

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Rutland

Report to The Electoral Commission

October 2002

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

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No.3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

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 and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the unitary authority of Rutland.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Rutland's electoral arrangements on 16 October 2001. The Boundary Committee for England (BCFE) published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 14 May 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received by the BCFE during consultation on its draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Rutland:

- **in 12 of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20% in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 75-76) are that:

- **Rutland County Council should have 26 councillors, six more than at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, with one ward retaining its existing boundaries.**

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

- **In 13 of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 16 wards expected to vary by no more than 9% from the average for the district by 2006.**

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

- **Revised warding arrangements and the reduction and redistribution of councillors for Oakham Town Council.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 13 November 2002:

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

**Fax: 020 7271 0505
Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**

Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Braunston & Belton	1	The parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Leighfield, Preston, Ridlington and Wardley	Map 2
2 Cottesmore	2	The parishes of Barrow, Cottesmore, Market Overton and Teigh	Map 2
3 Exton	1	The parishes of Ashwell, Burley, Egleton, Exton, Hambleton, Horn and Whitwell	Map 2
4 Greetham	1	The parishes of Clipsham, Greetham, Pickworth, Stretton and Thistleton	Map2
5 Ketton	2	The parishes of Barrowden, Ketton, Tinwell and Tixover	Map 2
6 Langham	1	The parish of Langham	Map 2
7 Lyddington	1	The parishes of Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Glaston, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water	Map 2
8 Martinsthorpe	1	The parishes of Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe, Morcott, Pilton and Wing	Map 2
9 Normanton	2	The parishes of Edith Weston, Empingham, Normanton, North Luffenham and South Luffenham	Map 2
10 Oakham North East	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham North East parish ward)	Large Map
11 Oakham North West	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham North West parish ward); the parish of Barleythorpe	Large Map
12 Oakham South East	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham South East parish ward)	Large Map
13 Oakham South West	2	part of Oakham parish (the proposed Oakham South West parish ward)	Large Map
14 Ryhall and Casterton	2	The parishes of Essendine, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Ryhall and Tickencote	Map 2
15 Uppingham	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – The parishes of Beaumont Chase and Uppingham	Map 2
16 Whissendine	1	The parish of Whissendine	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the Large Map inserted in the back of this report.

Table 2: Final recommendations for Rutland

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 Braunston & Belton	1	985	985	-2	1,028	1,028	-4
2 Cottesmore	2	2,033	1,017	1	2,083	1,042	-3
3 Exton	1	1,083	1,083	8	1,113	1,113	4
4 Greetham	1	921	921	-8	969	969	-9
5 Ketton	2	2,073	1,037	3	2,186	1,093	2
6 Langham	1	875	875	-13	1,042	1,042	-3
7 Lyddington	1	1,064	1,064	6	1,081	1,081	1
8 Martinsthorpe	1	971	971	-3	1,002	1,002	-6
9 Normanton	2	2,262	1,131	13	2,279	1,140	6
10 Oakham North East	2	1,886	943	-6	2,048	1,024	-4
11 Oakham North West	2	2,196	1,098	10	2,243	1,122	5
12 Oakham South East	2	1,727	864	-14	2,172	1,086	1
13 Oakham South West	2	2,065	1,033	3	2,094	1,047	-2
14 Ryhall and Casterton	2	2,203	1,102	10	2,289	1,145	7
15 Uppingham	3	2,750	917	-9	3,143	1,048	-2
16 Whissendine	1	972	972	-3	1,055	1,055	-1
Totals	26	26,066	-	-	27,827	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,003	-	-	1,070	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rutland County 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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Rutland. The district has now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Rutland's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1977 (Report no.199). Since undertaking the review, Rutland became a unitary authority in 1997.

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Rutland was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes that would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Rutland is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, specifying that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did 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.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 16 October 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Rutland County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified the Leicestershire Constabulary, the Local Government Association, Leicestershire 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 East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Rutland Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 7 January 2002. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 14 May 2002 with the publication of the Boundary Committee's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rutland*, and ended on 8 July 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 Rutland lies between the counties of Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. Rutland gained unitary status in April 1997 and is known as Rutland County Council in recognition of its strong local identity. Rutland has a population of 34,600 and covers a total area of 39,367 hectares. The whole area is parished and contains 58 civil parishes. It is predominantly comprised of rural parishes but also includes two towns, Oakham and Uppingham, which together account for 41% of the total electorate. At its centre is Rutland Water which covers 3,000 acres. Rutland County Council has projected an increase in the electorate of around 7% from 26,066 to 27,827 by 2006 with much of the development projected in Braunston and Oakham East wards.

