

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Lichfield in Staffordshire

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

October 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Lichfield in Staffordshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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



Local Government Commission for England

10 October 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 28 September 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Lichfield under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 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 113-114) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Lichfield.

We recommend that Lichfield District Council should be served by 56 councillors representing 26 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 the Council should continue to hold whole council elections.

The Local Government Act 2000, contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements 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 District 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Lichfield on 28 September 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 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 Lichfield:

- **in 13 of the 27 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and five 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 16 wards and by more than 20 per cent in seven wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 113-114) are that:

- **Lichfield District Council should have 56 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 26 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

These 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 19 of the proposed 26 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only three wards, Fazeley, Little Aston and Longdon, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the towns of Burntwood and Lichfield;**
- **revised warding arrangements for Drayton Bassett Parish Council;**
- **revised warding arrangements for Hammerwich Parish Council;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Burntwood Town Council;**
- **a reduction in the number of councillors serving Lichfield City Council;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Longdon Parish Council.**

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 21 November 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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	All Saints (Burntwood)	2	All Saints ward (part of the proposed All Saints parish ward of Burntwood parish); Highfield ward (part – part of the proposed All Saints parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2
2	Alrewas & Fradley	3	Alrewas ward (part the parish of Alrewas & Fradley)	Map 2
3	Armitage with Handsacre	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Armitage & Handsacre)	Map 2
4	Boley Park (Lichfield)	3	Central ward (part – part of the proposed Boley Park parish ward of Lichfield parish); St John's ward (part – part of the proposed Boley Park parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2
5	Boney Hay (Burntwood)	2	Boney Hay ward (part of the proposed Boney Hay parish ward of Burntwood parish); Chase Terrace ward (part – part of the proposed Boney Hay parish ward of Burntwood parish); Highfield ward (part – part of the proposed Boney Hay parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2
6	Bourne Vale	1	Bourne Vale ward (part – the parishes of Hints, Swinfen Packington and Weeford and the proposed Village parish ward of Drayton Bassett parish)	Map 2 and Map A2
7	Burntwood Central (Burntwood)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Central parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2
8	Chadsmead (Lichfield)	2	Chadsmead ward (part of the proposed Chadsmead parish ward of Lichfield parish); Curborough ward (part – part of the proposed Chadsmead parish ward of Lichfield parish); Leomansley ward (part – part of the proposed Chadsmead parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2
9	Chase Terrace (Burntwood)	3	Chase Terrace ward (part – the proposed Chase Terrace parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2
10	Chasetown (Burntwood)	2	Chasetown ward (part – part of the proposed Chasetown parish ward of Burntwood parish); Hammerwich ward (part – the proposed Pool parish ward of Hammerwich parish)	Large map and Map 2
11	Colton & Mavesyn Ridware	1	Colton & Ridwares ward (part – the parishes of Colton and Mavesyn Ridware)	Map 2
12	Curborough (Lichfield)	3	Curborough ward (part – the proposed Curborough parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
13 Fazeley	3	Drayton Bassett ward (part – the proposed Coleshill parish ward of Drayton Bassett parish); Fazeley ward (Fazeley parish)	Map 2 and Map A2
14 Hammerwich	2	Hammerwich ward (part – the proposed Hammerwich and Triangle parish wards of Hammerwich parish)	Map 2
15 Highfield (Burntwood)	2	Highfield ward (part – the proposed Highfield parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2
16 King’s Bromley	1	Colton & Ridwares ward (part – the parish of Hamstall Ridware); King’s Bromley ward (part – the parishes of Curborough & Elmhurst and King’s Bromley)	Map 2
17 Leomansley (Lichfield)	3	Central ward (part – part of the proposed Leomansley parish ward of Lichfield parish); Leomansley ward (part – part of the proposed Leomansley parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2
18 Little Aston	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Little Aston parish ward of Shenstone parish)	Map 2
19 Longdon	1	King’s Bromley ward (part – the parish of Farewell & Chorley); Longdon ward (Longdon parish)	Map 2
20 Mease & Tame	2	Mease Valley ward (the parishes of Clifton Campville, Edingale, Harlaston and Thorpe Constantine); Tame ward (the parishes of Elford and Wiggington & Hopwas)	Map 2
21 St John’s (Lichfield)	3	St John’s ward (part – the proposed St John’s parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2
22 Shenstone	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Shenstone parish ward of Shenstone parish and Wall parish)	Map 2
23 Stonnall	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Stonnall parish ward of Shenstone parish)	Map 2
24 Stowe (Lichfield)	3	Central ward (part – part of the proposed Stowe parish ward of Lichfield parish); Curborough ward (part – part of the proposed Stowe parish ward of Lichfield parish); Stowe ward (part of the proposed Stowe parish ward of Lichfield parish)	Large map and Map 2
25 Summerfield (Burntwood)	2	Chasetown ward (part – part of the proposed Summerfield parish ward of Burntwood parish); Summerfield ward (part of the proposed Summerfield parish ward of Burntwood parish)	Large map and Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
26	Whittington	2	Alrewas ward (part – the parish of Streethay); Whittington ward (the parishes of Fisherwick and Whittington)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Lichfield

	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	All Saints	2	3,006	1,503	14	3,111	1,556	9
2	Alrewas & Fradley	3	3,401	1,134	-14	4,239	1,413	-1
3	Armitage with Handsacre	3	3,989	1,330	1	4,457	1,486	4
4	Boley Park (Lichfield)	3	4,011	1,337	1	4,187	1,396	-2
5	Boney Hay (Burntwood)	2	2,617	1,309	-1	2,685	1,343	-6
6	Bourne Vale	1	1,384	1,384	5	1,382	1,382	-3
7	Burntwood Central (Burntwood)	2	2,701	1,351	2	2,797	1,399	-2
8	Chadsmead (Lichfield)	2	2,802	1,401	6	2,814	1,407	-1
9	Chase Terrace (Burntwood)	3	3,653	1,218	-8	4,148	1,383	-3
10	Chasetown (Burntwood)	2	2,958	1,479	12	2,998	1,499	5
11	Colton & Mavesyn Ridware	1	1,384	1,384	5	1,571	1,571	10
12	Curborough (Lichfield)	3	3,979	1,326	1	4,066	1,355	-5
13	Fazeley	3	3,659	1,220	-8	3,820	1,273	-11
14	Hammerwich	2	2,993	1,497	13	3,098	1,549	9
15	Highfield (Burntwood)	2	2,594	1,297	-2	3,050	1,525	7
16	King's Bromley	1	1,319	1,319	0	1,460	1,460	2
17	Leomansley (Lichfield)	3	3,198	1,066	-19	4,264	1,421	0
18	Little Aston	2	2,247	1,124	-15	2,520	1,260	-12
19	Longdon	1	1,531	1,531	16	1,585	1,585	11

	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 (%)
20	Mease & Tame	2	2,677	1,339	1	2,948	1,474	3
21	St John's (Lichfield)	3	4,137	1,379	5	4,472	1,491	5
22	Shenstone	2	2,688	1,344	2	2,819	1,410	-1
23	Stonnall	1	1,281	1,281	-3	1,374	1,374	-4
24	Stowe (Lichfield)	3	4,174	1,391	5	4,312	1,437	1
25	Summerfield (Burntwood)	2	2,894	1,447	10	2,932	1,466	3
26	Whittington	2	2,596	1,298	-2	2,730	1,365	-4
	Totals	56	73,873	-	-	79,839	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,319	-	-	1,426	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lichfield 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Lichfield in Staffordshire. We have now reviewed the eight districts in Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Lichfield. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1976 (Report No. 138). The electoral arrangements of Staffordshire County Council were last reviewed in July 1980 (Report No. 386). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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 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 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 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 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.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Staffordshire 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. 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 Orders 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 the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 28 September 1999, when we wrote to Lichfield District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 10 January 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 9 May 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Lichfield in Staffordshire*, and ended on 3 July 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 district of Lichfield is situated in the south-east of Staffordshire and is bordered by the West Midlands to the south, Cannock Chase to the west, Stafford and East Staffordshire to the north, and South Derbyshire and Tamworth to the west. It includes the town of Burntwood and the historic cathedral city of Lichfield. The remainder of the district is largely rural and agricultural in character, with some manufacturing industry. There is substantial residential development throughout the area, based on the district's proximity to Birmingham and the West Midlands, with which the district has good road and rail links. The area is wholly parished, containing 28 parishes.

