

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

Report to the Secretary of State for  
Environment, Transport and the Regions

*July 2000*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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





## Local Government Commission for England

25 July 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 20 July 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Test Valley under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in February 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 87-88) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Test Valley.

We recommend that Test Valley Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors representing 24 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that whole-council elections should take place every four years

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Test Valley on 20 July 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 22 February 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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

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

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 87-88) are that:

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

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

- **In 15 of the proposed 24 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward (Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams) expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for Romsey and Chilworth parish;**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 5 September 2000:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

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

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

*Notes: 1 Andover is only partly parished and comprises the six wards indicated above.*

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

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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Abbey	2	3,522	1,761	1	3,954	1,977	6
2	Alamein	3	5,685	1,895	9	5,611	1,870	0
3	Ampfield & Braishfield	1	1,750	1,750	1	1,756	1,756	-6
4	Amport	1	1,789	1,789	3	1,862	1,862	-1
5	Anna	2	2,909	1,455	-16	3,664	1,832	-2
6	Blackwater	2	4,048	2,024	17	4,026	2,013	7
7	Bourne Valley	1	1,703	1,703	-2	1,796	1,796	-4
8	Broughton & Stockbridge	2	3,654	1,827	5	3,697	1,849	-1
9	Charlton	1	1,679	1,679	-3	1,730	1,730	-8
10	Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams	3	5,053	1,684	-3	4,970	1,657	-12
11	Cupernham	2	3,961	1,981	14	3,965	1,983	6
12	Dun Valley	1	1,726	1,726	-1	1,799	1,799	-4
13	Harewood	1	1,795	1,795	3	1,738	1,738	-7
14	Harroway	3	4,825	1,608	-7	5,719	1,906	2
15	Kings Somborne & Michelmersh	1	1,905	1,905	10	1,942	1,942	4
16	Millway	3	5,484	1,828	5	5,838	1,946	4
17	North Baddesley	3	5,131	1,710	-1	5,561	1,854	-1
18	Over Wallop	1	1,148	1,148	-34	1,840	1,840	-2
19	Penton Bellinger	2	3,423	1,712	-1	3,555	1,778	-5
20	Romsey Extra	2	2,536	1,268	-27	4,044	2,022	8
21	St Mary's	3	5,890	1,963	13	5,848	1,949	4
22	Tadburn	2	4,259	2,130	23	4,015	2,008	7
23	Valley Park	3	3,990	1,330	-23	5,397	1,799	-4
24	Winton	3	5,926	1,975	14	6,128	2,043	9
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>83,791</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>90,455</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,873</b>	<b>-</b>

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

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

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Test Valley in Hampshire. We have now reviewed the 11 districts in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton city councils 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 was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Test Valley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 70). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in October 1980 (Report No. 397). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2005

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had 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.

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

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which 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, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to our 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 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Hampshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Test Valley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 25 October 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 22 February 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Test Valley in Hampshire*, and ended on 17 April 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Test Valley*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	2	3,173	1,587	-17	3,605	1,803	-12
2 Alamein	3	5,874	1,958	3	6,324	2,108	3
3 Anna	2	3,151	1,576	-17	3,883	1,942	-6
4 Blackwater	2	4,048	2,024	6	4,026	2,013	-2
5 Bourne Valley	1	1,701	1,701	-11	1,796	1,796	-13
6 Chilworth & Nursling	2	5,698	2,849	50	5,683	2,842	38
7 Cupernham	2	5,004	2,502	31	5,008	2,504	22
8 Dun Valley	1	1,726	1,726	-9	1,788	1,788	-13
9 Field	1	1,750	1,750	-8	1,756	1,756	-15
10 Harewood	2	2,612	1,306	-31	2,593	1,297	-37
11 Harroway	3	6,315	2,105	11	6,736	2,245	9
12 Kings Somborne & Michelmersh	1	1,905	1,905	0	1,942	1,942	-6
13 Millway	3	6,488	2,163	14	6,818	2,273	11
14 Nether Wallop & Broughton	1	1,523	1,523	-20	1,531	1,531	-26
15 North Baddesley	3	8,476	2,825	48	10,234	3,411	66
16 Over Wallop	1	1,148	1,148	-40	1,823	1,823	-11
17 Romsey Extra	1	2,536	2,536	33	4,044	4,044	97
18 St Mary's	3	5,512	1,837	-4	5,470	1,823	-11
19 Stockbridge	1	1,314	1,314	-31	1,311	1,311	-36
20 Tadburn	2	3,565	1,783	-6	3,360	1,680	-18
21 Tedworth	2	2,275	1,138	-40	2,395	1,198	-42
22 Weyhill	2	2,695	1,348	-29	2,803	1,402	-32
23 Winton	3	5,302	1,767	-7	5,526	1,842	-10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>83,791</b>	-	-	<b>90,455</b>	-	-
<b>Averages</b>	-	-	<b>1,904</b>	-	-	<b>2,056</b>	-