11 The Council presently has 20 members who are elected from 16 wards. One ward is represented by three councillors, two are represented by two councillors and the remaining 13 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

12 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the LGCE 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 that follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,303 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 1,391 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 16 wards varies by more than 10% from the district average, in eight wards by more than 20% and in three wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Oakham East ward where each councillor represents 39% more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing wards in Rutland

Table 3: 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	Barrowden	1	1,093	1,093	-16	1,111	1,111	-20
2	Belton	1	1,225	1,225	-6	1,277	1,277	-8
3	Braunston	1	840	840	-36	875	875	-37
4	Casterton	1	802	802	-38	834	834	-40
5	Cottesmore	1	1,584	1,584	22	1,622	1,622	17
6	Edith Weston	1	1,018	1,018	-22	1,023	1,023	-26
7	Empingham	1	931	931	-29	954	954	-31
8	Exton	1	1,135	1,135	-13	1,177	1,177	-15
9	Ketton	1	1,554	1,554	19	1,654	1,654	19
10	Langham	1	1,021	1,021	-22	1,196	1,196	-14
11	Luffenham	1	1,216	1,216	-7	1,228	1,228	-12
12	Oakham East	2	3,613	1,807	39	4,220	2,110	52
13	Oakham West	3	4,115	1,372	5	4,183	1,394	0
14	Ryhall	1	1,663	1,663	28	1,726	1,726	24
15	Uppingham	2	2,750	1,375	6	3,143	1,572	13
16	Whissendine	1	1,506	1,506	16	1,604	1,604	15
	Totals	20	26,066	-	-	27,827	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,303	-	-	1,391	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rutland County 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 Casterton ward were relatively over-represented by 38%, while electors in Oakham East ward were significantly under-represented by 39%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received four representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Rutland County Council and representations from the Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats Party, Ashwell Parish Council and Pickworth Parish Meeting. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the BCFE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rutland*.

15 The BCFE's draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals, which proposed an increase in council size from 20 to 26 members. This scheme achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a pattern of eight two-member wards, seven single-member and one three-member ward in the rest of the borough. However, it moved away from the Council's scheme in the proposed Langham and Oakham North West wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process. It proposed that:

- Rutland County Council should be served by 26 councillors, compared with the current 20, representing 16 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Oakham Town Council.

Draft recommendation

Rutland County Council should comprise 26 councillors, serving 16 wards. The Council should continue to hold whole council elections every four years.

16 The BCFE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 16 wards varying by no more than 10% from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 9% from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the BCFE received ten representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Rutland County Council (hereafter the Council).

Rutland Council

18 The Council supported the majority of the draft recommendations. However, it proposed that two ward names be amended and that both Barleythorpe and Langham parishes be placed within the same ward.

The Liberal Democrats

19 Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats (hereafter the Liberal Democrats) supported the majority of the draft recommendations but objected to the placement of Barleythorpe parish in the proposed Oakham North West ward and the use of Chater and Normanton as ward names.

Parish and town councils

20 We received eight responses from parish and town councils. Braunston Parish Council and Oakham Town Council supported the draft recommendations. Barrowden Parish Council proposed that it be joined with parishes of a comparable size. Exton Parish Council proposed that Exton and Greetham parishes remain within the same single ward. Langham Parish Council proposed parish warding amendments. Manton and Morcott parish councils proposed that the new Chater ward be renamed Martinthorpe ward. North Luffenham Parish Council proposed that the new Normanton ward be renamed Rutland Water East.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

21 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Rutland is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

22 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

23 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.

24 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be 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 that provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate forecasts

25 At Stage One the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 7% from 26,066 to 27,827 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Oakham East ward. 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. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the BCFE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

Council size

27 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

28 In its draft recommendations report, the BCFE adopted the Council’s proposal for a council of 26 members as it considered that this increase would facilitate more effective and convenient local government in Rutland. The Council argued that since attaining unitary status, the

implementation of new executive arrangements and the fulfilment of constituency obligations made the current number of members insufficient.