14 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'.

15 The electorate of the district is 73,873 (February 1999). The Council presently has 56 members who are elected from 27 wards, 14 of which are rural in character, with the remainder being relatively urban. Nine of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 11 are each represented by two councillors and seven are single-member wards. Whole-council elections take place every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate of Lichfield district, with around 14 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Central and Highfield wards.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,319 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,426 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 13 of the 27 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, five wards by more than 20 per cent and four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Central ward where each councillor represents 71 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Lichfield

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	All Saints	2	1,606	803	-39	1,659	830	-42
2	Alrewas	3	3,805	1,268	-4	4,679	1,560	9
3	Armitage with Handsacre	3	3,989	1,330	1	4,457	1,486	4
4	Boney Hay (Burntwood)	2	2,437	1,219	-8	2,497	1,249	-12
5	Bourne Vale	1	1,530	1,530	16	1,529	1,529	7
6	Central (Lichfield)	2	4,520	2,260	71	4,812	2,406	69
7	Chadsmead (Lichfield)	2	2,473	1,237	-6	2,477	1,239	-13
8	Chase Terrace (Burntwood)	3	3,735	1,245	-6	4,234	1,411	-1
9	Chasetown (Burntwood)	3	3,338	1,113	-16	3,373	1,124	-21
10	Colton & Ridwares	1	1,639	1,637	24	1,858	1,858	30
11	Curborough (Lichfield)	3	4,224	1,408	7	4,314	1,438	1
12	Fazeley	3	3,513	1,171	-11	3,673	1,224	-14
13	Hammerwich	3	3,305	1,102	-16	3,421	1,140	-20
14	Highfield (Burntwood)	2	4,092	2,046	55	4,604	2,302	61
15	King's Bromley	1	1,336	1,336	1	1,469	1,469	3
16	Leomansley (Lichfield)	2	2,437	1,219	-8	3,364	1,682	18
17	Little Aston	2	2,247	1,124	-15	2,520	1,260	-12
18	Longdon	1	1,259	1,259	-5	1,289	1,289	-10
19	Mease Valley	1	1,414	1,414	7	1,632	1,632	14
20	Redslade (Burntwood)	2	2,701	1,351	2	2,797	1,399	-2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
21	St John's (Lichfield)	3	5,330	1,777	35	5,727	1,909	34
22	Shenstone	2	2,688	1,344	2	2,819	1,410	-1
23	Stonnall	1	1,281	1,281	-3	1,374	1,374	-4
24	Stowe (Lichfield)	3	3,317	1,106	-16	3,421	1,140	-20
25	Summerfield (Burntwood)	2	2,202	1,101	-17	2,234	1,117	-22
26	Tame	1	1,263	1,263	-4	1,316	1,316	-8
27	Whittington	2	2,192	1,096	-17	2,290	1,145	-20
	Totals	56	73,873	-	-	79,839	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,319	-	-	1,426	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lichfield District Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in All Saints ward were relatively over-represented by 39 per cent, while electors in Central ward were significantly under-represented by 71 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received nine representations, including district-wide schemes from Lichfield District Council and Lichfield District Labour Party. We also received representations from six parish and town councils and from a local resident. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Lichfield in Staffordshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were substantially based on the District Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, provided a pattern of two- and three-member wards in Burntwood and Lichfield, and a mix of single-, two- and three-member wards in the rest of the district. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in Burntwood Town and in the south-west of the district, affecting seven wards, and put forward our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Lichfield District Council should be served by 57 councillors, compared with the current 56, representing 25 wards, two less than at present;
- the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Burntwood Town Council, Lichfield City Council and Drayton Bassett Parish Council. There should be a reduction in the number of councillors serving Lichfield City Council and an increase in the number of councillors serving Longdon Parish Council.

Draft Recommendation

Lichfield District Council should comprise 57 councillors, serving 25 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 21 of the 25 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only two wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 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 Lichfield District Council and the Commission.

Lichfield District Council

22 The District Council welcomed those parts of our draft recommendations which matched its Stage One proposals. However, the Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for the remainder of the district, particularly in the town of Burntwood and the south-west area of the district. These proposals would involve changes to the boundaries of seven of the proposed wards and would result in a 56-member council, as at present.

23 Electoral equality would be marginally worse under the District Council's proposals than our draft recommendations, resulting in seven wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve over the next five years to vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average in only three wards.

Lichfield District Labour Party

24 Lichfield District Labour Party largely supported our proposals. However, it expressed concerns over our proposals for the south of Burntwood Town and the adjoining rural area, and for the eastern rural area. It opposed our proposed ward names in southern Burntwood and suggested that Mease & Tame ward could be divided into two single-member wards.

Parish and Town Councils

25 We received representations from eight parish and town councils and from Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association which was generally supportive of our proposals. The Parish Council of Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay reiterated its Stage One proposal that none of its parish wards should be linked with other parish areas. Burntwood Town Council supported our draft recommendations and put forward alternative district and parish ward names for the town. Curborough/Elmhurst/Farewell/Chorley Parish Council stated that our recommendations were "not against the wishes" of the joint Parish Council. Kings Bromley Parish Council and Lichfield City Council supported our proposals for their respective parishes. Hammerwich Parish Council opposed our proposals and supported the District Council's proposals for the area on grounds of community identity. Shenstone and Wall parish councils opposed the recommendations for Shenstone parish and supported the District Council's proposals on grounds of community interest.

Other Representations

26 A further five representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a local organisation, a Member of Parliament, from two MEPs in a joint submission and a resident.

27 The Burntwood Chase Partnership opposed our proposals for Burntwood preferring to retain the existing boundaries of Burntwood Town. Michael Fabricant MP supported the District Council's proposals, particularly regarding Burntwood and Hammerwich. We received a joint representation from two Conservative MEPs representing the West Midlands area who supported the District Council's proposals. A local resident opposed our proposals for Shenstone and Stonnall wards, supporting the District Council's proposal to retain their existing boundaries. In addition, a local resident argued that the district should move to annual or two-yearly elections.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Lichfield 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”.

29 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.

30 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.

31 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

32 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 8 per cent from 73,873 to 79,839 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Leomansley ward, although a significant amount is also expected in the more rural Alrewas ward. The Council 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. 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.

33 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

34 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.

35 Lichfield District Council is at present served by 56 councillors. At Stage One the District Council proposed that the existing council size should be retained, arguing that the existing electoral arrangements have “worked well over the years” and that it is not “necessary or desirable” to make radical changes to the council size. The Labour Party proposed that the council size should be reduced from 56 to 52 members.

36 In our draft recommendations we substantially adopted the District Council’s scheme. However, we moved away from it in Burntwood Town and in the south of the district. In order to provide the correct level of representation in Burntwood, we proposed increasing the council size by one to 57. We considered that this would achieve the best balance between securing reasonable electoral equality and reflecting the interests and identities of local communities. We were not persuaded by the Labour Party’s proposal to reduce the existing council size, particularly given that its scheme would result in worse electoral equality than the District Council’s scheme, did not receive cross-party consensus, and there was limited evidence as to the way in which a 52-member council would deliver more effective and convenient local government.

