

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Wycombe in Buckinghamshire

*May 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective 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, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for High Wycombe is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Wycombe on 5 September 2000.

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

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

- **In 20 of the 32 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **By 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to have improved significantly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 19 wards and by more than 20 per cent in nine wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 100-101) are that:

- **Wycombe District Council should have 60 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards, instead of 32 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 24 of the proposed 28 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to continue with the number of electors per councillor in all 28 proposed wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Marlow Town and Chepping Wycombe and Hazlemere parishes.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 May 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 2 July 2001:

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Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Abbey (in High Wycombe)	3	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Cressex & Frogmoor ward (part); Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward (part)	Large map
2 Bledlow & Bradenham	1	Bledlow-cum-Saunderton ward (part – Bledlow-cum-Saunderton parish); Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward (part – Bradenham parish)	Map 2
3 Booker & Cressex (in High Wycombe)	2	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); Cressex & Frogmoor ward (part)	Large map
4 Bourne End-cum-Hedsor	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hedsor parish and Bourne End ward of Wooburn parish)	Map 2
5 Bowerdean (in High Wycombe)	2	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part)	Large map
6 Chiltern Rise	2	Lane End & Piddington ward (Lane End and Piddington & Wheeler End parishes); West Wycombe & Sands ward (part – West Wycombe parish)	Map 2
7 Disraeli (in High Wycombe)	2	Cressex & Frogmoor ward (part); Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward (part)	Large map
8 Downley & Plomer Hill	2	Downley ward (Downley parish); Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward (part); West Wycombe & Sands ward (part – unparished area (part))	Large map
9 Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow	3	Little Marlow ward (Little Marlow parish); Flackwell Heath ward (part – Flackwell Heath ward of Chepping Wycombe parish less detached areas); Loudwater ward (part – detached area of Loudwater ward of Chepping Wycombe parish)	Map 2
10 Greater Hughenden	3	Hughenden Valley ward (Hughenden Valley ward of Hughenden parish); Kingshill ward (Great Kingshill and Widmer End wards of Hughenden parish); Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward (part – Naphill ward of Hughenden parish)	Map 2
11 Greater Marlow	2	Great Marlow ward (Bovingdon Green and Great Marlow with Booker wards of Great Marlow parish and Danesfield ward of Medmenham parish); Marlow Bottom ward (Marlow Bottom ward of Great Marlow parish)	Map 2
12 Hambleton Valley	1	Hambleton Valley ward (Fawley, Hambleton and Turville parishes and Medmenham Village ward of Medmenham parish); Stokenchurch ward (part – Ibstone parish)	Map 2
13 Hazlemere North	2	Hazlemere West ward (Park & Brackley ward of Hazlemere parish); Hazlemere Central ward (part – Manor & Central ward of Hazlemere parish (part))	Large map and Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
14	Hazlemere South	2	Hazlemere East ward (Hill Farm & Penn Road ward of Hazlemere parish); Hazlemere Central ward (part – Manor & Central ward of Hazlemere parish (part)); Tylers Green ward (part – Tylers Green ward of Chepping Wycombe parish (part))	Large map and Map 2
15	Icknield	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Ellesborough, Great & Little Kimble and Longwick-cum-Imer parishes)	Map 2
16	Lacey Green, Speen & the Hampdens	1	<i>Unchanged</i> Lacey Green & Hampden ward (Great & Little Hampden and Lacey Green parishes)	Map 2
17	Marlow East	2	Marlow South ward (part – Marlow South ward of Marlow Town (part))	Maps 2 and A2
18	Marlow West	3	Marlow North ward (Marlow North ward of Marlow Town); Marlow South ward (part – Marlow South ward of Marlow Town (part))	Maps 2 and A2
19	Micklefield (in High Wycombe)	2	Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Marsh & Micklefield ward (part)	Large map
20	Oakridge & Castlefield (in High Wycombe)	3	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward (part)	Large map
21	The Risboroughs	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Princes Risborough ward (Princes Risborough Town)	Map 2
22	Ryemead (in High Wycombe)	2	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Marsh & Micklefield ward (part)	Large map
23	Sands (in High Wycombe)	2	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); West Wycombe & Sands ward (part – unparished area (part))	Large map
24	Stokenchurch & Radnage	2	Bledlow-cum-Saunderton ward (part – Radnage parish); Stokenchurch ward (part – Stokenchurch parish)	Map 2
25	Terriers & Amersham Hill (in High Wycombe)	3	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Green Hill & Totteridge ward (part)	Large map
26	Totteridge (in High Wycombe)	2	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Green Hill & Totteridge ward (part); Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part)	Large map

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
27	Tylers Green & Loudwater	3	Flackwell Heath ward (part – detached areas of Flackwell Heath ward of Chepping Wycombe parish); Loudwater ward (part – Loudwater ward of Chepping Wycombe parish less detached area); Tylers Green ward (part – Tylers Green ward of Chepping Wycombe parish (part))	Large map and Map 2
28	The Wooburns	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wooburn Green and Wooburn Town wards of Wooburn parish)	Map 2

*Notes: 1 High Wycombe is the only unparished part of the district and comprises the 10 wards indicated above.*

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

*3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wycombe

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey (in High Wycombe)	3	5,680	1,893	-7	5,884	1,961	-5
2 Bledlow & Bradenham	1	2,144	2,144	5	2,270	2,270	10
3 Booker & Cressex (in High Wycombe)	2	3,811	1,906	-6	4,058	2,029	-1
4 Bourne End-cum-Hedsor	2	4,392	2,196	8	4,170	2,085	1
5 Bowerdean (in High Wycombe)	2	3,687	1,844	-9	3,939	1,970	-4
6 Chiltern Rise	2	4,130	2,065	1	4,210	2,105	2
7 Disraeli (in High Wycombe)	2	4,134	2,067	2	4,108	2,054	0
8 Downley & Plomer Hill	2	3,646	1,823	-10	4,055	2,028	-1
9 Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow	3	5,836	1,945	-4	5,630	1,877	-9
10 Greater Hughenden	3	6,679	2,226	9	6,700	2,233	9
11 Greater Marlow	2	3,951	1,976	-3	3,960	1,980	-4
12 Hambleden Valley	1	2,097	2,097	3	1,910	1,910	-7
13 Hazlemere North	2	3,684	1,842	-9	4,181	2,091	2
14 Hazlemere South	2	4,212	2,106	3	4,064	2,032	-1
15 Icknield	1	2,460	2,460	21	2,260	2,260	10
16 Lacey Green, Speen & the Hampdens	1	2,101	2,101	3	2,050	2,050	0
17 Marlow East	2	4,519	2,260	11	4,401	2,201	7
18 Marlow West	3	6,686	2,229	10	6,449	2,150	5
19 Mickfield (in High Wycombe)	2	3,638	1,819	-11	4,292	2,146	4
20 Oakridge & Castlefield (in High Wycombe)	3	5,406	1,802	-11	5,903	1,968	-4
21 The Risboroughs	3	6,428	2,143	5	6,110	2,037	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Ryemead (in High Wycombe)	2	3,957	1,979	-3	4,152	2,076	1
23 Sands (in High Wycombe)	2	4,042	2,021	-1	4,057	2,029	-1
24 Stokenchurch & Radnage	2	4,253	2,127	4	4,190	2,095	2
25 Terriers & Amersham Hill (in High Wycombe)	3	6,472	2,157	6	6,273	2,091	2
26 Totteridge (in High Wycombe)	2	4,352	2,176	7	4,045	2,023	-2
27 Tylers Green & Loudwater	3	5,901	1,967	-3	6,035	2,012	-2
28 The Wooburns	2	3,807	1,904	-6	3,990	1,995	-3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>122,105</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>123,346</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,035</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,056</b>	<b>-</b>

