

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Corby in Northamptonshire

Further electoral review

December 2005

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by The Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

When conducting reviews 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 councils.



## Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A Further Electoral Review of Corby is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the borough. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each borough councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to undertake this review on 2 June 2004.

## Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, five wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the borough average. The development that the Borough Council forecast during the last review for the five-year period between 1996 and 2001 was largely not realised. However, in Hillside ward, more development was undertaken than expected, which has resulted in it having a particularly poor variance, with 50% more electors than the borough average.

Every review is conducted in four stages:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	3 August 2004	Submission of proposals to us
Two	16 November 2004	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	17 May 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	9 August 2005	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Draft recommendations

As part of our draft recommendations we proposed retaining a council size of 29 members and recommended a scheme for the borough largely based on options that the Borough Council had considered during Stage One of the review.

## Responses to consultation

We received eight submissions following publication of our draft recommendations. Our proposals in Corby town were largely supported, although we received proposals to transfer Corby Old Village out of a ward with Stanion parish. Our proposals in the rural areas of the borough were generally opposed as it was stated they did not reflect community identities.

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

The ambitious growth and regeneration plans that Corby has in place which aim to double the population of the borough by the year 2030 have already begun. Across the borough the Council has forecast a 15% increase in electorate between 2003 and 2008, the majority of which will be in the existing Hillside ward and in Stanion parish. Initially, many of the wards we have recommended will have poor electoral variances. However, our aim is to provide improved electoral equality over a five-year period and as the level of electoral equality that will be achieved by 2008 is good we are satisfied that the increase in electorate will ensure improved levels of electoral equality over time.

### Council size

We received no further submissions relating to council size and are therefore satisfied to support the draft recommendation for a council size of 29 members.

### General analysis

We propose to endorse the majority of our draft recommendations as we consider that we have not received sufficient evidence to justify moving away from our proposals which provide good levels of electoral equality. However, we have made an amendment in the centre of Corby Town where we are adopting a single-member Exeter ward. We are also proposing to make one ward name change. We are proposing 15 wards, which are a combination of single-, two- and three-member wards.

### What happens next?

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 17 January 2006. The representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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This address should only be used for this purpose.

The full report is available to download at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

**Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary**

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
1 Central	1	Central ward (part); Lodge Park ward (part)
2 Beanfield	2	Hazelwood ward (part); West ward (part)
3 Danesholme	2	Danesholme ward (part)
4 East	3	Central ward (part); East ward (part); Lloyds ward (part)
5 Exeter	1	Central ward (part)
6 Great Oakley	1	Danesholme ward (part); Hillside ward (part)
7 Kingswood	3	Hazelwood ward (part); Kingswood ward (part)
8 Lodge Park	2	Lodge Park (part)
9 Oakley Vale	3	Hillside ward (part)
10 Rowlett	2	Lloyds ward (part); Shire Lodge ward (part); Lodge Park ward (part)
11 Rural West	1	Rural West ward (the parishes of Cottingham, East Carlton, Middleton); Rural North ward (part – the parish of Rockingham)
12 Shire Lodge	2	Shire Lodge ward (part); Lodge Park ward (part)
13 Stanion & Corby Village	2	Rural East ward (part – the parish of Stanion); East ward (part)
14 Tower Hill	2	Hazelwood ward (part); Kingswood ward (part); West ward (part)
15 Weldon & Gretton	2	East ward (part); Rural East ward (part – the parish of Weldon); Rural North ward (part – the parish of Gretton)

**Notes:**

1. The borough comprises seven parishes and the unparished town of Corby.
2. The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

**Table 2: Final recommendations for Corby borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2003)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2008)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Central	1	1,477	1,477	7	1,535	1,535	-3
2	Beanfield	2	2,955	1,478	7	3,042	1,521	-4
3	Danesholme	2	3,185	1,593	15	3,206	1,603	1
4	East	3	4,811	1604	16	4,817	1,606	1
5	Exeter	1	1,494	1,494	8	1,510	1510	-5
6	Great Oakley	1	1,569	1,569	14	1,580	1,580	-1
7	Kingswood	3	4,578	1,526	11	5,031	1,677	6
8	Lodge Park	2	3,135	1,569	14	3,137	1,569	-1
9	Oakley Vale	3	1,947	649	-53	4,963	1,654	4
10	Rowlett	2	3,168	1,584	15	3,180	1,590	0
11	Rural West	1	1,374	1,374	0	1,438	1,438	-10
12	Shire Lodge	2	3,031	1,516	10	3,238	1,619	2
13	Stanion & Corby Village	2	1,803	902	-35	2,840	1,420	-11

**Table 2 (cont.): Final recommendations for Corby borough**

14	Tower Hill	2	3,010	1,505	9	3,030	1,515	-5
15	Weldon & Gretton	2	2,492	1,246	-10	3,539	1,770	11
<b>Totals</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>40,029</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,086</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>-</b>

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

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



# 1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Corby.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 The Electoral Commission agreed that The Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a Periodic Electoral Review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be a closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average; or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average.

