

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
MENDIP
IN SOMERSET

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

November 1997

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Mendip in Somerset.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Professor Michael Clarke

Robin Gray

Bob Scruton

David Thomas

Adrian Stungo (Chief Executive)

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Local Government Commission for England

4 November 1997

Dear Secretary of State

On 25 October 1996 the Commission commenced a periodic electoral review of the district of Mendip under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 1997 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 87) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Mendip.

We recommend that Mendip District Council should be served by 46 councillors representing 35 wards, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Mendip on 25 October 1996. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 28 May 1997, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Mendip because:

- **in 20 of the 32 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district; in six wards, the number varies by more than 20 per cent;**
- **this electoral imbalance is not expected to improve by 2001.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1) are that:

- **Mendip District Council should be served by 46 councillors, compared with 43 at present;**
- **there should be 35 wards, three more than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, while eight wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 24 of the 35 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**

- **By 2001, the number of electors per councillor is projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in 30 wards; none of the wards would have an electoral variance over 20 per cent.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet and Street town councils and Wells City Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 16 December 1997:

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

Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ashwick and Ston Easton	1	Ashwick ward (the parishes of Ashwick, Binegar and Emborough); Chilcompton and Ston Easton ward (part – the parish of Ston Easton)	Map 2
2	Avalon	1	Avalon ward (part – the parishes of Baltonsborough, Butleigh and West Pennard)	Map 2
3	Beacon	1	Beacon ward (the parishes of Cranmore, Doultong, Downhead and Stoke St Michael); Mells ward (part – the parish of Leigh-on-Mendip)	Map 2
4	Beckington and Rode	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Beckington, Berkley, Rode and Tellisford)	Map 2
5	Chilcompton	1	Chilcompton and Ston Easton ward (part – the parish of Chilcompton)	Map 2
6	Coleford	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Coleford)	Map 2
7	Creech	1	Creech ward (part – the parishes of Evercreech and Milton Clevedon)	Map 2
8	Frome Berkley Down	2	Fromefield parish ward of Frome town (part)	Map 2 and large map
9	Frome Fromefield	2	Fromefield parish ward of Frome town (part); Welshmill parish ward of Frome town (part)	Map 2 and large map
10	Frome Keyford	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part); Keyford parish ward of Frome town	Map 2 and large map
11	Frome Park	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part)	Map 2 and large map
12	Frome Welshmill	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part); Welshmill parish ward of Frome town (part)	Map 2 and large map
13	Glastonbury St Benedict's	1	St Benedict's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part); St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)	Maps 2 and A2
14	Glastonbury St Edmund's	1	St Edmund's parish ward of Glastonbury town; St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)	Maps 2 and A2

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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
15	Glastonbury St John's	1	St Benedict's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part); St John's parish ward of Glastonbury town	Maps 2 and A2
16	Glastonbury St Mary's	1	St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)	Maps 2 and A2
17	Knowle	1	Rodney ward (part – the parish of Westbury); Sheppey ward (part – the parish of Wookey)	Map 2
18	Mells	1	Mells ward (part – the parishes of Elm, Mells, Selwood and Whatley); Postlebury ward (part – the parish of Trudoxhill)	Map 2
19	Moor	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Godney, Meare, Sharpham and Walton)	Map 2
20	Nedge	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Chewton Mendip, Litton and St Cuthbert (Out) East and St Cuthbert (Out) South parish wards)	Map 2
21	Nordinton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Buckland Dinham, Hemington, Lullington and Norton St Philip)	Map 2
22	Postlebury	1	Creech ward (part – the parish of Batcombe); Postlebury ward (part – the parishes of Nunney, Upton Noble, Wanstrow and Witham Friary)	Map 2
23	Pylcombe	1	Avalon ward (part – the parish of North Wootton); Pylcombe ward (the parishes of Croscombe, Pilton and Pylle)	Map 2
24	Rodney and Priddy	1	Ebbor ward (part – the parish of Priddy); Rodney ward (part – the parish of Rodney Stoke)	Map 2
25	St Cuthbert Out North and West	1	Ebbor ward (part – the parish ward of St Cuthbert (Out) North); Sheppey ward (part – the parish ward of St Cuthbert (Out) West)	Map 2
26	Shepton East	2	Shepton Mallet ward (part)	Maps 2, A3 and large map

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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
27	Shepton West	2	Shepton Mallet ward (part)	Maps 2, A3 and large map
28	Stratton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Holcombe, Kilmersdon and Stratton on the Fosse)	Map 2
29	Street North	2	North parish ward of Street town (part)	Maps 2 and A4
30	Street South	2	North parish ward of Street town (part); South parish ward of Street town (part)	Maps 2 and A4
31	Street West	1	South parish ward of Street town (part)	Maps 2 and A4
32	Vale	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Ditcheat, East Pennard, Lamyat, Lydford-on-Fosse and West Bradley)	Map 2
33	Wells Central	1	Central parish ward of Wells city (part)	Maps 2 and A5
34	Wells St Cuthbert's	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (St Cuthbert's parish ward of Wells city)	Map 2
35	Wells St Thomas	2	Central parish ward of Wells city (part); St Thomas parish ward of Wells city	Maps 2 and A5

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Mendip in Somerset. We have now reviewed all the districts in Somerset as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

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

3 Regard was also had to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996 and supplemented in September 1996), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 25 October 1996, when we wrote to Mendip District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to Somerset County Council, the Avon & Somerset Police Authority, the local authority associations, Somerset Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 20 January 1997. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three began on 28 May 1997 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Mendip in Somerset*, and ended on 22 July 1997. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and published our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

6 The district of Mendip is located in the north-east of administrative Somerset and its main towns are Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and the city of Wells. The largest of the five, Frome, accounts for almost a quarter of the total electorate for the district, with the rural area accounting for some 30,000 electors (40 per cent of the total electorate).

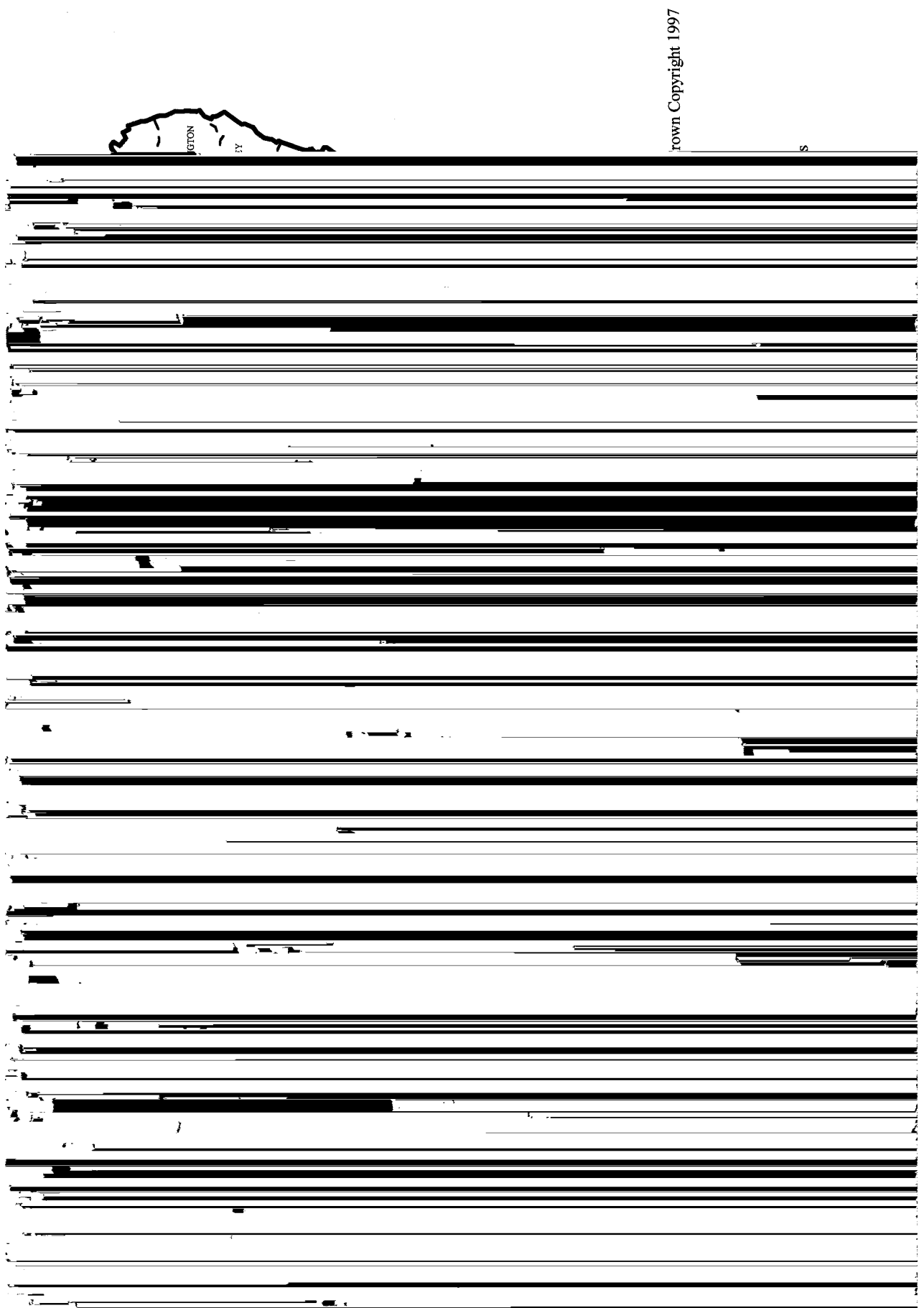
7 The topography of the district includes the Mendip hills in the north and the low peat levels in the south. Sedgemoor district lies to the west, South Somerset district to the south and the county boundary with Wiltshire forms Mendip's eastern boundary. The new Bath & North East Somerset Council lies to the north of the Mendip hills. The north-west of the district is the focus of the tourist industry for the area, with Wells Cathedral being one of the attractions. The A361 links Frome, Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury, and the A39 provides a link between the south-west of the district and the M5. The area is entirely parished, containing four town councils, one city council, 47 parish councils and 10 parish meetings.

8 Mendip District Council currently has 43 councillors elected from 32 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2). Two wards are each represented by three councillors, seven wards elect two councillors each, while the other 23 wards elect a single councillor each. The whole Council is elected together every four years, with the next elections due in May 1999. The electorate of the district is 75,883 (February 1996) and each councillor represents an average of 1,765 electors. The District Council forecasts that the electorate will increase by nearly 5 per cent to 79,374 by the year 2001, which would change the average number of electors per councillor to 1,846 (Figure 2).

