

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire

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

*July 2000*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 2000

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 169

# CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>9</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>11</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>15</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>47</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane: Detailed Mapping	<i>49</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane (February 2000)	<i>53</i>

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





## Local Government Commission for England

25 July 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 20 July 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Basingstoke & Deane under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in February 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation. A further round of consultation in relation to part of the borough took place from 12 May 2000.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 161) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Basingstoke & Deane.

We recommend that Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 30 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

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

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

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

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Basingstoke & Deane:

- **in eight of the 25 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in nine wards and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 161 – 162) are that:

- **Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should have 60 councillors, three more than at present;**
- **there should be 30 wards, instead of 25 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified and six wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 17 of the proposed 30 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further so that the number of electors per councillor in 25 of the 30 wards is expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average by 2004.**

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

- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Bramley, Dummer, Sherborne St John and Sherfield on Loddon.**

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

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



Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Basing	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Old Basing, Mapledurwell & Up Nately and Newnham parishes)	Map 2
2	Baughurst	1	Baughurst & Heath End ward (part – Baughurst and Baughurst Common wards of Baughurst parish); Kingsclere ward (part – Wolverton ward of Baughurst parish)	Map 2
3	Brighton Hill North (in Basingstoke)	2	Brighton Hill ward (part)	Large map
4	Brighton Hill South (in Basingstoke)	2	Brighton Hill ward (part); Hatch Warren ward (part)	Large map
5	Brookvale & Kings Furlong (in Basingstoke)	2	Brookvale ward (part); Eastrop ward (part)	Large map
6	Buckskin (in Basingstoke)	2	Buckskin ward (part)	Large map
7	Burghclere	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Burghclere, Ecchinswell & Sydmonton, Litchfield & Woodcott and Newtown parishes)	Map 2
8	Calleva	2	Calleva ward (part – Bramley East ward of Bramley parish as proposed, Hartley Wespall, Mortimer West End, Sherfield on Loddon ward of Sherfield on Loddon parish as proposed, Silchester, Stratfield Saye and Stratfield Turgis parishes)	Map 2 and Map A3
9	Chineham	3	Chineham ward (Chineham parish); Calleva ward (part – Taylor's Farm ward of Sherfield on Loddon parish as proposed)	Large map
10	East Woodhay	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (East Woodhay parish)	Map 2
11	Eastrop (in Basingstoke)	2	Brookvale ward (part); Eastrop ward (part)	Large map
12	Grove (in Basingstoke)	2	Brighton Hill ward (part); Grove ward	Large map
13	Hatch Warren & Beggarwood (in Basingstoke)	3	Hatch Warren ward (part); Oakley & North Waltham ward (part – Beggarwood ward of Dummer parish as proposed)	Large map
14	Highclere & Bourne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Ashmansworth, Highclere and St Mary Bourne parishes)	Map 2
15	Kempshott (in Basingstoke)	3	Buckskin ward (part); Kempshott ward (part)	Large map

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
16	Kingsclere	2	Kingsclere ward (part – Ashford Hill with Headley, Hannington and Kingsclere parishes)	Map 2
17	Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon	2	Overton & Laverstoke ward (Overton and Laverstoke parishes); Oakley & North Waltham ward (part – Steventon parish)	Map 2
18	Norden (in Basingstoke)	3	Brookvale ward (part); Norden ward (part)	Large map
19	Oakley & North Waltham	3	Oakley & North Waltham ward (part – Deane, North Waltham, Oakley and Popham parishes, Wootton ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish and Dummer ward of Dummer parish as proposed)	Map 2
20	Pamber	1	Calleva ward (part – Pamber parish)	Map 2
21	Popley East (in Basingstoke)	2	Norden ward (part); Popley ward (part)	Large map
22	Popley West (in Basingstoke)	2	Popley ward (part); Sherborne St John ward (part – Popley Fields ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed)	Large map
23	Rooksdown	1	Sherborne St John ward (part – Rooksdown ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed); Winklebury ward (part)	Large map
24	Sherborne St John	1	Calleva ward (part – Bramley West ward of Bramley parish as proposed); Sherborne St John ward (part – Monk Sherborne parish, Sherborne St John ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed, Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish)	Map 2 and Map A3
25	South Ham (in Basingstoke)	3	Brighton Hill ward (part); Buckskin ward (part); Kempshott ward (part); South Ham ward (part)	Large map
26	Tadley North	2	Baughurst & Heath End ward (part – Central ward (part) and North ward of Tadley Town Council); Tadley ward (part – Central ward (part) of Tadley Town Council)	Map 2 and Map A2
27	Tadley South	2	Tadley ward (part – East and South wards of Tadley Town Council)	Map 2 and Map A2
28	Upton Grey & The Candovers	1	<i>Unchanged</i> Upton Grey ward (Bradley, Candovers, Cliddesden, Ellisfield, Farleigh Wallop, Herriard, Nutley, Preston Candover, Tunworth, Upton Grey, Weston Corbett, Weston Patrick and Winslade parishes)	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
29	Whitchurch	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hurstbourne Priors and Whitchurch parishes)	Map 2
30	Winklebury Ward (in Basingstoke)	3	Buckskin ward (part); Winklebury ward (part)	Large map

*Notes: 1 Basingstoke is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises 13 wards as indicated above.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (1999)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Basing	3	6,211	2,070	8	6,602	2,201	5
2	Baughurst	1	1,942	1,942	1	1,968	1,968	-6
3	Brighton Hill North (in Basingstoke)	2	3,938	1,969	3	3,910	1,955	-6
4	Brighton Hill South (in Basingstoke)	2	4,268	2,134	11	4,223	2,112	1
5	Brookvale & Kings Furlong (in Basingstoke)	2	3,949	1,975	3	3,984	1,992	-5
6	Buckskin (in Basingstoke)	2	3,619	1,810	-6	4,307	2,154	3
7	Burghclere	1	2,054	2,054	7	1,902	1,902	-9
8	Calleva	2	3,907	1,954	2	4,595	2,298	10
9	Chineham	3	5,149	1,716	-10	7,167	2,389	14
10	East Woodhay	1	2,205	2,205	15	2,138	2,138	2
11	Eastrop (in Basingstoke)	2	3,311	1,656	-14	3,744	1,872	-10
12	Grove (in Basingstoke)	2	4,515	2,258	18	4,651	2,326	11
13	Hatch Warren & Beggarwood (in Basingstoke)	3	5,073	1,691	-12	6,759	2,253	8
14	Highclere & Bourne	1	2,361	2,361	23	2,312	2,312	11
15	Kempshott (in Basingstoke)	3	5,723	1,908	0	6,132	2,044	-2
16	Kingsclere	2	3,796	1,898	-1	3,958	1,979	-5
17	Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon	2	3,669	1,835	-4	3,780	1,890	-10
18	Norden (in Basingstoke)	3	5,953	1,984	4	6,534	2,178	4
19	Oakley & North Waltham	3	5,750	1,917	0	5,649	1,883	-10

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20	Pamber	1	2,196	2,196	15	2,209	2,209	6
21	Popley East (in Basingstoke)	2	3,781	1,891	-1	3,865	1,933	-7
22	Popley West (in Basingstoke)	2	2,855	1,428	-26	3,789	1,895	-9
23	Rooksdown	1	502	502	-74	1,962	1,962	-6
24	Sherborne St John	1	2,348	2,348	22	2,273	2,273	11
25	South Ham (in Basingstoke)	3	5,791	1,930	1	6,139	2,046	-2
26	Tadley North	2	4,507	2,254	18	4,570	2,285	9
27	Tadley South	2	4,372	2,186	14	4,308	2,154	3
28	Upton Grey & The Candovers	1	2,166	2,166	13	2,268	2,268	9
29	Whitchurch	2	3,627	1,814	-5	4,076	2,038	-2
30	Winklebury (in Basingstoke)	3	5,470	1,823	-5	5,507	1,836	-12
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>115,008</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,330</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,917</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,089</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire. We have now reviewed 11 districts in Hampshire and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Basingstoke & Deane. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1991 (Report No. 613). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in October 1980 (Report No. 397). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

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

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Hampshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 26 October 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 22 February 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire*, and ended on 17 April 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. In the light of representations received regarding the north-eastern area of the borough, we carried out a further period of consultation in relation to the most appropriate warding arrangements for the existing Calleva and Sherborne St John wards. On 12 May 2000, we wrote to the Borough Council, the relevant parish councils and other interested parties outlining our draft recommendations and two alternative options for that part of the borough and invited further



evidence and submissions by 13 June 2000. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and our further consultation, and now publish our final recommendations.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of Basingstoke & Deane covers an area of some 63,000 hectares in north Hampshire. The borough is bounded by the boroughs of Test Valley to the west, Hart, Winchester and East Hampshire to the south and east, and West Berkshire to the north. Basingstoke & Deane has a population of over 153,000 people, the majority of whom reside in Basingstoke town, the major economic centre of the borough. Over the latter part of this century Basingstoke town has expanded into the surrounding countryside. The remainder of the borough is predominantly rural, with the only other concentration of population being in the Tadley and Baughurst area. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers a large area in the west of the borough. The borough contains 51 parishes, but Basingstoke town itself is unparished.