37 At Stage Three, the District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for a 56-member council, arguing that its proposals avoided any “upward creep” in council size. In the light of the further evidence submitted during consultation, we have decided to modify our draft recommendations for Burntwood Town and the south-west of the district and to adopt the District Council’s proposals for that area. As a consequence we have decided to retain the existing council size of 56 members as part of our final recommendations.

Electoral Arrangements

38 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Labour Party. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

39 We considered that the District Council’s proposals would represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria for the majority of the district, and we substantially endorsed those proposals. We also considered that the District Council’s proposals would provide the best reflection of community identities and interests across the district, by largely respecting parish and parish ward boundaries in the rural area and by offering clearly identifiable boundaries within the towns of Burntwood and Lichfield. They would also result in improved levels of electoral equality.

40 The Labour Party offered little evidence in support of its proposal to reduce the size of the District Council and proposed a scheme with relatively poor electoral equality. It proposed

combining rural and urban areas, which we did not consider would best reflect the identities and interests of the communities involved. Nevertheless, there was a degree of consensus between the schemes submitted by the District Council and the Labour Party and, where possible, we reflected this in our draft recommendations. However, we proposed departing from the District Council's scheme in Burntwood and the south-western rural area of the district in order to better reflect what we considered to be the identities and interests of communities.

41 At Stage Three, the District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for Burntwood and the south-western area of the district. These proposals received local support as better representing community identity within the area, while our draft recommendations received considerable opposition. We have therefore been persuaded to adopt the District Council's proposals for this area. In our draft recommendations report we noted our concern that the Council's proposal to link a small part of Hammerwich parish with the town of Burntwood would not offer the best representation of community identities and interests. However, given the local cross-party support for this move we have been persuaded that it would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

42 The District Council's proposals would also offer a greater number of two-member wards, which it argued might be of use should two-yearly elections be introduced in future. The Labour Party reiterated its argument that a scheme of two-member wards would be ideal in order to "balance numbers of electors to councillors". It also raised concerns regarding a perceived contradiction between our recommendation that Kings Bromley and Longdon be represented by two single-member wards while Mease and Tame would be represented by a two-member ward. We have considered the warding arrangements in both these areas individually and consider that our recommendations offer the best representation of these areas. Our proposals have received support from other respondents and we recognise that single-member Mease and Tame wards would have significantly poorer levels of electoral equality than the proposed two-member Mease & Tame ward. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

43 It has been argued that ward boundaries should reflect parliamentary boundaries; however, we are not required to have regard to parliamentary constituency boundaries in formulating recommendations for district warding arrangements. Indeed, any new district ward boundaries will be taken into account by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission as part of its current Fifth General Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.

44 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

Burntwood (seven wards)

- (a) Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, Highfield and Redslade wards;
- (b) All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield wards.

Lichfield (six wards)

- (c) Chadsmead, Curborough and Leomansley wards;
- (d) Central, St John's and Stowe wards.

The rural areas

- (e) Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Ridwares, King's Bromley and Longdon wards;
- (f) Alrewas, Bourne Vale, Fazeley, Mease Valley, Tame and Whittington wards;
- (g) Hammerwich, Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall 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.

Burntwood (seven wards)

Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, Highfield and Redslade wards

46 The town of Burntwood comprises a single parish divided into seven parish wards which are the same as the district wards. The existing district wards of Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, Highfield and Redslade cover the northern area of Burntwood Town. Boney Hay, Highfield and Redslade wards are each represented by two councillors, while Chase Terrace ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements of a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the district average by 8 per cent, 6 per cent, 55 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Chase Terrace ward, to vary by 1 per cent from the district average in 2004, while Redslade ward would continue to vary by 2 per cent from the district average. The level of electoral equality in Boney Hay and Highfield wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 12 per cent and 61 per cent respectively in 2004.

47 At Stage One the District Council proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Boney Hay, Highfield and Redslade each being represented by two councillors and the proposed Chase Terrace ward being represented by three councillors. It proposed that Boney Hay ward should comprise the existing Boney Hay ward with that part of Chase Terrace ward that includes houses on the western side of Rugeley Road, to the north of the High Street and that part of the existing Highfield ward that includes houses on the eastern side of Ogle Hay Road, to the north of Slade Avenue. It proposed that Chase Terrace ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Chase Terrace ward which it considered to be a "well-defined" ward.

48 The District Council proposed that Highfield ward should comprise the remainder of Highfield ward, less that part bounded by Highfield Road and Rugeley Road. It proposed that Redslade ward should retain its existing boundaries, arguing that the ward "is well-defined and

requires no adjustment”. Under the District Council’s scheme for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality.

49 At Stage One the Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, St Matthew’s and Slade each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Boney Hay ward should comprise the northern parts of the existing Boney Hay and Chase Terrace wards, to be named Boney Hay or Chase Terrace North ward. It proposed that Chase Terrace ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Chase Terrace ward and the western part of the existing Redslade ward. It proposed that St Matthews ward should comprise the majority of the existing Highfield ward while Slade ward should comprise the remainder of Redslade and the western part of Boney Hay ward. It suggested that the ward could be named Slade or Burntwood Central. This scheme, for a 52-member council, would offer improved levels of electoral equality.

50 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we considered that both the District Council’s and the Labour Party’s proposals had merit. Both schemes provided an improved level of electoral equality, and utilised strong boundaries based on existing polling districts. However, we considered that the District Council’s proposals for this area would offer the better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we had reservations regarding the Labour Party’s proposed Chase Terrace ward which would have a high electoral variance. We did not consider that the level of electoral inequality was justified given the alternative scheme available. However, as a result of our proposals in the south of Burntwood, we proposed amending the District Council’s proposed Highfield ward in order to include that part of the existing Highfield ward to the south and west of Highfield Road and Rugeley Road to create a modified three-member Highfield ward.

51 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, Highfield and Redslade wards by 1 per cent, 6 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Boney Hay and Highfield wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 4 per cent and 7 per cent respectively in 2004. The electoral variance in Chase Terrace and Redslade wards would improve to 1 per cent and equal the district average respectively.

52 At Stage Three the District Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for this area. It pointed out that the modifications to its proposed Highfield ward that we had put forward as our draft recommendations were only suggested as a result of our proposals in the south of the town “not because it produces a better result per se”. It also stated that its Stage One proposals for Highfield ward offer good electoral equality and argued that its proposal “is preferable in terms of size and shape of the ward, community interest and identity”. Its proposed Highfield ward would also be a two-member ward which might assist should two-yearly elections be introduced in future. The Labour Party and Burntwood Town Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. Burntwood Town Council proposed renaming the proposed ward of Redslade as Burntwood Central.

53 Having carefully considered all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to substantially to endorse our draft recommendation for Boney Hay, Chase Terrace and Redslade wards as they would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality and have received local support. However, we recognise that there has been considerable opposition to our recommendations for the south of Burntwood and the south-western rural area of the district and, as a result of adopting the District Council's proposals in that area, we have also decided to adopt the District Council's Stage Three proposals for Highfield ward. The proposal offers reasonable levels of electoral equality, clear and easily identifiable boundaries and has received a measure of local support. Accordingly, we are persuaded that the District Council's scheme would offer the best reflection of community identities and interests. We have also decided to adopt the Town Council's proposal that Redslade ward should be renamed Burntwood Central.

54 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Boney Hay, Burntwood Central, Chase Terrace and Highfield wards by 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 8 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Boney Hay and Highfield wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 6 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004 respectively. The electoral variance of Chase Terrace ward would improve to 3 per cent, while continuing to vary by 2 per cent from the district average in Burntwood Central ward.

All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield wards

55 The existing wards of All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield cover the southern area of Burntwood Town. All Saints and Summerfield wards are each currently represented by two councillors, while Chasetown ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements of a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the district average by 39 per cent, 16 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 42 per cent, 21 per cent and 22 per cent in 2004.