29 During Stage Three the Liberal Democrats reiterated their support for a council size of 26 members. Exton Parish Council also stated that it did not oppose the increase in members. Given the evidence received during the review, we are content to confirm the draft proposals for 26 members as final.

Electoral arrangements

30 The BCFE's draft recommendations were generally based on the scheme developed and consulted upon by Rutland County Council. It considered that this scheme provided a good balance between the statutory criteria and had a degree of local support. However the BCFE was not persuaded by the evidence submitted in support of retaining an electoral variance of 12% for the proposed Langham ward containing Barleythorpe parish. It therefore proposed that Barleythorpe parish be placed within the proposed Oakham North West ward.

31 In response to the BCFE's draft recommendations report, a number of respondents supported Barleythorpe parish remaining within a ward containing Langham parish. Both Rutland County Council and the Liberals Democrats supported the majority of the draft recommendations with the exception of a few ward name changes. In support of its contention that the proposed Langham ward should comprise both Langham and Barleythorpe parishes, Rutland County Council submitted the results of specific public consultation on this issue. This showed that the majority of those who returned the questionnaire supported this proposal.

32 Exton Parish Council proposed alternative warding arrangements for the north of the district, in order to retain being in a single-member ward with Greetham parish. However, these proposals were not supported by any of the parishes that would be affected, other submissions or any evidence of public consultation.

33 Barrowden Parish Council objected to being placed in the same ward as Ketton parish on the grounds of community interests. However, it did not supply alternative ward arrangements and the local two parishes of Manton and Morcott both expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

34 In the course of this review it has come to our attention that there are a number of instances where a parish review would be advisable after the completion of this PER. This is particularly the case in respect of those parish boundaries that have subsequently been altered by the creation of Rutland Water in the centre of the district. We also consider that parish reviews would be appropriate for a number of parishes within Rutland that have effectively become dormant due to the low number of electors within them.

35 In the light of all the submissions received during Stage Three and the support for the draft recommendations in various areas, we propose confirming the majority of draft recommendations as final. We did not consider there was sufficient evidence to support amendments to the proposed Langham and Exton wards. However, we do propose making one ward name amendment. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards;
- (b) Oakham East, Oakham West and Langham wards;
- (c) Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards;
- (d) Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston, Luffenham and Uppingham wards.

36 Details of our final 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.

Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards

37 Located in the north-west of the district, the wards of Braunston, Cottesmore and Whissendine are each represented by a single councillor. Braunston ward comprises the parishes of Ashwell, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Burley, Egleton and Leighfield. Cottesmore ward comprises Barrow and Cottesmore parishes. Whissendine ward comprises the parishes of Market Overton, Teigh, Thistleton and Whissendine. The number of electors per councillor is 36% below the district average in Braunston ward (37% below by 2006), 22% above the district average in Cottesmore ward (17% above by 2006) and 16% above the district average in Whissendine ward (15% above by 2006).

38 At Stage One, the Council proposed modifying all three wards in this area. It proposed a single-member Braunston & Belton ward consisting of the parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Leighfield, Preston, Ridlington and Wardley. It also proposed a two-member Cottesmore ward comprising the parishes of Barrow, Cottesmore, Market Overton and Teigh. It further proposed a single-member Whissendine ward, coterminous with the parish of the same name. The Liberal Democrats expressed support for this proposal.

39 Ashwell Parish Council expressed support for a similar ward pattern in the rural area to that proposed under the Council's preferred scheme.

40 The BCFE noted the support the Council received from local parishes to its proposals for the area. In light of these arrangements, which also provide good electoral equality, the BCFE proposed fully adopting the Council's proposals for this area.

41 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Braunston & Belton, Cottesmore and Whissendine wards would be 2% below, 1% above and 3% below the district average respectively (4% below, 3% below and 1% below by 2006).

42 At Stage Three, the Council, the Liberal Democrats and Braunston Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations.

43 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for these wards as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support.

