

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire

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

June 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire.

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Local Government Commission for England

26 June 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 27 June 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Tewkesbury under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 2001 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 94-95) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Tewkesbury.

We recommend that Tewkesbury Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors representing 22 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council elections should continue to be held every four years.

The Local Government Act 2000 contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Tewkesbury on 27 June 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 January 2001, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 22 of the 27 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and 15 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 23 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 15 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 94-95) are that:

- **Tewkesbury Borough Council should have 38 councillors, two more than at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified and one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 15 of the proposed 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Twyning, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Ashchurch, Bishop's Cleeve, Churchdown and Tewkesbury.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 7 August 2001:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff	2	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Rural parish ward of Ashchurch parish); Tewkesbury Newtown ward (part – the parish of Walton Cardiff)	Large map
2	Badgeworth	1	Coombe Hill ward (part – the parishes of Boddington and Staverton); Crickley ward (the parishes of Badgeworth and Great Witcombe)	Map 2
3	Brockworth	3	Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield and Brockworth Westfield wards (Brockworth parish)	Map 2
4	Churchdown Brookfield	2	Churchdown Brookfield and Churchdown Pirton wards (part – the proposed Brookfield parish ward of Churchdown parish)	Large map
5	Churchdown St John's	3	Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton wards (part – the proposed St John's parish ward of Churchdown parish)	Large map
6	Cleeve Hill	2	Cleeve Hill ward (part – the parishes of Prescott, Southam and Woodmancote)	Map 2
7	Coombe Hill	2	Coombe Hill ward (part – the parishes of Deerhurst, Elmstone Hardwicke, Leigh and Uckington); De Winton ward (part – the parishes of Longford, Norton, Sandhurst and Twigworth)	Map 2
8	Grange	1	Bishop's Cleeve South ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish)	Large map
9	Highnam with Haw Bridge	2	Haw Bridge ward (the parishes of Ashleworth, Chaceley, Forthampton, Hasfield, Maisemore and Tirley); Highnam ward (the parishes of Highnam and Minsterworth)	Map 2
10	Hucclecote	1	Horsbere ward (part – the parish of Hucclecote)	Map 2
11	Innsworth with Down Hatherley	1	Churchdown Parton ward (part – the proposed RAF Innsworth parish ward of Churchdown parish); De Winton ward (part – the parish of Down Hatherley); Innsworth ward (the parish of Innsworth)	Map 2
12	Isbourne	1	Dumbleton ward (part – the parishes of Buckland, Dumbleton, Snowhill, Stanton and Toddington); Gotherington ward (part – the parish of Teddington)	Map 2
13	Northway	2	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Northway parish ward of Ashchurch parish)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
14	Oxenton Hill	1	Coombe Hill ward (part – the parish of Stoke Orchard); Gotherington ward (part – the parishes of Gotherington and Oxenton)	Map 2
15	Pullar	2	Bishop’s Cleeve North and Bishop’s Cleeve South wards (part – the proposed West parish ward of Bishop’s Cleeve parish)	Large map
16	St Michael’s	2	Bishop’s Cleeve East, Bishop’s Cleeve North and Bishop’s Cleeve South wards (part – the proposed East parish ward of Bishop’s Cleeve parish)	Large map
17	Shurdington	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> Shurdington ward (the parish of Shurdington)	Map 2
18	Tewkesbury Newtown	1	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Newtown parish ward of Ashchurch parish); Tewkesbury Newtown ward (part – the proposed Newtown parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)	Large map
19	Tewkesbury Prior’s Park	2	Tewkesbury Prior’s Park ward (part – the proposed Prior’s Park parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)	Large map
20	Tewkesbury Town with Mitton	2	Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior’s Park and Tewkesbury Town wards (part – the proposed Town with Mitton parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)	Large map
21	Twyning	1	Tewkesbury Mitton ward (part – the proposed Mythe parish ward of Tewkesbury parish); Twyning ward (the parish of Twyning)	Map 2
22	Winchcombe	3	Dumbleton ward (part – the parish of Stanway); Gotherington ward (part – the parish of Alderton); Winchcombe ward (part – the parishes of Gretton, Hawling, Sudeley and Winchcombe)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole borough is parished.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tewkesbury

	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	Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff	2	1,147	574	-63	3,132	1,566	-8
2	Badgeworth	1	1,764	1,764	12	1,782	1,782	5
3	Brockworth	3	4,949	1,650	5	5,338	1,779	5
4	Churchdown Brookfield	2	3,353	1,677	7	3,402	1,701	0
5	Churchdown St John's	3	5,110	1,703	8	5,253	1,751	3
6	Cleeve Hill	2	3,400	1,700	8	3,411	1,706	1
7	Coombe Hill	2	3,664	1,832	17	3,699	1,850	9
8	Grange	1	1,649	1,649	5	1,653	1,653	-3
9	Highnam with Haw Bridge	2	3,526	1,763	12	3,623	1,812	7
10	Hucclecote	1	1,017	1,017	-35	1,525	1,525	-10
11	Innsworth with Down Hatherley	1	1,728	1,728	10	1,732	1,735	2
12	Isbourne	1	1,695	1,695	8	1,740	1,740	8
13	Northway	2	3,616	1,808	15	3,618	1,809	7
14	Oxenton Hill	1	1,250	1,250	-20	1,609	1,609	-5
15	Pullar	2	3,164	1,582	1	3,356	1,678	-1
16	St Michael's	2	3,012	1,506	-4	3,269	1,635	-4
17	Shurdington	1	1,542	1,542	-2	1,598	1,598	-6
18	Tewkesbury Newtown	1	1,546	1,546	-2	1,550	1,550	-9
19	Tewkesbury Prior's Park	2	3,110	1,555	-1	3,132	1,566	-8
20	Tewkesbury Town with Mitton	2	3,334	1,667	6	3,737	1,869	10
21	Twynning	1	1,410	1,410	-10	1,458	1,458	-14

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 Winchcombe	3	4,690	1,563	0	4,827	1,609	-5
Totals	38	59,676	–	–	64,444	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,570	–	–	1,696	–

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. We have now reviewed the six districts in Gloucestershire 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 was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Tewkesbury. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1980 (Report No. 368). The electoral arrangements of Gloucestershire County Council were last reviewed in May 1982 (Report No. 424). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had 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.

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough 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 have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), which 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, so far as practicable, 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 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, i.e. 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 areas 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 Orders 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 the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Tewkesbury Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South West region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 October 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire*, and ended on 6 March 2001. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four, we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

12 The borough of Tewkesbury is situated in the north of Gloucestershire and covers some 41,470 hectares. The borough is largely rural in character and includes a considerable amount of Green Belt land. It is entirely parished, with a total of 49 parishes. The three main towns are Bishop's Cleeve, Churchdown and Tewkesbury which comprise 13 per cent, 15 per cent and 9 per cent of the borough's total electorate respectively. The rivers Avon and Severn converge at Tewkesbury and the borough spreads across the Severn Vale, taking in part of the Cotswolds Escarpment. The area is largely residential, based on its proximity to the adjoining towns of Cheltenham and Gloucester. The M5 motorway bisects the borough and connects the area to Birmingham, Bristol and South Wales.

13 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 borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

14 The borough of Tewkesbury has an electorate of 59,676 (February 2000), and this is forecast to increase to 64,444 by 2005. The Council presently has 36 members who are elected from 27 wards, 13 of which are relatively urban with the remainder being predominantly rural. One ward is represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and 19 are single-member wards. The whole Council is elected every four years.