9 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the average for the district in percentage terms, has been calculated. In the report, this calculation may also be described as 'electoral variance'.

10 Since the last electoral review was completed in 1976 by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), changes in population and electorate have been unevenly spread across the district. As a result, in 20 of the 32 wards the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average, and in six wards it varies by more than 20 per cent. The most significant electoral imbalance is in Frome Badcox ward where the councillors represent on average 2,394 electors each, 36 per cent more electors than the district average of 1,765.

*Map 1:
Existing Wards in Mendip*



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Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashwick	1	1,325	1,325	-25	1,390	1,390	-25
2 Avalon	1	2,040	2,040	16	2,130	2,130	15
3 Beacon	1	1,557	1,557	-12	1,586	1,586	-14
4 Beckington and Rode	1	1,806	1,806	2	1,925	1,925	4
5 Chilcompton and Ston Easton	1	1,911	1,911	8	2,069	2,069	12
6 Coleford	1	1,740	1,740	-1	1,765	1,765	-4
7 Creech	1	2,114	2,114	20	2,121	2,121	15
8 Ebbor	1	1,343	1,343	-24	1,330	1,330	-28
9 Frome Badcox	2	4,787	2,394	36	4,950	2,475	34
10 Frome Fromefield	3	6,235	2,078	18	6,550	2,183	18
11 Frome Keyford	2	3,131	1,566	-11	3,000	1,500	-19
12 Frome Welshmill	2	3,505	1,753	-1	3,500	1,750	-5
13 Glastonbury St Benedict's	1	1,421	1,421	-19	1,610	1,610	-13
14 Glastonbury St Edmund's	1	1,362	1,362	-23	1,390	1,390	-25
15 Glastonbury St John's	1	1,369	1,369	-22	1,450	1,450	-21
16 Glastonbury St Mary's	1	1,996	1,996	13	2,120	2,120	15
17 Mells	1	1,872	1,872	6	1,905	1,905	3
18 Moor	1	1,922	1,922	9	2,045	2,045	11
19 Nedge	1	1,310	1,310	-26	1,765	1,765	-4
20 Nordinton	1	1,573	1,573	-11	1,645	1,645	-11
21 Postlebury	1	1,664	1,664	-6	1,739	1,739	-6
22 Pylcombe	1	1,475	1,475	-16	1,505	1,505	-18

continued overleaf

Figure 2 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Rodney	1	1,576	1,576	-11	1,654	1,654	-10
24 Sheppey	1	1,840	1,840	4	1,910	1,910	3
25 Shepton Mallet	3	5,916	1,972	12	6,600	2,200	19
26 Stratton	1	1,826	1,826	3	1,810	1,810	-2
27 Street North	2	3,644	1,822	3	3,850	1,925	4
28 Street South	2	4,028	2,014	14	4,150	2,075	12
29 Vale	1	1,566	1,566	-11	1,610	1,610	-13
30 Wells Central	1	1,782	1,782	1	1,950	1,950	6
31 Wells St Cuthbert's	2	3,393	1,697	-4	3,450	1,725	-7
32 Wells St Thomas	2	2,854	1,427	-19	2,900	1,450	-21
Totals	43	75,883	—	—	79,374	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,765	—	—	1,846	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Mendip District Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1996, electors in Wells St Thomas ward were relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in Frome Badcox ward were relatively under-represented by 36 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

¹¹ During Stage One we received representations from Mendip District Council, four parish councils and three town councils. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in the report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Mendip in Somerset*. We proposed:

- (a) that Mendip District Council should be served by 46 councillors representing 36 wards, compared to 43 councillors representing 32 wards at present;
- (b) the re-warding of Frome, Glastonbury, Street and Wells, and warding Shepton Mallet for the first time; these towns should respectively be served by 10 councillors (compared with nine at present), four councillors, five councillors (four at present), five councillors and four councillors (three at present);
- (c) that all wards in the rural areas of the district, many of which would be modified, should return a single member;
- (d) modifications to the town and city council arrangements of Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Wells.

Draft Recommendation

Mendip District Council should comprise 46 councillors, serving 36 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

¹² Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 24 of the 36 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was expected to improve during the period to 2001, by which time only four wards were expected to vary by more than 10 per cent.

¹³ Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

14 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 48 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission.

Mendip District Council

15 The Council broadly agreed with our draft recommendations, including in relation to the overall council size, but put forward alternative proposals for the following wards:

- (a) in Shepton Mallet, the Council supported the establishment of two two-member wards for the town rather than our draft recommendation for four single-member wards;
- (b) in Street, the Council proposed that the town should be served by two two-member wards and one single-member ward, rather than our draft recommendation of one three-member and one two-member ward;
- (c) the Council supported all our proposals for the rural area of the district except our proposal to transfer Tellisford parish into Nordinton ward from Beckington and Rode ward. Instead it proposed no change to both wards.

Shepton Mallet Liberal Democrats

16 During Stage Three, the Shepton Mallet Branch of the Liberal Democrats supported our proposal for four single-member district council wards for the town, and that each ward should also return four councillors to the Town Council.

Wells Conservative Association

17 The Wells Conservative Association supported our proposals for the 'rural' area of the district, although it proposed renaming Rodney and Ebbor ward as 'Rodney and Priddy'. It also stated that St Cuthbert Out North and West ward should be renamed, but did not suggest an alternative. The Association opposed our draft proposals in four towns and submitted alternative arrangements for a

number of wards, including three of the four proposed wards in Glastonbury and three of the four proposed wards in Shepton Mallet. The Association also suggested that the towns of Street and Wells be served by single-member wards, to be consistent with the current arrangement in Glastonbury, and as we proposed in Shepton Mallet.

Parish and Town Councils

18 During Stage Three, representations were received from Wells City Council, three town councils, seven parish councils and one parish meeting. Wells City Council opposed our proposed boundary modification between two of its three wards and expressed its preference for no change. Frome Town Council supported our draft recommendations for the town, although it requested a minor boundary modification between two of the wards.

19 Shepton Mallet Town Council supported an additional (fourth) district councillor for the town, but expressed opposition to our proposed four single-member wards. Instead it proposed that the four district councillors should be returned from two two-member wards, and it proposed boundaries in that regard. Street Town Council supported our draft recommendation that the town receive an additional (fifth) district councillor, but did not agree with our proposed ward boundaries. Instead it supported the District Council's Stage Three proposal for the five district councillors to be returned from two two-member wards and one single-member ward.

20 Of the seven parish councils which responded during Stage Three, Lydford on Fosse Parish Council and St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for their respective areas. Wookey Parish Council supported the configuration of parishes in its proposed ward, but proposed that the ward should be named 'Knowle'. Nunney Parish Council opposed our recommendation to transfer Trudoxhill parish (from Postlebury ward) into Mells ward and Batcombe parish (from Creech ward) into Postlebury ward. Rode Parish Council opposed our proposal for Tellisford parish to be transferred from Beckington and Rode ward into Nordinton ward.

21 Rodney Stoke Parish Council stated that our proposal to place the parish in a ward with Priddy could “present problems”, and instead proposed no change to Ebbor ward. Trudoxhill Parish Council opposed the proposal for the parish to be transferred into Mells ward from Postlebury ward, while the Tellisford Parish Meeting opposed our proposal for the parish to be transferred from Beckington and Rode ward into Nordinton ward.

25 Councillor Wilson opposed our proposal for Tellisford parish to be transferred from Beckington and Rode ward into Nordinton ward, as did 18 residents from that area. A resident supported the principle of four single-member wards for Shepton Mallet but suggested that the area of Bowlsh should be combined within Shepton West ward.

Members of Parliament

22 David Heath, MP for Somerton and Frome, wrote in support of a proposal from Councillor Potter of Frome (see below). He also stated that a review of the county divisions in Frome should be undertaken soon, due to the area having an electorate which is “now significantly above the average”.

Other Representations

23 We received a further 32 representations in response to our draft recommendations. Somerset County Council and the Somerset Association of Local Councils both wrote in general terms and did not make any specific comments regarding our draft proposals. Councillor Potter of Frome submitted detailed proposals for five two-member wards in the town using different boundaries to those proposed by us. Councillors Bawden, Cross, Garland and Netley each wrote to us expressing their support for Councillor Potter’s proposals, as did a resident. Councillor Collins proposed an alternative configuration of the parishes in the western area of the district and Councillor St John opposed our proposal for the parish of Ston Easton to be transferred from Chilcompton and Ston Easton ward into a new Ashwick and Ston Easton ward.

24 Councillor King supported our proposal for an additional (fifth) district councillor for Street but suggested that the town should instead be served by one single-member ward and two two-member wards. He also put forward, as an alternative, modified boundaries for one two-member ward and one three-member ward in the town. Councillor Stokes supported our proposal for an additional (tenth) district councillor for Frome, but proposed alternative boundaries between Berkley Down and Fromefield wards and between Fromefield and Welshmill wards.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

26 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Mendip is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

27 However, our function is not merely arithmetical, for three reasons. First, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

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

29 The LGBC’s approach had considerable merit. It combined a clearly defined tolerance threshold with the flexibility necessary to achieve reasonable electoral equality across a local authority’s area. Accordingly, we have adopted this approach in our electoral reviews.

30 In our March 1996 *Guidance*, we expressed the view that “proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances ... and will have

to be justified in full”. However, as emphasised in our September 1996 supplement to the *Guidance*, while we accept that absolute equality of representation is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such equality should be the starting point in any electoral review.

Electorate Projections

31 During Stage One, the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the period 1996 to 2001, projecting an increase in the electorate of more than 4 per cent over the five-year period, from 75,883 to 79,374. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice has been obtained from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of ward boundary changes. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to projected electorates, were content that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

32 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate projections during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they provide the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

33 Our March 1996 *Guidance* indicated that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a borough or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

34 Mendip District Council is at present served by 43 councillors. It proposed an increase to council size during Stage One to 46. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 46 members

and invited further comments. In its Stage Three submission, the District Council reiterated its support for a 46-member council, and we have not received any evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Electoral Arrangements

35 Having considered all representations received during Stage Three of the review, we have reviewed our draft recommendations. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Frome (four wards);
- (b) Glastonbury (four wards);
- (c) Shepton Mallet;
- (d) Street (two wards);
- (e) Wells (three wards);
- (f) the western wards of Avalon, Ebbor, Moor, Nedge, Rodney and Sheppey;
- (g) the northern wards of Ashwick, Beacon, Chilcompton and Ston Easton, Coleford and Stratton;
- (h) the southern wards of Creech, Pylcombe and Vale;
- (i) the eastern wards of Beckington and Rode, Mells, Nordinton and Postlebury.