44 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations. The final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

Oakham East, Oakham West and Langham wards

45 Located in the west of Rutland, the three wards of Langham, Oakham East and Oakham West are presently represented by one, two and three councillors respectively. Langham ward comprises the parishes of Barleythorpe and Langham. Oakham East and Oakham West wards are coterminous with the parish wards of the same names. The number of electors per councillor is 22% below the district average in Langham ward (14% below by 2006), 39% above the district average in Oakham East ward (52% above by 2006) and 5% above the district average in Oakham West ward (equal to the average by 2006).

46 Rutland County Council proposed that Oakham town be divided into four two-member wards: Oakham North East, Oakham North West, Oakham South East and Oakham South West. Under a council size of 26 members, eight councillors were allocated to the town as the correct allocation for this council size. The Council proposed retaining the railway line as a ward

boundary. It also proposed that Braunston Road be used as the boundary between Oakham North West and Oakham South West. It further proposed that the boundary between Oakham North East and Oakham South East wards lie to the east of the railway line following South Street, Mill Street and then along Burley Road up to the proposed ward boundary with the proposed Exton ward. Rutland & Melton Constituency Liberal Democrats supported this proposal.

47 The Council proposed no change to Langham ward (comprising Langham and Barleythorpe parishes), which under a 26-member scheme would have an electoral variance of 12 % by 2006. It noted the option of transferring the Barleythorpe parish into one of the Oakham town wards, but expressed a preference for retaining the parishes of Langham and Barleythorpe together due to community identity.

48 Having considered the Council's proposals and visited this area of Rutland, the BCFE did not consider that an electoral variance of 12% within Langham ward was justified. It therefore proposed adopting the Council's proposals for this area with the exception of the proposed Langham ward. In order to secure a good balance between the statutory criteria, the BCFE proposed placing Barleythorpe parish within the Oakham North West ward. It also proposed Langham ward be comprised solely of Langham parish.

49 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the Langham, Oakham North East, Oakham North West, Oakham South East and Oakham South West wards would be 13% below, 6% below, 10% above, 14% below and 3% above the district average respectively (3% below, 4% below, 5% above, 1% above and 2% below by 2006).

50 In response to the BCFE's draft recommendations the Council supported the draft recommendations for the majority of this area but continued to propose the inclusion of Barleythorpe parish in Langham ward. It also submitted 35 public consultation forms that had been returned by electors from Barleythorpe parish. Of these residents 29 objected to the draft recommendations and stated a preference for the inclusion of Barleythorpe and Langham parishes in the same ward. Three other residents expressed support for the draft recommendations and three residents stated they had no particular view on this matter.

51 The Liberal Democrats also supported the majority of the draft recommendations for this area. However, they also stated that Barleythorpe parish should remain part of Langham ward. Langham Parish Council proposed alterations to the present parish boundaries between Barleythorpe and Langham parishes. Oakham Town Council expressed full support for the draft recommendations.

52 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received. We note the objections that have been raised concerning the proposed inclusion of Barleythorpe parish within an Oakham town ward. However, we do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to allow the 12% variance in the proposed Langham & Barleythorpe as proposed by the Council. Having visited this area, we note that Barleythorpe parish is served by direct road access to the north west of Oakham town. We also note that the main settlement in Barleythorpe parish is geographically nearer to Oakham town than it is to Langham parish. We do not consider that the proposed inclusion of Barleythorpe parish within Oakham North West ward would compromise its rural status and note that Oakham town itself retains a considerable rural hinterland surrounding it.

53 We therefore propose the adoption of all the draft recommendations for this area. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations. The final recommendations are illustrated on the Large Map inserted at the back of this report.

Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards

54 Located in the east and centre of the district, Casterton, Empingham, Exton, Ketton and Ryhall wards are each represented by a single councillor. Casterton ward comprises the parishes of Clipsham, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Pickworth and Tinwell. Empingham ward comprises the parishes of Empingham, Hambleton, Tickencote and Whitwell. Exton ward comprises the parishes of Exton, Greetham, Horn and Stretton. Ketton ward comprises the parishes of Ketton and Tixover. Ryhall ward comprises the parishes of Essendine and Ryhall. The number of electors per councillor is 38% below the district average in Casterton ward (40% below by 2006), 29% below the district average in Empingham ward (31% below by 2006), 13% below the district average in Exton ward (15% below by 2006), 19% above the district average in Ketton ward (19 % above by 2006) and 28% above the district average in Ryhall ward (24% above by 2006).