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

15 The electorate of the borough is 115,006 (February 1999). The Council currently has 57 members who are elected from 25 wards, 11 in Basingstoke which are relatively urban, with the remainder being predominantly rural. Five of the wards are each represented by one councillor, eight by two councillors and 12 by three councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

16 Since the last electoral review, there has been an increase in the electorate in Basingstoke & Deane borough, with around 5 per cent more electors than eight years ago as a result of new housing developments. Over the next five years, the electorate of the borough is expected to increase significantly due to residential developments on the outskirts of Basingstoke town, in the parishes of Dummer, Sherborne St John and Sherfield on Loddon.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,018 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,199 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 25 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalances are in Hatch Warren and Highclere & Bourne wards, where each councillor currently represents 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate by 2004, with nine of the 25 wards projected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and two wards by more than 20 per cent. In particular, Sherborne St John ward is forecast to have 112 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, due to further development.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Basingstoke & Deane*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Basing	3	6,211	2,070	3	6,602	2,201	0
2	Baughurst & Heath End	2	4,116	2,058	2	4,218	2,109	-4
3	Brighton Hill (in Basingstoke)	3	6,302	2,101	4	6,259	2,086	-5
4	Brookvale (in Basingstoke)	2	4,249	2,125	5	4,383	2,192	0
5	Buckskin (in Basingstoke)	2	4,087	2,044	1	4,775	2,388	9
6	Burghclere	1	2,054	2,054	2	1,902	1,902	-13
7	Calleva	3	6,797	2,266	12	8,826	2,942	34
8	Chineham	3	5,130	1,710	-15	5,820	1,940	-12
9	East Woodhay	1	2,205	2,205	9	2,138	2,138	-3
10	Eastrop (in Basingstoke)	2	4,007	2,004	-1	4,454	2,227	1
11	Grove (in Basingstoke)	2	4,383	2,192	9	4,519	2,260	3
12	Hatch Warren (in Basingstoke)	3	7,107	2,369	17	7,013	2,338	6
13	Highclere & Bourne	1	2,361	2,361	17	2,312	2,312	5
14	Kempshott (in Basingstoke)	3	5,669	1,890	-6	6,078	2,026	-8
15	Kingsclere	2	4,065	2,033	1	4,220	2,110	-4
16	Norden (in Basingstoke)	3	5,400	1,800	-11	5,903	1,968	-11
17	Oakley & North Waltham	3	5,933	1,978	-2	7,577	2,526	15
18	Overton & Laverstoke	2	3,488	1,744	-14	3,604	1,802	-18
19	Popley (in Basingstoke)	3	6,114	2,038	1	6,115	2,038	-7
20	Sherborne St John	1	2,252	2,252	12	4,670	4,670	112

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21	South Ham (in Basingstoke)	3	5,438	1,813	-10	5,786	1,929	-12
22	Tadley	3	6,436	2,145	6	6,366	2,122	-3
23	Upton Grey	1	2,166	2,166	7	2,268	2,268	3
24	Whitchurch	2	3,627	1,814	-10	4,076	2,038	-7
25	Winklebury (in Basingstoke)	3	5,409	1,803	-11	5,446	1,815	-17
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>115,006</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,330</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,018</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Hatch Warren and Highclere & Bourne wards were relatively over-represented by 17 per cent, while electors in Chineham wards were relatively under-represented by 15 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 20 representations, including borough-wide schemes from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, and representations from 11 parish and town councils, three local political parties, a borough councillor and two local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane in Hampshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards in the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting Calleva, Oakley & North Waltham and Sherborne St John wards, as well as eight wards in Basingstoke town, using locally generated options, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, compared with the current 57, representing 30 wards, five more than at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Bramley, Dummer, Sherborne St John and Sherfield on Loddon.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors, serving 30 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 17 of the 30 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further so that the number of electors per councillor in 27 of the 30 wards is expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average by 2004.





## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 49 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and the Commission.

### **Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council**

22 The Borough Council stated that the Commission's draft recommendations for the borough had been endorsed by its Policy Committee. It proposed, however, that Brookvale ward should be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward. The Council also proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Sherborne St John ward and Popley West and Rooksdown wards in order to retain well-established dwellings within Sherborne St John ward and the whole of the Popley Fields housing development area within Popley West ward.

### **Member of Parliament**

23 Andrew Hunter, Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, noted that the number of residents in Bramley had expressed concern regarding the proposals for their area, and requested further information regarding the extent of local consultation as part of the periodic electoral review.

### **Basingstoke Conservative Association**

24 Basingstoke Conservative Association ("the Conservatives") expressed general support for the draft recommendations, arguing that our proposals go "some way towards addressing sentiment that there should be geographically smaller wards in rural areas". They supported our proposed single-member Sherborne St John ward, arguing that "there is a strong local desire to maintain a single-member rural seat based on Sherborne St John". The Conservatives expressed disappointment however that their proposals for the south-east of Basingstoke town and several other boundary changes in Basingstoke town had not been adopted.

### **Basingstoke Liberal Democrats**

25 Basingstoke Liberal Democrats ("the Liberal Democrats") broadly supported our draft recommendations and proposed some minor boundary amendments to our proposed Chineham, Popley West, Rooksdown and Sherborne St John wards. They also proposed retaining the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish in Oakley & North Waltham ward and opposed our proposals to divide Bramley parish between Calleva and Sherborne St John wards. In Basingstoke town, the Liberal Democrats proposed that Brookvale ward should be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward and proposed several boundary amendments in Brighton Hill North, Brookvale, Grove and Kempshott wards.

## **Hampshire County Council**

26 Hampshire County Council argued that “the Commission’s proposal in relation to Taylor’s Farm would undermine the parish of Sherfield on Loddon as a strong unified community” and favoured retaining this area in the same ward as Sherfield on Loddon parish

### **Parish Councils**

27 We received two submissions from Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council expressing support for our proposed single-member Sherborne St John ward, arguing that the proposal would satisfy the preference of the rural parishes to form part of a rural ward. However, they proposed also including Wootton ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish in Sherborne St John ward or in the neighbouring rural ward of Kingsclere, rather than Oakley & North Waltham ward. Dummer Parish Council unanimously supported the proposals for their area, and Oakley & Deane Parish Council supported retaining Oakley and Deane parishes within the same ward. Sherborne St John Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations, but proposed two minor amendments to the boundary between Sherborne St John ward and Rooksdown and Popley West wards.

28 Pamber Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to divide Bramley parish and proposed several alternative warding arrangements for this area. It proposed combining our proposed Sherborne St John and Calleva wards in a new three-member ward. Alternatively, it favoured retaining the whole of Bramley parish in a revised two-member Calleva ward and combining Mortimer West End and Silchester parishes with our proposed Pamber and Sherborne St John ward in a new two-member ward. Pamber Parish Council also proposed that electoral equality could be further improved under this second option by transferring Monk Sherborne and Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish to Oakley & North Waltham ward. Bramley Parish Council also strongly opposed our proposals for this area, arguing that they would be detrimental to the well-being of the Bramley community, and expressed support for the proposals submitted by Pamber Parish Council.

29 Chineham Parish Council expressed support for our proposal to include the Taylor’s Farm development in Chineham ward, but proposed amending the western boundary of this ward, in order to ensure that the proposed Chineham railway station would form part of Chineham. Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to include the Taylor’s Farm area in Chineham ward, arguing that “this would create an administrative nightmare”. It proposed combining the whole of Sherfield on Loddon parish with Bramley, Hartley Wespall, Stratfield Turgis and Stratfield Saye parishes in a two-member Calleva ward, transferring Pamber, Mortimer West End and Silchester parishes to a revised two-member Sherborne St John ward, and transferring Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence parishes to a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward.

## Other Representations

30 A further 32 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents.

31 County Councillor Allen (Kingsclere & Tadley division) expressed support for our draft proposals for Baughurst & Heath End, Kingsclere and Tadley wards and opposed the proposals put forward by the North West Hampshire Conservative Association. The Baughurst Society supported the draft recommendations for the Baughurst and Wolverton area, arguing that they are of a similar rural nature.

32 North West Hampshire Conservative Association generally welcomed our draft recommendations, but reiterated its Stage One proposal that the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish should form part of either Sherborne St John or Kingsclere wards. They also argued that, since Overton is the largest village in our proposed Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon ward, it should be renamed Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward. A local resident submitted proposals similar to those submitted by the Liberal Democrats.

33 Councillor Blade (Sherborne St John ward), Ramsdell, Wootton & Monk Sherborne Branch and Kingsclere & The Sherbornes Division of the North West Hampshire Conservative Association, and seven local residents supported the draft proposals for Sherborne St John ward. Councillor Blade, however, proposed that the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish should be included in either Sherborne St John or Kingsclere wards, and that there should be a minor boundary amendment to include a number of established residences in the revised Sherborne St John ward rather than in Rooksdown ward. A local resident supported including the Taylor's Farm development (currently in Calleva ward) in a revised Chineham ward. Seven local residents proposed amending the southern boundary of our proposed Sherborne St John ward to include the residential area between Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane, arguing that they naturally form part of the Sherborne St John community.

34 Councillor Gardiner (Calleva ward) opposed our draft recommendations in relation to Bramley parish and proposed creating a three-member ward comprising the proposed Calleva and Sherborne St John wards. Alternatively, he also favoured including the whole of Bramley parish in Calleva ward and combining Mortimer West End, Pamber and Silchester parishes with Sherborne St John ward in a new two-member Pamber Forest ward. Two local residents objected to the draft recommendations for Sherborne St John ward and proposed warding arrangements similar to those put forward by Bramley and Pamber parish councils at Stage Three. They also proposed several boundary amendments in Basingstoke town, as well as a number of changes to ward names. Six local residents also objected to the draft recommendations in relation to Bramley parish, arguing that Bramley village should not be divided between district wards and that such a proposal would adversely affect community interests. Three of these residents also asserted that many local residents had not been aware of the draft recommendations for their area.

35 Councillor Gurden (Brighton Hill ward) and six local residents, as well as a petition containing 133 signatures, opposed our draft recommendation to retain the existing western boundary of Grove ward, along Cranbourne Lane, and proposed including the whole of the

Cranbourne area within Grove ward. Councillor Watts (Winklebury ward) proposed that Brookvale ward should be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward in order to better reflect the area covered by the ward. A local resident supported our proposal to include the part of Norden ward to the north of the A339 and west of the A33 in Popley East ward, but proposed including the Chineham industrial area in Chineham ward, rather than Popley East ward.

## **Further Consultation**

36 In the light of representations received regarding our draft recommendations for Calleva and Sherborne St John wards, we carried out a further period of consultation on the most appropriate warding arrangements for the area. On 12 May 2000, we wrote to the Borough Council, the relevant parish councils and other interested parties outlining our draft recommendations and two alternative options and invited further evidence and submissions by 13 June 2000. As part of this consultation, we received 35 representations.

37 Basingstoke Conservative Association, Councillor Leek (Sherborne St John ward), North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Kingsclere & The Sherbornes Division and Ramsdell, Wootton & Monk Sherborne Branch of the North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Monk Sherborne, Sherborne St John and Wootton St Lawrence parish councils, Parish Councillor Todd (Monk Sherborne parish) and four local residents broadly supported our draft recommendations, arguing that they would retain a single-member Sherborne St John ward and would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality. Councillor Leek, Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council and a local resident also stated that Alternative Option Two would be their second preference.

38 Andrew Hunter, the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, noted that “there are strong feelings in Bramley that the village should not be divided between two areas” and requested that local concerns receive the attention they deserve. Pamber Parish Council, Councillor Gardiner (Calleva ward) and two local residents expressed support for Alternative Option One, while Bramley Parish Council favoured either of the alternative proposals put forward during further consultation. Six local residents opposed our draft recommendations to divide Bramley parish and favoured the proposals put forward by Bramley Parish Council and borough councillors for Calleva ward.