Frome

36 The town of Frome as a whole is presently under-represented on the District Council. Although the two-member wards of Keyford and Welshmill are marginally over-represented by 11 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, the three-member ward of Fromefield is under-represented by 18 per cent and the two-member ward of Badcox, at 36 per cent, is the most under-represented ward in the district.

37 The District Council's Stage One proposal for a 46-member council, an overall increase of three which we endorsed in our draft recommendations, entitled Frome to an additional (tenth) councillor. In our consultation report, we proposed that Frome be served by five new two-member wards. Our proposal was based on the Stage One submission of Frome Town Council, although we

put forward two minor boundary adjustments between the Town Council's proposed Fromefield and Welshmill wards and Keyford and Park wards in order to improve electoral equality.

38 During Stage Three, the District Council supported our proposal for a 46-member council, although it made no comment regarding the Frome ward boundaries. Frome Town Council supported our recommendations insofar as they affected the town, with the exception of one of the two modifications which we made to its Stage One submission.

39 We also received a submission in relation to Frome from Councillor Potter, a local town and district councillor. The submission, which went into some detail, supported the concept of five two-member wards for Frome, but it differed markedly from our proposal in terms of its proposed boundaries. There is merit in Councillor Potter's submission, which was supported by David Heath MP and a number of Frome councillors, and his proposals would achieve a good level of electoral equality.

40 Having carefully considered Councillor Potter's proposals, we remain of the view that, on balance, our draft proposals for Frome should form the basis of our final recommendations. Frome Town Council developed its proposal from an early stage in the review process and in Stage Three supported our draft recommendations for the town, subject to minor boundary modifications. Mendip District Council did not oppose the proposals. Although Councillor Potter's proposals appear to have equal merit to ours in terms of electoral equality and reflecting community ties, other respondents locally have not had the opportunity to comment on his proposals, an issue which causes us some concern.

41 Therefore, and notwithstanding that the case for the competing schemes for Frome is finely balanced, we are confirming as final our draft recommendations for the two-member Frome wards of Berkley Down, Keyford and Park. These wards would respectively have electoral variances of 4 per cent, 11 per cent and 13 per cent on the 1996 figures, projected to become 6 per cent, 8 per cent and 9 per cent by 2001.

42 We accept Frome Town Council's argument that Clumber Drive would be better placed in Welshmill than Fromefield ward on community grounds. However, the projected electorate of

Welshmill ward means that it would vary by more than 10 per cent by 2001, if this were the only boundary change made. We therefore also propose that an area east of Welshmill Road should become part of Fromefield ward. Such a modification, affecting some 30 electors from Clumber Drive and 94 electors from Fromefield, Rosedale Walk, Spring Road, Stoneleigh Rise and Wickham Rise, would produce electoral variances of 9 per cent in Welshmill ward, both initially and in 2001, and 6 per cent in Fromefield ward, becoming 2 per cent by 2001. The large map inserted at the back of this report details our final recommendations for the Frome ward boundaries.

Glastonbury

43 Glastonbury is currently served by four single-member wards: St Benedict's, St Edmund's, St John's and St Mary's, with the number of electors per councillor in each ward being 19 per cent below, 23 per cent below, 22 per cent below and 13 per cent above the district average respectively. During Stage One the District Council did not propose any modifications to the existing boundaries, but Glastonbury Town Council proposed modifications which would provide electoral variances ranging from 3 per cent to 39 per cent.

44 Electoral equality is difficult to achieve in Glastonbury. It is entitled to between three and four councillors: with three it would be significantly under-represented overall, while with four it would be marginally over-represented. However, to improve electoral equality, we proposed boundary modifications to all four existing wards in the town, along similar lines to those proposed by the Town Council. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in St Benedict's, St Edmund's, St John's and St Mary's wards would be 14 per cent, 5 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent from the district average (7 per cent, 2 per cent, 7 per cent and 7 per cent in 2001).

45 At Stage Three, the District Council did not comment specifically on our proposals for the town and we did not receive a submission from the Town Council. Wells Conservative Association proposed alternative boundaries between St Benedict's and St Mary's wards, in order to transfer the area to the north of Bere Lane into St Benedict's ward. Additionally, the Association suggested that the Abbey grounds

and the Town Hall be transferred into St John's ward from St Benedict's ward.

46 We have concluded that, although the Association's proposals provide electoral variances which improve upon the existing arrangements to the same degree as our draft recommendations, they may not reflect local identities as well. The area north of Bere Lane, which the Association proposed to transfer into St Benedict's ward, appears to have closer ties with the existing St Mary's ward than with St Benedict's ward.

47 On balance, we consider that each of our boundary modifications to the existing four wards in Glastonbury would provide the best electoral equality for the area, having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the town as final (see Map A2 in Appendix A).

Shepton Mallet

48 The three-member Shepton Mallet ward has 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. By 2001, this is projected to worsen to 19 per cent, and the town will just about be entitled to four councillors although it would be marginally over-represented as a result. At the initial stage of the review, the Council proposed that the town be served by an additional (fourth) district councillor but did not propose warding the town.

49 Shepton Mallet Town Council also supported the proposal for a fourth district councillor and expressed its preference not to be split into wards. However, following the close of the initial consultation stage, the Town Council informed us that it would prefer that the town be split into single-member wards. In our draft proposals, we proposed that the town should indeed be served by a fourth district councillor and be split into four single-member wards. Shepton North, Shepton South and Shepton West wards would have electoral variances of no more than 4 per cent from the district average both initially and in 2001, while the number of electors per councillor in Shepton South East ward would be 43 per cent below the average, improving to 15 per cent in 2001, due to the large-scale development in that part of the town.

50 During Stage Three, Shepton Mallet Town Council supported the proposal for four district councillors in the town but preferred for them to

be returned from two two-member wards, rather than four single-member wards, and it proposed boundaries to that effect. The District Council supported the Town Council's view. The Shepton Mallet Liberal Democrats supported our proposal for four single-member wards in the town while the Wells Conservative Association supported the principle of four single-member wards for the town, but proposed modifications to the boundaries of three of the four wards. One resident also supported the principle of four single-member wards for the town and proposed that the area of Bowlish be transferred from the proposed Shepton North ward into the proposed Shepton West ward.

51 The boundaries proposed in Stage Three by the Town Council, and supported by the District Council, are very similar to those that would result if our proposed Shepton North and Shepton South-East wards (to form an 'eastern' ward) and Shepton South and Shepton West wards (to form a 'western' ward) were merged. We have concluded that this may better reflect community identities than our draft recommendations. Additionally, we concur with the District Council, the Town Council, Wells Conservative Association and the resident, that the area of Bowlish should be located in a 'western' rather than an 'eastern' ward.

52 In Shepton Mallet, two two-member wards as proposed by the town council would provide significantly better electoral equality than our draft proposals, with a two-member Shepton East ward having an initial electoral variance of 27 per cent compared to our draft proposal for a Shepton South-East ward which would have an initial electoral variance of 43 per cent. In addition to this, the Bowlish area would be included in a 'western' ward, where it appears to share closer ties, rather than in an 'eastern' ward as our draft recommendations proposed.

53 Given the support that this proposal received from the District Council and the Town Council, we have concluded that Shepton Mallet should be served by an additional (fourth) district councillor representing two two-member wards. We regard this proposal as providing the best balance of our statutory criteria.

54 The number of electors per councillor in Shepton East and Shepton West wards would be 27 per cent and 6 per cent respectively from the district average in 1996 (12 per cent and 3 per cent in 2001). The initial high level of electoral imbalance in Shepton East ward is due to the fact that there is

planned housing development which is projected to increase the electorate of the ward from under 2,500 to over 3,000 by 2001, and forecast to grow still further. Details of the proposed ward boundaries are illustrated in Map A3 at Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Street

55 Street is currently represented by four district councillors serving two two-member wards, Street North and Street South, in which the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent and 14 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent and 12 per cent in 2001). The District Council, in its Stage One submission, proposed that the town be served by an additional (fifth) district councillor, although it did not propose any boundary modifications. We received no other representations on the electoral arrangements for Street.

56 Our draft recommendation for the town was for it to be served by a fifth district councillor, with a consequential minor boundary modification to secure good electoral equality between the two-member North ward and the new three-member South ward. Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Street North and Street South wards would be 10 per cent and 5 per cent below the district average respectively (8 per cent and 7 per cent in 2001).

57 During Stage Three, the District Council supported our proposal for the town to be served by an additional (fifth) district councillor but opposed our proposed ward boundaries. Instead it suggested that the town's five district councillors be returned from one single-member and two two-member wards, and proposed ward boundaries to that end. Street Town Council wrote in support of the District Council's proposals. Wells Conservative Association suggested that the town should be split into five single-member wards, although it proposed no specific boundaries.

58 Additionally, we received a submission from Councillor King, who preferred the town's proposed five district councillors to be returned from one single-member ward and two two-member wards. He did not specify particular boundaries but stated that the single-member ward should be "based on the newer housing estates on the south and west side of Street", which is also where the District Council's proposed single-member ward would lie. He also

proposed alternative boundaries for one two-member ward and one three-member ward.

59 The District Council proposed one single-member and two two-member wards in the town on the grounds that it regarded the electorate as being more effectively represented in single and two-member wards, rather than three-member wards. A three-member Street South ward would, under our draft recommendations, be the only three-member ward in the entire district. On balance, we are of the view that we should modify our draft recommendations in Street to those proposed by the District Council.

60 Our final recommendations are that the town be served by an additional (fifth) district councillor, being returned from one single-member ward, Street West, and two two-member wards, Street North and Street South. The number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below, 9 per cent below and 7 per cent below the district average respectively (8 per cent, 6 per cent and 8 per cent in 2001). Our proposed boundaries for the three wards are illustrated in Map A4 at Appendix A.

Wells

61 Wells currently comprises one single-member ward, Central, and two two-member wards, St Cuthbert's and St Thomas. The number of electors

per councillor in each of the three wards is 1 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 19 per cent below the district average respectively (6 per cent, 7 per cent and 21 per cent in 2001). The District Council, during Stage One, proposed no change to any of the three wards and no other representations were received. In order to reduce the level of inequality in St Thomas ward, our draft proposals involved a minor boundary modification between Central and St Thomas wards, transferring 327 electors to the latter. The resultant variances for each of the three wards would be no more than 12 per cent initially and no more than 7 per cent in 2001.

62 During Stage Three, the District Council did not comment specifically on our proposals for the city while Wells City Council preferred no change and expressed its opposition to our proposals. The City Council stated that if boundary modifications were to be made "then any such alteration should follow natural communities and borders". The Wells Conservative Association proposed that the city be split into single-member wards, but did not propose specific boundaries. No other representations were received.