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

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Wycombe in Buckinghamshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the four districts in Buckinghamshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Wycombe. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1980 (Report No. 371). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1982 (Report No. 438). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

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

11 Stage One began on 5 September 2000, when we wrote to Wycombe District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Buckinghamshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We 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 27 November 2000.

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

13 Stage Three began on 9 May 2001 and will end on 2 July 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.***

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an Order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Wycombe district covers an area of approximately 32,500 hectares in the south-west of Buckinghamshire, midway between London and Oxford. Wycombe is a district of considerable contrast and character, including the urban environment of High Wycombe and the smaller towns of Marlow and Princes Risborough, and the scenic countryside of the Chilterns and the Thames Valley. The district is breached by the M40 motorway and contains the Chiltern railway line which runs into London Marylebone station. The district contains 27 parish and town councils, but High Wycombe itself is unparished and comprises approximately 40 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

17 The electorate of the district is 122,105 (February 2000). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 32 wards, eight of which are relatively urban in High Wycombe with the remainder being predominantly rural. Eleven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are each represented by two councillors and 15 are single-member wards. The whole Council is elected every four years.

18 Since the last electoral review there has been a significant increase in the electorate in Wycombe district, with around 19 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,035 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,056 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor currently varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average in 20 of the 32 wards, by more than 20 per cent in nine wards and by more than 30 per cent in five wards. The worst imbalance is in Loudwater ward where the councillor represents 56 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Wycombe*

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
1	Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1	2,425	2,425	19	2,300	2,300	12
2	Booker & Castlefield (in High Wycombe)	3	6,311	2,104	3	6,890	2,297	12
3	Bourne End-cum-Hedsor	2	4,392	2,196	8	4,170	2,085	1
4	Bowerdean & Daws Hill (in High Wycombe)	3	6,399	2,133	5%	6,210	2,070	1
5	Cressex & Frogmoor (in High Wycombe)	3	6,083	2,028	0	6,175	2,058	0
6	Downley	1	1,645	1,645	-19	1,755	1,755	-15
7	Flackwell Heath	2	4,737	2,369	16	4,575	2,288	11
8	Great Marlow	1	1,295	1,295	-36	1,278	1,278	-38
9	Green Hill & Totteridge (in High Wycombe)	3	6,035	2,012	-1	6,051	2,017	-2
10	Hambleden Valley	1	1,887	1,887	-7	1,712	1,712	-17
11	Hazlemere Central	1	2,415	2,415	19	2,756	2,756	34
12	Hazlemere East	1	2,416	2,416	19	2,376	2,376	16
13	Hazlemere West	1	2,410	2,410	18	2,458	2,458	20
14	Hughenden Valley	1	1,607	1,607	-21	1,546	1,546	-25
15	Icknield	1	2,460	2,460	21	2,260	2,260	10
16	Keep Hill & Hicks Farm (in High Wycombe)	3	5,280	1,760	-14	5,736	1,912	-7
17	Kingshill (in High Wycombe)	1	2,847	2,847	40	2,827	2,827	38
18	Lacey Green & Hampden	1	2,101	2,101	3	2,050	2,050	0
19	Lane End & Piddington	2	3,205	1,603	-21	3,310	1,655	-19
20	Little Marlow	1	1,099	1,099	-46	1,065	1,065	-48

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
21 Loudwater	1	3,170	3,170	56	3,119	3,119	52
22 Marlow Bottom	1	2,656	2,656	31	2,682	2,682	30
23 Marlow North	3	6,161	2,054	1	5,960	1,987	-3
24 Marlow South	3	5,044	1,681	-17	4,890	1,630	-21
25 Marsh & Micklefield (in High Wycombe)	3	5,394	1,798	-12	5,675	1,892	-8
26 Naphill-cum-Bradenham	1	2,550	2,550	25	2,869	2,869	40
27 Oakridge & Tinkers Wood (in High Wycombe)	3	6,959	2,320	14	7,410	2,470	20
28 Princes Risborough	3	6,428	2,143	5	6,110	2,037	-1
29 Stokenchurch	2	3,857	1,929	-5	3,811	1,906	-7
30 The Wooburns	2	3,807	1,904	-6	3,990	1,995	-3
31 Tylers Green	2	3,386	1,693	-17	3,571	1,786	-13
32 West Wycombe & Sands	3	5,644	1,881	-8	5,759	1,920	-7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>122,105</b>	–	–	<b>123,346</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>2,035</b>	–	–	<b>2,056</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wycombe 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 2000, electors in Little Marlow ward were relatively over-represented by 46 per cent, while electors in Loudwater ward were relatively under-represented by 56 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

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

#### **Wycombe District Council**

22 The District Council proposed a council of 60 members, as at present, serving 28 wards, four fewer than at present. Under its proposals, five wards would retain their existing boundaries, while two wards would be renamed in order to describe more accurately the geographic area of the ward. Under the Council's proposals, the number of councillors representing the Hazlemere area would be increased from three to four, while Marlow would have a total of five councillors, one fewer than at present. The Council's proposals would utilise strong community boundaries such as the M40 motorway and the London to Bicester railway line, together with revised warding arrangements for the unparished High Wycombe area. The Council also stated that it had undertaken an extensive consultation exercise with local interests, in particular with parish and town councils in the district. The Council received a total of 31 responses during its consultation exercise, copies of which were forwarded to the Commission.

23 Under the District Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the proposed 28 wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the district average, and only one ward would vary by more than 20 per cent from the average. By 2005, this level of electoral equality is projected to have improved significantly, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average. The Council's proposals are summarised in Appendix B.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

24 We received representations from five parish and town councils. Great Marlow Parish Council put forward a district-wide proposal for 43 single-member wards, arguing that a reduction in council size would provide for lower costs and greater accountability. The Parish Council provided no precise electorate figures for its proposals, but its proposed wards would vary in size from approximately 2,000 electors to 3,900 electors.

25 Marlow Town Council proposed largely retaining the existing three-member Marlow North and Marlow South wards, but proposed modifying the boundary between the two wards in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality. It argued that the two current wards are long standing, and known and recognised by the two communities of Marlow. Ibstone Parish Council

opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer the parish to a revised Hambleton Valley ward, arguing that the parish is geographically a part of Stokenchurch and shares few community ties with Hambleton.