39 Basingstoke Liberal Democrats and a local resident opposed our draft recommendations to divide Bramley parish, as well as Alternative Option Two, which they argued would result in an unreasonably high electoral variance in Sherborne St John ward. They expressed support for Alternative Option One, with a minor amendment to transfer the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish to Oakley & North Waltham ward. Hampshire County Council, Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council, Stratfield Turgis Parish Council and three local residents favoured Alternative Option Two. Two local residents also considered that Alternative Option Two would be the more realistic option, but reiterated their preference for transferring Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence parishes to Oakley & North Waltham ward.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

40 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Basingstoke & Deane is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

42 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

43 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

44 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 9 per cent from 115,006 to 125,330 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in four areas abutting the urban areas of Basingstoke and Chineham, due to housing developments in Oakley & North Waltham ward at Beggarwood Lane, in Sherborne St John ward at Popley Fields and Rooksdown, and in Calleva ward at Taylor’s Farm. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

## **Council Size**

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

47 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council currently has 57 members. At Stage One, the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed a small increase in council size from 57 to 60. They argued that this would reduce the size of wards and make them more community focused, as well as improving the accountability of councillors. The Conservatives proposed a 59-member scheme for the borough, which they argued achieved the best possible numerical solution together with sensible boundaries. Basingstoke Labour Party proposed retaining the council size of 57, although it did not provide detailed warding arrangements under such a council size. It argued that the current number is sufficient given the electorate, and that increasing the number now would not allow for increases in the future to reflect further increases in population.

48 In formulating our draft recommendations, we considered carefully the alternative council sizes and warding arrangements proposed at Stage One. We considered a variety of council sizes and concluded that 60 members provided a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than council sizes of 57 or 59. In particular, such an increase would enable many of the rural wards to remain unchanged, while providing equality of representation for electors in the new areas of housing development which will be built over the next five years. We accepted that, if the borough continues to grow as it has over the last 20 years, then a fundamental reappraisal of the council size will be required in the future. However, we stated that in this review we are only able to consider projected growth over the next five years. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members.

49 At Stage Three we received no further comments specifically regarding our proposals in relation to council size, and are content to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 60 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

50 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. From these representations, some considerations emerged which assisted us in preparing our draft recommendations.

51 There was some consensus between the schemes with regard to largely retaining the existing warding arrangements in the west of the borough. We also noted that they agreed that the Beggarwood Lane development in Dummer parish (currently in Oakley & North Waltham ward) should be combined with the urban area of Hatch Warren, and that the proposed housing development in Rooksdown should be separately warded from the remaining more rural part of

Sherborne St John parish. Finally, we noted that all three borough-wide schemes submitted at Stage One proposed a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-member wards.

52 We noted that the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide for a reasonable level of electoral equality, but considered that the Borough Council's 60-member scheme would provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries in Basingstoke town, while largely addressing the problems of electoral inequality in the parished areas surrounding the town. While our draft recommendations were based primarily upon the Borough Council's proposals, we sought to build on those proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria.

53 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations received a degree of local support and we propose that our draft recommendations should be substantially endorsed, subject to a number of boundary modifications. In the light of further evidence received, we have reviewed our draft recommendations in several areas in order to better reflect community identities and interests and to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Burghclere, East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Whitchurch wards;
- (b) Baughurst & Heath End, Kingsclere and Tadley wards;
- (c) Oakley & North Waltham and Overton & Laverstoke wards;
- (d) Calleva and Sherborne St John wards;
- (e) Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey wards;
- (f) Brighton Hill and Hatch Warren wards;
- (g) Buckskin, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards;
- (h) Norden and Popley wards;
- (i) Brookvale, Eastrop and Grove wards.

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

### **Burghclere, East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Whitchurch wards**

55 The wards of Burghclere, East Woodhay, Highclere & Bourne and Whitchurch cover the largely rural western part of the borough. Burghclere ward contains the parishes of Burghclere, Ecchinswell & Sydmonton, Litchfield & Woodcott and Newtown. East Woodhay ward contains the parish of that name and Highclere & Bourne ward comprises Ashmansworth, Highclere and St Mary Bourne parishes. Whitchurch ward contains the parishes of Hurstbourne Priors and Whitchurch. Under the existing arrangements, Burghclere, East Woodhay and Highclere & Bourne are each represented by one councillor and have 2 per cent, 9 per cent and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (13 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more by 2004). Whitchurch ward is represented by two councillors and has 10 per cent fewer electors than the borough average, improving to 7 per cent fewer by 2004.

56 At Stage One, the Borough Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats all proposed no change to the existing arrangements in this area. They argued that the parishes in Whitchurch, Burghclere and Highclere & Bourne wards share much in common and favoured retaining a single-member ward for the relatively isolated East Woodhay parish. Litchfield, Woodcote & Dunley Parish Meeting, Newtown Parish Council and North West Hampshire Conservative Association also proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements in this area.

57 In our draft recommendations, we proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for this area, which enjoy a significant degree of local support and reflect community ties well. We also noted that East Woodhay and Highclere & Bourne wards would initially have relatively high levels of electoral inequality under a council size of 60, with 15 per cent and 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. However, by 2004 they are forecast to improve significantly to 2 per cent and 11 per cent more than the average respectively. Under our draft recommendations, Burghclere ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent fewer by 2004), while Whitchurch ward would have 5 per cent fewer than the average, improving to 2 per cent fewer by 2004.

58 At Stage Three, we received no further representations specifically regarding our proposals in this area and therefore are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### **Baughurst & Heath End, Kingsclere and Tadley wards**

59 Baughurst & Heath End, Kingsclere and Tadley wards are located in the north and west of the borough. Baughurst & Heath End ward contains Baughurst and Baughurst Common wards of Baughurst parish together with North ward and part of Central ward of Tadley town. Tadley ward contains the remainder of the Tadley Town Council area. Kingsclere ward comprises the parishes of Ashford Hill with Headley, Hannington and Kingsclere, and Wolverton ward of Baughurst parish. Under the current warding arrangements, Baughurst & Heath End and Kingsclere wards are represented by two councillors each and have 2 per cent and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. Tadley ward is represented by three councillors and has 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. All three wards would have variance of no more than 4 per cent from the average by 2004.

60 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a revised two-member Kingsclere ward containing Ashford Hill with Headley, Kingsclere and Hannington parishes. It proposed creating a new single-member Baughurst ward comprising the whole of Baughurst parish, and two two-member wards for the Tadley Town Council area. The proposed Tadley North & Central ward would comprise the North and Central town council wards, and Tadley South & East ward would comprise the South and East town council wards. Under the Borough Council's 60-member scheme, Baughurst and Kingsclere wards would have 1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer by 2004). Tadley North & Central and Tadley South & East wards would have electoral variances of 18 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the average respectively, improving to 9 per cent and 3 per cent by 2004.



61 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats put forward identical warding arrangements to those proposed by the Borough Council for this area, although they proposed that the two wards in Tadley should be named Tadley North and Tadley South. Tadley Town Council's proposals for the Tadley area were also identical to the Borough Council's proposals. North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats argued that the existing warding arrangements in Tadley are the cause of some concern locally and should be changed.

62 North West Hampshire Conservative Association opposed the Borough Council's and the Conservatives' proposals, arguing that they would combine sparsely populated rural communities with largely urban areas. They proposed creating a new Ramsdell ward containing Baughurst, Hannington, Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence parishes, and a three-member Tadley North ward, comprising Baughurst Common ward of Baughurst parish and North and Central wards of Tadley town. The remainder of Tadley town (South and East wards) would form a two-member Tadley South ward. A local resident argued that there is little difference between Baughurst and Tadley, as both contain urban and rural areas. Another resident favoured combining the rural part of Baughurst parish with adjacent rural areas, such as Kingsclere, Ramsdell or Sherborne St John, rather than combining it with the urban areas of Baughurst or Tadley.

63 In our draft recommendations we noted that, with the exception of North West Hampshire Conservative Association, there was agreement regarding the most appropriate warding arrangement for this area. In particular we noted the arguments in favour of creating separate wards to represent the Baughurst and Tadley communities. We concurred with this view and put forward the warding arrangements proposed by the Borough Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats as part of our draft recommendations. However, we welcomed further views from local residents regarding ward names for the Tadley area at Stage Three.

64 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident supported the proposed names of Tadley North and Tadley South wards. The Borough Council supported our draft recommendations. The Baughurst Society expressed support for our draft recommendations for Baughurst ward and disagreed with the views of a local resident that Baughurst and Tadley are similar in character. Kingsclere & The Sherbornes Division of the North West Hampshire Conservative Association endorsed our draft recommendations for the Kingsclere and Baughurst areas. County Councillor Allen (Kingsclere & Tadley Division) expressed full support for our draft proposals for this area, arguing that they "reflect well the nature of the area and its residents", and opposed the proposals put forward by the North West Hampshire Conservative Association.

65 Having considered the representations received, we are content that our proposals have a degree of local support, and propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations, Baughurst and Kingsclere wards would have 1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer by 2004). Tadley North and Tadley South wards would initially have 18 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 9 per cent and 3 per cent more by 2004. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

## **Oakley & North Waltham and Overton & Laverstoke wards**

66 These two wards are located to the west of Basingstoke town. The parishes of Deane, Dummer, North Waltham, Oakley, Popham and Steventon, and Wootton ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish together form the three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward. Overton & Laverstoke ward is represented by two councillors and comprises the two parishes of Overton and Laverstoke. Under existing arrangements, Oakley & North Waltham ward has 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. Due to a projected large housing development at Beggarwood Lane in Dummer parish, the level of electoral inequality in Oakley & North Waltham ward is expected to deteriorate so that by 2004 it would have 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. Overton & Laverstoke ward has 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (18 per cent fewer by 2004).

67 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward, combining Wootton St Lawrence and Monk Sherborne parishes (currently in Sherborne St John ward) with the existing Oakley & North Waltham ward, but excluding Steventon parish and the Beggarwood Lane development in Dummer parish. It proposed creating a new three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward containing the Beggarwood Lane area together with part of the existing Hatch Warren ward, as discussed below. The Council proposed combining Steventon, Overton and Laverstoke parishes to create a two-member Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward, arguing that they have very similar identities. The Council's proposed Oakley & North Waltham and Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon wards would have 11 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal to the average and 10 per cent fewer by 2004).

68 The Conservatives proposed a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward, a two-member Overton & Laverstoke ward and a new three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, identical to the Borough Council's proposals for the area. The Conservatives' proposed Oakley & North Waltham and Overton & Laverstoke wards would have, on the basis of a council size of 59, 9 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent and 11 per cent fewer by 2004).

69 The Liberal Democrats also proposed creating a two-member Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward and a three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, identical to the Borough Council's proposals for the area. They proposed including the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish in a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Oakley & North Waltham and Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon wards would have 6 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent and 10 per cent fewer by 2004).

