

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
STRATFORD ON AVON  
IN WARWICKSHIRE

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

*November 1999*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Stratford on Avon in Warwickshire.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Kru Desai

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Robin Gray

Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Stratford-upon-Avon town is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

2 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 3 November 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Stratford on Avon under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 165-166) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Stratford on Avon.

We recommend that Stratford on Avon District Council should be served by 53 councillors representing 31 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.

We note that you have set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. 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 District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Stratford on Avon on 3 November 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 May 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Stratford on Avon:

- **in 18 of the 35 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average. Electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly by 2003.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 165-166) are that:

- **Stratford on Avon District Council should have 53 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 31 wards, four less than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified and eight 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 district councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 25 of the proposed 31 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all but one of the wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2003.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and an increase in town councillors serving the town of Stratford-upon-Avon;**
- **new warding arrangements for Lighthorne Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 14 December 1999:

**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 (existing wards)</b>  |
|----|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1  | Alcester          | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Arrow and Weethley, and Alcester and Oversley parish wards of Alcester parish)   |
| 2  | Aston Cantlow     | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Aston Cantlow, Billesley and Haselor)  |
| 3  | Bardon            | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Binton, Exhall, Luddington, Old Stratford & Drayton and Temple Grafton)  |
| 4  | Bidford & Salford | 3                            | Bidford ward (the parishes of Bidford-on-Avon and Wixford); Salford Priors ward (the parish of Salford Priors)   |
| 5  | Brailes           | 1                            | Brailes ward (part – the parishes of Barcheston, Brailes, Burmington, Honington, Sutton-under-Brailes and Tidmington); Tredington ward (part – the parish of Stretton on Fosse); Vale of the Red Horse ward (part – the parish of Idlicote)  |
| 6  | Burton Dassett    | 1                            | Burton Dassett ward (part – the parishes of Burton Dassett and Radway); Farnborough ward (part – the parishes of Ratley & Upton, Shotteswell and Warmington)   |
| 7  | Claverdon         | 1                            | Claverdon ward (part – the parishes of Claverdon, Langley and Preston Bagot); Wootton Wawen ward (part – the parish of Bearley)  |
| 8  | Ettington         | 1                            | Ettington ward (the parishes of Alderminster, Ettington and Loxley); Vale of the Red Horse ward (part – the parish of Halford)   |
| 9  | Fenny Compton     | 1                            | Farnborough ward (part – the parishes of Avon Dassett, Farnborough and Fenny Compton); Napton Priors ward (part – the parishes of Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston); Southam ward (part – the parishes of Chapel Ascote, Hodnell & Wills Pastures, Ladbroke, Radbourn, Stoneton, Watergall and Wormleighton) |
| 10 | Harbury           | 2                            | Harbury ward (part – the parishes of Bishop's Itchington, Chesterton & Kingston and Harbury)   |
| 11 | Henley            | 2                            | Henley ward (part – the parishes of Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden); Wootton Wawen ward (part – the parish of Wootton Wawen)   |
| 12 | Kineton           | 2                            | Burton Dassett ward (part – the parishes of Chadshunt and Gaydon); Harbury ward (part – the parish of Lighthorne); Kineton ward (the parish of Kineton); Moreton Morrell ward (part – the parishes of Combroke and Compton Verney)   |

Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

|    | <b>Ward name</b>            | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>  |
|----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 13 | Kinwarton                   | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Great Alne and Kinwarton, and Oversley Green parish ward of Alcester parish)   |
| 14 | Long Compton                | 1                            | Brailes ward (part – the parishes of Cherington and Stourton); Compton ward (the parishes of Barton-on-the-Heath, Great Wolford, Little Compton, Long Compton, Little Wolford and Whichford) |
| 15 | Long Itchington             | 1                            | Harbury ward (part – the parish of Ufton); Long Itchington ward (the parish of Long Itchington)  |
| 16 | Quinton                     | 1                            | Quinton ward (part – the parishes of Admington, Atherstone on Stour, Preston on Stour and Quinton); Welford ward (part – the parish of Long Marston)   |
| 17 | Sambourne                   | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Coughton, Moreton Bagot, Oldberrow, Sambourne and Spernall, and Mappleborough Green parish ward of Studley parish)   |
| 18 | Shipston                    | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Shipston on Stour)   |
| 19 | Snitterfield                | 1                            | Claverdon ward (part – the parish of Wolverton); Snitterfield ward (the parishes of Charlecote, Fulbrook, Hampton Lucy and Snitterfield)   |
| 20 | Southam                     | 3                            | Southam ward (part – the parish of Southam)  |
| 21 | Stockton & Napton           | 1                            | Napton Priors ward (part – the parishes of Napton on the Hill and Upper & Lower Shuckburgh); Southam ward (part – the parish of Stockton)  |
| 22 | Stratford Alveston          | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i>   |
| 23 | Stratford Avenue & New Town | 3                            | Stratford Market Hall ward (part); Stratford New Town ward   |
| 24 | Stratford Guild & Hathaway  | 3                            | Stratford Guild ward; Stratford Market Hall ward (part)  |
| 25 | Stratford Mount Pleasant    | 2                            | Stratford Market Hall ward (part)  |
| 26 | Studley                     | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (Studley parish ward of Studley parish)   |
| 27 | Tanworth                    | 2                            | Henley ward (part – the parish of Ullenhall); Tanworth ward (Tanworth parish ward of Tanworth parish); Tanworth Earlswood ward (Earlswood parish ward of Tanworth parish)                    |

*continued overleaf*

*Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

|    | <b>Ward name</b>      | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>   |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 28 | Tredington            | 1                            | Quinton ward (part – the parish of Whitchurch); Tredington ward (part – the parishes of Ilmington and Tredington)                                     |
| 29 | Vale of the Red Horse | 1                            | Vale of the Red Horse ward (part – the parishes of Butlers Marston, Compton Wynyates, Oxhill, Pillerton Hersey, Pillerton Priors, Tysoe and Whatcote) |
| 30 | Welford               | 1                            | Welford ward (part – the parishes of Clifford Chambers, Dorsington, Milcote, Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon)                                      |
| 31 | Wellesbourne          | 3                            | Moreton Morrell ward (part – the parishes of Moreton Morrell and Newbold Pacey); Wellesbourne ward (the parish of Wellesbourne)                       |

*Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.*

*2 Map 2 illustrates the proposed wards outlined above and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed boundaries in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon.*

Figure 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Stratford on Avon

| Ward name                      | Number of councillors | Electorate (1998) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2003) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Alcester                     | 3                     | 4,847             | 1,616                             | -4                      | 5,641             | 1,880                             | 3                       |
| 2 Aston Cantlow                | 1                     | 1,583             | 1,583                             | -6                      | 1,623             | 1,623                             | -11                     |
| 3 Bardon                       | 1                     | 1,515             | 1,515                             | -10                     | 1,839             | 1,839                             | 1                       |
| 4 Bidford & Salford            | 3                     | 4,712             | 1,571                             | -7                      | 5,371             | 1,790                             | -2                      |
| 5 Brailes                      | 1                     | 1,736             | 1,736                             | 3                       | 1,795             | 1,795                             | -1                      |
| 6 Burton Dassett               | 1                     | 1,704             | 1,704                             | 1                       | 1,784             | 1,784                             | -2                      |
| 7 Claverdon                    | 1                     | 1,912             | 1,912                             | 13                      | 1,923             | 1,923                             | 6                       |
| 8 Ettington                    | 1                     | 1,598             | 1,598                             | -5                      | 1,914             | 1,914                             | 5                       |
| 9 Fenny Compton                | 1                     | 1,890             | 1,890                             | 12                      | 1,948             | 1,948                             | 7                       |
| 10 Harbury                     | 2                     | 3,798             | 1,899                             | 12                      | 3,928             | 1,964                             | 8                       |
| 11 Henley                      | 2                     | 3,590             | 1,795                             | 6                       | 3,646             | 1,823                             | 0                       |
| 12 Kineton                     | 2                     | 3,413             | 1,707                             | 1                       | 3,509             | 1,755                             | -4                      |
| 13 Kinwarton                   | 1                     | 1,700             | 1,700                             | 1                       | 1,766             | 1,766                             | -3                      |
| 14 Long Compton                | 1                     | 1,670             | 1,670                             | -1                      | 1,813             | 1,813                             | 0                       |
| 15 Long Itchington             | 1                     | 1,885             | 1,885                             | 12                      | 1,930             | 1,930                             | 6                       |
| 16 Quinton                     | 1                     | 1,729             | 1,729                             | 2                       | 1,822             | 1,822                             | 0                       |
| 17 Sambourne                   | 1                     | 1,338             | 1,338                             | -21                     | 1,715             | 1,715                             | -6                      |
| 18 Shipston                    | 2                     | 3,291             | 1,646                             | -3                      | 3,778             | 1,889                             | 4                       |
| 19 Snitterfield                | 1                     | 1,803             | 1,803                             | 7                       | 1,980             | 1,980                             | 9                       |
| 20 Southam                     | 3                     | 4,907             | 1,636                             | -3                      | 5,371             | 1,790                             | -2                      |
| 21 Stockton & Napton           | 1                     | 1,804             | 1,804                             | 7                       | 1,969             | 1,969                             | 8                       |
| 22 Stratford Alveston          | 3                     | 4,357             | 1,452                             | -14                     | 5,270             | 1,757                             | -4                      |
| 23 Stratford Avenue & New Town | 3                     | 5,207             | 1,736                             | 3                       | 5,336             | 1,779                             | -2                      |

*continued overleaf*

Figure 2 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Stratford on Avon

| Ward name                     | Number of councillors | Electorate (1998) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2003) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 24 Stratford Guild & Hathaway | 3                     | 5,447             | 1,816                             | 7                       | 5,674             | 1,891                             | 4                       |
| 25 Stratford Mount Pleasant   | 2                     | 3,658             | 1,829                             | 8                       | 3,680             | 1,840                             | 1                       |
| 26 Studley                    | 3                     | 4,970             | 1,657                             | -2                      | 5,141             | 1,714                             | -6                      |
| 27 Tanworth                   | 2                     | 3,218             | 1,609                             | -5                      | 3,320             | 1,660                             | -9                      |
| 28 Tredington                 | 1                     | 1,848             | 1,848                             | 9                       | 1,902             | 1,902                             | 4                       |
| 29 Vale of the Red Horse      | 1                     | 1,809             | 1,809                             | 7                       | 1,887             | 1,887                             | 4                       |
| 30 Welford                    | 1                     | 1,673             | 1,673                             | -1                      | 1,705             | 1,705                             | -6                      |
| 31 Wellesbourne               | 3                     | 4,934             | 1,645                             | -3                      | 5,528             | 1,843                             | 1                       |
| <b>Totals</b>                 | <b>53</b>             | <b>89,546</b>     | —                                 | —                       | <b>96,508</b>     | —                                 | —                       |
| <b>Averages</b>               | —                     | —                 | <b>1,690</b>                      | —                       | —                 | <b>1,821</b>                      | —                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on Stratford on Avon District Council's submission. The electorate totals and variances for 2003 in relation to Bardon ward and two of the Stratford town wards (Avenue & New Town and Mount Pleasant) have been modified slightly from the original figures, in the light of comments received at Stage Three (see paragraphs 54 to 56).

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

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Stratford on Avon in Warwickshire. We have now reviewed the districts in Warwickshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Stratford on Avon. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1977 (Report No. 186). The electoral arrangements of Warwickshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1980 (Report No. 409). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in due course.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (updated in March 1998), 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 configurations 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. For example, 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 of the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Warwickshire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *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 3 November 1998, when we wrote to Stratford on Avon District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Warwickshire County Council, Warwickshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 February 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 25 May 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Stratford on Avon in Warwickshire*, and ended on 19 July 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 Stratford on Avon is one of the largest district councils by area in the country, covering around 980 square kilometres, and is situated at the centre of England in south Warwickshire. Stratford-upon-Avon is its largest town and is famous for being the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Tourism is the largest employer; about two and a half million visitors each year take in the sights of Stratford, as well as other out-of-town attractions such as Charlecote Park, Dorsington Manor Gardens and Ragley Hall. The district's economy has traditionally been based primarily on agriculture, and farming and market gardening continue to be important to the local economy.

