards

173 The existing wards of Buckingham North and Buckingham South contain the county town of Buckingham and two outlying parishes. Buckingham North contains the northern part of Buckingham town and Maids Moreton parish, while Buckingham South ward contains the southern part of Buckingham together with Gawcott with Lenborough parish. Both are currently represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards have 16 per cent fewer and 39 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent fewer and 53 per cent more than average by 2005).

174 The Council noted that the two wards of Buckingham North and Buckingham South currently have high levels of electoral inequality and that the electorate of Buckingham and, in particular the southern part of the town, is forecast to grow significantly over the next five years. It therefore proposed that both wards be modified. It proposed that Maids Moreton parish be transferred from the existing Buckingham North ward to Luffield Abbey ward, and that the ward boundary should move southwards from the A422 Brackley Road and Stratford Road to the River Great Ouse to compensate for this change. The revised Buckingham South ward would then contain the part of the existing ward to the south of the River Great Ouse. It argued that the river would provide a better balance of electorates and marks a distinct and identifiable boundary through the town. It stated that it had considered whether there was any merit in transferring Gawcott with Lenborough parish from Buckingham South ward to a neighbouring rural ward, but had not supported this change as the parish has “close links with the town”.

175 The Council’s proposed Buckingham North ward would have 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 6 per cent more than average by 2005. The proposed Buckingham South ward would have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 10 per cent more than average by 2005.

176 The Conservatives also proposed that Maids Moreton parish should be transferred from the existing Buckingham North ward to Luffield Abbey ward. However, they proposed a marginally different boundary between Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards. They argued that the revised boundary between the two wards should follow the River Great Ouse from the town’s eastern boundary in a westerly direction as far as Brooks Court, when it should follow Church Street, St Rumbolds Lane, Nelson Street and Tingewick Road. Thereafter it would rejoin the River Great Ouse in a northerly direction before rejoining the current boundary of Brackley Road. The Conservatives also proposed that Gawcott with Lenborough parish should be transferred from Buckingham South ward to a revised Tingewick ward, as detailed below. They argued that

this proposal would improve electoral equality in the current Tingewick ward and would enable the parish to be linked with neighbouring rural parishes.

177 Based upon a council size of 58, the Conservatives' Buckingham North ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 5 per cent more by 2005. Their proposed Buckingham South ward would have 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Both wards would continue to be represented by two councillors each.

178 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quinton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals.

179 Councillor Cadd (Buckingham South) argued that the River Great Ouse forms a natural boundary between the northern and southern parts of Buckingham town, and that the district ward boundary should therefore be based upon it. He also stated that Maids Moreton and Gawcott with Lenborough parishes should be retained within the respective Buckingham North and Buckingham South district wards. A Steeple Claydon resident proposed that Gawcott with Lenborough be included with parishes to its east and south, as stated previously.

180 We note that Buckingham is an expanding town, and consider that in view of the growth forecast for the town over the next five years it would contain sufficient electors to be represented by four councillors on its own boundaries by 2005. We therefore propose to base our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals for this area, which would transfer Maids Moreton parish from Buckingham North ward to a revised Luffield Abbey ward and Gawcott with Lenborough parish from Buckingham South ward to a revised Tingewick ward. However, we consider that there is merit in the Council's proposal to utilise the River Great Ouse as a ward boundary throughout the town and therefore also propose putting forward this change as part of our draft recommendations. Our proposed Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards would have 16 per cent more and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, improving to 6 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than average by 2005. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map A2 in Appendix A.

Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards

181 The existing wards of Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick abut the northern boundary of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Great Horwood contains the parishes of Beachampton, Great Horwood, Little Horwood, Nash and Whaddon. Luffield Abbey ward contains the parishes of Akeley, Foscott, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Dayrell with Luffield Abbey, Lillingstone Lovell, Stowe, Thornborough and Thornton. Tingewick ward contains the parishes of Biddlesden, Radclive cum Chackmore, Shalstone, Tingewick, Turweston, Water Stratford and Westbury. Currently all three wards are over-represented, and electoral equality in the three wards is forecast to deteriorate further over the next five years. Under existing arrangements, Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards have 9 per cent, 13 per cent and 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively.

By 2005, it is forecast that these wards would contain 13 per cent, 18 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than average respectively.