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

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

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 11 representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Test Valley Borough Council, and submissions from three parish councils, four political organisations, one MP and two local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Test Valley in Hampshire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and proposed a pattern of single and multi-member wards with multi-member wards more predominant in the urban part of the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in the towns of Andover and Romsey, affecting four wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Test Valley Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors, compared with the current 44, representing 24 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Romsey and Chilworth parishes.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Test Valley Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors, serving 24 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 24 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward, Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 16 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Test Valley Borough Council and the Commission.

### **Test Valley Borough Council**

23 The Borough Council broadly welcomed our draft recommendations but requested that we reconsider implementing their original scheme as it would provide more easily identifiable wards boundaries in Andover and Romsey and “...would be more likely to both reflect the identity and interests of the local community and to secure effective and convenient local government.”

24 Consequently, it proposed a number of minor amendments to our draft recommendations in the towns of Andover and Romsey. In Andover, it proposed that the northern boundary of the new Winton ward should be along the centre of both Salisbury Road and Western Road and that the boundary between St Mary’s ward should be along Junction Road to the Andover/Waterloo railway line. In Romsey, it proposed that the railway line be retained as the boundary between Abbey ward and Tadburn wards as “...it is not just a line on a map but is a real physical embankment division between the two areas.” It also argued that King’s Somborne & Michelmersh ward should retain its present name.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

25 During Stage Three, we received representations from one town council and eight parish councils. Romsey Town Council supported the Borough Council’s proposal for retaining the railway line as the boundary between Abbey, Tadburn and Cupernham wards. In particular, it supported the retention of the triangle which includes parts of Budds Lane, to the west of Greatbridge Road and to the east of the railway line, in Cupernham ward. Chilbolton Parish Council objected to our proposal to transfer Chilbolton parish to Broughton & Stockbridge ward, stating that the parish has extensive links with the parish of Wherwell and that the River Test links the two parishes, rather than dividing them. Instead, it proposed uniting the parishes of Chilbolton, Longstock, Leckford and Stockbridge with the proposed Harewood ward to form a two-member ward.

26 Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey parish councils both opposed our proposed two-member Penton Bellinger ward and single-member Amport ward. They argued that Penton Grafton shares a common boundary with Amport and that the two parishes have a great deal in common. Penton Grafton Parish Council argued that our draft proposals “...incur unnecessary confusion” and changes to long established ward names. Instead, they proposed that the existing Tedworth and Weyhill ward names be retained and that Tedworth ward be expanded to incorporate Thruxton and Monxton parishes. This proposal would also result in improved electoral equality for these two wards.

27 King’s Somborne and Michelmersh parish councils both opposed our draft proposal to change the name of the existing King’s Somborne & Michelmersh ward to King’s Somborne & Little Somborne. King’s Somborne Parish Council argued that “this name has stood the test of time and accurately reflects where the vast number of the electorate live.” Romsey Extra Parish Council, and Chilworth Parish Council both supported our draft recommendations for the borough while Abbots Ann Parish Council stated that they had no comment to make as we did not propose any change to the Anna ward.

## **Other Representations**

28 A further six representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups and residents. North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party largely supported our draft recommendations but argued that “rural” Smannell parish should be transferred from the “predominantly urban” Alamein ward to “rural” Bourne Valley ward. It also considered that its arguments “...were stronger than the arguments put forward by the Borough Council that the Smannell parish should be retained in Alamein for ecclesiastical purposes.” It objected to the retention of whole-council elections every four years and argued for elections by thirds believing them to provide “a more constant accountability for the local authority for the electorate and Council tax payer.”

29 Hampshire County Council did not make any specific comments regarding our draft recommendations for Test Valley Borough Council.