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Corby. Corby's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1997. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 8 October 1998 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place on 6 May 1999.

5 In carrying out our work, The Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.<sup>1</sup> This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
- secure effective and convenient local government; and
- achieve equality of representation.

In addition we are required to work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of Corby is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by The Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful in both understanding the approach taken by The Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission 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 any parish councils in the borough.

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962).

authority represent similar numbers of electors. 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.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

11 As indicated in its *Guidance*, The Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence for this.

12 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the borough.

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

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

**Table 3: Stages of the review**

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	3 August 2004	Submission of proposals to us
Two	16 November 2004	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	17 May 2005	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	9 August 2005	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 3 August 2004, when we wrote to Corby Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Northamptonshire Police Authority, Northamptonshire Local Councils' Association, parish councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Corby Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 15 November 2004.

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

17 Stage Three began on 17 May 2005 with the publication of the report *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Corby in Northamptonshire*, and ended on 8 August 2005.

18 During Stage Four we reconsidered the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decided whether to modify them, and now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It is now for the Commission to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an electoral changes Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

## Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report The Boundary Committee has had regard to:

- The general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to:
  - eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
  - promote equality of opportunity; and
  - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

## National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The borough of Corby comprises the unparished town of Corby which is surrounded by seven parishes. The Council has ambitious regeneration plans for the borough and by 2030 aims to approximately double its existing population to 100,000.

22 Under the existing arrangements a number of wards have poor levels of electoral equality, most notably in Hillside ward where the councillor represents 50% more electors than the borough average. Further research concluded that this level of electoral inequality would worsen further, both in Hillside ward and in other areas of the borough as development continues. Having considered these levels of electoral inequality, which are forecast to worsen over time across the whole borough, The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Corby Borough Council on 2 June 2004.

23 The electorate of the borough is 40,029 (December 2003). The Council presently has 29 members who are elected from 13 wards. Six wards are represented by three members, four by two members and three by a single member. All but three of the wards are predominantly urban. The borough contains seven parishes, but Corby town itself is unparished and comprises 88% of the borough's total electorate.

24 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,380 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,589 by the year 2008 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, overestimations of electorate growth during the last electoral review and uneven growth across the borough has resulted in the number of electors per councillor in five of the 13 wards varying by more than 10% from the borough average. Two wards vary by more than 20% and in Hillside ward the councillor represents 50% more electors than the borough average. If the existing arrangements remained, 10 wards would be expected to have an electoral variance of over 10% by 2008. Hillside ward would be expected to have 220% more electors than the borough average by 2008.

25 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the borough average in percentage terms. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (40,029), by the total number of councillors representing them on the council (currently 29). Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor is currently 1,380. In Lloyds ward, which is currently represented by three councillors, there are currently 4,790 electors, therefore each councillor represents, on average, 1,597 electors, 16% more than the current borough average.

**Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements in Corby borough**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2003)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2008)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Central	3	3,770	1,257	-9	3,818	1,273	-20
2	Danesholme	3	4,635	1,545	12	4,667	1,556	-2
3	East	2	2,524	1,262	-9	2,556	1,278	-20
4	Hazelwood	3	4,068	1,356	-2	4,150	1,383	-13
5	Hillside	1	2,066	2,066	50	5,082	5,082	220
6	Kingswood	3	3,800	1,267	-8	4,242	1,414	-11
7	Lloyds	3	4,790	1,597	16	4,805	1,602	1
8	Lodge Park	3	4,153	1,384	0	4,253	1,418	-11
9	Rural East	2	2,235	1,118	-19	4,182	2,091	32
10	Rural North	1	1,095	1,095	-21	1,227	1,227	-23

**Table 4 (cont.): Existing electoral arrangements in Corby borough**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Rural West	1	1,279	1,279	-7	1,332	1,332	-16
12 Shire Lodge	2	2,935	1,468	6	3,057	1,529	-4
13 West	2	2,679	1,340	-3	2,715	1,358	-15
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>40,029</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>46,086</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,589</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2003, electors in Rural North ward were relatively over-represented by 21%, while electors in Hillside ward were significantly under-represented by 50%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 Draft recommendations

26 During Stage One, four submissions were received, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. We also received representations from Middleton Parish Council, Exeter Tenants' and Residents' Association and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Corby in Northamptonshire*.

