

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Malvern Hills in Worcestershire

March 2002

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

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

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

SUMMARY

We began a review of Malvern Hills electoral arrangements on 31 July 2001.

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

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

- **in 17 of the 27 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and seven wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 17 wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main proposals for Malvern Hills future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs -) are that:

- **Malvern Hills District Council should have 38 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of six, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 16 of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Pendock Parish Council;**
- **revised warding arrangements and a reduction in the number of councillors serving Malvern Town Council.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 March 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

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

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Malvern Hills Review
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Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

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E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Alfrick & Leigh	2	the parishes of Alfrick, Bransford, Doddenham, Knightwick, Leigh, Lulsley and Suckley	Map 2
2	Baldwin	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Astley, Holt and Shrawley)	Map 2
3	Broadheath	2	the parishes of Broadheath, Broadwas, Cotheridge and Rushwick	Map 2
4	Chase	3	part of Malvern parish (the proposed Chase parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
5	Dyson Perrins	2	part of Malvern parish (the proposed Dyson Perrins parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
6	Hallow	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Grimley and Hallow)	Map 2
7	Kempsey	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Croome D'Abitot, Kempsey and Severn Stoke)	Map 2
8	Lindridge	1	the parishes of Bayton, Knighton on Teme, Lindridge, Mamble and Stockton on Teme	Map 2
9	Link	3	part of Malvern parish (the proposed Link parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
10	Longdon	1	the parishes of Berrow, Bushley, Eldersfield, Holdfast, Longdon, Pendock and Queenhill	Map 2
11	Martley	1	the parishes of Kenswick, Martley and Wichenford	Map 2
12	Morton & Wells	3	the parishes of Birtsmorton, Castlemorton, Little Malvern, Malvern Wells and Welland	Map 2
13	Pickersleigh	3	part of Malvern parish (the proposed Pickersleigh parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
14	Powick	2	the parishes of Guarlford, Madresfield, Newland and Powick	Map 2
15	Priory	2	part of Malvern parish (the proposed Priory parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
16	Ripple	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Earl's Croome, Hill Croome and Ripple)	Map 2
17	Teme Valley	1	the parishes of Clifton upon Teme, Eastham, Hanley, Lower Sapey, Shelsley Beauchamp, Shelsley Kings, Shelsley Walsh and Stanford with Orleton	Map 2
18	Tenbury	2	the parishes of Bockleton, Kyre, Rochford, Stoke Bliss and Tenbury	Map 2
19	Upton & Hanley	2	the parishes of Hanley Castle and Upton-upon-Severn	Map 2
20	West	2	the parish of West Malvern; part of Malvern parish (the proposed North Malvern parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
21	Woodbury	1	the parishes of Abberley, Great Witley, Hillhampton, Little Witley and Pensax	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A1 in Appendix A.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Malvern Hills

	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	Alfrick & Leigh	2	2,708	1,354	-11	2,839	1,420	-9
2	Baldwin	1	1,571	1,571	4	1,610	1,610	3
3	Broadheath	2	2,688	1,344	-11	2,785	1,393	-11
4	Chase	3	4,822	1,607	6	4,880	1,627	4
5	Dyson Perrins	2	2,605	1,303	-14	3,266	1,633	4
6	Hallow	1	1,458	1,458	-4	1,489	1,489	-5
7	Kempsey	2	3,176	1,588	5	3,215	1,608	3
8	Lindridge	1	1,624	1,624	7	1,661	1,661	6
9	Link	3	4,772	1,591	5	4,829	1,610	3
10	Longdon	1	1,663	1,663	10	1,707	1,707	9
11	Martley	1	1,341	1,341	-12	1,381	1,381	-12
12	Morton & Wells	3	4,287	1,429	-6	4,400	1,467	-6
13	Pickersleigh	3	4,609	1,536	1	4,664	1,555	-1
14	Powick	2	3,176	1,588	5	3,236	1,618	3
15	Priory	2	2,978	1,489	-2	3,014	1,507	-4
16	Ripple	1	1,490	1,490	-2	1,546	1,546	-1
17	Teme Valley	1	1,504	1,504	-1	1,549	1,549	-1
18	Tenbury	2	3,032	1,516	0	3,115	1,558	-1
19	Upton & Hanley	2	3,352	1,676	11	3,441	1,721	10
20	West	2	3,195	1,598	5	3,233	1,617	3
21	Woodbury	1	1,577	1,577	4	1,630	1,630	4
	Totals	38	57,628	-	-	59,490	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,517	-	-	1,566	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Malvern Hills District Council.