30 Romsey Constituency Labour Party “welcomed the changes being proposed to the boundaries” but objected to whole-council elections every four years. It argued that all parish councils should have annual elections as this “...would revive the importance of these bodies as a forum for local policy making...” and that “a revival of parish council elections would increase democracy and the number of people interested in contributing to it.” It also argued that there should be a system of annual elections at borough council level. The North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations but requested that we reconsider our draft recommendations in relation to the “arbitrary” boundaries between Millway, Winton and St Mary’s wards. However, it did not make any specific proposals for these areas.

31 A local resident queried the electorate figures provided by the Borough Council. In particular, he questioned the council’s forecast of 800 additional electors in Abbots Ann Parish and for an additional 1500 electors in Romsey Extra while arguing that a plan for 3000 new homes around Andover had been ignored. Another local resident proposed the same arrangements for the existing Tedworth and Weyhill wards as Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey parish councils. He proposed that only Thruxton and Monxton parishes should change wards so that the parishes of Fyfield, Kimpton and Shipton Bellinger form a single-member ward and the parishes of Ampport, Quarley, Grateley, Appleshaw, Penton Grafton, Penton Mewsey, Monxton and Thruxton form a two-member ward.

32 A local resident stated that the proposed ward name of “Penton Bellinger” “...is ridiculous and offensive to the people of this area”. She proposed “Anton Colling and Anna Bournes” as an alternative.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

33 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Test Valley is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the 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”.

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

35 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.

36 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, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

37 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 8 per cent from 83,791 to 90,455 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Andover, Baddesley and Romsey Extra. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

38 At Stage Three, a local resident queried the council’s electorate forecasts in Abbots Ann parish and Romsey Extra. He argued that the construction of new homes in these areas was still subject to detailed planning permission and a similar structure plan for new homes around Andover had not been included in the Council’s forecasts. However, the Borough Council have confirmed that the projected electorate figures provided were the best estimate that were available at the start of the review given the lack of information regarding the specific allocation of the

proposed developments in Andover but greater certainty regarding those in Romsey Extra. We therefore remain satisfied that the electorate forecasts represent the best estimates that were available at the time.

## **Council Size**

39 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 carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

40 Test Valley Borough Council is at present served by 44 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed an increase in council size from 44 to 48 due to the pockets of housing development which have occurred. It proposed allocating more councillors to these areas, to minimise the disruption to the remainder of the borough that would occur if councillors were redistributed throughout the borough and to provide more effective and convenient local government. This proposal received a degree of support from other respondents at Stage One, although a resident of Valley Park provided an alternative scheme for the borough under a council size of 43, but did not provide detailed warding arrangements for the towns of Romsey or Andover. In the light of this consensus and having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

41 At Stage Three, no further comments were received regarding this aspect of the review and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 48 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

42 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. It put forward a mixture of single- and multi-member wards which was supported by the late Michael Colvin, Member of Parliament for Romsey. We also received a number of partial schemes for the borough, but these either did not provide detailed warding patterns, or provided only limited argumentation in support of the proposals, making it difficult for us to understand fully the reasons why particular warding arrangements had been proposed.

43 We recognised the improved electoral equality achieved by the Borough Council's scheme, compared to the existing arrangements. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered changes to 16 ward boundaries and decided to move away slightly from the Borough Council's proposals in the towns of Andover and Romsey.

44 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three and judge that a minor modification should be made

to our proposed boundary in Andover, and that an existing ward name should be retained. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

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

45 Details of our final 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.

### **Andover (five wards)**

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

47 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed increasing the number of wards representing the town from five to six, five represented by three councillors and a new Charlton ward represented by a single councillor. It proposed a minor change to the boundary between Winton and St Mary's wards, so that all the properties in the Picket Twenty development would be united within St Mary's ward. It proposed amending the boundary between Winton and Millway wards, with the boundary running to the rear of the properties on the north side of Salisbury Road and to the west of Mead Close and Cress Gardens, thereby uniting the Redbridge Drive development within Winton ward. It proposed creating a new single-member Charlton ward, with the same boundaries as Charlton parish, and transferring that part of the Saxon Way housing development which is currently in Alamein ward to Harroway ward, in order to unite the housing estate within a single ward.

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

49 North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats supported the proposal combining the Saxon Way development, currently in Alamein ward, in a new Charlton ward, as put forward by the Labour

Party, and also proposed including the villages of Knights Enham and Alamein in this new ward. North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposals for the area.