27 Our draft recommendations were based on the proposals of the Borough Council in the town and on an option that the Council had considered in the rural areas of the borough. We also proposed a number of our own wards. These wards secured improved levels of electoral equality and strong boundaries. We proposed that:

- Corby Borough Council should be served by 29 councillors, the same as at present, representing 14 wards, one more than at present; and
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

28 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality over the five year forecast period. Initially, the number of electors per councillor in nine of the 14 wards would vary by more than 10% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve, with only two wards varying by more than 10% from the average by 2008.



## 4 Responses to consultation

29 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, eight representations were received, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Borough Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk).

### Corby Borough Council

30 The Borough Council supported or accepted the majority of our proposed wards. However, it proposed that Corby Old Village be transferred west of the railway line into the proposed Central ward. It also proposed that Stanion parish become a single-member rural ward.

### Political groups

31 The Conservative Group on the Borough Council proposed that Gretton, Stanion and Weldon parishes should comprise one ward and reiterated the Borough Council's proposal in relation to Corby Old Village. Corby and East Northants Liberal Democrats proposed linking Corby Old Village with Weldon and Stanion parishes in a ward. It also proposed new Beanfield and Tower Hill wards in the south of the town. It broadly supported our proposals in the rest of the town but put forward two name changes and some other amendments to ward boundaries.

### Parish councils

32 Representations were received from four parish councils. Middleton, Gretton, Stanion and Weldon parish councils opposed our proposals in their respective areas and stated that they wished to see the existing arrangements retained.

### Other representations

33 A further representation was received from Councillor Bromhall (Rural North ward) who objected to the proposals in the rural areas of the borough.



## 5 Analysis and final recommendations

34 We have now finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Corby.

35 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Corby is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended):

- the need to secure effective and convenient local government;
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

37 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

38 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 should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

39 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Electorate figures

40 As part of the previous review of Corby, the Borough Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 6% between 1996 and 2001. The increase in the electorate since the start of the last review and the start of this review is 2%. Most of this growth has occurred in Hillside ward. During Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the borough, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 15% from 40,029 to 46,086 over the five-year period from 2003 to 2008. It expected most of the growth to be in the existing Hillside ward in the unparished south of the town, although growth is also forecast in Stanion parish and the existing Kingswood ward.

41 We recognise that forecasting electorate is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures during Stage Two, accepted that they were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at that time.

42 We received no comments on the Council's electoral forecasts during Stage Three. We acknowledge that the forecast for the electorate is significant and is a higher increase in electorate than has been forecast in other districts that have been reviewed by The Boundary Committee or the Local Government Commission for England. However, we are satisfied that the Borough Council has provided sufficient information in support of the proposed increase in electorate and we have used its figures when making our recommendations. Initially, many of the wards we have recommended will have poor electoral variances. However, our aim is to provide improved electoral equality over a five-year period and as the level of electoral equality that will be achieved by 2008 is good we are satisfied that the increase in electorate will ensure improved levels of electoral equality over time. It should be noted that if the development forecast does not occur the electoral variances may remain so poor that the borough will meet the criteria for the Commission to consider directing a further review in the future.

## Council size

43 Corby Borough Council currently has 29 members. During Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the same council size and we received no other proposals for any other council sizes. We asked for further evidence from the council at that time in support of its proposal. Having considered this information we concluded that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council size of 29 members. The Liberal Democrats supported the proposed council size during Stage Three and we received no further comments. We remain satisfied in recommending a council size of 29 as part of our final recommendations.

## Electoral equality

44 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects The Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. When making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where no justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the borough average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

45 As noted above, many of the wards we have recommended will initially have electoral variances greater than 10%. However, this level of electoral equality is forecast to considerably improve by 2008 and we are therefore satisfied to adopt these wards. By 2008 two wards are forecast to have variances of over 10%. We considered that these two rural wards that by 2008 are both forecast to have variances of 11% are a better alternative than combining these parishes with any part of the surrounding urban area that is clearly separated by Uppingham Road.

46 The borough average number of electors per councillor for 2009 is calculated by dividing the total electorate forecast for the borough (46,086), by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, (29 under our final proposals). Therefore, in Corby by 2008, the borough average under our final recommendations is forecast to be 1,589.

## General analysis

47 As part of our draft recommendations we adopted a combination of the Council's Option One and Option Two schemes with some amendments in order to form wards that secured improved levels of electoral equality and strong boundaries. We considered that the Council's Option Two proposals in the town provided strong boundaries and relatively good electoral equality and were a good basis from which to develop a scheme. We proposed adopting the three more rural wards outlined under Option One of the Council's scheme as these provided a better level of electoral equality than Option Two and we did not consider that we could improve on them. However, we noted that in the rural areas of the borough it was difficult to form wards that did not combine urban and rural areas whilst providing a satisfactory level of electoral equality.