55 At Stage One, the Council proposed modifications to all of these wards. It proposed a single-member Exton ward comprising the parishes of Ashwell, Burley, Egleton, Exton, Hambleton, Horn and Whitwell; a single-member Greetham ward comprising the parishes of Clipsham, Greetham, Pickworth, Stretton and Thistleton. It further proposed a two-member Ketton ward comprising the parishes of Barrowden, Ketton, Tinwell and Tixover, and a two-member Ryhall & Casterton ward comprising the parishes of Essendine, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Ryhall and Tickencote. These proposals received the support of the Liberal Democrats.

56 The BCFE considered that Rutland County Council's proposals for this area provided the best balance between the statutory criteria and decided to adopt these proposals fully for the purposes of the draft recommendations.

57 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Exton, Greetham, Ketton and Ryhall & Casterton would be 8% above, 8% below, 3% above and 10% above the district average respectively (4% above, 9% below, 2% above and 7% above by 2006).

58 At Stage Three, the Council and the Liberal Democrats expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

59 Exton Parish Council proposed major amendments to the draft recommendations involving the north of Rutland. It stated that it preferred being placed in a single-member ward with Greetham parish on the grounds that Exton Primary School served the children of both these areas.

60 Exton Parish Council proposed two alternative options. Under the first option it proposed a ward pattern of one two-member ward and two single-member wards, one of which would comprise the parishes of Exton, Greetham, Horn and Whitwell. Under the second option it proposed a pattern of one two-member ward and one single-member ward comprising the parishes of Exton, Greetham, Horn and Stretton. However, within this option no ward pattern was provided for the remaining parishes to the east and west of these proposed wards. We received no further submissions in support of these proposed amendments to the north of Rutland.

61 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We note that the first option proposed by Exton Parish Council would provide good levels of electoral equality by 2006. However, we were not persuaded that these proposals reflected local community identity and would receive local support, particularly in view of the fact that the draft recommendations did receive some local support.

62 In assessing any alternative proposals we cannot look at any area in isolation. Therefore, with regard to the second option we noted that the proposed ward pattern isolated parishes to the east and west of the proposed wards and made no proposals as to how they should be warded. We also consider that this proposal would have a negative ripple effect on the rest of the warding pattern for Rutland that has considerable local support.

63 We therefore propose the adoption of all the draft recommendations for this area as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations. The final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston, Luffenham and Uppingham wards

64 Located in the south of Rutland the wards of Barrowden, Belton, Edith Weston and Luffenham are each represented by a single councillor while Uppingham ward is represented by two councillors. Barrowden ward comprises the parishes of Barrowden, Caldecott, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water. Belton ward comprises the parishes of Ayston, Belton-in-Rutland, Bisbrooke, Glaston, Preston, Ridlington, Wardley and Wing. Edith Weston ward comprises the parishes of Edith Weston, Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe and Normanton. Luffenham ward comprises the parishes of Morcott, North Luffenham, Pilton and South Luffenham. Uppingham ward comprises the parishes of Beaumont Chase and Uppingham Town. The number of electors per councillor is 16% below the district average in Barrowden ward (20% below by 2006), 6% below the district average in Belton ward (8% below by 2006), 22% below the district average in Edith Weston ward (26% below by 2006), 7% below the district average in Luffenham ward (12% below by 2006) and 6% above the district average in Uppingham ward (13% above by 2006).

65 At Stage One the Council proposed a single-member Chater ward comprising the parishes of Gunthorpe, Lyndon, Manton, Martinsthorpe, Morcott, Pilton and Wing. It proposed a single-member Lyddington ward comprising the parishes of Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Glaston, Lyddington, Seaton, Stoke Dry and Thorpe By Water. The Council also proposed a two-member Normanton ward comprising of the parishes of Edith Weston, Empingham, Normanton, North Luffenham and South Luffenham. It further proposed Uppingham ward remain the same as at present. This proposed warding pattern received the support of the Liberal Democrats.