15 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Tewkesbury borough, with around 19 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increase has been in Bishop's Cleeve North ward.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,658 electors, which the borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,790 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 in 22 of the 27 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, 15 wards by more than 20 per cent and eight wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Bishop's Cleeve North ward where the councillor represents 134 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Tewkesbury

Figure 3: 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	Ashchurch	2	4,466	2,233	35	4,471	2,236	25
2	Bishop's Cleeve East	1	1,305	1,305	-21	1,307	1,307	-27
3	Bishop's Cleeve North	1	3,885	3,885	134	4,328	4,328	142
4	Bishop's Cleeve South	1	2,635	2,635	59	2,643	2,643	48
5	Brockworth Glebe	1	951	951	-43	953	953	-47
6	Brockworth Moorfield	1	1,207	1,207	-27	1,236	1,236	-31
7	Brockworth Westfield	1	1,194	1,194	-28	1,194	1,194	-33
8	Churchdown Brookfield	2	2,557	1,279	-23	2,606	1,303	-27
9	Churchdown Parton	2	3,566	1,783	8	3,690	1,845	3
10	Churchdown Pirton	2	2,567	1,284	-23	2,586	1,293	-28
11	Cleeve Hill	2	2,925	1,463	-12	2,934	1,467	-18
12	Coombe Hill	2	2,621	1,311	-21	2,982	1,491	-17
13	Crickley	1	1,031	1,031	-38	1,043	1,043	-42
14	De Winton	1	2,404	2,404	45	2,435	2,435	36
15	Dumbleton	1	1,610	1,610	-3	1,665	1,665	-7
16	Gotherington	1	1,877	1,877	13	1,911	1,911	7
17	Haw Bridge	1	1,564	1,564	-6	1,582	1,582	-12
18	Highnam	1	1,962	1,962	18	2,041	2,041	14
19	Horsbere	1	2,614	2,614	58	3,480	3,480	94
20	Innsworth	1	1,151	1,151	-31	1,151	1,151	-36
21	Shurdington	1	1,542	1,542	-7	1,598	1,598	-11
22	Tewkesbury Mitton	1	1,326	1,326	-20	1,610	1,610	-10

	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 (%)
23	Tewkesbury Newtown	1	1,913	1,913	15	3,899	3,899	118
24	Tewkesbury Prior's Park	2	3,170	1,585	-4	3,192	1,596	-11
25	Tewkesbury Town	1	1,987	1,987	20	2,106	2,106	18
26	Twynning	1	1,301	1,301	-22	1,349	1,349	-25
27	Winchcombe	3	4,345	1,448	-13	4,452	1,484	-17
	Totals	36	59,676	-	-	64,444	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,658	-	-	1,790	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Brockworth Glebe ward were relatively over-represented by 43 per cent, while electors in Bishop's Cleeve North ward were relatively under-represented by 134 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received eight representations, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, and representations from three parish councils, a local political party and three from borough councillors. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mix of single-, two- and three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in Bishop's Cleeve and surrounding areas, Churchdown and Tewkesbury using options put forward at Stage One. We proposed that:

- Tewkesbury Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors, compared with the current 36, representing 22 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Ashchurch, Bishop's Cleeve, Churchdown and Tewkesbury.

Draft Recommendation

Tewkesbury Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors, serving 22 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 22 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward, Twyning, varying by more than 14 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 22 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Commission.

Tewkesbury Borough Council

21 The Borough Council supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve and Churchdown and did not comment on the rest of our recommendations.

Parish Councils

22 At Stage Three we received 16 representations from parish councils. Ashchurch Parish Council objected to our proposals for the parish and proposed combining it with the rural area of Walton Cardiff to form a three-member ward. Badgeworth Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council supported our proposal to respect the town boundaries at borough level; however, it reiterated its proposal for five single-member wards. Should we endorse our draft recommendations for Bishop's Cleeve as final, it suggested that Bishop's Cleeve East ward should be renamed St Michael's ward, Bishop's Cleeve South ward should be renamed Grange ward and Bishop's Cleeve West ward should be renamed Pullar ward.

23 Buckland Parish Council stated that it had no objection to our recommendations while Churchdown Parish Council supported our proposals for Churchdown. The Parish Council of Down Hatherley objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley with Innsworth and supported retaining the existing De Winton ward. Forthampton Parish Council proposed retaining the existing Haw Bridge and Highnam wards. The Parish Council of Hucclecote supported the proposed Hucclecote ward. Longford Parish Council objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley with Innsworth. As an alternative, it proposed combining the existing wards of Innsworth and Churchdown Pirton, and retaining the existing De Winton and an amended Coombe Hill ward. Maisemore Parish Council objected to the proposed Highnam & Haw Bridge ward and supported retaining the existing warding arrangements for this area. Norton Parish Council objected to dividing Down Hatherley parish from the other parishes in the existing De Winton ward and raised concerns about the size of the proposed Coombe Hill ward. Sandhurst Parish Council also objected to the proposed Coombe Hill ward.

24 Stoke Orchard Parish Council reiterated its Stage One proposal that the parish should be combined with parts of Bishop's Cleeve, together with Elmstone Hardwicke and Uckington parishes. Tewkesbury Town Council objected to including the Wheatpieces area in Ashchurch & Walton Cardiff ward and proposed including it in Tewkesbury Newtown ward instead. It also suggested that the proposed Tewkesbury Mitton North parish ward should be renamed Tewkesbury Mythe. Twigworth Parish Council objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley parish with Innsworth parish and to divide Down Hatherley from the existing De

Winton ward. It proposed that Innsworth should be combined with areas to its east. Woodmancote Parish Council supported our proposal for the parish.

Other Representations

25 A further five representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a local political group, two borough councillors, a county councillor and a local resident.

26 Bishop's Cleeve & Mid Tewkesbury branch of the Liberal Democrats supported our proposal to respect the boundaries of Bishop's Cleeve town at borough level and to increase the number of borough councillors representing the area to five. A borough councillor supported our proposals for Churchdown and Innsworth. Another borough councillor supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve; however, he objected to our proposals for Oxenton Hill ward. As an alternative, he proposed that Teddington and Prescott parishes should be included in Oxenton Hill ward, while Stoke Orchard should be combined with Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff ward, to be renamed Walton Cardiff with Stoke Orchard. He also proposed that the part of Ashchurch to the east of the motorway should be combined with Northway ward. A county councillor proposed that no changes should be made to the levels of representation within the parish wards of Ashchurch parish.

27 A local resident generally supported our recommendations at borough and parish level. He particularly supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve and Churchdown St John's. He also supported the proposed boundaries of Tewkesbury Prior's Park and Tewkesbury Town wards. However, he raised concerns regarding dividing Wynyards Close between Tewkesbury Newtown and Mitton wards.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Tewkesbury 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 ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

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, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only 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 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 7 per cent from 59,676 to 64,444 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Tewkesbury Newtown ward, although a significant amount is also expected in the more rural Horsbere ward. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

33 At Stage Three, the Parish Council of Down Hatherley argued that more attention should be given to development in Down Hatherley before 2011. However, we are required by Schedule 11 of the 1972 Local Government Act to have regard to the number and distribution of electors

at present and in five years' time only. Maisemore Parish Council also drew attention to possible development in Highnam parish. However, we are content that the Borough Council took into account any development that was due to take place before 2005. We therefore remain satisfied that the Borough Council's projections are the best estimates currently available.

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 carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

35 Tewkesbury Borough Council is currently served by 36 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a marginal increase in council size from 36 to 38. It considered that this would be the best option in order to "achieve the aims of the review". It proposed additional councillors for areas which have experienced significant development since the last review. Under its proposals for a 38-member council, the Borough Council was able to provide wards with good levels of electoral equality, while utilising parish boundaries and easily identifiable natural boundaries, and reflecting community identities and interests as much as possible. We did not receive any further representations regarding council size at Stage One; however, we noted that representations made to the Borough Council during its consultation period generally supported a 38-member scheme.

36 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 38 members.

37 During Stage Three we did not receive any representations regarding the proposed size of the council, therefore we are content to endorse our draft recommendation for a 38-member council as final.

Electoral Arrangements

38 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations. In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's Stage One proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we concluded that we should base our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. These proposals would minimise the number of wards crossing parish boundaries and would combine areas which share good transport and community links. However, to improve electoral equality further and to offer more clearly identifiable boundaries while having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in Bishop's Cleeve and the surrounding areas, and in Churchdown and Tewkesbury.