56 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with the proposed wards of All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that the boundaries of Burntwood should be extended in order to address inequalities in the existing Hammerwich ward. It argued that, while other options had been considered, the Council had been persuaded that the high level of electoral variance in Hammerwich ward would best be resolved by including part of the existing Hammerwich ward (and parish) in Chasetown ward. As a result of this proposal, the electorate of Burntwood would be increased, giving the correct level of councillor representation that it merits in relation to the rest of the district.

57 The District Council proposed that All Saints ward should comprise the existing All Saints ward together with that part of the existing Highfield ward bounded by Highfield Road and Rugeley Road. It proposed that Chasetown ward should combine the majority of the existing Chasetown ward, less that part to the east of Avon Road, Birch Avenue, Oakdene Road and Queen Street, with that part of Hammerwich ward to the south of Highfield Road. It

recommended that Summerfield ward should contain the existing Summerfield ward with the remainder of Chasetown ward. These proposals resulted in improved levels of electoral equality under a 56-member council.

58 At Stage One, the Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with the proposed wards of Chasetown, Summerfield and Swan each being represented by two councillors. It suggested that Chasetown ward should comprise the majority of Chasetown ward while Swan ward should comprise the existing All Saints ward, with that part of Highfield ward bounded by Highfield Road and those properties on Rugeley Road. It proposed that Summerfield ward should combine the existing Summerfield ward and the remainder of Chasetown ward. Under the Labour Party's scheme for a 52-member council, there would be improved electoral equality.

59 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we noted the merit in both the District Council's and the Labour Party's schemes. However, the Labour Party's proposals would offer relatively poor electoral equality under a 57-member scheme. We were also concerned about the District Council's proposal to include a small part of Hammerwich ward in Chasetown ward. This proposal would have transferred the small, north-western corner of Hammerwich parish, comprising five roads, to a ward within the town of Burntwood. We recognised that the north-western part of Hammerwich parish is of a similar suburban character to the adjoining urban wards of Chasetown and Summerfield. We therefore considered that the whole of the suburban area of the parish should be combined with adjacent areas of Burntwood Town in order to retain the community links that appeared to exist between the parish wards and the town. We considered that this proposal would achieve the best balance between securing reasonable electoral equality and reflecting the interests and identities of local communities, while utilising Hospital Road and Ogle Hay Road as easily identifiable boundaries.

60 As a result of our proposal to combine the more urban part of Hammerwich with parts of Burntwood Town, we put forward our own proposals for the south of Burntwood as draft recommendations, to provide wards with good electoral equality and clear boundaries. Our proposals reflected elements of both the District Council's and the Labour Party's schemes. We proposed that Chasetown ward should comprise the northern part of the existing ward, while that part of Hammerwich parish to the north-west of Ogle Hay and Hospital roads should be linked with the remainder of the existing Chasetown ward and that part of the existing Summerfield ward to the south of Chase Road and Queen Street, to form a new three-member Hammerwich Triangle ward. We proposed that Summerfield ward should comprise the existing All Saints ward and the remainder of the existing Summerfield ward.

61 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Chasetown and Hammerwich Triangle wards by 6 per cent and 7 per cent from the district average, while equalling the district average in Summerfield ward. This level of electoral equality was projected to improve over the next five years in Chasetown and Hammerwich Triangle wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 1 per cent and 4 per cent respectively by 2004. The electoral variance of Summerfield ward was projected to deteriorate marginally to vary by 5 per cent from the district average in 2004.

62 At Stage Three, the District Council resubmitted its Stage One proposals for All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield wards. It stated that our draft recommendations for this area were “markedly less desirable in terms of community interest and identity” arguing that the extended area of Hammerwich that we proposed including in Hammerwich Triangle ward does not have an affinity with Burntwood. It argued that the small area of Hammerwich that it proposed including in Chasetown ward is “similar in character to the western part of Chasetown”. It expressed particular concern regarding the proposal to divide the southern area of the existing Chasetown ward, arguing that this would “not be helpful” to community groups who represent the whole Chasetown area. It also argued that there “is no tangible community of interest or identity” between the existing All Saints ward and that part of the existing Summerfield ward which we proposed combining.

63 The Labour Party commented that our draft recommendations for this area “are probably the best that can be arranged” although it raised some concerns regarding our proposals for Hammerwich and opposed the name of Hammerwich Triangle ward, suggesting it be renamed Chasetown South & Triangle or Ridgeway. It argued that there is “a difference” between the village of Hammerwich and that part of the parish on the edge of Burntwood, but stated that residents of Chasetown might be concerned about “Hammerwich taking them over”. It also proposed renaming the proposed Chasetown ward as Chasetown North and the proposed Summerfield ward as Burntwood South. It also suggested an alternative under which All Saints ward would comprise All Saints ward and the Gorsty part of Highfield ward, as it had proposed at Stage One, which would be very similar to the District Council’s proposed All Saints ward.

64 Burntwood Town Council supported our draft recommendations but proposed renaming the wards of Chasetown, Hammerwich Triangle and Summerfield as Chasetown North, Chasetown Triangle and Burntwood Swan. Hammerwich Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations and supported the District Council’s proposals for the south of Burntwood. It argued that the proposed combination of Hammerwich Triangle parish ward of Hammerwich parish with the south of Burntwood would be extremely unpopular and might mean that this area would not receive the level of recognition it does as part of the more rural Hammerwich ward. The Burntwood Chase Partnership opposed our proposals for Burntwood, arguing that our proposals to significantly modify the boundaries of Chasetown ward might have an adverse effect on the administration of the group’s projects, which involve the whole Chasetown area. Michael Fabricant MP supported the District Council’s proposals and opposed our draft recommendations, arguing that they might mean Hammerwich would ultimately be “absorbed” into Burntwood, which “is not the wish of Hammerwich residents”.

65 We have given careful consideration to the further evidence and representations received and we propose adopting the District Council’s Stage Three proposals for this area. We recognise that our draft recommendations have drawn opposition while the District Council’s proposals for this area have generally been supported for this area and across the district. Given the evidence received, we have been persuaded that the District Council’s proposals for this area offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and would better reflect the community identities and interests in Chasetown and Hammerwich. Given that we are adopting new wards in this area, we are concerned that the names proposed by the Town Council would not accurately reflect the areas concerned. We have not therefore been persuaded to rename the proposed wards.

66 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in All Saints, Chasetown and Summerfield wards by 14 per cent, 12 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 9 per cent, 5 per cent and 3 per cent from the district average in 2004.

Lichfield (six wards)

Chadsmead, Curborough and Leomansley wards

67 The City of Lichfield comprises a single parish divided into six parish wards which are the same as the district wards. The existing district wards of Chadsmead, Curborough and Leomansley cover the north and west area of Lichfield City. Chadsmead and Leomansley wards are each represented by two councillors, while Curborough ward is represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements for a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the district average by 6 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Curborough ward, to vary by 1 per cent from the district average in 2004. The level of electoral equality in Chadsmead and Leomansley wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, varying by 13 per cent and 18 per cent in 2004.

68 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with Chadsmead ward being represented by two councillors and the proposed Curborough and Leomansley wards each being represented by three councillors. It proposed that Chadsmead ward should include the existing Chadsmead ward, which it argued is “mainly urban, compact and well-defined” with that part of Curborough ward, comprising Darwin Close, Lomax Close, Prince Rupert’s Way, the Windings, Prince Rupert Mews and part of Anson Avenue and Beacon Street, and the western side of Grange Lane to the north of Weston Road from Leomansley ward. It suggested that Curborough ward should include the remainder of the existing Curborough ward, and proposed an enlarged Leomansley ward which would comprise the remainder of the existing Leomansley ward (less the area to the north of Eastern Avenue which would be transferred to Chadsmead ward) with that part of Central ward to the west of St John’s Street. This scheme for a 56-member council would result in improved levels of electoral equality. This proposal received support from Lichfield City Council.