66 The BCFE noted the consultation of the parishes undertaken by the Council. Manton, Pilton and South Luffenham expressed support for the Council's proposals for this area. In the light of the consensus for these proposals and the good balance achieved between the statutory criteria the BCFE decided to adopt these proposals for the draft recommendations.

67 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Chater, Lyddington, Normanton and Uppingham would be 3% below, 6% above, 13% above and 9% below the district average respectively (6% below, 1% above, 6% above and 2% below by 2006).

68 At Stage Three, the Council and the Liberal Democrats expressed support for the draft recommendations for this area. However, the Liberal Democrats declined to comment on the suitability of Chater and Normanton as ward names. Manton and Morcott parish councils also expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. However, both proposed that Chater ward be renamed Martinsthorpe ward. North Luffenham Parish Council also stated that it objected to the proposed ward name of Normanton, alternatively proposing the ward be renamed Rutland Water East.

69 Barrowden Parish Council expressed a preference for being warded with parishes of a comparable size. It argued that with an electorate of over 1,000, councillors of Ketton parish would be more partial to the interests of Ketton parish than those of the villages of Barrowden, Tinwell and Tixover. However it did not submit any alternative proposals for this area.

70 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. We noted the objections of Barrowden Parish Council to the proposed Ketton ward. However we cannot look at any area in isolation. Barrowden Parish Council did not provide an alternative warding pattern for the whole area, and we noted that removing Barrowden parish from the proposed Ketton ward, placing it in either the proposed Chater or Lyddington wards would result in an unjustifiably high electoral variance of over 14% in the remaining ward comprising Ketton and Tinwell parishes. We are also not persuaded by its contention that councillors from Ketton parish will only be partial to Ketton's interests. We believe it is the duty of all councillors to represent the needs of all the electors they represent.

71 In light of the local support for the draft recommendations received from the Manton and Morcott parish councils, we consider that such amendments would not provide a good reflection of community identity. We therefore propose the adoption of the majority of draft recommendations for this area.

72 However, we do propose departing from the draft recommendations in respect of the ward name for the proposed Chater ward. In accordance with the Council's proposals we propose renaming it Martinthorpe ward, an amendment supported by Manton and Morcott parish councils who stated that Martinthorpe provided a better reflection of community interests within this area. As there was no local consensus on the use of Normanton as a ward name, we propose retaining the proposed ward name of Normanton.

73 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the draft recommendations. The final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral cycle

74 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

Conclusions

75 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the BCFE's consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse its draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- There should be an increase in council size from 20 to 26 members;
- There should be 16 wards;
- The boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries.

76 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	20	26	20	26
Number of wards	16	16	16	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,303	1,003	1,391	1,070
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	12	3	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	6	0

77 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 12 to three, with no ward varying by more than 20% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further with no ward varying by more than 9% by 2006. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

Rutland County Council should comprise 26 councillors serving 16 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.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

78 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In the BCFE's draft recommendations report it proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Oakham parish to reflect the proposed district wards.

79 The parish of Oakham is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Oakham East (returning six councillors) and Oakham West (returning nine councillors). The BCFE proposed that in light of the recommended district warding arrangements, Oakham parish should comprise four wards: Oakham North East returning three councillors, Oakham North West returning three councillors, Oakham South East returning three councillors and Oakham South West returning three councillors. It proposed modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the Rutland County Council wards within Oakham Town.

80 In response to the BCFE's consultation report, the Council, the Liberal Democrats and Oakham Town Council all expressed support for the revised warding and town council electoral arrangements in Oakham Town.

81 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of the proposed wards in this area, we confirm the draft recommendation for warding Oakham town as final.

Final recommendation

Oakham Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, representing four wards: Oakham North East (returning three councillors), Oakham North West (returning three councillors), Oakham South East (returning three councillors) and Oakham South West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

Map 2: Final recommendations for Rutland

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

82 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in Rutland and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

83 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 13 November 2002.

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

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Fax: 020 7271 0505

**Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**

APPENDIX A

Final recommendations for Rutland: Detailed mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Rutland area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the area that is shown in more detail on the Large Map at the back of the report.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Oakham town.

Map A1: Final recommendations for Rutland: Key map