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

Please note that the 2006 figures differ by two electors between the District Council's proposed wards and the existing wards. However, this does not have a substantive effect on our proposals. This is due to rounding.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of Malvern Hills in Worcestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the six districts in Worcestershire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Malvern Hills. The last review of Malvern Hills was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1976 (Report no. 159). We expect to begin a review of Worcestershire County Council's electoral arrangements later this year.

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

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

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary

to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

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

Table 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

11 Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when we wrote to Malvern Hills District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority, the local authority associations, Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Malvern Hills District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 22 October 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 26 March 2002 and will end on 20 May 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation

on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 The district of Malvern Hills lies in west Worcestershire adjoining Herefordshire, which lies on the other side of the Malvern Hills. The Malvern Hills area, an area of outstanding natural beauty, draws 1.5 million visitors per year while Malvern Wells provides the permanent setting for the Three Counties Show. The district is largely rural in character although industrial estates are located in Martley and Malvern Link and a business park in Tenbury. Tourism is also a well-established industry in the area.

16 The district is entirely parished and contains 61 civil parishes. Malvern town and West Malvern parish comprise 40 per cent of the district's total electorate.

17 The electorate of the district is 57,628 (February 2001). The Council presently has 42 members who are elected from 27 wards, six of which are relatively urban in Malvern town and West Malvern parish, with the remainder being mainly rural. Four of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and 16 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,372 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,416 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 17 of the 27 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in seven wards by more than 20 per cent and in four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Bayton & Mamble ward where the councillor represents 55 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Malvern Hills

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Baldwin	1	1,571	1,571	14	1,610	1,610	14
2	Bayton & Mamble	1	616	616	-55	640	640	-55
3	Broadheath	1	1,389	1,389	1	1,442	1,442	2
4	Chase	3	4,733	1,578	15	4,774	1,591	12
5	Hallow	1	1,458	1,458	6	1,489	1,489	5
6	Kempsey	2	3,176	1,588	16	3,215	1,608	13
7	Kyre Valley	1	860	860	-37	889	889	-37
8	Langland	3	4,670	1,557	13	4,711	1,570	11
9	Laugherne Hill	1	1,715	1,715	25	1,772	1,772	25
10	Leigh & Bransford	1	1,411	1,411	3	1,455	1,455	3
11	Lindridge	1	875	875	-36	882	882	-38
12	Link	3	4,301	1,434	4	4,332	1,444	2
13	Longdon	1	1,663	1,663	21	1,707	1,707	21
14	Martley	1	1,585	1,585	16	1,630	1,630	15
15	Morton	1	1,621	1,621	18	1,646	1,646	16
16	Powyke	2	2,939	1,470	7	2,987	1,494	5
17	Priory	2	2,061	1,031	-25	2,120	1,060	-25
18	Ripple	1	1,490	1,490	9	1,546	1,546	9
19	Temeside	1	1,297	1,297	-5	1,385	1,385	-2
20	Tenbury Town	2	2,391	1,196	-13	2,453	1,227	-13
21	The Hanleys	1	1,274	1,274	-7	1,337	1,337	-6
22	Trinity	3	4,552	1,517	11	5,228	1,743	23

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 %
23 Upton upon Severn	2	2,315	1,158	-16	2,352	1,176	-17
24 Valley of the Teme	1	697	697	-49	712	712	-50
25 Wells	2	2,666	1,333	-3	2,755	1,378	-3
26 West	2	2,664	1,332	-3	2,721	1,361	-4
27 Woodbury	1	1,638	1,638	19	1,702	1,702	20
Totals	42	57,628	-	-	59,492	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,372	-	-	1,416	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Malvern Hills Council.*

Note: *The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Bayton & Mable ward were relatively over-represented by 55 per cent, while electors in Laugherne Hill ward were relatively under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received seven submissions during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the District Council.