14 Good transport links exist within Stratford on Avon, including the B4455 road (Fosse Way) and the M40 motorway which bisect the district diagonally in opposing directions. The district contains 113 parishes, with the town of Stratford containing a fifth of the total population. The remaining residents reside in smaller towns and villages, including Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Shipston on Stour, Southam, Studley and Wellesbourne.

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

16 The electorate of the district is 89,546 (February 1998). The Council presently has 55 members who are elected from 35 wards. Eight of the wards are represented by three councillors each, four are represented by two councillors each and 23 are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been a substantial increase in the electorate in Stratford on Avon district, with around 25 per cent more electors than two decades ago, primarily as a result

of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in the towns of Alcester, Shipston-on-Stour, Stratford-upon-Avon, Southam and Wellesbourne.

18 At present each councillor represents an average of 1,628 electors, which the District Council forecasts would increase to 1,755 by the year 2003 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 18 of the 35 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and in nine wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Moreton Morrell ward where the councillor represents 41 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

*Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Stratford on Avon*

Map 1 (continued):  
Existing Wards in Stratford on Avon



Figure 3:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name             | Number of councillors | Electorate (1998) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2003) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Alcester            | 3                     | 4,847             | 1,616                             | -1                      | 5,641             | 1,880                             | 7                       |
| 2 Aston Cantlow       | 1                     | 1,583             | 1,583                             | -3                      | 1,623             | 1,623                             | -8                      |
| 3 Bardon              | 1                     | 1,515             | 1,515                             | -7                      | 1,839             | 1,839                             | 5                       |
| 4 Bidford             | 2                     | 3,542             | 1,771                             | 9                       | 4,169             | 2,085                             | 19                      |
| 5 Brailes             | 1                     | 1,647             | 1,647                             | 1                       | 1,713             | 1,713                             | -2                      |
| 6 Burton Dassett      | 1                     | 1,308             | 1,308                             | -20                     | 1,407             | 1,407                             | -20                     |
| 7 Claverdon           | 1                     | 1,510             | 1,510                             | -7                      | 1,524             | 1,524                             | -13                     |
| 8 Compton             | 1                     | 1,363             | 1,363                             | -16                     | 1,479             | 1,479                             | -16                     |
| 9 Ettington           | 1                     | 1,335             | 1,335                             | -18                     | 1,611             | 1,611                             | -8                      |
| 10 Farnborough        | 1                     | 1,752             | 1,752                             | 8                       | 1,792             | 1,792                             | 2                       |
| 11 Harbury            | 3                     | 4,992             | 1,664                             | 2                       | 5,160             | 1,720                             | -2                      |
| 12 Henley             | 2                     | 3,041             | 1,521                             | -7                      | 3,099             | 1,550                             | -12                     |
| 13 Kineton            | 1                     | 1,799             | 1,799                             | 10                      | 1,855             | 1,855                             | 6                       |
| 14 Kinwarton          | 1                     | 1,700             | 1,700                             | 4                       | 1,766             | 1,766                             | 1                       |
| 15 Long Itchington    | 1                     | 1,694             | 1,694                             | 4                       | 1,723             | 1,723                             | -2                      |
| 16 Moreton Morrell    | 1                     | 960               | 960                               | -41                     | 1,002             | 1,002                             | -43                     |
| 17 Napton Priors      | 1                     | 1,385             | 1,385                             | -15                     | 1,462             | 1,462                             | -17                     |
| 18 Quinton            | 1                     | 1,581             | 1,581                             | -3                      | 1,586             | 1,586                             | -10                     |
| 19 Salford Priors     | 1                     | 1,170             | 1,170                             | -28                     | 1,202             | 1,202                             | -31                     |
| 20 Sambourne          | 1                     | 1,338             | 1,338                             | -18                     | 1,715             | 1,715                             | -2                      |
| 21 Shipston           | 2                     | 3,291             | 1,646                             | 1                       | 3,778             | 1,889                             | 8                       |
| 22 Snitterfield       | 1                     | 1,596             | 1,596                             | -2                      | 1,770             | 1,770                             | 1                       |
| 23 Southam            | 3                     | 6,241             | 2,080                             | 28                      | 6,820             | 2,273                             | 30                      |
| 24 Stratford Alveston | 3                     | 4,357             | 1,452                             | -11                     | 5,270             | 1,757                             | 0                       |
| 25 Stratford Guild    | 3                     | 4,262             | 1,421                             | -13                     | 4,432             | 1,477                             | -16                     |

Figure 3 (continued):  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name                | Number of councillors | Electorate (1998) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2003) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 26 Stratford Market Hall | 3                     | 6,303             | 2,101                             | 29                      | 6,339             | 2,113                             | 20                      |
| 27 Stratford New Town    | 3                     | 3,747             | 1,249                             | -23                     | 3,919             | 1,306                             | -26                     |
| 28 Studley               | 3                     | 4,970             | 1,657                             | 2                       | 5,141             | 1,714                             | -2                      |
| 29 Tanworth              | 1                     | 1,280             | 1,280                             | -21                     | 1,314             | 1,314                             | -25                     |
| 30 Tanworth Earlswood    | 1                     | 1,353             | 1,353                             | -17                     | 1,424             | 1,424                             | -19                     |
| 31 Tredington            | 1                     | 2,046             | 2,046                             | 26                      | 2,131             | 2,131                             | 21                      |
| 32 Vale of the Red Horse | 1                     | 2,149             | 2,149                             | 32                      | 2,264             | 2,264                             | 29                      |
| 33 Welford               | 1                     | 1,942             | 1,942                             | 19                      | 2,054             | 2,054                             | 17                      |
| 34 Wellesbourne          | 2                     | 4,204             | 2,102                             | 29                      | 4,746             | 2,373                             | 35                      |
| 35 Wootton Wawen         | 1                     | 1,743             | 1,743                             | 7                       | 1,738             | 1,738                             | -1                      |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>55</b>             | <b>89,546</b>     | —                                 | —                       | <b>96,508</b>     | —                                 | —                       |
| <b>Averages</b>          | —                     | —                 | <b>1,628</b>                      | —                       | —                 | <b>1,755</b>                      | —                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on Stratford on Avon District Council's submission. The electorate totals and variances for 2003 in relation to Bardon ward and Stratford Market Hall ward have been modified slightly from the original figures, in the light of comments received at Stage Three (see paragraphs 54 to 56).

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Moreton Morrell ward were relatively over-represented by 41 per cent, while electors in Vale of the Red Horse ward were relatively under-represented by 32 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 17 representations, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Conservative Group on the Council, and representations from Warwickshire County Council, one town council, seven parish councils, a local branch of the Conservative Party, three district councillors and two local residents. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Stratford on Avon in Warwickshire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based primarily on the District Council's proposals, which achieved considerable improvements in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the District Council's scheme in some areas, adopting parts of the Conservative Group's scheme. We also put forward some proposals of our own. Overall, we proposed that:

- (a) Stratford on Avon District Council should be served by 53 councillors, two less than at present, representing 30 wards, five less than at present;
- (b) the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified, while six wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (c) there should be new warding arrangements for Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council and Beaudesert Parish Council.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Stratford on Avon District Council should comprise 53 councillors, serving 30 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 26 of the 30 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2003.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

<sup>22</sup> During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 104 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Stratford on Avon District Council and the Commission, by appointment.

### **Stratford on Avon District Council**

<sup>23</sup> The District Council was generally content with our draft recommendations, including in some areas where we had not put its original proposals forward. However, it suggested four alterations to the draft recommendations. It suggested dividing a proposed three-member ward within Stratford-upon-Avon town (Stratford Alveston ward) into a two-member and a single-member ward. The Council also suggested that the proposal to merge the single-member wards of Aston Cantlow and Bardon into a two-member ward should be altered in favour of the status quo, and that the parish of Wixford should be included in the proposed Bidford & Salford ward. Finally, the Council opposed its own Stage One proposal to divide the parish of Beaudesert between the proposed district wards of Henley and Tanworth.

### **The Conservative Group on the District Council**

<sup>24</sup> The Conservative Group also generally supported the draft proposals, including in areas where we had not put forward its initial proposals, although it too suggested some changes. It agreed with the Council that our suggested two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward should be divided into single-member wards and also agreed with the Council that the parish of Beaudesert should not be divided between two district wards. It also stated that it was “willing to support” the Council’s proposal to place Wixford parish in our proposed Bidford & Salford ward. Finally, the Group suggested two ward name modifications in the rural area and, unlike the Council, agreed with our draft proposal for a three-member Stratford Alveston ward.

### **Stratford & South Warwickshire Liberal Democrats (Stratford-upon-Avon Town Branch)**

<sup>25</sup> The Stratford-upon-Avon Town branch of the Liberal Democrats had “no objection” to the proposal to reduce the number of district councillors in Stratford-upon-Avon town from 12 to 11, nor did it object to the suggested ward boundaries. Although it agreed with our draft proposal that Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council should have its membership increased from 16 to 18, it suggested alternative town council electoral arrangements for much of the town.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

<sup>26</sup> We received representations directly from two town councils, 25 parish councils and three parish meetings. The parish councils of Aston Cantlow, Binton, Exhall, Haselor, Luddington, Old Stratford & Drayton and Wixford all objected to our proposal to combine the two single-member wards of Aston Cantlow and Bardon into a new two-member ward, preferring the status quo, on the grounds that the constituent parts of the proposed ward share relatively few community ties. Some of these submissions also stated that such a two-member ward would be too large for councillors to represent effectively and argued that the A46 road was seen as a natural boundary in this area. Wixford Parish Council additionally stated a preference for it to be placed in our proposed Bidford & Salford ward, arguing that it has community links with Bidford-on-Avon. Exhall Parish Council favoured both itself and Wixford being placed in a revised single-member Bardon ward, as the two parishes share community ties.

<sup>27</sup> Beaudesert & Henley-in-Arden Joint Parish Council and Ullenhall Parish Council both strongly opposed our proposals to place much of this area in a revised Tanworth ward, on the grounds that there are relatively few links with the Tanworth area. The two parish councils also enclosed petitions (signed by relatively large numbers of local residents) which asked that the Commission take account of

the strong links between the parishes of Henley-in-Arden, Beaudesert and Ullenhall. Tanworth Parish Council also objected to our proposals for a two-member Tanworth ward, arguing that it would be too large in size for councillors to represent effectively.

28 Wolverton Parish Council and Preston Bagot Parish Meeting objected to our proposals to place those parishes in Snitterfield ward and Henley ward respectively. Both wished to be placed in Claverdon ward on the grounds that they share close community and historical ties. Bearley Parish Council did not wish for the parish to be placed in Claverdon ward, on the grounds that it has no natural ties with the parishes of Claverdon or Langleigh, preferring instead to remain in a ward with Wootton Wawen parish.

29 Harbury Parish Council and Chesterton & Kingston Parish Meeting both stated that they wished for the parishes to remain together in the same ward, on the grounds that they are “socially and politically intertwined”. We also received a petition supporting this view from Chesterton village residents, with around 40 signatures. Ufton Parish Council also wished to remain in Harbury ward and opposed the parish being placed in Long Itchington ward, arguing that it shared links with Harbury. Whitchurch Parish Meeting stated its wish to remain in Quinton ward. Wellesbourne Parish Council opposed our proposal to place it in a ward with Moreton Morrell Parish, arguing that there are no community links. It wished to be placed instead with the parish of Charlecote.

30 Brailes Parish Council opposed our proposal to place it in a ward with the parish of Stretton-on-Fosse, preferring instead to be placed in a ward with the parishes of Cherington, Stourton and Sutton-under-Brailes, on the grounds that the parishes share community, historical and geographical ties. Bishops Itchington Parish Council preferred for the parish to become a single-member ward in its own right. Wootton Wawen and Radway parish councils supported the retention of single-member wards for their respective areas. Cherington & Stourton Joint Parish Council objected to our proposal to place it in Long Compton ward as it wished to be placed in Brailes ward, with which it stated it has strong social links.