63 Given the improved electoral equality which our draft recommendations would provide, and the absence of substantial evidence to persuade us to modify such proposals, we have concluded that we should confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Figure 3:
The Existing Western Wards - Constituent Parishes

Present ward	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
		1996	2001
Avalon	Baltonsbrough, Butleigh, North Wootton and West Pennard	16	15
Ebbor	Priddy and St Cuthbert (Out) (part - North parish ward)	-24	-28
Moor	Godney, Meare, Sharpham and Walton	9	11
Nedge	Chewton Mendip, Litton and St Cuthbert (Out) (part - East and South parish wards)	-26	-4
Rodney	Rodney Stoke and Westbury	-11	-10
Sheppey	St Cuthbert (Out) (part - West parish ward) and Wookey	4	3

Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member Wells Central ward and two-member Wells St Thomas wards would initially be 12 per cent and 4 per cent below the district average respectively (7 per cent and 6 per cent in 2001). The two-member Wells St Cuthbert's ward would initially have an electoral variance of 3 per cent and be equal to the average in 2001. Our proposed boundary modification is illustrated in Map A5 at Appendix A.

The western wards of Avalon, Ebbor, Moor, Nedge, Rodney and Sheppey

64 The present configuration of wards in this area is detailed in Figure 3.

65 During Stage One, the only views we received on the warding arrangements of this part of the district were from the District Council, which proposed a reconfiguration of the wards in this area. Our draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals with one exception. We proposed that the parish of Godney should be retained in Moor ward, instead of forming a ward with the parishes of Westbury and Wookey as had been proposed by the District Council. We therefore proposed no change to Moor ward. The Council did not suggest names for any of its proposed wards. Our proposals were as follows:

- Avalon ward, comprising the parishes of Baltonsborough, Butleigh and West Pennard, and varying by 10 per cent above the district average both initially and in 2001;
- Nedge ward, comprising the parishes of Chewton Mendip, Litton and the parish wards of St Cuthbert (Out) East and South, and varying by 21 per cent below the district average improving to 2 per cent above in 2001 following projected growth;
- St Cuthbert Out North and West ward, comprising the parish wards of those names, equalling the district average (3 per cent below in 2001);
- Wookey and Westbury ward, comprising both these parishes and varying by 3 per cent above the district average both initially and in 2001;
- Rodney and Ebbor ward, comprising the parishes of Priddy and Rodney Stoke, and varying by 15 per cent below the district average (16 per cent in 2001);

- Moor ward, comprising the parishes of Godney, Meare, Sharpham and Walton, and varying by 17 per cent above the district average (19 per cent in 2001).

66 During Stage Three, we received six submissions relating to the wards in this area. The District Council supported all our recommendations for the area, including our modification to its original proposals, and support was also forthcoming from St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council. The Wells Conservative Association supported our proposals and added that Rodney and Ebbor ward should be renamed 'Rodney and Priddy'. It also considered our proposed St Cuthbert Out North and West ward should be renamed, without putting forward an alternative. Wookey Parish Council also expressed its support for our recommendations, suggesting that the proposed Wookey and Westbury ward be renamed 'Knowle' ward to reflect local geographical features. Rodney Stoke Parish Council stated that our draft recommendation to combine Rodney Stoke and Priddy parishes could "present problems" and that a better alternative would be for no change to be made to the existing Ebbor ward.

67 Councillor Collins proposed two alternative schemes reconfiguring the parishes in the western area of the district. His first set of proposals would provide variances of between 9 per cent and 47 per cent, while his second set would be likely to provide similar figures with a proposed ward comprising the parishes of Rodney Stoke, Westbury and St Cuthbert (Out) North parish ward varying by 47 per cent, this ward being unchanged from his first scheme. Councillor Collins' proposals do not provide good electoral equality, although they may reflect areas with similar identities, and we do not regard them as being a better alternative to our draft proposals for the area.

68 In our draft recommendations report we recognised that the parishes in this part of the district are located among a number of geographical features. Therefore we accepted that to achieve a good level of electoral equality and reflect local communities, so far as is reasonably practicable, the possible alternative configurations of parishes were limited. Although Rodney Stoke Parish Council would prefer the present Ebbor ward to remain unchanged, the number of electors per councillor in the existing ward is 24 per cent below the district average projected to worsen to 28 per cent in 2001, a substantial degree of electoral inequality.

Figure 4:
The Existing Northern Wards - Constituent Parishes

Present ward	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
		1996	2001
Ashwick	Ashwick, Binegar and Emborough	-25	-25
Beacon	Cranmore, Doultling, Downhead and Stoke St Michael	-12	-14
Chilcompton and Ston Easton	Chilcompton and Ston Easton	8	12
Coleford	Coleford	-1	-4
Stratton	Holcombe, Kilmersdon and Stratton on the Fosse	3	-2

69 Having reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the representations received, we confirm our draft recommendations for ward boundaries in this area as final. In the light of the views expressed, however, we propose two modifications to ward names: Rodney and Ebbor ward should be renamed Rodney and Priddy, and Wookey and Westbury ward should be renamed Knowle.

70 The number of electors per councillor in our proposed wards of Avalon, Knowle, Moor, Nedge, Rodney and Priddy and St Cuthbert Out North and West would be 10 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 17 per cent above, 21 per cent below, 15 per cent below and equal to the average respectively (10 per cent, 3 per cent, 19 per cent, 2 per cent, 16 per cent and 3 per cent in 2001). As we acknowledged in our draft recommendations report, by 2001 the imbalances in Moor and Rodney and Priddy wards would not be ideal. However, we regard such levels of inequality as being inevitable if we are to reflect local identities and community ties in this area.

The northern wards of Ashwick, Beacon, Chilcompton and Ston Easton, Coleford and Stratton

71 The present configuration of wards in this area is detailed in Figure 4.

72 In its Stage One submission, the District Council proposed no change to Coleford and Stratton wards but did propose changes to the other three wards in this area. Its proposals involved Ston Easton parish

being transferred into a new Ashwick and Ston Easton ward with Chilcompton becoming a ward on its own boundaries. Additionally, Leigh-on-Mendip parish would be transferred from Mells ward into Beacon ward. Chilcompton Parish Council wrote to us during Stage One, supporting the District Council's proposed ward configuration in this area, although we also received a submission from Ston Easton Parish Council which opposed the proposal to transfer the parish into a new ward.

73 Our draft recommendations for the five wards in this area were as proposed by the District Council. The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Ashwick and Ston Easton, Beacon, Chilcompton, Coleford and Stratton would be 9 per cent above, 18 per cent above, 12 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 11 per cent above the average for the district respectively (8 per cent, 15 per cent, 8 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent in 2001).

74 During Stage Three, the District Council and the Wells Conservative Association supported our draft proposals for all five wards in this area. Councillor St John opposed our proposal to transfer Ston Easton parish into Ashwick ward. He stated that the parishes of Ston Easton and Chilcompton share closer ties than Ston Easton and Ashwick, and that although good transport links do exist between the latter two parishes, they are not as good as those which exist between Chilcompton and Ston Easton. We received no other representations for the wards in this area.

Figure 5:
The Existing Southern Wards - Constituent Parishes

Present ward	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
		1996	2001
Creech	Batcombe, Evercreech and Milton Clevedon	20	15
Pylcombe	Croscombe, Pilton and Pylle	-16	-18
Vale	Ditcheat, East Pennard, Lamyat, Lydford-on-Fosse and West Bradley	-11	-13

75 Having examined our draft recommendations in the light of the representations we received during Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft proposals for this area as final. Although Ston Easton parish may have better links with Chilcompton parish than with Ashwick parish, we regard our proposals as providing a good level of electoral equality overall without, on our understanding, being at the expense of local community identities.

The southern wards of Creech, Pylcombe and Vale

76 The present configuration of wards in this area is detailed in Figure 5.

77 In its Stage One submission, the District Council proposed that the parish of Batcombe should be transferred from Creech ward into a revised Postlebury ward (detailed below), with the parishes of Creech and Milton Clevedon forming a new Creech ward. It also proposed that the parish of North Wootton should be transferred from the neighbouring Avalon ward into Pylcombe ward and that no change be made to Vale ward. We

received no other representations on the wards in this area. We adopted each of these proposals as part of our draft recommendations, and the number of electors per councillor in the revised wards of Creech and Pylcombe would be 10 per cent and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent in 2001). The number of electors per councillor in the unchanged Vale ward would be 5 per cent below the district average (7 per cent in 2001).

78 During Stage Three, we received five submissions regarding these three wards. The District Council, Lydford-on-Fosse Parish Council and the Wells Conservative Association all supported our proposals. Councillor Collins proposed that the parish of Croscombe (currently in Creech ward) should be combined with the parish of North Wootton (currently in Avalon ward) and the parish wards of St Cuthbert (Out) East (currently in Ebbor ward) and St Cuthbert (Out) South (currently in Sheppey ward) to form a new single-member district ward. We also received the views of Nunney Parish Council, which opposed our proposal for the parish of Batcombe to be transferred from Creech ward into Postlebury ward.

Figure 6:
The Existing Eastern Wards - Constituent Parishes

Present ward	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
		1996	2001
Beckington & Rode	Beckington, Berkley, Rode and Tellisford	2	4
Mells	Elm, Leigh-on-Mendip, Mells, Selwood and Whatley	6	3
Nordinton	Buckland Dinham, Hemington, Lullington and Norton St Philip	-11	-11
Postlebury	Nunney, Trudoxhill, Upton Noble, Wanstrow and Witham Friary	-6	-6

79 In the light of the representations which we have received, we have not been persuaded away from our draft recommendations. Although a number of respondents have opposed our draft recommendations, we regard them as providing the best balance of our statutory criteria. Alternative proposals which we have received would not improve such a balance and we therefore confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final.

The eastern wards of Beckington and Rode, Mells, Nordinton and Postlebury

80 The present configuration of wards in this area is detailed in Figure 6.

81 In its Stage One submission, the District Council proposed modifications to each of the four wards in this area. Its proposals involved Trudoxhill parish being transferred from Postlebury ward into Mells ward; Batcombe parish being transferred from the neighbouring Creech ward into Postlebury ward; Leigh-on-Mendip parish being transferred from Mells ward into Beacon ward and Tellisford parish being transferred from Beckington and Rode ward into Nordinton ward. We also received a submission from Berkley Parish Council which stated that it was “not opposed” to the transferral of Tellisford parish into Nordinton ward.