70 North West Hampshire Conservative Association opposed the Borough Council's and the Conservatives' proposals for this area and put forward alternative warding arrangements. They proposed creating a new Ramsdell ward, comprising the rural parishes of Baughurst, Hannington, Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence. North West Hampshire Conservative Association also proposed combining Oakley, Dummer (excluding the Beggarwood Lane area) and Popham parishes to create a new two-member Oakley & Dummer ward, and combining the five parishes

of Deane, Laverstoke, North Waltham, Overton and Steventon to create a new two-member Overton & North Waltham ward.

71 Councillor Blade (Sherborne St John ward) opposed the Council's proposal to divide the existing Sherborne St John ward between four new wards and expressed support for the North West Hampshire Conservative Association's proposals. We also received a petition containing 370 signatures from residents of the villages of Ramsdell and Monk Sherborne, which opposed being combined with the largely urban Oakley ward. Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council opposed the current division of its parish between Oakley & North Waltham and Sherborne St John wards and argued that urban and rural areas should be differentiated. It proposed creating a new ward which would unite the rural communities on the eastern side of the North West Hampshire parliamentary constituency (including Hannington, Monk Sherborne, Sherborne St John and part of Baughurst parishes). It also proposed creating a single-member ward containing Popham and Dummer parishes, and a revised Overton & Laverstoke ward containing Overton, Laverstoke, Steventon, North Waltham and Deane parishes.

72 Oakley & Deane Parish Council argued that the parishes should remain in the same borough ward since the two villages of Oakley and Deane have very strong links with each other. Dummer Parish Council argued that including the Beggarwood Lane development in Oakley and North Waltham ward would be inappropriate given the rural nature of the area and instead proposed that it should form part of a new Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward.

73 In our draft recommendations, we noted that there were several opposing views regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for the sparsely populated parishes of Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence. In particular, we noted the views of North West Hampshire Conservative Association and local residents who opposed proposals to combine these rural parishes with the largely urban Oakley community, on the basis that they have distinct interests and share few direct communication and transport links. While we had some sympathy with this view, we also noted that the North West Hampshire Conservative Association's alternative proposal would only cover the North West Hampshire parliamentary constituency and, while providing a reasonable level of electoral equality for this area, would result in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality in the remaining parished area of the borough. We therefore proposed adopting a combination of the other schemes submitted to us at Stage One.

74 We proposed creating a two-member ward containing Laverstoke, Overton and Steventon parishes, as put forward by the Borough Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. In the light of representations received at Stage One, we proposed retaining Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish and Monk Sherborne parish with the rural Sherborne St John area, as detailed below. We noted Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council's proposal to retain the Beggarwood Lane development within a largely rural single-member ward, but did not consider that this proposal would adequately reflect community interests and identities in this area. We therefore proposed creating a three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, as proposed by the Borough Council, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Dummer Parish Council, as discussed below. We also proposed retaining the existing three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward (excluding the Beggarwood Lane area of Dummer parish and Steventon parish).

75 At Stage Three, the Borough Council expressed support for our draft recommendations. The Liberal Democrats and a local resident argued that the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish should be in one ward, and proposed achieving this by transferring Ramsdell parish ward to Oakley & North Waltham ward. North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Councillor Blade, Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council and a local resident generally supported our proposals for this area, but urged the Commission to reconsider its proposals with regard to the rural parish of Wootton St Lawrence, arguing that community interests should come before electoral equality in this area. They proposed combining the parish with either Sherborne St John or Kingsclere ward, rather than the largely urbanised Oakley & North Waltham ward. North West Hampshire Conservative Association also proposed that Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon ward should be renamed Overton, Laverstoke & Steventon ward.

76 Oakley & Deane Parish Council stated that it was pleased that our draft proposals had retained the two villages of Oakley and Deane within the same ward. Dummer Parish Council expressed unanimous support for our draft proposals for their area, and one local resident supported our proposal to retain Wootton ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish in Oakley & North Waltham ward.

77 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that there was broad support for our draft proposals in this area. We have noted that there was some opposition to our proposal to retain Wootton ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish in Oakley & North Waltham ward, but we have not been persuaded that our draft proposals are fundamentally flawed, nor that there exists overwhelming local opposition to the proposed warding arrangements for this area to justify the much higher electoral inequality which would result from the alternative proposals. We have also not been persuaded by the evidence received that our proposed Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon ward should be renamed and remain of the view that our proposed ward name adequately reflects the area covered by that ward. We are content, therefore, to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

78 Under our final recommendations, Laverstoke, Overton & Steventon and Oakley & North Waltham wards would have 4 per cent fewer and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (both 10 per cent below the average by 2004).

### **Calleva and Sherborne St John wards**

79 Calleva and Sherborne St John wards are located to the north of Basingstoke town. Calleva ward is represented by three councillors and contains seven parishes: Bramley, Hartley Wespell, Mortimer West End, Pamber, Sherfield on Loddon, Silchester, Stratfield Saye and Stratfield Turgis. Sherborne St John is a single-member ward comprising Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John parishes and Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish. Under existing arrangements, both wards have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. However, due to projected housing developments at Popley Fields and Rooksdown in Sherborne St John parish, and at Taylor's Farm in Sherfield on Loddon parish, the level of electoral equality in Sherborne St John and Calleva wards is expected to deteriorate to 112 per cent and 34 per cent more electors per councillors than the borough average respectively by 2004.

80 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating a new single-member Pamber ward comprising Pamber parish, and a revised Calleva ward comprising the existing Calleva ward, less the Taylor's Farm development, and Sherborne St John parish, less the Rooksdown and Popley Fields areas. In this way, they would be able to retain a largely rural ward for this area. It proposed creating a single-member Rooksdown ward and including the Popley Fields area within a new Popley West ward, as discussed below. They proposed that the Taylor's Farm development should be combined with Chineham parish, as also discussed below. Under the Council's proposals, Calleva and Pamber wards would have 2 per cent fewer and 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (equal to the average and 6 per cent more by 2004). Rooksdown ward would have initially an electoral variance of 73 per cent below the borough average. However, it is predicted that the level of electoral equality would improve to 5 per cent below the average by 2004.

81 The Conservatives proposed a revised single-member Sherborne St John ward comprising the existing ward, less the Rooksdown area of Sherborne St John parish. They proposed combining the Rooksdown development with Winklebury ward to create a new Rooksdown & Winklebury ward. The Conservatives proposed creating a new single-member Pamber ward and a three-member Bramley & Sherfield ward, which would contain the existing Calleva ward (excluding Pamber parish). Under their proposals, Bramley & Sherfield, Pamber and Sherborne St John wards would initially have 21 per cent fewer, 13 per cent more and 44 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 4 per cent more, 4 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer by 2004.

82 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Calleva ward, combining the existing ward (less Pamber parish and the Taylor's Farm development in Sherfield on Loddon parish) with Monk Sherborne parish and part of Sherborne St John parish. Similar to the Borough Council and the Conservatives, they also proposed creating a single-member Pamber ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed combining the Rooksdown and Popley Fields areas of Sherborne St John parish with the adjacent urban areas in Basingstoke town, as discussed below. Their proposed Calleva and Pamber wards would initially have 3 per cent and 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent and 6 per cent more by 2004).

83 North West Hampshire Conservative Association opposed the Borough Council's and the Conservatives' proposals for this area and put forward alternative warding arrangements. They proposed creating a new Ramsdell ward, comprising the rural parishes of Baughurst, Hannington, Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence, and a revised Sherborne St John ward containing Sherborne St John parish. Chineham Parish Council favoured including the Taylor's Farm development (currently in Calleva ward) in Chineham ward, arguing that the future electors in this area would have close community links with Chineham. Councillor Blade opposed the Council's proposal to divide the existing Sherborne St John ward and supported the North West Hampshire Conservative Association's proposals. We also received a petition containing 370 signatures from residents of the villages of Ramsdell and Monk Sherborne, which opposed the area being combined with the much larger urban area of Oakley.

84 In our draft recommendations we noted the opposition of North West Hampshire Conservative Association and local residents to combining the Monk Sherborne and Ramsdell

communities with the largely urban Oakley area. We concurred with their assessment that these areas have distinct interests and share few direct communication and transport links, and proposed to broadly retain the existing Oakley & North Waltham ward. As a consequence of our proposal and in the light of the views expressed at Stage One, we proposed a revised single-member Sherborne St John ward, comprising Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish, Monk Sherborne parish and part of Sherborne St John parish (excluding the Rooksdown and Popley Fields areas). To further improve electoral equality in this ward, we proposed including the part of Bramley parish to the west of the Basingstoke to Reading railway line (currently in Calleva ward). We recognised that in order to reflect the community ties between Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John we divided the parish of Bramley. However, we considered that on the basis of the evidence presented at Stage One, this would be the best option for the area as a whole.

85 We noted that there was a consensus in favour of a new single-member Pamber ward, comprising Pamber parish. We considered there was some merit in this proposal, which reflected community ties well, and put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. We noted, however, that there was a lack of consensus regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for Calleva ward (excluding Pamber parish). We therefore proposed a revised two-member Calleva ward, comprising the parishes of Hartley Westpall, the eastern part of Bramley, Mortimer West End, Silchester, Stratfield Saye, Stratfield Turgis and Sherfield on Loddon, excluding the Taylor's Farm area, thereby uniting the rural communities in the north-east of the borough. We proposed that the Taylor's Farm housing development area of Sherfield on Loddon parish should be combined with the existing Chineham ward, as described below.

86 We proposed creating a single-member Rooksdown ward, as largely proposed by the Borough Council. We considered that the housing development at Rooksdown would constitute a distinct community, separated from the rest of Basingstoke town by the A339 (Ringway North). While we noted that the area has some community ties with the Winklebury area, we noted that combining the two areas would mean dividing the Winklebury community. We were not persuaded therefore that the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposed Winklebury & Rooksdown ward would adequately reflect community ties in this area. We also proposed that the Popley Fields area of Sherborne St John parish should form part of a new Popley West ward, as discussed below.

87 Under our draft recommendations, Rooksdown and Sherborne St John wards would initially have electoral variances of 73 per cent below and 20 per cent above the borough average, improving to 5 per cent below and 9 per cent above the average by 2004. Calleva and Pamber wards would have 2 per cent and 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (10 per cent and 6 per cent more by 2004). In formulating our draft recommendations, we recognised that the particular configuration of parish boundaries in this area presented limits to the number of acceptable warding arrangements and considered that our proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and community interests and identities than the existing arrangements. We noted, however, that our draft proposals for this area departed from the schemes put to us at Stage One and considered that there might be alternative warding configurations that would prevent the division of Bramley parish, involving a different ward structure for the north-east of the borough. We therefore particularly welcomed further views from local residents at Stage Three regarding this area.