26 West Wycombe Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal to combine West Wycombe, Piddington & Wheeler End and Lane End parishes in a new two-member The Dashwoods ward, arguing that "with the new arrangement we feel that we would be considerably disadvantaged as the parish of Lane End will demand a great deal of time and could well occupy both District Councillors on an almost full time basis." However, the Parish Council expressed some support for a ward combining the parish with Piddington & Wheeler End parish. Piddington & Wheeler End Parish Council proposed renaming the Council's proposed The Dashwoods ward as Chiltern Rise ward.

### **Other Representations**

27 We received two further representations from local residents. A resident of Tylers Green expressed concern regarding the District Council's proposed Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow and Tylers Green & Loudwater wards, arguing that, under the Council's proposals, Chepping Wycombe Parish Council would cover too large an area. A resident of Downley opposed the Council's proposal to include Downley parish in a new Downley & Plomer Hill ward, arguing that the parish is a primarily rural area which shares few community ties with the more urban High Wycombe town. She proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area, either retaining the current single-member Downley ward, or transferring Downley parish to the proposed The Dashwoods ward.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Wycombe 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 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

31 Our *Guidance* states that 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 kept to the minimum, the objective 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 start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

32 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of 1 per cent from 122,105 to 123,346 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Booker & Castlefield ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward and Oakridge & Tinkers Bridge ward. The Council has 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.

33 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, we are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

34 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

35 Wycombe District Council presently has 60 members. The District Council proposed retaining the existing council size, noting that it considered that the existing number of councillors provides for effective and convenient local government. The Council stated that “having taken into account the proposed changes in the political management of the Authority we consider that the number of councillors should remain at 60”.

36 We also received a district-wide proposal for warding arrangements from Great Marlow Parish Council, which put forward a uniform pattern of 43 single-member wards. The Parish Council argued that this significant reduction in council size would provide a number of benefits to the electorate, including reduced cost and greater “clarity of responsibility and accountability”.

37 We have carefully considered the representations received, and note the disparity in council size proposed by the two district-wide schemes. We have not been persuaded that the significant reduction in council size proposed by Great Marlow Parish Council has been justified by sufficient evidence. In particular, we have received no evidence as to how the internal management structure of the District Council would be affected as a result of a reduction in council size, or how any revised structures would be implemented. Moreover, we have received no evidence of any local consultation on the Parish Council’s proposals, or of any widespread support for a reduction in council size on the scale proposed. We also note that the Parish Council’s proposals were accompanied by only approximate electorate figures, and that the proposed single-member wards would vary in size significantly, from approximately 2,000 electors to 3,900 electors.

38 We are content that a council size of 60 would reflect the appropriate levels of representation to which the town of High Wycombe and the surrounding rural areas are entitled, and that the interests of all parts of the district would continue to be appropriately represented. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

39 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes submitted by the District Council and Great Marlow Parish Council. From these representations, a number of considerations have emerged. As detailed above, we consider that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members. We have therefore been unable to consider fully the proposals submitted by Great Marlow Parish Council, which were based on a council size of 43.

40 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the District Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we are content to base our recommendations on the Council's scheme. We consider that its scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or any other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, in order to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we propose moving away from the Council's proposals in a number of areas. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Great Marlow, Marlow Bottom, Marlow North and Marlow South wards;
- (b) Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards;
- (c) Lane End & Piddington and West Wycombe & Sands wards;
- (d) Bledlow-cum-Saunderton, Hambleden Valley and Stokenchurch wards;
- (e) Icknield, Lacey Green & Hampden and Princes Risborough wards;
- (f) Hughenden Valley, Kingshill and Naphill-cum-Bradtenham wards;
- (g) Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow, Loudwater and Tylers Green wards;
- (h) Hazlemere Central, Hazlemere East and Hazlemere West wards;
- (i) Booker & Castlefield, Downley and Oakridge & Tinkers Wood wards;
- (j) Bowerdean & Daws Hill, Cressex & Frogmoor and Green Hill & Totteridge wards;
- (k) Keep Hill & Hicks Farm and Marsh & Micklefield wards.

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

### **Great Marlow, Marlow Bottom, Marlow North and Marlow South wards**

42 The four wards of Great Marlow, Marlow Bottom, Marlow North and Marlow South are situated in the south of the district, broadly to the south of the M40 motorway. Great Marlow ward is currently represented by a single councillor and comprises Bovington Green and Great Marlow with Booker wards of Great Marlow parish, together with Danesfield ward of Medmenham parish. Marlow Bottom ward is also represented by a single councillor and is coterminous with Marlow Bottom ward of Great Marlow parish. Marlow North and Marlow South wards are each currently represented by three councillors. Marlow North ward is coterminous with North ward of Marlow town, while Marlow South ward is coterminous with South ward of Marlow town. Under existing arrangements, Great Marlow and Marlow Bottom wards have 36 per cent fewer and 31 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (38 per cent fewer and 30 per cent more than the average by 2005). Marlow North and Marlow South wards have 1 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3 per cent and 21 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

43 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing single-member Great Marlow and Marlow Bottom wards to form a new two-member Greater Marlow ward. In order to address the level of electoral inequality in the current Marlow South ward, the Council proposed a new two-member Marlow East ward comprising the part of the existing Marlow South

ward to the east of the High Street, Portlands and the Court Garden Leisure complex. It proposed combining the remaining part of Marlow South ward with the existing Marlow North ward to form a new three-member Marlow West ward.

44 Under the District Council's proposals, the new Marlow East and Marlow West wards would have 15 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 11 per cent and 2 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005. Greater Marlow ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent fewer by 2005).

45 We received one further representation in relation to this area at Stage One. Marlow Town Council proposed retaining the existing three-member Marlow North and Marlow South wards, and proposed amending the boundary between the two wards in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality. It proposed transferring 553 electors from the area bounded by Wycombe Road and Bobmore Lane from Marlow North ward to a revised Marlow South ward. It argued that the current warding arrangements are "long standing, known and recognised by the two distinct communities". Under Marlow Town Council's proposals, the revised three-member Marlow North and Marlow South wards would each have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially. However, as a result of developments and demographic changes which are expected to take place across the district over the next five years, the two wards are each projected to have 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2005.

46 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we are content to largely base our draft recommendations for this area on the District Council's proposals, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Marlow East and Marlow West wards. We note Marlow Town Council's proposal to broadly retain the existing three-member Marlow North and Marlow South wards. However, under a council size of 60, the Marlow town area is entitled to a total of 5.5 councillors now, declining to 5.3 councillors by 2005. We concur with the District Council's proposal to allocate a total of five councillors to the Marlow area, which we consider would most appropriately reflect the level of representation to which the town is entitled, and we have therefore not been able to consider further the Town Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations. While we are content to adopt the District Council's two-member Marlow East and three-member Marlow West wards, we propose amending the boundary between the two wards in order to further improve electoral equality. We propose enlarging the proposed Marlow West ward to include the area to the west of the High Street, between Portlands and the River Thames. Under our draft recommendations, the two-member Marlow East and three-member Marlow West wards would have 11 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 7 per cent and 5 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005. The proposed boundary between Marlow East and Marlow West wards is illustrated on Map A2 in Appendix A.