182 The Council proposed the retention of three wards for this area but, in order to improve electoral equality, proposed that each of the wards be modified. It proposed that Tingewick ward be expanded southwards to include Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes from Marsh Gibbon ward and Stowe parish from Luffield Abbey ward. It argued that Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes have stronger links with areas to their north than to their south, and that Stowe parish has “particularly strong links” with Radclive cum Chackmore parish. The Council proposed that the existing Luffield Abbey ward, less Stowe parish, should be enlarged to include Maids Moreton parish from Buckingham North ward. It argued that while Maids Moreton parish is adjacent to Buckingham, it maintains a very strong village identity and has strong links with Akeley and Foscott parishes. It proposed that Great Horwood ward be expanded to include Adstock parish from the current Winslow ward. It argued that Adstock is rural and has no specific links or relationships with Winslow.

183 Under the Council’s proposals, Great Horwood and Tingewick wards would currently have 7 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 2 per cent and 6 per cent more than average by 2005. Luffield Abbey ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

184 The Conservatives proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area but proposed the retention of three wards. They proposed that Gawcott with Lenborough parish from Buckingham South ward and Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes from Marsh Gibbon ward be combined with the existing Tingewick ward. They proposed a revised Luffield Abbey ward containing the existing ward, less Thornborough parish, together with Beachampton parish from Great Horwood ward and Maids Moreton parish from Buckingham North ward. Their revised Great Horwood ward would then comprise the existing ward less Beachampton parish together with Thornborough parish from Luffield Abbey ward.

185 Under the Conservatives’ proposed council size of 58, Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards would currently contain 9 per cent, 5 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Electoral equality in all of these wards is forecast to improve over the next five years, so that they would contain 3 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than average respectively by 2005.

186 Councillors Ashenden (Winslow ward), Brandis (Haddenham ward), Cartwright (Grendon Underwood ward), Glover (Wing ward) and Polhill (Quinton ward) and 13 local residents expressed support for the Conservatives’ proposals.

187 We propose basing our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives’ proposals. As discussed earlier, we note that Buckingham is an expanding town and that it would be entitled to four councillors by 2005 on its current boundaries. We therefore concur with the Conservatives’ view that Maids Moreton parish should be transferred from Buckingham North ward to a revised Luffield Abbey ward (which was also proposed by the Council), and that Gawcott with Lenborough parish should be transferred from Buckingham South ward to a revised

Tingewick ward. We note that in order to reflect these changes and our proposals for neighbouring wards, the number of options for this area are limited. On that basis, therefore, we are content to put forward the Conservatives' other proposals for this area – transferring Thornborough parish from Luffield Abbey ward to Great Horwood ward and Beachampton parish from Great Horwood ward to Luffield Abbey ward.

188 Under our proposals, Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards would initially contain 11 per cent, 7 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 5 per cent, 1 per cent and 8 per cent more than average by 2005.

Electoral Cycle

189 We received two representations regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council itself supported the retention of whole-council elections. It argued that a four-year term provides a stable period of government and avoids constant change in the political composition of a council, which it considered inherent with elections by thirds. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association also supported the retention of whole-council elections, subject to a single-member ward pattern being adopted for the whole district.

190 We have considered carefully all representations. At present, there appears to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained and we therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the District Council.

Conclusions

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 58 to 59;
- there should be 36 wards;
- the boundaries of 35 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two wards;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

192 Our draft recommendations would involve modifications to all but three of the existing wards in Aylesbury Vale district, as summarised below:

- in Aylesbury, we propose putting forward our own proposals which would largely reflect the District Council's proposals in the north of the town and would reflect elements of the Conservatives' proposals for the south of the town;
- in the south-east and east of the district, we propose putting forward the District Council's proposals;

- to the south of Aylesbury town, our proposals reflect the Conservatives' proposals;
- to the east of Aylesbury, our proposals reflect both the Conservatives' and the Council's proposals;
- in the north of the district, our proposals are largely based upon the Conservatives' proposals, although we propose utilising the River Great Ouse as a boundary in Buckingham as proposed by the Council and propose a revised Steeple Claydon ward comprising Steeple Claydon, East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes;
- there should be no change to the wards of Oakfield, Wendover and Wing.