88 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations, but proposed minor amendments to the northern boundaries of our proposed Rooksdown and Popley West wards, in order to retain more established dwellings along Aldermaston Road, Elm Road, Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane within Sherborne St John ward. The Basingstoke Conservative Association stated that although our proposals would result in the division of Bramley parish, it supported them because of “a strong local desire to maintain a single-member rural seat based on Sherborne St John” and argued that our proposals would go “some way towards addressing the sentiment that there should be geographically smaller wards in rural areas”.

89 Similarly, the Liberal Democrats stated that while they were unhappy about our proposals to divide Bramley parish between Sherborne St John and Calleva wards, they recognised that the only other solution would be to unite these two wards. They proposed amending the boundary between Sherborne St John and Rooksdown and Popley West wards in order to include more established dwellings in Sherborne St John ward, as also proposed by the Borough Council. The Liberal Democrats also proposed transferring an area to the north of the Ringway North, which under our draft recommendations would form part of our proposed Popley West and Winklebury wards, to Rooksdown ward. Finally, as described above, they proposed including the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish in Oakley & North Waltham ward. A local resident proposed changes identical to those put forward by the Liberal Democrats.

90 North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council and Councillor Blade broadly supported our proposed Sherborne St John ward, but proposed transferring the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish to either Sherborne St John or Kingsclere ward, as detailed above. Sherborne St John Parish Council generally supported our draft recommendations for Sherborne St John ward, but proposed two minor boundary amendments to transfer the established dwellings on Aldermaston Road, Elm Road, Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane to Sherborne St John ward. Councillor Blade also proposed amending the boundary between Rooksdown and Sherborne St John wards, arguing that it would provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary, while six local residents favoured retaining the established properties on Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane in Sherborne St John ward, arguing that this area will share few ties with the new housing developments in our proposed Popley West ward. Kingsclere & The Sherbornes Division and Ramsdell, Wootton & Monk Sherborne Branch of the North West Hampshire Conservative Association and seven local residents also expressed support for our proposed Sherborne St John ward.

91 Pamber Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to divide Bramley parish between wards and proposed several alternative warding arrangements for this area. It proposed combining our proposed Sherborne St John and Calleva wards in a new three-member ward. Alternatively, it proposed retaining the whole of Bramley parish in a revised two-member Calleva ward and combining Mortimer West End and Silchester parishes with our proposed Pamber and Sherborne St John wards in a new two-member ward. Pamber Parish Council also argued that electoral equality could be further improved under this second option by transferring the whole of Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence parishes to Oakley & North Waltham ward. Bramley Parish Council strongly opposed our proposals for this area and broadly favoured Pamber Parish Council’s proposals for the area. Councillor Gardiner (Calleva ward) and six local

residents also opposed our proposals with regard to Bramley parish, arguing that they would arbitrarily divide the village and would disrupt community ties in this area.

92 Two local residents opposed our draft recommendations for this area. They proposed a revised Calleva ward comprising Bramley, Stratfield say, Stratfield Turgis, Hartley Wespall and part of Sherfield on Loddon parishes, and a new Pamber ward comprising Pamber, Silchester and Mortimer West End parishes and the rural part of Sherborne St John parish. They also proposed transferring Wootton St Lawrence and Monk Sherborne parishes to Oakley & North Waltham ward.

93 Mr Andrew Hunter, the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, expressed concern that a number of residents in the village of Bramley had not been aware of the proposed warding arrangements for their area.

94 Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council objected to our draft recommendation to transfer the Taylor's Farm development area to Chineham ward, arguing that "this would create an administrative nightmare". It proposed creating a two-member Calleva ward comprising Sherfield on Loddon, Bramley, Hartley Wespall, Stratfield Saye and Stratfield Turgis parishes, a two-member Sherborne St John ward comprising Sherborne St John, Pamber, Silchester and Mortimer West End parishes, and a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward combining our proposed ward with Monk Sherborne parish and Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish. Chineham Parish Council and a local resident expressed support for our draft recommendation to include the Taylor's Farm development area in a revised Chineham ward. Hampshire County Council opposed our proposal in relation to Taylor's Farm, arguing that "the Commission's proposal in relation to Taylor's Farm would undermine the parish of Sherfield on Loddon as a strong unified community".

95 At the end of Stage Three we noted that at there was a lack a consensus among the submissions received and considered that we required further information and evidence on the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area before reaching our final recommendations. We considered, however, that we should confirm some aspects of our draft recommendations. In particular, we considered that the balance of the evidence received suggested that the new urban developments at Rooksdown, Popley Fields and Taylor's Farm should be combined with their neighbouring urban areas rather than forming part of predominantly rural wards. In addition, we considered that there are strong community ties between Monk Sherborne and Ramsdell and the village of Sherborne St John and that these should be reflected in any revised warding structures.

96 We therefore conducted a further period of consultation focused specifically on the area covered by the proposed Calleva, Pamber and Sherborne St John wards, from 12 May 2000 to 13 June 2000. We outlined our draft recommendations and two alternative proposals, as proposed by Pamber Parish Council, and requested further views. Alternative Option One would combine our proposed Sherborne St John and Calleva wards in a new three-member ward and would retain the proposed single-member Pamber ward. Alternative Option Two would retain Bramley parish in a revised two-member Calleva ward and create a two-member Sherborne St John & Pamber



ward, combining our proposed Sherborne St John and Pamber wards together with Mortimer West End and Silchester parishes.

97 We received 35 representations during this period of further consultation. Basingstoke Conservative Association, Councillor Leek (Sherborne St John ward), North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Kingsclere & The Sherbornes Division and Ramsdell, Wootton & Monk Sherborne Branch of the North West Hampshire Conservative Association, Monk Sherborne, Sherborne St John and Wootton St Lawrence parish councils, Parish Councillor Todd (Monk Sherborne parish) and four local residents expressed support for our draft recommendations, arguing that they would retain a single-member Sherborne St John ward and would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality. Councillor Leek and Wootton St Lawrence Parish Council also stated that the creation of a two-member Sherborne St John & Pamber ward, as proposed under Alternative Option Two, would be preferable to creating a large three-member Calleva & Sherborne St John ward, as proposed under Alternative Option One. Another local resident expressed support for our draft recommendations, but also stated that her second preference would be Alternative Option Two, amended by dividing Pamber parish so as to create two single-member wards.

98 Mr Andrew Hunter, the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, noted that “there are strong feelings in Bramley that the village should not be divided between two areas” and that there appeared to be considerable local support for the proposals put forward by Pamber Parish Council. Pamber Parish Council, Councillor Gardiner (Calleva ward) and two local residents expressed support for Alternative Option One, while Bramley Parish Council favoured either of the alternative proposals put forward during further consultation. Six local residents opposed our draft recommendations to divide Bramley parish and stated that they favoured the proposals put forward by Bramley Parish Council and borough councillors for Calleva ward.

99 Basingstoke Liberal Democrats and a local resident opposed our draft recommendations as they would divide Bramley parish between wards, but they also opposed Alternative Option Two which they argued would result in an unreasonably high electoral variance in Sherborne St John ward. They supported creating a single-member Pamber ward and expressed support for Alternative Option One, with a minor amendment to transfer the whole of Wootton St Lawrence parish to Oakley & North Waltham ward.

100 Hampshire County Council, Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council, Stratfield Turgis Parish Council and three local residents favoured Alternative Option Two. Two local residents also considered that Alternative Option Two would be the more realistic option, but reiterated their preference for transferring Monk Sherborne and Wootton St Lawrence parishes to Oakley & North Waltham ward.

101 We have carefully considered the evidence received at Stage Three and during the further consultation, and a number of considerations have emerged. First, we note that there was broad support for our proposed single-member Rooksdown ward and are content to put it forward as part of our final recommendations, subject to a minor boundary amendment as discussed below. Similarly, we propose confirming our draft recommendations to combine Taylor’s Farm with Chineham parish in a revised Chineham ward, as also discussed below.

102 We note, however, that there is a continued lack of local consensus regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area. Upon analysis, the submissions received during Stage Three and during further consultation were equally divided in terms of their support for our draft recommendations and either of the alternative options. Moreover, we noted that both support for and opposition to our proposals was geographically localised, with interested parties in Sherborne St John, Monk Sherborne and Ramsdell expressing support for our draft recommendations, while those from the existing Calleva ward, and particularly Bramley parish, largely opposed them.

103 We note that the arguments in favour and against each proposal for this area are finely balanced. Our draft recommendations would create three relatively compact rural wards, would recognise the strong community ties between the communities of Sherborne St John, Monk Sherborne and Ramsdell and would provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality by 2004. We recognise, however, that under our draft proposals Bramley parish would be divided between wards. The two alternative options would have the benefit of retaining the whole of Bramley parish in one ward. Alternative Option One would provide for two wards with variances of no more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004. This option, however, would create a large three-member rural Calleva & Sherborne St John ward, combining areas which appear to have relatively little affinity with each other. Alternative Option Two would not produce wards of such an unwieldy size, but would create a Sherborne St John & Pamber ward with a variance of 28 per cent currently and 18 per cent in 2004. In addition, it would combine communities stretching from Sherborne St John to Silchester, areas with relatively few ties.

104 While the arguments are finely balanced, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that either of the two alternative options would provide for a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. While we recognise that there is a degree of local opposition to our proposals with regard to Bramley parish, we also note that any alternative warding arrangements would adversely affect the adjoining areas of the borough or would provide for worsened levels of electoral equality. In the light of these considerations, we propose to broadly confirm our draft recommendations for this area.

105 We propose, however, a minor amendment to the southern boundary of Sherborne St John ward. We have noted local residents' proposal that the more established dwellings on Aldermaston Road, Elm Road, Chineham Lane and Sherborne Road should form part of Sherborne St John ward, rather than being combined with newer developments in Rooksdown and Popley West wards. We consider that this proposal has some merit and have been persuaded that, while this change would result in a marginal deterioration in electoral equality, it would better reflect community ties than our draft proposals. We are content therefore to put forward this change as part of our final recommendations.

106 Under our final recommendations, Calleva, Pamber and Sherborne St John wards would have 2 per cent, 15 per cent and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (10 per cent, 6 per cent and 11 per cent more by 2004). Rooksdown ward would initially have 74 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, but would improve significantly to 6 per cent fewer by 2004. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2, Map A3 in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of this report.