39 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a mix of single-, two- and three-member wards, a pattern which we adopted as our draft recommendations. It considered that the aim of achieving good levels of electoral equality, clearly identifiable ward boundaries and reflecting community identities and interests would best be met by a scheme of mixed-member wards. We received three representations favouring predominantly single-member wards but they did not provide schemes or persuasive supporting argumentation. While we noted the general opposition to multi-member wards in rural areas, we did not receive evidence to persuade us that multi-member wards would offer worse community representation than single-member wards. We considered that our draft proposals would offer the best possible representation of community identities and interests across the borough, while having regard to electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

40 In response to our draft recommendations report, a number of respondents supported our draft recommendations. In particular we received support for our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve, Churchdown, and wards in the south of the borough. We received a number of representations objecting to our proposals for Ashchurch, Down Hatherley, and Stoke Orchard, and for the proposed wards of Oxenton Hill and Coombe Hill. While we recognise that there is some merit in the arguments that we have divided areas that share strong connections, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We consider that our draft recommendations combine well-connected areas and avoid warding parishes as much as possible, which we consider is in the best interests of representing local community identities.

41 Having reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, we have concluded that they present the best balance between the statutory criteria and electoral equality. We are content, therefore, to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to one minor amendment and changes to three ward names. These changes will use a clearer boundary between wards, and will ensure that community identity is reflected more accurately. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Ashchurch, Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town and Twyning wards;
- (b) Coombe Hill, Crickley, De Winton, Haw Bridge, Highnam and Shurdington wards;
- (c) Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield, Brockworth Westfield, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Parton, Churchdown Pirton, Horsbere and Innsworth wards;
- (d) Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North, Bishop's Cleeve South, Cleeve Hill, Dumbleton, Gotherington and Winchcombe wards.

42 Details of our final 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.

Ashchurch, Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town and Twyning wards

43 The existing wards of Ashchurch, Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town and Twyning cover the north-west of the borough. Ashchurch ward (comprising the parish of Ashchurch) and Tewkesbury Prior's Park ward (comprising Prior's Park parish ward of Tewkesbury parish) are each represented by two councillors, while Tewkesbury Mitton ward (comprising Mitton parish ward of Tewkesbury parish), Tewkesbury Newtown ward (comprising Newtown parish ward of Tewkesbury parish), Tewkesbury Town ward (comprising Town parish ward of Tewkesbury parish) and Twyning ward (comprising Twyning parish) are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements for a 36-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Ashchurch, Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town and Twyning wards varies from the borough average by 35 per cent, 20 per cent, 15 per cent, 4 per cent, 20 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Ashchurch, Tewkesbury Mitton and Tewkesbury Town wards to vary by 25 per cent, 10 per cent and 18 per cent from the borough average in 2005 respectively. The level of electoral equality in Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park and Twyning wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 118 per cent, 11 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

44 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed allocating additional councillors to this area to address the current under-representation. It proposed that this area should comprise six wards, with the proposed wards of Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff, Northway, Prior's Park and Tewkesbury Town with Mitton each being represented by two councillors, and the proposed wards of Newtown and Twyning each being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff ward should comprise the majority of Ashchurch parish, less those parts to the north-west of the railway line, the A438 and the M5, together with Walton Cardiff parish. It put forward a Northway ward, comprising that part of Ashchurch ward bounded by the railway line, the A438 and the M5, and a Newtown ward combining the remainder of Ashchurch parish and that part of Tewkesbury parish to the north-east of the Ashchurch Road and Oldfield, including Northway Lane. It proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Tewkesbury Prior's Park ward to form a new Prior's Park ward and forming a new Tewkesbury Town with Mitton ward from the remainder of Tewkesbury parish, less that part to the north-west of the River Avon. It suggested that the remainder of Tewkesbury parish should be combined with Twyning parish to form a new Twyning ward.

45 We received one further representation about this area at Stage One from a local councillor who suggested that the Walton Cardiff area should be represented by an extra councillor in order to allow for development in the area.

46 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. They would also result in increased representation for the Walton Cardiff area, as proposed by a local councillor, to which it is entitled, and would respect the existing community divisions in this area. However, in order to utilise a more clearly identifiable boundary between Prior's Park and Tewkesbury Town with Mitton wards, we proposed transferring that

part of Tewkesbury parish to the north of the River Swilgate and Link Road to Tewkesbury Town with Mitton ward. In addition, we proposed prefixing the proposed names of the Tewkesbury town wards with the name of Tewkesbury for clarity.

47 Under our draft recommendations, the level of electoral equality in Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff, Northway, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town with Mitton and Twyning wards would vary from the borough average by 63 per cent, 15 per cent, 3 per cent, 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff and Northway wards to vary by 8 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average. The level of electoral equality in Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town with Mitton and Twyning wards is projected to deteriorate marginally to vary from the borough average by 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 14 per cent in each ward in 2005.

48 At Stage Three, Ashchurch Parish Council objected to our proposals for the parish and proposed combining the whole of Ashchurch parish with the rural area of Walton Cardiff to form a three-member ward. It argued that our proposals would confuse the electorate. However, it did not put forward proposals for the remainder of Tewkesbury Newtown ward or Walton Cardiff parish. Tewkesbury Town Council objected to including the Wheatpieces area of Walton Cardiff parish in Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff ward. It argued that the Wheatpieces area is "socially and geographically more aligned to Tewkesbury". It proposed including the area in Tewkesbury Newtown ward instead and amending the boundaries and representation in order to address levels of electoral equality. However, it did not put forward specific proposals in support of these changes.

49 A borough councillor proposed that Stoke Orchard should be combined with Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff ward in order to avoid combining Stoke Orchard with Oxenton Hill ward. He proposed that the revised ward should be renamed Walton Cardiff with Stoke Orchard. He asserted that Stoke Orchard should not be combined with Oxenton Hill ward because there are no historical or community associations between the two areas. He also proposed that the part of Ashchurch to the east of the motorway should be combined with Northway ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in Cleeve Hill, Isbourne, Oxenton Hill, Northway and the proposed Walton Cardiff with Stoke Orchard wards would vary by 8 per cent, 13 per cent, 9 per cent, 6 per cent and 76 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve in Cleeve Hill and Walton with Stoke Orchard wards, to vary by 1 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average. However, it would deteriorate in Northway and Oxenton Hill wards, to vary by 13 per cent and 15 per cent from the borough average in 2005, while continuing to vary by 13 per cent in Isbourne ward.

50 A local resident supported our proposed Tewkesbury Prior's Park and Tewkesbury Town wards. He commented that the proposed boundaries were "neater" and used more identifiable boundaries. However, he raised concerns regarding the division of Wynyards Close between Tewkesbury Newtown and Mitton wards.

51 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for this area, with one minor amendment. We note that these proposals have received some support and we consider that they offer the best balance between electoral

equality and the statutory criteria. We consider that the proposal to combine the whole of Wynyards Close in a single ward, with those areas to which it is most closely connected, makes sense. While this proposal would offer marginally worse levels of electoral equality, we consider that it is justified in the interests of using a clearer boundary between communities. We propose, therefore, that the whole of Wynyards Close should be included in Tewkesbury Town with Mitton ward.

52 We have not been persuaded to adopt Ashchurch Parish Council's proposals given that they would result in the Newtown area being divided along a relatively unclear boundary. We also have some concern that there is little shared identity between Northway and Walton Cardiff village, which Ashchurch Parish Council proposes combining in a single ward. While we appreciate the concerns of Tewkesbury Town Council that the Wheatpieces area has strong connections with Tewkesbury town, we have not been persuaded that warding Walton Cardiff parish would be in the best interests of the local community. This proposal would also have an adverse effect on levels of electoral equality unless areas which are geographically separate were to be combined. We are not persuaded that the borough councillor's proposals would offer a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations given that they would result in significantly worse levels of electoral equality and we have not been persuaded that this proposal would secure local support.