48 Our draft recommendations were generally supported in the town of Corby but we received some conflicting proposals regarding the Corby Old Village area which we had proposed to combine in a ward with Stanion parish. Our draft recommendations for the rural areas of the borough were generally opposed by respondents during Stage Three as it was considered the proposed pattern of warding did not reflect community identities in those areas and the existing arrangements were considered to be a better reflection of community identity.

49 As a result of the submissions received during Stage Three we are proposing to retain the majority of the wards outlined in our draft recommendations. The submissions that we received during Stage Three were generally not supported by strong enough evidence of community identity to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendations and we received no proposals that were formed in order to improve electoral equality across the borough. We are proposing one new ward as a result of the evidence received during the consultation period as we consider sufficient community identity argument was provided to adopt this ward with strong boundaries and good levels of electoral equality. We are also proposing to change one ward name. We are proposing 15 wards: four single-member wards, eight two-member wards and three three-member wards.

## Warding arrangements

50 For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a Rural East, Rural North and Rural West wards (page 28)
- b Central, East, Lloyds, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards (page 31)
- c Hazelwood, Kingswood and West wards (page 34)
- d Danesholme and Hillside wards (page 35)

51 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

### Rural East, Rural North and Rural West wards

52 Under the existing arrangements Rural East ward comprises the parishes of Stanion and Weldon, Rural North ward comprises the parishes of Gretton and Rockingham and Rural West ward comprises the parishes of Cottingham, East Carlton and Middleton. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

53 We received only one submission in relation to this area during Stage One, which was from the Borough Council. It proposed a three-member Weldon & Stanion ward comprising the parishes of Stanion and Weldon, together with Willowbrook and Weldon North industrial estates from the existing East ward which have no electors. It also proposed a two-member Welland Valley ward comprising the parishes of Cottingham, East Carlton, Gretton, Middleton and Rockingham, along with two properties from the existing unparished West ward. Transferring these two properties would enable Uppingham Road to be used as a strong boundary between the town and surrounding rural areas.

54 The Borough Council's proposals in this area would provide poor levels of electoral equality. By 2008, Weldon & Stanion and Welland Valley wards would have 12% and 19% fewer electors than the borough average respectively.

55 We did not consider there was sufficient evidence in the Borough Council's scheme to justify adopting a ward with 19% fewer electors than the borough average. We therefore considered other alternative patterns of warding in the parished parts of the borough, including the scheme that the Borough Council had formed when considering what recommendations to make to us. This 'Option One' scheme provided a different warding arrangement in the parished areas of the borough, with a better level of electoral equality than the scheme the Council actually proposed. It outlined three wards in the rural areas: a single-member Rural West ward comprising the parishes of Cottingham, East Carlton, Middleton and Rockingham, a two-member Stanion & Corby Village ward comprising Stanion parish and an unparished area, including Corby Old Village and outlined a two-member Weldon & Gretton ward comprising the parishes of Gretton and Weldon and the Willowbrook East and Weldon North industrial estates.

56 Although we recognised that the electoral equality in these wards is not as good as our recommendations in other parts of the borough we considered that these

wards would provide the best option in the area, providing acceptable levels of electoral equality whilst limiting the number of wards with urban and rural mixes, which in our view does not reflect community identity. We therefore adopted the three rural wards the Council considered as part of its 'Option One' scheme, with one minor amendment to strengthen the boundary between the town and the rural area.

57 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Stanion & Corby Village and Weldon & Gretton wards would initially have 35% and 10% fewer electors than the borough average, respectively. By 2008 they would have 11% fewer and 11% more electors, respectively. Rural West ward would initially have less than 1% fewer electors than the borough average, with 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2008.

58 During Stage Three, all eight respondents commented on our proposals in this area. Following Corby Borough Council's decision to transfer Corby Old Village into the proposed Central ward (paragraph 73 discusses this further) it considered two options for the surrounding rural area which would experience a knock-on effect as a result of the Council's decision in relation to Corby Old Village. Its 'Option B' for the rural wards outlined a Rural East ward comprising Gretton, Stanion and Weldon parishes and a Rural West ward comprising Cottingham, East Carlton, Middleton and Rockingham parishes. This Rural West ward is identical to that outlined in the draft recommendations. By 2008, these wards would have 11% more and 10% fewer electors than the borough average, respectively. Its 'Option C' also outlined wards similar to our draft recommendations. It supported the Rural West ward outlined in the draft recommendations and divided the Rural East ward it outlined under 'Option B' into two wards: Stanion ward would comprise only Stanion parish and Weldon & Gretton ward would comprise Weldon and Gretton parishes. By 2008, these three wards would have 10% fewer, 11% more and 11% more electors, respectively.

