

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

Report to The Electoral Commission

*July 2002*

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



# WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Malvern Hills in Worcestershire.



## SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Malvern Hills electoral arrangements on 31 July 2002. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 March 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

We found that the existing 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% from the average for the district, and seven wards vary by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 17 wards and by more than 20% in eight wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 69-70) are that:

- **Malvern Hills District Council should have 38 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five, and seven 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 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only three wards expected to vary by more than 10% from the average for the district by 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;**
- **revised warding arrangements and a reduction in the number of councillors serving Malvern Town Council;**
- **revised warding arrangements for Malvern Wells.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 10 September 2002:

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

*Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
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	unchanged (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	1	<i>unchanged</i> (the parishes of Birtsmorton, Castlemorton 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	Wells	2	<i>unchanged</i> (the parishes of Little Malvern and Malvern Wells)	Map 2
21	West	2	the parish of West Malvern; part of Malvern parish (the proposed North Malvern parish ward)	Map 2 and large map
22	Woodbury	1	the parishes of Abberley, Great Witley, Hillhampton, Little Witley and Pensax	Map 2

*Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.*

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

Table 2: Final 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	1	1,621	1,621	7	1,645	1,645	5
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	Wells	2	2,666	1,333	-12	2,755	1,378	-12
21	West	2	3,195	1,598	5	3,233	1,617	3
22	Woodbury	1	1,577	1,577	4	1,630	1,630	4
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>57,628</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>59,490</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>-</b>

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.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Malvern Hills in Worcestershire. The six districts in Worcestershire have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Malvern Hills' last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1976 (Report no. 159). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Malvern Hills was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Malvern Hills is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but it was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and stressed that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did 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.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Malvern Hills District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority, the Local Government Association, 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. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end

of Stage One, was 22 October 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 26 March 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Malvern Hills in Worcestershire*, and ended on 20 May 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation, and we now publish the final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 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.

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

12 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.

13 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the LGCE 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 calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

14 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% from the district average, in seven wards by more than 20% and in four wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Bayton & Mamble ward where the councillor represents 55% fewer electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Malvern Hills*

*Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2001)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2006)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
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 Vale	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

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 %
22 Trinity	3	4,552	1,517	11	5,228	1,743	23
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
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>57,628</b>	-	-	<b>59,492</b>	-	-
<b>Averages</b>	-	-	<b>1,372</b>	-	-	<b>1,416</b>	-

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. For example, in 2001, electors in Bayton & Mable ward were relatively over-represented by 55%, while electors in Laugharne Hill ward were relatively under-represented by 25%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

15 During Stage One the LGCE received seven representations, including a district-wide scheme from Malvern Hills District Council, and representations from three parish councils, the Green Party, a local residents' association and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Malvern Hills in Worcestershire*.

16 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards across the district. However, it moved away from the District Council's scheme in the Malvern Wells area, using its own proposals. It proposed that:

- Malvern Hills District Council should be served by 38 councillors, compared with the current 42, representing 21 wards, six fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be an increase in the number of councillors serving Pendock Parish Council and revised warding arrangements and a reduction in the number of councillors serving Malvern Town Council.

**Draft Recommendation**

Malvern Hills District Council should comprise 38 councillors, serving 21 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

17 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 16 of the 21 wards varying by no more than 10% from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only two wards varying by more than 10% from the average in 2006.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

18 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report the LGCE received 26 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Malvern Hills District Council.

### **Malvern Hills District Council**

19 The District Council supported the draft proposals with the exception of the proposed amalgamation of the Morton and Wells wards.

### **Worcestershire County Council**

20 Worcestershire County Council proposed a number of minor amendments to the proposals in Malvern town.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

21 We received responses from three parish and town councils. Malvern Town Council supported the draft proposals for Malvern Town. Both Malvern Wells Parish Council and Little Malvern & Welland Parish Council objected to the proposal to combine the proposed Wells and Morton wards.

### **Other Representations**

22 A further 21 representations were received in response to the LGCE's draft recommendations from two councillors, Pickersleigh Residents Group and 18 local residents. Councillor Tretheway objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward and Councillor Coates objected to the proposed Pickersleigh ward name. Pickersleigh Residents Group supported the proposed Pickersleigh ward name. Fourteen local residents objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward. Four local residents supported the proposed Pickersleigh ward name.



## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

24 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

25 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.

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

27 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 3% from 57,628 to 59,492 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expected 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.

28 At Stage Three, Malvern Wells Parish Council and three local residents questioned the proposed electorate projections for the parish of Malvern Wells. Malvern Wells Parish Council argued that due to planning approval it would be reasonable to assume an extra 100 electors.

29 In response to the objections to the projected electorate figures the District Council stated that building development within Malvern Wells had been included within the original forecasts. We therefore remain satisfied that the proposed electorate forecasts represent the best estimates currently available.

### **Council Size**

30 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

31 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the Council's proposal for a council of 38 members. The District Council 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 "come 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.

32 The LGCE noted the objections to the District Council's proposals; however, it also noted that a reduction in the number of councillors had the support of the District Council and of the majority of those who responded to the District Council's public consultation.

33 At Stage Three, the District Council supported the proposal to reduce the number of councillors serving on the council from 42 to 38. We received no other specific comments regarding council size. 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 statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 38 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

34 The LGCE noted that there was limited opposition to the District Council's scheme as a whole, that it secured a good level of electoral equality in much of the district and that it was subject to widespread public consultation. In view of the support given to large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, the LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme. It considered that this scheme would provide for a better reflection of 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, it moved away from the District Council's proposals in the Malvern Wells area.

35 In response to the LGCE's draft recommendations report, a number of respondents objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward while a number of other respondents supported the proposed Pickersleigh ward name.

36 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. 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).

37 Details of our final 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**

38 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% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (55% fewer in 2006). Kyre Vale ward comprises the parishes of Bockleton, Hanley, Kyre, Rochford and Stoke Bliss, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 37% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (37% 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% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (38% in 2006). Tenbury Town ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by two councillors and currently has 13% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (13% 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% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (50% fewer in 2006).

39 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 and 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.

40 Stoke Bliss, Kyre and Bockleton Group Parish Council and a local resident objected to the District Council's proposed Tenbury ward.

41 The LGCE noted the objections to the District Council's proposed Tenbury ward; however, it also noted that the current Tenbury Town ward would, under a 38-member council, have 22% fewer electors per councillor than the district average were it maintained on its current boundaries. Therefore it considered that the District Council's proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards would best reflect the statutory criteria and proposed adopting them as part of its draft recommendations.

42 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards would have the same number of electors and 7% more electors per councillor than the district average initially (1% fewer and 6% more in 2006).

43 At Stage Three we received no specific comments regarding the proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards and remain convinced that they would best reflect the statutory criteria in the area. We therefore confirm the proposed Tenbury and Lindridge wards as final. The electoral variances are the same as under the draft proposals. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

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

44 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (14% more in 2006). Broadheath ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 1% more electors per councillor than the district average (2% more in 2006). Hallow ward comprises the parishes of Grimley and Hallow, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 6% more electors per councillor than the district average (5% 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (25% 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% more electors per councillor than the

district average (15% 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (20% more in 2006).

45 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 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 proposed that the current Baldwin and Hallow wards be maintained on their existing boundaries and that the parishes of Broadheath, Broadwas, Cotheridge and Rushwick be combined to form a two-member Broadheath ward.

46 The LGCE noted that the District Council's proposed Broadheath and Martley wards would both have electoral variances of over 10% by 2006; however, having considered the District Council's argumentation with regard to the two wards it was of the view that its proposals would best reflect community identity in the area. It was also of the view that the District Council's proposals would best reflect the statutory criteria in the remainder of the area, and therefore adopted the District Council's proposed Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Martley, Teme Valley and Woodbury wards as part of its draft recommendations.

47 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Martley, Teme Valley and Woodbury wards would initially have 4% more, 11% fewer, 4% fewer, 12% fewer, 1% fewer and 4% more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3% more, 11% fewer, 5% fewer, 12% fewer, 1% fewer and 4% more in 2006).

