

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Solihull

Report to The Electoral Commission

May 2003

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Solihull.

Summary

We began a review of Solihull's electoral arrangements on 4 December 2001. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 22 October 2002, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

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

- **in 10 of the 17 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and five wards vary by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 11 wards and by more than 20% in five wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 133-134) are that:

- **Solihull Borough Council should have 51 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in no change to the total amount of wards, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average;**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in no ward expected to vary by more than 7% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Hockley Heath and Kingshurst;**
- **a boundary amendment between Balsall East and Balsall West parish wards.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 24 June 2003. *The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made:*

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Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Bickenhill	3	The parishes of Bickenhill and Hampton in Arden; the Balsall East parish ward of Balsall parish; the Hall parish ward of Chelmsley Wood parish	2, 3, 4 & 5
2	Blythe	3	Part of Shirley South ward; the proposed Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green parish wards of Hockley Heath parish	4
3	Castle Bromwich	3	<i>Unchanged</i> ; the parish of Castle Bromwich	1
4	Chelmsley Wood	3	Part of Chelmsley Wood parish; the Cole parish ward of Fordbridge parish	1
5	Dorridge & Hockley Heath	3	Part of Knowle ward; part of Packwood ward; the proposed Hockley Heath Village parish ward of Hockley Heath parish	4
6	Elmdon	3	Part of Elmdon ward; part of Silhill ward	2
7	Kingshurst & Fordbridge	3	The Bennett's Well and Hatchford parish ward of Fordbridge parish; the proposed Kingshurst South parish ward of Kingshurst parish	1
8	Knowle	3	Part of Knowle ward; part of Meriden ward; the proposed Balsall West parish ward of Balsall parish	2, 4 & 5
9	Lyndon	3	Part of Elmdon ward; part of Lyndon ward; part of Olton ward	2
10	Meriden	3	Part of Meriden ward	3 & 5
11	Olton	3	Part of Olton ward; part of Lyndon ward; part of Shirley East ward	2
12	St Alphege	3	Part of St Alphege ward; part of Shirley South ward; part of Silhill ward	2 & 4
13	Shirley East	3	Part of Shirley East ward	2 & 4
14	Shirley South	3	Part of Shirley South ward; part of Shirley East ward; part of St Alphege ward	4
15	Shirley West	3	<i>Unchanged</i> ; Shirley West ward	2 & 4
16	Silhill	3	Part of St Alphege ward; part of Silhill ward	2
17	Smith's Wood	3	Smith's Wood ward; the proposed Kingshurst North parish ward of Kingshurst parish	1

Notes:

- 1 The western urban area is the only unparished part of the borough.
- 2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.

Table 2: Final recommendations for Solihull

	Ward name	No. of Councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bickenhill	3	9,100	3,033	0	9,342	3,114	2
2	Blythe	3	8,704	2,901	-4	9,706	3,235	6
3	Castle Bromwich	3	9,411	3,137	4	9,231	3,077	1
4	Chelmsley Wood	3	8,647	2,882	-5	8,759	2,920	-4
5	Dorridge & Hockley Heath	3	8,508	2,836	-6	8,576	2,859	-6
6	Elmdon	3	9,928	3,309	10	9,746	3,249	6
7	Kingshurst & Fordbridge	3	9,013	3,004	-1	8,825	2,942	-4
8	Knowle	3	8,395	2,798	-7	8,468	2,823	-7
9	Lyndon	3	9,788	3,263	8	9,831	3,277	7
10	Meriden	3	9,030	3,010	0	9,283	3,094	1
11	Olton	3	9,289	3,096	3	9,414	3,138	3
12	St Alphege	3	9,464	3,155	4	9,448	3,149	3
13	Shirley East	3	8,976	2,992	-1	9,065	3,022	-1
14	Shirley South	3	9,036	3,012	0	8,985	2,995	-2
15	Shirley West	3	9,172	3,057	1	9,050	3,017	-1
16	Silhill	3	8,800	2,933	-3	9,170	3,057	0
17	Smith's Wood	3	8,795	2,932	-3	8,699	2,900	-5
	Totals	51	154,056	-	-	155,598	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,021	-	-	3,051	-

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Solihull. We are reviewing the seven metropolitan boroughs in the West Midlands as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Solihull. Solihull's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1977 (Report no. 246).

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Solihull was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan borough ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan borough wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when we wrote to Solihull Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified West Midlands Police Authority, the local authority associations, West Midlands Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 April 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

10 Stage Three began on 22 October 2002 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Solihull*, and ended on 16 December 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 Current electoral arrangements

11 Solihull is a metropolitan authority covering 17,832 hectares with a population of 205,600. It is situated to the east and south-east of Birmingham in the Midlands. Its central location at the hub of good road and rail communications makes the district an attractive one for prestige office development. Solihull has also become well known as the home of the world famous Land Rover. Included in the district are Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre.

12 The borough contains 12 parishes, but Solihull town itself is unparished. Solihull town comprises 50% of the borough's total electorate.

13 The electorate of the borough is 154,056 (February 2001). The Council presently has 51 members who are elected from 17 wards, 12 of which are relatively urban; the remainder being predominantly rural. All wards are three-member wards.

14 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,021 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,051 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 10 of the 17 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average, four wards by more than 20% and three wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Shirley South ward where each councillor represents 45% more electors than the borough average.

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 borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

Map 1: Existing wards in Solihull

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bickenhill	3	10,512	3,504	16	10,654	3,551	16
2	Castle Bromwich	3	9,411	3,137	4	9,231	3,077	1
3	Chelmsley Wood	3	7,458	2,486	-18	7,553	2,518	-17
4	Elmdon	3	7,963	2,654	-12	7,881	2,627	-14
5	Fordbridge	3	5,975	1,992	-34	5,896	1,965	-36
6	Kingshurst	3	5,557	1,852	-39	5,438	1,813	-41
7	Knowle	3	8,833	2,944	-3	8,912	2,971	-3
8	Lyndon	3	7,772	2,591	-14	7,667	2,556	-16
9	Meriden	3	9,550	3,183	5	9,804	3,268	7
10	Olton	3	9,339	3,113	3	9,539	3,180	4
11	Packwood	3	11,591	3,864	28	12,551	4,184	37
12	Shirley East	3	9,168	3,056	1	9,257	3,086	1
13	Shirley South	3	13,155	4,385	45	12,945	4,315	41
14	Shirley West	3	9,172	3,057	1	9,050	3,017	-1
15	Silhill	3	9,961	3,320	10	10,553	3,518	15
16	Smith's Wood	3	7,465	2,488	-18	7,396	2,465	-19
17	St Alphege	3	11,174	3,725	23	11,271	3,757	23
	Totals	51	154,056	-	-	155,598	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,021	-	-	3,051	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Solihull Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Shirley South ward were relatively over-represented by 45%, while electors in Kingshurst ward were significantly under-represented by 39%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Draft recommendations

16 During Stage One 199 representations were received, including a borough-wide scheme from Solihull Borough Council, and representations from two parish councils, four local residents associations, one borough councillor and 191 local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Solihull*.