59 The Council noted that neither of these options was ideal and that 'the preference would have been to link Gretton with other villages in the Welland Valley area' and that a 'continued union between Weldon and Stanion... would have been preferable'. However, it stated that in order to provide wards which provide improved levels of electoral equality it had considered these alternative options. Having considered both 'Option B' and 'Option C' the Borough Council submitted that we should adopt 'Option C'. However, it did not detail why this was preferable over 'Option B' and no evidence was provided in support of this proposal. The Conservative Group on the Council stated that Gretton, Stanion and Weldon parishes should comprise one ward, as outlined in 'Option B' that the Council considered. The Conservatives did not provide evidence of community identity in support of this proposal but stated that Gretton is 'independent of Corby' and that it shares 'many of the aims and aspirations of Weldon and Stanion'. This ward would have 11% more electors than the borough average by 2008.

60 All other respondents opposed our recommendations in the rural areas of the borough. Corby and East Northants Liberal Democrats, Councillor Bromhall, and Gretton and Middleton parish councils proposed the previously considered Welland Valley ward which would comprise the parishes of Cottingham, East Carlton, Middleton, Rockingham and Gretton and which by 2008 would have 19% fewer electors than the borough average. These respondents stated that there is 'a strong sense of identity in this group of parishes'. Councillor Bromhall noted that there are historical links between the parishes in the Welland Valley and that the Jurassic Way

long distance footpath passes through the area. He also noted that 'people returning from Corby to Gretton are beginning to use Rockingham Tea Rooms'. Gretton Parish Council stated that it did not want to be included in a ward with Weldon. It stated that 'Gretton has always been allied to Rockingham and the Welland Valley and would prefer to stay with Rockingham'. It stated that if the existing arrangements for the parish could not be retained that including Gretton parish with other parishes in the Welland Valley would 'tie up with such links as the churches [and the] Welland Valley schools'.

61 Weldon Parish Council opposed being included in a ward with Gretton parish as it has 'no traditional ties' with it and that it would prefer to be included in a ward with Stanion parish which 'are two villages with many commonalities in terms of location, problems with adjacent highways, the major effects of the Milton Keynes S... M... Study – urban sprawl, urban regeneration, prevention of coalescence between Corby and the two villages'. Stanion Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations and considered that it should be included in a ward with Weldon parish. It stated that it has 'no link with Corby Old Village' but 'has always been associated with Weldon'. It noted that the parishes share a grass cutting contract and are linked by the landfill site and the A43.

62 Corby & East Northants Liberal Democrats proposed a new Three Villages ward comprising the parishes of Weldon and Stanion and most of Corby Old Village (with the exception of a number of properties on Oakley Road). As part of its proposal the Liberal Democrats accepted that it was necessary to link some unparished areas with at least one parish and stated that it considered 'these three villages are the best choice given the road links between them, the shared boundaries, their shared experience in pre-dating the expansion of Corby New Town and the shared experience of close proximity to the steelworks'. By 2008 this Three Villages ward would have approximately 9% more electors than the borough average.

63 Having considered the representations received we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations in their entirety in this area. We have considered the arguments put forward by all respondents but consider that we have not received sufficient evidence to justify moving away from our draft recommendations. We acknowledge that there are good links between Gretton parish and the rest of the Welland Valley parishes. However, this proposal was considered previously when we formed our draft recommendations but not adopted as it would have 19% fewer electors than the borough average by 2008 and we did not consider we had sufficient evidence to justify adopting a ward with such electoral inequality. We do not consider that we have received any further information that is sufficiently persuasive for us to adopt this ward as part of our final recommendations. We acknowledge that the proposed wards in this area are not ideal. However, we consider that to justify a variance of 19% more evidence of community identity would be needed. We note that Councillor Bromhall considered that Weldon and Gretton parishes are not directly linked all the way along Gretton Road. However, we consider the link via Priors Haw Road is satisfactory and provides an acceptable link between the two parishes.

64 We also acknowledge that Weldon and Stanion parishes have stronger links to each other than other areas. However, we do not consider that we received strong enough evidence that would justify moving away from our draft recommendations, which provide a satisfactory level of electoral equality across the rural area as a

whole. Retaining the Rural East ward, as proposed by the constituent parish councils of Weldon and Stanion would result in there being 32% more electors than the borough average by 2008 which is an unacceptable level of electoral inequality. We also note that given our decision not to adopt the proposed Welland Valley ward it would be difficult to find an alternative option in this area that would link Stanion and Weldon parishes.

65 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Rural West, Stanion & Corby Village and Weldon & Gretton wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 2, 3a and 3b accompanying this report.