48 At Stage Three we received no specific comments regarding the proposed Baldwin, Broadheath, Hallow, Martley, Teme Valley and Woodbury wards and remain convinced that they would best reflect the statutory criteria in the area. We therefore confirm the proposed wards as final. The electoral variances are the same as under the draft proposals. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Kempsey, Leigh & Bransford, Powyke and Temeside wards**

49 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (13% more in 2006). Leigh & Bransford ward comprises the parishes of the same names, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 3% more electors per councillor than the district average (3% more in 2006). Powyke ward comprises the parishes of Madresfield, Newland and Powick, is represented by two councillors and currently has 7% more electors per councillor than the district average (5% 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% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (2% fewer in 2006).

50 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.

51 The LGCE adopted the District Council's proposed Alfrick & Leigh, Kempsey and Powick wards as part of its draft recommendations.

52 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Alfrick & Leigh, Kempsey and Powick wards would initially have 11% fewer, 5% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the district average (9% fewer, 3% more and 3% more in 2006).

53 At Stage Three, we received no specific comments regarding the proposed Alfrick & Leigh, Kempsey and Powick wards and remain convinced that they would best reflect the statutory criteria in the area. We therefore confirm the proposed wards as final. The electoral variances are the same as under the draft proposals. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

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

54 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (21% more in 2006). Morton ward comprises the parishes of Birtsmorton, Castlemorton and Welland, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 18% more electors per councillor than the district average (16% 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% more electors per councillor than the district average (9% more in 2006). The Hanleys ward comprises the parishes of Hanley Castle and Guarlford, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6% fewer in 2006). Upton-upon-Severn ward comprises the parish of the same name, is represented by two councillors and currently has 16% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17% fewer in 2006). Wells ward comprises the parishes of Little Malvern and Malvern Wells, is represented by two councillors and currently has 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3% fewer in 2006).

55 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 the current Longdon ward shared a strong commonality of interest. It also argued that, although the current Wells ward would vary by more than 10% from the district average by 2006, this was preferable to combining the current Morton and Wells wards in a three-member ward. It stated that the latter alternative would not provide for "effective and convenient local government nor reflect the interests and identities of these different parishes". It also 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% more, 7% more, 2% fewer, 11% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (9% more, 5% more, 1% fewer, 10% more and 12% fewer in 2006).

56 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.

57 The LGCE noted the argumentation of the District Council and Malvern Wells Parish Council with regard to the proposed Wells ward. However, it noted that it would have 12% 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. It therefore adopted this as part of its draft recommendations. It was 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 therefore adopted them as part of its draft recommendations.

58 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Longdon, Ripple and Upton & Hanley wards would initially have 10% more, 2% fewer and 11% more electors per councillor

than the district average (9% more, 1% fewer and 10% more in 2006). The proposed Morton & Wells ward would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially (6% fewer in 2006).

59 At Stage Three, the District Council objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward, arguing that it would not provide for convenient and effective local government and that the areas do not share a commonality of interest. The parishes of Little Malvern & Welland and Malvern Wells both objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward. It was argued that while the proposed Morton ward was predominantly rural, the proposed Wells ward was mainly urban. It was also argued that Wells ward looks towards Malvern town and that Morton ward has strong links with Upton. Councillor Trethaway and thirteen local residents also objected to the proposed Morton & Wells ward for similar reasons.

60 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We have noted the argumentation regarding the proposed Morton & Wells ward and have been persuaded that a single-member Morton ward and a two-member Wells ward, as proposed by the District Council at Stage One, would better reflect the statutory criteria than the LGCE's draft recommendations in the area. We also note that we received no specific comments regarding the remainder of the proposals in the area and therefore confirm them as final.

61 Under the final recommendations the proposed Longdon, Ripple and Upton & Hanley wards would initially have 10% more, 2% fewer and 11% more electors per councillor than the district average (9% more, 1% fewer and 10% more in 2006). The proposed Morton and Wells wards would have 7% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially (5% fewer and 12% fewer by 2006).

### **Malvern town (six wards)**

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

63 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the current Chase and Langedland wards be largely maintained. However, it proposed that the boundaries not run along the centre of main roads, thus uniting both sides of a road in one ward. It also proposed that Langedland ward be renamed Pickersleigh ward, arguing that the name Pickersleigh is a "much older geographic name" for the area and that signposts in Madresfield 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 the 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% more, 14% fewer, 5% more, 1% more, 2% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the district average (4% more, 4% more, 3% more, 1% fewer, 4% fewer and 3% more in 2006).