53 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff, Northway, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town with Mitton and Twynning wards would vary from the borough average by 63 per cent, 15 per cent, 3 per cent, 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff and Northway wards to vary by 8 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average. The level of electoral equality in Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park, Tewkesbury Town with Mitton and Twynning wards is projected to deteriorate marginally to vary from the borough average by 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 14 per cent in each ward in 2005. Our final recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 2, and are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Coombe Hill, Crickley, De Winton, Haw Bridge, Highnam and Shurdington wards

54 The existing wards of Coombe Hill, Crickley, De Winton, Haw Bridge, Highnam and Shurdington cover the rural western part of the borough. Coombe Hill ward (comprising the parishes of Boddington, Deerhurst, Elmstone Hardwicke, Leigh, Staverton and Uckington) is represented by two councillors, while Crickley ward (comprising the parishes of Badgeworth and Great Witcombe), De Winton ward (comprising the parishes of Down Hatherley, Longford, Norton, Sandhurst and Twigworth), Haw Bridge ward (comprising the parishes of Ashleworth, Chaceley, Forthampton, Hasfield, Maisemore and Tirley), Highnam ward (comprising the parishes of Highnam and Minsterworth) and Shurdington ward (comprising Shurdington parish) are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements for a 36-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Coombe Hill, Crickley, De Winton, Haw Bridge, Highnam and Shurdington wards varies from the borough average by 21 per cent, 38 per cent, 45

per cent, 6 per cent, 18 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Coombe Hill, De Winton and Highnam wards to vary by 17 per cent, 36 per cent and 14 per cent in 2005 respectively. The level of electoral equality in Crickley, Haw Bridge and Shurdington wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 42 per cent, 12 per cent and 11 per cent in 2005 respectively.

55 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed reducing the number of councillors representing this area, and proposed that this area should comprise four wards, with the proposed wards of Coombe Hill and Highnam with Haw Bridge each being represented by two councillors, and the proposed wards of Badgeworth and Shurdington each being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Badgeworth ward should comprise the parishes of Badgeworth, Boddington, Great Witcombe and Staverton while Coombe Hill ward would include the parishes of Deerhurst, Elmstone Hardwicke, Leigh, Longford, Norton, Sandhurst, Twigworth and Uckington. It put forward a new Highnam with Haw Bridge ward to include the parishes to the east of the River Severn: Ashleworth, Chaceley, Forthampton, Hasfield, Highnam, Maisemore, Minsterworth and Tirley. It also proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Shurdington ward.

56 We did not receive any further representations regarding this area at Stage One. We gave careful consideration to possible alternative options for this area, as a result of which we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals offered the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The Borough Council's proposals respected parish boundaries and shared community interests, and resulted in minimal disruption to the existing wards. While we had some concerns regarding the geographical size of the proposed Highnam with Haw Bridge ward, we noted that the parishes in this ward share transport links and have similar community interests. Also, the only alternative warding arrangements for this area would involve either disregard for the distinct boundary of the River Severn, additional parish warding or high levels of electoral inequality. Similarly, we noted that alternative arrangements for Badgeworth and Coombe Hill would either result in high levels of electoral inequality or additional parish warding, which we did not consider would best reflect community identity. We therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposals as our draft recommendations for this area without amendment.

57 Under our draft recommendations there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in Badgeworth, Coombe Hill, Highnam with Haw Bridge and Shurdington wards varying from the borough average by 12 per cent, 17 per cent, 12 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Badgeworth, Coombe Hill and Highnam with Haw Bridge wards to vary from the borough average by 5 per cent, 9 per cent and 7 per cent in 2005. The level of electoral equality in Shurdington ward is projected to deteriorate marginally, to vary from the borough average by 6 per cent in 2005.

58 In response to our draft recommendations the Parish Council of Down Hatherley objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley with Innsworth. It argued that it would not be in the interests of Down Hatherley residents for the community to be combined with the "semi-urban" area of Innsworth, and it asserted that the two areas are geographically separate. It also raised concerns regarding the proposed Coombe Hill ward, given that it would result in the A38 road being divided between wards. It supported retaining the links between parishes combined in the

existing De Winton ward, arguing that these villages share “common interests and needs” and that they are of a similar rural character. Longford Parish Council also objected to combining Down Hatherley and Innsworth. It asserted that Down Hatherley shares community links with the five parishes of the existing De Winton ward while it is “very different” in character to Innsworth. It proposed retaining the existing wards of Coombe Hill and De Winton and suggested combining the existing ward of Innsworth with Churchdown Pirton. It stated that Elmstone Hardwicke and Uckington parishes have more in common with other parishes in the existing Coombe Hill ward than with the De Winton parishes.

59 Under Longford Parish Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Coombe Hill, De Winton and Innsworth & Churchdown Pirton wards would vary by 4 per cent, 53 per cent and 21 per cent from the borough average initially, and vary by 10 per cent, 44 per cent and 27 per cent from the borough average in 2005. If no further changes were made to our draft recommendations these proposals would have a consequential effect on surrounding wards, resulting in the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Badgeworth, Churchdown Parton and Oxenton Hill wards varying by 33 per cent, 14 per cent and 36 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would deteriorate over the next five years to vary by 37 per cent, 15 per cent and 40 per cent from the borough average in 2005.

60 Norton Parish Council also objected to dividing Down Hatherley from parishes in the existing De Winton ward. It argued that Down Hatherley shares close ties with other parishes in the existing De Winton ward. It also raised concerns about the geographical size of the proposed Coombe Hill ward. Sandhurst Parish Council also objected to the geographical size of the proposed Coombe Hill ward, which it considered would be difficult to represent. Twigworth Parish Council objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley with Innsworth and to divide Down Hatherley from the existing De Winton ward. It argued that Twigworth, Down Hatherley and the other parishes in the existing De Winton ward share common interests and facilities. It proposed that the existing De Winton ward should be retained while Innsworth should be combined with areas to its east. As detailed earlier, under our proposals for a 38-member council, the existing De Winton ward would have an electoral variance of 53 per cent from the borough average (44 per cent in 2005).

61 Forthampton Parish Council proposed retaining the existing Haw Bridge and Highnam wards. It argued that the parishes of the existing Haw Bridge ward are of a similar character and should be served by a single councillor. It claimed that the residents of Highnam and Minsterworth parishes should be represented separately from the Haw Bridge parishes because they have different needs and priorities and they associate with Gloucester and the Forest of Dean while the residents of the Haw Bridge parishes associate with Tewkesbury. It also raised concerns that the proposed Highnam with Haw Bridge ward would result in the interests of residents of smaller Haw Bridge communities being outweighed by those of the more densely populated Highnam and Minsterworth parishes. Maisemore Parish Council also objected to the proposed Highnam & Haw Bridge ward and supported retaining the existing warding arrangements for this area. Under our proposals for a 38-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the existing Highnam wards would vary by 25 per cent from the borough average, while equalling the borough average in Haw Bridge ward. By 2005, the number of electors per councillor in Haw Bridge and Highnam wards would vary by 7 per cent and 20 per cent from the borough average.

62 Stoke Orchard Parish Council proposed that the parish should be combined with parts of Bishop's Cleeve, and with Elmstone Hardwicke and Uckington parishes, as the Borough Council had proposed at Stage One. It argued that Stoke Orchard shares interests with these areas, whereas it does not consider that Stoke Orchard has much in common with Gotherington and Oxenton. However, it did not put forward specific ward boundary proposals.

63 A local borough councillor objected to our proposals for Oxenton Hill ward. He asserted that Stoke Orchard should not be combined with Gotherington and Oxenton as there are no historical or community associations between these areas. As an alternative, he proposed that Teddington and Prescott parishes should be included in Oxenton Hill ward. He argued that these villages share associations and use similar facilities. He proposed that Stoke Orchard should be combined with Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff ward under the name Walton Cardiff with Stoke Orchard. He also proposed that the part of Ashchurch to the east of the motorway should be combined with Northway ward (as detailed earlier). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in Cleeve Hill, Isbourne, Oxenton Hill, Northway and the proposed Walton Cardiff & Stoke Orchard wards would vary by 8 per cent, 13 per cent, 9 per cent, 6 per cent and 76 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve in Cleeve Hill and Walton & Stoke Orchard wards, to vary by 1 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average. However, it would deteriorate in Northway and Oxenton Hill wards, to vary by 13 per cent and 15 per cent from the borough average in 2005, while continuing to vary by 13 per cent in Isbourne ward.