31 Stockton Parish Council objected to our proposal to create a single-member Stockton ward, on the grounds that it shares minimal community links with the other parishes in the proposed ward.

It wished to be placed instead in the current Southam ward, arguing that it has developed strong community links with Southam. However, Southam Town Council supported our proposal to create a three-member Southam ward (consisting solely of that parish) as the proposal would improve electoral equality. Little Compton, Gaydon and Bidford-on-Avon parish councils all supported our draft recommendations for their respective areas, while Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council expressed no firm views.

## **Warwickshire County Council**

32 The County Council urged the Commission to reconsider its draft recommendations “to take the opportunity to allow coterminosity [between district wards and county divisions to be achieved] and to consider making any changes effective simultaneously with changes to county division boundaries”.

33 It stated that it objected to the draft recommendations for all five of the Warwickshire districts on the basis that “the importance of coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards in achieving the statutory objectives of electoral reviews has not been given adequate weight”, and considered that “undue weight has been given to the objective of achieving equality of representation largely within the existing framework at district level at the expense of wider considerations”. It considered that this situation would cause “either significant inequality of representation or inadequate coterminosity between divisions and wards to emerge in the subsequent review of county council electoral divisions”.

34 The County Council also opposed the use of the centre of roads as ward boundaries (usually in urban areas) which it considered to be “problematical and not conducive to the objective to reflect the interests of local communities”. It stated that “where changes to existing ward boundaries are to take effect, we believe that matching changes to county division boundaries should take place simultaneously” and recognised that “to achieve this it may be necessary to delay district changes or to bring the county electoral review forward”. It stated that such problems “will become even more difficult if the government moves to implement district and county elections in alternate years as set out in its recent White Paper”.

35 Specifically regarding Stratford-on-Avon district, the County Council commented that the draft recommendations fitted “fairly well” with county divisions in comparison to the draft proposals in other districts in Warwickshire. However, it also commented on some of the areas where change was perceived to be significant, including proposals affecting the Kineton county division and the Stratford-upon-Avon town area.

## Member of Parliament

36 James Plaskitt, MP for the Warwick & Leamington constituency, opposed the draft recommendation which would involve all of Ullenhall parish and part of Beaudesert parish being transferred from Henley ward to a revised Tanworth ward. Mr Plaskitt stated that the proposals were “inappropriate” as both Beaudesert and Ullenhall share closer links with Henley-in-Arden than with Tanworth.

## Elected Members

37 Twelve councillors, writing as members of either Stratford-on-Avon District Council or Warwickshire County Council (or both) wrote to us during Stage Three. Councillor Pilkington, the member for the present Vale of the Red Horse ward, argued that the ward name should be retained and that the draft recommendation for a change of name to Tysoe should be dropped. This view was supported by County Councillor Gunter, who also commented on the perceived identities of some of the villages which would make up the proposed new district wards in the south of the district.

38 Councillor Adams, a town and district councillor who represents the present Stratford Market Hall ward, commented that our draft recommendations in Stratford-upon-Avon would split the community of Bishopton, and made some alternative proposals for that part of the town. She also opposed the use of the ward name Stratford Mount Pleasant, preferring instead the name Stratford Spa, and commented on the perceived difficulties faced by those candidates in local elections who do not belong to any of the main political parties.

39 Councillor Cockings, a member for the present Stratford Guild ward, stated that he was generally in favour of the new ward boundaries in Stratford-upon-Avon town but that he wished to see a

boundary anomaly resolved in the Bishopton area of the town. Two local residents concurred with this view. Councillor Parrott, a member for the present Stratford Alveston ward, reiterated his Stage One comments that Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council “should be merged into the District Council area”. He also pointed out a boundary anomaly between the parishes of Charlecote and Wellesbourne.

40 Councillor Winterburn, the member for the present Bardon ward, generally agreed with our draft proposals but argued that the two present single-member wards of Aston Cantlow and Bardon should be retained, rather than being merged together to form a new two-member ward. He also supported the Council’s view that a proposed three-member ward within Stratford-upon-Avon town (Stratford Alveston ward) should instead be split into a two-member and a single-member ward. Councillor Winterburn also commented on the Council’s electorate projections (see next chapter).

41 Councillor Lockhart, the member for the present Quinton ward, also commented on the Council’s electorate projections (see next chapter) and opposed the draft recommendation for a revised Quinton ward on both community identity grounds and because, in her view, “the busy B4632 [road] acts as a natural boundary” in the area. Councillor Lawrence, the member for the present Aston Cantlow ward, opposed the draft recommendation for a two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward, preferring that the two present single-member wards in this area be retained.

42 Councillor Macdonald, a member for the present Bidford ward, generally supported the draft proposal for a new three-member Bidford & Salford ward, although he argued that the parish of Wixford should be added to it. These views were supported by Councillor Lisle, the other member for the present Bidford ward. Councillor Macdonald also stated that he would prefer for a different ward name to be adopted as Bidford & Salford is “perhaps cumbersome”.

43 Councillor Hyde, a member for the present Stratford Alveston ward, supported our draft recommendation for there to be no change to the boundaries of that ward. He opposed the suggestion put forward by the Council and Councillor Winterburn that the ward instead be divided into a two-member ward and a single-member ward. County Councillor Cowcher, who

represents the Wellesbourne division, concurred with the County Council's representation regarding the difficulties of reviewing the five Warwickshire districts separately. He commented that his division would cover parts of five wards under the draft recommendations, which would "severely confuse electors".

from Lighthorne Parish Council and from three residents from that area, one of whom also gave his general support for our draft recommendations in the north-eastern part of the district.

## Other Representations

44 A further 57 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, town councillors and residents. We received a relatively large volume of representations regarding three interrelated issues affecting the north-western part of the district. Around 20 local residents from the village of Earlswood, within the parish of Tanworth, opposed the draft recommendation to abolish the present single-member Tanworth Earlswood ward, arguing that as the area was on the very edge of the district it needed local representation, rather than being made part of an expanded two-member Tanworth ward.

45 A large number of residents from the parish of Ullenhall (76 per cent of electors according to Ullenhall Parish Council) signed a petition opposing the inclusion of the parish within the expanded two-member Tanworth ward, arguing that local people had no affinity with Tanworth. We also received a number of letters directly from residents on this issue. As an example of the lack of a common identity, it was stated that the two areas were in different church dioceses, Ullenhall being within Coventry and Tanworth being within Birmingham. Respondents preferred that Ullenhall parish should remain in a ward with the neighbouring parish of Henley-in-Arden.

46 We also received around 25 representations regarding the proposal to split the parish of Beaudesert between two new district wards. Respondents argued that the whole of the parish of Beaudesert shared particularly strong links with the neighbouring parish of Henley-in-Arden as there was a joint parish council and a history of association between the two areas.

47 Finally, we received representations from two town councillors in Stratford-upon-Avon supporting the creation of smaller town council wards in the town, and we received a request for parish warding

48 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Stratford on Avon district 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 interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

49 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 must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

50 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.

51 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, 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. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of

circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

## Electorate Forecasts

52 During Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 8 per cent from 89,546 to 96,508 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It expected most of the growth to be in Stratford-upon-Avon town and the parishes of Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Shipston-on-Stour, Southam and Wellesbourne, although some of the more rural areas were also forecast to see some fairly substantial increases. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

53 In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorates 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.

54 During Stage Three we received some comments on this issue. Councillor Lockhart, the member for the present Quinton ward, believed that the Council's electorate projections failed to “take into account 7.7 (ee47.6.0169 Tw[0.1423 Tw.6.pasted])TJT0.200 ingMarpstor commented that “a late alteration to the local plan provisions for the boundary of Old Stratford & Drayton (esf objection).

otherwise content with the electorate projections. While we acknowledge the views of Councillor Lockhart, there was no support from other respondents for her comments regarding electoral projections. In the circumstances we are of the view that we should not alter the projections for this area at this stage of the review.

56 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the comments received during Stage Three, are content that the original electorate forecasts represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time, subject to one minor modification. As a result of the comments received from the Council and Councillor Winterburn, the projected electorate figure for the parish of Old Stratford & Drayton (the present Bardon ward) should be increased by 135 electors, and the projected figure for the town of Stratford-upon-Avon (the present Market Hall ward) should be reduced by the same amount.

## Council Size

57 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a borough or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

58 Stratford on Avon District Council is at present served by 55 councillors. At Stage One the District Council proposed a council size of 53 members, a proposal supported by the Conservative Group. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council size of 53 members.

59 At Stage Three both the Council and the Conservative Group reiterated their support for a council size of 53 members. No specific alternative council sizes were proposed, although some respondents argued for the status quo in their own areas. Given the general support for such a council size, we are confirming this draft recommendation as final.

## Electoral Arrangements

60 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide

schemes from the District Council and the Conservative Group. From these representations some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

61 The Council's proposals were for a reduction in council size from 55 to 53. The proposals resulted in some improvement to electoral equality, with the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average reducing from 18 to six, and further to just one in 2003. Under its proposals both Stratford-upon-Avon town and the rural area would be served by one fewer district councillor.

62 The Conservative Group's scheme was similar to the Council's both in terms of the overall council size proposed and in a majority of the specific ward boundaries put forward. However, its proposals differed in certain areas, notably in Stratford-upon-Avon town and in the north-east of the district. The Group's scheme would achieve a similarly improved level of electoral equality, with just one proposed ward projected to exceed 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district by 2003.

63 We recognised the improved electoral equality achieved by the two district-wide schemes, compared to the existing arrangements. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. In particular, we suggested our own scheme for Stratford-upon-Avon town which, in our view, would involve less disruption to the existing arrangements, and give generally excellent electoral equality.

64 In response to our draft recommendations report the Council and the Conservative Group both generally supported the draft proposals, including in areas where we had not put forward their original proposals, although each suggested some alterations, notably in the north-western part of the district.

65 A number of respondents opposed the proposals in the north-western part of the district, arguing that the proposed two-member Tanworth ward was too large in terms of area and that the parishes of Beaudesert and Ullenhall would be disadvantaged by the draft recommendations. We also received substantial opposition to our proposal to merge the present single-member Aston

Cantlow and Bardon wards into a two-member ward. However, other than this, the draft recommendations were generally well received, although some parish councils opposed the specific recommendations for their areas.

66 As stated earlier, Warwickshire County Council opposed the draft recommendations. It noted that due to the high degree of change and the proposed ward sizes under the draft recommendations, that this would “cause either significant inequality of representation or inadequate coterminosity between divisions and wards to emerge in the subsequent review of county electoral divisions”. It urged us to reconsider our draft recommendations “to take the opportunity to allow coterminosity [to be achieved] and to consider making any changes effective simultaneously with changes to county division boundaries”.

67 This is an issue which has arisen in a number of review areas. It is indicative of the tensions which can arise between the achievement of electoral equality within the individual districts of a county, each of whose electoral arrangements can vary significantly in terms of councillor:elector ratios and ward sizes, and across county council electoral divisions, while also seeking some measure of coterminosity between the two. These tensions are not readily reconciled.

68 In certain cases it has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe that ward patterns and sizes should be such that they would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be an approach the Commission should take. As a Commission, we rely heavily on local authorities and others to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved.

69 We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria and achieve a high level of electoral equality. Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and district wards is likely to be conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of county council electoral arrangements.

70 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. The

following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Stratford-upon-Avon town (four wards);
- (b) Claverdon, Henley, Snitterfield, Tanworth, Tanworth Earlswood and Wootton Wawen wards;
- (c) Alcester, Bidford, Kinwarton, Salford Priors, Sambourne and Studley wards;
- (d) Aston Cantlow, Bardon, Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford wards;
- (e) Burton Dassett, Harbury, Kineton, Moreton Morrell and Wellesbourne wards;
- (f) Farnborough, Long Itchington, Napton Priors and Southam wards; and
- (g) Brailes, Compton, Shipston and Vale of the Red Horse wards.