82 We endorsed the District Council’s proposals in our draft recommendations report. Our proposed Beckington and Rode, Mells and Nordinton wards would vary by 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 3 per cent respectively, with Postlebury ward being equal to the average (4 per cent, 8 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent in 2001).

83 During Stage Three, the District Council supported our recommendations for the wards in this area with the exception of the proposal to transfer Tellisford parish into Nordinton ward. Wells Conservative Association supported our proposals for all four wards. We also received submissions from Councillor Wilson, Rode Parish Council, Tellisford Parish Meeting and 18 residents, all in opposition to the proposed transfer of Tellisford parish into Nordinton ward. Each of the respondents objected on the grounds of community identity, arguing that Tellisford parish shares close ties with Rode, with the two villages being within walking distance of each other. Nunney Parish Council opposed the proposal

for Trudoxhill parish to be transferred into Mells ward and Batcombe parish being transferred into Postlebury ward.

84 We have given due consideration to the views expressed during the consultation period. The submissions received in relation to Tellisford were clearly in favour of the village remaining in its present ward with the neighbouring village of Rode. To retain the existing Beckington and Rode ward would result in an electoral imbalance of 9 per cent in 1996, projected to be 12 per cent in 2001. However, it appears to us that this degree of under-representation is outweighed by the closeness of present community ties. Good electoral equality in the remainder of this part of the district would be secured. We have therefore concluded that we should recommend the retention of Tellisford parish in Beckington and Rode ward and maintain the existing arrangements in both that and Nordinton wards.

85 This modification to our draft recommendations would provide the three wards of Beckington and Rode, Mells and Nordinton with electoral equality of 9 per cent above, 10 per cent above and 5 per cent below the district average respectively, with Postlebury ward being equal to the average (12 per cent, 8 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent in 2001).

Electoral Cycle

86 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the present system of whole-council elections in Mendip be retained. At Stage Three the District Council reiterated its support for this proposal. No other representations were received on this issue, and we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

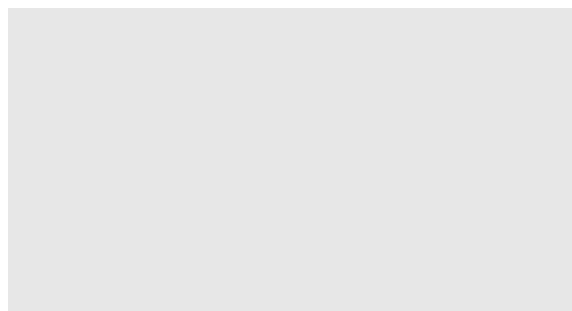
Conclusions

87 We have concluded that there should be an increase in council size from 43 to 46; that there should be 35 wards, three more than at present; that the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified; and that whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years. Our final recommendations for the most part confirm our draft proposals, subject to the amendments indicated for the following wards:

- (a) in Shepton Mallet, there should be two two-member wards named Shepton East and Shepton West. The boundary between the two wards should be the same as merging our initially proposed Shepton North and Shepton South-East

and Shepton South and Shepton West wards, with the exception of the Bowlish area of the town being transferred into Shepton West ward from Shepton East ward. Our proposed boundary is illustrated on Map A3 in Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of this report;

- (b) in Street, the town should be served by two two-member wards, named Street North and Street South, and one single-member Street West ward. The boundaries between the three wards are illustrated on Map A4 in Appendix A;
- (c) in Frome, the proposed boundary between Fromefield and Welshmill wards should be modified, as detailed on the large map inserted at the back of this report;
- (d) Beckington and Rode and Nordinton wards should remain unchanged, with the parish of Tellisford remaining in Beckington and Rode ward;
- (e) our proposed Rodney and Ebbor ward should be remained Rodney and Priddy;
- (f) our proposed Wookey and Westbury ward should be renamed Knowle.



88 Figure 7 shows the impact of our final

*Figure 7:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1996 electorate		2001 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	43	46	43	46
Number of wards	32	35	32	35
Average number of electors per councillor	1,765	1,650	1,846	1,726
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	20	11	20	5
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	2	6	0

council wards. No comments were received during Stage Three and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Final Recommendation

Frome Town Council should continue to comprise 20 councillors, and should in future be elected from the five new wards of Frome Berkley Down, Frome Fromefield, Frome Keyford, Frome Park and Frome Welshmill, with each ward returning four town councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards, as illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

92 At draft stage we proposed that each of the four town council wards in Glastonbury should continue to return four town councillors, and that those wards should be coterminous with the district council wards. No comments were received during Stage Three and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Final Recommendation

Glastonbury Town Council should continue to comprise 16 councillors, with the wards of Glastonbury St Benedict's, Glastonbury St Edmund's, Glastonbury St John's and Glastonbury St Mary's each returning four town councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards, as illustrated on Map A2 in Appendix A.

93 At draft stage we proposed that each of the four proposed town council wards in Shepton Mallet should each return four town councillors. Shepton Mallet Town Council supported our proposal for it to be served by a total of 16 town councillors, but preferred that they be returned from two wards, rather than four. We have decided to modify our draft proposals so that the town would in future be served instead by two wards, and propose that the two wards should return eight town councillors.

Final Recommendation

Shepton Mallet Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, representing two wards: Shepton East and Shepton West, with each ward returning eight town councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be coterminous with the proposed District Council wards, as illustrated on Map A3 in Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

94 At draft stage, we proposed that the two proposed wards of Street North and Street South should be served by five and seven town councillors respectively. During Stage Three, the District Council and the Town Council proposed two two-member district wards and one single-member district ward for the town. Street Town Council additionally proposed that both Street North and Street South wards return five town councillors and Street West return two town councillors. We have decided to modify our draft proposals to endorse the Town Council's proposals.

Final Recommendation

Street Town Council should continue to comprise 12 councillors. However, they should in future be elected from three wards, with the wards of Street North and Street South each returning five town councillors and Street West ward returning two town councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards, as illustrated in Map A4 at Appendix A.

95 At draft stage we proposed that Wells Central ward should continue to return four city councillors and Wells St Cuthbert's and Wells St Thomas wards should each continue to return six city councillors. No specific comments were received and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Final Recommendation

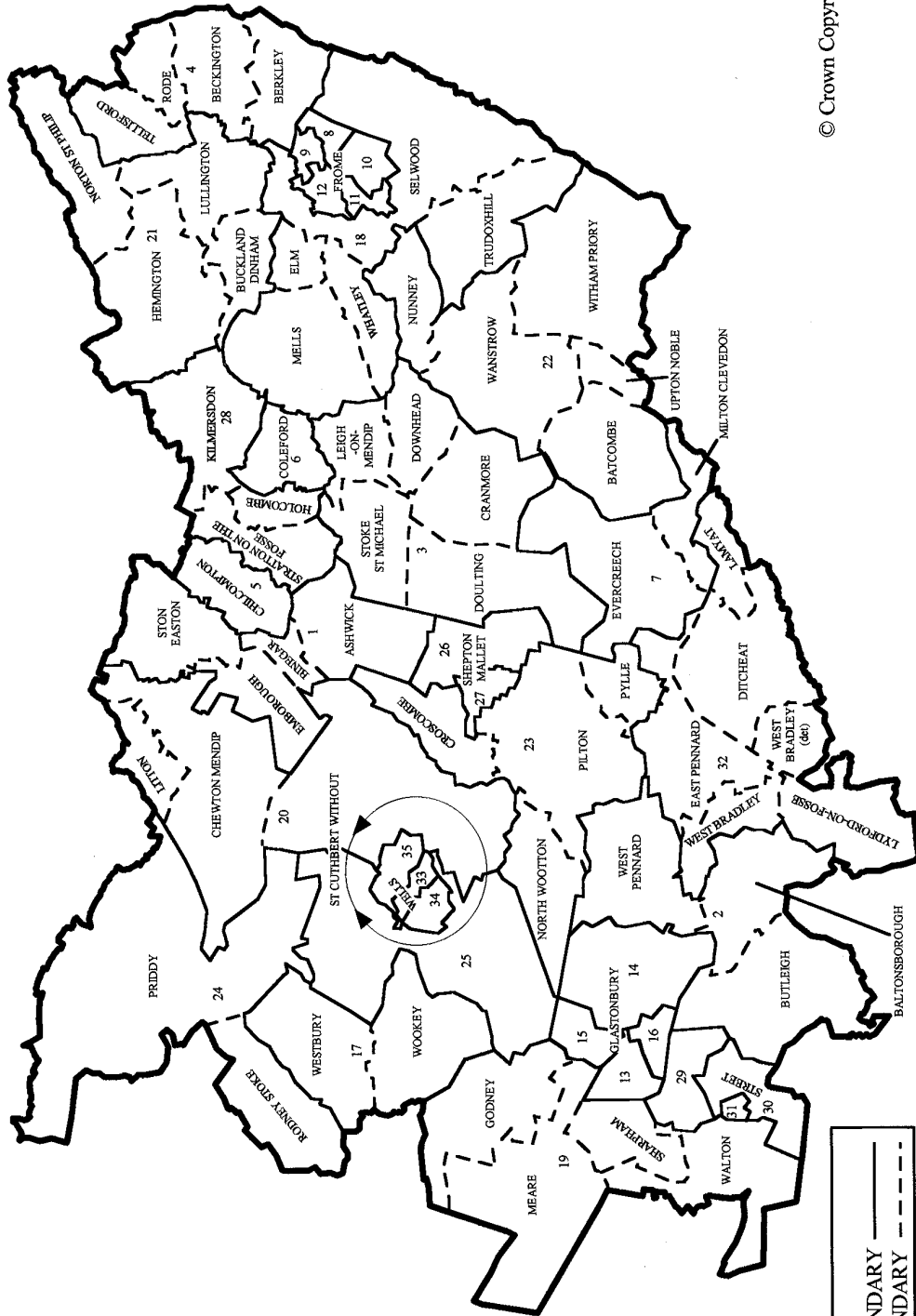
Wells City Council should continue to comprise 16 councillors, representing three wards, with the wards of Wells St Cuthbert's and Wells St Thomas each returning six city councillors, and Wells Central ward returning four city councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the proposed District Council wards, as illustrated in Map A5 at Appendix A.

⁹⁶ In our draft recommendations report, we also proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district. We have not received any evidence to persuade us to move away from this proposal, and therefore confirm it as final.