64 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. We note Down Hatherley and Longford Parish Councils' objections to our proposals for Down Hatherley, and while we note that there is some evidence to suggest that Down Hatherley is more closely connected with villages within the existing De Winton ward than with Innsworth, we are unable to consider any area in isolation, and the combination of these areas is necessary in the interests of electoral equality as a result of our proposals in the rural western parts of the borough as well as in those areas to the south, which have received support. We are also content that there are strong road connections between the two areas. We recognise that Norton, Sandhurst and Twigworth Parish Councils have proposed retaining the existing Coombe Hill and De Winton wards; however, this would result in high levels of electoral inequality, or would necessitate warding parishes elsewhere in the borough. It would also require changing our draft recommendations for the east of the borough, which have received support. The villages that we have proposed combining in the proposed Coombe Hill and Oxenton Hill wards share road links and a similar rural identity and therefore we are content to adopt these wards as our final recommendations.

65 We have considered the objections of Forthampton and Maisemore Parish Councils to our proposed Haw Bridge and Highnam wards. However, as we explained in our draft recommendations report, the only alternative warding arrangements for this area would involve either disregard for the distinct boundary of the River Severn, additional parish warding or high levels of electoral inequality, which we do not consider would offer a better balance of electoral equality and the reflection of community identity than our draft recommendations.

66 We have noted the proposals of Stoke Orchard Parish Council to combine Stoke Orchard with Bishop's Cleeve. However, at both Stage One and Stage Three we received considerable support for reflecting the parish boundaries of Bishop's Cleeve at a borough level and we do not

consider that doing otherwise would offer the best reflection of community identity, or would receive local support. We also note the proposals of a borough councillor to combine Stoke Orchard with Ashchurch and Prescott and Teddington parishes with the remainder of Oxenton Hill ward. However, as detailed earlier, this scheme would result in poor levels of electoral equality in adjacent wards, or would require changes to our proposals for the east of the borough, which have received support. Therefore, we have not been persuaded to adopt these proposals.

67 Having carefully considered all the representations received, we consider that our draft recommendations offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we are endorsing them as final. Our final recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 2, and are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield, Brockworth Westfield, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Parton, Churchdown Pirton, Horsbere and Innsworth wards

68 The existing wards of Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield, Brockworth Westfield, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Parton, Churchdown Pirton, Horsbere and Innsworth cover the more urban south-western part of the borough. Churchdown Brookfield ward (comprising Brookfield parish ward of Churchdown parish), Churchdown Parton ward (comprising Parton parish ward of Churchdown parish) and Churchdown Pirton ward (comprising Pirton parish ward of Churchdown parish) are each represented by two councillors, while Brockworth Glebe ward (comprising the Glebe parish ward of Brockworth parish), Brockworth Moorfield ward (comprising Moorfield parish ward of Brockworth parish), Brockworth Westfield ward (comprising Westfield parish ward of Brockworth parish), Horsbere ward (comprising Horsbere parish ward of Churchdown parish and Hucclecote parish) and Innsworth ward (comprising Innsworth parish) are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements for a 36-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield, Brockworth Westfield, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Parton, Churchdown Pirton, Horsbere and Innsworth wards varies from the borough average by 43 per cent, 27 per cent, 28 per cent, 23 per cent, 8 per cent, 23 per cent, 58 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Churchdown Parton ward to vary by 3 per cent from the borough average in 2005. The level of electoral equality in Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield, Brockworth Westfield, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Pirton, Horsbere and Innsworth wards is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 47 per cent, 31 per cent, 33 per cent, 27 per cent, 28 per cent, 94 per cent and 36 per cent in 2005 respectively.

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed reducing the representation of this area to 10 councillors, and suggested that this area should comprise six wards, with the proposed Brockworth ward being represented by three councillors, the proposed wards of Churchdown Brookfield and Churchdown Parton each being represented by two councillors, and the proposed wards of Churchdown Pirton, Hucclecote and Innsworth with Down Hatherley each being represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Brockworth ward should comprise the parish of Brockworth, and that Churchdown Brookfield ward should comprise that part of Churchdown parish to the south of the A40. It put forward a Churchdown Parton ward, comprising the north-

east part of Churchdown parish. It proposed that the remainder of Churchdown parish, excluding RAF Innsworth, should form a Churchdown Pirton ward. It put forward a Hucclecote ward, comprising Hucclecote parish and an Innsworth with Down Hatherley ward, comprising the parishes of Down Hatherley and Innsworth together with RAF Innsworth from Churchdown parish.

70 Churchdown Parish Council supported the Borough Council's Stage One proposals, except for its proposals for the north of Churchdown. It argued that the proposed wards of Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton should be united in a single Churchdown St John's ward. It considered that the similar ward names of Parton and Pirton are "confusing" and argued that a larger three-member ward would aid the reflection of community identity in this area. It also argued that the existing boundary between Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton wards is "ill-defined and confusing".

71 A local councillor wrote on behalf of two other borough councillors in support of the Borough Council's proposed Churchdown Brookfield ward, and in support of its proposal to combine RAF Innsworth with Innsworth parish. He argued that these proposals would address the "ill-defined" boundary between the existing Churchdown Brookfield and Churchdown Pirton wards, and would remove the "confusing anomaly" resulting in RAF Innsworth being included in a Churchdown ward under current warding arrangements. However, he objected to the Borough Council's proposed Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton wards, which he claimed share an "irrational boundary". He proposed that the two wards should be combined in a new Churchdown St John's ward. He argued that there is no identifiable boundary between Parton and Pirton and stated that the majority of services for the whole of this area are centred in the proposed Pirton ward. He also raised concerns regarding local confusion between the names of Parton and Pirton. A second local councillor supported the Borough Council's proposal to include Brockworth and Hucclecote parishes in separate wards, and to address the high level of electoral inequality in this area by increasing the area's level of representation on the Borough Council.

72 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals had merit and we noted that they had received support. We considered that their proposals to respect parish boundaries where possible offered the best representation of community identities and interests, while we judged that the proposal to combine part of Churchdown parish with Down Hatherley and Innsworth was justified, given that RAF Innsworth is a distinct and separate area which is well connected by road to Innsworth village. However, we agreed that the Borough Council's proposals for Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton wards utilised unclear boundaries, and we shared local concerns that confusion might be caused by the similarity of the proposed ward names. Therefore, we were persuaded to adopt the proposals of Churchdown Parish Council and a local councillor to combine the two wards to form a new Churchdown St John's ward.

73 Under our draft recommendations there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in Brockworth, Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown St John's, Hucclecote and Innsworth with Down Hatherley wards varying from the borough average by 5 per cent, 7 per cent, 8 per cent, 35 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Churchdown St John's,

Hucclecote and Innsworth with Down Hatherley wards to vary from the borough average by 3 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent in 2005, while equalling the borough average in Churchdown Brookfield ward. Brockworth ward would continue to have an electoral variance of 5 per cent from the borough average.

74 At Stage Three the Borough Council, Churchdown Parish Council and a borough councillor supported our proposals for Churchdown, while Badgeworth Parish Council supported our draft recommendations in general. The Parish Council of Hucclecote supported our proposed Hucclecote ward.

75 Longford Parish Council objected to combining Down Hatherley and Innsworth. It asserted that Down Hatherley shares community links with the five parishes within the existing De Winton ward while it is “very different” in character from Innsworth. It proposed retaining the existing De Winton ward and combining the existing wards of Innsworth and Churchdown Pirton (as detailed earlier). Under Longford Parish Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Coombe Hill, De Winton and Innsworth & Churchdown Pirton wards would vary by 4 per cent, 53 per cent and 21 per cent from the borough average, to vary by 10 per cent, 44 per cent and 27 per cent in 2005. If no further changes were made to our draft recommendations these proposals would have a consequential effect on surrounding wards resulting in the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Badgeworth, Churchdown Parton and Oxenton Hill wards varying by 33 per cent, 14 per cent and 36 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would deteriorate over the next five years to vary by 37 per cent, 15 per cent and 40 per cent in 2005.