17 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, subject to five amendments, across the borough, in order to group similar communities in single wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in the south of the borough, using some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Solihull Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors, as at present, representing 17 wards;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Bickenhill, Fordbridge, Hockley Heath and Kingshurst and a boundary amendment between Balsall East and Balsall West parish wards.

Draft recommendation

Solihull Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors, serving 17 wards.

18 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards varying by no more than 10% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 7% from the average in 2006.

4 Responses to consultation

19 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 167 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Solihull Borough Council.

Solihull Borough Council

20 The Borough Council supported the draft recommendations but pointed out the local objection to the proposed Shirley East and St Alphege wards. It also proposed two ward name changes.

Parish and town councils

21 We received representations from six parish and town councils. Berkswell Parish Council supported the proposals for its area but proposed one ward name change. Bickenhill Parish Council supported the draft recommendations but objected to the proposed parish councillor redistribution for its parish. Castle Bromwich Parish Council noted our draft recommendations.

22 Fordbridge Town Council objected to the proposed rewording and redistribution of councillors for its parish. Hockley Heath Parish Council objected to the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Packwood wards. It supported the proposed warding arrangements for Hockley Heath parish. Kingshurst Parish Council proposed amendments to the proposed River Cole ward.

Other representations

23 A further 160 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents.

24 Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the draft recommendations but proposed a boundary amendment between the proposed Olton and Silhill wards. They also proposed an alternative warding arrangement for the Shirley/St Alphege area.

25 Dorridge & District Residents Association objected to the proposed warding arrangement for its area and reiterated its support for the Borough Council's proposed Option Two or Three at Stage One. Hockley Heath Residents Association objected to the proposed Hockley Heath & Dorridge ward but supported the proposed warding arrangements for Hockley Heath parish.

26 One local councillor supported the draft recommendations but proposed one ward name change. Another local councillor supported the draft proposal to include Bentley Heath in a single ward. The local councillor proposed an amendment between the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Knowle wards. He also proposed two ward name changes in the south of the borough. One local resident proposed a ward name change in the south of the borough. One local resident supported the proposed parish councillor distribution for Bickenhill parish.

27 We received 152 submissions and one petition from local residents and one local councillor, currently in St Alphege ward, objecting to being included in the proposed Shirley East ward.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

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

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

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

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

Electorate forecasts

32 Since 1975 there has been a 10% increase in the electorate of Solihull borough. At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting a minimal increase in the electorate from 154,056 to 155,598 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be spread throughout the borough. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

Council size

34 Solihull Borough Council presently has 51 members. In the draft recommendations report we adopted the Council’s proposal for a council of 51 members as we considered that it provided for the correct allocation of councillors in the distinct urban north, urban west and rural areas of the borough. The Electoral Review Working Party considered the role of councillors under the new executive arrangements, Leader and Cabinet Model, and highlighted the boards, committees and working groups on which councillors will serve before recommending to the Council’s Strategic Committee that the Council required 51 members to function effectively. In particular, the Working Party highlighted the Task and Finish Groups appointed by the Overview and

Scrutiny Boards' and also outlined members' non-executive functions and their active role in representing the Council on external bodies and in relation to partnership arrangements being established under the Local Strategic Partnership.

35 The Working Party outlined the major initiatives the Council will be undertaking which require substantive member involvement. It also carried out a consultation exercise in relation to council size which revealed no public view on council size, although there appeared to be no case for an increase.

36 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 51 members and were therefore content to base the draft recommendations on a council of this size.

37 During Stage Three we received no submission in relation to council size and we are content to put forward a council size of 51 members as part of our final recommendations as we remain of the opinion that Solihull Borough Council would best function under a council of that size.

Electoral arrangements

38 After careful consideration of all the evidence received at Stage One we considered that the Borough Council's proposals would represent a better balance between the statutory criteria than the current arrangements and we were content to endorse these proposals substantially. We considered that the Borough Council's proposals would provide the best reflection of community identities and interests across the borough by using easily identifiable boundaries and respecting natural communities. However, we made a number of minor boundary amendments across the borough in order to tie boundaries to better ground detail, or to group similar communities in single wards. We also proposed our own warding arrangements for the south of the borough.

39 In the urban north we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals substantially, subject to one minor boundary amendment and adopting the name River Cole ward for the Council's proposed Ward 3. In the urban west of the borough we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals with the exception of proposing our own arrangements in the southern area and making four minor boundary amendments in the north of this area. In the remaining rural area of the borough we are proposing to adopt the Borough Council's proposals substantially, subject to two boundary amendments. We are also proposing three of our own ward names in this area.

40 We noted the outline borough-wide proposal provided by a local resident and considered it to have merit. We acknowledged the fact that it was not intended to be a detailed counter-proposal but presented to support the suggestion that the Council's proposals may not be the best way forward. We endeavoured to investigate this outline proposal but found that it would have made it difficult to utilise good boundaries and obtain good levels of electoral equality while respecting natural communities in the urban west area. We also considered it difficult to pursue this outline proposal in the south of the borough as it would have created a warding arrangement that, in our opinion, would not have facilitated effective and convenient local government for the Dorridge and Knowle areas. The proposal would have also produced a poor level of electoral equality for Bickenhill ward which is integral, due to its central position, to a good warding arrangement across the borough.

41 Each Borough Council consultation option and the draft recommendations supported the fact that an urban area must be included in Bickenhill ward to obtain a suitable electoral variance, and on the basis of community identity we considered that urban area to best be included from

the urban north. As a result of this it did not enable us to consider the local resident's outlined proposal for the urban north.

42 Having considered all the representations received at Stage Three we propose substantially adopting the draft recommendations subject to two boundary amendments.

43 In the north of the borough we propose to adopt our draft recommendations without amendment. We noted the proposed amendment between Smith's Wood and River Cole wards proposed by Kingshurst Parish Council but remain of the opinion that the draft recommendations best satisfy the statutory criteria as we consider that they utilise good boundaries and include both sides of Silver Birch Road in a single ward.

44 In the urban west of the borough we noted the local objection to the proposed Shirley East and St Alphege wards from residents formerly in St Alphege ward and concur with the residents that they have more community identity with the St Alphege area. Therefore, we propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Shirley East and St Alphege wards and return those residents on the east side of Prospect Lane to the proposed St Alphege ward.

45 We noted the three further proposed amendments in this area by Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group but did not consider these proposals to better satisfy the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations. We considered the draft recommendations to provide better levels of electoral equality and to reflect local communities better than the alternatives provided and are content to put forward the remaining wards in this area as part of the final recommendations.

46 In the south of the borough we propose to endorse the draft recommendations subject to one boundary amendment between the proposed Knowle and Dorridge & Hockley Heath wards in order to better reflect the local community as proposed by a local councillor.