Final Recommendation

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that for the District Council.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Mendip



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- KEY**
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY ———
EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY - - - -
- Key to Wards**
- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Ashwick and Ston Easton | 7 Creech | 13 Glastonbury St Benedict's | 19 Moor | 25 St Cuthbert Out North and West | 31 Street West |
| 2 Avalon | 8 Frome Berkley Down | 14 Glastonbury St Edmund's | 20 Nedge | 26 Shepton East | 32 Vale |
| 3 Beacon | 9 Frome Fromefield | 15 Glastonbury St John's | 21 Nordinton | 27 Shepton West | 33 Wells Central |
| 4 Beckington and Rode | 10 Frome Keyford | 16 Glastonbury St Mary's | 22 Postlebury | 28 Stratton | 34 Wells St Cuthbert's |
| 5 Chilcompton | 11 Frome Park | 17 Knowle | 23 Pylcombe | 29 Street North | 35 Wells St Thomas |
| 6 Coleford | 12 Frome Welshmill | 18 Mells | 24 Rodney and Priddy | 30 Street South | |

Figure 8:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Mendip

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashwick and Ston Easton	1	1,790	1,790	9	1,865	1,865	8
2 Avalon	1	1,811	1,811	10	1,890	1,890	10
3 Beacon	1	1,944	1,944	18	1,976	1,976	15
4 Beckington and Rode	1	1,806	1,806	9	1,925	1,925	12
5 Chilcompton	1	1,446	1,446	-12	1,594	1,594	-8
6 Coleford	1	1,740	1,740	5	1,765	1,765	2
7 Creech	1	1,807	1,807	10	1,816	1,816	5
8 Frome Berkley Down	2	3,164	1,582	-4	3,258	1,629	-6
9 Frome Fromefield	2	3,510	1,755	6	3,510	1,755	2
10 Frome Keyford	2	3,659	1,830	11	3,739	1,870	8
11 Frome Park	2	3,726	1,863	13	3,746	1,873	9
12 Frome Welshmill	2	3,599	1,800	9	3,747	1,874	9
13 Glastonbury St Benedict's	1	1,422	1,422	-14	1,611	1,611	-7
14 Glastonbury St Edmund's	1	1,724	1,724	5	1,752	1,752	2
15 Glastonbury St John's	1	1,523	1,523	-8	1,604	1,604	-7
16 Glastonbury St Mary's	1	1,479	1,479	-10	1,603	1,603	-7
17 Knowle	1	1,700	1,700	3	1,774	1,774	3
18 Mells	1	1,807	1,807	10	1,855	1,855	8
19 Moor	1	1,922	1,922	17	2,045	2,045	19
20 Nedge	1	1,310	1,310	-21	1,765	1,765	2
21 Nordinton	1	1,573	1,573	-5	1,645	1,645	-5

Figure 8 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Mendip

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Postlebury	1	1,649	1,649	0	1,704	1,704	-1
23 Pylcombe	1	1,704	1,704	3	1,745	1,745	1
24 Rodney and Priddy	1	1,405	1,405	-15	1,450	1,450	-16
25 St Cuthbert Out North and West	1	1,654	1,654	0	1,670	1,670	-3
26 Shepton East	2	2,408	1,204	-27	3,031	1,516	-12
27 Shepton West	2	3,508	1,754	6	3,569	1,785	3
28 Stratton	1	1,826	1,826	11	1,810	1,810	5
29 Street North	2	3,006	1,503	-9	3,232	1,616	-6
30 Street South	2	3,077	1,539	-7	3,179	1,590	-8
31 Street West	1	1,589	1,589	-4	1,589	1,589	-8
32 Vale	1	1,566	1,566	-5	1,610	1,610	-7
33 Wells Central	1	1,455	1,455	-12	1,610	1,610	-7
34 Wells St Cuthbert's	2	3,393	1,697	3	3,450	1,725	0
35 Wells St Thomas	2	3,181	1,591	-4	3,240	1,620	-6
Totals	46	75,883	—	—	79,374	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,650	—	—	1,726	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Mendip District Council's submission.

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

6. NEXT STEPS

⁹⁷ Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Mendip and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

⁹⁸ It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

⁹⁹ All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Mendip: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Mendip area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4, A5 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Glastonbury town.

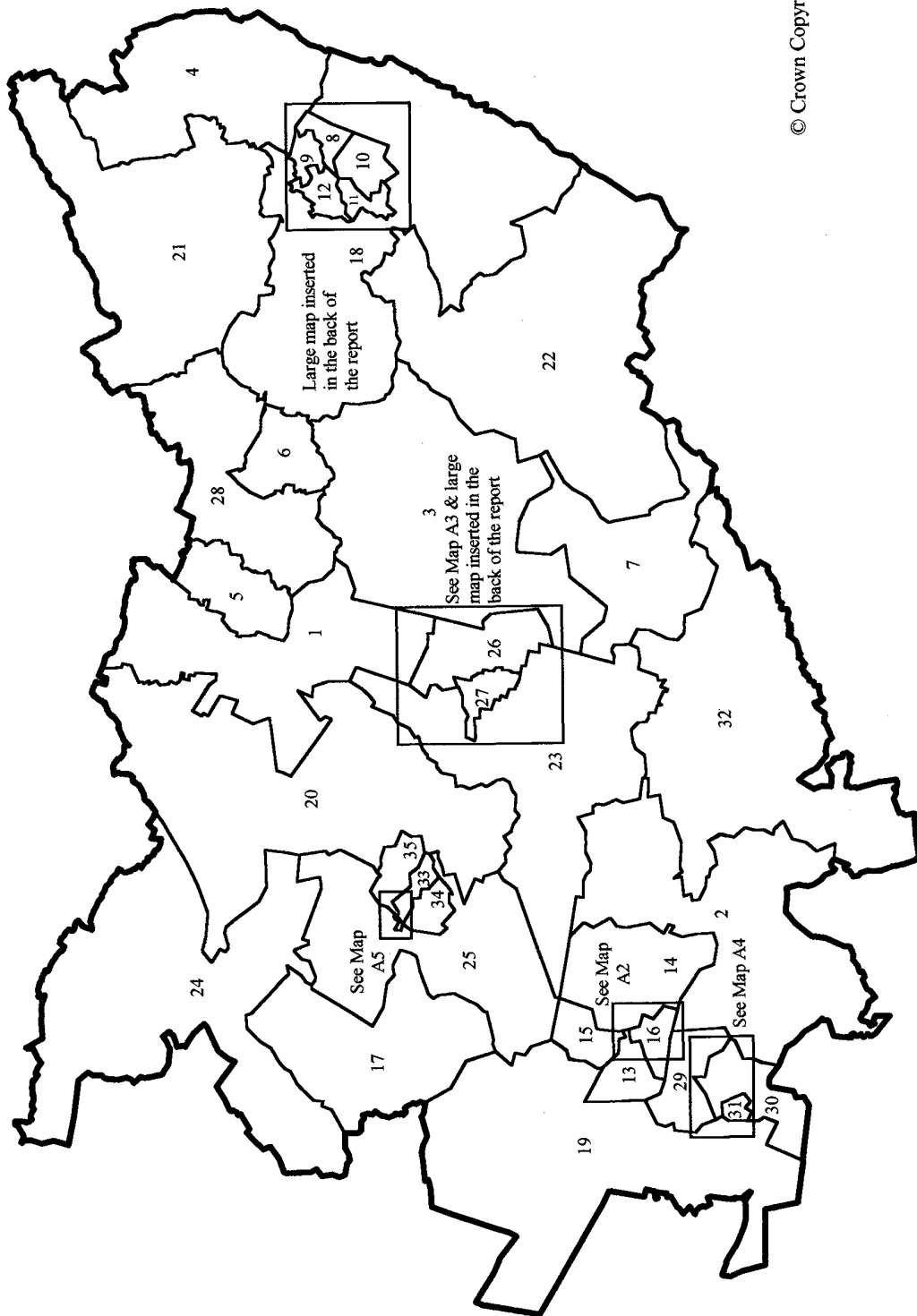
Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between the two new wards in Shepton Mallet town and also indicates the centre of the town which is shown in more detail on the large map at the back of the report.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Street town.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed ward boundary between Wells Central and Wells St Thomas wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of this report illustrates the Commission's proposed ward boundaries in Frome and also the boundaries in the central area for the two new wards in Shepton Mallet.