193 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	58	59	58	59
Number of wards	38	36	38	36
Average number of electors per councillor	2,050	2,016	2,154	2,118
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	18	12	23	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	3	13	0

194 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Aylesbury Vale District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 18 to 12. By 2005 only two wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation

Aylesbury Vale District Council should comprise 59 councillors serving 36 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. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

195 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible 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.

196 The Aylesbury Vale (Parishes) Order 2000 came into effect in April 2001, and provides for the creation of three new parishes in Aylesbury, Coldharbour and Watermead and would combine the existing parishes of Lillingstone Dayrell and Luffield Abbey in a new Lillingstone Dayrell with Luffield Abbey parish. It also provides for numerous parish boundary changes, and would result in the district being entirely parished. The Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions did not make provision for new parish wards as part of that order and, consequently, Aylesbury Vale District council prepared new parish wards for Aylesbury Town Council. However, as a result of modifications to district ward boundaries in Aylesbury and Buckingham, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the towns of Aylesbury and Buckingham and the parishes of Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville to reflect our proposed district wards.

197 Aylesbury Town Council is currently served by 25 councillors representing nine town council wards. The existing town council wards are coterminous with the existing district wards of the same name, with the exception of Elmhurst town council ward which covers only that part of the current district ward within Aylesbury Town. As detailed earlier, we propose amending eight of the existing district wards. We therefore propose consequential changes to the existing town council wards so that they reflect our proposed district warding arrangements in the town.

198 In order to facilitate our proposed district warding arrangements in the town, we propose that Aylesbury Town Council be served by 24 councillors, one fewer than at present, serving 10 parish wards. We propose that Bedgrove ward be served by four town councillors: Central ward be served by a single town councillor: Gatehouse ward be served by three town councillors and Southcourt ward be served by two town councillors. We propose that these wards be coterminous with our proposed district wards of the same name. The remaining six of our proposed district wards for the town would include part or all of a number of parishes that adjoin Aylesbury. Therefore, we propose that the boundaries of the following six town council wards should reflect only those parts of our proposed district wards contained in Aylesbury town itself. We propose that Elmhurst and Mandeville town council wards be served by three town councillors each and Oakfield, Oxford Road, Quarrendon and Walton Court town council wards be served by two town councillors each.

Draft Recommendation

Aylesbury Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, one fewer than at present, representing 10 wards: Bedgrove (returning four councillors), Central (returning one councillor), Elmhurst (returning three councillors), Gatehouse (returning three councillors), Mandeville (returning three councillors), Oakfield (returning two councillors), Oxford Road (returning two councillors), Quarrendon (returning two councillors), Southcourt (returning two councillors) and Walton Court (returning two councillors). The boundary between the 10 town council wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

199 The town of Buckingham is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. As outlined above, under Schedule 11 of the 1972 Act, any parish which is divided between district wards must also be divided between parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. As detailed earlier, we have based our draft recommendation for a revised boundary between the two district wards of Buckingham on the District Council's proposals. We are also content to put forward the District Council's proposals for new town council wards which would reflect our proposed district warding arrangements for the town. We propose a new Buckingham North town council ward returning eight town councillors which would be coterminous with our proposed Buckingham North district ward, and a new Buckingham South town council ward returning seven town councillors which would also be coterminous with our proposed Buckingham South district ward.

Draft Recommendation

Buckingham Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Buckingham North (returning eight councillors) and Buckingham South (returning seven councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 at Appendix A.

200 The parish of Bierton with Broughton is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we propose that the Oldhams Meadow area of the parish should form part of a revised Elmhurst district ward in Aylesbury town. We consider this area to be a self-contained part of the parish with a greater affinity with neighbouring parts of Aylesbury than with Bierton village. In order to facilitate our proposed warding arrangements in this area, we therefore propose that Bierton with Broughton parish be warded. For parish council purposes, we propose a new Oldhams Meadow parish ward represented by a single parish councillor. We propose that the remainder of the parish form a new Bierton Village parish ward and be represented by eight parish councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Bierton with Broughton Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Bierton Village (returning eight councillors) and Oldhams Meadow (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

201 The parish of Stoke Mandeville is currently served by 12 councillors and is not warded. The Conservatives proposed creating four new parish wards – Hawkslade, Stoke Grange, Stoke Leys and Stoke Mandeville Village – in order to facilitate combining the urban areas of Stoke Mandeville parish adjoining Aylesbury with the proposed Mandeville & Elm Farm and Hawkslade district wards. The boundary of the proposed Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange parish wards with the proposed Stoke Mandeville Village parish ward would reflect the boundary between the proposed Mandeville and Aston Clinton district wards. The boundary between the proposed Hawkslade and Stoke Mandeville parish wards would reflect the boundary of the proposed Hawkslade and Mandeville & Elm Farm district wards.