## Central, East, Lloyds, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards

66 Under the existing arrangements each of these wards is wholly unparished. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

67 We received two submissions in relation to this area during Stage One. The Borough Council proposed five revised wards of the same name as the existing wards. These were based broadly on the existing arrangements. By 2008, its proposed Central, East, Lloyds, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards would have 3% more, 12% more, 7% more, 1% fewer and 6% more electors than the borough average, respectively. The Borough Council did not provide any evidence or argument in support of each of its proposed wards in this area.

68 The Exeter Tenants' and Residents' Association proposed a single-member ward, based on the boundaries of an existing polling district. This single-member ward would initially have 8% more electors than the borough average and by 2008 would have 5% fewer electors than the borough average.

69 We noted that the Borough Council's proposals throughout this area would provide a relatively good level of electoral equality and we based our draft recommendations on them. However, as our proposals in the rural areas of the borough would have a knock-on effect to the surrounding wards we made a number of amendments to the proposed East, Lloyds and Shire Lodge wards, which also improved electoral equality in the latter two wards. We adopted the Borough Council's proposed Central and Lodge Park wards in their entirety as they would provide good levels of electoral equality.

70 We considered that the single-member ward proposed by the Tenants' and Residents' Association would have strong boundaries and a good level of electoral equality. However, given the lack of evidence in support of it, and in light of the alternative Central ward proposed by the Borough Council which would have a slightly improved level of electoral equality we did not adopt it as part of our recommendations.

71 By 2008, under our draft recommendations the proposed Central, East, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards would have had 3% more, 4% fewer, 1% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average respectively. Lloyds ward would vary by less than 1% from the borough average by 2008.

72 During Stage Three we received representations regarding this area from the Borough Council, Corby and East Northants Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Group. The Borough Council opposed the recommendation to include Corby Old Village with Stanion parish. It asserted that Corby Old Village is part of the town to the west of the railway, noting that it 'has a higher density of social housing, [and that] its amenities e.g. shops, public houses, etc are utilised by surrounding areas within the town'. The Borough Council therefore formulated two options for 'integrating Corby Old Village back into the urban area'. Its first option was to transfer Corby Old Village into the proposed East ward. There are just over 1,000 electors in the Corby Old Village area. In order to ensure transferring this many electors into the East ward did not result in a poor level of electoral equality the Borough Council noted that it would be necessary to transfer electors out of the proposed East ward into the proposed Lloyds ward. By 2008, under this option the amended East ward would have 12% more electors than the borough average and the amended Lloyds ward would have 10% more.

73 The Borough Council's second option in this area was to transfer the electors in Corby Old Village into the proposed Central ward. In order to ensure that electoral equality was maintained in this ward, the Council stated it would be necessary to increase its representation from two to three councillors, without the need to amend the boundaries of the ward. Having considered both these options the Borough Council submitted its second option to us proposing that Corby Old Village be transferred into the proposed Central ward. However, it did not provide any evidence as to why it had chosen this option over the other. Under the Borough Council's proposal the revised three-member Central ward would have 9% fewer electors than the borough average by 2008. The Conservative Group also proposed this warding arrangement during Stage Three but did not provide any argument to support its view.

74 We received an alternative recommendation for the warding arrangements in this area from Corby and East Northants Liberal Democrats. It considered that Corby Old Village, 'with the exception of some properties on Oakley Road' should be included in a ward with Stanion and Weldon parishes. The argument that it provided is discussed in paragraph 62 above. The Liberal Democrats supported the boundaries of the proposed Lloyds, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards.

75 The Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Group both proposed the single-member ward that the Exeter Tenants' and Residents' Association proposed during Stage One. This single-member ward would initially have 8% more electors than the borough average and by 2008 would have 5% fewer. The Liberal Democrats stated that 'it has strong boundaries on the ground ... [and that] it is a discrete estate within the town, having its own community centre, local shopping area and importantly its own Tenants' and Residents' Association which signifies a strong community identity'. The Conservative Group did not provide more evidence of community identity but added that 'the Residents' Association is confident in the area's electoral viability and is providing good leadership'.

76 As a result of the Liberal Democrats' decision in relation to the Exeter Estate and its proposed Three Villages ward it proposed amendments to the East and Central wards outlined in the draft recommendations. It proposed transferring 'the electors

living in the area bounded by Forest Gate Road, Occupation Road and Cottingham Road' out of the Central ward and into the East ward.

77 The Liberal Democrats proposed two ward name changes. It proposed renaming the East ward as Lloyds. It stated that 'the name Lloyds arises from the style and design of houses erected by the Stewarts and Lloyds Company... in the 1930's'. It stated that the majority of this style of housing is in the proposed East ward and the name of the ward should reflect this. Consequently it proposed to rename the proposed Lloyds ward as Rowlett as this is the name of one of the principal roads in the area.