## **Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey wards**

107 Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey wards are located in the east and south-east of the borough. Basing ward is represented by three councillors and comprises the parishes of Mapledurwell & Up Nately, Newnham and Old Basing. Chineham ward contains the parish of that name and is represented by three councillors. The 13 parishes of Bradley, Candovers, Cliddesden, Ellisfield, Farleigh Wallop, Herriard, Nutley, Preston Candover, Tunworth, Upton Grey, Weston Corbett, Weston Patrick and Winslade comprise the single-member Upton Grey ward. Under existing electoral arrangements, Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey wards have 3 per cent more, 15 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal to, 12 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more than the average by 2004).

108 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing wards of Basing and Upton Grey (renamed Upton Grey & The Candovers), stating that their constituent parishes have similar interests. It put forward a revised Chineham ward, combining the existing ward with the Taylor's Farm development area (currently in Calleva ward), which it argued "will naturally look inward to Chineham for much of its needs and will share very much the same identity". The Borough Council's proposed Basing, Chineham, Pamber and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards would have electoral variances of no more than 15 per cent from the borough average (14 per cent by 2004).

109 The Conservatives also proposed retaining the existing wards of Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey (renamed Upton Grey & The Candovers). Under their proposed council size of 59, Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards would have electoral variances of no more than 12 per cent from the borough average (9 per cent by 2004).

110 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Basing ward, containing the existing ward less Lychpit ward of Basing parish. They proposed creating a two-member Lychpit ward, comprising the Lychpit area of Old Basing parish (currently in Basing ward) and the part of Chineham parish south of the Reading Road. Like the Borough Council and the Conservatives, they proposed retaining the existing Upton Grey ward (renamed Upton Grey & The Candovers), and revising Chineham ward to include the Taylor's Farm development from Sherfield on Loddon parish. Under their proposals, Basing, Chineham, Lychpit and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards would have electoral variances of no more than 21 per cent from the borough average currently, and 9 per cent by 2004.

111 Newnham Parish Council favoured retaining the existing Basing ward and the number of councillors serving the ward. Chineham Parish Council favoured including the Taylor's Farm development (currently in Calleva ward) in Chineham ward, arguing that the future electors in this area would have close community links with Chineham. It also suggested that Chineham Business Park and Hampshire Business Park (currently in Popley ward) should be included in Chineham ward, arguing that this would enable the residents to have a greater involvement in planning issues relating to the area.

112 In our draft recommendations, we noted that there was a consensus in favour of retaining the existing Upton Grey ward (renamed Upton Grey & The Candovers). We considered there was

some merit in this proposal, which enjoyed significant local support and reflects community ties well, and put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. We also noted that, except for the Liberal Democrats, all the submissions received at Stage One proposed retaining the existing Basing ward and that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would mean dividing Chineham parish. We considered that the community in the Lychpit area of Basing parish is distinct from that of the adjoining area of Chineham parish and were not persuaded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area. We proposed, therefore, retaining the existing Basing ward, as proposed by both the Borough Council and the Conservatives.

113 We also noted that the majority of the submissions received at Stage One supported including the Taylor's Farm development in Sherfield on Loddon parish in Chineham ward, arguing that the urban community in Taylor's Farm will naturally look towards Chineham for their public amenities and facilities. We concurred with this assessment and considered that this proposal would provide a good balance between community ties and electoral equality. We therefore put forward as part of our draft recommendations a revised three-member Chineham ward containing the Taylor's Farm area, as proposed by the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats and Chineham Parish Council.

114 At Stage Three, the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations. Chineham Parish Council and a local resident expressed support for our draft recommendation to include the Taylor's Farm development area in a revised Chineham ward. Chineham Parish Council proposed, however, amending the western boundary of the proposed ward to follow the western side of the railway line, in order to include the new Chineham Railway Station within Chineham ward. Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council objected to our draft recommendation to transfer the Taylor's Farm development area to Chineham ward, arguing that "this would create an administrative nightmare" and proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area, as detailed above. Hampshire County Council also opposed our proposal in relation to Taylor's Farm, arguing that it "would undermine the parish of Sherfield on Loddon as a strong unified community". The Liberal Democrats and a local resident supported transferring the Chineham Business Park & Hampshire Business Park to Chineham ward, rather than our proposed Popley East ward.

115 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We have noted the views of Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council, Hampshire County Council and the Liberal Democrats regarding our proposed Chineham ward, together with the evidence received at Stage One, and remain of the view that our proposals for this area reflect community ties well, in addition to providing for a reasonable level of electoral equality both now and in five years' time. We note that a large number of parishes are warded and divided between district wards, and are not persuaded that such a proposal in relation to the Taylor's Farm area would cause significant administrative problems or would prove to be detrimental to the local community. We have not been persuaded to transfer the Chineham Industrial estate area from our proposed Popley East ward to Chineham ward. Such a change would involve not electors and would combine an unparished part of Basingstoke Town with the parish of Chineham. We consider this issue is better addressed as part of a future parishing review.

116 While we consider that Chineham Parish Council's proposal to amend the western boundary of Chineham ward has some merit, such an amendment would require warding a small area of Bramley parish containing no electors, which is not permitted under existing legislation. We consider that such issues involving external parish boundaries would be better addressed as part of a future parish review which can be carried out by the Borough Council under the Local Government & Rating Act 1997.

117 Having received no further views regarding our proposals for this area, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations, Basing, Chineham and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards would have 8 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent, 14 per cent and 9 per cent more by 2004). The proposed boundary between Calleva and Chineham wards is illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

### **Brighton Hill and Hatch Warren wards**

118 The two wards of Brighton Hill and Hatch Warren cover the south-western part of Basingstoke town, adjacent to Oakley & North Waltham and Upton Grey wards. Under existing arrangements, each ward is represented by three councillors. Brighton Hill and Hatch Warren wards have 4 per cent more and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (5 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more by 2004).

119 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating a new Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward comprising the Beggarwood Lane development area of Dummer parish (currently in Oakley & North Waltham ward) and part of Hatch Warren ward. It argued that the urban development of Beggarwood Lane will naturally look towards Basingstoke for its services and facilities. It also proposed creating a two-member Brighton Hill South ward, comprising the southern part of the existing Brighton Hill ward and part of Hatch Warren ward, and a two-member Brighton Hill North ward, comprising the remainder of Brighton Hill ward, excluding the area to the north of The Harrow Way, which it proposed should form part of a revised Grove ward. The Borough Council argued that its proposals for this area would "recapture the community identity which truly belongs to this traditional area of town". Under the Borough Council's proposals, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have 12 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer by 2004).

120 The Conservatives proposed three new wards for this area, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South, identical to those proposed by the Borough Council. Under the Conservatives' proposed council size of 59, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have 13 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer by 2004).

121 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a revised three-member Hatch Warren ward containing the Beggarwood Lane area of Dummer parish, and two new wards for the Brighton Hill area, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South. Under their proposals, Lehar Close would

form part of Brighton Hill South rather than Brighton Hill North ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and Conservatives. They also proposed transferring the part of Brighton Hill ward to the north of The Harrow Way to a revised Grove ward, which they argued would have strong boundaries and represent a distinct community in Basingstoke, thereby justifying a relatively high level of electoral inequality. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed council size of 60, Hatch Warren, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have electoral variances of 12 per cent below, equal to and 12 per cent above the borough average respectively (7 per cent above, 9 per cent below and 2 per cent above by 2004).

122 In our draft recommendations we noted that there was consensus between the submissions received regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area, and were content to use them as the basis of our draft recommendations. We proposed creating a three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, a two-member Brighton Hill South ward and a two-member Brighton Hill North ward. Our proposed Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward would contain part of Hatch Warren ward and the Beggarwood Lane area of Dummer parish, which we considered would have a natural affinity with the adjacent urban area of Hatch Warren. Brighton Hill South ward would contain the remaining area of Hatch Warren ward and the western part of the existing Brighton Hill ward. The boundary between these two wards would follow the rear of the properties (east side) forming part of the Cathedral Estate and the east side of Hatch Warren Lane and Birches Crest to the M3.

123 Our proposed Brighton Hill North ward would comprise the eastern part of the existing Brighton Hill ward. We proposed retaining the existing ward boundary along Cranbourne Lane, rather than including the area to the north of The Harrow Way in Grove ward, which would result in what we considered to be an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality in Grove ward. We proposed that the boundary between Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards should run along Strauss Road, to the rear of Beech Down Primary School, eastwards along Brighton Way, to the rear of Chopin Close (east side) and the properties on Brahms Road, Mozart Close, Wagner Close (east side) and westwards along Hatch Warren Lane.

124 Under our draft recommendations, Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have 12 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more and 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

125 At Stage Three, the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations. The Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Gurden (Brighton Hill ward) and six local residents, as well as a petition containing 133 signatures, opposed our draft recommendation to retain the Cranbourne Lane area to the north of The Harrow Way in Brighton Hill North ward and proposed transferring this area to Grove ward. They argued that there is a natural affinity between the Cranbourne Lane area and the adjoining area of Grove ward, and that The Harrow Way is a significant boundary between communities on either side of it. One local resident proposed that the boundary between Brighton Hill North and Grove wards should follow the rear of the properties leading from Cranbourne Lane, while the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Gurden, one local resident and the petition favoured utilising The Harrow Way as a ward boundary.

126 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we propose amending our draft recommendations for Brighton Hill North ward, in the light of the significant local opposition to our proposed boundary between Brighton Hill North and Grove wards. We have been persuaded by the evidence received that community ties in the Cranbourne Lane area would be adversely affected under our draft proposals and that our proposed warding arrangements would therefore not be conducive to effective and convenient local government in this area. We propose that the northern boundary between Brighton Hill North and Grove wards should run along The Harrow Way, which we consider is a significant boundary between communities on either side of it. We consider that our revised proposals provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The most appropriate warding arrangements for the Cranbourne Lane are considered in further detail below. Having received no further views regarding our proposed Hatch Warren & Beggarwood and Brighton Hill North wards, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for these areas as final.

127 Under our final recommendations Hatch Warren & Beggarwood, Brighton Hill North and Brighton Hill South wards would have 12 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8 per cent more, -6 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

### **Buckskin, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury wards**

128 These four wards are located to the west of the Ringway West in Basingstoke town, between the A30 (Winchester Road) and the A339 (Ringway North). Under current arrangements, Buckskin ward is represented by two councillors and has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, increasing to 9 per cent more by 2004. Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury are each represented by three councillors and have 6 per cent, 10 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (8 per cent, 12 per cent and 17 per cent fewer by 2004).