202 The District Council argued that dividing Stoke Mandeville between wards would mean that the parish would also have to be warded and that residents from all parts of the parish use the facilities of the village. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council also opposed being divided between parish wards, arguing that this “would not be conducive to the democratic nature of the Council”. However, it did support the areas of Hawkslade and Stoke Grange forming separate parishes in the future. An Aylesbury resident also suggested that, if it was necessary to ward Stoke Mandeville parish, that Stoke Mandeville village be combined with Wendover ward and Halton parish be combined with Aston Clinton ward.

203 Our draft recommendations for this area are broadly based upon the Conservatives’ proposals and would combine part of Stoke Mandeville parish with Aylesbury Town. In particular, we propose that the Hawkslade area form part of a new Walton Court district ward, and that the Stoke Grange and Stoke Leys areas form part of a revised Mandeville ward. In order to facilitate the proposed district warding arrangements in this area, we propose retaining 12 councillors for Stoke Mandeville Parish Council and creating four new parish wards: Hawkslade and Stoke Grange returning three parish councillors each, Stoke Leys returning two parish councillors and Stoke Mandeville Village returning four parish councillors. We recognise that our draft recommendations depart from some of the proposals that we received at Stage One and would therefore particularly welcome the views of local people at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Hawkslade (returning three councillors): Stoke Grange (returning three councillors): Stoke Leys (returning two councillors) and Stoke Mandeville Village (returning four councillors). The boundary between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

204 The parish of Aston Abbots is currently served by five parish councillors. At Stage One, the Parish Council requested an increase of two parish councillors, arguing that it would thereby be able to widen its representation of parish residents. We are content to put forward the Parish Council's proposal for further consultation, and would welcome further views at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Aston Abbots Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, two more than at present.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

206 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Aylesbury Vale 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 Aylesbury Vale

5 NEXT STEPS

207 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 2 July 2001. 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.

208 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Aylesbury Vale 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
www.lgce.gov.uk

209 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 Aylesbury Vale: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Aylesbury Vale 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 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Buckingham town.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed ward boundary between Edlesborough and Pitstone wards and the boundaries between Ivinghoe and Ivinghoe Aston parish wards.

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

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Aylesbury Vale: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Buckingham Town

Map A3: Proposed Boundary Between Edlesborough and Pitstone wards

APPENDIX B

Aylesbury Vale District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B1: Aylesbury Vale District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Aston Clinton	3	5,504	1,835	-9	5,481	1,827	-14
Aylesbury Central	1	1,912	1,912	-5	2,066	2,066	-2
Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	2	4,661	2,331	16	4,490	2,245	6
Bierton	1	1,676	1,676	-17	2,287	2,287	8
Brill	1	2,095	2,095	4	2,082	2,082	-2
Buckingham North	2	4,669	2,335	16	4,506	2,253	6
Buckingham South	2	3,752	1,876	-7	4,655	2,328	10
Cheddington	1	2,334	2,334	16	2,318	2,318	9
Coldharbour	2	1,829	915	-55	4,022	2,011	-5
Edlesborough	1	2,248	2,248	12	2,231	2,231	5
Elmhurst (in Aylesbury)	3	6,177	2,059	2	6,092	2,031	-4
Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	4,247	2,124	5	4,531	2,266	7
Grange (in Aylesbury)	2	4,627	2,314	15	4,491	2,246	6
Great Brickhill	1	1,854	1,854	-8	1,842	1,842	-13
Great Horwood	1	2,164	2,164	7	2,152	2,152	2
Grendon Underwood	1	1,913	1,913	-5	1,903	1,903	-10
Haddenham	3	6,381	2,127	6	6,439	2,146	1
Long Crendon	2	4,125	2,063	2	4,097	2,049	-3
Luffield Abbey	1	2,053	2,053	2	2,035	2,035	-4
Mandeville (in Aylesbury)	2	4,293	2,147	6	4,357	2,179	3