76 Norton Parish Council also objected to dividing Down Hatherley from parishes in the existing De Winton ward. It argued that Down Hatherley shares close ties with other parishes in the existing De Winton ward. Twigworth Parish Council also objected to our proposal to combine Down Hatherley with Innsworth and to divide Down Hatherley from the existing De Winton ward. It argued that Twigworth, Down Hatherley and the other parishes in the existing De Winton ward share common interests and facilities. It proposed that the existing De Winton ward should be retained while Innsworth should be combined with areas to its east.

77 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and note that our draft recommendations for this area have received considerable local support. However, we note that we have received objections to our proposals for Down Hatherley and Innsworth. As detailed earlier, while we note that there is some evidence to suggest that Down Hatherley is more closely connected with villages within the existing De Winton ward than with Innsworth, we are unable to consider any one area in isolation, and the combination of these areas is necessary in the interests of electoral equality as a result of adopting our proposals in the rural western parts of the borough, in Churchdown and in areas to the south of the borough, which have received support. We are also content that there are strong road connections between Down Hatherley and Innsworth. We remain of the view that our draft recommendations offer the best balance between ensuring electoral equality, reflecting community identity, and respecting parish boundaries. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final. Our final recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 2, and are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North, Bishop's Cleeve South, Cleeve Hill, Dumbleton, Gotherington and Winchcombe wards

78 The existing wards of Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North, Bishop's Cleeve South, Cleeve Hill, Dumbleton, Gotherington and Winchcombe cover the east of the borough. Winchcombe ward (comprising the parishes of Gretton, Hawling, Prescott, Sudeley and Winchcombe) is represented by three councillors, Cleeve Hill ward (comprising the parishes of Southam and Woodmancote) is represented by two councillors, and Bishop's Cleeve East ward (comprising East parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish), Bishop's Cleeve North ward (comprising North parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish), Bishop's Cleeve South ward (comprising South parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish), Dumbleton ward (comprising the parishes of Buckland, Dumbleton, Snowhill, Stanton, Stanway and Toddington) and Gotherington ward (comprising the parishes of Alderton, Gotherington, Oxenton and Teddington) are each represented by a single councillor. Under current arrangements for a 36-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North, Bishop's Cleeve South, Cleeve Hill, Dumbleton, Gotherington and Winchcombe wards varies from the borough average by 21 per cent, 134 per cent, 59 per cent, 12 per cent, 3 per cent, 13 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally in Bishop's Cleeve South and Gotherington wards to vary by 48 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average in 2005. The level of electoral equality in Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North, Cleeve Hill, Dumbleton and Winchcombe is projected to deteriorate over the next five years, to vary by 27 per cent, 142 per cent, 18 per cent, 7 per cent and 17 per cent in 2005 respectively.

79 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that this area should comprise six wards, with the proposed Bishop's Cleeve North with Stoke Orchard, Winchcombe and Woodmancote with Bishop's Cleeve South wards each being represented by three councillors, while the proposed wards of Bishop's Cleeve Central, Isbourne and Oxenton Hill would each be represented by a single councillor. It proposed that Bishop's Cleeve Central ward should comprise the existing Bishop's Cleeve East ward and those parts of the existing Bishop's Cleeve North and Bishop's Cleeve South wards bounded by Orchard Road and Two Hedges Road. It proposed that Bishop's Cleeve North with Stoke Orchard ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Bishop's Cleeve North ward together with Stoke Orchard parish and that Woodmancote with Bishop's Cleeve South ward should comprise the remainder of the existing Bishop's Cleeve South ward together with Woodmancote parish. It proposed that Isbourne ward should comprise the parishes of Buckland, Dumbleton, Snowhill, Stanton, Teddington and Toddington, while Oxenton Hill ward should combine the parishes of Alderton, Gotherington, Oxenton and Prescott. It also put forward a Winchcombe ward comprising the parishes of Gretton, Hawling, Southam, Stanway, Sudeley and Winchcombe.

80 Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council proposed a scheme of five single-member wards for Bishop's Cleeve. It also put forward an alternative scheme for four single-member wards should a reduced council size be adopted; however, this would have resulted in significantly high levels of electoral inequality under a 38-member scheme. It argued that Bishop's Cleeve parish requires further representation at borough level in order to address the significant under-representation of the area under current arrangements. It opposed the Borough Council's proposals to combine

parts of Bishop's Cleeve with Stoke Orchard and Woodmancote. It argued that Bishop's Cleeve should be warded separately as it is a "large self-contained community" which is more urban in nature than the surrounding rural parishes. It also asserted that the parish of Woodmancote is a "distinct community". It raised concerns that the proposed three-member wards would be "too large to provide the necessary accountability".

81 Under its proposals for a five-ward Bishop's Cleeve, under a 38-member council, Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council proposed that Bishop's East ward should comprise the existing Bishop's Cleeve East ward and those parts of Bishop's Cleeve North and Bishop's Cleeve South ward bounded by Cheltenham Road, Church Road, Prior Lane, School Road, Tobyfield Road and Two Hedges Road. It proposed that Bishop's Cleeve North ward should comprise the north-eastern parts of the existing Bishop's Cleeve North ward, and the remainder of the existing Bishop's Cleeve North ward, less the south-eastern parts which it proposed should form a new Bishop's Cleeve North West ward. It put forward a Bishop's Cleeve West ward, comprising the remainder of the existing Bishop's Cleeve North ward, and the northern part of the existing Bishop's Cleeve South ward. The remainder of the existing Bishop's Cleeve South ward would form a new Bishop's Cleeve South ward.

82 As a result of its proposals for Bishop's Cleeve to be warded separately from the surrounding parishes, the Parish Council also proposed alternative warding arrangements for the south-eastern part of the borough. It proposed an unnamed ward comprising the parishes of Prescott, Southam and Woodmancote, a new Oxenton Hill ward, comprising the parishes of Gotherington, Oxenton and Stoke Orchard, and a Winchcombe ward comprising the parishes of Alderton, Gretton, Hawling, Stanway, Sudeley and Winchcombe.

83 Winchcombe & Bishop's Cleeve Labour Party Branch opposed the Borough Council's Stage One proposals to combine Bishop's Cleeve and Winchcombe with surrounding parishes in large multi-member wards. It argued that the "distinctive characters" of the communities in the two towns would best be served by warding them separately from the surrounding more rural parishes in order to represent the different interests of local residents in the rural and more urban areas. It also proposed that these areas should be represented by single-member wards in order to provide "maximum accountability" and to minimise the geographical size of rural wards. However, it did not put forward specific warding proposals.

84 A local councillor objected to the Borough Council's Stage One proposals and suggested that Bishop's Cleeve should be represented by five single-member wards to give the town the correct level of representation on the Borough Council and to ward the town separately to the surrounding rural parishes. However, he did not put forward specific warding proposals. He raised concerns that the Borough Council's proposal to combine parts of Bishop's Cleeve with Stoke Orchard and Woodmancote would adversely affect the reflection of the town's community identity and would affect the representation of the town's residents' interests. A second local councillor supported the Borough Council's proposal to increase the number of councillors representing Bishop's Cleeve, but he objected to its proposal to combine the town with surrounding parishes.