47 We consider that the District Council's proposal to combine the current Great Marlow and Marlow Bottom wards to form a new two-member Greater Marlow ward would address the significant levels of electoral inequality in the existing wards, while reflecting the identities and interests of the rural communities surrounding Marlow town. We are therefore content to put forward the two-member Greater Marlow ward as part of our draft recommendations, without

amendment. Based on a council size of 60, the proposed Greater Marlow ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

### **Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards**

48 Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards are situated in the south-east of the district, adjacent to South Buckinghamshire District and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The two-member Bourne End-cum-Hedsor ward comprises Hedsor parish and Bourne End ward of Wooburn parish. The Wooburns ward, also represented by two councillors, comprises Wooburn Green and Wooburn Town wards of Wooburn parish. At present, Bourne End-cum-Hedsor ward has 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while The Wooburns ward has 6 per cent fewer than the average (1 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

49 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards, without amendment. We received no further representations in relation to this area at Stage One.

50 Having carefully considered the District Council's proposals for this area, we are content to retain the existing Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards, without amendment. We consider that the two wards reflect local community identities and interests well, and note that the current arrangements provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality, both now and in five years' time. Under our draft recommendations Bourne End-cum-Hedsor and The Wooburns wards would have 8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

### **Lane End & Piddington and West Wycombe & Sands wards**

51 The two wards of Lane End & Piddington and West Wycombe & Sands are situated in the centre of the district, broadly to the west of High Wycombe town. The two-member Lane End & Piddington ward comprises the parishes of Lane End and Piddington & Wheeler End. West Wycombe & Sands ward is currently represented by three councillors, and comprises West Wycombe parish together with the unparished Sands area of High Wycombe. At present, Lane End & Piddington ward has 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while West Wycombe & Sands ward has 8 per cent fewer than the average (19 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

52 At Stage One, the District Council proposed enlarging the current Lane End & Piddington ward to include West Wycombe parish, from the existing West Wycombe & Sands ward, to form a new two-member The Dashwoods ward. It argued that the area includes the Dashwoods Estate, and noted that the Dashwood family have strong links with West Wycombe. The remaining part of the current West Wycombe & Sands ward, the unparished Sands area, would be combined with part of the existing Booker & Castlefield ward to form a new two-member Sands ward, as detailed below. Under the Council's proposals, the two-member The Dashwoods ward would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more than the average by 2005).

53 We received two further representations in relation to this area. West Wycombe Parish Council opposed the Council's proposed The Dashwoods ward, arguing that the parish "would be considerably disadvantaged as the parish of Lane End will demand a great deal of time and could well occupy both District Councillors on an almost full time basis". However, the Parish Council supported combining West Wycombe and Piddington & Wheeler End parishes in a single ward. Piddington & Wheeler End Parish Council objected to the name of the proposed The Dashwoods ward, and put forward the alternative name of Chiltern Rise ward.

54 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose basing our draft recommendations for this area on the District Council's proposals. While we note the concerns of West Wycombe Parish Council regarding its inclusion in a ward with Lane End parish, we consider that the Council's proposed The Dashwoods ward would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. We have considered alternative warding arrangements for these parishes, but have been unable to identify an appropriate arrangement which would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality. Based on a council size of 60, the electorate of Lane End parish would entitle it to between one and two district councillors, and we have been unable to create an alternative two-member ward with acceptable levels of electoral equality in this area, given the electorates of the neighbouring parishes in question. We recognise that there is some local opposition to the name of the Council's proposed The Dashwoods ward, and we note that the Council itself had put forward the name as a working title. We are therefore content to rename the ward as Chiltern Rise ward, as proposed by Piddington & Wheeler Parish Council, for the purposes of our draft recommendations, and we would welcome any further views on this issue at Stage Three. Under our draft recommendations, the two-member Chiltern Rise ward would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more than the average by 2005).

### **Bledlow-cum-Saunderton, Hambleton Valley and Stokenchurch wards**

55 The largely rural Bledlow-cum-Saunderton, Hambleton Valley and Stokenchurch wards are situated in the west of the district, adjacent to Oxfordshire County. The single-member Bledlow-cum-Saunderton ward comprises the parishes of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton and Radnage. Hambleton Valley ward, also represented by a single councillor, comprises the parishes of Fawley, Hambleton and Turville, together with Medmenham Village ward of Medmenham parish. Stokenchurch ward is currently represented by two councillors, and comprises the parishes of Ibstone and Stokenchurch. At present, Hambleton Valley and Stokenchurch wards have 7 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Bledlow-cum-Saunderton ward is currently relatively under-represented, with 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (12 per cent more by 2005).

56 At Stage One, the District Council proposed enlarging the single-member Hambleton Valley ward to include Ibstone parish, currently in Stokenchurch ward. It noted that Ibstone is situated on the Hambleton Valley side of the M40 Motorway and argued that the parish is "characteristically similar to other small villages in the Hambleton Valley ward". The Council proposed combining the remaining part of the current Stokenchurch ward, comprising Stokenchurch parish, with Radnage parish (currently in Bledlow-cum-Saunderton ward) to form

a new two-member Stokenchurch & Radnage ward, arguing that “Radnage has closer ties with Stokenchurch than with its existing ward.” Finally, Bledlow-cum-Saunderton parish would be combined with Bradenham parish, from the existing Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward, to form a new single-member Bledlow & Bradenham ward.

57 Under the District Council’s proposals, Stokenchurch & Radnage ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. Bledlow & Bradenham and Hambleden Valley wards would have 5 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

58 We received one further representation in relation to this area at Stage One. Ibstone Parish Council opposed the Council’s proposed Hambleden Valley ward, arguing that the parish is “geographically a part of Stokenchurch” and shares few community ties with Hambleden.

59 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, without amendment. We consider that the Council’s proposals would address the relatively high levels of electoral inequality in both Bledlow-cum-Saunderton and Hambleden Valley wards, and we are content that they would continue to reflect local community identities well. We recognise the concerns expressed by Ibstone Parish Council in relation to the proposal to transfer the parish from Stokenchurch ward to a revised Hambleden Valley ward. However, we note that the small rural community of Ibstone is physically detached from the larger settlement of Stokenchurch, and we have not been persuaded that the parish is sufficiently separate and distinct from Hambleden to justify retaining the high level of over-representation in the current Hambleden Valley ward.

60 Under our draft recommendations the two-member Stokenchurch & Radnage ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. The single-member Bledlow & Bradenham and Hambleden Valley wards would have 5 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (10 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

### **Icknield, Lacey Green & Hampden and Princes Risborough wards**

61 The three wards of Icknield, Lacey Green & Hampden and Princes Risborough are situated in the north of the district, adjacent to Aylesbury Vale District. The single-member Icknield ward comprises the parishes of Ellesborough, Great & Little Kimble and Longwick-cum-Ilmer. Lacey Green & Hampden ward, also represented by a single councillor, comprises the parishes of Great & Little Hampden and Lacey Green. Princes Risborough ward is currently represented by three councillors and is coterminous with Princes Risborough Town. Icknield ward is relatively under-represented at present, with 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent more by 2005). Lacey Green & Hampden and Princes Risborough wards have 3 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (equal to the average and 1 per cent fewer respectively by 2005).

62 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing Icknield, Lacey Green & Hampden and Princes Risborough wards, without amendment. However, it proposed renaming Lacey Green & Hampden ward as Lacey Green, Speen & the Hampdens ward, and renaming Princes Risborough ward as The Risboroughs ward, in order to reflect more accurately the communities covered by the two wards. Under the Council's proposals, the three-member The Risboroughs ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. The single-member Icknield and Lacey Green, Speen & the Hampdens wards would have 21 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (10 per cent more and equal to the average respectively by 2005).

63 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, without amendment. We are content that the current arrangements continue to reflect local community identities and interests well, and provide reasonable levels of electoral equality which are forecast to further improve over the next five years. We are also content to put forward the Council's proposed ward name changes for further consultation, and would welcome further views from interested parties at Stage Three.

64 Under our draft recommendations, the three-member The Risboroughs ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. The single-member Icknield and Lacey Green, Speen & the Hampdens wards would have 21 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (10 per cent more and equal to the average respectively by 2005).

### **Hughenden Valley, Kingshill and Naphill-cum-Bradenham wards**

65 Hughenden Valley, Kingshill and Naphill-cum-Bradenham wards are situated in the centre and east of the district, directly to the north of High Wycombe town. At present, each of the three wards is represented by a single councillor. Hughenden Valley ward is coterminous with Hughenden Valley ward of Hughenden parish, while Kingshill ward comprises Great Kingshill and Widmer End wards of Hughenden parish. Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward comprises Naphill ward of Hughenden parish, together with Bradenham parish. Hughenden Valley ward is relatively over-represented at present, with 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. This level of electoral inequality is expected to deteriorate further over the next five years, and Hughenden Valley ward is forecast to have 25 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2005. Kingshill and Naphill-cum-Bradenham wards are significantly under-represented at present, with 40 per cent and 25 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (38 per cent and 40 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005).

66 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring Bradenham parish from the current Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward to a new Bledlow & Bradenham ward, as detailed above. It proposed combining the remaining part of Naphill-cum-Bradenham ward, Naphill ward of Hughenden parish, with the current Hughenden Valley and Kingshill wards to form a new three-member Greater Hughenden ward, arguing that "community identity is well established through a common parish council." Under the Council's proposals, the new Greater Hughenden ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and in five years' time. We received no further representations in relation to this area at Stage One.

67 Having considered the Council's proposals, we are content to put forward the District Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations, without amendment. We concur with the view that the areas to be combined in the proposed Greater Hughenden ward share a degree of community ties, and consider that the Council's proposals would reflect local community identities well, while providing an improved level of electoral equality in this area. Under our draft recommendations, the three-member Greater Hughenden ward would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and in five years' time.

### **Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow, Loudwater and Tylers Green wards**

68 The four wards of Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow, Loudwater and Tylers Green are situated to the south and east of High Wycombe town, adjacent to the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and the districts of Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire. Little Marlow ward is currently represented by a single councillor, and is coterminous with Little Marlow parish. The single-member Loudwater ward is coterminous with Loudwater ward of Chepping Wycombe parish, while the two-member Flackwell Heath and Tylers Green wards are coterminous with Flackwell Heath and Tylers Green wards of Chepping Wycombe parish respectively. At present, Flackwell Heath ward has two detached parts, to the south and east of Loudwater ward, while Loudwater ward has a detached part to the south of Flackwell Heath ward.

69 Little Marlow ward is significantly over-represented at present, with 46 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Electoral equality is expected to deteriorate further over the next five years, and Little Marlow ward is forecast to have 48 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2005. Conversely, Loudwater ward has 56 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average at present, and is forecast to have 52 per cent more than the average in five years' time. Flackwell Heath and Tylers Green wards have 16 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (11 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

70 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing Little Marlow ward with the Flackwell Heath area (currently in Flackwell Heath ward) and Wilfrids Wood Close from Loudwater ward to form a new three-member Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow ward. It also proposed combining the parts of the current Flackwell Heath ward to the east of Sniggs Wood and Upper Dearham's Farm and to the south of Boundary Road with Loudwater and Tylers Green wards of Chepping Wycombe parish to form a new three-member Tylers Green & Loudwater ward. As a result of these amendments, there would no longer be any detached wards in this area.

71 Under the District Council's proposals, Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while Tylers Green & Loudwater ward would have 7 per cent more than the average (9 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005).

72 We received one further submission in relation to this area. A resident of Tylers Green expressed concern regarding the Council's proposed Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow and Tylers Green & Loudwater wards, arguing that, under the Council's proposals, Chepping Wycombe Parish Council would cover a geographically large area.

73 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose largely basing our draft recommendations for this area on the District Council's proposals. We consider that the Council's proposals would address the significant levels of electoral inequality in Little Marlow and Loudwater wards, and we are content that the proposed Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow and Tylers Green & Loudwater wards would reflect local community identities and interests well. In particular, we note that the Council's proposals would resolve the prior anomaly of three detached wards. We do, however, propose amending the northern boundary of the Council's proposed Tylers Green & Loudwater ward, in order to improve further levels of electoral equality in this area. Under our draft recommendations, the area to the west of Oaktree Close, St Johns Close and Channer Drive and north of King's Wood would be transferred from the proposed Tylers Green & Loudwater ward to a new Hazlemere South ward, as detailed below.

74 While we note the concerns expressed by the resident of Tylers Green in relation to the large geographic area covered by Chepping Wycombe parish, this issue falls outside the remit of this review, and should be addressed as part of any future parish review carried out by the District Council. We have considered alternative options for warding arrangements which would reduce the size of wards in this area, but have been unable to identify an alternative proposal which would provide for acceptable levels of electoral equality. However, we note that our proposed amendment to the northern boundary of Tylers Green & Loudwater ward would result in a small reduction in the size of the proposed ward.

75 Under our draft recommendations, the three-member Tylers Green & Loudwater ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow ward, also represented by three councillors, would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). The proposed boundary between Tylers Green & Loudwater and Hazlemere South wards is illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

### **Hazlemere Central, Hazlemere East and Hazlemere West wards**

76 The three wards of Hazlemere Central, Hazlemere East and Hazlemere West are situated in the east of the district and cover the small town of Hazlemere. Hazlemere Central, Hazlemere East and Hazlemere West wards are currently each represented by a single councillor, and are coterminous with Manor & Central, Hill Farm & Penn Road and Park & Brackley wards of Hazlemere parish respectively. At present, each of the three Hazlemere wards are relatively under-represented. Hazlemere Central and Hazlemere East wards each have 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, while Hazlemere West ward has 18 per cent more than the average. These levels of electoral inequality are not expected to improve over the next five years, and Hazlemere Central, Hazlemere East and Hazlemere West wards are forecast to have 34 per cent, 16 per cent and 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively by 2005.

77 At Stage One, the District Council proposed new Hazlemere North and Hazlemere South wards, each represented by two councillors. The new Hazlemere North ward would comprise the existing Hazlemere West ward together with the part of Hazlemere Central ward to the north-west

of the A404 Amersham Road. The remaining part of the current Hazlemere Central ward would be combined with Hazlemere East ward to form a new Hazlemere South ward. The Council argued that its proposed boundary would follow “a division along the A404 which is a natural dividing line between the two wards”. Under the Council’s proposals, Hazlemere North ward would have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 7 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Hazlemere South ward would have 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 9 per cent fewer by 2005.

78 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose largely basing our draft recommendations for Hazlemere on the District Council’s proposals. We are content that the Council’s proposals would reflect local community ties well, and would address the significant level of under-representation in Hazlemere at present. In particular, we note that, based on its current electorate, Hazlemere is entitled to a total of 3.5 councillors (3.7 councillors by 2005) rather than three as at present, and we concur with the Council’s proposal to increase the total number of councillors representing Hazlemere to four. However, we propose two minor amendments to the new Hazlemere North and Hazlemere South wards in order to further improve levels of electoral equality. We propose transferring the development area to the south of Amersham Road and west of Magnolia Dene from Hazlemere South ward to the proposed Hazlemere North ward, and transferring the area to the west of Oaktree Close, St Johns Close and Channer Drive and north of King’s Wood from the current Tylers Green ward to the proposed Hazlemere South ward, as detailed above.

79 Under our draft recommendations, the two-member Hazlemere North ward would have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. Hazlemere South ward, also represented by two councillors, would have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. The proposed boundaries between Hazlemere North, Hazlemere South and Tylers Green & Loudwater wards are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

### **Booker & Castlefield, Downley and Oakridge & Tinkers Wood wards**

80 The three wards of Booker & Castlefield, Downley and Oakridge & Tinkers Wood are situated in the centre of the district, and cover the western part of High Wycombe town. Downley ward is currently represented by a single councillor and is coterminous with Downley parish. Booker & Castlefield and Oakridge & Tinkers Wood wards are currently each represented by three councillors, and form part of the unparished area of High Wycombe. Under the existing arrangements, Booker & Castlefield and Downley wards have 3 per cent more and 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (12 per cent more and 15 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward is more significantly under represented, with 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the average at present, increasing to 20 per cent more than the average over the next five years.

81 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a new two-member Downley & Plomer Hill ward, comprising the existing Downley ward together with the part of the existing West Wycombe & Sands ward to the north of the London to Bicester railway line and the part of the

existing Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward to the north-west of Downs Park. The Council argued that, while Downley parish has a strong identity, “it also has good community links with the adjoining Plomer Hill area”. The remaining part of Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward to the north of the railway line would be combined with the part of Cressex & Frogmoor ward to the north of the railway line to form a new two-member Disraeli ward. The Council proposed combining the part of Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward to the south of the railway line and west of Desborough Avenue, Plumer Road and Carrington Road with the part of Booker & Castlefield ward to the east of New Road to form a new three-member Oakridge & Castlefield ward, arguing that the new ward would “provide better community identity”. The remaining parts of Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward would be transferred to a new Abbey ward, as detailed below.

82 The District Council also proposed a new two-member Sands ward comprising the part of the unparished Sands area of West Wycombe & Sands ward to the south of the London to Bicester railway line, together with the part of Booker & Castlefield ward to the west of New Road and north of Squirrel Lane and Graham Drive. The Council noted that the Sands area is “a distinct community within the town of High Wycombe”. The remaining part of the current Booker & Castlefield ward would be combined with the part of Cressex & Frogmoor ward to the south of Cressex Road and east of Coronation Road, to form a new two-member Booker & Cressex ward. Under the District Council’s proposals, Disraeli ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to equal to the average by 2005. Booker & Cressex, Downley & Plomer Hill and Oakridge & Castlefield wards would have 3 per cent, 10 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005).

83 We received one further representation in relation to this area at Stage One. A resident of Downley opposed the Council’s proposal to include Downley parish in a new Downley & Plomer Hill ward, arguing that the parish is a primarily rural area which shares few community ties with the more urban High Wycombe. She noted that “Downley has always had a separate identity from the town of High Wycombe” and that residents of the parish continue to share stronger community ties with the West Wycombe and Piddington areas. She proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area, either retaining the current single-member Downley ward, or transferring Downley parish to the proposed The Dashwoods ward.

84 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council’s proposals, subject to one minor boundary amendment. We are content that the Council’s proposals would reflect the identities and interests of the various communities in the western part of High Wycombe well, and would utilise strong natural boundaries, such as the London to Bicester railway line. We also note that the Council’s proposals would provide for improved levels of electoral equality in this area, in particular addressing the significant level of under-representation in the current Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward. However, we propose amending the eastern boundary of the proposed Booker & Cressex ward to run to the rear of properties on the eastern side of New Road, and then to the rear of properties on the south of Cressex Road. This minor amendment would unite both sides of New Road in the proposed Booker & Cressex ward, and would retain both sides of Cressex Road and the adjacent industrial estate in the proposed Abbey ward. We consider that this change would provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary, and note that it would also provide a small

improvement in electoral equality in the proposed Booker & Cressex ward. While we recognise the concerns expressed by the resident of Downley regarding the inclusion of Downley parish in the proposed Downley & Plomer Hill ward, we note that the southern part of the parish comprises areas of housing which have developed from within the town of High Wycombe, and which share excellent communication links with the Plomer Hill community to the north of the London to Bicester railway line. We consider that Downley parish shares strong community links with the Plomer Hill area, and are content that the Council's proposals would reflect local community identities and interests well.

85 Under our draft recommendations, the two-member Disraeli ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to equal to the district average by 2005. The two-member Booker & Cressex and Downley & Plomer Hill wards would have 6 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 1 per cent fewer than the average each by 2005. The three-member Oakridge & Castlefield ward would have 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (4 per cent fewer by 2005). The proposed ward boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of the report.

### **Bowerdean & Daws Hill, Cressex & Frogmoor and Green Hill & Totteridge wards**

86 The three wards of Bowerdean & Daws Hill, Cressex & Frogmoor and Green Hill & Totteridge are situated in the centre of the district. All three wards are currently represented by three councillors each and cover the southern and central parts of the unparished area of High Wycombe town. At present, Bowerdean & Daws Hill and Green Hill & Totteridge wards have 5 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Cressex & Frogmoor ward currently has equal to the average number of electors per councillor, and is expected to continue to have equal to the average number of electors per councillor in five years' time.