129 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed broadly retaining the existing warding arrangements in this area, with minor boundary changes to improve electoral equality under a council size of 60. It proposed transferring the area around the southern part of Old Kempshott Lane (currently in Buckskin ward) to Kempshott ward and changing the boundary between Buckskin and South Ham wards to include an additional 270 electors in a revised South Ham ward. The Council proposed altering the boundary between Kempshott and South Ham wards to include all the properties on Pinkerton Road within South Ham ward and all the properties on High Drive in Kempshott ward. Under its scheme, Winklebury ward would remain unchanged. The Borough Council's proposed Buckskin, Kempshott and South Ham wards would have electoral variances of no more than 6 per cent from the borough average currently (13 per cent by 2004).

130 The Conservatives also proposed broadly retaining the existing Kempshott ward, with only a minor change to its boundary with South Ham ward to improve electoral equality. They proposed revising the boundary between the existing Buckskin and South Ham wards to include the South Ham Extension estate within one ward. The Conservatives put forward two new wards: a two-member Buckskin & Worting ward, comprising the majority of the existing Buckskin ward

and part of Winklebury ward, and a three-member Winklebury & Rooksdown ward, comprising the remainder of Winklebury ward and the Rooksdown area of Sherborne St John parish. Under the Conservatives' proposals, Buckskin & Worting, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury & Rooksdown wards would have electoral variances of no more than 10 per cent from the borough average currently (11 per cent by 2004).

131 The Liberal Democrats put forward a two-member Buckskin & Worting ward and a three-member Winklebury & Rooksdown ward, similar to the Conservatives' proposals. They argued that Buckskin constitutes a clearly defined area of the town, but that the residents in Worting village and Old Worting Road would use the same facilities as those in Buckskin. The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the area around Old Kempshott Lane and Pack Lane to a revised Kempshott ward, and transferring the South Ham Extension estate area (currently in Buckskin ward) to a revised South Ham ward, which they argued already has clear boundaries in the south and east. Their proposed Buckskin & Worting, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury & Rooksdown wards would have electoral variances of no more than 7 per cent from the borough average (13 per cent by 2004).

132 In our draft recommendations, we noted that there was consensus locally in favour of broadly retaining the existing Kempshott and South Ham wards. We concurred the assessment that the existing arrangements reflect community ties well, and proposed retaining the existing Kempshott and South Ham wards as part of our draft recommendations, with only minor boundary changes to further improve electoral equality. We proposed transferring the area around Old Kempshott Lane and Pack Lane (currently in Buckskin ward) to Kempshott ward, as broadly proposed by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats. We also proposed transferring an area containing around 270 electors (Old Worting Road, Orchard Road, Pinkerton Road, St Michael's Road, Salisbury Gardens and St Peter's Road) from Buckskin ward to South Ham ward. We proposed no changes in relation to the boundary between Kempshott and South Ham in the High Drive area.

133 We noted, however, that the submissions received at Stage One differed with regard to their proposals for Winklebury ward. We considered that the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposed Winklebury & Rooksdown ward would unite two distinct communities, separated by the A339 (Ringway North) and would divide the Winklebury area between wards. We considered that each of these communities should have separate representation and, in the light of our proposed Rooksdown ward, as described above, we broadly endorsed the Borough Council's proposals for this area. We proposed largely retaining the existing Winklebury ward, with only a minor boundary change to include the north side of Worting Road (currently in Buckskin ward), to provide for an improved level of electoral equality.

134 At Stage Three, the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations. The Liberal Democrats reiterated their proposal for all properties on High Drive and Brackley Way to be contained in Kempshott ward rather than being divided between South Ham and Kempshott wards. Their proposals were supported by a local resident. The Conservatives expressed concern regarding our proposed Buckskin ward, arguing that it includes the South Ham Extension estate, which has "transport and community links with the rest of the South Ham estate to the east" and has little affinity with Buckskin. They also argued that our proposals would sever traditional links



between the Worting and Buckskin areas and in particular, opposed our proposal to transfer the area north of Worting Road from Buckskin ward to Winklebury ward. While the Conservatives recognised the difficulties in dealing with this area because of the nature of Winklebury to the north, “which has very strong boundaries without any clear lines of division within it”, they urged the Commission to reconsider its proposals for Buckskin wards.

135 We have considered further the proposed boundary between Kempshott ward and South Ham ward in the High Drive area. We have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations in this area however. We note that High Drive is an important local access road and consider that it provides a clearly identifiable boundary. While there was a case in electoral equality terms for other minor boundary amendments, this change would not significantly improve electoral equality in either ward.

136 We have carefully considered the Conservatives’ views in relation to the Buckskin area, but have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations. We consider that the South Ham Extension estate area, while having a greater affinity with the South Ham area, has some affinity with the neighbouring areas of Buckskin to which it is linked by a number of footpaths. We consider that our proposals would have the advantage of broadly retaining current ward boundaries and ensuring that the community of Winklebury would not be divided between wards. We remain of the view that in order to improve electoral equality the area to the north of Basingstoke town as a whole, we consider that our proposals in this area provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we are content to confirm them as final.

137 Under our final recommendations, Buckskin, Kempshott, South Ham and Winklebury ward would have electoral variances of 6 per cent below, equal to, 1 per cent above and 5 per cent below the borough average respectively (3 per cent above, 2 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 12 per cent below by 2004).

## **Norden and Popley wards**

138 Norden and Popley wards cover the north and north-eastern part of Basingstoke town and are currently represented by three councillors each. Under existing arrangements, Norden and Popley have 11 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (11 per cent and 7 per cent fewer by 2004).

139 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed creating two new two-member wards, Popley West and Popley East, and a revised three-member Norden ward. Popley West ward would comprise the western part of the existing Popley ward and the Popley Fields area of Sherborne St John parish. It argued that the housing developments at Popley Fields will look to Basingstoke town for their services and facilities, and will be a logical extension of the urban town area. The Council’s proposed Popley East ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Popley ward and the part of Norden ward to the north of the A339 (Ringway North) and west of the A33 (Reading Road). It also proposed a revised Norden ward containing the majority of the existing ward and the part of Brookvale ward to the north of the London Waterloo to Southampton railway line. The Borough Council’s proposed Norden, Popley West and Popley East wards

would have 4 per cent more, 23 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer by 2004).

140 The Conservatives proposed broadly retaining the existing Popley ward, with a minor boundary change to include the part of Norden ward to the north of the A339 and west of the A33. They proposed a revised Norden ward, identical to that proposed by the Borough Council. Under the Conservatives' proposals for a 59-member council, Norden and Popley wards would have 2 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent more in both wards by 2004).

141 The Liberal Democrats, similarly to the Borough Council, proposed creating two new wards, Popley East and Popley West, and a revised Norden ward. Their proposed two-member Popley West ward would contain the Popley Fields area of Sherborne St John parish and the western part of Popley ward, and their two-member Popley East ward would comprise the remainder of Popley ward and the part of Norden ward to the north and east of the A339. They proposed a revised Norden ward containing the majority of the existing ward and the part of Brookvale ward to the north of the London Waterloo to Southampton railway line. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Norden, Popley East and Popley West wards would have initially 4 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 12 per cent fewer by 2004).

142 In our draft recommendations, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and put them forward as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we concurred with its assessment, and that of the Liberal Democrats, that the Popley Fields development will look towards the adjoining urban community in Basingstoke town. We also considered that the area to the north of the London Waterloo to Basingstoke railway shares a strong affinity with the adjoining area of Norden and should form part of that ward. However, we proposed two minor changes to the Borough Council's proposed ward boundaries for Popley West ward, to include 34 electors on Sherborne Road and Chineham Lane within Popley West ward, and to include Tobago Close in Popley East ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

143 At Stage Three the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrats and seven local residents proposed amending the northern boundary of Popley West ward to retain longer established dwellings on Chineham Lane and Sherborne Road within Sherborne St John ward, as outlined previously. The Liberal Democrats also proposed transferring the Vickers Business Centre from Popley West ward to Rooksdown ward, and transferring the Chineham Business Park & Hampshire Business Park to Chineham ward, as outlined above. A local resident supported our proposal to include the part of Norden ward to the north of the A339 and west of the A33 in Popley East ward, but proposed including the Chineham industrial area in Chineham ward, rather than Popley East ward.

144 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to a minor boundary amendment in Popley West ward. In the light of significant opposition to our proposal to transfer the dwellings on

Chineham Lane and Sherborne Road to Popley West ward, we propose amending the boundary between Sherborne St John and Popley West wards. We have been persuaded by the evidence received that the established residential area bounded by Chineham Lane and Sherborne Road, which contains 34 electors, has a strong affinity with the rural community in Sherborne St John and is likely to share fewer community ties with the newer Popley Fields housing development in Popley West ward.

145 In the absence of significant opposition to our proposed Popley East and Norden wards, we remain persuaded that our proposals provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are content to put them forward as part of our final recommendations. Under our final recommendations, Norden and Popley East wards would have 4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer by 2004). Popley West ward would initially have 26 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, but is projected to improve to 9 per cent fewer by 2004.

### **Brookvale, Eastrop and Grove wards**

146 Brookvale and Eastrop wards cover the Basingstoke town centre, while Grove ward comprises the largely residential area between the A30 (Ringway South) and the M3 in the east of the town. Each ward is represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Brookvale, Eastrop and Grove have 5 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal to, 1 per cent more and 3 per cent more by 2004).

147 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed largely retaining the existing Grove ward, with a minor boundary change to include the area to the north of The Harrow Way (currently in Brighton Hill ward). It proposed a revised Brookvale ward comprising the part of the existing ward to the south of the London Waterloo to Basingstoke railway line and part of Eastrop ward containing around 700 electors. To improve electoral equality further, the Council proposed transferring part of Penrith Road, Hamelyn Close, Devonshire Place and part of Hardy Lane to a revised Eastrop ward. Under the Borough Council's proposals, Brookvale, Eastrop and Grove wards would have 2 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more by 2004)

148 The Conservatives opposed the Borough Council's proposals for this area and proposed creating four new wards. They proposed a two-member Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward comprising the southern part of the existing Brookvale ward and an area containing 700 electors in Eastrop ward. Under their proposals, the remainder of Eastrop ward would form a new single-member Eastrop & Riverdene ward. The Conservatives proposed creating a two-member Fairfields & Viabes ward, comprising the area to the west of Hackwood Road and the A339, currently in Eastrop and Grove wards, and the part of Brighton Hill ward to the north of The Harrow Way. Finally, they proposed that the area to the east of the A339 should form a new single-member Black Dam ward. The Conservatives' proposed Black Dam, Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop & Riverdene and Fairfields & Viabes wards would have electoral variances of

no more than 6 per cent from the borough average currently (7 per cent from the average by 2004).