78 Having considered the representations received we have decided to endorse the boundaries of the proposed Lloyds, Lodge Park and Shire Lodge wards outlined in our draft recommendations. However, we propose to move away from our recommendations in Central and East wards. We consider that the proposal to form a single-member ward in the Exeter area of the town has been supported by further evidence. We note that this was proposed during Stage One but not adopted because of a lack of community identity argument and the alternative proposal from the Borough Council which provided slightly better electoral equality. We consider that the further argument that we have received during Stage Three is sufficient to justify adopting a ward that will secure a good level of electoral equality whilst providing strong boundaries. This ward will initially have 8% more electors than average and by 2008 will have 5% fewer. We propose to name this ward Exeter to reflect how the area is known locally.

79 We note the concern raised by a number of respondents regarding Corby Old Village. However, we note that the Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed it should be included to the west of the railway line with the proposed Central ward whereas the Liberal Democrats considered it should be included with Stanion and Weldon parishes. We do not consider that any of these respondents provided very strong evidence in support of their proposals. We have not been persuaded by the evidence provided that community identity would be better reflected by either of these alternative proposals.

80 The impact of adopting a single-member Exeter ward from the Central ward is that the Central ward would become represented by a single member with a variance of 11% by 2008. In order to improve this resultant inequality we propose to transfer the electors from Central to East ward as the Liberal Democrats proposed transferring as part of its Stage Three submission. In order to strengthen the boundary in this area we are also proposing to transfer a number of electors around Lime Trees Grove, north of Cottingham Road so that these electors have direct access into the ward in which they are voting. We consider that the revised boundary between the East and Central wards is strong and consider that the resultant improvement in the reflection of community identity in the Exeter ward would not unduly result in a deterioration of community identity in the amended Central or East wards.

81 We note the proposed ward name changes and propose to rename Lloyds ward as Rowlett but do not propose to rename East ward as Lloyds. We consider that as it appears that the majority of the houses built by the Lloyds Company are not contained in the proposed Lloyds ward it should not be called Lloyds and consider Rowlett is a good alternative as the proposed ward contains Rowlett Road. However,

we do not propose to rename East ward as Lloyds as some of the Lloyds housing would still be contained within the proposed Rowlett ward and we consider East adequately reflects the geographical positioning of the ward and this name would reduce confusion among the electorate.

82 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Central, East, Lodge Park, Rowlett, and Shire Lodge wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 2 accompanying this report.

## Hazelwood, Kingswood and West wards

83 Under the existing arrangements each of these wards is wholly unparished. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

84 We received one submission in relation to this area during Stage One, which was from the Borough Council. The Council proposed three revised wards of the same name in this area. It proposed a two-member Hazelwood ward in the area south of Westcott Way, north of Oakley Road and east of Beanfield Avenue. To the south of this ward it proposed a three-member Kingswood ward, north west of Oakley Road and south west of Sower Leys Road. The Council's proposed Hazelwood ward's western boundary would be the same as the existing West ward's eastern boundary. The Council proposed a West ward based on the boundaries of the existing West ward but including the area around Coldermeadow Avenue from the existing Kingswood ward.

85 The Borough Council did not provide any evidence or argument in support of each of its proposed wards in this area. As discussed in our draft recommendations, an error in calculating the 2008 figures resulted in the Council providing new figures for the Hazelwood and Kingswood wards. As a result of these revised electorate figures for 2008 the electoral variances for the Council's proposed Hazelwood and Kingswood ward worsened significantly.

86 We considered that the levels of electoral inequality resulting from the revised figures were so poor that it would not be possible to simply make minor amendments to the wards in order to improve them. Therefore, in the light of the lack of where the community of identity in the area is, we proposed our own wards with good electoral equality and strong boundaries. We proposed Beanfield, Kingswood and Tower Hill wards. Our proposed Kingswood ward would comprise the area north of Danesholme Road to the north west of Oakley Road. The remaining two wards that we proposed were formed by dividing the remaining electorate in the area into two two-member wards. This area has no distinct or obvious break to indicate where the ideal boundary should be and we therefore divided it at the point where the optimum level of electoral equality between the two wards could be achieved. By 2008, under our draft recommendations, the proposed Beanfield, Kingswood and Tower Hill wards would have 4% fewer, 6% more and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average.

87 During Stage Three, only Corby & East Northants Liberal Democrats submitted comments regarding this area. It supported the proposed Kingswood ward and the

names of the Beanfield and Tower Hill wards but proposed an alternative warding pattern for these two wards. It proposed a single-member Tower Hill ward and a three-member Beanfield ward. It stated that its proposed Tower Hill ward 'is predominantly comprised of owner occupied houses the majority of which were privately built'. Its proposed Beanfield ward would comprise the Beanfield ward outlined in our draft recommendations with the addition of those electors that it had not proposed be included in its Tower Hill ward. It stated that it 'comprises most of the area which the residents consider to be the Beanfield estate'.