69 At Stage One, the Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Curborough, Grange, Leomansley and St Chad’s each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Curborough ward should comprise the majority of Curborough ward, while Grange ward should combine the northern part of Chadsmead and Leomansley wards. It suggested that this proposed ward could be named either Leomansley or Christ Church & Friary. It also proposed that St Chad’s ward should comprise the remainder of the existing wards of Chadsmead and Curborough, the eastern part of the existing Central ward and the southern part of the existing Stowe ward. This scheme would offer improved levels of electoral equality under the Labour Party’s proposed 52-member council.

70 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we considered that the District Council's proposals would offer a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, utilising more clearly identifiable boundaries for established communities, and we adopted its proposals as our draft recommendations for this area.

71 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved levels of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Chadsmead, Curborough and Leomansley wards by 8 per cent, 2 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Curborough ward, varying by 3 per cent from the district average in 2004, improve significantly to equal the district average in Chadsmead ward, while varying from the district average by 1 per cent in Leomansley ward.

72 At Stage Three the District Council, the Labour Party and Lichfield City Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. We received no further representations at Stage Three and, given that our draft recommendations for this area have received general support, we have decided to confirm them as final.

73 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved levels of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Chadsmead, Curborough and Leomansley wards by 6 per cent, 1 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years in Curborough ward, varying by 5 per cent from the district average in 2004, improving significantly to vary from the district average by 1 per cent in Chadsmead ward, while equaling the district average in Leomansley ward.

Central, St John's and Stowe wards

74 The existing wards of Central, St John's and Stowe cover the southern and eastern areas of Lichfield City. Central ward is represented by two councillors, while St John's and Stowe wards are each represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements for a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the district average by 71 per cent, 35 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Central and St John's wards, varying by 69 per cent and 34 per cent from the district average by 2004. The level of electoral equality in Stowe ward is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, varying by 20 per cent in 2004.

75 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with the proposed wards of Boley Park, St John's and Stowe each being represented by three councillors. It proposed that Boley Park ward should comprise that part of Central ward to the south-east of Tamworth Street and Trent Valley Road, and those parts of St John's ward to the east of Gorse Lane and Tamworth Road, thereby ensuring that the whole Boley Park development would be included in this single ward. It suggested the remainder of St John's ward should form a new St John's ward while Stowe ward should combine the existing Stowe ward with the remainder of Central and Curborough wards. Under the District Council's scheme for a 56-member council there would be improved electoral equality.

76 The Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Boley Park North & Streethay, Boley Park South, Brownsfield and St John's each being represented by two councillors. It proposed that Boley Park North & Streethay ward should combine the south-east part of Central ward and the parish of Streethay from the existing Alrewas ward. It proposed a Boley Park South ward comprising the remaining south-eastern parts of the Boley Park area of Central and St John's wards. It suggested that Brownsfield ward should combine the remainder of Stowe ward and proposed that St John's ward should comprise the remaining parts of the existing Central and St John's wards. Under the Labour Party's scheme for a 52-member council there would be improved electoral equality.

77 At Stage One, Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay Parish Council opposed any part of their parish being combined in a ward with areas outside the parish boundary. Lichfield City Council supported the District Council's proposals for the city.

78 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we concluded that the District Council's proposals for this area offered the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The District Council proposed easily identifiable boundaries which provided reasonable levels of electoral equality and its scheme had received support from Lichfield City Council. By contrast, the Labour Party's proposals offered worse levels of electoral equality, and we were particularly concerned about its proposal to link the rural parish of Streethay with part of the City of Lichfield. The Parish Council opposed such a change, and we did not consider that it would be in the best interests of the communities involved to combine these areas of different character within a single ward. We noted that the District Council's scheme also addressed the existing geographical size of Central ward which currently spans the width of the City.

79 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Boley Park, St John's and Stowe wards by 3 per cent, 7 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality was projected to improve over the next five years, to equal the district average in Boley Park and to vary by 6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively in St John's and Stowe ward in 2004.

80 At Stage Three the District Council, the Labour Party and Lichfield City Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, the Labour Party had some reservations about not combining the parish of Streethay with one of the city wards but also commented that the proposed Boley Park ward "makes sense". Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay Parish Council reiterated its Stage One representation in which it opposed combining any part of the parish with areas outside the parish boundary. We received no further representations at Stage Three.

81 We note that the Labour Party suggested that Streethay should be linked with Lichfield City wards. However, we are not persuaded that the combination of these rural and urban areas would best reflect community identities and interests. Given that our draft recommendations for this area have received general support, we have decided to confirm them as final.

82 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Boley Park, St John's and Stowe wards by 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. This

level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally in Boley Park ward, to vary by 2 per cent from the district average, while continuing to vary by 5 per cent in St John's ward and improving to 1 per cent in Stowe ward in 2004.

The rural areas

Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Ridwares, King's Bromley and Longdon wards

83 The existing wards of Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Ridwares, King's Bromley and Longdon cover the northern part of the district. Colton & Ridwares ward (comprising the parishes of Colton, Hamstall Ridware and Mavesyn Ridware), King's Bromley ward (comprising the parishes of Curborough & Elmhurst, Farewell & Chorley and King's Bromley) and Longdon ward (comprising the parish of Longdon) are each represented by one councillor, while Armitage with Handsacre ward (comprising the parish of Armitage with Handsacre) is represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements for a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the district average by 1 per cent, 24 per cent, 1 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, varying by 4 per cent, 30 per cent, 3 per cent and 10 per cent in 2004.

84 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed Armitage with Handsacre ward being represented by three councillors and the proposed wards of Colton & Ridwares, King's Bromley and Longdon each being represented by one councillor. It proposed no change to Armitage with Handsacre ward. In order to address existing electoral imbalances in Colton & Ridwares ward, it proposed that a revised Colton & Ridwares ward should be formed by transferring Hamstall Ridware parish to a revised King's Bromley ward. In addition, it suggested that the parish of Farewell & Chorley should be transferred from King's Bromley ward to a revised Longdon ward. It argued that this proposal "is acceptable locally", although it suggested that a possible alternative would be to combine the proposed wards of King's Bromley and Longdon to form a new two-member ward. Under the District Council's scheme for a 56-member council, there would be improved levels of electoral equality.

85 The Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with the proposed Armitage with Handsacre ward being represented by three councillors, the proposed Bromley, Hamstall & Longdon ward being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Colton & Mavesyn Ridware ward being represented by one councillor. Its proposals for Armitage with Handsacre and Colton & Mavesyn Ridware used the same boundaries as the District Council's proposed Armitage with Handsacre and Colton & Ridwares wards. It proposed that the existing wards of King's Bromley and Longdon should be combined with the parish of Hamstall Ridware, from the existing Colton & Ridwares ward, to form a new Bromley, Hamstall & Longdon ward. There would be improved levels of electoral equality under this scheme for a 52-member council.

86 At Stage One, Curborough/Elmhurst/Farewell/Chorley Parish Council supported retaining the existing boundaries of King's Bromley ward. However, it argued that, if change were necessary, the parishes of Curborough & Elmhurst and Farewell & Chorley should be linked with "similar parishes". King's Bromley Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal.

87 In compiling our draft recommendations, we gave careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One. We noted the similarity between the proposals of the District Council and the Labour Party and we adopted elements of both schemes in our draft recommendations for this area. We accepted the proposed Armitage with Handsacre ward, comprising the parish of Armitage & Handsacre, given that it respects community identity and electoral equality and causes minimal disruption to the existing wards. We also supported the creation of a ward comprising the parishes of Colton and Mavesyn Ridware, as proposed by both the District Council and the Labour Party and, given its composition, the Labour Party's proposal to name the ward Colton & Mavesyn Ridware. While there was merit in the Labour Party's proposal for a two-member Bromley, Hamstall & Longdon ward, we noted that it had not received general support and considered that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that it would offer the best reflection of community identities and interests. Also, King's Bromley Parish Council opposed the creation of a two-member ward for King's Bromley and the parishes of Hamstall Ridware and Farewell & Chorley appear to have little in common. We therefore adopted the District Council's proposals for single-member wards for King's Bromley, comprising the parishes of Curborough & Elmhurst, Hamstall Ridware and King's Bromley, and Longdon, comprising the parishes of Farewell & Chorley and Longdon.