Map A1:
Final Recommendations for Mendip: Key Map

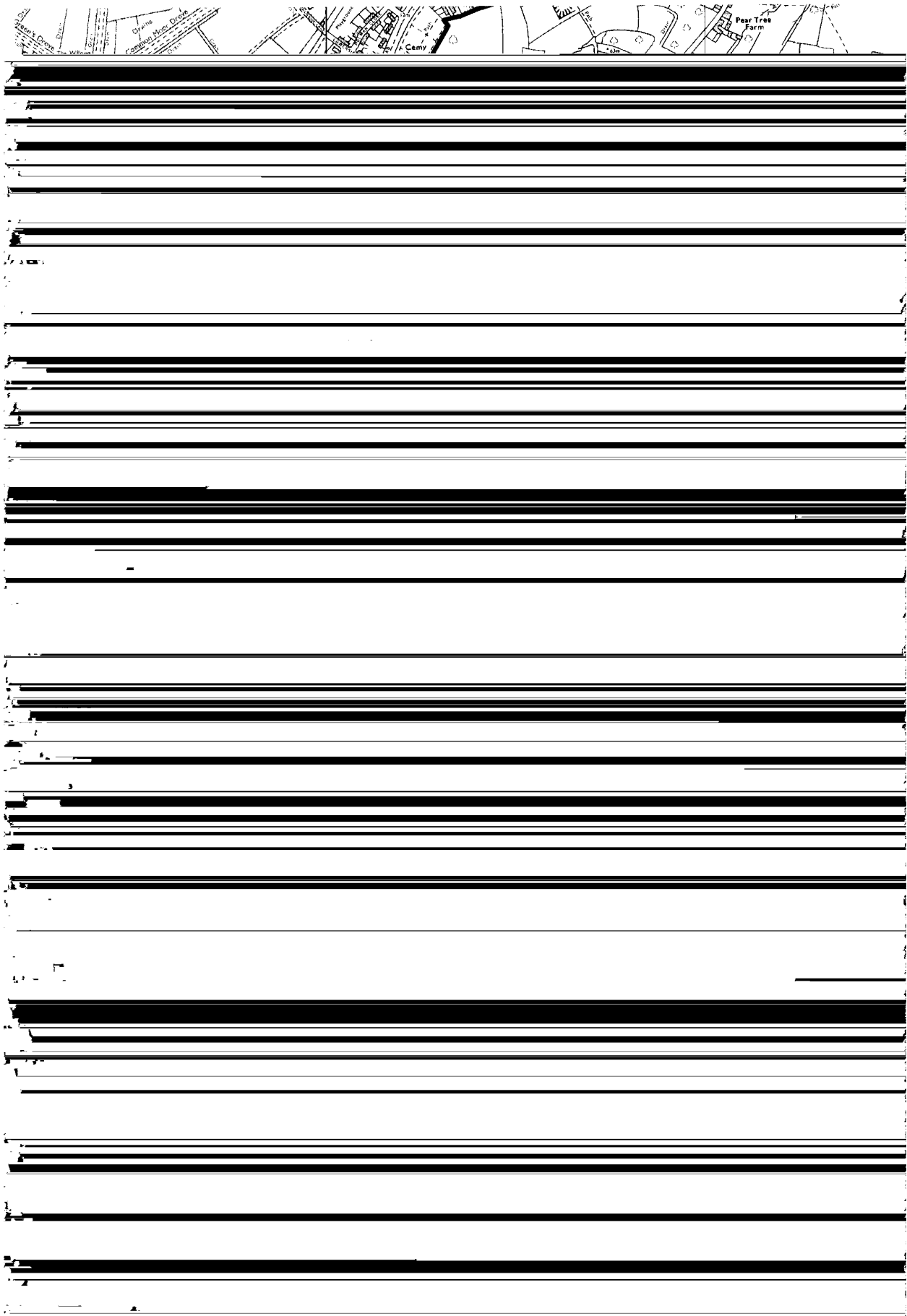


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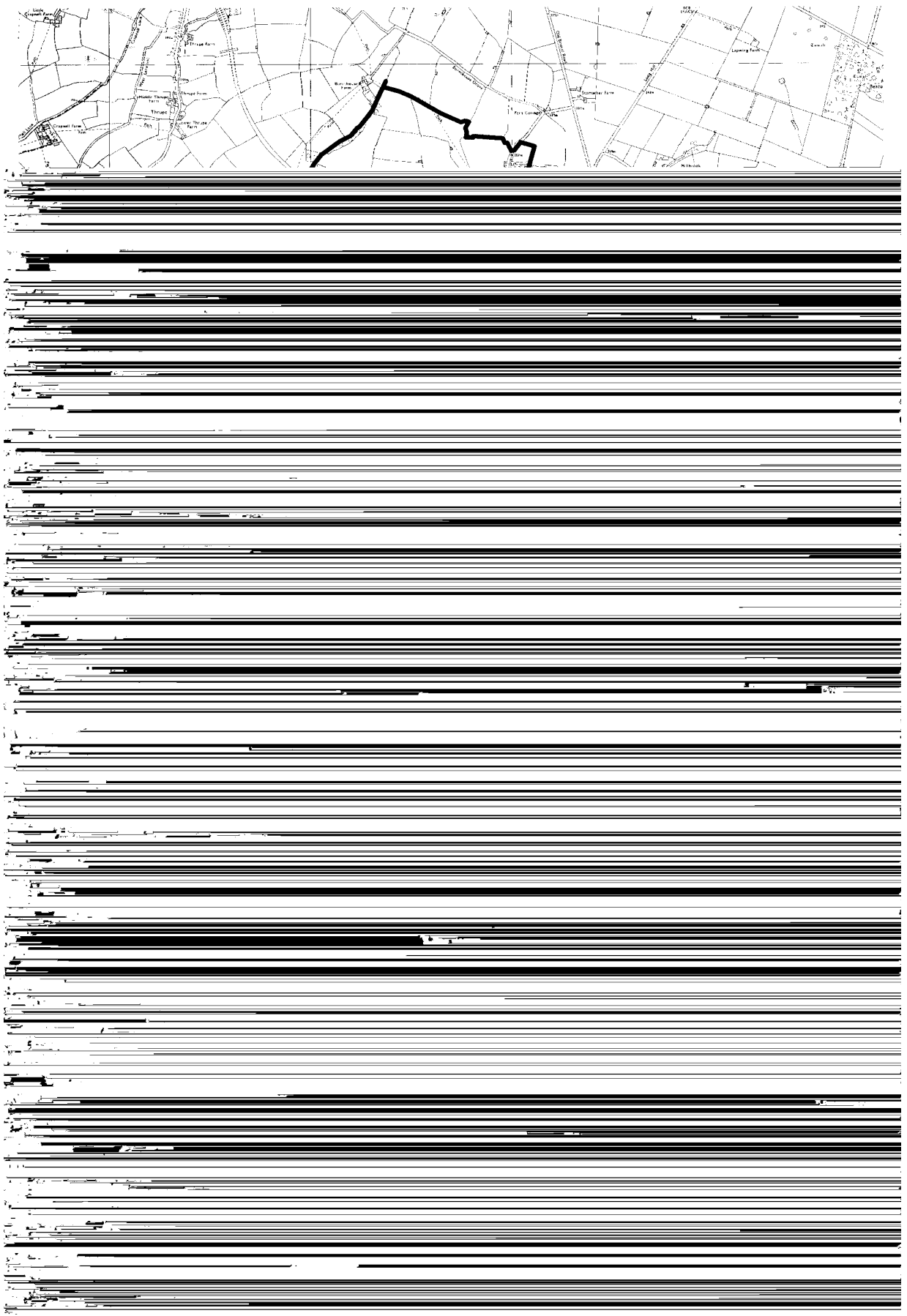
Key to Wards

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|--------------------|----|---------------------------|----|-------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Ashwick and Ston Easton | 7 | Creech | 13 | Glastonbury St Benedict's | 19 | Moor | 25 | St Cuthbert Out North and West | 31 | Street West |
| 2 | Avalon | 8 | Frome Berkley Down | 14 | Glastonbury St Edmund's | 20 | Nedge | 26 | Shepton East | 32 | Vale |
| 3 | Beacon | 9 | Frome Fromefield | 15 | Glastonbury St John's | 21 | Nordinton | 27 | Shepton West | 33 | Wells Central |
| 4 | Beckington and Rode | 10 | Frome Keyford | 16 | Glastonbury St Mary's | 22 | Postlebury | 28 | Stratton | 34 | Wells St Cuthbert's |
| 5 | Chilcompton | 11 | Frome Park | 17 | Knowle | 23 | Pylcombe | 29 | Street North | 35 | Wells St Thomas |
| 6 | Coleford | 12 | Frome Welshmill | 18 | Mells | 24 | Rodney and Priddy | 30 | Street South | | |

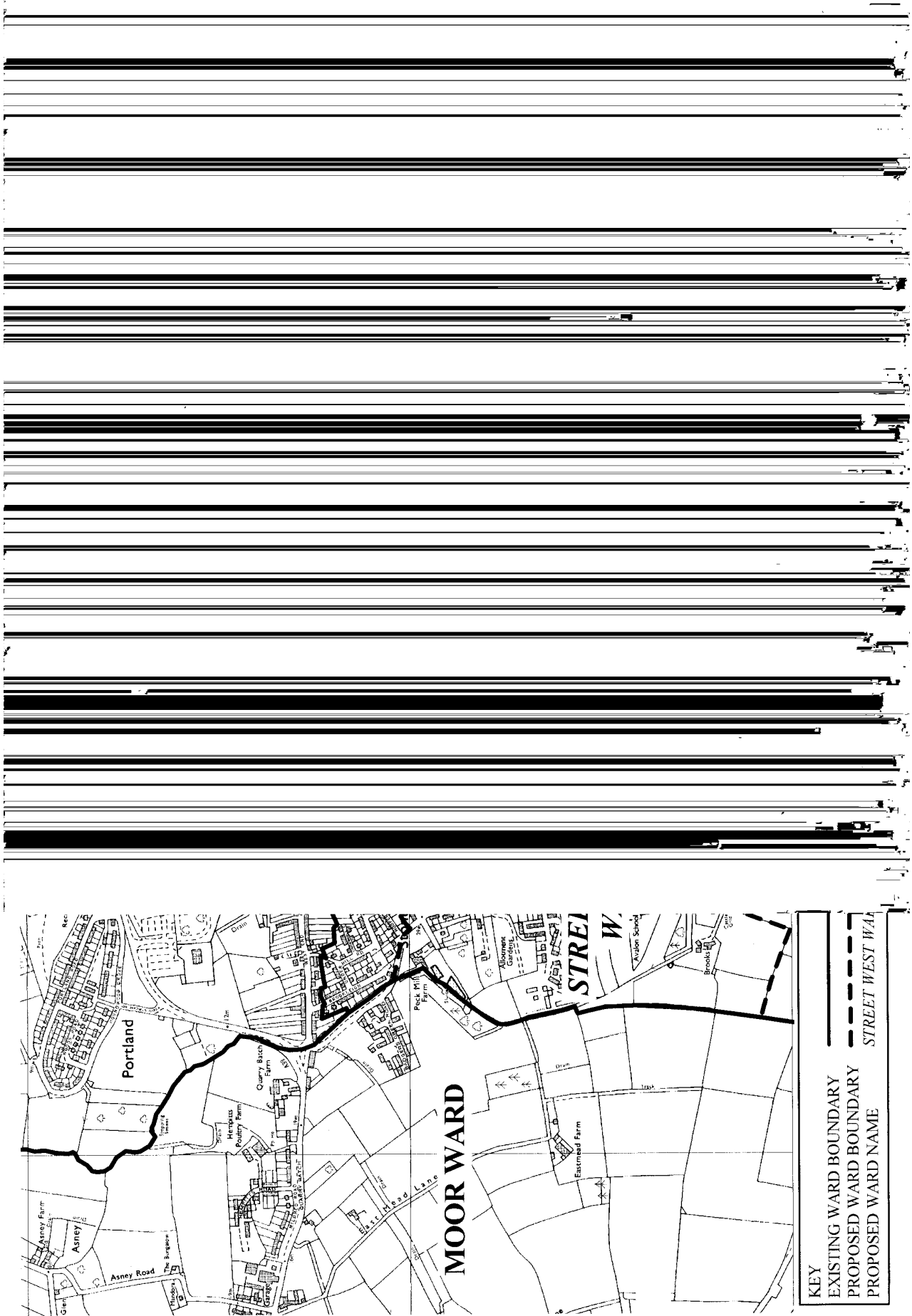
*Map A2:
Proposed Ward Boundaries in Glastonbury*