71 Details of our final recommendations are set

submitted at Stage One. We proposed an unchanged three-member Stratford Alveston ward (south of the river), new three-member wards of Stratford Avenue & New Town and Stratford Guild & Hathaway, and a new two-member Stratford Mount Pleasant ward. We were of the view that easily identifiable boundaries could be attained by these proposals, as well as a reasonable level of electoral equality by 2003.

75 Our proposals did not necessitate a substantial degree of change to the ward boundaries in the town. Under our draft proposals the wards of Stratford Alveston, Stratford Avenue & New Town, Stratford Guild & Hathaway and Stratford Mount Pleasant would initially vary from the district average by 14 per cent below, 3 per cent above, 7 per cent above and 8 per cent above. By 2003, and taking into account the projected housing development in Stratford Alveston ward, all of the proposed wards would vary by no more than 4 per cent from the district average.

76 At Stage Three our proposals for district council wards in the town were generally well received, with the Conservative Group and the Stratford & South Warwickshire Liberal Democrats supporting them in their entirety, while the Council supported three of the four proposed wards. The only real area of contention was in the suggested Stratford Alveston ward, which the Conservative Group and Councillor Hyde supported, but which the Council and Councillor Winterburn did not. The latter respondents suggested that the proposed three-member ward should instead be divided into a single-member ward and a two-member ward. In terms of electoral equality there is little to choose between the alternative proposals; under either scenario the level of electoral equality by 2003 would be reasonable (between 4 and 6 per cent from the district average).

77 The arguments in terms of community identities and interests were also inconclusive. Councillor Hyde, who represents the present Stratford Alveston ward, stated: "I do not agree that this ward should be split in two. I consider that the major issues faced by this ward are not geographically distinct and are shared by all the communities within it." Councillor Hyde submitted supporting evidence detailing how, in his view, the residents of south Stratford (the present Alveston ward) have a common interest in two particular issues, housing developments and traffic monitoring.

78 Councillor Winterburn stated that "the villages of Tiddington and Alveston are semi-rural settlements and ... still constitute an ecclesiastical parish with the church in Alveston village". It was also stated that the Bridgetown area of the ward was in a different ecclesiastical parish and that Banbury Road has been a boundary "for about a thousand years".

79 It seems clear that there is more than one identifiable community within the present Stratford Alveston ward, but that those communities share at least some common interests. Given that we are recommending multi-member wards in the rest of Stratford-upon-Avon, proposals which are supported by both the Council and the Conservative Group, we remain of the view, on balance, that the draft recommendation for a three-member Stratford Alveston ward is appropriate and should be confirmed as final. We acknowledge, however, that the area of the town to the south of the river has notable differences to the rest of the town.

80 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for district council ward boundaries in Stratford-upon-Avon town as final. Although a boundary issue was raised by a local councillor and two local residents relating to the Bishopton part of the town, we are unable to modify the external boundary of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon under the legislation governing this review. This is now a matter which the District Council can review under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997. We also received some comments on the suggested ward names, but as there was general support for our proposals from the Council and the Conservative Group, we are of the view that it would be inappropriate to alter the ward names in the town, without significant evidence of opposition to the proposed ward names.

81 The large map at the back of this report gives details of our final recommendations for the district council wards in the Stratford-upon-Avon town area. For details of our final recommendations regarding Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council's electoral arrangements, please see the section at the end of this chapter on page 31 of the report.

#### **Claverdon, Henley, Snitterfield, Tanworth, Tanworth Earlswood and Wootton Wawen wards**

82 Currently Henley ward returns two councillors, while the wards of Claverdon, Snitterfield,

Tanworth, Tanworth Earlswood and Wootton Wawen each return a single councillor. Henley ward comprises the parishes of Beaudesert, Henley-in-Arden and Ullenhall, Claverdon ward comprises the parishes of Claverdon, Langley, Preston Bagot and Wolverton, while Snitterfield ward comprises the parishes of Charlecote, Fulbrook, Hampton Lucy and Snitterfield. Tanworth and Tanworth Earlswood wards comprise the parish wards of Tanworth and Earlswood respectively (of Tanworth parish), while Wootton Wawen ward comprises the parishes of Bearley and Wootton Wawen.

83 The majority of wards in this area are over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor in Claverdon, Henley, Snitterfield, Tanworth and Tanworth Earlswood wards being 7 per cent, 7 per cent, 2 per cent, 21 per cent and 17 per cent below the district average respectively (13 per cent below, 12 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 25 per cent below and 19 per cent below by 2003). The number of electors per councillor in Wootton Wawen ward is presently 7 per cent above the district average, projected to be 1 per cent below the average by 2003.

84 We received schemes from the Council and the Conservative Group for this part of the district, as well as representations from two parish councils and a district councillor. As described in the draft recommendations report, we decided to put forward the Council's scheme for this part of the district as we believed it best met our criteria. The Council's scheme included a proposal for a new two-member Tanworth ward, comprising both parish wards of Tanworth parish (Tanworth and Earlswood), Ullenhall parish and the rural part of Beaudesert parish. This proposal was supported by the Conservative Group.

85 The Council's other proposals in this area were for a revised two-member Henley ward, comprising the parish of Henley-in-Arden, the 'town' part of Beaudesert parish, plus the parishes of Wootton Wawen and Preston Bagot; for a revised single-member Claverdon ward, comprising the parishes of Bearley, Claverdon and Langley; and for a revised single-member Snitterfield ward, comprising the parishes of Charlecote, Fulbrook, Hampton Lucy, Snitterfield and Wolverton. All the proposed wards in this north-western area of the district would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district by 2003.

86 At Stage Three this proved to be the most contentious area of the district, with a relatively large number of representations received, almost all opposing the draft recommendations. As described in Chapter 3, residents in both Earlswood (Tanworth parish) and Ullenhall opposed the draft recommendation for a two-member Tanworth ward, primarily on the grounds that the ward would be large in size and that Ullenhall in particular did not share links with the rest of the proposed ward. The Council and the Conservative Group, however, both continued to support the draft recommendation for the Tanworth ward.

87 There was considerable opposition to dividing the parish of Beaudesert between two different district wards. Respondents argued that the whole of the parish of Beaudesert shared very close links with the parish of Henley-in-Arden and that the two parishes (which form a joint parish council) should remain together in the same district ward. The Council and the Conservative Group both agreed that their initial proposal to divide Beaudesert parish between two district council wards should be dropped.

88 Wolverton Parish Council opposed the inclusion of Wolverton in a revised Snitterfield ward, preferring instead to remain in a ward with the parish of Claverdon. Preston Bagot Parish Meeting also preferred that Preston Bagot parish remain in Claverdon ward, stating that it had more in common with Claverdon than with Henley-in-Arden. Wootton Wawen Parish Council objected to the proposed change to its present ward, arguing that there was "no justification for change" to be made to its current ward. Bearley Parish Council also preferred that it remain in the present Wootton Wawen ward.

89 We have reviewed the draft recommendations in the light of the comments received during Stage Three. The proposal for a two-member Tanworth ward, while eliciting much opposition locally, is one where we believe there are few choices. Given the general acceptance of a 53-member council size for Stratford-upon-Avon district, the average number of electors per councillor by 2003 is forecast to be 1,821. The electorates of the present single-member Tanworth and Tanworth Earlswood wards are forecast to be 1,314 and 1,424 respectively by 2003, both more than 20 per cent below the district average under a 53-member council size. This is too high a level of electoral inequality for us to accept when alternatives are available.

90 Were we to place the two Tanworth parish wards together to form a new two-member district ward, substantial electoral inequality would remain; the ward would be some 25 per cent over-represented. The parish of Tanworth-in-Arden is too large, in terms of electorate, to merit one district councillor and too small to merit two. Therefore the parish needs to be placed with a neighbouring area to form a two-member ward of the appropriate size. Given the fact that the parish is surrounded on three sides by the district boundary, the options as to which area(s) are placed into the two-member Tanworth ward are very limited indeed.

91 For these reasons we are unable to reflect the views of those respondents from Earlswood and Ullenhall who opposed the inclusion of those areas in a two-member Tanworth ward. There are simply no realistic alternatives available that would secure reasonable electoral equality. However, we accept that the suggestion to include the rural part of Beaudesert parish within the proposed Tanworth ward, which was also strongly opposed locally, should be altered. The rural area of Beaudesert parish contains less than 150 electors, therefore reflecting the views of local respondents who commented on this issue, including the Council and the Conservative Group, would not cause a particularly significant deterioration in the level of electoral equality.

92 We are therefore confirming as final the broad thrust of our draft recommendations for the most north-western ward in the district, subject to the whole of Beaudesert parish being included within the proposed Henley ward (see also below). Under our final recommendations the proposed two-member Tanworth ward would comprise the parishes of Tanworth-in-Arden and Ullenhall, and would vary by 5 per cent below the average initially, 9 per cent below by 2003. We acknowledge that this final recommendation will not find favour among many of those who wrote to us regarding this area during Stage Three, but we believe that electoral imbalances in excess of 20 per cent must be avoided in district council periodic electoral reviews except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

93 With the modification described above, the revised two-member Henley ward would comprise the whole of the parish of Beaudesert, plus the parishes of Henley-in-Arden, Preston Bagot and Wootton Wawen. Such a ward would retain a

reasonable level of electoral equality; it would vary by 3 per cent above the average number of electors per councillor for the district by 2003. We acknowledge the views of Wootton Wawen Parish Council, which would prefer no change to the present warding arrangements, but with more than 1,100 electors in that parish, the level of electoral equality in the area would deteriorate markedly if it were excluded from the Henley ward.

94 However, the options for the parish of Preston Bagot, which only contains just over 100 electors, are somewhat more varied. The Chairman of Preston Bagot Parish Meeting contended that the local electorate of the parish opposed our draft recommendation to include the parish within a revised Henley ward. The submission stated that local residents have more in common with Claverdon than with Henley-in-Arden, and evidence of local affiliations (such as sporting and social links) was submitted.

95 If Preston Bagot parish was to be placed in a revised two-member Henley ward with the parishes of Henley-in-Arden, Beaudesert and Wootton Wawen, such a ward would vary by 9 per cent above the average initially, improving to 3 per cent by 2003. The revised single-member Claverdon ward, as put forward in the draft recommendations (i.e. excluding Preston Bagot), would vary by 7 per cent from the average initially, improving to 1 per cent by 2003. The case for placing Preston Bagot in a revised Henley ward, in terms of electoral equality, is therefore strong.

96 If Preston Bagot were instead placed in a revised single-member Claverdon ward (along with the parishes of Bearley, Claverdon and Langley) the revised ward would vary by 13 per cent above the average initially. However, such a ward is projected to improve to 6 per cent above the average by 2003. The 'loss' of Preston Bagot parish would marginally improve electoral equality in a revised two-member Henley ward, which would vary by 6 per cent above the average initially but would equal the average by 2003.

97 Taking all factors into account, we have been persuaded that a marginal deterioration in electoral equality in Claverdon ward, in comparison to the draft recommendations, is acceptable to facilitate better electoral equality in Henley ward and to better reflect the identities and interests of Preston Bagot parish. We therefore propose, as a final recommendation, that a revised two-member

Henley ward be established, comprising the parishes of Henley-in-Arden, Beaudesert and Wootton Wawen.

98 As described above, the addition of Preston Bagot parish to a revised Claverdon ward would result in reasonable electoral equality for that ward by 2003, although in the short term the ward would be marginally under-represented. While acknowledging the views of Bearley Parish Council, which preferred to remain in an unchanged Wootton Wawen ward, we note that the parish contains some 600 electors and are of the view that to move the parish from a revised Claverdon ward would cause unacceptable levels of electoral inequality. Additionally, as described above, we are placing Wootton Wawen parish in a revised Henley ward.

99 We also received the views of Wolverton Parish Council which argued that it should be retained within Claverdon ward rather than being placed in an enlarged Snitterfield ward. The parish contains some 200 electors and the Snitterfield ward would retain a reasonable level of electoral equality without the addition of Wolverton. However, we have stated above our reasons for including Preston Bagot parish within a revised Claverdon ward. If we were to additionally include Wolverton parish, the revised Claverdon ward would vary by 25 per cent above the average number of electors per councillor initially and 17 per cent above by 2003.