64 Malvern Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for the area, also supporting the proposed Dyson Perrins ward name. It accepted that the proposed Pickersleigh

ward name had proved controversial. Pickersleigh Residents' Group supported the District Council's proposed Pickersleigh ward name.

65 The LGCE adopted the District Council's proposed Chase, Dyson Perrins, Link, Pickersleigh, Priory and West wards in full as part of its draft recommendations. However, it noted that during Stage One its proposed Pickersleigh ward name did not receive full support in the area and welcomed further views from interested parties during Stage Three.

66 At Stage Three the District Council requested a minor adjustment to the boundary between the proposed Dyson Perrins and Link wards, proposing that the entire length of Lower Howsell Road be included within Link ward, "so as to give effect to the Council's original submission". It also reiterated its support for the proposed Pickersleigh ward name. Worcestershire County Council proposed that the boundary between the proposed Chase and Pickersleigh wards be moved south to Upper Chase Road and that it should also follow Wedderburn Road and Madresfield Road. Malvern Town Council supported the LGCE's draft proposals. Councillor Coates objected to the proposed Pickersleigh ward name. Pickersleigh Residents Group and four local residents supported the proposed Pickersleigh ward name.

67 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage Three and note the proposals of Worcestershire County Council. However, we have not been convinced by the level of argumentation to move away from the draft proposals in the proposed Chase and Pickersleigh wards. Given the support received for the proposals in Malvern town we propose substantially confirming them subject to the proposed minor amendment between the proposed Dyson Perrins and Link wards. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

68 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

## **Conclusions**

69 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse its draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- we propose that the proposed Morton & Wells ward be divided between a two-member Wells ward and a single-member Morton ward;
- we propose a minor boundary amendment between the proposed Dyson Perrins and Link wards.

70 We conclude that, in Malvern Hills:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 42 to 38;
- there should be 22 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

*Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	42	38	42	38
Number of wards	27	22	27	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,372	1,517	1,416	1,566
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	17	6	17	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	8	0

72 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 17 to six, with no wards varying by more than 20% from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with only three wards varying by more than 10% from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

#### **Final Recommendation**

Malvern Hills District Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 22 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.

### **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

73 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In the LGCE's draft recommendations report it proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Malvern parish to reflect the proposed district wards.

74 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.

75 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).

76 In the light of the draft recommendations the LGCE proposed adopting the District Council's and Town Council's proposed parishing arrangements for Malvern town.

77 At Stage Three, the District Council and Malvern Town Council both supported the proposed parish warding arrangements. Councillor Coates objected to the proposed reduction of councillors in the town. A local resident stated that she was concerned that a reduction in councillor numbers would not be in Malvern town's interest and agreed with the proposed North Malvern parish ward name unless the name Cowleigh was used.

78 As a result of the amendment to the boundary between Dyson Perrins and Link district wards we propose amending the parish wards accordingly. We have noted the objections to the proposed warding arrangements within Malvern town. However, given the support of the District Council and Malvern Town Council we propose endorsing these proposals as final.

**Final 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.

79 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".

80 The proposed district warding arrangements resulted in no change to this area, and the LGCE was content to adopt the District Council's proposal as part of its draft recommendations. At Stage Three, the District Council supported the proposals for Pendock parish, and we therefore confirm the draft recommendations as final.

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

81 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).

82 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. The LGCE considered the representations received and stated that it would have no objection in principle to the proposals. However, it requested that detailed maps be provided to show the precise boundary between the two parish wards.

83 At Stage Three, the District Council provided a detailed map of the proposed amendments to the current parish ward boundaries, and we are content to adopt them as part of our final recommendations. However, we propose slightly amending the proposed boundary in order that it follow ground detail.

**Final Recommendation**

Malvern Wells Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: All Saints (returning six councillors) and St Peters (returning seven councillors). The parish ward boundaries are illustrated on Map A2.

*Map 2: Final Recommendations for Malvern Hills*



## 6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

85 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 10 September 2002.

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final 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 Map A2 and the large map at the back of this report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed parish wards of Malvern Wells parish.

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

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Malvern Hills: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed parish wards of Malvern Wells parish*