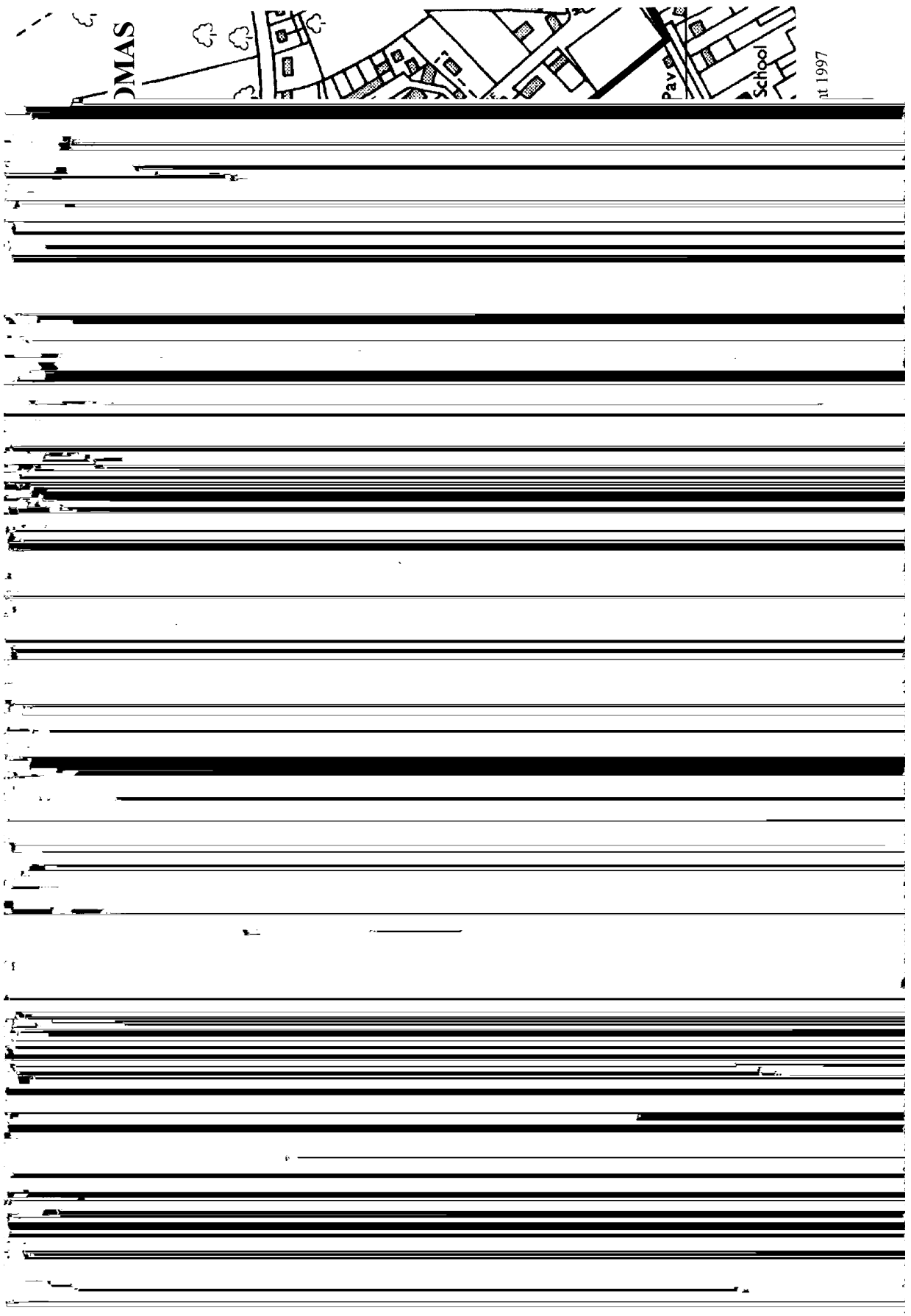
*Map A3:
Proposed Boundary Between the Two New Wards in Shepton Mallet. It also indicates the centre of the town which is shown in more detail in the map inserted at the back of the report*



Map A4:
Proposed Ward Boundaries in Street



Map A5:
Proposed Boundary between Wells Central and Wells St Thomas Wards



APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Mendip

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1 Ashwick and Ston Easton	1	Ashwick ward (the parishes of Ashwick, Binegar and Emborough); Chilcompton and Ston Easton ward (part – the parish of Ston Easton)
2 Avalon	1	Avalon ward (part – the parishes of Baltonsborough, Butleigh and West Pennard)
3 Beacon	1	Beacon ward (the parishes of Cranmore, Doultling, Downhead and Stoke St Michael); Mells ward (part – the parish of Leigh-on-Mendip)
4 Beckington and Rode	1	Beckington and Rode ward (part – the parishes of Beckington, Berkley and Rode)
5 Chilcompton	1	Chilcompton and Ston Easton ward (part – the parish of Chilcompton)
6 Coleford	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Coleford)
7 Creech	1	Creech ward (part – the parishes of Evercreech and Milton Clevedon)
8 Frome Berkley Down	2	Fromefield parish ward of Frome town (part)
9 Frome Fromefield	2	Fromefield parish ward of Frome town (part); Welshmill parish ward of Frome town (part)
10 Frome Keyford	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part); Keyford parish ward of Frome town
11 Frome Park	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part)
12 Frome Welshmill	2	Badcox parish ward of Frome town (part); Welshmill parish ward of Frome town (part)
13 Glastonbury St Benedict's	1	St Benedict's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part); St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)
14 Glastonbury St Edmund's	1	St Edmund's parish ward of Glastonbury town; St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)
15 Glastonbury St John's	1	St Benedict's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part); St John's parish ward of Glastonbury town

Figure B1 (continued)

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
16	Glastonbury St Mary's	1	St Mary's parish ward of Glastonbury town (part)
17	Mells	1	Mells ward (part – the parishes of Elm, Mells, Selwood and Whatley); Postlebury ward (part – the parish of Trudoxhill)
18	Moor	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Godney, Meare, Sharpham and Walton)
19	Nedge	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Chewton Mendip, Litton and St Cuthbert (Out) East and St Cuthbert (Out) South parish wards)
20	Nordinton	1	Beckington and Rode ward (part – the parish of Tellisford); Nordinton ward (the parishes of Buckland Dinham, Hemington, Lullington and Norton St Philip)
21	Postlebury	1	Creech ward (part – the parish of Batcombe); Postlebury ward (part – the parishes of Nunney, Upton Noble, Wanstrow and Witham Friary)
22	Pylcombe	1	Avalon ward (part – the parish of North Wootton); Pylcombe ward (the parishes of Croscombe, Pilton and Pylle)
23	Rodney and Ebbor	1	Ebbor ward (part – the parish of Priddy); Rodney ward (part – the parish of Rodney Stoke)
24	St Cuthbert Out North and West	1	Ebbor ward (part – the parish ward of St Cuthbert (Out) North); Sheppey ward (part – the parish ward of St Cuthbert (Out) West)
25	Shepton North	1	Shepton Mallet ward (part)
26	Shepton South	1	Shepton Mallet ward (part)
27	Shepton South East	1	Shepton Mallet ward (part)
28	Shepton West	1	Shepton Mallet ward (part)
29	Stratton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Holcombe, Kilmersdon and Stratton on the Fosse)
30	Street North	2	North parish ward of Street town (part)
31	Street South	3	North parish ward of Street town (part); South parish ward of Street town (part)
32	Vale	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Ditcheat, East Pennard, Lamyat, Lydford-on-Fosse and West Bradley)

Figure B1 (continued)

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
33	Wells Central	1	Central parish ward of Wells city (part)
34	Wells St Cuthbert's	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (St Cuthbert's parish ward of Wells city)
35	Wells St Thomas	2	Central parish ward of Wells city (part); St Thomas parish ward of Wells city
36	Wookey and Westbury	1	Rodney ward (part – the parish of Westbury); Sheppey ward (part – the parish of Wookey); Moor ward (part – the parish of Godney)

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Mendip

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashwick and Ston Easton	1	1,790	1,790	9	1,865	1,865	8
2	Avalon	1	1,811	1,811	10	1,890	1,890	10
3	Beacon	1	1,944	1,944	18	1,976	1,976	15
4	Beckington and Rode	1	1,688	1,688	2	1,800	1,800	4
5	Chilcompton	1	1,446	1,446	-12	1,594	1,594	-8
6	Coleford	1	1,740	1,740	5	1,765	1,765	2
7	Creech	1	1,807	1,807	10	1,816	1,816	5
8	Frome Berkley Down	2	3,164	1,582	-4	3,258	1,629	-6
9	Frome Fromefield	2	3,446	1,723	4	3,446	1,723	0
10	Frome Keyford	2	3,659	1,830	11	3,739	1,870	8
11	Frome Park	2	3,726	1,863	13	3,746	1,873	9
12	Frome Welshmill	2	3,663	1,832	11	3,811	1,906	10
13	Glastonbury St Benedict's	1	1,422	1,422	-14	1,611	1,611	-7
14	Glastonbury St Edmund's	1	1,724	1,724	5	1,752	1,752	2
15	Glastonbury St John's	1	1,523	1,523	-8	1,604	1,604	-7
16	Glastonbury St Mary's	1	1,479	1,479	-10	1,603	1,603	-7
17	Mells	1	1,807	1,807	10	1,855	1,855	8
18	Moor	1	1,922	1,922	17	2,045	2,045	19
19	Nedge	1	1,310	1,310	-21	1,765	1,765	2
20	Nordinton	1	1,691	1,691	3	1,770	1,770	3
21	Postlebury	1	1,649	1,649	0	1,704	1,704	-1
22	Pylcombe	1	1,704	1,704	3	1,745	1,745	1

Figure B2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Mendip

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Rodney and Ebbor	1	1,405	1,405	-15	1,450	1,450	-16
24 St Cuthbert Out North and West	1	1,654	1,654	0	1,670	1,670	-3
25 Shepton North	1	1,638	1,638	-1	1,733	1,733	0
26 Shepton South	1	1,657	1,657	0	1,657	1,657	-4
27 Shepton South East	1	940	940	-43	1,468	1,468	-15
28 Shepton West	1	1,681	1,681	2	1,742	1,742	1
29 Stratton	1	1,826	1,826	11	1,810	1,810	5
30 Street North	2	2,954	1,477	-10	3,160	1,580	-8
31 Street South	3	4,718	1,573	-5	4,840	1,613	-7
32 Vale	1	1,566	1,566	-5	1,610	1,610	-7
33 Wells Central	1	1,455	1,455	-12	1,610	1,610	-7
34 Wells St Cuthbert's	2	3,393	1,697	3	3,450	1,725	0
35 Wells St Thomas	2	3,181	1,591	-4	3,240	1,620	-6
36 Wookey and Westbury	1	1,700	1,700	3	1,774	1,774	3
Totals	46	75,883	—	—	79,374	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,650	—	—	1,726	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Mendip District Council's submission.

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