Malvern Hills District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 38 members, four less than at present, serving 22 wards, compared to the existing 27. It proposed a mix of single and multi-member wards throughout the district.

23 Under the District Council's proposals, electoral equality would improve, with only three wards varying by more than 10 per cent by 2006. It stated that the River Severn and River Teme divide the district, which it argued "inevitably limits the options so far as some parts of the district are concerned".

Parish and Town Councils

24 We received responses from three parish and town councils. Malvern Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for Malvern town. Malvern Wells Parish Council proposed that the current Wells ward be maintained. Stoke Bliss, Kyre & Bockleton Group Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal that the area be combined with Tenbury Town ward.

Other Submissions

25 We received a further three submissions from the Green Party, a local residents' association and a local resident. The Green Party objected to a decrease in the number of councillors serving the District Council but stated that of the schemes the District Council consulted upon they preferred option B which was eventually submitted as the official District Council submission. They also stated that they objected to the proposed Pickersleigh ward name. Pickersleigh Residents' Group supported the District Council's proposed Pickersleigh ward name. A local resident objected to the District Council's proposal to reduce the number of councillors representing the council and also objected to its proposed Tenbury ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

27 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Malvern Hills is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

29 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

31 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 3 per cent from 57,628 to 59,492 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the current Trinity ward of Malvern town. 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.

32 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the District Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

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

34 Malvern Hills District Council presently has 42 members. The District Council proposed a council of 38 members, a reduction of four. It stated that it had attempted to put forward proposals that would provide effective and convenient local government, reflect the government's modernisation agenda and a move towards "more streamlined decision making". It also stated that too few councillors could result in large rural wards which would be difficult to represent effectively. It argued that a council size of 38 had provided the best balance between these factors. It stated that, as a result of public consultation, 27 people had supported the reduction, nine people had objected to it and 17 people had expressed no view. It stated that the present council size had "came about by default rather than by design" and that the present review was the first opportunity the Council had had to consider how many councillors it needed. The Green Party objected to a reduction in the number of councillors, arguing that a balance had to be struck between efficiency and money saving on the one hand and democracy and accountability on the other. A local resident stated that they could not see how "democracy [would] be improved" by reducing the number of councillors.

35 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note the objections to the District Council's proposals; however, we note that a reduction in the number of councillors has the support of the District Council and of the majority of those who responded to the District Council's public consultation. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 38 members.

Electoral Arrangements

36 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received during Stage One, including the district-wide scheme received from the District Council. We note that there is limited opposition to the District Council's scheme as a whole, that it secures a good level of electoral equality in much of the district and that it was subject to widespread public consultation.

37 In view of the support given to large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further, and bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are moving away from the District Council's proposals in the Malvern Wells area. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Bayton & Mamble, Kyre Vale, Lindridge, Tenbury Town and Valley of the Teme wards;
- (b) Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Laugherne Hill, Martley and Woodbury wards;

- (c) Kempsey, Leigh & Bransford, Powyke and Temeside wards;
- (d) Longdon, Morton, Ripple, The Hanleys, Upton-upon-Severn and Wells wards;
- (e) Malvern town (six wards).

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

Bayton & Mamble, Kyre Vale, Lindridge, Tenbury Town and Valley of the Teme wards

39 These five wards are situated in the north-west of the district. Bayton & Mamble ward comprises the parishes of the same name, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 55 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Kyre Vale ward comprises the parishes of Bockleton, Hanley, Kyre, Rochford and Stoke Bliss, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 37 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (37 per cent fewer in 2006). Lindridge ward comprises the parishes of Lindridge, Pensax and Stockton on Teme, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 36 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (38 per cent fewer in 2006). Tenbury Town ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by two councillors and currently has 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (13 per cent fewer in 2006). Valley of the Teme ward comprises the parishes of Eastham, Knighton on Teme and Stanford with Orleton, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 49 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (50 per cent fewer in 2006).

40 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Tenbury Town ward be combined with the parishes of Bockleton, Kyre, Rochford and Stoke Bliss to form a two-member Tenbury ward. It argued that its proposals maintained the common parish council arrangement shared by Bockleton, Kyre and Stoke Bliss within the same ward and that although the proposed ward involved a “mix of town and more rural areas” Tenbury is a market town and a focus for this part of the district. It proposed that the current Bayton & Mamble ward be combined with the parishes of Lindridge, Knighton on Teme and Stockton on Teme to form a revised single-member Lindridge ward. Under the District Council’s proposals its proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards would have the same number of electors and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially (1 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more in 2006).

