

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Wychavon in Worcestershire

March 2002

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

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission has set up a Boundary Committee which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Wychavon's electoral arrangements on 31 July 2001.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Wychavon:

- **in 24 of the 36 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 15 wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 26 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 12 wards.**

Our main proposals for Wychavon's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 95 - 96) are that:

- **Wychavon District Council should have 45 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 32 wards, instead of 36 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of four, and nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 28 of the proposed 32 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 9 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Bredon, Droitwich, Evesham and Hanbury.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 March 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft**

recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.

- After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, with effect from 1 April 2002, will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.
- The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 20 May 2002:

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Wychavon Review
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London WC1V 7JU**

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Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Badsey	1	Aldington parish; part of Badsey parish (Badsey and Bowers Hill parish wards)	Maps 2 & A2
2	Bengeworth	2	part of Evesham parish (the proposed Bengeworth parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
3	Bowbrook	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Crowle, Hadzor, Himbleton, Huddington, Oddingley and Tibberton	Map 2
4	Bredon	1	the parish of Bredon’s Norton; part of Bredon parish (the proposed Bredon parish ward)	Maps 2 & A3
5	Bretforton & Offenham	1	the parishes of Bretforton and Offenham; part of Badsey parish (Blackminster parish ward)	Maps 2 & A2
6	Broadway & Wickhamford	2	the parishes of Broadway, Childswickham, Wickhamford	Map 2
7	Dodderhill & Hanbury	1	the parishes of Dodderhill and Upton Warren; part of Hanbury parish (the proposed Hanbury North parish ward)	Maps 2 & A4
8	Drakes Broughton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Drakes Broughton & Wadborough, Pirton and Stoulton	Map 2
9	Droitwich Central	1	part of Droitwich parish (the proposed Droitwich Central parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
10	Droitwich East	2	part of Droitwich parish (the proposed Droitwich East parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
11	Droitwich South East	2	part of Droitwich parish (the proposed Droitwich South East parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
12	Droitwich South West	2	part of Droitwich parish (the proposed Droitwich South West parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
13	Droitwich West	2	part of Droitwich parish (the proposed Droitwich West parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
14	Eckington	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Besford, Birlingham, Defford, Eckington and Strensham	Map 2
15	Elmley Castle & Somerville	1	the parishes of Aston Somerville, Elmley Castle, Great Comberton, Hinton on the Green, Little Comberton, Netherton and Sedgeberrow	Map 2
16	Evesham North	2	part of Evesham parish (the proposed Evesham North parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
17	Evesham South	2	part of Evesham parish (the proposed Evesham South parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
18	Fladbury	1	the parishes of Bricklehampton, Charlton, Crophorne, Fladbury and Wick	Map 2
19	Great Hampton	1	part of Evesham parish (the proposed Great Hampton parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
20	Hartlebury	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Hartlebury	Map 2
21	Harvington & Norton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Harvington and Norton & Lenchwick	Map 2
22	Honeybourne & Pebworth	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Bickmarsh, Honeybourne and Pebworth	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
23	Inkberrow	2	the parishes of Abberton, Abbots Morton, Church Lench, Cookhill, Inkberrow, Rous Lench and Stock & Bradley; part of Hanbury parish (the proposed Hanbury South parish ward)	Maps 2 & A4
24	Little Hampton	2	part of Evesham parish (the proposed Little Hampton parish ward)	Map 2 & large map
25	Lovett & North Claines	2	the parishes of Elmbridge, Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree, North Claines, Salwarpe and Westwood	Map 2
26	Norton & Whittington	1	the parishes of Norton Juxta Kempsey and Whittington	Map 2
27	Ombersley	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Doverdale and Ombersley	Map 2
28	Pershore	3	the parish of Pershore	Map 2
29	Pinvin	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Bishampton, Hill & Moor, Pinvin, Throckmorton and Wyre Piddle	Map 2
30	South Bredon Hill	1	the parishes of Ashton under Hill, Beckford, Conderton, Kemerton and Overbury; part of Bredon parish (the proposed Westmancote parish ward)	Maps 2 & A3
31	The Littletons	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Cleeve Prior, North & Middle Littleton and South Littleton	Map 2
32	Upton Snodsbury	1	the parishes of Bredicot, Broughton Hackett, Churchill, Dormston, Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford, Kington, Naunton Beauchamp, North Piddle, Peopleton, Spetchley, Upton Snodsbury and White Ladies Aston	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2, Maps A1 – A4 in Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Wychavon

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Badsey	1	2,183	2,183	8	2,205	2,205	5
2	Bengeworth	2	3,714	1,857	-8	4,101	2,051	-2
3	Bowbrook	1	1,947	1,947	-4	2,103	2,103	0
4	Bredon	1	1,997	1,997	-1	2,056	2,056	-2
5	Bretforton & Offenham	1	2,078	2,078	3	2,085	2,085	-1
6	Broadway & Wickhamford	2	3,929	1,965	-3	4,100	2,050	-2
7	Dodderhill & Hanbury	1	2,130	2,130	5	2,195	2,195	5
8	Drakes Broughton	1	1,943	1,943	-4	1,957	1,957	-7
9	Droitwich Central	1	2,042	2,042	1	2,048	2,048	-2
10	Droitwich East	2	4,140	2,070	2	4,314	2,157	3
11	Droitwich South East	2	3,932	1,966	-3	4,334	2,167	3
12	Droitwich South West	2	4,093	2,047	1	4,180	2,090	0
13	Droitwich West	2	3,943	1,972	-3	4,062	2,031	-3
14	Eckington	1	2,120	2,120	5	2,171	2,171	3
15	Elmley Castle & Somerville	1	2,062	2,062	2	2,075	2,075	-1
16	Evesham North	2	3,785	1,893	-7	4,051	2,026	-3
17	Evesham South	2	3,937	1,969	-3	3,970	1,985	-5
18	Fladbury	1	2,265	2,265	12	2,286	2,286	9
19	Great Hampton	1	2,055	2,055	1	2,083	2,083	-1
20	Hartlebury	1	2,196	2,196	8	2,222	2,222	6
21	Harvington & Norton	1	2,070	2,070	2	2,114	2,114	1
22	Honeybourne & Pebworth	1	1,855	1,855	-8	1,909	1,909	-9
23	Inkberrow	2	4,029	2,015	-1	4,356	2,178	4
24	Little Hampton	2	3,913	1,957	-3	4,097	2,049	-2
25	Lovett & North Claines	2	4,116	2,058	2	4,262	2,131	2
26	Norton & Whittington	1	2,236	2,236	10	2,216	2,216	6
27	Ombersley	1	1,801	1,801	-11	1,972	1,972	-6

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
28 Pershore	3	5,997	1,999	-1	6,174	2,058	-2
29 Pinvin	1	2,269	2,269	12	2,264	2,264	8
30 South Bredon Hill	1	1,958	1,958	-3	1,974	1,974	-6
31 The Littletons	1	2,255	2,255	11	2,271	2,271	8
32 Upton Snodsbury	1	2,123	2,123	5	2,198	2,198	5
Totals	45	91,113	-	-	94,405	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,025	-	-	2,098	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wychavon 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.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of Wychavon in Worcestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the six districts in Worcestershire 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 expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Wychavon. Wychavon's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1977 (Report no. 242). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. 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 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. 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 assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *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 of the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when we wrote to Wychavon District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority, the local authority associations, Worcestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies 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 Wychavon District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (end of Stage One) was 22 October 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 26 March 2002 and will end on 20 May 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 The district of Wychavon is situated in the south east of the county of Worcestershire. The M5 motorway runs through the district, providing easy access to the West Midlands conurbation and the national road network. The district has direct rail links to both Birmingham and London and is within easy reach of Birmingham International Airport. The River Avon and the River Salwarpe both run through the district as well as the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

16 The district is wholly parished and contains 80 civil parishes. Droitwich town comprises 20 per cent, Evesham town comprises 19 per cent and Pershore town comprises 7 per cent of the district's total electorate.