47 We acknowledge the local objection and proposed alternatives to the draft recommendations in this area. However, we cannot consider one area in isolation and any major rewording of this area would have a knock-on effect which would result in the amendment to the surrounding wards that have been locally supported. We also remain of the opinion that, given all viable alternatives, the draft recommendations provide the best balance between the statutory criteria.

48 We noted the local support and also support from the Borough Council for the remaining draft proposals, in particular in the rural area of the borough, and are content to put wards forward as part of the final recommendations.

49 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

Urban north

- i. Castle Bromwich, Kingshurst and Smith's Wood wards;
- ii. Chelmsley Wood and Fordbridge wards;

Urban west

- iii. Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards;
- iv. St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley South and Shirley West wards;

Rural area

- v. Knowle and Packwood wards;
- vi. Bickenhill and Meriden wards.

50 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2 and illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

Castle Bromwich, Kingshurst and Smith's Wood wards

51 The existing wards of Castle Bromwich, Kingshurst and Smith's Wood cover the urban north area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 4%, 39% and 18% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Castle Bromwich ward while deteriorating slightly in Kingshurst and Smith's Wood wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 41% and 19% respectively by 2006.

52 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by two wards, with the proposed Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood wards being represented by three councillors each. Its proposed Smith's Wood ward would contain the existing Smith's Wood and would also contain those properties south of Chester Road and north of Silver Birch Road, Marston Drive and Gilson Way, formerly in Kingshurst ward. The Borough Council also proposed retaining the existing Castle Bromwich ward.

53 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed extending the ward area in the urban north southward towards Marston Green as in the Borough Council's Option Two, on which it consulted, then redrawing the boundaries to give four new wards for the urban north.

54 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals subject to one minor boundary modification. We propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Smith's Wood and River Cole wards so that it would run to the rear of properties on the south side of Silver Birch Road, as discussed later. We considered the Council's proposals in the remainder of this area to utilise good boundaries, such as Lanchester Way and Windward Way, achieving good levels of electoral equality while respecting natural communities, such as retaining the distinctive area of Castle Bromwich parish in a ward of its own. We note the outline proposal for the urban north by a local resident but found that upon closer investigation it resulted in a knock-on effect across the borough with the inclusion of an urban area with the largely rural part of Bickenhill ward south of the A45. We considered overall that the Borough Council's proposal best satisfies the statutory criteria in this area.

55 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood wards by 4% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Castle Bromwich ward and to deteriorate slightly in Smith's Wood ward to vary by 1% and 5% by 2006.

56 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area. Castle Bromwich Parish Council noted our draft recommendations. Kingshurst Parish Council proposed a boundary amendment to the proposed River Cole ward, as detailed later.

57 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for this area without amendment. We noted the representations received at Stage Three, in particular the support from the Borough Council, and are content to put forward the draft proposals as part of the final recommendations as we consider the proposed arrangement to best satisfy the statutory criteria.

58 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Castle Bromwich and Smith's Wood wards by 4% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five

years in Castle Bromwich ward and to deteriorate slightly in Smith's Wood ward to vary by 1% and 5% by 2006.

Chelmsley Wood and Fordbridge wards

59 The existing wards of Chelmsley Wood and Fordbridge cover the south of the urban north area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the two wards varies from the borough average by 18% and 34% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Chelmsley Wood ward while deteriorating slightly in Fordbridge ward to vary from the borough average by 17% and 36% respectively by 2006.

60 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by two wards, with the proposed Chelmsley Wood ward and Ward 3 being represented by three councillors each. The Council's proposed ward directly south of the proposed Smith's Wood ward was unnamed by the Council and will therefore be referred to as Ward 3. The proposed Ward 3 would include Kingshurst parish apart from all those properties north of Silver Birch Road, Marston Drive and Gilson Way, which would be included in the proposed Smith's Wood ward. The proposed Ward 3 would also include Fordbridge parish apart from those properties east of the River Cole which would be included in the proposed Chelmsley Wood ward. The Borough Council's proposed Chelmsley Wood ward would contain the existing Chelmsley Wood ward and also part of Fordbridge parish as outlined earlier.

61 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed a new warding arrangement for the urban north area as discussed earlier.

62 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals subject to one minor boundary modification and naming the Borough Council's proposed Ward 3, River Cole ward as we consider this to best reflect the area. We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Smith's Wood and River Cole wards so that it would run to the rear of properties on the south side of Silver Birch Road, grouping all those properties on Silver Birch Road in a single ward in the interests of community identity. We consider the Council's proposals in the remainder of this area to utilise good boundaries, such as Kingshurst Brook, achieving good levels of electoral equality while respecting natural communities such as including those properties both sides of Cook Lane in a ward with the urban area to its south.

63 We noted the fact that the proposed River Cole ward is bisected by the River Cole and we would not normally propose or adopt a ward of this nature but due to the geographical and borough boundary constraints in this area, allied to the need to achieve good levels of electoral equality, we considered the proposed River Cole ward justified in this case. It was also noted that crossing points exist across the River Cole which would facilitate effective and convenient local government. Given the overall constraints of the area we consider that this arrangement best satisfies the statutory criteria. We noted the outline proposal by a local resident and considered it to have merit but did not pursue it, as discussed earlier.

64 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Chelmsley Wood and River Cole wards by 5% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Chelmsley Wood ward and to deteriorate slightly in River Cole ward to vary by 4% and 4% by 2006.

65 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area but proposed that River Cole ward should be renamed Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward.

66 Fordbridge Town Council objected to the proposed rewarding and redistribution of councillors for Fordbridge parish. Kingshurst Parish Council suggested that the boundary between the proposed Smith's Wood and River Cole wards should run along Silver Birch Road and not to the rear of properties as proposed at Stage One.

67 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for this area subject to one ward name change. We propose that the proposed River Cole ward should be renamed Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward as suggested by the Borough Council.

68 We noted the suggested boundary amendment between the proposed Smith's Wood and River Cole wards by Kingshurst Parish Council and consider its argument to have merit. However, we propose to retain the boundary as at Stage One as it unites properties on both sides of Silver Birch Road in a single ward. We are still of the opinion that the remainder of the draft recommendations best satisfy the statutory criteria and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

69 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst & Fordbridge wards by 5% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Chelmsley Wood ward and to deteriorate slightly in Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward to vary by 4% and 4% by 2006.

Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards

70 The existing wards of Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill cover the north of the urban west area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the borough average by 12%, 14%, 3% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in all wards to vary from the borough average by 14%, 16%, 4% and 15% respectively by 2006.

71 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards, with the proposed Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards being represented by three councillors each. The Borough Council's proposed Lyndon ward would contain the existing Lyndon ward and would also contain those properties west of Hobs Moat Road, to the north of the Grand Union Canal and east and south of Castle Lane, formerly in Elmdon ward. Its proposed Elmdon ward would contain the existing Elmdon ward apart from those properties transferred to the proposed Lyndon ward, as mentioned earlier. The proposed ward would also contain the area north of the Grand Union Canal, formerly in Silhill ward, and the urban area east of Damson Lane, formerly in Bickenhill ward.