50 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and were content to base our draft recommendations in Andover on the scheme put forward by the Borough Council, as we considered that it provided the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we recognised that the scheme put forward by the Labour Party utilised more easily identifiable boundaries and combined the more rural parts of Andover with surrounding rural wards, we considered that the resulting high levels of electoral inequality in Charlton and Harewood ward were unjustified in the light of the alternative warding arrangements available. We also noted that an additional councillor was allocated to this area. However, we proposed one minor amendment to the scheme put forward by the Borough Council. We proposed that the boundary between Millway and St Mary's wards run to the rear of the properties on the west side of Windsor Road, the south side of Osborne Road, the north side of Queens Avenue and along the footpath on the east side of Junction Road before rejoining the existing boundary on Western Avenue. We considered that this would improve the balance of electoral equality between the two wards while combining communities with similar interests. We welcomed further views on these proposals from interested parties during Stage Three. Our draft recommendations would result in Alamein, Millway, St Mary's and Winton wards having 9 per cent, 5 per cent, 14 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 9 per cent in 2004). Charlton ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent in 2004).

51 At Stage Three the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations but requested that we reconsider implementing its original scheme. It argued that its scheme had more easily identifiable ward boundaries in Andover which would better reflect the identity and interests of the local community and would not "materially alter the electoral equality". It proposed that the northern boundary of the Winton ward run along the centre of Salisbury Road and Western Road. It proposed that the boundary between St Mary's ward and Millway ward should run along the rear of the properties on the western side of Junction Road to Cross Lane then along the centre of Junction Road to the Andover/Waterloo railway line.

52 North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party proposed that Smannell parish should be transferred from Alamein ward to Bourne Valley ward, arguing that Smannell parish was rural and should therefore be united with the rural ward of Bourne Valley whereas Alamein ward was "predominantly urban". It also considered that this argument was stronger than the Council's, which contended that Smannell parish should remain in Alamein ward "for ecclesiastical purposes". It supported our other draft proposals for the Andover wards.

53 North West Hampshire Conservative Association requested that we reconsider our draft recommendations in relation to what it considered to be arbitrary boundaries between Millway, Winton and St Mary's wards as they "...do not take into account existing community boundaries...". However they did not make any specific alternative proposals.

54 We have carefully considered the representations received in this area and are confirming our draft recommendations as final subject to one minor amendment. Accordingly, we have

decided to adopt the Borough Council's proposal to run the boundary between St Mary's ward and Millway ward along the rear of the properties on the western side of Junction Road to Cross Lane then along the centre of Junction Road to the Andover/Waterloo railway line. We have been persuaded that this would provide a clearer boundary between the two wards and would better reflect community interest and identity in the area without significantly altering electoral equality. We have not been convinced that the northern boundary of the new Winton ward should run along the centre of Western Road as this would result in the small number of houses on Western Road being divided between different wards.

55 We considered the arguments put forward by North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party to transfer Smannell parish from Alamein ward. However, this would result in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality which cannot be justified in the light of the availability of alternative warding arrangements. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final for the remaining four wards.

56 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Millway, St Mary's and Winton wards would be 5 per cent, 13 per cent and 14 percent above the borough average respectively (4 per cent, 4 per cent and 9 per cent in 2004). Alamein ward and Harroway ward would be 9 per cent above and 7 per cent below the average respectively (equal to the average and 2 per cent in 2004).

### **Romsey (three wards)**

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

58 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the existing boundary along the railway line between Abbey and Cupernham wards should be retained, except in the north where it would follow the centre of Greatbridge Road, thereby uniting Budds Lane within Abbey ward. It proposed retaining the existing boundary between Tadburn and Abbey wards along the railway line. However, in order to take into account the extensive development that has occurred in Cupernham ward, the Council proposed that the boundary between Cupernham and Tadburn wards run along the centre of Winchester Hill. These proposals were supported by the Romsey Conservative Association, North West Hampshire Conservative Association and the late Michael Colvin, MP.

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

60 At Stage Three, the Borough Council objected to the proposed boundary between Abbey ward and Tadburn ward, proposing that the railway line remain as the boundary “...as it is not just a line on a map but is a real physical embankment division between the two areas.” Romsey Town Council supported the Borough Council’s submission for the railway line to be retained as the boundary, and, while acknowledging that this would result in worse electoral equality, argued that the case load in Abbey ward was significantly higher. It also “strongly recommended” that the railway line remain as the boundary between Abbey and Cupernham wards.