100 We are of the view that this is too high a level of electoral inequality to put forward as a final recommendation when a reasonable alternative is available. There was general acceptance of our draft proposals in this area, including from the Council and the Conservative Group, and in view of this we are confirming our draft recommendation for a revised Snitterfield ward (including Wolverton parish) as final. We are also confirming as our final recommendation that the revised Claverdon ward should comprise the parishes of Bearley, Claverdon, Langley and Preston Bagot.

#### **Alcester, Bidford, Kinwarton, Salford Priors, Sambourne and Studley wards**

101 Alcester ward comprises the parishes of Arrow and Weethley, and the Alcester and Oversley parish wards of Alcester parish. Studley ward comprises solely the Studley parish ward of the parish of the same name. Both district wards return three councillors. Bidford ward returns two councillors,

and comprises the parishes of Bidford-on-Avon and Wixford, while Kinwarton, Salford Priors and Sambourne wards each return a single councillor. Kinwarton ward comprises the parishes of Great Alne and Kinwarton, plus the Oversley Green parish ward of Alcester parish. Salford Priors ward comprises solely the parish of the same name, while Sambourne ward comprises the parishes of Coughton, Moreton Bagot, Oldberrow, Sambourne and Spennall, plus the Mappleborough Green parish ward of Studley parish.

102 The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Alcester, Bidford, Kinwarton, Salford Priors, Sambourne and Studley is 1 per cent below, 9 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 28 per cent below, 18 per cent below and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent above, 19 per cent above, 1 per cent above, 31 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2003).

103 As part of its Stage One scheme, the Council proposed modifications to the Alcester, Bidford and Salford Priors wards in order to improve electoral equality. It also proposed no change to the Kinwarton, Sambourne and Studley wards, as each of these would retain reasonable levels of electoral equality having regard to the five-year projections of electorate. We also received representations from the Conservative Group and Councillor Winterburn, both expressing support for the Council's proposals. Given the reasonable levels of electoral equality that would be attained and the general support from respondents, we put forward the Council's proposals for no change to the wards of Kinwarton, Sambourne and Studley.

104 However, we did not consider that community identities in the parish of Bidford-on-Avon would be best reflected under the proposals suggested by the Council, which had suggested dividing the parish and removing the Broom area from the current ward. We were of the view that the community of Broom shares strong ties with the remainder of the parish of Bidford-on-Avon and that separating the two communities between wards could have an adverse impact on community identities.

105 We therefore proposed that the parish of Salford Priors and the whole of Bidford-on-Avon parish (including Broom) should be combined to form a new three-member Bidford & Salford ward. Consequently, the present three-member Alcester

ward would remain unchanged. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bidford & Salford and Alcester wards would initially be 9 per cent below and 4 per cent below the district average respectively, projected to be 4 per cent below and 3 per cent above by 2003.

106 At Stage Three we received eight representations for this area. The Council generally supported our recommendations, as did the Conservative Group, three local councillors and three parish councils. The Council, the Conservative Group, Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council and Councillor Winterburn, district councillor for Bardon ward, all generally concurred with our proposal to combine Bidford and Salford Priors wards. Councillors Lisle and MacDonald (both district councillors for Bidford ward) and Wixford Parish Council supported this proposal and noted that the parishes of Bidford-on-Avon and Wixford share many common interests.

107 The Council, Wixford Parish Council and Councillors Lisle and MacDonald all suggested one amendment to our draft recommendations. They argued that Wixford parish should be placed in the proposed Bidford & Salford ward, rather than Bardon ward, on the grounds that Wixford identifies strongly with both Bidford and Salford. The Conservative Group also expressed a willingness to support this proposal. Wixford Parish Council stated that it had “very few cultural or social links” with the current Bardon ward. However, Councillor Winterburn supported placing Wixford in a single-member Bardon ward. Exhall Parish Council expressed no objection to our

proposal to place Wixford parish in Bardon ward, noting that Exhall and Wixford shared community ties.

108 We recognise the close community ties shared between the parishes of Wixford, Bidford and Salford and therefore accept the argument put forward by the District Council, Wixford Parish Council and Councillors Lisle and MacDonald, that Wixford parish should be added to the proposed Bidford & Salford ward. Given the local support, and that placing Wixford in a revised three-member Bidford & Salford ward would improve electoral equality in the ward, we are content to propose that Wixford be placed in that ward as part of our final recommendations.

109 Having received no further comments on this area, we are content, with the transfer of Wixford parish into a revised three-member Bidford & Salford ward, to confirm all our draft recommendations for this area of the district as final. The revised Bidford & Salford ward would have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 2 per cent fewer by 2003.

**Aston Cantlow, Bardon, Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford wards**

110 The constituent parishes, number of councillors and electoral variances in the wards of Aston Cantlow, Bardon, Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford are detailed below in Figure 4.

*Figure 4:  
The present Aston Cantlow, Bardon, Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford Wards*

| Present ward  | Number of councillors | Constituent parishes   | Electoral variance (%) |      |
|---------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------|------|
|               |                       |  | 1998                   | 2003 |
| Aston Cantlow | 1                     | Aston Cantlow, Billesley and Haselor   | -3                     | -8   |
| Bardon        | 1                     | Binton, Exhall, Luddington, Old Stratford & Drayton and Temple Grafton                   | -7                     | 5    |
| Ettington     | 1                     | Alderminster, Ettington and Loxley   | -18                    | -8   |
| Quinton       | 1                     | Admington, Atherstone on Stour, Preston on Stour, Quinton and Whitchurch                 | -3                     | -10  |
| Tredington    | 1                     | Ilmington, Stretton on Fosse and Tredington  | 26                     | 21   |
| Welford       | 1                     | Clifford Chambers, Dorsington, Milcote, Long Marston, Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon | 19                     | 17   |

111 During Stage One we received identical proposals for this area, which is predominantly to the west and south of Stratford-upon-Avon town, from both the Council and the Conservative Group. We endorsed the proposals for revised single-member Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford wards, as all four wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the district average number of electors per councillor both initially and by 2003. We were also of the view that these proposals would generally reflect community identities and interests.

112 The proposals were as follows: Ettington ward would be expanded to additionally include the parish of Halford (from the present Vale of the Red Horse ward); Quinton ward would lose the parish of Whitchurch but gain the parish of Long Marston; Tredington ward would lose the parish of Stretton on Fosse but gain the parish of Whitchurch; and Welford ward would lose the parish of Long Marston.

113 The Council also proposed at Stage One that the single-member Aston Cantlow and Bardon wards should remain generally unchanged, although it did propose that Wixford parish be transferred from Bidford ward to an expanded Bardon ward. However, although the proposals would result in reasonable electoral equality initially, we were concerned that the proposal for an unchanged Aston Cantlow ward would result in a projected imbalance of 11 per cent by 2003, under an overall council size of 53. We therefore proposed that the Council's single-member Aston Cantlow and Bardon wards be joined together to form a new two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward. The number of electors per councillor in this ward would be 5 per cent below the district average both initially and by 2003.

114 During Stage Three we received a number of representations relating to this area, most of which were in opposition to our proposed Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward. These representations are referred to later in this section. Additionally, we received comments on the electorate projections relating to both Bardon ward and Quinton and Welford wards. As explained above in the section on electorate projections (see paragraphs 54 to 56), as a result of the comments received we have decided to adjust the projected electorate figure for Bardon ward (Old Stratford & Drayton parish) to include an additional 135 electors by 2003.

115 Our other proposals in this area were generally well received. Both the Council and the Conservative Group endorsed our proposals for this area (not including Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward) in their entirety. With the exception of Whitchurch Parish Meeting, which expressed no strong views on our proposals, none of the parish councils from the proposed Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford wards wrote to us during Stage Three.

116 Two councillors commented on the perceived community identities of villages in this area and on local geography. County Councillor Gunter commented that the parish of Halford had more in common with Tredington and Shipston-on-Stour than Ettington, and that Halford should not therefore be included in the proposed Ettington ward. District Councillor Lockhart commented that the draft proposal which would transfer the parish of Long Marston from Welford ward to Quinton ward "has no geographical relationship as the busy B4632 [road] acts as a natural boundary between the two wards". She also commented on the lack of coterminosity that would result between district wards and county divisions under the draft recommendations.

117 While we acknowledge the views of Councillors Gunter and Lockhart, we do not propose altering the draft recommendations for the four wards of Ettington, Quinton, Tredington and Welford. With the support of both the Council and the Conservative Group, and with no objections received from any of the constituent parish councils, we remain of the view that the draft recommendations, which secure reasonable levels of electoral equality by 2003, are appropriate for this area. Transferring to different wards either the parish of Halford, which by 2003 will contain around 300 electors, or Long Marston, which will contain around 350 electors by that time, would result in unacceptably large levels of electoral inequality and would also affect the levels of electoral equality in neighbouring wards.

118 The proposed two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward was opposed by all respondents who commented on it. As described in more detail in Chapter 3, almost all the parish councils from this area objected to the proposal, on the grounds both that the ward would be large in geographic size and that the current single-member wards were effectively divided from one another by the main A46 road which runs between the towns of

Stratford-upon-Avon and Alcester. The Council, district councillors Lawrence and Winterburn and the Conservative Group all also opposed the creation of a two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward, the general view being that two single-member wards would be a better reflection of local community identities and interests.

119 We note this local preference, but remain concerned that the projected electoral variance for an unchanged single-member Aston Cantlow ward would be 11 per cent. No other proposed ward in the district has a projected (2003) electoral imbalance above 10 per cent. However, the local preference for two single-member wards appears to be widely held, and good reasons have been put forward for retaining single-member wards for this area. In particular, the Council informed us that it believed the average weekday traffic flow along the A46 road to be approaching 20,000 vehicles, and stated that the County Council's Department of Planning and Transport supports the need for this trunk road to become a dual carriageway in due course.

120 Taking local views into account, and bearing in mind that an electoral imbalance of 11 per cent by 2003, while undesirable, only equates in a single-member ward to a deviation of around 200 electors, we have been persuaded that the draft proposal for a two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward should be amended. We propose as a final recommendation that the single-member Aston Cantlow ward, comprising the parishes of Aston Cantlow, Billesley and Haselor, be retained. The ward would vary by 6 per cent below the average initially and 11 per cent below by 2003. We are prepared to accept such an imbalance given the particular nature of this area.

121 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that the parish of Wixford, presently part of Bidford ward, be transferred to the proposed two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward. As argued earlier in this report in relation to the Bidford and Salford areas, we propose as a final recommendation that Wixford instead form part of a three-member Bidford & Salford ward. This means that, with the Aston Cantlow and Bardon wards reverting to being single-member wards, the composition of Bardon ward would be unchanged from the present situation, if no other changes were made.

122 We considered whether Exhall parish (containing 170 electors) might be better placed in the

proposed three-member Bidford & Salford ward, since Exhall Parish Council stated that it shares close ties with the parish of Wixford. However, taking into account the revised projected electorate figures for Bardon ward, if that ward were to exclude Exhall it would vary by 20 per cent below the district average number of electors per councillor initially, although it would improve to being 9 per cent below the average by 2003. Transferring Exhall into Bidford & Salford ward would have relatively little impact on electoral equality in that ward.

123 As the parishes of Exhall and Wixford are already in separate district wards, and as transferring Exhall from a single-member Bardon ward would result in a substantial deterioration in electoral equality in that ward, we are unable to agree to Exhall Parish Council's preference for the parish to be in the same ward as Wixford. An unchanged single-member Bardon ward, comprising the parishes of Binton, Exhall, Luddington, Old Stratford & Drayton and Temple Grafton, would vary by 10 per cent below the average initially but would improve to just 1 per cent above it by 2003. Given the support of the Council and others for this proposal, we are confirming it as a final recommendation.