72 The Borough Council's proposed Silhill ward would contain the existing Silhill ward apart from those properties transferred to the proposed Elmdon ward as previously mentioned. It would also exclude the area to the east of Damson Parkway, to the rear of properties on Pinfold Road and to the east of the Solihull bypass, formerly in Silhill ward, which would be transferred to the proposed Bickenhill ward. The proposed Silhill ward would include those properties south of Warwick Road, north of Streetsbrook Road and west of Lode Lane, formerly in St Alphege ward. The Council proposed retaining Olton ward on its existing boundaries.

73 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed, for the urban west area, redrawing the eastern boundary to include the development at Elmdon Heath as proposed by the Borough Council. The boundary would then follow the line of the Solihull bypass as far as Junction 5 of the M42 before following the M42 southbound until it meets with the boundary of the existing Packwood ward. He also proposed redrawing the boundaries within the urban area to give nine wards rather than eight as at present.

74 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area, subject to four boundary amendments to the proposed Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards. We propose that the proposed Olton ward's southern boundary should follow the rear of properties on the south side of Streetsbrook Road, north-west of Robin Hood Cemetery and its south-eastern boundary, shared with the proposed Silhill ward, should run to the rear of properties on the south side of Dove House Lane and Berkswell Close, east of Heaton Lane. We propose that the boundary between the proposed Lyndon and Olton ward should follow the rear of properties on the south side of Pierce Avenue and to the rear of properties on the east side of Richmond Road. All the outlined boundary amendments would be in the interests of community identity as they group similar communities in single wards and facilitate effective and convenient local government by including areas in wards into which they have access. We propose adopting the Borough Council's proposed Elmdon ward without modification.

75 We noted the outline proposal provided by the local resident and considered it to have merit but we consider the Borough Council's and our own proposal to best satisfy the statutory criteria in the urban west area, as it utilised good boundaries such as Hobs Moat Road and the Grand Union Canal. It would also be difficult to include the development at Elmdon Heath within the urban west warding arrangement if we were to adopt the local resident's previously outlined approach to the urban north.

76 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards by 10%, 8%, 3% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Elmdon, Lyndon and Silhill wards to vary by 6%, 7% and equal to the borough average by 2006. The electoral variance for Olton ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

77 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

78 Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the draft recommendations but proposed a boundary amendment between the proposed Olton and Silhill wards. They proposed that the area on the south side of Dove House Lane, including Berkswell Close be included in the proposed Silhill ward. They also proposed an alternative warding arrangement for the Shirley area, as detailed later.

79 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for this area without amendment.

80 We noted the proposed amendments in this area provided by Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group but do not consider these proposals to reflect local communities or improve electoral equality and we are confident that our draft recommendations best satisfy the statutory criteria than those alternatives provided. We consider the draft recommendations to best satisfy the statutory criteria in this area as they utilise good boundaries and include both sides of Dove House Lane and Berkswell Close in a single ward into which they have access.

81 We noted the support from the Borough Council for this area and are content to put the draft recommendations forward as part of the final recommendations.

82 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Elmdon, Lyndon, Olton and Silhill wards by 10%, 8%, 3% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Elmdon, Lyndon and Silhill wards to vary by 6%, 7% and equal to the borough average by 2006. The electoral variance for Olton ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley South and Shirley West wards

83 The existing wards of St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley South and Shirley West cover the southern area of the urban west of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the borough average by 23%, 1%, 45% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Shirley South ward to vary from the borough average by 41% by 2006. The electoral variances for the existing St Alphege, Shirley East and Shirley West wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

84 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards, with the proposed St Alphege, Shirley East, Ward 14 and Shirley West wards being represented by three councillors each. The Borough Council's proposed St Alphege ward would include the existing St Alphege ward apart from that area which would be transferred to the proposed Silhill ward, as previously mentioned, and it would exclude those properties bounded by Dingle Lane, Whitefields Road, Widney Lane and Blossomfield Road, which would be transferred to the proposed Ward 14. Its proposed St Alphege ward would include an area north of Widney Lane, formerly in Shirley South ward.

85 The Borough Council's proposed Ward 14 would include all of the existing Shirley South ward to the east of Tamworth Lane, with the exclusion of an area north of Widney Lane to be transferred to the proposed St Alphege ward and the addition of an area north of Widney Lane, formerly in St Alphege ward, as previously mentioned. The Council proposed retaining Shirley East and Shirley West wards on their existing boundaries.

86 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed a new warding arrangement for the urban west area as discussed earlier.

87 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting our own proposals in this area, apart from adopting the existing Shirley West ward as proposed by the Borough Council and adopting the name Shirley South ward as we consider it to best reflect the area. Our proposed Shirley East ward would be based largely on the Borough Council's proposed ward less the urban area south of Union Road and Longmore Road, which would be included in the proposed Shirley South ward. Our proposed Shirley East ward would also include an area east of Stratford Road, which was to be included in the Borough Council's proposed St Alphege ward.

88 This new boundary between the proposed St Alphege and Shirley East wards would follow the rear of properties on Westwood Grove, run to the rear of properties on the east side of Cambridge Avenue and follow the rear of properties on Heathcote Avenue and Calverdon Close before running along the western side of Sharmans Cross Junior School until it reached Sharmans Cross Road. From here the proposed boundary would follow the rear of the properties on the eastern side of Woodlea Drive before joining the proposed Olton ward boundary on Streetsbrook Road. Our proposed St Alphege ward would also be based on the Borough Council's proposed St Alphege ward with the previously mentioned boundary amendment between it and the proposed Shirley East ward and a further boundary amendment which would include the urban area both sides of Widney Lane in the proposed St Alphege ward.

89 We considered our proposed warding arrangement in southern urban Solihull to best satisfy the statutory criteria as it grouped similar communities, such as both sides of Widney Lane, in a single ward and it also utilised strong boundaries in the area such as Union Road. We also considered our proposals to offer a better alternative than that provided by the Borough Council as it facilitates a more favourable mix of urban and rural in the south of the borough which is discussed later. We noted the outline proposal provided by a local resident but consider our

proposals to best satisfy the statutory criteria as it utilises good boundaries such as the railway line and Warwick Road while achieving good levels of electoral equality. Also, upon investigating the outline proposals we did not consider these would be easily achieved.

90 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley South and Shirley West wards by 2%, 5%, equal to the average and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in St Alphege and Shirley South wards to vary by 3% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variances for the proposed Shirley East and Shirley West wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

91 At Stage Three, the Borough Council substantially supported the draft recommendations for this area. However, it did draw our attention to the local objection to the proposed Shirley and St Alphege wards.