61 We have noted the views that the railway lines should remain as the boundaries between the three Romsey wards. However, in the light of the high level of electoral inequality that would result if the railway line was to remain as the boundary between Abbey and Tadburn wards and given that no alternatives to this proposal were submitted at Stage Three, we are content to endorse our draft recommendations. We are of the opinion that the two wards are relatively densely populated urban wards and have not been persuaded that our proposals would adversely affect the community interests and identity of the area. Similarly, we have not been persuaded that the railway line should be retained as the boundary between Abbey and Cupernham ward as our proposals unite the whole of Budds Lane in Abbey ward thereby improving community identity in this area. In the light of the evidence received, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for Abbey, Tadburn and Cupernham wards as final.

#### **Anna, Bourne Valley, Tedworth and Weyhill wards**

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

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

64 The Labour Party proposed no change to the existing Anna ward and argued that Smannell parish currently in the existing Alamein ward of Andover, should be transferred to Bourne Valley ward, as both areas are rural in nature. They proposed that Thrupton parish be transferred from Tedworth ward to Weyhill ward, and that Tedworth ward be renamed Shipton Bellinger ward. A resident of Redenham in Fyfield parish argued that Redenham has “nothing in common with Shipton Bellinger and Thrupton [parishes, and] should be in the same ward as Appleshaw”.

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

66 At Stage Three, three respondents objected to our draft recommendations for our proposed Penton Bellinger and Amport wards. Penton Grafton Parish Council stated that our proposals had “...not been properly thought out and are not a rational solution...”. It argued that Penton Grafton has a common boundary with Amport and that the two parishes have a great deal in common. It also argued that the Pentons have “...no practical synergy...” with the parishes of Shipton Bellinger, Kimpton and Fyfield and that our draft proposals “...incur unnecessary confusion” and changes to long established ward names. It proposed that the existing wards of Weyhill and Tedworth be largely retained, but that Weyhill ward be enlarged to include the parishes of Thrupton and Monxton. The amended Tedworth ward would comprise the parishes of Shipton Bellinger, Kimpton and Fyfield. The Parish Council contended that under their proposals electoral equality in the two wards would improve and only two parishes would be transferred instead of four as under our draft recommendations. It also argued that “old established and well known” ward names could remain unchanged. Penton Mewsey Parish Council supported this proposal and reiterated the arguments put forward by Penton Grafton Parish Council. A local resident proposed the same arrangement, arguing that the Borough Council’s proposals did not provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria or involve the least disruption to the existing warding arrangements.

67 We have carefully considered the submissions from the respondents in these wards. While we have noted the argumentation behind these proposals, we understand that the proposals have not been the subject of wider local discussion with neighbouring parishes and are therefore not convinced that they would be in the best interests of all the parishes concerned. We therefore remain of the opinion that our draft recommendations for Amport, Anna, Bourne Valley and Penton Bellinger wards represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and confirm them as final.

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

68 These four wards lie across the middle of the borough. Harewood ward (comprising the parishes of Barton Stacey, Bullington, Chilbolton, Longparish and Wherwell) is currently

represented by two councillors and has 31 per cent fewer electors than the borough average. Nether Wallop & Broughton ward (comprising the parishes of Nether Wallop and Broughton), Over Wallop ward (comprising the parish of Over Wallop) and Stockbridge ward (comprising the parishes of Bossington, Houghton, Leckford, Longstock and Stockbridge) are currently each represented by a single councillor and have 20 per cent, 40 per cent and 31 per cent fewer electors than the borough average respectively (26 per cent, 11 per cent and 36 per cent in 2004).

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

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

71 At Stage Three, Chilbolton Parish Council opposed our draft proposal to separate it from the parish of Wherwell, arguing that the River Test linked rather than divided them. It proposed that the proposed Harewood ward be joined by the parishes of Chilbolton, Leckford, Longstock and Stockbridge to form a two-member ward. It argued that this would “preserve historic links and current common concerns” and that it would unify Test Valley parishes with the local centre of Stockbridge.

72 Having carefully considered the representations received, we remain of the opinion that our draft recommendations would best satisfy the statutory criteria. We note the arguments of Chilbolton Parish Council but have not been persuaded to adopt its proposal as it would split an existing group of parishes. We have not been persuaded that there is sufficient support for its proposal or that it has been widely consulted on during Stage Three. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the proposed wards of Harewood, Broughton & Stockbridge and Over Wallop as final.