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Marsh Gibbon	1	1,850	1,850	-8	2,257	2,257	7
Newton Longville	1	1,980	1,980	-2	1,967	1,967	-7
Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	3,911	1,956	-3	4,065	2,033	-4
Pitstone	1	2,099	2,099	4	2,407	2,407	14
Quainton	1	1,988	1,988	-1	1,970	1,970	-7
Quarrendon (in Aylesbury)	2	3,582	1,791	-11	4,388	2,194	4
Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	3	6,597	2,199	9	6,521	2,174	3
Steeple Claydon	1	2,320	2,320	15	2,303	2,303	9
Stewkley	1	2,172	2,172	8	2,154	2,154	2
Stoke Mandeville	2	4,430	2,215	10	4,388	2,194	4
Tingewick	1	2,257	2,257	12	2,235	2,235	6
Waddesdon	1	1,867	1,867	-7	1,856	1,856	-12
Weedon	1	1,637	1,637	-19	2,447	2,447	16
Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-7	5,883	1,961	-7
Wing	1	2,149	2,149	7	2,130	2,130	1
Wingrave	1	2,014	2,014	0	2,004	2,004	-5
Winslow	2	3,906	1,953	-3	3,890	1,945	-8
Totals	59	118,923	-	-	124,942	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,016	-	-	2,118	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Aylesbury Vale 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.

Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association

Figure B2: Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Aston Clinton	3	6,957	2,319	13	6,920	2,307	7
Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	2	4,182	2,091	2	4,064	2,032	-6
Bierton	1	1,405	1,405	-31	2,016	2,016	-6
Brill	1	2,184	2,184	7	2,170	2,170	1
Buckingham North	2	4,406	2,203	7	4,536	2,268	5
Buckingham South	2	3,507	1,754	-14	4,121	2,061	-4
Cheddington	1	2,334	2,334	14	2,318	2,318	8
Coldharbour & Haydon Hill	3	4,582	1,527	-26	6,543	2,181	1
Edlesborough	1	2,246	2,246	10	2,231	2,231	4
Great Brickhill	1	2,306	2,306	12	2,290	2,290	6
Great Horwood	1	2,235	2,235	9	2,222	2,222	3
Grendon Underwood	1	1,966	1,966	-4	1,956	1,956	-9
Haddenham	2	4,605	2,303	12	4,647	2,324	8
Hawkslade (in Aylesbury)	2	4,737	2,369	16	4,655	2,328	8
Long Crendon	1	1,934	1,934	-6	1,921	1,921	-11
Luffield Abbey	1	2,161	2,161	5	2,134	2,134	-1
Mandeville & Elm Farm (in Aylesbury)	3	6,014	2,005	-2	6,029	2,010	-7
Manor Park & Central (in Aylesbury)	3	6,312	2,104	3	6,590	2,197	2
Marsh Gibbon	1	1,681	1,681	-18	2,088	2,088	-3
Meadowcroft (in Aylesbury)	3	6,283	2,095	2	6,486	2,162	0

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Newton Longville	1	1,980	1,980	-3	1,967	1,967	-9
Oakley	1	2,228	2,228	9	2,213	2,213	3
Pitstone	1	2,101	2,101	2	2,407	2,407	12
Quainton	1	2,303	2,303	12	2,282	2,282	6
Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	2	4,159	2,080	1	4,402	2,201	2
Steeple Claydon	1	2,065	2,065	1	2,050	2,050	-5
Stewkley	1	2,171	2,171	6	2,154	2,154	0
Tingewick	1	2,297	2,297	12	2,283	2,283	6
Turnfurlong Grange (in Aylesbury)	2	4,408	2,204	7	4,262	2,131	-1
Waddesdon & Stone	2	3,303	1,652	-19	4,138	2,069	-4
Watermead & The Coppice (in Aylesbury)	2	4,362	2,181	6	4,340	2,170	1
Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-8	5,883	1,961	-9
Whitchurch with Weedon	1	1,255	1,255	-39	2,068	2,068	-4
Wing	1	2,149	2,149	5	2,130	2,130	-1
Wingrave	1	2,014	2,014	-2	2,004	2,004	-7
Winslow	2	4,441	2,221	8	4,422	2,211	3
Totals	58	118,923	–	–	124,942	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,050	–	–	2,154	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association'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.

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.

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.

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.

APPENDIX D

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

Commission compliance with Code criteria

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