92 Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group proposed amendments between the proposed St Alphege and Shirley East wards, St Alphege and Shirley South wards, Shirley East and Shirley South wards and between the proposed Packwood and Shirley South wards. Between Shirley East and Shirley South wards they proposed to transfer that residential area south of Union Road between Marshall Lake Road and Aynsley Court into the proposed Shirley East ward. Between St Alphege and Shirley South wards they proposed to transfer that area on the south side of Widney Lane between Brick Kiln Lane and Monkspath Hall Road into the proposed Shirley South ward.

93 Between Packwood and Shirley South wards they proposed to transfer that area to the north and west side of Monkspath Hall Road into the proposed Shirley South ward. Its final amendment between St Alphege and Shirley East wards would see the boundary between the proposed wards follow Prospect Lane as far as Heathcote Avenue.

94 We received 152 submissions and one petition from local residents and one local councillor, currently in St Alphege ward, objecting to being included in the proposed Shirley East ward. One local councillor supported the draft recommendations but proposed that Shirley East ward should be renamed Sharmans Cross ward.

95 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendation for this area subject to one boundary amendment between the proposed St Alphege and Shirley East wards.

96 We noted the amount of local objection in relation to the proposed St Alphege and Shirley East wards and concur with the local residents that those properties formerly in St Alphege ward, on the east side of Prospect Lane, should remain in St Alphege ward. We consider that this area has more in common with the St Alphege area and looks toward this area on a community level and propose to revert back to the existing boundary that runs along Prospect Lane.

97 We noted the proposed amendments in this area provided by Solihull & Meriden Liberal Democrats/Liberal Democrat Group but do not consider these proposals to reflect local communities or improve electoral equality and we are confident that our draft recommendations best satisfy the statutory criteria than those alternatives provided. We noted the proposed amendment between St Alphege and Shirley East wards but consider that the boundary should extend along the full length of Prospect Lane.

98 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley South and Shirley West wards by 4%, 1%, equal to the average and 1% respectively. This level of electoral

equality is projected to improve in St Alphege ward while deteriorating slightly in Shirley South ward to vary by 3% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Shirley East and Shirley West wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Knowle and Packwood wards

99 The existing wards of Knowle and Packwood cover the south rural area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the two wards varies from the borough average by 3% and 28% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Packwood ward to vary from the borough average by 37% by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Knowle ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

100 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards, with the proposed Knowle ward, Ward 13 and Ward 15 being represented by three councillors each. The Borough Council's proposed Knowle ward would contain the existing Knowle ward with the exception of an area which would be transferred to the proposed Ward 15, as mentioned later. Its eastern boundary was also to be moved to contain an area west of Fen End Road, formerly in Meriden ward.

101 The Borough Council's proposed Ward 13 would contain that part of Hockley Heath parish to the west of the M42. In addition, the proposed ward would include an urban area of Solihull bounded by Haslucks Green Road, Burman Road, Bills Lane, School Road, Stratford Road and Tamworth Lane, formerly in Shirley South ward. Its proposed Ward 15 would contain the remainder of Hockley Heath parish to the east of the M42 and also the remainder of the existing Packwood ward, which is bounded in the east by Widney Manor Road, Widney Road, Knowle Wood Road and Blue Lake Road. In addition, the proposed Ward 15 would contain an area north of Widney Road formerly in Knowle ward, and the new boundary would follow Smiths Lane and run to the rear of properties west of Tilehouse Green Lane before joining the existing boundary.

102 Hockley Heath Parish Council stated that the Borough Council's proposals for its area did not take local circumstances into account, nor did it reflect the identities and interests of local communities. It was the Parish Council's view that the Borough Council's proposed Ward 13 and Ward 15 would not meet our statutory criteria. The Parish Council also expressed concern at the possibility of Hockley Heath village being separated from the rest of the parish. Hockley Heath Residents Association objected to the Borough Council's proposals for its area. Tidbury Green Residents Association objected to the Borough Council's proposals for its area and suggested that Tidbury Green, Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green form a ward with Hockley Heath and the area of Dorridge south of the railway line known as Bentley Heath.

103 Dickens Heath Residents Association considered themselves to be a rural village and not connected to urban Shirley and stated that, should the Borough Council's proposal be accepted, they would request a parish review from the Borough Council with a view to warding Dickens Heath in order to establish a new parish council for the area. Dorridge & District Residents Association supported the Borough Council's Option Two or Three as they reduced the size of the current Packwood ward.

104 We received 189 representations from local residents which objected to the Borough Council's proposed Wards 13 and 15 on the grounds that they contravened the statutory criteria outlined in our *Guidance*. These submissions also requested that 2,000 electors be added to the west of Hockley Heath parish to make a viable number to form a ward. A local resident suggested that there may be a substantial population increase by 2011 but we are unable to consider any projections beyond 2006.

105 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed four wards for the remaining rural area. This proposal included a new Knowle ward centred on the main areas of population in Dorridge and Knowle. It also included a new Packwood ward that would involve the redrawing of the north-eastern boundary to account for the revised Dorridge/Knowle ward and also move it further to the north-east to obtain the requisite number of electors, and a new Bickenhill ward that involved the redrawing of its boundaries to account for the urban north and urban west changes, as discussed earlier, and a redrawing of its south-eastern boundary to account for the new Dorridge/Knowle ward. This outline proposal did not change the existing Meriden ward.

106 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposed Knowle ward and proposed Ward 15 subject to two boundary amendments. We also proposed our own arrangement for the remainder of the south of the borough. We proposed amending the proposed Knowle ward's eastern boundary to facilitate the inclusion of Temple Balsall hamlet in the proposed Meriden & Berkswell ward. We proposed amending the Council's proposed Ward 15 boundary to include properties on the rear of Smiths Lane and the first two properties on Lady Byron Lane in order to group these properties in a single ward in the interests of community identity. As the Borough Council did not provide a name for this proposed ward we proposed to name it Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward as we considered this to best reflect the area.

107 We proposed our own ward for the remainder of this southern area and proposed to name it Packwood ward as the Borough Council did not provide a ward name for this area during Stage One. Our proposed ward would contain the parish of Hockley Heath less that part of the parish to the east of the motorway which would be included in the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward. Our proposed ward would also contain the entire Monkspath urban area north-east of Stratford Road and east of Highlands Road.

108 We have noted the volume of opposition to the Borough Council's proposal for Hockley Heath parish and the argumentation supplied. As a result of the objections, we endeavoured to investigate other warding arrangements for this area and we consider our proposal for this southern area to best satisfy the statutory criteria as it grouped similar communities in single wards and utilises good boundaries, such as the M42. We understand that our proposal groups an urban area with the largely rural Hockley Heath parish but consider this urban area to have more in common with Hockley Heath parish than that of Shirley, as proposed by the Borough Council. We investigated the possibilities of including Hockley Heath parish in a ward of its own but this resulted in a poor electoral variance of over 20%. We also investigated the possibility of attaching part of Dorridge to the parish of Hockley Heath as proposed by Tidbury Green Residents Association, but found that the resultant knock-on effect involved a redrawing of boundaries across the borough and we were unable to consider this southern area in isolation.

109 We also noted the outline proposal for the rural area provided by a local resident and considered it to have merit. Our draft recommendations are similar to the resident's outlined Bickenhill and Meriden wards but we considered our recommendations in the south of the borough to better satisfy the statutory criteria. This was due to the resident's outlined Packwood ward being geographically unwieldy, which we considered would not provide effective and convenient local government.

110 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Dorridge & Hockley Heath, Knowle and Packwood wards by 7%, 6% and 4% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Knowle and Packwood wards to vary by 6% and 7% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

111 At Stage Three, the Borough Council highlighted the fact that there were a number of alternative names suggested for the proposed Packwood ward and drew our attention specifically to the responses from Hockley Heath Parish Council and a local resident from Cheswick Green. The Borough Council also made no specific proposals for an alternative Packwood ward and is content for the Boundary Committee to make a recommendation having considered all suggestions. Hockley Heath Parish Council objected to the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Packwood wards and proposed that Packwood ward should be renamed Sidenhale, Crewenhale or Blythe ward.

112 Dorridge & District Residents Association objected to the proposed warding arrangement for its area and reiterated its support for the Borough Council's proposed Option Two or Three put forward at Stage One. Hockley Heath Residents Association objected to the proposed Hockley Heath & Dorridge ward but supported the proposed warding arrangements for Hockley Heath parish.

113 One local councillor proposed an amendment between the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Knowle wards. The amended boundary would run to the rear of properties in the east side of Knowle Wood Road and would unite properties on both sides of Knowle Wood Road in a single ward. The local councillor supported the draft proposal to include Bentley Heath in a single ward and proposed two ward name changes in the south of the borough. He proposed that Packwood ward should be renamed Blythe or Blythe Valley ward and the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward be renamed Packwood ward. One local resident considered the draft recommendations not to have addressed his original concerns and suggested that the proposed Packwood ward should be renamed Blythe or Rumbush ward.

114 A local councillor objected to the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward on the basis that it did not respect local communities. He also reiterated his original proposal to include those electors west of the railway line in Dorridge (known as the Four Ashes) into the same ward as Hockley Heath parish and the urban area of Monkspath could then be attached to the Dorridge area. If these could not be implemented he supported the name Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward.

115 The local councillor also objected to the proposed Packwood ward as it included the urban Monkspath area with a largely rural area and suggested the proposed ward should be renamed Sidenhale or Blythe ward. Finally, the local councillor supported the proposed parish warding arrangement for Hockley Heath parish.

116 Having carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for this area subject to one boundary amendment and one ward name change. We propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Knowle wards to include those properties on the east side of Knowle Wood Road in the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward, as proposed by a local councillor.

117 We propose that Packwood ward should be renamed Blythe ward as we consider this name to best reflect the local area and it has been locally proposed. We noted the other alternative names provided for the proposed Packwood ward and found that Blythe was a consistent suggestion in the representations.

118 We noted the objection to our proposed Packwood and Dorridge & Hockley Heath wards but we remain confident that, upon considering the evidence received in light of the statutory criteria, the draft recommendations provide the best warding arrangement for this southern area than any alternative provided. We noted the support for the Borough Council's Option Two or Three in this area but consider that this would involve a major re-warding of the southern area and would have a knock-on affect to the surrounding wards that have been locally supported. We also could not consider this area in isolation and, in the wider context of a borough wide scheme, consider the draft recommendations to provide the best balance between the statutory criteria.

119 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Dorridge & Hockley Heath, Knowle and Blythe wards by 7%, 6% and 4% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Knowle and Blythe wards to vary by 6% and 7% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Bickenhill and Meriden wards

120 The existing wards of Bickenhill and Meriden cover the east rural area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 51- member council, the number of electors per councillor in the two wards varies from the borough average by 16% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Meriden ward, to vary from the borough average by 7% by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Bickenhill ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

121 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by two wards, with the proposed Bickenhill and Meriden wards being represented by three councillors each. The Borough Council's proposed Bickenhill ward would include the existing Bickenhill ward with the exception of the urban area east of Damson Lane, which would be transferred to the proposed Elmdon ward. The proposed Meriden ward would contain the existing Meriden ward with the exception of an area in the south-west of the existing ward being transferred to the proposed Knowle ward. The new Meriden ward south-west boundary would follow Fen End Road.

122 Balsall Parish Council expressed concern at the limited time for consultation and also at the Borough Council's proposal to place one of its parish wards in a separate borough ward from the rest of the parish. One local resident proposed parish council changes. A local councillor, for the existing Meriden ward, requested that Meriden ward remain intact but if this was not possible then requested that the hamlet of Temple Balsall remain in Meriden ward as it is an integral part of the community.

123 We received an outline proposal for the borough from a local resident which proposed four wards for the remaining rural area. The outline proposal made no change to the existing Meriden ward and proposed a new Bickenhill ward to account for changes to the urban north and Knowle area.

124 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area, subject to one boundary amendment. We proposed that the proposed Meriden & Berkswell ward boundary should run along Kenilworth Road, Temple Lane, Chadwick Lane, Old Green Lane and Oldwich Lane West rather than Fen End Road so that it included Temple Balsall hamlet in the proposed Meriden & Berkswell ward, in the interests of community identity as proposed by a local councillor. We proposed adopting the ward name Meriden & Berkswell as we considered it to best reflect the major composite parts of the ward. We considered the Council's proposed Bickenhill ward to best satisfy the statutory criteria, as it grouped similar communities within a single ward such as the urban area north of the A45, while achieving a good level of electoral equality.

125 The proposed Bickenhill ward facilitated a good warding arrangement across the borough due to its central position. We considered the transfer of properties east of Damson Lane, from the existing Bickenhill ward into the proposed Elmdon ward, as proposed by the Borough Council, would promote community identity as its community focus would be the urban western area rather than the largely rural Bickenhill ward. We also concurred with the Council's statement that Bickenhill ward is integral to any warding arrangement across the borough, and agreed that the proposed Bickenhill ward would best satisfy the statutory criteria in this central area of the borough.

126 We noted the local resident's outline proposal for this area and considered it similar to our draft recommendations. However, we felt that our proposals best satisfied the statutory criteria as they achieved a good level of electoral equality in the proposed Bickenhill ward and this proposed ward, due to its central position, facilitated a good warding arrangement across the borough.

127 Under our draft recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Bickenhill and Meriden & Berkswell wards would be equal to the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Bickenhill and Meriden & Berkswell wards to vary by 2% and 1% by 2006.

128 In response to the draft recommendations the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

129 Berkswell Parish Council supported the proposals for its area but proposed one ward name change. Bickenhill Parish Council supported the draft recommendations but objected to the proposed parish councillor redistribution for its parish. One local resident supported the proposed parish councillor distribution for Bickenhill parish.

130 Having carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three and in light of the local support for the proposals in this area, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for this area subject to one ward name change. We propose that Meriden & Berkswell ward should be renamed Meriden ward.

131 Under our final recommendations for a 51-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Bickenhill and Meriden wards by both wards being equal to the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Bickenhill and Meriden wards to vary by 2% and 1% by 2006.

Electoral cycle

132 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan boroughs have a system of election by thirds.

Conclusions

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

- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Shirley East and St Alphege wards;
- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Knowle wards;
- We propose renaming three wards so that Meriden & Berkswell ward should be renamed Meriden ward, Packwood ward should be renamed Blythe ward and River Cole ward should be renamed Kingshurst & Fordbridge ward.

134 We conclude that, in Solihull:

- there should be 51 councillors, as at present;
- there should be 17 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	51	51	51	51
Number of wards	17	17	17	17
Average number of electors per councillor	3,021	3,051	3,021	3,051
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	10	0	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	5	0

136 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in no wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2006, with no ward varying by more than 7% from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

Solihull Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

137 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. In our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Balsall, Bickenhill, Fordbridge, Kingshurst and Hockley Heath to reflect the proposed borough wards.

138 The parish of Balsall is currently served by 12 councillors representing two wards: Balsall East returning 10 parish councillors and Balsall West returning two parish councillors. As a result of changes to borough wards in the area it is proposed that an amended Balsall West parish ward be included in the proposed Knowle borough ward. This change affects the eastern boundary of Balsall West parish ward, as indicated on the large map, but does not affect the distribution of parish councillors.

139 At Stage Three we received no submissions in relation to this area, and having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we confirm the draft recommendation for warding Balsall parish as final.

Final recommendation

Balsall Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Balsall East parish ward (returning 10 councillors) and Balsall West parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map.

140 The parish of Bickenhill is currently served by 12 councillors representing four wards: Bickenhill ward returning two parish councillors, Black Firs ward returning two parish councillors, Marston Green ward returning six parish councillors and Merstone ward returning two parish councillors.

141 During Stage One we received one representation from a local resident which provided for new parish councillor distribution in order to provide equality at parish level. This proposal provided for four parish wards, as at present, with Bickenhill ward returning one parish councillor, Black Fir ward returning one parish councillor, Marston Green ward returning six parish councillors and Merstone ward returning four parish councillors.

142 Having considered the representation received at Stage One we considered it to have merit. However, on the basis that we did not wish to reduce existing two-member parish wards to single-member wards we considered it more beneficial to add an additional two parish councillors to Merstone parish ward in order to address the existing parish councillor:electorate imbalances. Therefore, we proposed that Bickenhill Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, two more than at present, representing four wards: Bickenhill ward returning two parish councillors, Black Firs ward returning two parish councillors, Marston Green ward returning six parish councillors and Merstone ward returning four parish councillors.

143 At Stage Three, Bickenhill Parish Council supported the draft recommendations but did not consider the increase in parish councillors to be necessary and requested that it be left at the present arrangement of 12 parish councillors. A local resident supported the parish councillor distribution proposed at Stage One.

144 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the comments made by the Parish Council we propose to retain the existing arrangements for Bickenhill parish.

Final recommendation

Bickenhill Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Bickenhill ward returning two parish councillors, Black Firs ward returning two parish councillors, Marston Green ward returning six parish councillors and Merstone ward returning two parish councillors. The existing parish ward boundaries would remain unchanged.

145 The parish of Fordbridge is currently represented by 14 parish councillors and is divided into three parish wards: Bennetts Well ward returning six parish councillors, Cole ward returning three parish councillors and Hatchford ward returning five parish councillors.

146 As a result of new borough warding arrangements in this area, changes were proposed to the parish warding arrangements for Fordbridge parish. The new arrangements would provide for 14 parish councillors, as at present, representing two parish wards: Fordbridge East ward returning four parish councillors and Fordbridge West ward returning 10 parish councillors. Fordbridge East parish ward would be included in the proposed Chelmsley Wood ward and Fordbridge West parish ward would be included in the proposed River Cole ward.

147 At Stage Three, Fordbridge Town Council objected to the proposed warding arrangements for Fordbridge parish on the grounds that it was unnecessary to change them. It highlighted that retaining the existing ward names and composition would not materially alter the borough

warding recommendations for the area. The Town Council also highlighted that the existing arrangements provided for the correct councillor allocation.

148 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the evidence provided and comments made by Fordbridge Town Council, we propose to retain the existing parish warding arrangement for Fordbridge parish.

Final recommendation

Fordbridge Parish Council should comprise 14 parish councillors, as at present, representing three parish wards: Bennett's Well parish ward returning six parish councillors, Hatchford parish ward returning five parish councillors and Cole parish ward returning three parish councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the existing parish warding boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map.

149 The parish of Hockley Heath is currently represented by 13 parish councillors and is unwarded. During Stage One we received one representation from Hockley Heath Parish Council proposing new warding arrangements for the parish should the Borough Council's proposed wards be adopted in the area. The Parish Council's proposals provided for Hockley Heath Parish Council being represented by four parish wards with Cheswick Green parish ward returning four councillors, Dickens Heath parish ward returning four councillors, Hockley Heath Village parish ward returning three councillors and Tidbury Green parish ward returning two councillors.

150 Although we did not adopt the Borough Council's scheme at borough level for this area at Stage One we found it necessary to ward the parish based on the Parish Council's justification of giving each distinctive settlement its own identity. We decided to adopt the Parish Council's parish warding proposals for this area in full, with minor boundary amendments to tie the boundary to better ground detail. The proposed Cheswick Green parish ward, Dickens Heath parish ward and Tidbury Green parish ward would be included in the proposed Packwood borough ward and the proposed Hockley Heath Village parish ward would be included in the proposed Dorridge & Hockley Heath ward.

151 At Stage Three, one local councillor supported the parish warding recommendations for Hockley Heath parish.

152 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we confirm the draft recommendation for warding Hockley Heath parish as final apart from Packwood ward being renamed Blythe ward.

Final recommendation

Hockley Heath Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Cheswick Green parish ward returning four councillors, Dickens Heath parish ward returning four councillors, Hockley Heath Village parish ward returning three councillors and Tidbury Green parish ward returning two councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect those indicated on the large map.

153 The parish of Kingshurst is currently represented by 12 parish councillors and is divided into four parish wards: Bacon's End ward returning two parish councillors, Cook's Lane ward returning two parish councillors, Woodlands ward returning three parish councillors and Yorkswood ward returning five parish councillors.

154 As a result of proposing new borough warding arrangements in this area, new parish warding arrangements were proposed for Kingshurst parish. The new arrangements provided for 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two parish wards: Kingshurst North parish ward returning four parish councillors and Kingshurst South parish ward returning eight parish

councillors. Kingshurst North parish ward would be included in the proposed Smith's Wood ward and Kingshurst South parish ward would be included in the proposed River Cole ward.

155 At Stage Three, we received no submissions in relation to the parish warding arrangements of Kingshurst parish and, having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we confirm the draft recommendation for warding Kingshurst parish as final.

Final recommendation

Kingshurst Parish Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Kingshurst North parish ward returning four councillors and Kingshurst South parish ward returning eight councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map.

Map 2: Final recommendations for Solihull

6 What happens next?

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

157 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 24 June 2003, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date. They particularly welcome any comments on the first draft of the Order, which will implement the new arrangements.

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

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

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

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Solihull: Detailed mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed wards for Solihull.

The **large maps** illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for Solihull.

Map A1: Final recommendations for Solihull: Key map

Appendix B

Guide to interpreting the draft of the Statutory Instrument

Preamble

This describes the process by which the Statutory Instrument will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Citation and Commencement

This defines the name of the Statutory Instrument and sets the dates on which it will come into force.

Interpretation

This defines terms that are used in the Statutory Instrument.

Wards of the Borough of Solihull

This abolishes the existing wards, and defines the names and areas of the new wards, in conjunction with the map and the Schedule.

Elections of the council of the Borough of Solihull

This sets the date on which a whole council election will be held to implement the new wards, and the dates on which councillors will retire.

Maps

This requires Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

Electoral Registers

This requires Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

Revocation

This revokes the Statutory Instrument that defines the existing wards, with the exception of any articles that established the system of election by thirds.

Explanatory Note

This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Appendix C

First draft of the electoral change Order for Solihull

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2003 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND

The Borough of Solihull (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

Made - - - - 2003

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(**a**), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(**b**), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(**c**) recommendations dated May 2003 on its review of the borough(**d**) of Solihull:

And whereas the Electoral Commission have decided to give effect [with modifications] to those recommendations:

And whereas a period of not less than six weeks has expired since the receipt of those recommendations:

Now, therefore, the Electoral Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 17(**e**) and 26(**f**) of the Local Government Act 1992, and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Order:

Citation and commencement

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Borough of Solihull (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
- (2) This Order shall come into force –
 - (a) For the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on 6th May 2004, on 15th October 2003;

(a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.

(b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

(c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992, to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).

(d) The metropolitan district of Solihull has the status of a borough.

(e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.

(f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

- (b) for all other purposes, on 6th May 2004.

Interpretation

2. In this Order –

“borough” means the borough of Solihull;

“existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made;

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Solihull (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –

- (a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
- (b) the offices of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council; and

any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number.

Wards of the borough of Solihull

3.—(1) The existing wards of the borough(a) shall be abolished.

- (2) The borough shall be divided into seventeen wards which shall bear the names set out in Schedule 1.
- (3) The wards shall comprise the areas designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.
- (4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

Elections of the council of the borough of Solihull

4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the borough shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).

- (2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the borough immediately before 10th May 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.
- (3) Of the councillors elected in 2004 one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.
- (4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –
 - (a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and
 - (b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.
- (5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.
- (6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.

(a) See the Borough of Solihull (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1978 (S.I. 1978/1606).

(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by article 8 of S.I. 1978/1806.

(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).

- (7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.
- (8) Except as otherwise provided in the foregoing paragraphs of this article the term of office of councillors shall be four years, and all councillors shall retire on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election of councillors of the borough in the year of retirement and the newly elected councillors shall come into office on the day on which their predecessors retire.

Wards of the parish of Balsall

- 5.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Balsall shall be abolished.
- (2) The parish of Balsall shall be divided into two parish wards which shall bear the names set out in column (1) of Schedule 2; each parish ward shall comprise the area of the borough ward specified in respect of the parish ward in column (2) of that Schedule, and the number of councillors to be elected for each parish ward shall be the number specified in respect of the parish ward in column (3) of that Schedule.

Wards of the parish of Hockley Heath

- 6.—(1) The parish of Hockley Heath shall be divided into four parish wards which shall bear the names Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Hockley Heath and Tidbury Green; and the wards shall comprise the areas designated on sheet 4 by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by orange lines.
- (2) The number of councillors to be elected for the parish wards of Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath shall be four, for the parish ward of Hockley Heath Village shall be three, and for the parish ward of Tidbury Green shall be two.

Wards of the parish of Kingshurst

- 7.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Kingshurst shall be abolished.
- (2) The parish shall be divided into two parish wards which shall bear the names set out in column (1) of Schedule 3; each parish ward shall comprise the area of the borough ward specified in respect of the parish ward in column (2) of that Schedule, and the number of councillors to be elected for each parish ward shall be the number specified in respect of the parish ward in column (3) of that Schedule.

Maps

8. Solihull Borough Council shall make a print of the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Solihull (Electoral Changes) Order 2003” available for inspection at its offices by any member of the public at any reasonable time.

Electoral registers

9. The Electoral Registration Officer(a) for the borough shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Revocation

10. The Borough of Solihull (Electoral Changes) Order 2003(b) is revoked, save for article 8.

(a) As to electoral registration officers and the register of local government electors, *see* sections 8 to 13 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2).

(b) S.I. 1978/1606.

Signed by the members of the Electoral Commission

Date

Pamela Gordon
Commissioner

Date

Glyn Mathias
Commissioner

Date

Neil McIntosh
Commissioner

Date

Karamjit Singh
Commissioner

Date

Sam Younger
Commissioner

Date

Graham Zellick
Commissioner

SCHEDULE 1

article 3

NAMES OF WARDS

<i>(1)</i> <i>Name of Ward</i>
Bickenhill
Blythe
Castle Bromwich
Chelmsley Wood
Dorridge and Hockley Heath
Elmdon
Kingshurst and Fordbridge
Knowle
Lyndon
Meriden
Olton
St Alphege
Shirley East
Shirley South
Shirley West
Silhill
Smith's Wood

SCHEDULE 2

article 5

WARDS OF THE PARISH OF BALSALL

NAMES AND AREAS OF WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<i>(1)</i> <i>Name of Ward</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Area of Ward</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Number of Councillors</i>
Balsall East	So much of the borough ward of Bickenhill as comprises the parish of Balsall	10
Balsall West	So much of the borough ward of Knowle as comprises the parish of Balsall	2

SCHEDULE 3

article 7

WARDS OF THE PARISH OF KINGSHURST

NAMES OF WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

<i>(1)</i> <i>Name of Ward</i>	<i>(2)</i> <i>Area of Ward</i>	<i>(3)</i> <i>Number of Councillors</i>
Kingshurst North	So much of the borough ward of Smith's Wood as comprises the parish of Kingshurst	4
Kingshurst South	So much of the borough ward of Kingshurst and Fordbridge as comprises the parish of Kingshurst	8

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect, [with modifications], to recommendations by the Boundary Committee for England, a committee of the Electoral Commission, for electoral changes in the borough of Solihull

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after 6th May 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the borough and provides for the creation of 17 new wards. That article and Schedule 1 also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.

Articles 5 to 7 make electoral changes in the parishes of Balsall, Hockley Heath and Kingshurst.

Article 9 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 10 revokes the Borough of Solihull (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1978, with the exception of article 8.

The areas of the new borough and parish wards are demarcated on the map described in article 2. Prints of the map may be inspected at all reasonable times at the offices of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.