### **Blackwater, Dun Valley and Kings Somborne & Michelmersh wards**

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

74 The Borough Council proposed retaining these three wards on their existing boundaries as they have “worked well for the past twenty years and the projected electorate illustrates that they will continue to be viable in 2004.” However, we were under the impression that it proposed that Kings Somborne & Michelmersh ward be renamed Kings Somborne & Little Somborne ward. Romsey Conservative Association and North West Hampshire Conservative Association supported the proposals for the retention of the current warding arrangements.

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

76 At Stage Three we received several submissions opposing the proposed ward name of King’s Somborne & Little Somborne. King’s Somborne Parish Council argued that the existing ward name should be retained and was “disturbed to hear that there is suggestion to change the name of the ward” contending that “this name has stood the test of time and accurately reflects where the vast number of the electorate live.” Michelmersh Parish Council also objected to the proposal arguing that Michelmersh and King’s Somborne were “the two ‘centres’ of population” in the ward. Test Valley Borough Council “strongly refute[d]” any suggestion that it had proposed a ward name change.

77 In the light of the opposition to the proposed ward name of King’s Somborne & Little Somborne, we propose retaining the existing ward name of King’s Somborne & Michelmersh. In the absence of any further proposals for these wards we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

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

78 These four wards lie in the south-east of the borough, with Romsey Extra encircling the town of Romsey. The two-member ward of Chilworth & Nursling (comprising the parishes of

Chilworth and Nursling & Rownhams) is currently under-represented by 50 per cent (38 per cent in 2004) and considerable growth is forecast in this area over the next five years. The single-member wards of Field (comprising the parishes of Ampfield and Braishfield) and Romsey Extra (comprising the parish of Romsey Extra) currently have 8 per cent fewer and 33 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively (15 per cent and 97 per cent in 2004). The three-member ward of North Baddesley (comprising the parish of North Baddesley) currently has 48 per cent more electors than the borough average (66 per cent in 2004).

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

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

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

82 At Stage Three the Borough Council broadly supported our proposals and Chilworth Parish Council and Romsey Extra Parish Council both supported our draft recommendations. In the light of this support and the absence of any further submissions at Stage Three, we propose confirming them as final.

## **Electoral Cycle**

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

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

85 At Stage Three, North West Hampshire Constituency Labour Party reiterated their support for elections by thirds. Romsey Constituency Labour Party argued that all parish councils should have annual elections as they would “revive the importance of these bodies as a forum for local policy making”. It also stated its support for a system of annual elections at Borough Council Level and maintained that in areas of dense population, “it would increase voters involvement with their elected representative...” However, given the lack of cross-party support and limited local consensus for a move to elections by thirds, we therefore propose retaining the existing cycle of whole-council elections for the Borough Council. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final.

## **Conclusions**

86 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- In Andover town we propose that the boundary between Millway and St Mary’s wards be modified to include Junction Road in St Mary’s ward;
- We proposed retaining the existing ward name of King’s Somborne & Michelmersh.

87 We conclude that, in Test Valley:

- there should be an increase in council size from 44 to 48;
- there should be 24 wards, one more than at present;

- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified;
- whole-council elections should be held every four years.

88 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

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

89 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 15 to nine, with four wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with only one ward, Chilworth, Nursling and Rownhams, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average and no wards varying by more than 20 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

#### **Final Recommendation**

Test Valley Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. Whole-council elections should be held every four years.

### **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

90 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough.

Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Chilworth and Romsey parishes to reflect the proposed borough wards.

91 The parish of Chilworth is currently served by nine councillors representing two wards. Chilworth parish ward is currently represented by six councillors and Valley Park parish ward is currently represented by three councillors. We propose that this level of representation should be retained, but that Valley Park parish ward be renamed Chilworth North parish ward in order to avoid confusion with the Valley Park ward of North Baddesley parish, as these parish wards will be combined to form the proposed Valley Park borough ward. At Stage Three we received no further comments and are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

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

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

93 At Stage Three we received no further comments regarding the arrangements for Romsey. We are therefore content to put forward these recommendations as part of our final recommendations.

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

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

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

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Test Valley*

## 6 NEXT STEPS

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

96 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 5 September 2000.

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Test Valley: Detailed Mapping**

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

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Valley Park ward.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Romsey town.

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

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Test Valley: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Valley Park ward.*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Romsey town.*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Test Valley

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of two wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to retain the existing ward name of King's Somborne & Michelmersh.

*Figure B1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Millway	Millway ward (part)
St. Mary's	Millway ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Winton ward (part)

*Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Millway	3	5,448	1,816	5	5,802	1,934	3
St Mary's	3	5,926	1,975	14	5,884	1,961	5

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

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