88 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Mavesyn Ridware, King's Bromley and Longdon wards by 3 per cent, 7 per cent, 2 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate over the next five years in Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Mavesyn Ridware and King's Bromley wards to vary by 6 per cent, 12 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average in 2004. However, the level of electoral equality in Longdon ward would improve, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by 13 per cent from the district average in 2004.

89 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Labour Party and Kings Bromley Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, the Labour Party added that a two-member King's Bromley and Longdon ward "is tenable" should that option be preferred. Curborough/Elmhurst/Farewell/Chorley Parish Council stated that our draft recommendations were "not against the wishes" of the Parish Council.

90 We note that the Labour Party suggested that the proposed King's Bromley and Longdon wards might be combined. However, this option has not received any support at Stage Three and we consider that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that it would better reflect community identities and interests. Also, our proposals have received general support and we have decided therefore to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

91 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Mavesyn Ridware and Longdon wards by 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 16 per cent respectively, while equaling the district average in King's Bromley ward. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate over the next five years in Armitage with Handsacre, Colton & Mavesyn Ridware and King's Bromley wards to vary by 4 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent respectively from the district average in 2004. The level of electoral

equality in Longdon ward would improve, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by 11 per cent from the district average in 2004.

Alrewas, Bourne Vale, Fazeley, Mease Valley, Tame and Whittington wards

92 The existing wards of Alrewas, Bourne Vale, Fazeley, Mease Valley, Tame and Whittington cover the eastern part of the district. Bourne Vale ward (comprising the parishes of Drayton Bassett, Hints, Swinfen & Packington and Weeford), Mease Valley ward (comprising the parishes of Clifton Campville, Edingale, Harlaston and Thorpe Constantine) and Tame ward (comprising the parishes of Elford and Wigginton & Hopwas) are each represented by a single councillor. Whittington ward (comprising the parishes of Fisherwick and Whittington) is represented by two councillors, and Alrewas ward (comprising the parishes of Alrewas & Fradley and Streethay) and Fazeley ward (comprising the parish of Fazeley) are each represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements for a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the six wards varies from the district average by 4 per cent, 16 per cent, 11 per cent, 7 per cent, 4 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate over the next five years in Alrewas, Fazeley, Mease Valley, Tame and Whittington wards, to vary by 9 per cent, 14 per cent, 14 per cent, 8 per cent and 20 per cent respectively from the district average by 2004, while improving in Bourne Vale ward to vary by 7 per cent from the district average.

93 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise five wards, with the proposed wards of Alrewas and Fazeley each being represented by three councillors, the proposed wards of Mease & Tame and Whittington each being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Bourne Vale ward being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Alrewas ward should comprise the existing ward of Alrewas less the parish of Streethay, which would be transferred to form an enlarged Whittington ward in order to improve electoral equality in both wards. To improve electoral equality in Bourne Vale and Fazeley wards, the District Council proposed creating two parish wards in the parish of Drayton Bassett, and transferring the proposed Coleshill parish ward to the enlarged three-member Fazeley ward. It proposed that Bourne Vale ward should remain a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Hints, Swinfen & Packington, Weeford and the Village parish ward of Drayton Bassett parish. It proposed that the existing wards of Mease Valley and Tame should be combined to form a two-member Mease & Tame ward, emphasising that this was necessary in order to address the level of electoral inequality in the existing Mease Valley ward without dividing parishes. Under the District Council's scheme for a 56-member council, there would be improved levels of electoral equality.

94 At Stage One, the Labour Party proposed that this area should be represented by four wards, with the proposed wards of Alrewas & Fradley, Fazeley & Drayton and Whittington each being represented by three councillors and Mease Valley ward being represented by one councillor. It put forward an Alrewas & Fradley ward with the same boundaries as the District Council's proposed Alrewas ward and a Fazeley & Drayton ward comprising the parishes of Drayton Bassett and Fazeley. It proposed that Mease Valley ward should retain its existing boundaries and suggested a Whittington ward comprising the existing wards of Bourne Vale, Tame and Whittington, less the parish of Drayton Bassett. This scheme, for a 52-member council, would result in improved levels of electoral equality.

95 Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay Parish Council argued that the representation of the area at district level should be increased, and that Alrewas and the parishes of Fradley, Orgreave and Streethay should each be allocated two councillors. It also opposed combining parts of the parish with areas outside the existing parish boundary. Drayton Bassett Parish Council supported retaining the existing arrangements.

96 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we considered that the District Council's proposals would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. We also noted that the Labour Party's proposals would offer good electoral equality and would avoid parishes being re-warded. However, given that we did not adopt the Labour Party's proposal to link the parish of Streethay with Lichfield it was not possible to adopt its proposals in adjoining areas. Also, in the interests of electoral equality it was necessary to divide the grouped parish of Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay and to link Streethay with areas outside the parish. However, we were persuaded that the proposed ward comprising the parish of Alrewas & Fradley should be named Alrewas & Fradley ward, as proposed by the Labour Party, as we considered that this name would best reflect the area. While we had some concerns regarding the District Council's proposal to ward the parish of Drayton Bassett, we recognised that this was probably the best option in the interests of electoral equality, while having regard to community identity and interests. We adopted therefore the proposal that Alrewas & Fradley ward should comprise the parish of Alrewas & Fradley, Bourne Vale ward should contain the parishes of Hints, Swinfen and Weeford and the proposed Village parish ward of Drayton Bassett parish. We proposed that Fazeley ward should combine the parish of Fazeley and the proposed Coleshill parish ward of Drayton Bassett parish and that Mease & Tame ward should comprise the parishes of Clifton Campville, Edingale, Elford, Harlaston, Thorpe and Wiggington & Hopwas.

97 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Alrewas & Fradley, Bourne Vale, Fazeley and Mease & Tame wards varying by 13 per cent, 7 per cent, 6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively, while equaling the district average in Whittington ward. This level of electoral equality was projected to improve over the next five years in Alrewas & Fradley and Bourne Vale wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 1 per cent from the district average in both wards in 2004. The level of electoral equality in Fazeley, Mease & Tame and Whittington wards was projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years, varying by 9 per cent, 5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively from the district average in 2004.

98 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations. The Labour Party also supported our proposals, particularly for Alrewas & Fradley and Fazeley wards. However, it expressed some reservations regarding the geographical size of Bourne Vale ward. It also raised concerns over the proposed Whittington ward, arguing that Streethay shares links with Lichfield. It also commented that the proposed Mease & Tame ward could be divided into two single-member wards.

99 In response to our draft recommendations Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay Parish Council reiterated its Stage One proposal that the area's level of representation on the District Council

should be increased, but that the parish group should not be combined in district wards with parts of other parishes.

100 We note that the Labour Party raised concerns regarding the geographical size of Bourne Vale ward. However, we consider that this is necessary in the interests of electoral equality. As explained above, we were not persuaded to include Streethay parish with Lichfield given the lack of evidence to support the combination of this rural area with part of the urban City of Lichfield. The division of Mease & Tame ward into two single-member wards would result in significantly worse levels of electoral equality and, as we have received no indication of local support for such a change, we remain unpersuaded of its merits. Also, in the interests of electoral equality it is necessary to divide the grouped parish of Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay and to link Streethay with areas outside the grouped parish. Having carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period we consider that our recommendations have generally been supported and we have decided to confirm them as final.