88 Having considered the representation received we have decided to endorse the draft recommendation for all of the wards in this area. We have considered the arguments put forward by the Liberal Democrats but do not consider that it has submitted sufficient evidence to justify moving away from wards with a good level of electoral equality. We note that no other respondents have commented on our proposals which has made it difficult to consider how well they reflect the community identities. However, despite this we consider that as our proposals have been consulted on and not drawn opposition it would be unsatisfactory to move away from our recommendations in light of the lack of full argument to support this alternative warding arrangement.

89 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Beanfield, Kingswood and Tower Hill wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 2 accompanying this report.

## Danesholme and Hillside wards

90 Under the existing arrangements both of these wards are wholly unparished. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2003 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2008 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

91 We received two submissions in relation to this area during Stage One. The Borough Council proposed a three-member Oakley Vale ward, based on the boundaries of the existing Hillside ward (less an area north of Lewin Road which it transferred into its proposed Great Oakley ward). It proposed that the remaining two wards in the area would be formed by dividing the existing three-member Danesholme ward along Oakley Road to create a two-member Danesholme ward to the west and a single-member Great Oakley ward to the east. A local resident also proposed dividing the existing Danesholme ward along Oakley Road.

92 In light of the strong boundaries, good electoral equality and support from a local resident for the Borough Council's scheme, we adopted its proposals in this area in their entirety. By 2008, under our draft recommendations, the proposed Danesholme, Great Oakley and Oakley Vale wards would have 1% more, 1% fewer and 4% more electors per councillor than the borough average.

93 During Stage Three Corby and East Northants Liberal Democrats stated that it supported our draft recommendations. The Conservative Group considered that the proposed Danesholme ward should be divided into two single-member wards. It did not provide evidence of community identity in support of its wards but asserted that

single-member wards provide better accountability and that it ‘would like to see the present review as the start of a trend towards single councillor wards’.

94 Having considered the representations received we have decided to endorse the draft recommendation for the wards in this area. The Conservative Group’s proposal to adopt single-member wards has not been based on providing wards that reflect community identity and we have therefore not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations that provide good levels of electoral equality and strong boundaries.

95 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 10, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Danesholme, Great Oakley and Oakley Vale wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 2 accompanying this report.

## Conclusions

96 Table 5 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2003 and 2008 electorate figures.

**Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements**

	Current arrangements		Final recommendations	
	2003	2008	2003	2008
Number of councillors	29	29	29	29
Number of wards	13	13	15	15
Average number of electors per councillor	1,380	1,589	1,380	1,589
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	10	8	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	3	2	0

97 As shown in Table 5, our final recommendations for Corby Borough Council will result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 10 to 2 by 2008. We propose to retain the existing council size of 29 members.

**Final recommendation:**

Corby Borough Council should comprise 29 councillors serving 15 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

98 As part of an FER, The Boundary Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the borough council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements in FERs. However, the Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the borough council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an FER.

99 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by The Boundary Committee, lies with borough councils.<sup>2</sup> If a district or borough council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or The Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

100 During Stage One we received proposals for revised parish council electoral arrangements from the Borough Council who proposed reducing the number of parish councillors in six of the seven parishes in Corby. It acknowledged that the proposals 'do necessarily reflect the opinion of any or all parish councils'. We therefore did not make any recommendations to change any parishes' electoral arrangements. During Stage Three we received no further comments regarding any parishes' electoral arrangements and we are therefore not recommending any changes at this stage. The Borough Council in the future may conduct a review of the electoral arrangements of these parishes and consider reducing the number of parish councillors under section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

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<sup>2</sup> Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.



## 6 What happens next?

101 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Corby and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation.<sup>3</sup>

102 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether or not 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 17 January 2006 and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations on the conduct of the review made to them by that date.

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

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

**Fax: 020 7271 0505**

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

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<sup>3</sup> Under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI No. 2001/3962)



## 7 Mapping

Final recommendations for Corby borough:

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Corby borough.

**Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Corby borough, including constituent parishes.

**Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Corby town.

**Sheet 3, Map 3a** illustrates part of the proposed Rural West ward.

**Sheet 3, Map 3b** illustrates part of the proposed Weldon & Gretton ward.



# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
The Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
The Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the borough

Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or Further Electoral Review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last Periodic Electoral Review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The twelve National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is: 'an extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action: - the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; - access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; - wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; - established farming use is effectively maintained'
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single borough enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or Periodic Electoral Review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by The Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet; a cabinet with a leader; or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented

Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the borough average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the borough council

## Appendix B

### Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm)), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

**Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria**

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