#### **Burton Dassett, Harbury, Kineton, Moreton Morrell and Wellesbourne wards**

124 Presently Harbury ward returns three councillors, Wellesbourne ward returns two councillors and Burton Dassett, Kineton and Moreton Morrell wards each return a single councillor. Harbury ward comprises the parishes of Bishop's Itchington, Chesterton & Kingston, Harbury, Lighthorne and Ufton, while Wellesbourne and Kineton wards comprise solely the parishes of those names. Burton Dassett ward comprises the parishes of Burton Dassett, Chadshunt, Gaydon and Radway, and Moreton Morrell ward comprises the parishes of Combrook, Compton Verney, Moreton Morrell and Newbold Pacey.

125 There is a substantial degree of electoral inequality in this area, with the number of electors per councillor in Burton Dassett, Harbury, Kineton and Wellesbourne wards being 20 per cent below, 2 per cent above, 10 per cent above and 29 per cent above the district average respectively, projected to be 20 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 6 per cent above and 35 per cent above the average by 2003. Moreton Morrell ward currently has the highest level of electoral imbalance in the district, with the

number of electors per councillor at 41 per cent below the district average initially, projected to worsen to 43 per cent below by 2003.

<sup>126</sup> We received schemes from both the Council and the Conservative Group relating to this area during Stage One, plus representations from a councillor, two parish councils and a local resident. As described in our draft recommendations report, we decided to put forward the Conservative Group's scheme for this area with one relatively minor modification. We were of the view that the Group's proposals generally provided for improved electoral equality while reflecting local community identities. We also noted that under these proposals the M40 motorway, which has been built in this area since the last electoral review, would generally be acknowledged as the boundary between communities that it has become in this part of the district.

<sup>127</sup> Our draft proposals were as follows: a revised two-member Harbury ward, comprising the parishes of Bishop's Itchington and Harbury; a new two-member Kineton ward, comprising the parishes of Chadshunt, Chesterton & Kingston, Combroom, Compton Verney, Gaydon, Kineton and Lighthorne; and a revised three-member Wellesbourne ward, comprising the parishes of Moreton Morrell, Newbold Pacey and Wellesbourne. As discussed later in this chapter, the parish of Ufton would be transferred into an enlarged single-member Long Itchington ward, while the parishes of Burton Dassett and Radway would form part of a revised single-member Burton Dassett ward.

<sup>128</sup> Under our draft recommendations the three proposed wards of Harbury, Kineton and Wellesbourne would vary by 9 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent below the district average number of electors per councillor respectively, projected to be 5 per cent above, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent above the average by 2003.

<sup>129</sup> During Stage Three we received representations relating to this area from the Council, the Conservative Group, five parish councils and three local residents. The Council and the Conservative Group both supported the draft proposals for this area in their entirety. Wellesbourne Parish Council stated that, while it recognised that it may be necessary for the parish to be linked with neighbouring parishes for electoral purposes, it would prefer for the parish to form a ward with Charlecote parish and not Moreton Morrell.

<sup>130</sup> A local resident, while noting the need for Wellesbourne to be linked to neighbouring parishes to improve electoral equality, also preferred that it be linked with Charlecote parish rather than Moreton Morrell. Another resident argued that Wellesbourne should remain in a ward by itself. A further resident argued that Moreton Morrell and Newbold Pacey should not be included with Wellesbourne and should alternatively be included in a ward with Lighthorne parish.

<sup>131</sup> Under a council size of 53, Wellesbourne parish, which has a projected electorate of around 4,750 by 2003, would merit around 2.6 councillors on its own. Clearly, it is too big to be allocated two councillors and too small to be allocated three, so placing it with neighbouring, more rural parishes is the only realistic option to attain a reasonable level of electoral equality. The draft proposal, to include the parishes of Moreton Morrell and Newbold Pacey with Wellesbourne, is in our view a suitable one as the parishes share reasonable communication links and have the Fosse Way road as their common eastern boundary.

<sup>132</sup> While we accept that the parish of Charlecote may be a more natural partner for Wellesbourne in terms of district warding arrangements, we are content that Charlecote should remain in a revised Snitterfield ward as there was support for this proposal locally and its removal from that ward would worsen electoral equality, albeit marginally. Given the support of the Council and the Conservative Group for our draft proposal, and as changes to the configuration of wards in this area would have a substantial effect on the levels of electoral equality in neighbouring wards, we are content to confirm our draft recommendation for Wellesbourne ward as final.

<sup>133</sup> Our proposal for a revised two-member Kineton ward was specifically supported by both the Conservative Group and Gaydon Parish Council. However, Chesterton & Kingston Parish Council and Harbury Parish Council both argued that the parish of Chesterton & Kingston should be included in a revised Harbury ward rather than Kineton ward, contending that the two parishes share many links. We also received a petition from a resident of Chesterton & Kingston parish, arguing that around half the local electorate had indicated opposition to the draft proposal and that the local preference was to retain Chesterton & Kingston in a ward with Harbury.

134 Bishop's Itchington Parish Council proposed that, rather than being placed in a two-member ward with Harbury, Bishop's Itchington parish should form its own single-member ward. The parish, with a projected electorate of just over 1,750 by 2003, is around the right size for a single-member ward; it would vary by 4 per cent below the district-wide average number of electors per councillor by that time, assuming a 53-member council size. However, the problem is that Harbury parish, which is projected to contain 2,077 electors by 2003, would vary by some 14 per cent above the average by that time if it formed a single-member ward on its own boundaries. Additionally, the options for Harbury are somewhat limited given its geographic position abutting the district boundary.

135 Taking the above factors into account, we have not been persuaded that Bishop's Itchington should form a single-member ward on its own boundaries; the resultant levels of electoral inequality in neighbouring wards would be too great. Having reviewed the draft proposals in the light of the submissions received, however, we are now of the view that the parish of Chesterton & Kingston should indeed be placed in a ward with Harbury. The two areas clearly share close ties, and we were persuaded in particular that the M40 motorway and the B4100 road (formerly the A41) separate this area from Lighthorne and other parishes in the proposed Kineton ward.

136 The effect of transferring Chesterton & Kingston parish from the proposed Kineton ward to the proposed Harbury ward is reasonably small. Under the draft recommendations the Harbury and Kineton wards would respectively vary by 9 per cent and 4 per cent above the average number of electors per councillor, becoming 5 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2003. If Chesterton & Kingston parish were placed within Harbury ward, the ward would vary by 12 per cent above the average initially, but would improve to 8 per cent above by 2003. The revised Kineton ward would vary by 1 per cent above the average initially, 4 per cent below by 2003.

137 We are therefore proposing the establishment of a two-member Kineton ward as part of our final recommendations. The ward would vary from the draft recommendations except that it would exclude the parish of Chesterton & Kingston. As covered more fully in the next section, we also considered whether the parish of Ufton, which

under our draft proposals would be placed in an expanded Long Itchington ward, should instead be transferred to Harbury ward. However, the level of electoral imbalance in Harbury ward would, in our view, be too great under such a proposal. We are therefore putting forward as a final recommendation that a new two-member Harbury ward be established, comprising the parishes of Bishop's Itchington, Chesterton & Kingston and Harbury.

138 Lighthorne Parish Council and some residents of the parish requested that parish wards be established for the parish council, a request which was not directly related to the proposed district council wards in the area. For full details of the proposals for parish wards in Lighthorne parish, please refer to the section on parish and town council electoral arrangements at the end of this chapter.

### **Farnborough, Long Itchington, Napton Priors and Southam wards**

139 Currently Southam ward returns three councillors and the wards of Farnborough, Long Itchington and Napton Priors return a single councillor each. Farnborough ward comprises the parishes of Avon Dassett, Farnborough, Fenny Compton, Ratley & Upton, Shotteswell and Warmington. Long Itchington ward comprises solely the parish of the same name, while Napton Priors ward comprises the parishes of Napton on the Hill, Priors Hardwick, Priors Marston and Upper & Lower Shuckburgh. Southam ward comprises the parishes of Chapel Ascote, Hodnell & Wills Pastures, Ladbroke, Radbourn, Southam, Stockton, Stoneton, Watergall and Wormleighton.

140 The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Farnborough, Long Itchington, Napton Priors and Southam is 8 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 15 per cent below and 28 per cent above the district average respectively, projected to be 2 per cent above, 2 per cent below, 17 per cent below and 30 per cent above the average by 2003.

141 During Stage One the Council proposed a reconfiguration of wards in this area in order to improve electoral equality. It proposed modifications to all wards in the area, except the present single-member Long Itchington ward. Under the Council's proposals the parishes of Ratley & Upton, Shotteswell and Warmington would be transferred from the current Farnborough ward into a revised Burton Dassett ward (as mentioned

earlier). The parishes of Burton Dassett and Radway would also be included in this ward. The Council also proposed a revised three-member Southam ward, comprising solely the parish of the same name.

142 In the remainder of this area the Council proposed creating two new single-member wards. A new Fenny Compton ward was proposed, consisting of the parishes of Avon Dassett, Farnborough, Fenny Compton, Priors Hardwick, Priors Marston, Chapel Ascote, Hodnell & Wills Pastures, Ladbroke, Radbourn, Stoneton, Watergall and Wormleighton. A new Stockton ward was also proposed, comprising the parishes of Napton on the Hill, Upper & Lower Shuckburgh and Stockton.

143 The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Burton Dassett, Fenny Compton, Long Itchington, Southam and Stockton wards would initially be 1 per cent above, 12 per cent above, equal to the average, 3 per cent below and 7 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent below, 7 per cent above, 5 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 8 per cent above by 2003). We also received representations from the Conservative Group, Councillor Winterburn and the Southam branch of the Conservative Party. The Conservative Group generally supported the Council's proposed wards.

144 We concluded that the Council's proposals for this area reflected local community interests, without adversely affecting the statutory criteria, and therefore we were content to adopt these proposals as part of our draft recommendations, with one amendment. As a consequence of adopting the Conservative Group's proposals for wards to the west of Long Itchington parish, it was necessary for us to revise slightly the Council's proposed Long Itchington ward to include the parish of Ufton. The number of electors per councillor in our expanded Long Itchington ward would initially be 12 per cent above the district average, improving to 6 per cent by 2003.

145 At Stage Three we received seven representations for this area. The District Council supported our draft recommendations in full. The Conservative Group also supported our proposals with one exception. It argued that our proposed Stockton ward, which covers the parish of Stockton and part of the present Napton ward, should be renamed Stockton & Napton ward. It

argued that "both communities are prominent and have distinct cultural differences".

146 Stockton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations as they affected its parish. It argued that it shared "minimal social and political links" with the other parishes in the proposed single-member Stockton ward. It stated that it had developed strong links with Southam and that "the interests of this community are best reflected by the current three-member ward of Southam". Southam Town Council supported our proposed changes to Southam ward, arguing that it would "greatly help to provide equality of representation". Ufton Parish Council objected to our proposal to include it in an expanded Long Itchington ward, on the grounds that it viewed Long Itchington and Ufton as being "remote from each other". It also argued that the parishes of Ufton and Harbury were "closely linked socially and geographically".

147 County Councillor Gunter expressed concern over the size of our proposed Fenny Compton ward, but suggested no alternative. Radway Parish Council argued that it would be less effectively represented in the modified Burton Dassett ward, because councillors would need to travel "longer distances to serve fewer people". It also suggested that our criterion of basing recommendations on councillor:elector ratios was biased against rural areas.

148 Our draft recommendations would provide a good level of electoral equality for Fenny Compton and Burton Dassett wards. We are obliged to have regard to the statutory criteria (as stated earlier) and no specific alternative schemes for these two wards were suggested. Therefore, having received no further representations, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Fenny Compton and Burton Dassett wards as final.

149 We recognise that Stockton parish appears to share some community ties with Southam. However, this parish is projected to contain over 1,000 electors by 2003 and would therefore contain over half of the electorate of the proposed Stockton ward. It is therefore not practicable to remove this parish from the proposed Stockton ward. We also recognise that Ufton parish appears to be closely linked to Harbury and that placing Ufton in Harbury ward would have relatively little effect on the level of electoral equality in Long Itchington ward.