101 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Alrewas & Fradley, Bourne Vale, Fazeley, Mease & Tame and Whittington wards varying by 14 per cent, 5 per cent, 8 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Alrewas & Fradley and Bourne Vale wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 1 per cent and 3 per cent from the district average respectively in 2004. The level of electoral equality in Fazeley, Mease & Tame and Whittington wards is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years, varying by 11 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average in 2004.

Hammerwich, Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall wards

102 The existing wards of Hammerwich, Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall cover the south-west part of the district. Stonnall ward (comprising the Stonnall parish ward of Shenstone parish) is represented by one councillor, Little Aston ward (comprising the Little Aston parish ward of Shenstone parish) and Shenstone ward (comprising the parish of Wall and the Shenstone parish ward of Shenstone parish) are each represented by two councillors, while Hammerwich ward (comprising the parish of Hammerwich) is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements for a 56-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Hammerwich, Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall wards varies from the district average by 16 per cent, 15 per cent, 2 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Little Aston and Shenstone wards, to vary from the district average by 12 per cent and 1 per cent in 2004 respectively. The level of electoral equality in Hammerwich and Stonnall wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 20 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2004.

103 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Hammerwich, Little Aston and Shenstone each being represented by two councillors and the proposed Stonnall ward being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Hammerwich ward should comprise the existing Hammerwich ward less the proposed Pool parish ward of Hammerwich parish. It proposed that Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall wards should retain their existing boundaries. The Council noted that electoral imbalances in Little

Aston ward could be remedied by adding parts of the existing Shenstone or Stonnall wards. However, it argued that Little Aston “has only a tenuous affinity” with Stonnall and that further warding Shenstone parish would involve the creation of an “artificial ward”. Under its scheme for a 56-member council, there would be improved levels of electoral equality.

104 The Labour Party proposed that this area should comprise three wards, with the proposed ward of Shenstone & Little Aston being represented by three councillors, the proposed Hammerwich ward being represented by two councillors, and the proposed Stonnall & Wall ward being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Hammerwich ward should retain its existing boundaries, while Shenstone & Little Aston ward should comprise the existing wards of Little Aston and Shenstone, less Wall parish. It proposed that Stonnall & Wall ward should comprise the existing Stonnall ward and the parish of Wall from the existing Shenstone ward. This scheme, for a 52-member council, would offer improved levels of electoral equality.

105 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we noted the similarity between and merits of the schemes put forward by the District Council and the Labour Party. However, as a result of our proposals to combine the south-western part of Hammerwich parish in a new Hammerwich Triangle ward (as discussed earlier), we put forward our own proposals for this area. We proposed that the remainder of Hammerwich ward should be combined with Wall parish to form a single-member Hammerwich & Wall ward, while the existing boundaries of Little Aston ward would be retained as a two-member ward, as proposed by the District Council. We also proposed an amended Shenstone ward, comprising the Shenstone and Stonnall parish wards of Shenstone parish, represented by three councillors. We considered that these proposals would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and would involve combining areas with shared community identities and interests. While we recognised that Little Aston ward would have a relatively high level of electoral variance under our proposals, we considered this area to be self-contained with a clear identity which would be best represented by a single councillor. We also considered that re-warding the parish ward of Little Aston of Shenstone parish would not provide effective or convenient local government, or better reflect community identity. Also, the ward’s level of electoral equality was forecast to improve over the next five years.

106 Under our draft recommendations for a 57-member council there would be improved electoral equality with the number of electors per councillor in Little Aston and Shenstone wards varying from the district average by 13 per cent and 7 per cent while equalling the district average in Hammerwich & Wall ward. This level of electoral equality was projected to deteriorate in Hammerwich & Wall and Shenstone wards over the next five years to vary by 4 per cent and 9 per cent from the district average in 2004. The level of electoral equality in Little Aston ward is projected to improve to 10 per cent from the district average in 2004.

107 At Stage Three, the District Council opposed our proposals and reiterated its Stage One scheme for this area. It argued that Wall parish should be combined with Shenstone parish ward because it has “greater affinity” with the area in terms of community interest and identity and the two “link naturally” by road as well as sharing historic links. It argued that the links between Hammerwich and Wall, which we proposed combining, “are much less tangible, if they exist at all” and pointed out that the areas are separated by the A461 trunk road. The Labour Party supported our draft recommendations “on balance”. However, it expressed some concern

regarding the level of district council representation in this area. It also proposed that the proposed Hammerwich and Wall ward should be renamed Hammerwich Village and Wall.

108 Hammerwich Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations, particularly in respect of the area of the parish that we proposed combining with part of Burntwood, as discussed above. It supported the District Council's proposals for the area, arguing that there is "no affinity" between Hammerwich and Wall and that the villages have "distinctive characters" and are separated by the A461 trunk road. Shenstone Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations and supported the District Council's Stage Three proposals, reiterating its Stage One comment that Little Aston should be represented by two councillors and arguing that Shenstone has "no affinity at all" with Stonnall. Wall Parish Council opposed our proposal to link Hammersmith with Wall arguing that local residents have "a far greater community interest with Shenstone than with Hammerwich". A local resident opposed our draft recommendations arguing that Shenstone and Stonnall comprise "very different social mixes" whose individuality should be respected. She also argued that Wall has "no connection to Hammerwich" while it shares interests and concerns with Shenstone.

109 Given that we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for the south of Burntwood, it is no longer necessary in the interests of electoral equality to link Hammerwich and Wall parishes. Indeed our proposals to combine Hammerwich with Wall and Shenstone with Stonnall received considerable opposition, and we have been persuaded that the District Council's proposals would offer the best reflection of community identities and interests as well as providing reasonable levels of electoral equality. We have therefore decided to adopt the District Council's proposals, which have significant local support, as our final recommendations. We propose that Hammerwich ward should comprise the proposed Hammerwich and Triangle parish wards of Hammerwich parish, that Little Aston parish ward of Shenstone parish should form Little Aston ward, Shenstone ward should combine Shenstone parish ward of Shenstone parish and Wall parish, while Stonnall ward should comprise Stonnall parish ward of Shenstone parish.

110 Under our final recommendations for a 56-member council, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the district average in Hammerwich, Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall wards by 13 per cent, 15 per cent, 2 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Hammerwich, Little Aston and Shenstone wards, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 9 per cent, 12 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average in 2004, while the level of electoral equality in Stonnall ward would deteriorate marginally to 4 per cent in 2004.

Electoral Cycle

111 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining its current cycle of whole council elections. We received no other proposals to change the electoral cycle of the district, we therefore made no recommended change to the present system of whole council elections every four years.

112 At Stage Three a local resident proposed that there should be elections either annually or every two years. However, under current legislation the Commission does not have the power to

recommend annual or two-yearly elections. No further comments were received regarding the electoral cycle at Stage Three and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation to retain the current system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- In Burntwood Town we propose creating new All Saints, Chasetown, Highfield and Summerfield wards, as proposed by the District Council.
- We propose creating a new Hammerwich ward, as proposed by the District Council.
- We propose retaining the existing boundaries of Shenstone and Stonnall wards.

114 We conclude that, in Lichfield:

- the existing council size of 56 members should be retained;
- there should be 26 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

115 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	56	56	56	56
Number of wards	27	26	27	26
Average number of electors per councillor	1,319	1,319	1,426	1,426
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	13	7	16	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	7	0

116 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 13 to seven with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with only three wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Lichfield District Council should comprise 56 councillors serving 26 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

117 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Burntwood, Drayton Bassett and Lichfield to reflect the proposed district wards. We also proposed that the number of councillors representing Longdon parish should be increased.

118 Burntwood Town is currently served by 21 councillors representing seven wards: All Saints, Boney Hay, Chase Terrace, Chasetown, Highfield, Redslade and Summerfield. We received no

representations regarding Burntwood Town Council at Stage One; however, we proposed that the Town Council’s parish wards should be amended as a consequence of the proposed district wards of Burntwood. We also suggested that the number of councillors within the proposed Town Council wards should be redistributed according to the proportion of the electorate in each town ward. The current 21 councillors did not divide fairly between the proposed seven wards. We therefore proposed that the size of Burntwood Town Council should be increased by one councillor to 22. We recommended that the proposed Town Council wards of Boney Hay, Chasetown, Redslade and Summerfield should each be represented by three town councillors, the proposed wards of Chase Terrace and Highfield should be represented by four town councillors and that part of the proposed Hammerwich Triangle ward that lies within the parish of Burntwood should be represented by two town councillors.

119 As a result of adopting the District Council’s Stage Three proposals for Burntwood, we propose amending the parish ward boundaries in accordance with the new district ward boundaries of All Saints, Boney Hay, Burntwood Central, Chase Terrace, Chasetown, Highfield and Summerfield. In response to our consultation report, Burntwood Town Council proposed renaming the parish wards which we put forward as our draft recommendations. As a result of the changes to the town wards that we have proposed as our final recommendations, some of these proposals are no longer relevant. However, given that we are confirming our draft recommendation for Redslade ward, we have decided to adopt the Town Council’s proposal that Redslade ward should be renamed Burntwood Central. The District Council argued that the number of councillors could be increased to 22, as we proposed, with each ward being represented by three parish councillors, except for Chasetown which should be represented by four. We note that the distribution of parish councillors throughout the seven parish wards is fairer under a 22 member council and that this will allow for an extra member for the increased share of the electorate in Chase Terrace ward.

Final Recommendation
Burntwood Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, one more than at present, representing seven wards: All Saints, Boney Hay, Burntwood Central, Chasetown, Highfield and Summerfield (each returning three councillors); and Chase Terrace (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inside the back cover.

120 The parish of Drayton Bassett is currently unwarded and is represented by seven councillors. In our draft recommendations, as a result of our proposals for Bourne Vale and Fazeley district wards, we proposed that the parish should be divided into two wards, Coleshill and Village, which would be coterminous with the district ward boundaries as proposed by the District Council. Although Drayton Bassett Parish Council objected to this proposal, we considered that this option provided the most appropriate warding pattern at a district council level. We recommended that the proposed Coleshill parish ward should be represented by two councillors while the proposed Village parish ward should be represented by five councillors in line with their share of the parish electorate.

121 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our proposals for Drayton Bassett parish. No further comments were received and, having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Drayton Bassett parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Drayton Bassett Parish Council should comprise two parish wards, Coleshill and Village. The parish council should continue to be served by seven councillors, with two councillors representing Coleshill ward and five councillors representing Village ward. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

122 Hammerwich parish is currently served by 11 councillors representing three wards: Hammerwich, Ogle Hay and Triangle. As a result of our decision to adopt the District Council’s Stage Three proposal for Hammerwich, we propose consequential warding of Hammerwich parish in line with the new district wards boundaries. The District Council proposed that the area of Hammerwich parish to be included in Chasetown district ward should form the proposed Pool parish ward. At Stage Three, Hammerwich Parish Council proposed that the parish wards of Hammerwich and Ogle Hay should be combined, because the small number of electors in the existing Ogle Hay parish ward results in the parish ward councillor having a disproportionately small vote, “to the detriment of electors in the other two wards”.

123 Having considered all the evidence received, we consider that the existing Hammerwich and Ogle Hay parish wards should be combined to form a Hammerwich parish ward, while Triangle parish ward should retain its existing boundaries, less that part which will be included in Chasetown district ward which we propose should form Pool parish ward. In line with their share of the parish electorate, we propose that Hammerwich ward should be represented by three councillors, Pool by one, and Triangle by seven.

Final Recommendation
Hammerwich Parish Council should comprise three parish wards: Hammerwich, Pool and Triangle. The parish should continue to be served by 11 councillors, with three councillors representing Hammerwich ward, one councillor representing Pool ward and seven councillors representing Triangle ward. The boundaries of Pool ward should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inside the back cover.

124 The City of Lichfield is currently served by 30 councillors representing six wards: Central, Chadsmead, Curborough, Leomansley, St John’s and Stowe. At Stage One, the City Council supported the amendment of the City Council’s parish wards, in line with the District Council’s proposed district wards for the City, and suggested that the proposed City wards of Boley, Curborough, Leomansley, St John’s and Stowe should each be represented by five city

councillors, while the proposed Chadsmead ward should be represented by three city councillors. This would result in an overall reduction of two in the number of city councillors, resulting in a City Council size of 28. A local resident argued that the level of representation on the City Council should be reduced to 17 to make the council more effective and efficient, arguing that a significantly reduced council size would be ideal. However, given that the City Council did not support such a measure, we were not persuaded that this would facilitate effective and convenient local government and therefore we adopted the City Council’s proposals as our draft recommendations for Lichfield City Council.

125 In response to our consultation report, the District Council and Lichfield City Council supported our proposals for the City Council. Having considered the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Lichfield City as final.

Final Recommendation
Lichfield City Council should comprise 28 councillors, two fewer than at present, representing six wards: Boley, Curborough, Leomansley, St John’s and Stowe (returning five councillors) and Chadsmead (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inside the back cover.

126 The parish of Longdon is currently served by nine councillors, with three councillors representing Gentleshaw parish ward and six councillors representing Longdon parish ward. At Stage One, the Parish Council of Longdon proposed that the number of councillors representing Longdon parish ward should be increased by “at least two” and, given that there was no opposition to this proposal, we adopted an increase of two councillors as part of our draft recommendations.

127 In response to our consultation report, the District Council and the Parish Council of Longdon supported our proposals for the parish. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation to increase the number of parish councillors.

Final Recommendation
Longdon Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, two more than at present, representing two wards: Gentleshaw (returning three councillors) and Longdon (returning eight councillors). The existing parish ward boundaries should be retained.

128 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 District Council.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Lichfield

6 NEXT STEPS

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

130 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 21 November 2000.

131 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
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APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Lichfield: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Map A2 and on the large map inside the back cover.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Drayton Bassett parish.

The **large map** inside the back cover illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Burntwood and Lichfield.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Lichfield: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Drayton Bassett Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Lichfield

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of seven 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 rename Redslade ward as Burntwood Central ward.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Boney Hay (Burntwood)	Boney Hay ward; Chase Terrace ward (part); Highfield ward (part)
Chasetown (Burntwood)	Chasetown ward (part)
Hammerwich & Wall	Hammerwich ward (part – Hammerwich and Ogle Hay parish wards of Hammerwich parish); Shenstone ward (part – the parish of Wall)
Hammerwich Triangle (Burntwood)	Chasetown ward (part); Hammerwich ward (part – Triangle parish ward of Hammerwich parish); Summerfield ward (part)
Highfield (Burntwood)	Highfield ward (part)
Shenstone	Shenstone ward (part – Shenstone parish ward of Shenstone parish); Stonnall ward (Stonnall parish ward of Shenstone parish)
Summerfield (Burntwood)	All Saints ward (part); Summerfield 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 %
Boney Hay (Burntwood)	2	2,617	1,309	1	2,685	1,343	-4
Chasetown (Burntwood)	2	2,746	1,373	6	2,775	1,388	-1
Hammerwich & Wall	1	1,299	1,299	0	1,349	1,349	-4

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Hammerwich Triangle (Burntwood)	3	4,164	1,388	7	4,271	1,424	2
Highfield (Burntwood)	3	3,990	1,330	3	4,502	1,501	7
Shenstone	3	3,620	1,207	-7	3,827	1,276	-9
Summerfield (Burntwood)	2	2,591	1,296	0	2,658	1,329	-5

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lichfield 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.