87 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining parts of the existing Oakridge & Tinkers Wood and Cressex & Frogmoor wards to form a new two-member Disraeli ward, as detailed above. The Council also proposed a new three-member Abbey ward, comprising the remaining part of Cressex & Frogmoor ward to the south of the London to Bicester railway line, less the areas to the north of Cressex Road and east of Coronation Road, together with the parts of Oakridge & Tinkers Wood ward to the east of Desborough Avenue, Plumer Road and Carrington Road. The new Abbey ward would also include the part of the existing Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward to the south of the London to Bicester railway line, and the parts of Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward to the west of Florida Street and First Street and the Queen's Road area to the west of Totteridge Avenue. The Council argued that Wycombe Abbey School is "a physical feature dominating the ward".

88 The District Council also proposed a new three-member Terriers & Amersham Hill ward comprising the part of the current Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward to the north of the London to Bicester railway line and west of Lucas Road and Totteridge Avenue, together with the existing Green Hill & Totteridge ward less the area to the east of Highworth Close. The Council argued

that the proposed ward would comprise “the community on either side of the arterial A404 as it runs from Terriers to the centre of High Wycombe”. The remaining part of Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward to the north of the London to Bicester railway line, less the West Drive area, would form a new two-member Bowerdean ward. The remaining parts of Bowerdean & Daws Hill and Green Hill & Totteridge wards would be transferred to a new Totteridge ward, as detailed below.

89 Under the District Council’s proposals the new Abbey, Bowerdean and Terriers & Amersham Hill wards would have 3 per cent, 9 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent, 4 per cent and 8 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). We received no further representations in relation to this area at Stage One.

90 Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council’s proposals, subject to some minor boundary modifications. We are content that the Council’s proposals would better reflect local community identities and interests than the current warding arrangements in these areas, and would also maintain reasonable levels of electoral equality. In particular, we note that the proposals would utilise the London to Bicester railway line as a boundary in the centre of High Wycombe town, and we consider that the proposed Bowerdean and Terriers & Amersham Hill wards would delineate the distinct and discrete communities to the north of the railway line well.

91 However, we propose a number of minor modifications to the Council’s proposals, in order to reflect local community ties and further improve electoral equality. As detailed above, we propose amending the boundary between the proposed Abbey and Booker & Cressex wards in order to retain both sides of New Road in Booker & Cressex ward, and both sides of Cressex Road and the adjacent industrial estate in Abbey ward. We also propose retaining the Queen’s Road area of the current Keeps Hill & Hicks Farm ward within a new Ryemead ward, as detailed below. We consider that this amendment would provide a more clearly identifiable boundary in the east of the proposed Abbey ward, and note that it would result in improved levels of electoral equality in the proposed Ryemead ward. Finally, we also propose retaining the part of Green Hill & Totteridge ward bounded by Highworth Close and Wynbury Drive, less part of Old Hardenwaye, in the proposed Terriers & Amersham Hill ward. This amendment would unite the communities adjoining the northern part of Totteridge Lane within the proposed Terriers & Amersham Hill ward, and we note that it would also provide for improved levels of electoral equality in both Terriers & Amersham Hill and Totteridge wards. We propose adopting the Council’s proposed Bowerdean ward as part of our draft recommendations without amendment.

92 Under our draft recommendations, the three-member Terriers & Amersham Hill ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 2 per cent more than the average by 2005. The three-member Abbey and two-member Bowerdean wards would have 7 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 5 per cent and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005. The proposed ward boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of the report.

## **Keep Hill & Hicks Farm and Marsh & Micklefield wards**

93 The three-member Keep Hill & Hicks Farm and Marsh & Micklefield wards are situated in the centre of the district, and form part of the unparished area of High Wycombe. At present Keep Hill & Hicks Farm and Marsh & Micklefield wards are relatively over-represented, with 14 per cent and 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. However, these levels of electoral equality are forecast to improve slightly over the next five years, and the two wards are expected to have 7 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively by 2005.

94 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a new two-member Ryemead ward comprising the parts of Keep Hill & Hicks Farm and Marsh & Micklefield wards to the south of the London to Bicester railway line, less the Queens Road and Florida Street areas of Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward, as detailed above. The part of Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward to the north of the railway line and east of Hicks Farm Rise and Hennerton Way would be combined with the part of the current Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward to the east of West Drive and the part of Green Hill & Totteridge ward to the east of Highworth Close to form a new two-member Totteridge ward. The part of the current Marsh & Micklefield ward to the north of the railway line would be combined with the part of Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward to the east of Hicks Farm Rise and Hennerton Way to form a new two-member Micklefield ward.

95 Under the District Council's proposals, Totteridge ward would have 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, improving to 8 per cent more than the average by 2005. Micklefield and Ryemead wards would have 6 per cent and 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (9 per cent more and 8 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). We received no further representations in relation to this area at Stage One.

96 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we are content to base our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, subject to some minor boundary modifications. We consider that the Council's proposals would provide an appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and note that its proposals would reflect the distinct communities either side of the London to Bicester railway line. However, we propose some minor modifications to the proposed wards, in order to provide for clearer boundaries, and to improve further levels of electoral equality. As detailed above, we propose retaining the Queen's Road area within the proposed Ryemead ward, and retaining the Highworth Close and Rush Brooke Close area in the proposed Terriers & Amersham Hill ward. In order to further improve levels of electoral equality in the proposed Micklefield and Totteridge wards, we also propose transferring Hennington Way and part of Hicks Farm Rise from Micklefield ward to the proposed Totteridge ward.

97 Under our draft recommendations, the two-member Micklefield and Ryemead wards would have 11 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (4 per cent and 1 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Totteridge ward, also represented by two councillors, would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the average initially, improving to 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. The proposed ward boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted inside the back cover of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

98 We received only one representation in relation to the District Council’s electoral cycle at Stage One. The Council itself stated that it “has a strong preference for elections of the whole Council every four years to continue”.

99 We have considered the representations received and note that, at present, there appears to be no significant support for any change to the present electoral cycle. We therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the District Council.

## **Conclusions**

100 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- a council of 60 members should be retained;
- there should be 28 wards, four fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- the whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

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

- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Marlow East and Marlow West wards to follow the High Street.
- We propose enlarging the proposed Hazlemere South ward to include the part of Tylers Green ward to the west of Oaktree Close, St Johns Close and Channer Drive and north of King’s Wood.
- We propose transferring the development area to the south of Amersham Road and west of Magnolia Dene from the proposed Hazlemere South ward to the proposed Hazlemere North ward.
- We propose retaining both sides of New Road within the proposed Booker & Cressex ward, and both sides of Cressex Road within the proposed Abbey ward.
- We propose retaining the Queen’s Road area within the proposed Ryemead ward.
- We propose transferring Hennington Way and part of Hicks Farm Rise from Micklefield ward to the proposed Totteridge ward.

- We propose transferring the area bounded by Highworth Close and Rush Brooke Close, less part of Old Hardenwaye, from Totteridge ward to the proposed Terriers & Amersham Hill ward.
- We propose renaming the proposed The Dashwoods ward as Chiltern Rise ward.

102 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	32	28	32	28
Average number of electors per councillor	2,035	2,035	2,056	2,056
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	20	4	19	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	1	9	0

103 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Wycombe District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 20 to four. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Wycombe District Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

104 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that

if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the town of Marlow and the parishes of Chepping Wycombe and Hazlemere to reflect the proposed district wards.

105 Marlow Town Council is currently represented by 12 councillors serving two wards: North ward (returning seven councillors) and South ward (returning five councillors). At Stage One the District Council proposed new Marlow East and Marlow West district wards, while Marlow Town Council itself proposed broadly retaining the existing Marlow North and Marlow South wards. In our draft recommendations, we have proposed adopting the District Council’s proposals for Marlow, subject to a minor boundary amendment between the two wards. As a consequence of our draft recommendations, we propose creating new East and West wards of Marlow town to reflect the proposed district ward boundary. We propose that East ward should return five town councillors, and that West ward should return seven councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Marlow Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: East ward (returning five councillors) and West ward (returning seven councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary in Marlow, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

106 The parish of Chepping Wycombe is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Flackwell Heath ward, Loudwater ward and Tylers Green ward, each returning five councillors. At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the Flackwell Heath area to a new Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow ward, and combining the Loudwater and Tylers Green areas to form a new Tylers Green & Loudwater ward. In our draft recommendations, we have proposed adopting the Council’s proposed Little Marlow & Flackwell Heath ward without amendment. However, we have proposed transferring part of the proposed Tylers Green & Loudwater ward to a revised Hazlemere South ward.

107 As a consequence of our draft recommendations, we propose amending the boundary between Flackwell Heath and Loudwater wards of Chepping Wycombe parish, and creating new Tylers Green North and Tylers Green South wards of Chepping Wycombe parish. The boundary between the revised Flackwell Heath and Loudwater wards of Chepping Wycombe parish would reflect the proposed boundary between the new Flackwell Heath & Little Marlow and Tylers Green & Loudwater district wards, and the boundary between the new Tylers Green North and Tylers Green South wards of Chepping Wycombe parish would reflect the proposed boundary between Tylers Green & Loudwater ward and the new Hazlemere South district ward. The revised Flackwell Heath ward should return six councillors, and the revised Loudwater ward should return four councillors. The new Tylers Green North ward should return one councillor, and Tylers Green South ward should return four councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**

Chepping Wycombe Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Flackwell Heath ward (returning six councillors), Loudwater ward (returning four councillors), Tylers Green North ward (returning 1 councillor) and Tylers Green South ward (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

108 The parish of Hazlemere is currently served by 12 councillors, representing three wards: Hill Farm & Penn Road ward (returning four councillors), Manor & Central ward (returning four councillors) and Park & Brackley ward (returning four councillors). At Stage One, the District Council proposed two new district wards for Hazlemere, Hazlemere North and Hazlemere South. In our draft recommendations, we proposed adopting the District Council’s proposals subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between the two wards. As a consequence of our draft recommendations, we propose creating new North and South wards of Hazlemere parish to reflect the proposed district wards. We propose that North ward should return seven councillors, and that South ward should return five councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**

Hazlemere Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North ward (returning seven councillors) and South ward (returning five councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

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

**Draft Recommendation**

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

**110 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Wycombe and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wycombe*

## 5 NEXT STEPS

111 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 2 July 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

112 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

113 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Wycombe: Detailed Mapping**

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

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundaries of Marlow East and Marlow West wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for High Wycombe.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Wycombe: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Boundaries for Marlow East and Marlow West wards*



## APPENDIX B

### Wycombe District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the District Council in respect of 11 wards, where the Council's proposals are set out below. The only other amendment to the Council's proposals, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose renaming The Dashwoods ward as Chiltern Rise ward.

*Figure B1: Wycombe District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Abbey (in High Wycombe)	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Cressex & Frogmoor ward (part); Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part)
Booker & Cressex (in High Wycombe)	Booker & Castlefield ward (part); Cressex & Frogmoor ward (part)
Hazlemere North	Hazlemere Central ward (part – Manor & Central ward of Hazlemere parish (part)); Hazlemere West ward (Park & Brackley ward of Hazlemere parish)
Hazlemere South	Hazlemere Central ward (part – Manor & Central ward of Hazlemere parish (part)); Hazlemere East ward (Hill Farm & Penn Road ward of Hazlemere parish)
Marlow East	Marlow South ward (part – Marlow South ward of Marlow Town (part))
Marlow West	Marlow North ward (Marlow North ward of Marlow Town); Marlow South ward (part – Marlow South ward of Marlow Town (part))
Micklefield (in High Wycombe)	Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Marsh & Micklefield ward (part)
Ryemead (in High Wycombe)	Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Marsh & Micklefield ward (part)
Terriers & Amersham Hill (in High Wycombe)	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Green Hill & Totteridge ward (part)
Totteridge (in High Wycombe)	Bowerdean & Daws Hill ward (part); Keep Hill & Hicks Farm ward (part); Green Hill & Totteridge ward (part)
Tylers Green & Loudwater	Flackwell Heath ward (part – detached areas of Flackwell Heath ward of Chepping Wycombe parish); Loudwater ward (part – Loudwater ward of Chepping Wycombe parish less detached area)

Figure B2: Wycombe District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average (%)
Abbey (in High Wycombe)	3	5,908	1,969	-3	6,112	2,037	-1
Booker & Cressex (in High Wycombe)	2	3,938	1,969	-3	4,185	2,093	2
Hazlemere North	2	3,684	1,842	-9	3,840	1,920	-7
Hazlemere South	2	3,557	1,779	-13	3,750	1,875	-9
Marlow East	2	4,668	2,334	15	4,550	2,275	11
Marlow West	3	6,537	2,179	7	6,300	2,100	2
Micklefield (in High Wycombe)	2	3,843	1,922	-6	4,497	2,249	9
Ryemead (in High Wycombe)	2	3,602	1,801	-12	3,797	1,899	-8
Terriers & Amersham Hill (in High Wycombe)	3	5,880	1,960	-4	5,681	1,894	-8
Totteridge (in High Wycombe)	2	4,739	2,370	16	4,432	2,216	8
Tylers Green & Loudwater	3	6,556	2,185	7	6,690	2,230	8

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

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

## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.



## APPENDIX D

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

#### *Commission compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies 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	The Commission complies 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	The Commission complies 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	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods

<p>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</p>	<p>The Commission complies with this requirement</p>
<p>Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated</p>	<p>The Commission complies with this requirement</p>