150 However, as argued earlier, we are of the view that Chesterton & Kingston parish should be added to Harbury ward. If we also recommended placing Ufton parish in a revised Harbury ward, the ward would be under-represented by 18 per cent initially, and 14 per cent by 2003. We are not persuaded that such a large electoral imbalance is justifiable in this case. Therefore, having received no further representations relating to the boundaries of Stockton, Southam or Long Itchington wards, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

151 We are persuaded by the argument put forward by the Conservative Group that the proposed Stockton ward should be renamed Stockton & Napton. We accept that this name would better reflect the composition of the ward and therefore propose amending our draft recommendations to name the new ward Stockton & Napton.

### **Brailes, Compton, Shipston and Vale of the Red Horse wards**

152 Presently Shipston ward returns two councillors and Brailes, Compton and Vale of the Red Horse wards each return a single councillor. Brailes ward comprises the parishes of Brailes, Barcheston, Burmington, Cherington, Honington, Stourton, Sutton-under-Brailes and Tidmington. Compton ward comprises the parishes of Barton-on-the-Heath, Great Wolford, Little Compton, Long Compton, Little Wolford and Whichford, while Shipston ward comprises solely the parish of Shipston on Stour. Vale of the Red Horse ward comprises the parishes of Butlers Marston, Compton Wynyates, Halford, Idlicote, Oxhill, Pillerton Hersey, Pillerton Priors, Tysoe and Whatcote.

153 The number of electors per councillor in Brailes, Compton, Shipston and Vale of the Red Horse wards is 1 per cent above, 16 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 32 per cent above the district average respectively, projected to be 2 per cent below, 16 per cent below, 8 per cent above and 29 per cent above the average by 2003.

154 During Stage One the Council proposed a reconfiguration of wards in this area in order to improve electoral equality while reflecting local community identities. The Council proposed some significant modifications in this area, affecting all wards except the present two-member Shipston ward. It suggested that a new ward comprising the

whole of the present Compton ward plus the parishes of Cherington and Stourton (from the present Brailes ward) should be established and named Long Compton. It further suggested that a modified Vale of the Red Horse ward (the present ward less the parishes of Halford and Idlicote) be renamed Tysoe ward. Halford parish is discussed in relation to Ettington ward (as described earlier).

155 Finally in this area, the Council proposed that Brailes ward be reconfigured, losing the parishes of Cherington and Stourton (as described above) but gaining the parishes of Idlicote (from Vale of the Red Horse ward) and Stretton-on-Fosse (from Tredington ward). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Brailes, Long Compton, Shipston and Tysoe wards would initially be 3 per cent above, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 7 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent below, equal to the average, 4 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2003).

156 The Conservative Group supported the Council's proposals in this area. We considered that the proposals would provide for improved levels of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria, and were content to adopt them as part of our draft recommendations.

157 At Stage Three we received seven representations relating to this area. The Council supported our draft recommendations in full. The Conservative Group and Councillor Pilkington, district councillor for Vale of the Red Horse ward, accepted our recommendations with one exception. They argued that the proposed Tysoe ward, which would cover the majority of the present Vale of the Red Horse ward, should retain its original name because it is preferred locally. The Conservative Group noted that the ward would contain a "number of similarly sized villages whose people would resent a new ward being called Tysoe". Councillor Pilkington echoed these views and argued that all the parts of the current ward, except Halford and Idlicote parishes (which it was proposed should be removed from the ward), are "in what is the vale of the red horse".

158 County Councillor Gunter preferred that the modified Vale of the Red Horse ward retain its current name, and also argued that the suggested changes in this area had been proposed "without too much thought being give to natural communities". She suggested placing the village of Ratley in the Vale of the Red Horse ward, rather

than in Burton Dassett ward. She also argued that Pillerton Priors and Pillerton Hersey parishes and Butlers Marston parish should be removed from the proposed Tysoe ward and be placed instead in Ettington ward and Kineton ward respectively. Finally, County Councillor Gunter opposed Halford parish being moved into Ettington ward from Vale of the Red Horse ward, believing it had “stronger connections” with other neighbouring villages.

<sup>159</sup> Brailes Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations insofar as they affected its ward. It opposed the inclusion of Stretton-on-Fosse parish in a revised Brailes ward, preferring instead that Cherington and Stourton parishes remain in the ward. It argued that it had “nothing in common with Stretton-on-Fosse”, but shared “very close ties with Cherington, Stourton and Sutton-under-Brailes”. Cherington & Stourton Joint Parish Council echoed this view and argued that it had “successful council and social links with Brailes”, but none with Compton. Little Compton Parish Council supported our draft recommendation for a new Long Compton ward.

<sup>160</sup> We recognise the close community ties shared between the parishes of Brailes, Cherington, Stourton and Sutton-under-Brailes and also recognise that the current Brailes ward has a good level of electoral equality. However, the neighbouring Compton ward is currently over-represented to a significant degree and this can only be rectified by adjusting its northern or western boundaries, given that it abuts the county boundary to the south and east. Transferring the parishes of Cherington and Stourton from the present Brailes ward is one way to rectify this imbalance.

<sup>161</sup> The proposals in this area were supported by both the District Council and the Conservative Group during Stage Three, and no alternative proposals to address the current levels of electoral inequality came forward during the consultation period. We are therefore of the view that the draft recommendations for a revised Brailes ward and a new Long Compton ward should be confirmed as final.

<sup>162</sup> We considered that the comments of County Councillor Gunter, relating to the area in the vicinity of the current Vale of the Red Horse ward, had some merit in terms of reflecting community ties in the area. However, our draft recommendations

would provide good levels of electoral equality for this area and the District Council, the Conservative Group and District Councillor Pilkington all concurred with our proposed warding arrangements for the suggested Tysoe ward. Having received no further representations relating to the boundaries of this ward or Shipston ward, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for the boundaries of these two wards as final.

<sup>163</sup> Given the arguments put forward at Stage Three by the Conservative Group and councillors Pilkington and Gunter, we have been persuaded that the proposed Tysoe ward, which covers the majority of the present Vale of the Red Horse ward, should revert to the current ward name. As we have received no specific support for the ward being named Tysoe, we are content that the existing ward name has stronger local ties and would be more appropriate. We therefore propose amending our draft recommendation to reflect this local preference.

## Electoral Cycle

<sup>164</sup> We received no substantive comments on this issue during Stage Three. Given this, we propose no change to the current electoral cycle of elections by thirds for the District Council.

## Conclusions

<sup>165</sup> 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:

- (a) Beaudesert parish should remain unwarded, and the whole parish should form part of the proposed Henley district ward;
- (b) the parish of Wixford should be transferred from the proposed Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward into the proposed Bidford & Salford ward;
- (c) the proposed two-member Aston Cantlow & Bardon ward (less Wixford parish) should be divided into two single-member wards so that the existing single-member wards of Aston Cantlow and Bardon are retained;
- (d) the parish of Chesterton & Kingston should be transferred from the proposed Kineton ward into the proposed Harbury ward;

- (e) the parish of Preston Bagot should be transferred from the proposed Henley ward into the proposed Claverdon ward;
- (f) two ward names should be amended, such that the proposed Tysoe ward would be named Vale of the Red Horse and the proposed Stockton ward would be named Stockton & Napton.

166 We conclude that, in Stratford on Avon district:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 55 to 53;
- (b) there should be 31 wards, four fewer than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

167 Figure 5 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

168 As Figure 5 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 18 to six, with only one ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further by 2003, with only one ward,

Aston Cantlow, projected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 11 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

### Final Recommendation

Stratford on Avon District Council should comprise 53 councillors serving 31 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

169 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Stratford-upon-Avon town and Beaudesert parish.

*Figure 5:  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

|  | 1998 electorate      |                       | 2003 forecast electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements     | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors  | 55                   | 53                    | 55                       | 53                    |
| Number of wards  | 35                   | 31                    | 35                       | 31                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                              | 1,628                | 1,690                 | 1,755                    | 1,821                 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 18                   | 6                     | 18                       | 1                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 9                    | 1                     | 8                        | 0                     |

170 In relation to Beaudesert parish, the draft recommendation to create parish wards was put forward to facilitate potential district council warding arrangements in this area. Given that as part of our final recommendations the whole of Beaudesert parish would form part of Henley district ward, the need for creating parish wards in Beaudesert no longer applies. Accordingly, we are not proposing any change to the present electoral arrangements of Beaudesert Parish Council as part of our final recommendations.

171 In Stratford-upon-Avon town, we proposed consequential changes to the town council warding arrangements in the light of our draft proposals for district council wards. We also proposed an increase in the overall number of town councillors, from 16 to 18. During Stage Three, we received a number of comments on our proposals, although Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council expressed no strong views.

172 Councillor Winterburn commented that three of the district council wards in the town could each be divided approximately in half for town council purposes, so that the wards could be more “local” for town council elections. Town Councillors Lloyd and Seaman also proposed that the town council wards should generally be smaller than the district council wards. This view was also put forward by the Stratford-upon-Avon town branch of the Stratford & South Warwickshire Liberal Democrats, which believed that “five-member wards [for the town council] would be too large ... and could work against the democratic process by deterring possible candidates from putting themselves forward for election”. The Liberal Democrats concurred with our proposal to increase the size of the town council from 16 to 18 members.

173 Both Councillor Winterburn and the Stratford & South Warwickshire Liberal Democrats put forward specific proposals for smaller town council wards, including potential ward names, although the proposals differed from one another. However, no proposals were put forward by either Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council or the District Council for alternative town council warding arrangements. We are of the view that in the absence of support from such sources we should not substantially alter the proposed town council electoral arrangements at this stage of our review, particularly as there appears to be no local consensus as to what any changes should be.

174 We are of the view that if a widespread desire to subdivide the town council wards into smaller electoral areas does emerge, the District Council should consult locally, particularly with the Town Council, and use its powers under the 1997 Local Government and Rating Act to propose such changes to the Secretary of State. In this review, therefore, we are confirming our draft recommendations for town council electoral arrangements in Stratford-upon-Avon as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, two more than at present, representing four wards: Stratford Alveston, Stratford Avenue & New Town, Stratford Guild & Hathaway and Stratford Mount Pleasant. Stratford Alveston, Stratford Avenue & New Town and Stratford Guild & Hathaway wards should each return five town councillors, and Stratford Mount Pleasant ward should return three town councillors. The town ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

175 During Stage Three a local resident proposed that the parish of Lighthorne be divided into two parish wards for parish council electoral purposes and that the overall number of parish councillors be increased, from seven to nine. The resident proposed a new Lighthorne parish ward, returning four parish councillors, and a new Lighthorne Heath parish ward, returning five parish councillors. Lighthorne Parish Council and two other local residents supported the proposal to establish parish wards, but proposed that the parish council continue to be served by seven parish councillors. Lighthorne Parish Council proposed that a Lighthorne parish ward should return three parish councillors and that a Lighthorne Heath parish ward should return four parish councillors.

176 No further comments on this issue were received. As there appears to be some local consensus that the parish be warded for parish council electoral purposes, we concur with this proposal. We understand from Lighthorne Parish Council’s submission that its preference to maintain seven parish councillors overall represents the views of many residents in both proposed

parish wards. We concur with this view, and we are not persuaded that a sufficient case has been put forward to increase the number of parish councillors from seven to nine.

177 We therefore propose that the parish of Lighthorne be divided into two parish wards, with a new Lighthorne parish ward returning three parish councillors and a new Lighthorne Heath parish ward returning four parish councillors. The proposed boundary between the two parish wards is detailed on Map A2 in Appendix A.

### **Final Recommendation**

Lighthorne Parish Council should be divided into two new parish wards and should continue to be served overall by seven parish councillors. A new Lighthorne parish ward should return three parish councillors and a new Lighthorne Heath parish ward should return four parish councillors. Details of the proposed parish ward boundary are shown on Map A2 in Appendix A.