149 The Liberal Democrats proposed creating a two-member Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward, broadly similar to the Borough Council's proposed Brookvale ward. They argued that this ward would have strong boundaries to the north, west and south, and that it would unite the Brookvale and Kings Furlong areas in one ward, as they had been prior to the 1991 review. They proposed a revised two-member Eastrop ward comprising the remainder of the existing ward, and a revised Grove ward, as also proposed by the Borough Council. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop and Grove wards would have 1 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 10 per cent fewer and 14 per cent more by 2004).

150 In our draft recommendations we noted that the Conservatives' proposals would provide for improved electoral equality and separate representation for the Black Dam community, but considered that their proposed Fairfield & Viables ward would result in the creation of a disparate ward, in which communities would be divided by the significant boundary of the A30 (Ringway South). With regard to the Grove area, we considered that Hackwood Road acts as a focal point for communities, rather than as a boundary between communities, as suggested by the Conservatives, and were not persuaded to put forward their proposals for this area.

151 We considered that the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposed warding arrangements for this area would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and put them forward as part of our draft recommendations, with minor changes to provide more clearly identifiable boundaries and to further improve electoral equality. We proposed that the boundary between Brookvale and Eastrop wards should run southwards along Essex Road and Pendrith Road to Winchester Road, eastwards on Hawkfield Lane and southwards along the rear of the properties on Sylvia Close, Cordale Road and Culver Road to the A30 (Ringway South). As described previously, we also proposed retaining the existing western boundary of Grove ward, rather than including the area to the north of The Harrow Way.

152 For the purposes of consultation, we proposed that the existing ward name of Brookvale ward should be retained. Nevertheless, we welcomed further comments from local residents at Stage Three regarding the most appropriate name for this ward.

153 At Stage Three the Borough Council argued that Brookvale ward should be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward to "reflect more closely the identity of the ward." Councillor Watts (Winklebury ward) expressed broad support for the draft proposals, but also requested that Brookvale ward be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward arguing that the ward contains "both Kings Furlong schools (Infants and Primary), the Kings Furlong Public House, the Kings Furlong Shopping Parade and a large residential area which associates itself with Kings Furlong". The Liberal Democrats also favoured renaming Brookvale ward as Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward.

154 The Conservatives expressed disappointment that their Stage One proposals for this area had not been adopted, arguing that their scheme offered clearer community boundaries and

improved electoral equality. They also argued that, while their proposed Fairfield & Viables ward would be divided by Ringway South and “is not an ideal solution”, there are strong links between the two parts of the ward, including common school catchment areas and three path links to the town centre. The Conservatives also stated they were “surprised” that the Commission did not utilise The Harrow Way as a ward boundary. While they accepted the simple solution would be to transfer the area to the north of The Harrow Way to the proposed Grove ward, they supported the Commission’s view that this would “create far too high a level of electoral inequality in Grove ward”

155 As discussed previously, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Gurden (Brighton Hill ward) and eight local residents, as well as a petition containing 133 signatures, opposed our draft recommendation to retain the Cranbourne Lane area to the north of The Harrow Way in Brighton Hill North ward and favoured transferring this area to Grove ward. One local resident proposed that the boundary between Brighton Hill North and Grove wards should follow the rear of the properties leading from Cranbourne Lane, while the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Gurden, one local resident and the petition favoured utilising The Harrow Way as a ward boundary.

156 We have carefully considered the evidence received at Stage Three and remain of the view that our proposals for this area would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We propose substantially endorsing our draft recommendations for this area, subject to two amendments. As discussed previously, in the light of significant local opposition, we propose that the area to the north of The Harrow Way should not form part of the new Brighton Hill North ward. Under our final recommendations, we propose that the area to the north of The Harrow Way should form part of Grove ward. We recognise that by making such a change our proposed Grove ward would have a relatively high level of electoral inequality. However, we have been persuaded that there is strong evidence that this area shares little affinity with Brighton Hill, has strong ties with the rest of Grove ward and that our proposed Grove ward would have strong, easily recognisable boundaries.

157 We also propose renaming Brookvale ward as Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward, as proposed by the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillor Watts. We consider that the new ward name would better reflect the totality of the area covered by the ward.

158 Under our final recommendations, Brookvale & Kings Furlong, Eastrop and Grove wards would have 3 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer and 18 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 10 per cent fewer and 11 per cent more by 2004).

## **Electoral Cycle**

159 At Stage One, we received three representations regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council, the Liberal Democrats and the North West Hampshire Liberal Democrats, all proposed no change to the electoral cycle in Basingstoke & Deane. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

160 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

## **Conclusions**

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

- we propose a minor amendment to the boundary between Sherborne St John ward and Rooksdown and Popley West wards;
- we propose a minor boundary amendment, involving no electors, between Rooksdown and Winklebury wards;
- in Basingstoke town, we propose amending the boundary between Brighton Hill North and Grove wards, and propose that Brookvale ward should be renamed Brookvale & Kings Furlong.

162 We conclude that, in Basingstoke & Deane:

- there should be an increase in council size from 57 to 60;
- there should be 30 wards, instead of 25 as at present;
- the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

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

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	57	60	57	60
Number of wards	25	30	25	30
Average number of electors per councillor	2,018	1,917	2,199	2,089
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	13	9	5
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	4	2	0

164 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in 13 wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average initially. By 2004, five wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and none would vary by more than 20 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**  
 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 30 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

**Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

165 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Bramley, Dummer, Sherborne St John and Sherfield on Loddon to reflect the proposed borough wards.

166 The parish of Bramley is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations, we proposed a revised two-member Calleva ward and a single-member Sherborne St John ward. As a consequence of our proposals, we proposed that Bramley parish should be represented by two wards. Bramley East would form part of a revised Calleva ward and

would be represented by five councillors. Bramley West would form part of a revised Sherborne St John ward and would be represented by four councillors.

167 In response to our consultation report, as discussed previously, we have proposed endorsing our draft recommendations for a single-member Sherborne St John and a two-member Calleva ward as final. As a consequence of our recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we propose confirming our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements of Bramley Parish Council as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
Bramley Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards. Bramley East parish ward should return five councillors and Bramley West parish ward should return four councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary between Calleva and Sherborne St John wards, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

168 The parish of Dummer is currently served by five councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations report, we proposed creating a new three-member Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward and a revised three-member Oakley & North Waltham ward. As a consequence of our proposal, we proposed that Dummer parish should be divided into two new parish wards, each to be represented by four councillors - Beggarwood parish ward which would form part of the proposed Hatch Warren & Beggarwood ward, and Dummer parish ward which would form part of the proposed Oakley & North Waltham ward.

169 In response to our consultation report, we received a degree of support for our draft recommendations for borough warding arrangements in Dummer and propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, as discussed previously. As a consequence of our recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we propose confirming our draft proposals for electoral arrangements in Dummer parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
Dummer Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, three more than at present, representing two wards. Beggarwood and Dummer parish ward would each return four councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

170 The parish of Sherborne St John is currently divided into two wards, North and South, returning six and two parish councillors respectively. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed creating a new single-member Rooksdown ward, a two-member Popley West ward and a single-member Sherborne St John ward. To reflect our proposed borough warding



arrangements, we proposed that Sherborne St John should be divided between three new parish wards. We proposed a new Popley Fields parish ward should be represented by three members. Rooksdown parish ward, which would be broadly the same as the borough ward, would be represented by five councillors, and Sherborne St John parish ward, which would form part of the proposed Sherborne St John ward, would be represented by four councillors.

171 In response to our consultation report, we received a degree of support for our draft recommendations for borough warding arrangements in this area, although there was some opposition to our proposals for the adjoining parished areas. As discussed previously, we have proposed confirming our draft recommendations for Popley West, Rooksdown and Sherborne St John wards, subject to a minor boundary amendment between these wards. As a consequence of our recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we propose confirming our draft proposals for electoral arrangements in Sherborne St John parish as final, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between Sherborne St John parish ward and Popley Fields and Rooksdown parish wards.

**Final Recommendation**

Sherborne St John Parish Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, three more than at present, representing three wards: Popley Fields (returning three councillors), Rooksdown (five) and Sherborne St John (four). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

172 The parish of Sherfield on Loddon is represented by eight councillors, and is not currently divided into parish wards. As part of our draft recommendations we have proposed a revised three-member Chineham ward, containing the Taylor’s Farm area of the parish, and a two-member Calleva ward, containing the remainder of the parish. To facilitate our proposed borough wards, we proposed that Sherfield on Loddon should be divided between two new parish wards: Sherfield on Loddon parish ward would be represented by six councillors and Taylor’s Farm parish ward would be represented by four councillors.

173 In response to our consultation report, we received a degree of support for our draft recommendations for this area, although Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council and Hampshire County Council opposed our proposals in relation to the Taylor’s Farm development area, as discussed previously. In the light of the evidence received, we have proposed confirming our draft recommendations for Chineham and Calleva wards as final. As a consequence of our recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we propose confirming our draft proposals for electoral arrangements for Sherfield on Loddon parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, two more than a present, representing two wards: Sherfield on Loddon (returning six councillors) and Taylor's Farm (four). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

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

**Final Recommendation**

For parish and town councils, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane*



## 6 NEXT STEPS

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

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

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Basingstoke & Deane area.

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Tadley town.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Bramley parish.

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

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane: Key Map*



*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Tadley Town*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Bramley Parish*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Basingstoke & Deane

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Brookvale ward as Brookvale & Kings Furlong ward.

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
Brighton Hill North (in Basingstoke)	Brighton Hill ward (part)
Grove (in Basingstoke)	<i>Unchanged</i>
Popley West (in Basingstoke)	Popley ward (part); Sherborne St John ward (part – Popley Fields ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed)
Rooksdown	Sherborne St John ward (part – Rooksdown ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed)
Sherborne St John	Calleva ward (part – Bramley West ward of Bramley parish as proposed); Sherborne St John ward (part – Monk Sherborne parish, Sherborne St John ward of Sherborne St John parish as proposed, Ramsdell ward of Wootton St Lawrence parish)
Winklebury	Buckskin ward (part); Winklebury ward

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brighton Hill North (in Basingstoke)	2	4,070	2,035	6	4,042	2,021	-3
Grove (in Basingstoke)	2	4,383	2,192	14	4,519	2,260	8
Popley West (in Basingstoke)	2	2,889	1,445	-25	3,823	1,912	-8
Rooksdown	1	517	517	-73	1,977	1,977	-5
Sherborne St John	1	2,299	2,299	20	2,273	2,273	9
Winklebury	3	5,470	1,823	-5	5,507	1,836	-12

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.*

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