41 Stoke Bliss, Kyre and Bockleton Group Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposed Tenbury ward, arguing that the district councillors representing the ward could both be either urban residents or rural residents with “no knowledge or interest” in the needs of part of the electorate. It proposed that the parishes be linked to similar rural parishes. A local resident objected to the District Council’s proposed Tenbury ward, arguing that “councillors representing a town ward will tend to concentrate their efforts” on the town to the detriment of the rural areas of the ward.

42 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note the objections to the District Council’s proposed Tenbury ward; however, we also note that the current Tenbury Town ward would, under a 38-member council, have 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average were it maintained on its current boundaries. Therefore we consider that the District Council’s proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards

would best reflect the statutory criteria and propose adopting them as part of our draft recommendations. Electoral equality would be the same as under the District Council's proposals. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Laugherne Hill, Martley and Woodbury wards

43 These six wards are located in the north and north-east of the district. Baldwin ward comprises the parishes of Astley & Dunley, Holt and Shrawley, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (14 per cent more in 2006). Broadheath ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more in 2006). Hallow ward comprises the parishes of Grimley and Hallow, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent more in 2006). Laugherne Hill ward comprises the parishes of Broadwas, Cotheridge, Kenswick, Rushwick and Wichenford, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 25 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (25 per cent more in 2006). Martley ward comprises the parishes of Clifton upon Teme, Lower Sapey, Martley and Shelsley Walsh, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (15 per cent more in 2006). Woodbury ward comprises the parishes of Abberley, Great Witley, Hillhampton, Little Witley, Shelsley Beauchamp and Shelsley Kings, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (20 per cent more in 2006).

44 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parishes of Clifton upon Teme, Eastham, Hanley, Lower Sapey, Shelsley Beauchamp, Shelsley Kings, Shelsley Walsh and Stanford with Orleton be combined to form a single-member Teme Valley ward. It stated that although this would be a large ward geographically the area shares reasonable links and that it was not thought that this would interfere with effective and convenient local government. It also argued that this would unite the parishes of Shelsley Beauchamp, Shelsley Kings and Shelsley Walsh, which share a common parish council, in the same ward. It proposed that the parishes of Abberley, Great Witley, Hillhampton, Little Witley and Pensax be combined in a revised single-member Woodbury ward and that the parishes of Kenswick, Martley and Wichenford be combined in a revised single-member Martley ward. It stated that as its proposed Martley ward would have 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006, consideration had been given to combining the proposed Martley and Teme Valley wards to form a two-member ward, which would secure an improved level of electoral equality. However, it noted that the proposed ward would cover an "impossibly large" geographical area. It had also considered placing the parish of Little Witley within its proposed Martley ward but argued that the community identity of the parish is "inextricably linked with that of Great Witley". It proposed that the current Baldwin and Hallow wards be maintained on their existing boundaries. It proposed that the parishes of Broadheath, Broadwas, Cotheridge and Rushwick be combined to form a two-member Broadheath ward. It argued that despite the proposed ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average, Broadwas and Cotheridge, which share a group parish, would be kept within the same ward with the River Teme forming the southern boundary of the ward.

45 Under the District Council's proposals its proposed Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Martley, Teme Valley and Woodbury wards would initially have 4 per cent more, 11 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 12 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent more, 11 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 12 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more in 2006).

46 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the District Council's proposed Broadheath and Martley wards would both have electoral variances of over 10 per cent by 2006; however, having considered the District Council's argumentation with regard to the two wards we are of the view that its proposals would best reflect community identity in the area. We note that the District Council's proposals would secure good levels of electoral equality in the remainder of the area while having regard to the statutory criteria, and therefore we are adopting the District Council's proposed Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Martley, Teme Valley and Woodbury wards as part of our draft proposals. Electoral equality would be the same as under the District Council's proposals. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Kempsey, Leigh & Bransford, Powyke and Temeside wards

47 These four wards are situated in the central area of the district. Kempsey ward comprises the parishes of Croome D'Abitot, Kempsey and Severn Stoke, is represented by two councillors and currently has 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (13 per cent more in 2006). Leigh & Bransford ward comprises the parishes of the same names, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent more in 2006). Powyke ward comprises the parishes of Madresfield, Newland and Powick, is represented by two councillors and currently has 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent more in 2006). Temeside ward comprises the parishes of Alfrick, Doddenham, Knightwick, Lulsley and Suckley, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent fewer in 2006).