178 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district, and we 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 Stratford on Avon



*continued overleaf*

Map 2 (continued):  
 The Commission's Final Recommendations for Stratford on Avon



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## 6. NEXT STEPS

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

180 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 earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

181 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 Stratford on Avon: Detailed Mapping

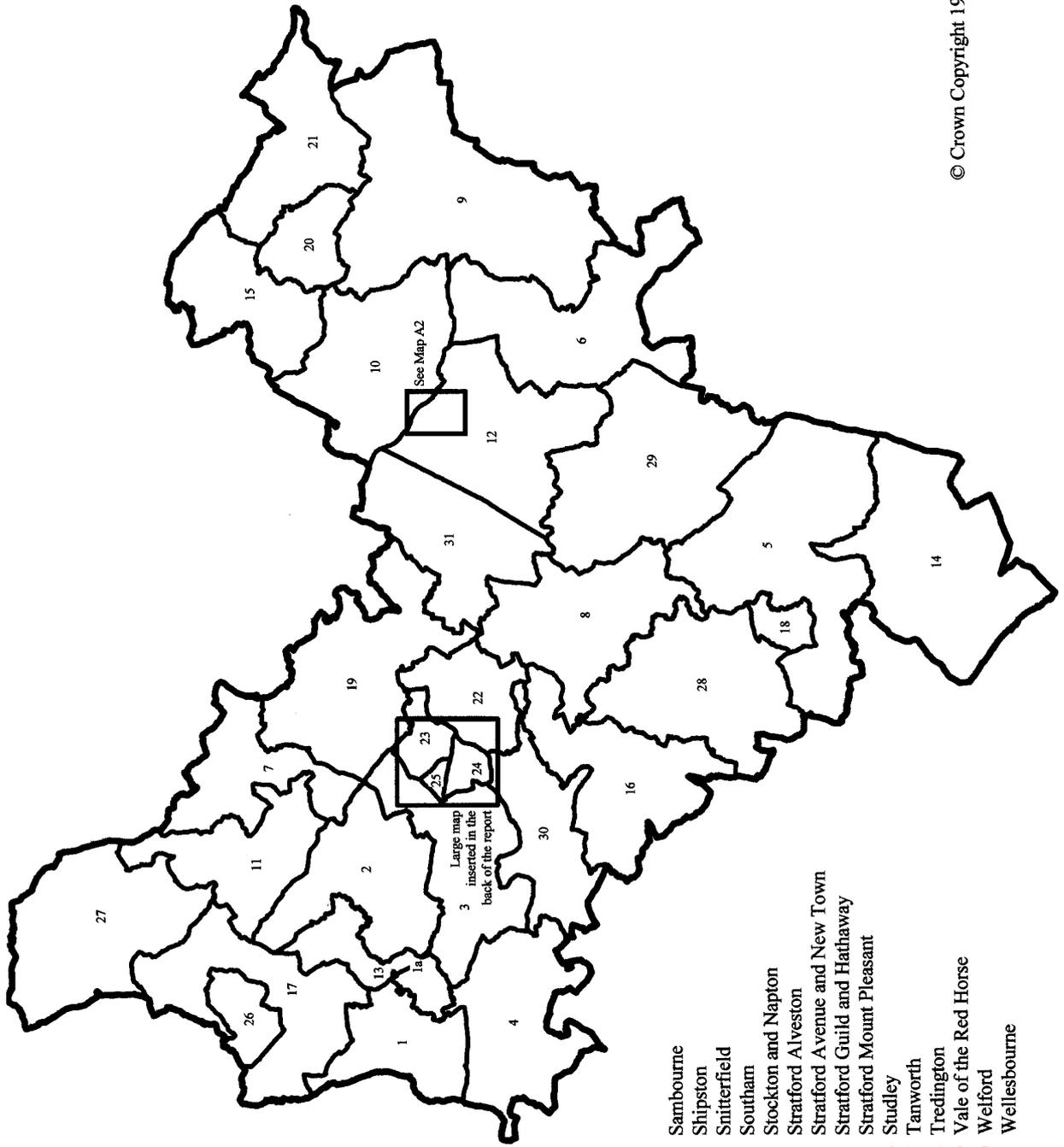
The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Stratford on Avon area.

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Lighthorne parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Stratford-upon-Avon town.

Map A1:  
 Final Recommendations for Stratford on Avon: Key Map

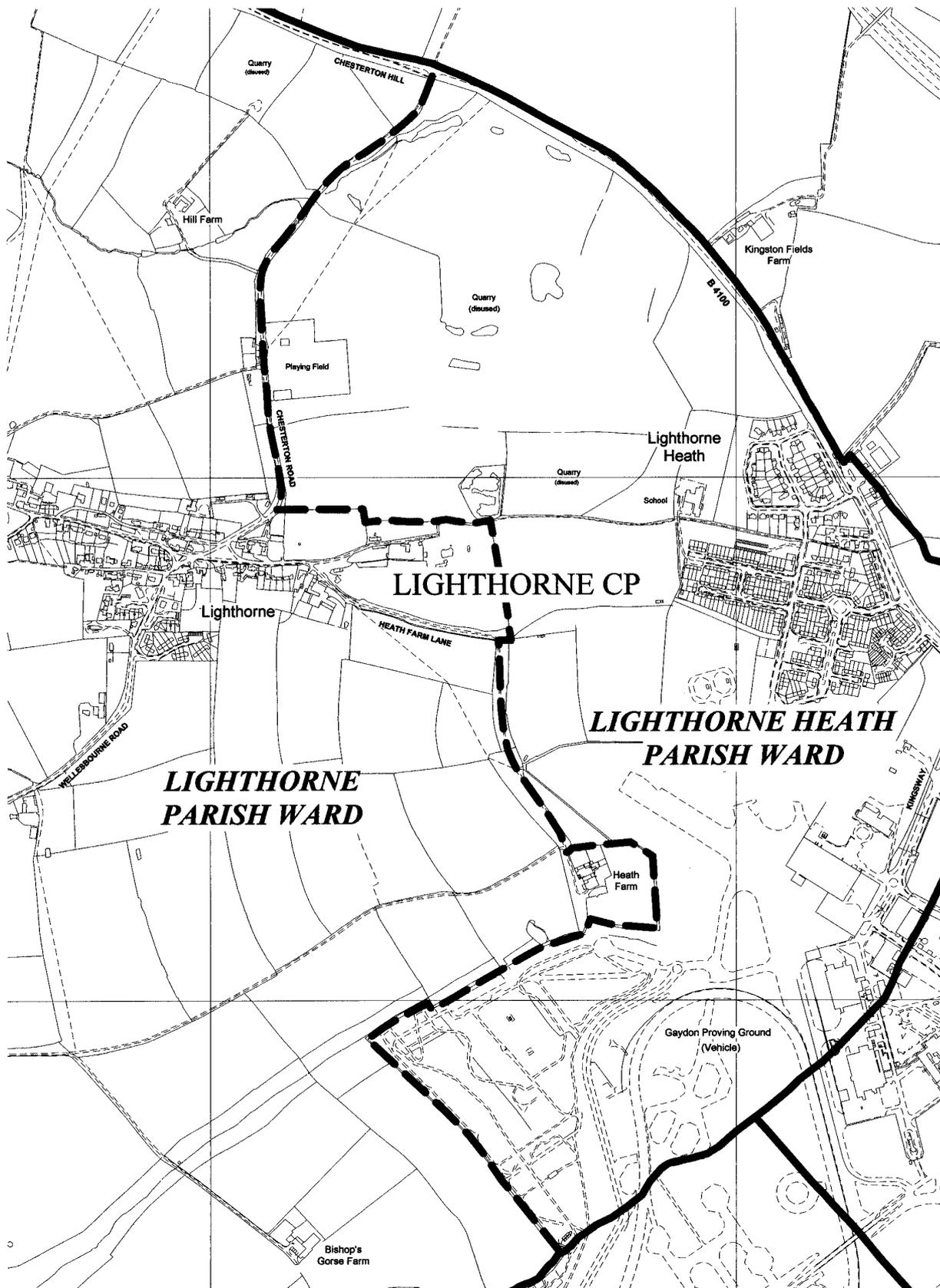


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Key to Wards

- |    |                     |    |                               |
|----|---------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Alcester            | 17 | Sambourne                     |
| 1a | Alcester (Det)      | 18 | Shipston                      |
| 2  | Aston Cantflow      | 19 | Snitterfield                  |
| 3  | Bardon              | 20 | Southern                      |
| 4  | Bidford and Salford | 21 | Stockton and Napton           |
| 5  | Brailes             | 22 | Stratford Alveston            |
| 6  | Burton Dassett      | 23 | Stratford Avenue and New Town |
| 7  | Claverdon           | 24 | Stratford Guild and Hathaway  |
| 8  | Ettington           | 25 | Stratford Mount Pleasant      |
| 9  | Fenny Compton       | 26 | Studley                       |
| 10 | Harbury             | 27 | Tanworth                      |
| 11 | Henley              | 28 | Tredington                    |
| 12 | Kineton             | 29 | Vale of the Red Horse         |
| 13 | Kinwarton           | 30 | Welford                       |
| 14 | Long Compton        | 31 | Wellesbourne                  |
| 15 | Long Itchington     |    |                               |
| 16 | Quinton             |    |                               |

Map A2:  
The Proposed Warding of Lighthorne Parish



|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>KEY</b>                    |                               |
| EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY      |                               |
| PROPOSED PARISH WARD BOUNDARY |                               |
| PROPOSED PARISH WARD NAME     | <b>LIGHTHORNE PARISH WARD</b> |

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# APPENDIX B

## Draft Recommendations for Stratford on Avon

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 changes from draft to final recommendations, which are not included in Figures B1 and B2, are that we propose renaming Tysoe ward as Vale of the Red Horse, and renaming Stockton ward as Stockton & Napton.

*Figure B1:  
Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

| <b>Ward name</b>       | <b>Constituent areas (existing wards)<br/>councillors</b>  |
|------------------------|--|
| Aston Cantlow & Bardon | Aston Cantlow ward (the parishes of Aston Cantlow, Billesley and Haselor); Bardon ward (the parishes of Binton, Exhall, Luddington, Old Stratford & Drayton and Temple Grafton); Bidford-on-Avon ward (part – the parish of Wixford)                           |
| Bidford & Salford      | Bidford ward (part – the parish of Bidford-on-Avon); Salford Priors ward (the parish of Salford Priors)  |
| Claverdon              | Claverdon ward (part – the parishes of Claverdon and Langley); Wootton Wawen ward (part – the parish of Bearley)   |
| Harbury                | Harbury ward (part – the parishes of Bishop’s Itchington and Harbury)  |
| Henley                 | Claverdon ward (part – the parish of Preston Bagot); Henley ward (part – the parish of Henley-in-Arden and part of the parish of Beaudesert); Wootton Wawen ward (part – the parish of Wootton Wawen)  |
| Kineton                | Burton Dassett ward (part – the parishes of Chadshunt and Gaydon); Harbury ward (part – the parishes of Chesterton & Kingston and Lighthorne); Kineton ward (the parish of Kineton); Moreton Morrell ward (part – the parishes of Combrook and Compton Verney) |
| Tanworth               | Henley ward (part – the parish of Ullenhall and part of the parish of Beaudesert); Tanworth ward (Tanworth parish ward of Tanworth parish); Tanworth Earlswood ward (Earlswood parish ward of Tanworth parish)   |

Figure B2:

*Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

| Ward name              | Number of councillors | Electorate (1998) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2003) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aston Cantlow & Bardon | 2                     | 3,213             | 1,607                             | -5                      | 3,448             | 1,724                             | -5                      |
| Bidford & Salford      | 3                     | 4,597             | 1,532                             | -9                      | 5,250             | 1,750                             | -4                      |
| Claverdon              | 1                     | 1,802             | 1,802                             | 7                       | 1,809             | 1,809                             | -1                      |
| Harbury                | 2                     | 3,697             | 1,849                             | 9                       | 3,832             | 1,916                             | 5                       |
| Henley                 | 2                     | 3,553             | 1,777                             | 5                       | 3,613             | 1,807                             | -1                      |
| Kineton                | 2                     | 3,514             | 1,757                             | 4                       | 3,605             | 1,803                             | -1                      |
| Tanworth               | 2                     | 3,365             | 1,683                             | 0                       | 3,467             | 1,734                             | -5                      |

Source: Electorate figures are based on Stratford on Avon District Council's Stage One submission.

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