85 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we noted that there was local opposition to the proposal to combine Bishop's Cleeve parish with surrounding

parishes. We considered that Bishop's Cleeve is significantly different in character from Stoke Orchard, Woodmancote and surrounding areas, and therefore we proposed that the town be warded separately. We considered that Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council's five-ward proposal for the town had merit, given that it would divide the town into identifiable wards and would provide Bishop's Cleeve with the correct level of representation on the Borough Council under a 38-member scheme. However, in order to provide clearer community representation and improved electoral equality we proposed combining the Parish Council's proposed Bishop's Cleeve East and Bishop's Cleeve North wards to form a Bishop's Cleeve East ward, and the proposed Bishop's Cleeve North West and Bishop's Cleeve West wards in a new Bishop's Cleeve West ward. We also suggested modifying the proposed boundaries of the three Bishop's Cleeve wards in order to provide improved levels of electoral equality and more clearly identifiable boundaries. We proposed that the boundary between the proposed Bishop's Cleeve East and Bishop's Cleeve West wards should be modified to include all the properties on Tobyfield Road in Bishop's Cleeve East ward. We also proposed that the northern boundary of Bishop's Cleeve South ward should be drawn along Two Hedges Road and the back of properties on Delphinium Drive and Voxwell Lane.

86 As a result of putting forward separate warding arrangements for Bishop's Cleeve, we were unable to adopt the Borough Council's proposal for the south-east of the borough, which were based on the combination of Bishop's Cleeve with Woodmancote parish. Also, while we noted that there was support for such a move, it was not possible to place the parish of Winchcombe in a separate ward without significantly higher levels of electoral inequality or further parish warding, which we did not consider would be in the best interests of community identity. Additionally, Winchcombe is a small town which shares close transport links and community interests with surrounding parishes and, therefore, we considered that it should be combined with the surrounding rural parishes. We were content to accept Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council's options for the south-east of the borough, given that it put forward proposals which would combine well-connected parishes, which are of a similar rural character and which share similar community interests. We suggested that the Parish Council's proposed unnamed ward, comprising the parishes of Prescott, Southam and Woodmancote, should be named Cleeve Hill ward, after the existing ward which contains these parishes.

87 Under our draft recommendations, there would be improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve South, Bishop's Cleeve West, Cleeve Hill, Isbourne and Oxenton Hill wards varying from the borough average by 4 per cent, 5 per cent, 1 per cent, 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, while equalling the borough average in Winchcombe ward. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years in Bishop's Cleeve South, Cleeve Hill and Oxenton Hill wards to vary from the borough average by 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 5 per cent in 2005 respectively. The level of electoral equality in Winchcombe ward is projected to deteriorate marginally to vary by 5 per cent from the borough average, while Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve West and Isbourne wards would continue to have electoral variances of 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

88 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve. Bishop's Cleeve & Mid Tewkesbury branch of the Liberal Democrats supported our proposal to respect the boundaries of Bishop's Cleeve at borough level and to increase the number of borough

councillors representing the town. Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council also supported our proposal to respect the town boundaries at borough level. It stated that while it was "in no way rejecting the Commission's proposals" it wished to reiterate its Stage One proposal for five single-member wards. It asserted that this would better reflect community identity and would offer "more defined areas of responsibility and accountability". Should we retain our recommendations, it suggested that Bishop's Cleeve East ward should be renamed St Michael's, Bishop's Cleeve South ward should be renamed Grange and Bishop's Cleeve West ward should be renamed Pullar. It argued that these names would better reflect the identity and history of the proposed wards.

89 Buckland Parish Council stated that it had no objections to our recommendations, Woodmancote Parish Council supported our proposal for Woodmancote and a local resident supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve and Churchdown St John's. A borough councillor supported our proposals for Bishop's Cleeve; however, (as detailed earlier) he objected to our proposals for Oxenton Hill ward, arguing that there are no historical or community links between Stoke Orchard and the Oxenton Hill parishes. As an alternative, he proposed that Prescott and Teddington parishes should be included in Oxenton Hill ward. He asserted that these villages share links and use similar facilities. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in Cleeve Hill, Isbourne, Oxenton Hill, Northway and the proposed Walton Cardiff & Stoke Orchard wards would vary by 8 per cent, 13 per cent, 9 per cent, 6 per cent and 76 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve in Cleeve Hill and Walton & Stoke Orchard wards, to vary by 1 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average. However, it would deteriorate in Northway and Oxenton Hill wards, to vary by 13 per cent and 15 per cent from the borough average in 2005, while continuing to vary by 13 per cent in Isbourne ward.

90 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and we note that our draft recommendations for this area have generally received support. We note that Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council has reiterated its Stage One proposals for a five-ward scheme for Bishop's Cleeve. However, given the lack of new evidence to the contrary, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations for Bishop's Cleeve provide clearer community representation and better electoral equality than the alternatives. However, we consider that there is merit in using more specific names to identify the communities combined in each of the proposed wards. Therefore, we support Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council's proposal that the proposed Bishop's Cleeve East ward should be renamed St Michael's, Bishop's Cleeve South ward should be renamed Grange and Bishop's Cleeve West ward should be renamed Pullar.

91 As detailed earlier, we have considered the proposals of a borough councillor, to combine Prescott and Teddington wards with Oxenton Hill ward, less Stoke Orchard parish. We have not been persuaded to adopt this proposal given that it would result in poorer levels of electoral equality in connected wards than our draft recommendations, or would require changes to our proposals for the east of the borough, which have received support. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to the proposed changes to the names of the proposed Bishop's Cleeve wards. Our final recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 2, and are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

92 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole council elections every four years.

93 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

94 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- we propose that the whole of Wynyards Close should be contained in Tewkesbury Town with Mitton ward;
- we propose that our proposed Bishop's Cleeve East ward should be renamed St Michael's, Bishop's Cleeve South ward should be renamed Grange and Bishop's Cleeve West ward should be renamed Pullar.

95 We conclude that, in Tewkesbury:

- there should be an increase in council size from 36 to 38;
- there should be 22 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

96 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	36	38	36	38
Number of wards	27	22	27	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,658	1,570	1,790	1,696
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	22	7	23	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	15	2	15	0

97 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 22 to seven with two wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve significantly in 2005, with only one ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Tewkesbury Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 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

98 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Ashchurch, Bishop's Cleeve, Churchdown and Tewkesbury to reflect the proposed borough wards.

99 The parish of Ashchurch is currently unwarded and is served by 15 councillors. As a result of our draft recommendations for this area at borough level, we proposed that the parish should be warded into three wards, Newtown, Northway and Rural. We proposed that these wards should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed borough wards of Tewkesbury Newtown,

Northway and Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff respectively, and should be represented by one, 12 and two councillors respectively, in order to offer a fair representation of the parish ward electorates.

100 In response to our consultation report, a county councillor proposed that no changes should be made to the levels of representation between the parish wards of Ashchurch parish. He raised concerns regarding the balance of representation between the urban and rural areas of Ashchurch; however, he did not put forward an alternative allocation of councillors.

101 While we noted the concerns of a county councillor, he did not put forward convincing argumentation to persuade us to endorse an unfair balance of parish councillors between the proposed parish wards. We also note that the Borough Council and Parish Council have not supported such a measure. Having considered all the evidence received, therefore, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we are content to confirm our draft recommendation for warding Ashchurch parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Ashchurch Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Newtown (returning one councillor), Northway (returning 12 councillors) and Rural (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

102 The parish of Bishop’s Cleeve is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: East, North and South, each returning five councillors. At Stage One, Bishop’s Cleeve Parish Council argued that the current parish council size is “about right” to achieve the convenient and effective running of the Parish Council. Under its proposed five-ward scheme it proposed that each of the five wards should be represented by three members, retaining the existing council size.

103 However, under our draft recommendations, we proposed two two-member and one single-member ward for Bishop’s Cleeve at borough level as a result of which we proposed that the existing parish wards of Bishop’s Cleeve should be abolished, to be replaced by three wards: East, South and West. We proposed that these wards should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed borough wards of Bishop’s Cleeve East, Bishop’s Cleeve South and Bishop’s Cleeve West respectively. In line with their proportion of the electorate, we proposed that East and West wards should each be represented by six parish councillors, while South ward should be represented by three.

104 In response to our consultation report, no further comments were received concerning parish warding. Therefore, in the light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Bishop’s Cleeve parish as final, subject to ward name changes. As a consequence of our proposals at borough level, we propose that similar changes should be made to the proposed parish wards. We propose that the proposed East parish

ward should be renamed St Michael’s, South parish ward should be renamed Grange and West parish ward should be renamed Pullar.