48 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Kempsey ward be maintained upon its current boundaries. It proposed that the parish of Guarlford be added to the current Powyke ward to form a two-member Powick ward. It also proposed that the current Leigh & Bransford and Temeside wards be combined to form a two-member Alfrick & Leigh ward. It stated that the purpose of this proposal was to achieve a good level of electoral equality and to place parishes which share a common parish council within the same district ward. Under the District Council's proposals its proposed Alfrick & Leigh, Kempsey and Powick wards would initially have 11 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 3 per cent more in 2006).

49 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the District Council's proposals for the area secure an acceptable level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. Therefore we have decided to adopt the District Council's Alfrick & Leigh, Kempsey and Powick wards as part of our draft recommendations. Electoral equality would be the same as under its proposals. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Longdon, Morton, Ripple, The Hanleys, Upton-upon-Severn and Wells wards

50 These six wards are located in the south of the district. Longdon ward comprises the parishes of Berrow, Bushley, Eldersfield, Holdfast, Longdon, Pendock and Queenhill, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (21 per cent more in 2006). Morton ward comprises the parishes of Birtsmorton, Castlemorton and Welland, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 18 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (16 per cent more in 2006). Ripple ward comprises the parishes of Earl's Croome, Hill Croome and Ripple, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent more in 2006). The Hanleys ward comprises the parishes of Hanley Castle and Guarlford, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer in 2006). Upton-upon-Severn ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by two councillors and currently has 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent fewer in 2006). Wells ward comprises the parishes of Little Malvern and Malvern Wells, is represented by two councillors and currently has 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent fewer in 2006).

51 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Longdon, Morton, Ripple and Wells wards be maintained on their current boundaries. It argued that the parishes in its proposed Longdon ward shared a strong commonality of interest. It also argued that, although its proposed Wells ward would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average by 2006, this was preferable to combining its proposed Morton and Wells wards in a three-member ward. It stated that that the latter alternative would not provide for "effective and convenient local government nor reflect the interests and identities of these different parishes". It proposed that the parishes of Hanley Castle and Upton upon Severn be combined in a two-member Upton & Hanley ward. Under the District Council's proposals its proposed Longdon, Morton, Ripple, Upton & Hanley and Wells wards would initially have 10 per cent more, 7 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 11 per cent more and 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 10 per cent more and 12 per cent fewer in 2006).

52 Malvern Wells Parish Council proposed that the current Wells ward be maintained on its current boundaries, arguing that the combination of the parishes of Malvern Wells and Little Malvern was long established.

53 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note the argumentation of the District Council and Malvern Wells Parish Council with regard to the proposed Wells ward. However, we note that it would have 12 per cent fewer electors by 2006 and that, were the proposed Morton and Wells wards combined to form a three-member Morton & Wells ward, an improved level of electoral equality would be achieved, while having regard to community identity and convenient and effective local government. We are therefore adopting this as part of our draft recommendations. We are of the view that the District Council's proposed Longdon, Ripple and Upton & Hanley wards would best reflect the statutory criteria in the remainder of the area and are therefore adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

54 Under our draft proposals our proposed Longdon, Ripple and Upton & Hanley wards would initially have 10 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (9 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 10 per cent more in 2006). Our proposed Morton & Wells ward would have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially (6 per cent fewer in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

Malvern town (six wards)

55 The six wards of Chase, Langland, Link, Priory, Trinity and West comprise the town of Malvern and the parish of West Malvern. Chase, Langland, Link and Trinity wards are each represented by three councillors and currently have 15 per cent more, 13 per cent more, 4 per cent more and 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (12 per cent more, 11 per cent more, 2 per cent more and 23 per cent more in 2006). Priory and West wards are each represented by two councillors and currently have 25 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (25 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer in 2006).

56 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Chase and Langland wards be largely maintained, subject to avoiding running boundaries along the centre of main roads and thus uniting both sides of a road in one ward. It also proposed that Langland ward be renamed Pickersleigh ward, arguing that the name Pickersleigh is a “much older geographic name” for the area and that signposts in Maderesfield give directions to Pickersleigh. It proposed extending the current Priory ward northwards to border Link Common. It proposed that the current West ward be extended eastwards towards Link Top to form a revised West ward and proposed a new two-member Dyson Perrins ward to the north of the current West ward, to the north of and including Somers Park Avenue and to the west of the railway line. Its proposed Link ward would comprise the area to the east of the railway line and to the north of the proposed Pickersleigh ward and that area to the west of the railway line, to the north of its proposed Priory ward, to the east of its proposed West ward and to the south of its proposed Dyson Perrins ward. Its proposed Chase, Dyson Perrins, Link, Pickersleigh, Priory and West wards would initially have 6 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more, 1 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more in 2006).

57 Malvern Town Council supported the District Council’s proposals for the area, also supporting the proposed Dyson Perrins ward name but accepting that the proposed Pickersleigh ward name had proved controversial. Pickersleigh Residents’ Group supported the District Council’s proposed Pickersleigh ward name.

58 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that the District Council’s proposals secure good levels of electoral equality in the area and have received the support of Malvern Town Council. We are therefore adopting the District Council’s proposed Chase, Dyson Perrins, Link, Pickersleigh, Priory and West wards as part of our draft recommendations. We have noted, however, that during Stage One its proposed Pickersleigh ward name did not receive full support in the area and would welcome further views from interested parties during Stage Three. Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

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

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 42 to 38;
- there should be 21 wards;
- the boundaries of 23 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of six, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

61 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following area:

- We propose combining the District Council's proposed Morton and Wells wards to form a three-member Morton & Wells ward.

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

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	42	38	42	38
Number of wards	27	21	27	21
Average number of electors per councillor	1,372	1,517	1,416	1,566
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	17	5	17	2
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	8	0

63 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Malvern Hills District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 17 to five. By 2006 two wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation
Malvern Hills District Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

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

65 Malvern Town Council is currently served by 25 councillors representing six wards: Chase, Langland, Link and Trinity each returning five councillors, Priory returning three councillors and West returning two councillors.

66 At Stage One the District Council and Malvern Town Council proposed that the number of town councillors be reduced to 20. They proposed that the 20 councillors be divided between six wards, to be coterminous with the proposed district wards in the town, Chase, Link and Pickersleigh (each returning four councillors), Dyson Perrins and Priory (each returning three councillors) and North Malvern (returning two councillors).

67 In the light of our draft recommendations we propose adopting the District Council and Town Council’s proposed parishing arrangements for Malvern town.

Draft Recommendation
Malvern Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, five fewer than at present, representing six wards: Chase, Link and Pickersleigh (each returning four councillors), Dyson Perrins and Priory (each returning three councillors) and North Malvern (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

68 The parish of Pendock is currently served by five councillors and is unwarded. The District Council, in agreement with the parish council, proposed that the number of councillors serving the parish be increased to seven, arguing that there were “difficulties in forming a quorum at times”.

69 Our proposed district warding arrangements would result in no change to this area and we are content to adopt the District Council's proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

Draft Recommendation

Pendock Parish Council should comprise seven parish councillors, instead of the current five.

70 The parish of Malvern Wells is currently served by 13 councillors representing two wards: All Saints (returning six councillors) and St Peter's (returning seven councillors).

71 At Stage One the District Council and Malvern Wells Parish Council proposed that the boundary between All Saints ward and St Peter's ward be amended to include properties on Hanley Road and the western side of Wells Road within All Saints parish ward. It stated that this would allow for a more equal representation between the two wards. We have considered the representations received and would have no objection in principle to the proposals. However, we would ask that detailed maps are provided as to the precise boundary between these two parish wards.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Malvern Hills

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

74 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

www.lgce.gov.uk

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Malvern Hills: Detailed Mapping

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

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

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Great Malvern.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Malvern Hills: Key Map

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Table B1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

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