17 The electorate of the district is 91,113 (February 2001). The Council presently has 49 members who are elected from 36 wards, 10 of which are relatively urban in Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, with the remainder being mainly rural. Four of the wards are each represented by three councillors, five are each represented by two councillors and 27 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,859 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,927 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 24 of the 36 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, 15 wards by more than 20 per cent and nine wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Evesham South ward, where the councillor represents 79 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Wychavon

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Badsey	1	2,273	2,273	22	2,294	2,294	19
2	Bowbrook	1	1,947	1,947	5	2,103	2,103	9
3	Bredon	1	2,264	2,264	22	2,323	2,323	21
4	Bretforton & Offenham	1	1,992	1,992	7	1,996	1,996	4
5	Broadway	2	2,644	1,322	-29	2,793	1,397	-28
6	Dodderhill	1	1,685	1,685	-9	1,980	1,980	3
7	Drakes Broughton	1	1,943	1,943	4	1,957	1,957	2
8	Droitwich Central	3	5,439	1,813	-2	5,579	1,860	-3
9	Droitwich South	3	8,114	2,705	45	8,643	2,881	50
10	Droitwich West	3	4,597	1,532	-18	4,716	1,572	-18
11	Eckington	1	2,120	2,120	14	2,171	2,171	13
12	Elmley Castle	1	1,539	1,539	-17	1,554	1,554	-19
13	Evesham East	1	1,917	1,917	3	2,079	2,079	8
14	Evesham Hampton	3	4,642	1,547	-17	4,677	1,559	-19
15	Evesham North	1	1,982	1,982	7	2,439	2,439	27
16	Evesham South	2	6,664	3,332	79	6,931	3,466	80
17	Evesham West	1	2,165	2,165	16	2,177	2,177	13
18	Fladbury	1	1,706	1,706	-8	1,717	1,717	-11
19	Hanbury	1	938	938	-50	1,010	1,010	-48
20	Hartlebury	1	2,196	2,196	18	2,222	2,222	15
21	Harvington & Norton	1	2,070	2,070	11	2,114	2,114	10
22	Honeybourne & Pebworth	1	1,855	1,855	0	1,909	1,909	-1
23	Inkberrow	1	2,538	2,538	36	2,559	2,559	33
24	Lenches	1	997	997	-46	1,002	1,002	-48
25	Lovett	1	1,548	1,548	-17	1,589	1,589	-18
26	North Claines	2	2,568	1,284	-31	2,672	1,336	-31
27	Ombersley	1	1,801	1,801	-3	1,972	1,972	2
28	Pershore Holy Cross	2	2,930	1,465	-21	3,094	1,547	-20
29	Pershore St Andrews	2	3,067	1,534	-18	3,080	1,540	-20
30	Pinvin	1	2,269	2,269	22	2,264	2,264	18

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
31 Somerville	1	1,672	1,672	-10	1,686	1,686	-12
32 South Bredon Hill	1	1,106	1,106	-41	1,111	1,111	-42
33 Spetchley	1	2,669	2,669	44	2,658	2,658	38
34 The Littletons	1	2,255	2,255	21	2,271	2,271	18
35 Upton Snodsbury	1	1,716	1,716	-8	1,756	1,756	-9
36 Wickhamford	1	1,285	1,285	-31	1,307	1,307	-32
Totals	49	91,113	-	-	94,405	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,859	-	-	1,927	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wychavon 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 2001, electors in Hanbury ward were relatively over-represented by 50 per cent, while electors in Evesham South ward were relatively under-represented by 79 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Wychavon District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 13 submissions during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Mid Worcestershire, West Worcestershire & Redditch & Inkberrow Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

Wychavon District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 45 members, four less than at present, serving 32 wards, compared to the existing 36. It proposed a single three-member ward, 11 two-member wards and 20 single-member wards. The District Council conducted widespread and detailed consultation on its proposals, and made modifications to its final submission in the light of responses received during this consultation process. It proposed four two-member wards and a single-member ward in both Droitwich and Evesham towns and a single three-member ward covering Pershore town. In the rural area it proposed three two-member wards, with the remainder of the proposed wards returning a single member. It also put forward proposals to ward three parishes in the south of the district to improve electoral equality. Under the District Council's proposals five wards would initially have a councillor:elector ratio above 10 per cent. However, no wards would have a councillor:elector ratio above 10 per cent by 2006.

Political Groups

23 The Mid Worcestershire, West Worcestershire & Redditch & Inkberrow Liberal Democrats (referred to as the Liberal Democrats in the remainder of this report) supported the proposal for a council size of 45. They put forward a pattern of single-member wards across the entire district and they proposed warding five parishes, to improve electoral equality and facilitate a pattern of single-member wards. Under the Liberal Democrats, proposals five wards would have a councillor:elector ratio above 10 per cent. However, only one ward would have a councillor:elector ratio above 10 per cent by 2006.

24 Wychavon District Council Labour Group of Councillors (referred to as the Labour Group in the remainder of this report) supported the Liberal Democrats' proposal for single-member wards in the towns of Droitwich and Evesham.

Parish and Town Councils

25 We received responses from eight parish and town councils. Pershore Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for Pershore town. Bishampton & Throckmorton, Hill & Moor and Kemerton Parish Councils opposed the District Council's proposals for their areas and put forward proposals identical to those put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group. Kingston & Dormston and Naunton Beauchamp opposed the District Council's proposals and stated their general support for the Liberal Democrats' proposals. The parish

councils of Hanbury and Norton-Juxta-Kempsey put forward their own proposals for their areas.

Other Submissions

26 We received a further two submissions from a local councillor and a local resident. Councillor Argyle, member for Pinvin ward, opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer Bricklehampton parish out of the existing Pinvin ward, arguing that the existing ward should be retained. A resident of Evesham "broadly accepted the District Council's proposal" for Evesham town.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

28 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Wychavon is 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 of 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 estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and maintaining local ties.

30 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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 an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

32 Since 1975 there has been a 44 per cent increase in the electorate of Wychavon district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4 per cent from 91,113 to 94,405 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Droitwich South and Evesham North wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, 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. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

33 During Stage One the District Council’s electorate projections were not challenged. The 2006 total electorate provided under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals differed initially from those put forward by the District Council. However, the Liberal Democrats did not have any different projections for specific areas and they provided us with corrected electorate data during Stage Two. We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the District Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

34 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

35 Wychavon District Council presently has 49 members. The District Council proposed a council of 45 members, which was adopted as part of its Stage One submission following the consultation undertaken on its initial proposals. The Council stated that a council size of 45 would help facilitate the “new executive structure”, provided us with details of a new committee structure and stated that “reducing to 45 members enables 80 per cent of the councillors to be directly involved in the decision making processes of the Council”. The District Council also stated that a council size of 45 would enable a scheme to be developed which retained a split between urban and rural, kept parish warding to a minimum and reduced the number of three-member wards. The Liberal Democrats’ district-wide scheme was also based on a council size of 45 which they stated “requires fewer boundary changes and re-warding of parishes”. We received no further submissions regarding council size during Stage One.

36 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 45 members.

Electoral Arrangements

37 We have carefully considered all the representations received during Stage One, including the district-wide schemes put forward by Wychavon District Council and the Liberal Democrats.

38 Both district-wide schemes were based on a council size of 45 which enabled us to consider both sets of proposals for individual areas. The Liberal Democrats proposed a pattern of single-member wards across the entire district and consequently there were a number of differences between the schemes, especially in the three towns of Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore, where the District Council proposed multi-member wards. There was general consensus over the proposed electoral arrangements in the south of the district. The proposals in the north of the district were also similar with only one significant difference, in the proposals for North Claines parish. However, our draft recommendations in the centre of the district hinged on the proposals for the existing Pinvin ward and whether or not Bishampton parish should be transferred into a new Inkberrow & Lenches ward. Our draft recommendations are detailed later in the chapter.

39 We propose adopting proposals from both the District Council’s and the Liberal Democrats’ schemes, as well as putting forward our own proposals in some areas. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Evesham East, Evesham Hampton, Evesham North, Evesham South and Evesham West wards;
- (b) Droitwich Central, Droitwich South and Droitwich West wards;
- (c) Broadway, Pershore Holy Cross, Pershore St Andrews and Wickhamford wards;
- (d) Dodderhill, Hartlebury, Lovett, North Claines and Ombersley wards;

- (e) Bowbrook, Hanbury, Inkberrow, Lenches and Upton Snodsbury wards;
- (f) Drakes Broughton, Eckington, Pinvin and Spetchley wards;
- (g) Bredon, Elmley Castle, Fladbury, Somerville and South Bredon Hill wards;
- (h) Badsey, Bretforton & Offenham, Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth and The Littletons wards.

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

Evesham East, Evesham Hampton, Evesham North, Evesham South and Evesham West wards

41 These five wards cover the town of Evesham, which is situated in the south-east of the district. Under the existing arrangements Evesham Hampton ward returns three councillors, Evesham South ward returns two councillors and Evesham East, Evesham North and Evesham West wards each return a single councillor. Evesham East, Evesham North, Evesham South and Evesham West wards have councillor:elector ratios 3 per cent, 7 per cent, 79 per cent and 16 per cent above the district average respectively (8 per cent, 27 per cent, 80 per cent and 13 per cent by 2006). Evesham Hampton ward has a councillor:elector ratio 17 per cent below the district average (19 per cent by 2006).

42 Wychavon District Council proposed that Evesham town be represented by nine councillors, proposing four two-member and one single-member ward. The Council proposed a two-member Evesham Town ward covering the entire area to the north of the River Avon which it described as a “natural encircling boundary”. It stated that this ward is “distinct from Bengeworth and Hampton”. It noted that its proposal would provide a councillor:elector ratio of 10 per cent by 2006 but that “any subtraction to satisfy the numbers game would be crude and artificial”. The District Council stated that “Great Hampton ought to stand alone as a single-member ward; it is close to the ideal number [of electors] and is separate geographically from the rest of Evesham.” The Council stated that the remainder of Evesham is more urban in nature and should be divided into three two-member wards to provide the best levels of electoral equality. It stated that “these wards will, of course, fall about 7 per cent below the ideal total number of electors [by 2006] but this is a worthwhile price to pay to retain the original market town as one cohesive unit”. The Council proposed a two-member Little Hampton ward covering the part of the town south of Evesham General Hospital and Fairfield Road, to the east of Four Pools Industrial Estate and to the south of The Link. It proposed a two-member Evesham South ward to the north of Little Hampton ward and south of the properties on Port Street and Broadway Road not including Digby Road and Porter Road which should be transferred into a new two-member Bengeworth ward based around the area of the town known as Bengeworth. The Council stated that “Evesham is basically a rural community, especially in Great Hampton and the market town centre and the 10 per cent rural deviation should be allowed”.

43 The Liberal Democrats proposed nine single-member wards, which provided good levels of electoral equality across the town of Evesham. They proposed two new wards north of the River Avon Evesham North and Evesham West wards as well as a new Evesham Workman ward which would comprise electors from both sides of the river. They stated that “the ideal would have been to retain the river as a boundary”, however this would have resulted in higher levels of electoral inequality. The Liberal Democrats proposed a single-member Hampton ward which was almost identical to the District Council’s proposed Great Hampton ward, however they utilised the railway instead of the River Avon as a ward boundary. The Liberal Democrats proposed a further five single-member Bengeworth, Charity, East,

Fairfield and Four Pools wards covering the remainder of Evesham. The Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats' proposed nine single-member wards covering Evesham town.

44 A resident of Evesham "broadly accepted the District Council's proposal to redraw the ward boundaries within Evesham town and increase the overall number of councillors by one to a total of nine".

45 We carefully considered all representations received at Stage One concerning Evesham town and have noted that both the District Council and Liberal Democrats allocated nine councillors to the town, the correct entitlement under a council size of 45. We have considered the Liberal Democrats' proposal for single-member wards, however, having visited the area we considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposals for single-member wards utilised somewhat artificial boundaries which divided existing communities, especially in the south of the town, which would not meet our statutory criteria. The District Council's proposals for Evesham town provided electoral variances of 7 per cent, 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent, which we consider is too high for an urban area. We have noted the District Council's argument that Evesham town is a "rural community", however we consider that in a town with over 17,000 electors it is possible to provide improved levels of electoral equality than has been put forward in the District Council's submission. In order to improve the levels of electoral equality we are proposing a ward which spans the River Avon. We are proposing utilising the boundary put forward by the Liberal Democrats for Workman ward. Those electors to the east of Abbey Road, south of Swan Lane, east of Common Road and south of the Oxford to Worcester railway would be transferred into a revised Bengeworth ward. We propose that the remainder of the District Council's proposed Evesham Town ward should form a revised two-member ward, however we propose renaming this ward Evesham North, as we are transferring the town centre into Bengeworth ward.

46 Having transferred those electors to the north of the River Avon into the District Council's Bengeworth ward we are proposing a modification to the ward's southern boundary. We propose transferring those electors to the south of Broadway Road into the District Council's proposed Evesham South ward. This modification provides improved levels of electoral equality while improving the access between constituent parts of Evesham South ward. We are also proposing a modification between the District Council's proposed Evesham South and Little Hampton wards. We propose modifying the boundary to run to the north of Evesham General Hospital and Battleton Road, transferring the electors to the south of this boundary into a revised Little Hampton ward. We propose that Bengeworth, Evesham North, Evesham South and Little Hampton wards should return two councillors each. We propose adopting the District Council's proposed single-member Great Hampton ward without modification as we consider that it provides the best balance between electoral equality and our statutory criteria.

47 Under our draft recommendations Bengeworth, Evesham North, Evesham South and Little Hampton wards would have councillor:elector ratios 8 per cent, 7 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (2 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 2 per cent by 2006). Great Hampton ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 1 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

Droitwich Central, Droitwich South and Droitwich West wards

48 These three wards cover the town of Droitwich, which is situated in the north of the district. Under the existing arrangements each of these three wards returns three councillors. Droitwich Central and Droitwich West wards have councillor:elector ratios 2 per cent and 18 per cent below the district average respectively (3 per cent and 18 per cent by 2006). Droitwich South ward has a councillor:elector ratio 45 per cent above the district average (50 per cent by 2006).

49 Wychavon District Council stated that Droitwich town should be represented by nine councillors, with four two-member wards and one single-member ward. The District Council proposed a two-member Droitwich West ward comprising two communities that on their own do not have the correct number of electors to form single-member wards. The proposed Droitwich West ward would cover the part of the town to the west of the Kidderminster to Worcester railway line and Droitwich Canal. It proposed a single-member Droitwich Central ward comprising the Ledwych Road area which “has no natural affinity with the rest of the existing Droitwich West ward” and the town centre. The proposed Droitwich Central ward covers the area encircled by Droitwich Canal and the Saltway, Blackfriars Avenue and Celvestone Way. The Council proposed a two-member Droitwich East ward comprising “two natural community areas” and a new two-member Droitwich South West ward which “straddles either side of the main thoroughfare, the Worcester Road, it has a natural affinity and would be difficult to split into two separate wards”. Droitwich East ward would cover the area to the east of the Kidderminster to Worcester railway line, the Saltway, Lyttleton Road and Newland Road and north of Primsland Way. The proposed Droitwich South West ward would cover the area encircled by the Kidderminster to Worcester railway line, Celvestone Way, Blackfriars Avenue, The Saltway, Lyttleton Road, Oakland Avenue, Worcester Road and the Copcut stream. The Council proposed a new two-member Droitwich South East ward stating that “this area would be difficult to separate into two wards ... but would have a natural affinity as one ward”. The Council’s proposed Droitwich South East ward would cover the area to the east of Worcester Road and south of Oakland Avenue and Primsland Way.

50 The Liberal Democrats proposed nine new single-member wards in Droitwich. They stated that “Westlands is too big for one councillor” and consequently proposed including a small part of Westlands in a new Hill & Valley ward with the Chawson Valley area of the town. The majority of the Westlands area would be covered by a new Westlands ward. They proposed a further seven new wards, to be named Chawson, North East, Park, South, South East, Town and Witton covering that part of the town to the east of the Kidderminster to Worcester railway line. These proposals were based on providing good levels of electoral equality while attempting to reflect local communities in the town. The Labour Group supported the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for nine single-member wards covering Droitwich town.

51 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One concerning Droitwich. The District Council and Liberal Democrats both allocated nine councillors to the town, the correct entitlement under a council size of 45. We have noted that the Westlands area is separate from the remainder of the town, however the area has too many electors for a single member and too few for two members. Having visited the area we consider that the Westlands area should not be divided, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, as this would provide a weak boundary and would not reflect community identities in the area. We have also noted that the Liberal Democrats’ proposed Westlands ward would have an electoral variance of 11 per cent by 2006. We therefore propose adopting the District Council’s

proposed two-member Droitwich West ward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that in the remainder of Droitwich town there are relatively few natural boundaries and it is not possible to provide good levels of electoral equality while utilising these boundaries, for example the A38 Worcester Road. Having adopted the District Council's proposed Droitwich West ward the electoral equality provided for the remainder of the town under the District Council's proposals was better than under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We also considered that the larger two-member wards put forward by the District Council enabled more communities to be placed in the same ward than under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We attempted to improve on the District Council's proposed boundary between Droitwich East and Droitwich South East wards, which we considered did not best reflect the community of the Primsland area. However, we were unable to identify a boundary that provided an acceptable level of electoral equality and did not have an adverse affect on community identity in neighbouring parts of the town. We therefore propose adopting the District Council's proposals for Droitwich town with one minor modification. We propose running the boundary between Droitwich East and Droitwich South West wards behind the properties on the east of Lyttleton Road to include all the electors of Lyttleton Road in Droitwich South West ward. This modification will provide marginally improved electoral equality and retain all the electors of Lyttleton Road in the same ward.

52 Under our draft recommendations Droitwich Central, Droitwich East and Droitwich South West wards would have councillor:elector ratios 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent below, 3 per cent above and equal to the district average by 2006). Droitwich South East and Droitwich West wards would have councillor:elector ratios 3 per cent below the district average in both wards (3 per cent above and 3 per cent below by 2006 respectively). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report.

Broadway, Pershore Holy Cross, Pershore St Andrews and Wickhamford wards

53 Pershore Holy Cross and Pershore St Andrews wards cover the town of Pershore, which is situated in the centre of the district. Broadway ward includes the town of Broadway and the surrounding rural area and is bordered by Wickhamford ward which contains the parishes of Childswickham and Wickhamford. The wards of Broadway and Wickhamford are situated in the south of the district. Pershore Holy Cross and Pershore St Andrews wards have councillor:elector ratios 21 per cent and 18 per cent below the district average respectively (20 per cent in both wards by 2006). Broadway and Wickhamford wards have councillor:elector ratios 29 per cent and 31 per cent below the district average respectively (28 per cent and 32 per cent by 2006).

54 Wychavon District Council proposed that Pershore town should be represented by a single three-member ward. It proposed combining the existing Broadway and Wickhamford wards in a new two-member Broadway & Wickhamford ward. The Council stated that its consultation "revealed support for the proposal to create a two-member ward and avoid splitting the parish of Broadway". Pershore Town Council stated that it supported "the District Council's proposal for a single three-member ward for Pershore".

55 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Pershore town should be divided into three single-member wards Pershore Central, Pershore North and Pershore South. The proposed Pershore North ward would comprise all those electors "to the north of Worcester Road, with the exception of Hudson Close, Redlands House and Redlands". Pershore Central ward would comprise the electors "of Worcester Road and development to the south, High Street and

development to the west, Three Springs Road and adjoining streets”. Pershore South ward would comprise the electors of “the Abbey Estate, Broad Street, Bridge Street, Defford Road and adjoining streets and Pensham Hill village”. The Liberal Democrats proposed creating two single-member wards covering the parishes of Broadway, Childswickham and Wickhamford. They proposed “warding the west side of Broadway parish and putting it with the present Wickhamford ward so the rural area can continue to have a district councillor of their own, rather than being overpowered by the interests of the town of Broadway”.

56 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One regarding these four wards. We noted that Pershore Town Council supported the District Council’s proposal for a single three-member ward. We also consider that the boundaries put forward by the Liberal Democrats for three single-member wards were not easily identifiable and did not reflect the community identities of the town. We therefore propose adopting a single three-member ward, covering Pershore town in its entirety, as part of our draft recommendations.

57 We consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to ward Broadway parish would not reflect community identity in the town, as a small number of electors situated in Broadway town would be included in a different ward to the remainder of the town. Consequently we propose adopting the District Council’s proposal for a two-member Broadway & Wickhamford ward as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome comments from local people on our draft recommendations for this ward.

58 Under our draft recommendations Pershore ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 1 per cent below the district average (2 per cent by 2006). Broadway & Wickhamford ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 3 per cent below the district average (2 per cent by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Dodderhill, Hartlebury, Lovett, North Claines and Ombersley wards

59 These five wards are situated in the north of the district to the north, south and west of Droitwich town. Under the existing arrangements Dodderhill ward comprises the parishes of Dodderhill and Upton Warren; Lovett ward comprises the parishes of Elmbridge, Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree, Salwarpe and Westwood; and Ombersley ward comprises the parishes of Doverdale and Ombersley. The wards of Hartlebury and North Claines are coterminous with the parishes of the same names. North Claines ward currently returns two councillors, while Dodderhill, Hartlebury, Lovett and Ombersley wards each return a single councillor. Dodderhill, Lovett, North Claines and Ombersley wards have councillor:elector ratios 9 per cent, 17 per cent, 31 per cent and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (3 per cent above, 18 per cent below, 31 per cent below, 2 per cent above by 2006). Hartlebury ward has a councillor:elector ratio 18 per cent above the district average (15 per cent by 2006).

60 Wychavon District Council proposed combining the existing Lovett and North Claines wards in a new two-member Lovett & North Claines ward. It stated that “the majority of respondents supported the proposal to create a two-member ward”. The Council proposed retaining the existing arrangements for Dodderhill, Hartlebury and Ombersley wards.

61 The Liberal Democrats proposed warding the parish of North Claines in order to facilitate single-member Fernhill Heath and Lovett wards. They proposed a new single-member ward covering the village of Fernhill Heath. They stated that that part of North Claines parish to the west of Fernhill Heath, the settlement of Bevere and the surrounding area would be transferred into a revised Ombersley ward. The remainder of North Claines parish, the

settlement of Lower Town and Porter Hill Farm, would be transferred into the existing Lovett ward, along with the parish of Upton Warren, currently in Dodderhill ward. They stated that “Fernhill Heath has a separate identity and is relatively densely populated” and proposed transferring the remainder of the parish into wards which contain parishes of a similar nature. The Liberal Democrats also proposed transferring part of Hanbury parish into a revised Dodderhill & Hanbury ward with the parish of Dodderhill, as detailed later in the chapter.

62 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One concerning these five wards. We consider that, based on the evidence and argumentation put forward at Stage One, the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to ward North Claines parish, so that electors in three different parts of the parish would be situated in three different district wards, would not provide effective and convenient local government to the electors of this area. We noted that the Liberal Democrats provided letters of opposition to the District Council’s proposals, however we did not consider that these letters also demonstrated support for the Liberal Democrats’ proposals as their preferred alternative. Although the District Council’s proposed Lovett & North Claines ward covers a large area we consider this to be preferable to the proposal to ward North Claines parish, however we would welcome comments from local people on these proposals during Stage Three. We propose adopting the District Council’s proposed two-member Lovett & North Claines ward as part of our draft recommendations, and also propose retaining the existing electoral arrangements of Hartlebury and Ombersley wards, as put forward by the District Council. We are putting forward our own proposals for a new single-member Dodderhill & Hanbury ward comprising the parishes of Dodderhill and Upton Warren with part of Hanbury parish, as detailed later in the chapter.

63 Under our draft recommendations Dodderhill & Hanbury, Hartlebury and Lovett & North Claines wards would have councillor:elector ratios 5 per cent, 8 per cent and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent by 2006). Ombersley ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 11 per cent below the district average (6 per cent by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4.

Bowbrook, Hanbury, Inkberrow, Lenches and Upton Snodsbury wards

64 These five wards are situated in the centre of the district and each ward returns a single councillor. Bowbrook ward comprises the parishes of Crowle, Hadzor, Hibleton, Huddington, Oddingley and Tibberton; Hanbury ward comprises the parishes of Hanbury and Stock & Bradley; Inkberrow ward comprises the parishes of Cookhill and Inkberrow; Lenches ward comprises the parishes of Abberton, Abbots Morton, Church Lench and Rous Lench; and Upton Snodsbury ward comprises the parishes of Dormston, Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford, Kington, Naunton Beauchamp, North Piddle, Peopleton and Upton Snodsbury. Hanbury, Lenches and Upton Snodsbury wards have councillor:elector ratios 50 per cent, 46 per cent and 8 per cent below the district average respectively (48 per cent, 48 per cent and 9 per cent by 2006). Bowbrook and Inkberrow wards have councillor:elector ratios 5 per cent and 36 per cent above the district average respectively (9 per cent and 33 per cent by 2006).

65 Wychavon District Council proposed modifications to all five of these wards, which would result in new groupings of parishes. It proposed a new Hanbury ward comprising the parishes of Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford, Hadzor, Hanbury, Hibleton, Huddington, Oddingley, North Piddle and Stock & Bradley. It stated that this proposal retained in the same ward, the parishes of Hadzor, Hanbury, Hibleton, Huddington, Oddingley, currently in Bowbrook ward, and the parishes of Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford and North Piddle, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward. It also provided a solution to the existing over-representation in Hanbury ward. The District Council proposed a new two-member Inkberrow

& Lenches ward comprising the existing Inkberrow and Lenches wards together with the parish of Bishampton, currently in Pinvin ward, and the parishes of Dormston and Kington, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward. The Council noted that there was local opposition to the proposal to transfer Bishampton parish out of Pinvin ward, as discussed later in the chapter. However, it stated that its proposals “provide wards within the accepted variance and minimise the warding of parishes”. The District Council proposed that the remainder of Bowbrook ward, the parishes of Crowle and Tibberton, should be included in a new single-member Crowle ward with the parishes of Naunton Beauchamp and Upton Snodsbury, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward, and the parishes of Bredicott, Broughton Hackett, Churchill and Spetchley, currently in Spetchley ward. Finally the District Council proposed that Peopleton parish, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward, should be transferred into a revised Pinvin ward, as outlined later in the chapter.

66 The Liberal Democrats proposed the retention of the existing Bowbrook ward. They proposed transferring the parishes of Bredicot, Broughton Hackett, Churchill, Spetchley and White Ladies Aston, currently in Spetchley ward, into a revised Upton Snodsbury ward with the parishes of the existing ward. They stated in their submission that as the parishes of Flyford Flavell, Grafton Flyford and North Piddle, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward, look towards Pershore town, they should not be included in a ward with Hanbury parish, which looks towards Droitwich town. The Liberal Democrats proposed dividing Hanbury parish between two wards. They proposed that part of Hanbury parish “north of the B4090, the Roman road known as ‘The Saltway’” should be transferred into a new Dodderhill & Hanbury ward with the parish of Dodderhill. They stated that the boundary should be taken south of the properties on the south side of the B4090. They stated that “the division between the north of Hanbury and the east of Dodderhill is currently not distinct and a merger is logical”. The remainder of Hanbury parish and Stock & Bradley parish would be included in a new Inkberrow ward under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals. They proposed warding Inkberrow parish, transferring the village of Inkberrow and the western part of the parish into their proposed Inkberrow ward. The remainder of Inkberrow parish and Cookhill parish would be transferred into a new Cookhill to Lenches ward with the parishes of the existing Lenches ward. The Liberal Democrats stated that “Inkberrow parish does not wish to be warded, but it is too big with Cookhill to remain a single district ward”. They commented that their proposals for Inkberrow ward would result in “crossing into the Droitwich rural hinterland, but it is inevitable” and that in their proposed Cookhill to Lenches ward “Cookhill looks to Redditch and Alcester and the Lenches mostly look to Evesham” which is undesirable but necessary to provide good levels of electoral equality.

67 Hanbury Parish Council stated that “in such sparsely populated rural areas there must be special dispensation against the “ideal” councillor:elector ratio”. It stated that it “would support the proposal to create a ward consisting of Hanbury, Stock & Bradley, Hadzor, Himbleton and Oddingley as it is the most acceptable option that has been put forward and is only slightly adrift of the desired ratio”. Kington & Dormston Parish Council opposed the District Council’s proposal to transfer the parishes of Dormston and Kington into a new two-member Inkberrow ward, stating it “would be very detrimental to our needs which are agricultural, residential and rural”. The Parish Council fully supported the proposals of Councillor E Tucker [the Liberal Democrat proposals] stating that they are “a well thought out solution to a very complex problem”. Naunton Beauchamp Parish Council stated that it was opposed to the District Council’s proposed Crowle ward, which included its parish in a ward with parishes that looked towards Droitwich instead of Pershore. It stated its preference was for “the proposals put forward by Councillor E Tucker [the Liberal Democrat proposals] keeping single-member wards throughout”. The Parish Council stated that it wished to be included in a ward that was concentrated towards the south of the district.

68 Bishampton & Throckmorton Parish Council opposed the proposal by the District Council to transfer Bishampton parish into a revised two-member Inkberrow & Lenches ward. Councillor Argyle, member for Pinvin ward, also stated his opposition to this proposal, and Hill & Moor Parish Council stated that the existing Pinvin ward should be retained (all three submissions are detailed later in the chapter).

69 We have carefully considered all representations received concerning these five wards. Our draft recommendations in this area hinged on whether or not the parish of Bishampton should be retained in the existing Pinvin ward. Having considered the argumentation that was put forward at Stage One we propose retaining the existing Pinvin ward as part of our draft recommendations, as detailed later in the chapter. Having decided not to include Bishampton parish in a proposed Inkberrow & Lenches ward we have been unable to adopt the District Council's proposals in any of the neighbouring wards. Consequently we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposed Upton Snodsbury ward as it would provide a good level of electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats' proposed ward would retain all eight parishes of the existing Upton Snodsbury ward in the same ward as well as the parishes of Bredicott, Broughton Hackett, Churchill and Spetchley, currently in Spetchley ward. We have noted the general support from Kington & Dormston and Naunton Beauchamp Parish Councils for the Liberal Democrats' proposed Upton Snodsbury ward. We also propose retaining the existing Bowbrook ward, as put forward by the Liberal Democrats, as it provides a good level of electoral equality, reflects community identity in the area and facilitates our proposals in neighbouring wards.

70 We have considered the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats to ward the parishes of Hanbury and Inkberrow to facilitate three single-member Dodderhill & Hanbury, Inkberrow and Cookhill to Lenches wards. Although we would generally prefer not to divide parishes between district wards, due to the geographical size of both parishes, the low number of electors in Hanbury parish, the high number of electors in Inkberrow parish and the need to produce the best available electoral arrangements for the district as a whole, we consider that there will need to be some degree of parish warding in this area in order to provide acceptable levels of electoral equality. We have noted that Hanbury Parish Council wished to see its parish included in a ward with the parishes of Hadzor, Himbleton, Oddingley and Stock & Bradley. However, we are unable to adopt this proposal as we must have regard to the district as a whole, and this proposal would have an adverse affect on the draft recommendations for neighbouring wards. Consequently we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal to transfer part of Hanbury parish into a ward with Dodderhill parish, however we also propose including the parish of Upton Warren in our proposed Dodderhill & Hanbury ward. We have noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposal utilises a strong and easily identifiable boundary the B4090, Roman Road, which retains the whole of Hanbury village in the same ward and links the village of Hanbury with the settlements of Stoke Prior and Wychbold, which all look towards Droitwich town and between which there are good road links.

71 When considering the proposals for the remainder of this area we noted that the settlements of Stock & Bradley parish and to the south of Hanbury parish, which the Liberal Democrats propose transferring into a new Inkberrow ward, have good communication links with Inkberrow village. However, we do not propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposed Cookhill to Lenches and Inkberrow wards. We consider that the proposed boundary between these two wards is not as strong and easily identifiable as the proposal to divide Hanbury parish. We have also noted that the settlement of Holberrow Green and Cookhill parish have good communication links with Inkberrow, however electors would have to travel through Inkberrow village to reach the parishes of the existing Lenches ward. Therefore, having visited the area, and in the light of the fact that we are not aware of the views of the

local parish councils and residents, we do not propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal to ward Inkberrow parish as part of our draft recommendations. We propose combining the Liberal Democrats' proposed Cookhill to Lenches and Inkberrow wards in a new two-member Inkberrow ward. This proposed Inkberrow ward would comprise the parishes of Abberton, Abbots Morton, Church Lench, Cookhill, Inkberrow, Rous Lench and Stock & Bradley as well as the proposed Hanbury South parish ward. Our proposed Inkberrow ward would provide a good level of electoral equality and all constituent parts have good links with Inkberrow village, which is situated at the centre of the ward. We would welcome comments on our draft recommendations from local people.

72 Under our draft recommendations Bowbrook and Inkberrow wards would have councillor:elector ratios 4 per cent and 1 per cent below the district average respectively (equal to the district average and 4 per cent above by 2006). Dodderhill & Hanbury and Upton Snodsbury wards would both have a councillor:elector ratio 5 per cent above the district average, both initially and by 2006. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4.

Drakes Broughton, Eckington, Pinvin and Spetchley wards

73 These four wards are situated in the centre and west of the district, to the north and west of Pershore town, and return a single councillor each. Drakes Broughton ward comprises the parishes of Drakes Broughton & Wadborough, Pirton and Stoulton; Eckington ward comprises the parishes of Besford, Birlingham, Defford, Eckington and Strensham; Pinvin ward comprises the parishes of Bishampton, Hill & Moor, Pinvin, Throckmorton and Wyre Piddle; Spetchley ward comprises the parishes of Bredicot, Broughton Hackett, Churchill, Norton Juxta Kempsey, Spetchley, White Ladies Aston and Whittington. Drakes Broughton, Eckington, Pinvin and Spetchley wards have councillor:elector ratios 4 per cent, 14 per cent, 22 per cent and 44 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent, 13 per cent, 18 per cent and 38 per cent above by 2006).

74 Wychavon District Council proposed modifications to Drakes Broughton, Pinvin and Spetchley wards, and proposed retaining the existing arrangements of Eckington ward. It proposed transferring Bishampton parish, currently in Pinvin ward, into a new Inkberrow & Lenches ward. In order to retain a good level of electoral equality after this modification the District Council proposed transferring Peopleton parish, currently in Upton Snodsbury ward, into Pinvin ward. The Council stated that "a significant number of requests have been received requesting the parishes around the airfield site [the existing Pinvin ward] be kept together". It stated that it had considered alternative warding arrangements but it considered that "this solution provides wards within the acceptable variance and minimises the warding of parishes". The District Council proposed transferring the parishes of Bredicott, Broughton Hackett, Churchill and Spetchley currently in Spetchley ward, into a new single-member Crowle ward, as outlined earlier in the chapter. It proposed a new single-member Norton & Whittington ward, comprising the parishes of Norton Juxta Kempsey and Whittington, currently in Spetchley ward. It stated that these two parishes have "common interests and facilitate a single-member ward". The Council proposed a modified Drakes Broughton ward comprising the parishes of the existing ward and White Ladies Aston parish, currently in Spetchley ward. Under the District Council's proposals Spetchley ward would cease to exist.

75 The Liberal Democrats proposed no change to the existing electoral arrangements of Pinvin ward. They opposed the District Council's proposal to include Bishampton parish in a new Inkberrow & Lenches ward, stating that "Bishampton looks to Pershore for its services ... it has absolutely no community of interest with the Lenches which looks to Evesham". The

Liberal Democrats outlined a number of local issues which affect the existing Pinvin ward, including the airfield site, the landfill site and the foot and mouth burial site, arguing that Pinvin ward should remain unchanged in order to effectively deal with the issues arising from these sites. The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the parishes of Bredicot, Broughton Hackett, Churchill, Spetchley and White Ladies Aston, currently in Spetchley ward, into a revised Upton Snodsbury ward with the parishes of the existing ward. The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's proposals for a new Norton & Whittington ward and the retention of the existing Eckington ward. They also proposed that there should be no change to the existing Drakes Broughton ward.

76 Bishampton & Throckmorton Parish Council opposed Wychavon District Council's proposal to transfer Bishampton parish into a new two-member Inkberrow & Lenches ward, stating that the existing Pinvin ward should be retained. The Parish Council stated that "the area has a strong community identity, formed through close co-operation over issues concerning two important sites, the Throckmorton former airfield site (which incorporates a foot and mouth burial site) and the Hill & Moor landfill site". The Parish Council stated that it supported the proposals put forward by Councillor E Tucker [the Liberal Democrats' proposals] which retained the existing electoral arrangements of Pinvin ward. Hill & Moor Parish Council stated that "in terms of communication and effective local government management it considers it is imperative this area [Pinvin ward] remains as an integrated unit with a single accountable councillor". It put forward the issues surrounding the landfill and airfield sites as argumentation to justify the retention of the existing ward.

77 Councillor Argyle, member for Pinvin ward, opposed the proposal to change the existing electoral arrangements of Pinvin ward "because all the villages share the short and long term effects of this huge site [the airfield and landfill sites]". He stated that the "ward has a strong community identity ... as they all look towards Pershore for their services". Councillor Argyle opposed the proposal to split Bishampton and Throckmorton parishes, which both return councillors to Bishampton & Throckmorton Parish Council, as the parishes in the proposed "Inkberrow & Lenches ward look towards Redditch and Evesham for their services".

78 Norton-Juxta-Kempsey Parish Council stated that "it is logical to be allied with Drakes Broughton & Wadborough, Pirton and Stoulton [parishes] to form the Drakes Broughton ward" as there are already links and common interests between the four communities.

79 We have carefully considered all the representations received during Stage One regarding these four wards. We noted that during the District Council's consultation on its Stage One proposals there was strong opposition to the proposal to transfer Bishampton parish out of the existing Pinvin ward. We have noted that the Liberal Democrats, Bishampton Parish Council and Councillor Argyle, member for Pinvin ward, all put forward strong arguments together with evidence to support their proposals. The retention of the existing Pinvin ward was also supported by Hill & Moor Parish Council. We have considered the arguments put forward relating to the disused airfield and the landfill site, which are situated in the centre of the existing ward. Having visited the area and having considered the representations received at Stage One, we have concluded that the issues arising from these two sites have created a strong sense of community identity between the constituent parishes of the existing ward. We therefore consider that as the existing Pinvin ward provides an acceptable level of electoral equality the best reflection of community identity would be met by the retention of the existing ward. We therefore propose retaining the existing Pinvin ward as part of our draft recommendations.

80 We considered the proposal put forward by Norton-Juxta-Kempsey Parish Council for a ward comprising the parishes of Drakes Broughton & Wadborough, Norton Juxta Kempsey, Pirton and Stoulton. This proposal would provide a relatively high level of electoral inequality in both this proposed ward and the neighbouring Upton Snodsbury ward. We have considered including Whittington parish in a two-member ward with the parishes of Drakes Broughton & Wadborough, Norton-Juxta-Kempsey, Pirton and Stoulton and we would welcome comments on this proposal at Stage Three. However, we propose adopting the District Council's proposed Norton & Whittington ward, which provides a good level of electoral equality and has the support of the Liberal Democrats. We propose retaining the existing Drakes Broughton ward, as put forward by the Liberal Democrats, and Eckington ward as put forward by both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats.

81 Under our draft recommendations Eckington, Norton & Whittington and Pinvin wards would have councillor:elector ratios 5 per cent, 10 per cent and 12 per cent above the district average respectively (3 per cent, 6 per cent and 8 per cent above by 2006). Drakes Broughton ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 4 per cent below the district average (7 per cent by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Bredon, Elmley Castle, Fladbury, Somerville and South Bredon Hill wards

82 These five wards are situated in the south of the district; each ward currently returns a single councillor. Bredon ward comprises the parishes of Bredon and Bredon's Norton; Elmley Castle ward comprises the parishes of Bricklehampton, Elmley Castle, Great Comberton, Little Comberton, Netherton and Wick; Fladbury ward comprises the parishes of Charlton, Cropthorne and Fladbury; Somerville ward comprises the parishes of Ashton under Hill, Aston Somerville, Hinton on the Green and Sedgeberrow; South Bredon Hill ward comprises the parishes of Beckford, Conderton, Kemerton and Overbury. Elmley Castle, Fladbury, Somerville and South Bredon Hill wards would have councillor:elector ratios 17 per cent, 8 per cent, 10 per cent and 41 per cent below the district average respectively (19 per cent, 11 per cent, 12 per cent and 42 per cent below by 2006). Bredon ward has a councillor:elector ratio 22 per cent above the district average (21 per cent by 2006).

83 Wychavon District Council proposed modifications to all five of these wards. It proposed transferring Bredon's Norton parish and the north-eastern corner of Bredon parish, currently in Bredon ward, into a modified single-member South Bredon Hill ward with the parishes of the existing ward and Ashton under Hill parish, which is currently in Somerville ward. It stated that this proposal "retains the grouping of parishes to the south of Bredon Hill which looks to Gloucestershire for facilities". The District Council proposed including the remainder of the existing Somerville ward, the parishes of Aston Somerville, Hinton on the Green and Sedgeberrow, in a new single-member Elmley Castle & Somerville ward with the parishes of Elmley Castle, Great Comberton, Little Comberton, Netherton and part of Bricklehampton parish, currently in Elmley Castle ward. The District Council stated that its proposal would require a change to the external boundary of Bricklehampton parish under the Local Government & Ratings Act 1997. It proposed including the northern part of Bricklehampton parish in a revised Fladbury ward with the parishes of the existing ward and with Wick parish, currently in Elmley Castle ward.

84 The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's proposals for a new Elmley Castle & Somerville ward and a revised Fladbury ward. However, they proposed an alternative warding arrangement between the proposed Bredon and South Bredon Hill wards which is identical to the proposal put forward by Kemerton Parish Council.

85 Kemerton Parish Council stated that “the villages which lie to the south of Bredon Hill form a group whose members are similar to one another and distinctly different from the rest of Wychavon”. It put forward an alternative proposal for warding Bredon parish to the one put forward by Wychavon District Council. Kemerton Parish Council proposed including the settlements of Lower Westmancote and Westmancote in a revised South Bredon Hill ward with the parishes of the existing ward and Ashton under Hill parish, currently in Somerville ward. This proposal would leave the remainder of Bredon parish in a revised Bredon ward with Bredon’s Norton parish. The Parish Council stated that “Westmancote is much more closely linked to Kemerton than is Bredon’s Norton ... the parishes of Kemerton and Bredon’s Norton do not adjoin and access between the two can only be achieved by passing through Westmancote”.

86 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these five wards. In order to provide an acceptable level of electoral equality in Bredon and South Bredon Hill wards it is necessary to ward the parish of Bredon, for which we have received two different proposals, as outlined above. Having visited the area we are minded to adopt the proposals put forward by Kemerton Parish Council and the Liberal Democrats, as we have noted that there is no direct access to South Bredon Hill ward from Bredon’s Norton parish. Consequently we consider that the inclusion of the settlements of Lower Westmancote and Westmancote in a revised South Bredon Hill ward would provide the best reflection of community identity and provision of effective and convenient local government in both Bredon and South Bredon Hill wards.

87 We carefully considered the proposals put forward by the District Council for a new Elmley Castle & Somerville ward and a revised Fladbury ward, and noted that this proposal had the support of the Liberal Democrats and provided acceptable levels of electoral equality. However, this proposal would involve including that part of Bricklehampton parish to the north of Lower End in a revised Fladbury ward. The District Council stated that this would involve a change to the external boundaries of the parish, we have no power to modify this boundary. In order to transfer part of Bricklehampton parish into Fladbury ward we would have to create two parish wards, which could then be placed in different district wards. However, this would mean the creation of a parish ward containing 58 electors who would return a parish councillor to Elmley Castle, Bricklehampton & Netherton Parish Council. We do not consider that the creation of such a small parish ward would provide effective and convenient local government at a parish or district level. Consequently we are left with two options, to include the whole of the parish of Bricklehampton in Elmley Castle & Somerville ward or Fladbury ward. We have noted that Bricklehampton parish is part of Elmley Castle, Bricklehampton & Netherton Grouped Parish Council. However, to include Bricklehampton parish in Elmley Castle & Somerville ward would result in Wick parish becoming detached from the remainder of the proposed Fladbury ward. We believe that detached wards lack community identity and are therefore undesirable electoral areas. With this in mind, in order to retain Bricklehampton in a ward with the parishes of Elmley Castle and Netherton, we would have to develop a completely new electoral scheme for the south of the district, as Wick parish would not be included in a new Fladbury ward. Consequently we propose transferring the whole of Bricklehampton parish into a revised Fladbury ward with the parishes of Charlton, Crophorne, Fladbury and Wick as part of our draft recommendations. Our proposed Elmley Castle & Somerville wards would comprise the parishes of Aston Somerville, Elmley Castle, Great Comberton, Little Comberton, Hinton on the Green, Netherton and Sedgeberrow. We are of the view that our draft recommendations will provide acceptable levels of electoral equality while facilitating a locally generated scheme in the remainder of the southern part of the district. We would welcome comments from local people on this proposal at Stage Three.

88 Under our draft recommendations Bredon and South Bredon Hill wards would have councillor:elector ratios 1 per cent and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (2 per cent and 6 per cent below by 2006). Elmley Castle & Somerville and Fladbury wards would have councillor:elector ratios 2 per cent and 12 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent below and 9 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A3.

Badsey, Bretforton & Offenham, Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth and The Littletons wards

89 These five wards are situated in the south-east corner of the district, to the east of Evesham town. Each of these wards returns a single councillor. Badsey ward comprises the parishes of Aldington and Badsey; Bretforton & Offenham ward comprises the parishes of the same names; Harvington & Norton ward comprises the parishes of Harvington and Norton & Lenchwick; Honeybourne & Pebworth ward comprises the parishes of Bickmarsh, Honeybourne and Pebworth; The Littletons ward comprises the parishes of Cleeve Prior, North & Middle Littleton and South Littleton. Badsey, Bretforton & Offenham, Harvington & Norton and The Littletons wards have councillor:elector ratios 22 per cent, 7 per cent, 11 per cent and 21 per cent above the district average respectively (19 per cent, 4 per cent, 10 per cent and 18 per cent by 2006). Honeybourne & Pebworth ward has a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average (1 per cent below by 2006).

90 Wychavon District Council proposed retaining the existing electoral arrangements for Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth and The Littletons wards. It proposed a boundary modification between Badsey and Bretforton & Offenham wards, stating that the existing Blackminster parish ward of Badsey parish should be transferred into a revised Bretforton & Offenham ward. The Council proposed no further modifications to the remainder of Badsey and Bretforton & Offenham wards.

91 The Liberal Democrats proposed the retention of the existing electoral arrangements in all five of these wards.

92 We have carefully considered both submissions received relating to these five wards. We have noted that the District Council's proposal to transfer the Blackminster parish ward of Badsey parish into Bretforton & Offenham ward would provide much improved levels of electoral equality in both wards. We therefore propose adopting the District Council's proposed Badsey and Bretforton & Offenham wards as part of our draft recommendations. We noted that both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed the retention of the existing electoral arrangements for Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth and The Littletons wards. The existing arrangements provide acceptable levels of electoral equality under a council size of 45, and continue to reflect community identities and interest in the area, and we therefore propose retaining the existing Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth and The Littletons wards as part of our draft recommendations.

93 Under our draft recommendations Badsey, Bretforton & Offenham, Harvington & Norton and The Littletons wards would have councillor:elector ratios 8 per cent, 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 11 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent above, 1 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 8 per cent above by 2006). Honeybourne & Pebworth ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 8 per cent below the district average (9 per cent by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2.

Electoral Cycle

94 At Stage One we did not receive any comments relating to the electoral cycle of the district. We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

95 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 49 to 45;
- there should be 32 wards;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of four, and nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

96 Our draft recommendations would involve modifying all but nine of the existing wards in Wychavon district, as summarised below:

- in Droitwich town we propose adopting the District Council's proposal with one minor modification. In Evesham town we are adopting the District Council's proposed Great Hampton ward and proposing our own warding arrangements in the remainder of the town;
- we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for Badsey, Bretforton & Offenham, Broadway & Wickhamford, Lovett & North Claines, Norton & Whittington and Pershore wards;
- we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Bredon, South Bredon Hill and Upton Snodsbury wards;
- we are putting forward our own proposals for new Dodderhill & Hanbury, Elmley Castle & Somerville, Fladbury and Inkberrow wards;
- there should be no change to Bowbrook, Drakes Broughton, Eckington, Hartlebury, Harvington & Norton, Honeybourne & Pebworth, Ombersley, Pinvin and The Littletons wards.

97 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	49	45	49	45
Number of wards	36	32	36	32
Average number of electors per councillor	1,859	2,025	1,927	2,098
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	24	4	26	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	15	0	12	0

98 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Wychavon District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 24 to four. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation
 Wychavon District Council should comprise 45 councillors serving 32 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 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

99 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Bredon, Droitwich, Evesham and Hanbury to reflect the proposed district wards.

100 The parish of Bredon currently returns 11 councillors to Bredon & Bredon’s Norton Parish Council, which is served by 12 councillors. Bredon parish is currently not warded. The District Council and the Liberal Democrats put forward two different warding arrangements at a district ward level. We propose adopting the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, which were also put forward by Kemerton Parish Council, at a district ward level, as outlined earlier in the chapter. Therefore we propose that the parish ward boundary for Bredon be coterminous with the proposed district ward boundary in the same area.

Draft Recommendation

The parish of Bredon should return 11 councillors to Bredon & Bredon's Norton Parish Council, which should comprise 12 councillors, as at present. Bredon parish should be divided into two wards: Bredon parish ward (returning nine councillors), and Westmancote parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundary between Bredon and Westmancote parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

101 The parish of Droitwich is currently served by 18 councillors representing three wards, Droitwich Central, Droitwich South and Droitwich West wards, each returning six councillors. The District Council and the Liberal Democrats put forward two different warding arrangements at a district ward level. We propose adopting the District Council's proposals with one minor modification, at a district ward level, as outlined earlier in the chapter. Therefore we propose that the parish ward boundaries for Droitwich be coterminous with the proposed district ward boundaries in the same area.

Draft Recommendation

Droitwich Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Droitwich South, Droitwich South East, Droitwich South West and Droitwich West parish wards (each returning four councillors) and Droitwich Central parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

102 The parish of Evesham is currently served by 24 councillors representing six wards, Evesham East, Evesham Hampton No. 1, Evesham Hampton No. 2, Evesham North, Evesham South and Evesham West wards, each returning four councillors. The District Council and the Liberal Democrats put forward two different warding arrangements at a district ward level. We propose adopting the District Council's proposed Great Hampton ward; however we are putting forward our own proposals in the remainder of the town at a district ward level, as outlined earlier in the chapter. Therefore we propose that the parish ward boundaries for Evesham be coterminous with the proposed district ward boundaries in the same area.

Draft Recommendation

Evesham Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Evesham North parish ward (returning six councillors), Bengeworth, Evesham South and Little Hampton parish wards (each returning five councillors) and Great Hampton parish ward (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

103 The parish of Hanbury is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. The Liberal Democrats proposed including part of Hanbury parish in a new Dodderhill & Hanbury ward and part in a revised Inkberrow at a district ward level. We propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal, as outlined earlier in the chapter. Therefore we propose that the parish

ward boundary for Hanbury be coterminous with the proposed district ward boundary in the same area.

Draft Recommendation

Hanbury Parish Council should comprise nine parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Hanbury North parish ward (returning six councillors) and Hanbury South parish ward (returning three councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Wychavon

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

105 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Wychavon contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 20 May 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

106 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

www.lgce.gov.uk

107 In the light of responses received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Wychavon: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Wychavon 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 Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Badsey parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Bredon parish.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Hanbury parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Droitwich and Evesham towns.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Wychavon: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Badsey parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Bredon parish

Map A4: Proposed Warding of Hanbury parish

Appendix B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

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