Final Recommendation
Bishop’s Cleeve Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Pullar and St Michael’s (each returning six councillors) and Grange (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

105 The parish of Churchdown is currently divided into three parish wards: Churchdown Brookfield, Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton, each returning seven councillors.

106 As a result of our draft recommendations at borough level, we proposed that the existing parish wards of Churchdown should be replaced by three new wards: Brookfield, RAF Innsworth and St John’s. We proposed that these wards should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed borough wards of Churchdown Brookfield, Innsworth with Down Hatherley and Churchdown St John’s respectively. In line with their proportion of the electorate, we proposed that the three wards should be represented respectively by eight, one and 12 parish councillors.

107 In response to our consultation report, Churchdown Parish Council supported our proposals for the parish. Having considered this support, and in the light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we are content to confirm our draft recommendation for warding Churchdown parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Churchdown Parish Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Brookfield (returning eight councillors), RAF Innsworth (returning one councillor) and St John’s (returning 12 councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

108 The parish of Tewkesbury is currently divided into four parish wards: Tewkesbury Mitton and Tewkesbury Newtown, each returning three councillors, Tewkesbury Prior’s Park, returning six councillors, and Tewkesbury Town, returning four councillors.

109 As a result of our draft recommendations at borough level, we proposed that the existing parish wards of Tewkesbury should be replaced by four new wards: Mitton North, Newtown, Prior’s Park and Town with Mitton. We proposed that these wards should be coterminous with the boundaries of the proposed borough wards of Twyning, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior’s Park and Tewkesbury Town with Mitton respectively. In line with their proportion of the

electorate, we proposed that the four wards should be represented respectively by one, three, six and six parish councillors.

110 In response to our consultation report, Tewkesbury Town Council suggested that the proposed Tewkesbury Mitton North parish ward should be renamed Tewkesbury Mythe. It argued that the area to the north-west of the River Avon has “little social or geographical alignment with Mitton”. In the light of this representation, we consider that the proposed Mitton North parish ward should be renamed Mythe. Also, in the light of our final recommendations at borough level, we propose largely confirming our draft recommendation for warding Tewkesbury parish as final, subject to a minor boundary amendment to the boundary of Town with Mitton ward, in order to include the whole of Wynyards Close. This proposal would not have a significant effect on the electoral balance between wards. Therefore, we are not proposing consequential changes to the level of representation of each of the parish wards.

Final Recommendation
Tewkesbury Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Mythe (returning one councillor), Newtown (returning three councillors), Prior’s Park and Town with Mitton (each returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

111 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough, and are confirming this as final.

Final 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 borough ward of which they are part.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Tewkesbury

6 NEXT STEPS

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

113 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 7 August 2001.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Tewkesbury (January 2001)

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Rural parish ward of Ashchurch parish); Tewkesbury Newtown ward (part – Walton Cardiff parish)
Badgeworth	Coombe Hill ward (part – the parishes of Boddington and Staverton); Crickley ward (the parishes of Badgeworth and Great Witcombe)
Bishop's Cleeve East	Bishop's Cleeve East, Bishop's Cleeve North and Bishop's Cleeve South wards (part – the proposed East parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish)
Bishop's Cleeve South	Bishop's Cleeve South ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish)
Bishop's Cleeve West	Bishop's Cleeve North and Bishop's Cleeve South wards (part – the proposed West parish ward of Bishop's Cleeve parish)
Brockworth	Brockworth Glebe, Brockworth Moorfield and Brockworth Westfield wards (Brockworth parish)
Churchdown Brookfield	Churchdown Brookfield and Churchdown Pirton wards (part – the proposed Brookfield parish ward of Churchdown parish)
Churchdown St John's	Churchdown Parton and Churchdown Pirton wards (part – the proposed St John's parish ward of Churchdown parish)
Cleeve Hill	Cleeve Hill ward (part – the parishes of Prescott, Southam and Woodmancote)
Coombe Hill	Coombe Hill ward (part – the parishes of Deerhurst, Elmstone Hardwicke, Leigh and Uckington); De Winton ward (part – the parishes of Longford, Norton, Sandhurst and Twigworth)
Highnam with Haw Bridge	Haw Bridge ward (the parishes of Ashleworth, Chaceley, Forthampton, Hasfield, Maisemore and Tirley); Highnam ward (the parishes of Highnam and Minsterworth)
Hucclecote	Horsbere ward (part – Hucclecote parish)
Innsworth with Down Hatherley	Churchdown Parton ward (part – the proposed RAF Innsworth parish ward of Churchdown parish); De Winton ward (part – Down Hatherley parish); Innsworth ward (Innsworth parish)
Isbourne	Dumbleton ward (part – the parishes of Buckland, Dumbleton, Snowhill, Stanton and Toddington); Gotherington ward (part – Teddington parish)
Northway	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Northway parish ward of Ashchurch parish)
Oxenton Hill	Coombe Hill ward (part – Stoke Orchard parish); Gotherington ward (part – the parishes of Gotherington and Oxenton)

Ward name	Constituent areas
Shurdington	<i>Unchanged:</i> Shurdington ward (Shurdington parish)
Tewkesbury Newtown	Ashchurch ward (part – the proposed Newtown parish ward of Ashchurch parish); Tewkesbury Newtown ward (part – the proposed Newtown parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)
Tewkesbury Prior's Park	Tewkesbury Prior's Park ward (part – the proposed Prior's Park parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)
Tewkesbury Town with Mitton	Tewkesbury Mitton, Tewkesbury Newtown, Tewkesbury Prior's Park and Tewkesbury Town wards (part – the proposed Town with Mitton parish ward of Tewkesbury parish)
Twynning	Tewkesbury Mitton ward (part – the proposed Mitton North parish ward of Tewkesbury parish); Twynning ward (Twynning parish)
Winchcombe	Dumbleton ward (part – Stanway parish); Gotherington ward (part – Alderton parish); Winchcombe ward (part – the parishes of Gretton, Hawling, Sudeley and Winchcombe)

Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: 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 (%)
Ashchurch with Walton Cardiff	2	1,147	574	-63	3,132	1,566	-8
Badgeworth	1	1,764	1,764	12	1,782	1,782	5
Bishop's Cleeve East	2	3,012	1,506	-4	3,269	1,635	-4
Bishop's Cleeve South	1	1,649	1,649	5	1,653	1,653	-3
Bishop's Cleeve West	2	3,164	1,582	1	3,356	1,678	-1
Brockworth	3	4,949	1,650	5	5,338	1,779	5
Churchdown Brookfield	2	3,353	1,677	7	3,402	1,701	0
Churchdown St John's	3	5,110	1,703	8	5,253	1,751	3
Cleeve Hill	2	3,400	1,700	8	3,411	1,706	1
Coombe Hill	2	3,664	1,832	17	3,699	1,850	9

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 (%)
Highnam with Haw Bridge	2	3,526	1,763	12	3,623	1,812	7
Hucclecote	1	1,017	1,017	-35	1,525	1,525	-10
Innsworth with Down Hatherley	1	1,728	1,728	10	1,732	1,735	2
Isbourne	1	1,695	1,695	8	1,740	1,740	8
Northway	2	3,616	1,808	15	3,618	1,809	7
Oxenton Hill	1	1,250	1,250	-20	1,609	1,609	-5
Shurdington	1	1,542	1,542	-2	1,598	1,598	-6
Tewkesbury Newtown	1	1,616	1,616	3	1,620	1,620	-4
Tewkesbury Prior's Park	2	3,110	1,555	-1	3,132	1,566	-8
Tewkesbury Town with Mitton	2	3,264	1,632	4	3,667	1,834	8
Twynning	1	1,410	1,410	-10	1,458	1,458	-14
Winchcombe	3	4,690	1,563	0	4,827	1,609	-5
Totals	38	59,676	-	-	64,444	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,570	-	-	1,696	-

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

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

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Table C1: Commission compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	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
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	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement