

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire

Report to the Secretary of State for  
Transport, Local Government and the Regions

*November 2001*

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# WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Aylesbury Vale.



## SUMMARY

We began a review of Aylesbury Vale on 5 September 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 2001. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore the closing date for receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001.

- **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 arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Aylesbury:

- **in 18 of the 38 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2005 this situation is expected to worsen, 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 13 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 117-118) are that:

- **Aylesbury Vale District Council should have 59 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 36 wards, instead of 38 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 35 of the existing wards should be modified, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 24 of the proposed 36 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in 34 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Aylesbury and Buckingham town councils;**
- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville parishes;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Aston Abbotts Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing them before 2 January 2002:

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

*Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Aston Clinton	3	the parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland, Drayton Beauchamp and Weston Turville; part of Stoke Mandeville parish (the Stoke Mandeville Village parish ward)	Map 2
2	Aylesbury Central	1	part of Aylesbury Town (the Central parish ward)	Large Map
3	Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	part of Aylesbury Town (the Bedgrove parish ward)	Large Map
4	Bierton	1	Hulcott parish; part of Bierton with Broughton parish (the Bierton Village parish ward)	Map 2 and Large Map
5	Brill	1	the parishes of Boarstall, Brill, Chilton and Oakley	Map 2
6	Buckingham North	2	part of Buckingham parish (the Buckingham North parish ward)	Map 2 and A2
7	Buckingham South	2	part of Buckingham parish (the Buckingham South parish ward)	Map 2 and A2
8	Cheddington	1	the parishes of Cheddington, Marsworth and Slapton	Map 2
9	Coldharbour	3	Coldharbour parish; part of Aylesbury Town (the Oxford Road parish ward)	Large Map
10	Edlesborough	1	Edlesborough parish; part of Ivinghoe parish (the Ivinghoe Aston parish ward)	Map 2 and A3
11	Elmhurst & Watermead (in Aylesbury)	3	Watermead parish; part of Aylesbury Town (the Elmhurst parish ward); part of Bierton with Broughton parish (the Oldhams Meadow parish ward)	Large Map
12	Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	part of Aylesbury Town (the Gatehouse parish ward)	Large Map
13	Great Brickhill	1	the parishes of Drayton Parslow, Great Brickhill, Soulbury and Stoke Hammond	Map 2
14	Great Horwood	1	the parishes of Great Horwood, Little Horwood, Nash, Thornborough and Whaddon	Map 2
15	Grendon Underwood	1	the parishes of Dorton, Edgcott, Grendon Underwood, Kingswood, Ludgershall, Westcott, Woodham and Wotton Underwood	Map 2
16	Haddenham	3	the parishes of Aston Sandford, Dinton-with-Ford & Upton, Haddenham, Kingsey and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell	Map 2
17	Long Crendon	2	the parishes of Chearsley, Cuddington, Ickford Long Crendon, Shabbington and Worminghall	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
18	Luffield Abbey	1	the parishes of Akeley, Beachampton, Foscott, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Dayrell with Luffield Abbey, Lillingstone Lovell, Maids Moreton, Stowe and Thornton	Map 2
19	Mandeville & Elm Farm (in Aylesbury)	3	part of Aylesbury Town (the Mandeville parish ward); part of Mandeville parish (the Stoke Grange and Stoke Leys parish wards)	Large Map
20	Marsh Gibbon	1	the parishes of Charndon, Hillesden, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Preston Bissett and Twyford	Map 2
21	Newton Longville	1	the parishes of Newton Longville and Mursley	Map 2
22	Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> part of Aylesbury Town (the Oakfield parish ward)	Large Map
23	Pitstone	1	the parish of Pitstone; part of Ivinghoe parish (the Ivinghoe parish ward)	Map 2 and A3
24	Quainton	1	the parishes of Hogshaw, North Marston, Oving, Pitchcott and Quainton	Map 2
25	Quarrendon (in Aylesbury)	2	Quarrendon parish; part of Aylesbury Town (the Quarrendon parish ward)	Map 2 and Large Map
26	Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	2	part of Aylesbury Town (the Southcourt parish ward)	Large Map
27	Steeple Claydon	1	the parishes of East Claydon, Middle Claydon and Steeple Claydon	Map 2
28	Stewkley	1	the parishes of Dunton, Granborough, Hoggston, Stewkley and Swanbourne	Map 2
29	Tingewick	1	the parishes of Barton Hartshorn, Biddlesden, Chetwode, Gawcott with Lenborough, Radclive-cum-Chackmore, Shalstone, Tingewick, Turweston, Water Stratford and Westbury	Map 2
30	Waddesdon	1	the parishes of Ashendon, Fleet Marston, Lower Winchendon, Upper Winchendon and Waddesdon	Map 2
31	Walton Court & Hawkslade (in Aylesbury)	2	part of Aylesbury Town (the Walton Court parish ward); part of Stoke Mandeville parish (the Hawkslade parish ward)	Large Map
32	Weedon	1	the parishes of Creslow, Hardwick, Weedon and Whitchurch	Map 2
33	Wendover	3	<i>Unchanged</i> the parishes of Halton and Wendover	Map 2
34	Wing	1	<i>Unchanged</i> Wing parish	Map 2
35	Wingrave	1	the parishes of Aston Abbotts, Cublington Mentmore and Wingrave with Rowsham	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
36	Winslow	2	the parishes of Addington, Adstock Padbury and Winslow	Map 2

*Notes: 1 The proposed warding arrangements for Aylesbury Vale reflect the provisions of The Aylesbury Vale (Parishes) Order 2000 which came into effect in May 2001. This Order made a number of boundary amendments to existing parishes and established new parishes for Aylesbury, Coldharbour and Watermead areas. The whole district is now parished.*

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Aylesbury Vale

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 Aston Clinton	3	6,957	2,319	15	6,920	2,307	9
2 Aylesbury Central	1	1,912	1,912	-5	2,066	2,066	-2
3 Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	6,993	2,331	16	6,762	2,254	6
4 Bierton	1	1,405	1,405	-30	2,016	2,016	-5
5 Brill	1	2,095	2,095	4	2,082	2,082	-2
6 Buckingham North	2	4,669	2,335	16	4,506	2,253	6
7 Buckingham South	2	3,244	1,622	-20	4,151	2,076	-2
8 Cheddington	1	2,334	2,334	16	2,318	2,318	9
9 Coldharbour	3	3,753	1,251	-38	5,904	1,968	-7
10 Edlesborough	1	2,248	2,248	12	2,231	2,231	5
11 Elmhurst & Watermead (in Aylesbury)	3	6,448	2,149	7	6,363	2,121	0
12 Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	4,126	2,063	2	4,410	2,205	4
13 Great Brickhill	1	2,306	2,306	14	2,290	2,290	8
14 Great Horwood	1	2,235	2,235	11	2,222	2,222	5
15 Grendon Underwood	1	1,913	1,913	-5	1,903	1,903	-10
16 Haddenham	3	6,381	2,127	6	6,439	2,146	1
17 Long Crendon	2	4,125	2,063	2	4,097	2,049	-3
18 Luffield Abbey	1	2,161	2,161	7	2,134	2,134	1
19 Mandeville & Elm Farm (in Aylesbury)	3	6,014	2,005	-1	6,029	2,010	-5
20 Marsh Gibbon	1	1,850	1,850	-8	2,257	2,257	7
21 Newton Longville	1	1,980	1,980	-2	1,967	1,967	-7
22 Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	3,911	1,956	-3	4,065	2,033	-4
23 Pitstone	1	2,099	2,099	4	2,407	2,407	14
24 Quainton	1	1,919	1,919	-5	1,901	1,901	-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 %
25 Quarrendon (in Aylesbury)	2	3,703	1,852	-8	4,509	2,255	6
26 Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	2	3,997	1,999	-1	3,984	1,992	-6
27 Steeple Claydon	1	2,074	2,074	3	2,058	2,058	-3
28 Stewkley	1	2,171	2,171	8	2,154	2,154	2
29 Tingewick	1	2,297	2,297	14	2,283	2,283	8
30 Waddesdon	1	1,867	1,867	-7	1,856	1,856	-12
31 Walton Court & Hawkslade (in Aylesbury)	2	4,227	2,114	5	4,151	2,076	-2
32 Weedon	1	1,255	1,255	-38	2,068	2,068	-2
33 Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-7	5,883	1,961	-7
34 Wing	1	2,149	2,149	7	2,130	2,130	1
35 Wingrave	1	2,014	2,014	0	2,004	2,004	-5
36 Winslow	2	4,441	2,221	10	4,422	2,211	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>118,923</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>124,942</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,016</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>-</b>

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

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire. We have now reviewed the four districts in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes unitary authority 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 finish in 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Aylesbury Vale. Aylesbury Vale's last review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report no. 58). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in 1982 (Report no. 438). 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, i.e. 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 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

6 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 also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. 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 assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should

automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper called *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 were 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 5 September 2000, when we wrote to Aylesbury Vale District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, the County of Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 May 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire*, and ended on 6 August 2001. During this period we sought comments from the public and any other interested parties on our preliminary conclusions. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore the closing date for receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001. 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 district of Aylesbury Vale covers an area of some 90,360 hectares in central Buckinghamshire, and is bounded by Milton Keynes borough and South Northamptonshire district to the north, Dacorum borough and South Bedfordshire district to the east, Chiltern and Wycombe districts to the south, and Cherwell and South Oxfordshire districts to the west. Aylesbury Vale has a population of 156,000, with the main town and administrative centre of the district being Aylesbury itself. The remainder of the district is predominantly rural, with the exception of the towns of Buckingham, Wendover and Winslow and the large villages of Haddenham and Stoke Mandeville. The district contains 110 parishes, and is entirely parished.

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

14 The electorate of the district is 118,923 (February 2000). The Council presently has 58 members who are elected from 38 wards. Nine wards cover the town of Aylesbury, two wards cover the town of Buckingham and the remainder cover the predominantly rural area. Four wards are each represented by three councillors, 12 wards are each represented by two councillors and 22 wards are each represented by a single councillor. The whole council is elected every four years.

15 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Aylesbury Vale district, with around 46 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Elmhurst and Weston Turville wards.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,050 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,154 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 18 of the 38 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in eight wards by more than 20 per cent and in five wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Weston Turville ward where the councillors each represent 60 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Aylesbury Vale*

Table 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 Aston Clinton	2	3,353	1,677	-18	3,345	1,673	-22
2 Aylesbury Central	1	2,181	2,181	6	2,335	2,335	8
3 Bedgrove (in Aylesbury)	3	5,173	1,724	-16	5,002	1,667	-23
4 Bierton	1	2,207	2,207	8	3,629	3,629	68
5 Brill	1	1,398	1,398	-32	1,389	1,389	-36
6 Buckingham North	2	3,465	1,733	-16	3,297	1,649	-23
7 Buckingham South	2	5,690	2,845	39	6,593	3,297	53
8 Cheddington	1	2,153	2,153	5	2,138	2,138	-1
9 Edlesborough	1	2,552	2,552	24	2,535	2,535	18
10 Elmhurst (in Aylesbury)	2	5,908	2,954	44	5,823	2,912	35
11 Gatehouse (in Aylesbury)	2	2,645	1,323	-36	2,975	1,488	-31
12 Grange (in Aylesbury)	2	4,115	2,058	0	3,979	1,990	-8
13 Great Brickhill	1	1,854	1,854	-10	1,842	1,842	-14
14 Great Horwood	1	1,875	1,875	-9	1,865	1,865	-13
15 Grendon Underwood	1	1,987	1,987	-3	1,976	1,976	-8
16 Haddenham	2	3,915	1,958	-5	3,961	1,981	-8
17 Hogshaw	1	1,701	1,701	-17	1,687	1,687	-22
18 Long Crendon	1	1,934	1,934	-6	1,921	1,921	-11
19 Luffield Abbey	1	1,787	1,787	-13	1,762	1,762	-18
20 Mandeville (in Aylesbury)	3	5,947	1,982	-3	5,979	1,993	-7

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 Marsh Gibbon	1	1,968	1,968	-4	2,373	2,373	10
22 Meadowcroft (in Aylesbury)	2	5,147	2,574	26	5,064	2,532	18
23 Newton Longville	1	1,524	1,524	-26	1,515	1,515	-30
24 Oakfield (in Aylesbury)	2	3,911	1,956	-5	4,065	2,033	-6
25 Oakley	1	2,128	2,128	4	2,114	2,114	-2
26 Pitstone	1	2,248	2,248	10	2,553	2,553	19
27 Quainton	1	2,086	2,086	2	2,076	2,076	-4
28 Southcourt (in Aylesbury)	3	5,905	1,968	-4	6,096	2,032	-6
29 Steeple Claydon	1	2,320	2,320	13	2,303	2,303	7
30 Stewkley	1	2,319	2,319	13	2,299	2,299	7
31 Stone	2	4,227	2,114	3	6,191	3,096	44
32 Tingewick	1	1,671	1,671	-19	1,663	1,663	-23
33 Waddesdon	1	1,696	1,696	-17	2,530	2,530	17
34 Wendover	3	5,650	1,883	-8	5,883	1,961	-9
35 Weston Turville	2	6,581	3,291	60	6,524	3,262	51
36 Wing	1	2,149	2,149	5	2,130	2,130	-1
37 Wingrave	1	1,742	1,742	-15	1,734	1,734	-20
38 Winslow	2	3,811	1,906	-7	3,796	1,898	-12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>118,923</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>124,942</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,050</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,154</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Gatehouse ward were relatively over-represented by 36 per cent, while electors in Weston Turville ward were relatively under-represented by 60 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received 35 representations, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and Aylesbury Constituency Conservative Association and representations from David Lidington MP (Aylesbury), seven parish councils, seven councillors, one local group and 17 local residents. 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 Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire*.

18 Our draft recommendations for Aylesbury combined elements of the Council's and Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals; in the rural area we also combined elements of the Council's and the Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals. Our draft recommendations for rural wards to the south and east of Aylesbury town reflected the Conservatives' proposals for these areas, while our proposals reflected the District Council's proposals to the north-west and west of the town. In the north of the district our proposals broadly reflected the Conservatives' proposals, and in the west of the district they reflected the District Council's proposals. In the south-east of the district, we put forward the Council's proposals, which were identical to the Conservatives' proposals. We believed that our draft recommendations achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards. We proposed that:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council should be served by 59 councillors, compared with the current 58, representing 36 wards, two less than at present;
- the boundaries of 35 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the towns of Aylesbury and Buckingham and the parishes of Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Aylesbury Vale District Council should comprise 59 councillors, serving 36 wards. The 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 24 of the 36 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only two wards, Pitstone and Whaddeson, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 40 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Aylesbury Vale District Council.

### **Aylesbury Vale District Council**

21 The District Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, but proposed an alternative configuration of wards in the Bedgrove, Grange and Mandeville areas of Aylesbury Town. It put forward a revised three-member Bedgrove ward, proposed a minor modification to the existing two-member Grange ward and put forward two alternative proposals in the Mandeville area. The Council also proposed an alternative configuration of parishes in the Haddenham area.

### **Aylesbury Constituency Liberal Democrats**

22 Aylesbury Constituency Liberal Democrats (“the Liberal Democrats”) stated that they had consulted with the Liberal Democrat group on the council, ward organisations and members and that “the consensus is in agreement” with our draft recommendations. They expressed support for a council size of 59 and the proposal to hold whole-council elections. However, they proposed alternative warding arrangements affecting several of our proposed town wards and opposed our proposed Haddenham and Waddesdon wards. The Liberal Democrats proposed some amendments to our proposals for Aylesbury Town Council and they also proposed several ward name changes.

### **Aylesbury Labour Party**

23 Aylesbury Labour Party expressed broad support for our draft recommendations.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

24 We received 17 submissions from parish and town councils. Bierton with Broughton, Quainton and Wendover parish councils supported our draft recommendations in their areas and Slapton Parish Council made no comment on our draft recommendations.

25 Aylesbury Town Council opposed our proposed Bedgrove, Grange and Mandeville wards and proposed alternative warding arrangements in this area. The Town Council stated that its proposals would “minimise the railway problem and minimise disruption by creating a ward structure closer to that currently existing”. Buckingham Town Council, although expressing support for our draft recommendations in its area, stated that it was “not happy with the prospect of warding the town” but did not provide any alternative warding arrangements in this area.

26 Chearsley, Dinton with Ford & Upton, Ivinghoe, Long Crendon, Mentmore, Stoke Mandeville, Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell and Thornborough parish councils generally opposed our draft recommendations in their respective areas. Coldharbour, Haddenham and Watermead parish councils also opposed our draft recommendations in their respective areas and put forward alternative warding arrangements.

## Other Representations

27 A further 20 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, councillors, MPs and residents. David Lidington MP expressed support for our draft recommendations but “with some reservations” and proposed several ward name changes. County Councillor Huxley (Aylesbury Northern Division) also expressed broad support for our draft recommendations and put forward several ward name changes. Councillors Cartwright (Grendon Underwood) and Chapple (Weston Turville) expressed support for our draft recommendations and Councillor Rowlands (Tingewick) expressed support for our draft recommendations and in particular the revised Tingewick ward.

28 County Councillor Graves (Long Crendon and Brill Division) opposed our draft recommendations affecting the Long Crendon and Brill areas, but stated that he has “fewer reservations” regarding the proposal to put Oakley parish in the revised Brill ward. Councillors Brandis and Stuart (Haddenham) and Lambert (Stone) opposed our proposed Haddenham ward and put forward an alternative configuration of parishes in this area. Councillors Brandis and Lambert also argued that large wards are not conducive to effective representation and Councillor Stuart stated that the proposed Haddenham ward did not “recognise the differences between the communities” in question. Councillor Sherwell (Grange) expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but put forward alternative warding arrangements in the Bedgrove, Grange and Mandeville areas which were identical to those proposed by the Liberal Democrats and Aylesbury Town Council. He also expressed support for the submissions from Coldharbour Parish Council and those submissions opposed to our proposed Haddenham ward.

29 Aylesbury Old Town Residents’ Association broadly opposed our draft recommendations and reiterated its Stage One argument for a district-wide, uniform pattern of single-member wards. It also stated that any urban development in the rural wards of Bierton and Weedon should be included in the Aylesbury Town wards. The Association also commented on the electoral arrangements for Aylesbury Town Council. The Aylesbury Society opposed our proposal to divide Grange ward between Bedgrove and Mandeville wards and proposed alternative warding arrangements in this area. We received eight submissions from local residents during Stage Three; three expressed support for our draft recommendations, two generally supported our draft recommendations in the urban area and proposed several ward name changes, two generally supported our proposals in the north and south of the district and one opposed our proposed Coldharbour ward.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

30 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Aylesbury Vale 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”.

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

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

33 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 minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

34 Since 1975 there has been a 46 per cent increase in the electorate of Aylesbury Vale district. At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 5 per cent from 118,923 to 124,942 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Stone ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Bierton and Buckingham South wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. We accept that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

35 At Stage Three the Aylesbury Constituency Liberal Democrats queried the electorate projections for several wards. Coldharbour, Long Crendon, Ivinghoe and Watermead parish councils also queried the electorate projections for their respective wards. We therefore asked officers at the District Council to revisit their projections for the whole district; they indicated that they remained satisfied that their original projections represented the best estimates in electorate over the five-year period. Therefore,

having examined the Council's projections, we are content that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## **Council Size**

36 As already explained, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

37 In our draft recommendations report we adopted the Council's proposal for a council of 59 members, an increase of one, as we considered that a small change in council size would best facilitate the proposed warding arrangements in Aylesbury Vale district.

38 During Stage Three we noted that our draft recommendation for a council size of 59 received some support from the Liberal Democrats. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 59 members. We are content therefore to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 59 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

39 Our draft recommendations for Aylesbury combined elements of the Council's and Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals; in the rural area we also combined elements of the Council's and the Conservatives' schemes with our own proposals. Our draft recommendations for rural wards to the south and east of Aylesbury town reflected the Conservatives' proposals for these areas, while our proposals reflected the District Council's proposals to the north-west and west of the town. In the north of the district our proposals broadly reflected the Conservatives' proposals, and in the west of the district they reflected the District Council's proposals. In the south-east of the district, we put forward the Council's proposals, which were identical to the Conservatives' proposals. We considered that our draft recommendations achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards.

40 We note that at Stage Three Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association reiterated their Stage One proposal for a uniform pattern of single-member wards across the district, but did not state a specific council size, provide detailed warding arrangements or detailed mapping. As stated in our *Guidance*, we are not prescriptive about whether wards should be represented by one, two or three councillors. However, we have not been persuaded that such a uniform pattern of warding arrangements would provide a satisfactory reflection of local community identities and interests across the district. Instead, our proposals are based upon the arrangements which we consider would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

41 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards;
- (b) Mandeville and Southcourt wards;
- (c) Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield wards;

- (d) Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville wards;
- (e) Haddenham, Stone and Whaddesdon wards;
- (f) Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley wards;
- (g) Bierton and Quainton wards;
- (h) Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards;
- (i) Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards;
- (j) Wing and Wingrave wards;
- (k) Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards;
- (l) Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards;
- (m) Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards;
- (n) Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards.

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

### **Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft wards**

43 The existing wards of Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Meadowcroft are situated in the central and northern part of Aylesbury, a town of some 63,000 people located in the south of the district. Aylesbury Central ward is represented by a single councillor and has 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 8 per cent more by 2005. Elmhurst, Meadowcroft and Gatehouse wards are each represented by two councillors, and have 44 per cent more, 26 per cent more and 36 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (35 per cent more, 18 per cent more and 31 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

44 At Stage One we received a number of differing proposals for this area. The District Council proposed broadly retaining the existing Aylesbury Central ward and expanding the existing Elmhurst and Gatehouse wards. It also proposed a new two-member Quarrendon ward. The Conservatives proposed a new three-member Manor Park & Central ward, a new two-member Watermead & The Coppice ward and a revised three-member Meadowcroft ward. We received two further representations for this area at Stage One. David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed support for the Conservatives' proposals for the Aylesbury area. One local resident argued that the proposed Elmhurst ward would be too large and proposed alternative warding arrangements in this area.

45 We considered that on balance, the District Council's proposals would provide the best available option and based our draft recommendations on its proposals for this area. We did, however, depart from the Council's proposals in two areas. We proposed an amendment to the Council's revised Elmhurst ward and we also amended the Council's proposed boundary between Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards.

46 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Aylesbury Central and Quarrendon wards would be 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer than the district average respectively (2 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Elmhurst and Gatehouse wards would be 7 per cent and 2 per cent more than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 4 per cent more in 2005).

47 At Stage Three we received six representations in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrats expressed broad support for our draft recommendations in this area, in particular the Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst and Gatehouse wards and expressed support for Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and

Quarrendon ward names, but proposed an amendment to our proposed Elmhurst ward. The Liberal Democrats opposed our proposal to include the Oldhams Meadows area in our proposed Elmhurst ward. They argued that it should be included in the proposed Bierton ward, and stated that they did not “support the disruption of the communal coherence of parishes by unnecessary warding”.

48 Watermead Parish Council opposed our proposed Elmhurst ward and proposed a new Watermead ward, coterminous with the parish of Watermead. In support of its proposal, the parish council pointed to “the hugely different natures of Elmhurst and Watermead, which are distinct communities”. David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed, with reservation, broad support for our draft recommendations, and proposed renaming Elmhurst ward as Elmhurst & Watermead ward. County Councillor Huxley (Aylesbury Northern Division) proposed renaming the proposed Elmhurst ward as Elmhurst with Watermead ward and one local resident expressed support for our proposed Elmhurst ward and one local resident proposed renaming Elmhurst ward as Elmhurst with Watermead ward.

49 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to substantially endorse our draft recommendations for Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst, Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards, as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. We have not been persuaded by the Liberal Democrats to amend the proposed Elmhurst ward, as we remain of the opinion that the Oldham Meadows area has a closer geographical proximity to Aylesbury town than Bierton village, and we still consider that the area appears to have a greater affinity with the town of Aylesbury than with Bierton with Broughton parish. Neither have we been persuaded by Watermead Parish Council to create a single-member Watermead ward. While we recognise that the Watermead area is a distinctive community with its own parish council, we remain of the opinion that the electorate of Watermead is too small to warrant a single councillor. We consider that on balance, our draft recommendations for a three-member Elmhurst ward continue to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the proposal put forward by Watermead Parish Council. We have however decided to move away from our draft recommendations in part in the light of local support. We propose renaming Elmhurst ward as Elmhurst & Watermead ward as we consider that this would better reflect local community identity. We are content therefore to confirm as final, our draft recommendations for Aylesbury Central, Elmhurst & Watermead, Gatehouse and Quarrendon wards, subject to the change of name detailed above.

50 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Aylesbury Central and Quarrendon wards would be 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Elmhurst & Watermead and Gatehouse wards would be 7 per cent and 2 per cent more than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 4 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map in the back of this report.

## **Mandeville and Southcourt wards**

51 The existing Mandeville ward is situated in the south-west of Aylesbury town and is currently represented by three councillors. Southcourt ward is situated in the west of Aylesbury and is also represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Mandeville and Southcourt wards have 3 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

52 At Stage One we received a number of differing proposals for this area. The District Council proposed a new two-member Coldharbour ward containing the new Coldharbour parish, the

neighbouring Hartwell estate area and the new development to the south of Oxford Road from the existing Southcourt ward. It proposed the retention of a three-member Southcourt ward on revised boundaries as well as a revised two-member Mandeville ward. The Conservatives put forward significantly different warding arrangements for this part of Aylesbury town. They proposed new three-member Coldharbour & Haydon Hill and Mandeville & Elm Farm wards, a new two-member Hawkslade ward and a revised two-member Southcourt ward. The Conservatives' proposals were supported by David Lidington MP (Aylesbury), five councillors and 13 local residents. Councillor Stuart (Haddenham ward) opposed the Council's proposed Haddenham ward, and suggested that Stone and Coldharbour parishes continue to form a distinct ward in their own right. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council opposed being divided between district wards, arguing that this "would not be conducive to the democratic nature of the Council". However, it did support the areas of Hawkslade and Stoke Grange forming separate parishes in future.

53 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was a divergence of opinion on the issue of whether or not to combine urban developments on the fringes of Aylesbury with the town. We also noted that there was a degree of support for combining Coldharbour with part of Aylesbury. In relation to the areas of Stoke Mandeville parish abutting Aylesbury, we considered that these areas are in close geographical proximity with the town of Aylesbury, and we were not persuaded that they shared a significant degree of affinity with Stoke Mandeville village. We considered, therefore, that these areas of urban development on the fringe of Aylesbury town should be included in urban wards rather than rural wards. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on elements of both the Conservatives' and the Council's proposals, alongside our own proposals for the Coldharbour area. We proposed creating a new three-member Coldharbour ward and a revised two-member Southcourt ward. We proposed a new two-member Walton Court ward, which we noted was broadly similar to the Conservatives' proposals. However, the Conservatives proposed that the ward be named Hawkslade rather than Walton Court. Finally, we proposed a revised Mandeville ward, which we noted was identical to the Conservatives' proposed Mandeville & Elm Farm ward.

54 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Coldharbour and Walton Court wards would be 38 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more than the district average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer in 2005). Mandeville and Southcourt wards would both have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer in 2005).

55 In response to our draft recommendations we received 11 representations in relation to this area. The District Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, stating that they "provide an acceptable warding structure" for the district, but proposed a reconfiguration of the proposed Mandeville ward affecting several of our proposed wards in this area. The Liberal Democrats expressed broad support for our proposed Mandeville and Southcourt wards "in as far as they affect Coldharbour parish and the new Southcourt ward". However, they put forward three alternatives for the proposed Mandeville ward, two of which were identical to the District Council's proposals, and stated that their support for the new Walton Court ward would "depend on the Commission's reactions to their proposed amendments" for the Mandeville ward. Aylesbury Town Council and Councillor Sherwell (Grange) also proposed alternative warding arrangements for the Mandeville area which were identical to the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals.

56 Coldharbour Parish Council, supported by Councillor Sherwell (Grange) and Parish Councillor Mahon generally supported our draft recommendations with the exception of the proposed Coldharbour ward. The parish council proposed an alternative two-member Coldharbour ward based on revised electorate projections and stated that the Coldharbour ward proposed in the draft recommendations

report is based on an underestimation of the electorate of Coldharbour parish in 2005. It proposed that the remainder of the proposed ward be included in a revised Southcourt ward. However, as previously discussed, officers at the District Council revisited their projections for the whole district and indicated that they remained satisfied that their original projections represented the best estimates in electorate over the five-year period. Therefore, having examined the Council's projections, we are content that they represent the best estimates presently available. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council commented on the proposal to divide the parish between three district wards, stating that "a majority of councillors are opposed to this". The parish council also stated that its "objections were submitted at an earlier stage" of the review.

57 David Lidington MP (Aylesbury) expressed, with reservation, broad support for our draft recommendations, and proposed renaming the proposed Walton Court ward as Walton Court & Hawkslade ward and the proposed Mandeville ward as Mandeville & Elm Farm ward. County Councillor Huxley (Aylesbury Northern Division) proposed renaming the proposed Mandeville ward as Mandeville & Elm Farm ward and Walton Court ward as Walton Court & Hawkslade ward. One local resident expressed support for our proposed Walton Court ward and also proposed renaming it Hawkslade & Walton Court. One local resident expressed support for the ward name of Mandeville but expressed a preference for including Elm Farm in the new ward name. He also proposed renaming Walton Court ward as Walton Court & Hawkslade ward.

58 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and have not been persuaded to substantially amend our draft recommendations. We are content to confirm as final our draft recommendations for this area, subject to two minor amendments to ward names as discussed in detail below. While we note the District Council's, the Liberal Democrats', Aylesbury Town Council's and Councillor Sherwell's (Grange) alternative proposals for the Mandeville area, we have not been persuaded that their proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We have also noted the absence of local support for the Liberal Democrats' alternative proposals and therefore do not propose adopting them as part of our final recommendations. We also note the alternative proposal put forward by Coldharbour Parish Council and supported by Parish Councillor Mahon. However, as previously discussed, officers at the District Council revisited their projections for the whole district and indicated that they remained satisfied that their original projections represented the best estimates in electorate over the five-year period. Therefore, having examined the District Council's projections, we are content that they represent the best estimates presently available. We have not therefore, been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations in the Coldharbour area as we remain content that our draft recommendations continue to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the proposals put forward by Coldharbour Parish Council. We also note the concerns of Stoke Mandeville Parish Council, but in the absence of new evidence and detailed argumentation we have not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations, as we remain of the opinion that the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange parish wards have a greater affinity with the town of Aylesbury than the parish of Stoke Mandeville.

59 We have, however, decided to move away from our draft recommendations in part. In the light of the evidence received at Stage Three and some local support, we propose two ward name changes. We propose that Walton Court ward be renamed Walton Court & Hawkslade, and the proposed Mandeville ward be renamed Mandeville & Elm Farm ward. We are content therefore to endorse as final our draft recommendations for Coldharbour, Mandeville, Southcourt and Walton Court, subject to the two amendments detailed previously.

60 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Coldharbour, Mandeville & Elm Farm, Southcourt and Walton Court & Hawkslade wards would be 38 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more than the district average respectively (7 per cent, 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map in the back of this report.

### **Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield wards**

61 The existing wards of Bedgrove, Grange and Oakfield are situated in the town of Aylesbury. Bedgrove ward is currently a three-member ward, and Grange and Oakfield are currently each represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Bedgrove and Oakfield wards have 16 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Grange ward currently contains equal to the average number of electors per councillor, and is forecast to contain 8 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

62 At Stage One we received a number of differing proposals for this area. The District Council proposed transferring a number of electors from the existing Bedgrove ward to the existing Grange ward, each being represented by two councillors. It also proposed retaining the current two-member Oakfield ward without amendment. The Conservatives, supported by David Lidington (MP), proposed dividing the existing Oakfield ward between three wards, together with a revised two-member Bedgrove and a new two-member Turnfurlong ward. Our draft recommendations for this area combined elements of the Council's proposals with our own proposals. We proposed retaining the existing two-member Oakfield ward and proposed a revised three-member Bedgrove ward containing part of the current Grange ward. We considered that our proposals would provide a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

63 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Bedgrove and Oakfield wards would be 16 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the district average currently (6 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer in 2005).

64 At Stage Three we received six representations in relation to this area. The District Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, but proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area. It proposed including the Stoke Grange parish ward of Stoke Mandeville parish, currently in Weston Turville ward, in the existing three-member Bedgrove ward, arguing that the "western part of the Commission's proposed Bedgrove ward has no relationship with the Bedgrove estate". It also proposed transferring the Chiltern Street area, currently in Mandeville ward, to a revised Grange ward, stating that the Chiltern Street area "comprises older housing which would fit well with similar adjoining housing in the Grange ward".

65 The Liberal Democrats expressed support for our proposed Oakfield ward but put forward two alternative options in this area. The Liberal Democrats' first alternative was identical to the Council's proposals and was supported by Aylesbury Town Council and Councillor Sherwell (Grange); they argued that their proposals would "produce more physically and socially cohesive wards". They put forward a second proposal in this area which did not provide for an improved level of electoral equality, saying that while they considered their proposal to be "an improvement on the Commission's proposal", ... "it was not much of one and we do not recommend it". The Liberal Democrats also proposed renaming the proposed Bedgrove ward as Turnfurlong ward should our draft recommendations remain unchanged. In the event that we amended our draft recommendations in favour of their revised

Bedgrove ward, the Liberal Democrats proposed renaming Bedgrove ward Bedgrove & Stoke Grange ward.

66 The Aylesbury Society opposed our proposal to divide the existing Grange ward between revised Bedgrove and Mandeville wards and argued that there is only “one road / rail crossing between the wards, and that links between Grange and Mandeville wards do not exist”. It proposed expanding the existing Grange ward to include parts of Central ward. One local resident expressed support for our proposed Bedgrove ward and stated that the proposals created a “homogenous ward sharing common interests and problems”.

67 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and are confirming our draft recommendations as final. While we note the alternative proposals put forward by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, Aylesbury Town Council and Councillor Sherwell (Grange), we have not been persuaded that their proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We have also noted the absence of local support for the alternative proposals and therefore do not propose adopting them as part of our final recommendations. Neither have we been persuaded to rename Bedgrove ward as we note the absence of local support for such a ward name change. Similarly, we have not been persuaded to amend our proposals for the Grange area as proposed by the Aylesbury Society, as we do not consider there to be substantial local support for such an amendment. We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendations for Bedgrove and Oakfield wards.

68 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Bedgrove and Oakfield wards would be 16 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the district average currently (6 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

### **Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville wards**

69 The existing wards of Aston Clinton, Wendover and Weston Turville are situated to the south of Aylesbury town. Aston Clinton and Weston Turville wards are currently each represented by two councillors, while Wendover ward is represented by three councillors. Aston Clinton ward contains the parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland and Drayton Beauchamp. Wendover ward contains the parishes of Halton and Wendover, and Weston Turville ward contains the parishes of Stoke Mandeville and Weston Turville. Under existing arrangements, Aston Clinton and Wendover wards have 18 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (22 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Weston Turville ward currently has 60 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (51 per cent more than average by 2005).

70 At Stage One we received two differing proposals in this area. The District Council and the Conservatives both proposed retaining the existing Wendover ward. The District Council proposed an enlarged three-member Aston Clinton ward and a new two-member Stoke Mandeville ward. The Conservatives, supported by David Lidington (MP), five councillors and 13 local residents, proposed that the urban areas of Stoke Mandeville parish adjoining Aylesbury (currently in Weston Turville ward) should be combined with the town. As outlined earlier, they proposed that the Hawkslade area be combined with part of Mandeville ward in a new Hawkslade ward and that the Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange areas be combined with parts of Grange and Mandeville wards in a new Mandeville & Elm Farm ward. They also proposed a revised three-member Aston Clinton ward. We noted that there was some consensus regarding the warding arrangements for Wendover ward and therefore proposed

retaining the current Wendover ward. We put forward the Conservatives' proposed three-member Aston Clinton ward, as this provided for better electoral equality than either the District Council's proposal or the existing warding arrangements. Under our draft recommendations, Aston Clinton and Wendover wards would have 15 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (9 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer by 2005).

71 At Stage Three we received four representations in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrats expressed broad support for our proposed Aston Clinton and Wendover wards but stated "they regretted the proposals that would lead to the warding of parishes like Stoke Mandeville". Stoke Mandeville Parish Council questioned the proposal to include it in a revised Aston Clinton ward and stated that "it is a matter of opinion whether or not the village will benefit from being part of a larger three-member Aston Clinton ward or from remaining in a two-member Weston Turville ward". Wendover Parish Council expressed support for the proposal to retain the existing Wendover ward. David Lidington (MP) supported our proposed Wendover and Aston Clinton wards, but expressed a preference for renaming the proposed Aston Clinton ward to include the names of Aston Clinton, Weston Turville and Stoke Mandeville.

72 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and are confirming our draft recommendations as final. While we note the Liberal Democrats' concerns regarding the warding of parishes, we also note the absence of any viable alternative to the warding of Stoke Mandeville parish and have not therefore been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations in this area. We also note the concerns of the parish of Stoke Mandeville, but in the absence of alternative warding arrangements we have not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations as they affect the parish of Stoke Mandeville. Neither have we been persuaded to rename the proposed Aston Clinton ward as proposed by David Lidington (MP) as we note the absence of local support for such a name change. We are therefore confirming as final our draft recommendations for Aston Clinton and Wendover wards as final. Under our final recommendations Aston Clinton and Wendover wards would have 15 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (9 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon wards**

73 The existing wards of Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon are situated in the south of the district and to the west of Aylesbury town. Haddenham and Stone wards are both currently represented by two councillors, while Waddesdon ward is currently a single-member ward. Haddenham ward contains the parishes of Aston Sandford, Haddenham and Kingsey. Stone ward contains the parishes of Chearsley, Coldharbour, Cuddington, Dinton with Ford & Upton and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell. Waddesdon ward contains the parishes of Fleet Marston, Lower (or Nether) Winchendon, Upper Winchendon, Quarrendon and Waddesdon. Under existing arrangements, Haddenham, Stone and Waddesdon wards have 5 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent fewer, 44 per cent more and 17 per cent more in 2005).

74 At Stage One, the District Council proposed an enlarged three-member Haddenham ward. It proposed a revised Long Crendon ward, as discussed later, and a new two-member Coldharbour ward, as detailed earlier. The District Council also proposed a new two-member Quarrendon ward, which would include Quarrendon parish, and a revised Waddesdon ward. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, proposed an enlarged two-member Haddendham ward, a revised single-member Brill ward (as discussed later) and a revised single-member Grendon Underwood ward.

Councillor Brandis (Haddenham ward) opposed the District Council's proposed Haddenham ward and Councillor Stuart (Haddenham ward) also opposed the Council's proposed Haddenham and Coldharbour wards. Three local residents opposed the District Council's proposal to include Quarrendon parish in the Aylesbury Town wards. We based our draft recommendations in this area on the District Council's proposals, which we considered would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations a three-member Haddenham and a single-member Waddesdon ward would have 6 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more and 12 per cent fewer in 2005).

75 At Stage Three we received eight representations in relation to this area. Aylesbury Vale District Council and Councillors Brandis and Stuart (Haddenham ward) and Lambert (Stone ward) opposed our proposed Haddenham ward and put forward an alternative configuration of parishes in this area resulting in a two-member Haddenham ward and a single-member Stone ward. The District Council and Councillor Stuart argued that the proposed three-member Haddenham ward would not "recognise the differences between the communities" and Councillors Brandis and Lambert argued that large wards are not conducive to effective representation. Under their alternative configuration of parishes the two-member Haddenham and single-member Stone wards would have 6 per cent fewer and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively in 2005. Haddenham Parish Council also opposed our revised three-member Haddenham ward, arguing that the proposed ward is "an artificial grouping of parishes". The parish council put forward an alternative configuration of parishes which would result in a two-member Haddenham and a single-member Stone ward with electoral variances of 10 per cent more and 15 per cent fewer than the district average, respectively, in 2005.

76 The Liberal Democrats opposed our proposed three-member Haddenham ward but did not provide any alternative warding arrangements. Dinton with Ford & Upton Parish Council opposed the proposed Haddenham ward and reiterated its Stage One argument. Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell Parish Council also opposed the proposed Haddenham ward, arguing that the proposal to include it in a larger ward will "decrease local democracy and ultimately deter voters". The parish council did not put forward any alternative warding arrangements.

77 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and are confirming our draft recommendations as final. We recognise the concerns expressed by the District Council, Haddenham Parish Council and Councillors Brandis, Stuart and Lambert in relation to our proposed Haddenham ward. However, we note that neither of the alternatives put forward improve upon our levels of electoral equality and we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that a single-member Stone and a two-member Haddenham ward would justify such high levels of electoral inequality. We remain of the opinion that our proposals provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also note the concerns of the Liberal Democrats, Dinton with Ford & Upton and Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell parish councils, but in the absence of any viable alternative and no new evidence we are content to confirm our proposals for a three-member Haddenham ward as final. Under our final recommendations Haddenham and Waddesdon wards would have 6 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more and 12 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley wards**

78 The existing wards of Brill, Long Crendon and Oakley are situated in the south-west of the district and are all single-member wards. Brill ward contains the parishes of Boarstall, Brill, Chilton and Dorton, and Oakley ward contains the parishes of Ickford, Oakley, Shabbington and Worminghall. Long

Crendon ward is coterminous with the parish of Long Crendon. Under existing arrangements, Brill and Long Crendon wards have 32 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (36 per cent and 11 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Oakley ward has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and is projected to contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than average by 2005.

79 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the existing Oakley ward should be divided between a revised single-member Brill and a two-member Long Crendon ward. It stated that although a number of options had been considered for this area, parish electorates and the district boundary constrained alternative options. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, proposed retaining the existing three single-member wards with some minor boundary modifications. We based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals as we considered that they would better reflect community identities and interests overall. Under our draft recommendations, Brill and Long Crendon wards would have 4 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent and 3 per cent fewer in 2005).

80 At Stage Three we received four submissions in relation to this area. Chearsley Parish Council stated its objection to being included in a ward with the parish of Brill and argued that putting it in a ward with either Long Crendon or Haddenham "would reinforce existing connections". Long Crendon Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to enlarge the existing Long Crendon ward and stated a preference for retaining the existing single-member ward. The parish council argued that it could not see "any benefits...that would result from amalgamation with adjacent parishes and multiple representation". County Councillor Graves (Long Crendon and Brill Division) opposed our proposal to include Dorton parish in a revised Grendon Underwood ward. He argued that Dorton has many community links with the current Brill ward in an ecclesiastical and educational sense. County Councillor Graves said however, that he had "fewer reservations about the proposal to place Oakley parish within the Brill ward", though he also stated that Oakley does "belong with the Ickford group of parishes rather than those centred on Brill". One local resident expressed support for our proposal to include Cuddington parish in a revised Long Crendon ward.

81 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and are confirming our draft recommendations as final. While we recognise the concerns expressed by Chearsley Parish Council, our draft recommendations proposed including Chearsley parish in the revised Long Crendon ward and not Brill ward as stated by the parish council. We also note the concerns of Long Crendon Parish Council and County Councillor Graves, but in the absence of any new evidence or a viable alternative, we consider that our draft recommendations continue to provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We are content therefore to confirm as final our draft recommendations for a single-member Brill and a two-member Long Crendon ward. Under our final recommendations Brill and Long Crendon wards would have 4 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent and 3 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Bierton and Quainton wards**

82 The existing wards of Bierton and Quainton are situated towards the centre of the district, to the north and west of Aylesbury town, and are both currently single-member wards. Bierton ward contains the parishes of Bierton with Broughton, Hardwick, Hulcott and Weedon, while Quainton ward contains the parishes of Creslow, Oving, Pitchcott, Quainton and Whitchurch. Under existing arrangements,

Bierton and Quainton wards have 8 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (68 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

83 At Stage One the District Council proposed a revised single-member Bierton ward which would include the Oldhams Meadow area (as discussed earlier), a new single-member Weedon ward and a revised single-member Quainton ward. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, proposed a revised Bierton ward that was identical to the Council's proposed ward with the exception that they proposed including the Oldhams Meadow area in the Elmhurst area (as detailed earlier). They proposed a new single-member Whitchurch with Weedon ward which was broadly similar to the Council's Weedon ward and an alternative configuration of parishes to form a revised single-member Quainton ward. We based our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' scheme in this area, subject to some modifications to their proposed Quainton ward, as we considered that they offered the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and had received some degree of local support. Under our draft recommendations Bierton, Quainton and Weedon wards would initially have 30 per cent, 5 per cent and 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent fewer in 2005).

84 At Stage Three we received four representations in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrats opposed our recommendation to include the Oldhams Meadow area in our proposed Elmhurst ward (as previously discussed). They proposed including the Oldhams Meadow area in the revised Bierton ward and stated that they did not "support the disruption of the communal coherence of parishes". However, the Liberal Democrats stated in their submission that aside from their proposal to include the Oldhams Meadow area in Bierton ward they supported our proposals for revised Bierton and Quainton wards. Bierton with Broughton Parish Council expressed "full agreement" for the draft recommendations affecting the parish and Quainton Parish Council expressed its support for a revised Quainton ward. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association requested that the Commission "look again" at the warding arrangements for the proposed Bierton and Weedon wards and stated that these wards are "destined to receive major urban developments on the fringes of Aylesbury". The Residents' Association stated that the proposed warding arrangements "should provide for these urban extensions to be separated from the nearby villages and included within the Aylesbury urban area".

85 While we note the concerns of the Liberal Democrats regarding the Oldhams Meadow area, we also note their support for the remainder of Bierton ward and Quainton ward. We also note the support of Bierton with Broughton Parish Council for the proposed Bierton ward, and have not therefore been persuaded by the evidence received to amend our proposed Bierton ward. We remain of the opinion that the Oldhams Meadow area should be united with Aylesbury town due to its closer geographical proximity to the town than to Bierton village. We also note the comments made by Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association. However, as stated previously, we are content that the electorate projections supplied by Aylesbury Vale District Council represent the best estimates in electorate over the five-year period, and are therefore the basis of our draft recommendations. We are content to endorse as final our draft recommendations for the proposed Bierton, Quainton and Weedon wards. Under our final recommendations Bierton, Quainton and Weedon wards would initially have 30 per cent, 5 per cent and 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards**

86 The existing wards of Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon abut the western boundary of the district and are both single-member wards. Grendon Underwood ward contains the parishes of Ashendon, Edgcott, Grendon Underwood, Kingswood, Ludgershall, Westcott, Woodham and Wotton Underwood. Marsh Gibbon ward contains the parishes of Barton Hartshorn, Chetwode, Charndon, Hillesden, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon, Preston Bissett and Twyford. Under existing arrangements, Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards have 3 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent fewer and 10 per cent more than average by 2005).

87 At Stage One the District Council largely proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for this area. It proposed retaining the existing Grendon Underwood ward, with the exception of Ashendon parish, which it proposed should form part of a revised Waddesdon ward, and the inclusion of Dorton parish from Brill ward. It also proposed retaining Marsh Gibbon with the exception of Barton Hartshorn and Chetwode parishes, which it proposed should form part of a revised Tingewick ward (as discussed later). The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, proposed that the current Grendon Underwood ward, less Edgcott parish, be combined with Lower Winchendon and Upper Winchendon parishes from Waddesdon ward to form a revised single-member Grendon Underwood ward. They also proposed a revised single-member Marsh Gibbon ward containing Edgcott parish from Grendon Underwood ward, together with Charndon, Marsh Gibbon, Poundon and Twyford parishes from the existing Marsh Gibbon ward.

88 We noted that both the Conservatives and the District Council proposed broadly similar warding arrangements in this area based largely upon existing wards. However, we based our proposals on the Council's scheme which we considered would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and would reflect our proposed warding arrangements in neighbouring areas. Under our draft recommendations Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards would contain 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (10 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than average by 2005).

89 At Stage Three we received one representation in relation to this area. County Councillor Graves (Long Crendon and Brill Division) opposed the proposal to include the parish of Dorton in the proposed Grendon Underwood ward (as previously discussed).

90 We have carefully considered the representation received and we are content to confirm as final our draft recommendations for the proposed Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards. While we note the concerns of County Councillor Graves, in the absence of any alternative warding arrangements we have not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations for the proposed Grendon Underwood ward. Under our final recommendations Grendon Underwood and Marsh Gibbon wards would contain 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (10 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than average by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards**

91 The existing wards of Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone are situated in the south-east of the district and are all single-member wards. Edlesborough ward contains the parishes of Edlesborough and Slapton. Cheddington ward contains the parishes of Cheddington, Marsworth and Mentmore, and

Pitstone ward contains the parishes of Ivinghoe and Pitstone. Under existing arrangements, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards have 24 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent more and 19 per cent more than average by 2005). Cheddington ward has 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently, and is forecast to have 1 per cent fewer than average by 2005.

92 At Stage One the District Council and the Conservatives (supported by five councillors and 13 local residents) proposed identical warding arrangements in this area. The District Council noted that some change to warding arrangements were necessary due to a large increase in population in the Pitstone area over the next five years. Each scheme proposed a revised single-member Pitstone ward which would include Ivinghoe parish ward of Ivinghoe parish and Pitstone parish, a revised single-member Edlesborough ward containing Ivinghoe Aston parish ward of Ivinghoe parish and a revised single-member Cheddington ward including Slapton parish. Mentmore parish, which currently forms part of Cheddington ward, would be combined with Wingrave ward (as discussed later). Ivinghoe Parish Council opposed the District Council's and the Conservatives' proposal to divide the parish between the proposed Edlesborough and Pitstone wards, arguing that it would affect the quality of local administration and the common identity of the parish.

93 We noted the consensus of opinion between the District Council and the Conservatives and therefore based our proposals for this area on these proposals as we considered that they would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also noted that under these proposals, Pitstone ward would contain 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the average by 2005. However, we recognised that this area is relatively isolated from the remainder of the district and is effectively enclosed by the neighbouring county of Hertfordshire, thus reducing the number of alternative options. Under our draft recommendations Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards would currently contain 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent, 5 per cent and 14 per cent more than average by 2005).

94 At Stage Three we received three representations in relation to this area. Ivinghoe Parish Council opposed our proposals for revised Edlesborough and Pitstone wards and reiterated their Stage One argument. Mentmore Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to include it in a revised Wingrave ward (as discussed later) and Slapton Parish Council made no comment on our draft recommendations.

95 We have carefully considered the representations received during this stage and are confirming as final our draft recommendations in this area. While we note the concerns of Ivinghoe Parish Council we have not been persuaded by the evidence received to amend our proposed Edlesborough and Pitstone wards. As clearly stated in our draft recommendations we consider that the parish does contain two separate communities and that retaining the existing warding arrangements in this area would fail to provide reasonable electoral equality. We further note that their inclusion in separate district wards would not affect these areas continuing to form part of the same parish council, and we still consider this to be the case. We are therefore confirming as final our draft recommendations in this area. Under our final recommendations Cheddington, Edlesborough and Pitstone wards would currently contain 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent, 5 per cent and 14 per cent more than average by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Wing and Wingrave wards**

96 The existing wards of Wing and Wingrave are situated in the east of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Wing ward is coterminous with Wing parish, and Wingrave ward contains the parishes of Aston Abbots, Cublington and Wingrave with Rowsham. Under existing arrangements, Wing and Wingrave wards have 5 per cent more and 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent and 20 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

97 At Stage One the District Council and the Conservatives (supported by five councillors and 13 local residents) proposed identical warding arrangements in this area. Each proposed retaining the existing single-member Wing ward and in order to improve electoral equality, each scheme proposed an enlarged Wingrave ward to include Mentmore parish from Cheddington ward. We therefore proposed basing our draft recommendations in this area on the District Council's and Conservatives' schemes as we considered that these proposals would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations Wing and Wingrave wards would contain 7 per cent more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer by 2005).

98 At Stage Three we received one representation in relation to this area. Mentmore Parish Council opposed the proposal to include it a revised Wingrave ward. The parish council stated that it has no community of interest with the parishes in the current Wingrave ward and highlighted its "religious, educational, social and transport links" with the existing Cheddington ward.

99 We have carefully considered the representation received in relation to this area and we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. While we note the concerns of Mentmore Parish Council, we also note the absence of any alternative viable warding arrangements, and have not therefore been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations. Under our final recommendations Wing and Wingrave wards would contain 7 per cent more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards**

100 The existing wards of Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley are situated in the north-east of the district and are all single-member wards. Great Brickhill ward contains the parishes of Great Brickhill, Soulbury and Stoke Hammond. Stewkley ward contains the parishes of Drayton Parslow, Dunton, Hoggston, Mursley and Stewkley. Newton Longville ward is coterminous with Newton Longville parish. Under existing arrangements, Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards have 10 per cent fewer, 26 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent fewer, 30 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than average by 2005).

101 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Great Brickhill ward and enlarging the single-member Newton Longville ward to include Mursley parish from Stewkley ward. It also proposed a revised single-member Stewkley ward. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, also proposed an enlarged Newton Longville ward that was the same as the District Council's proposal. They proposed a revised and enlarged Great Brickhill ward as they considered the current ward to be undersized. They also proposed an alternative configuration of parishes in the Stewkley area, including the parishes of Granborough and Swanbourne from the existing Hogshaw ward. We based our draft recommendations in this area on the Conservatives'

proposals, which we considered would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards would contain 14 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2005).

102 At Stage Three we received no representations in relation to this area and we are therefore content to confirm as final our draft recommendations. Under our final recommendations Great Brickhill, Newton Longville and Stewkley wards would currently contain 14 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards**

103 The existing wards of Hogshaw, Steeple Claydon and Winslow are situated towards the centre of the district. Hogshaw and Steeple Claydon wards are each represented by a single councillor and Winslow ward is represented by two councillors. Hogshaw ward contains the parishes of East Claydon, Middle Claydon, Granborough, Hogshaw, North Marston and Swanbourne. Steeple Claydon ward contains the parishes of Padbury and Steeple Claydon, while Winslow ward contains the parishes of Addington, Adstock and Winslow. Under existing arrangements, Hogshaw and Winslow wards currently have 17 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (22 per cent and 12 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Steeple Claydon ward currently has 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, and is forecast to have 7 per cent more by 2005.

104 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Steeple Claydon ward and proposed dividing Hogshaw ward between Quainton and Stewkley (as previously discussed) and including the remaining parishes, East Claydon and Middle Claydon, in a revised two-member Winslow ward. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, also proposed that the current Hogshaw ward be divided between the existing wards of Quainton and Stewkley. They proposed expanding the current two-member Winslow ward to include parishes from the neighbouring Steeple Claydon ward, arguing that this proposal would minimise the disturbance to the current Winslow ward and would combine the parishes grouped along the A413. They also proposed a revised single-member Steeple Claydon ward. Two local residents proposed that Steeple Claydon parish be combined with East Claydon and Middle Claydon parishes in a single-member ward, arguing that they form part of the same ecclesiastical parish and share community and transport links.

105 We considered that the best warding arrangements for the district as a whole would be achieved by dividing the existing Hogshaw ward between Quainton and Stewkley wards, as proposed by both the District Council and the Conservatives. In the Winslow area we based our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals as their proposal would minimise the disturbance to the current Winslow ward and would combine the parishes grouped along the A413. In the Steeple Claydon area we based our draft recommendations on the locally generated representations as we considered the three parishes of East Claydon, Middle Claydon and Steeple Claydon would provide a relatively compact ward, would reflect community ties and provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards would contain 3 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2005).

106 At Stage Three we received one representation in relation to this area. One local resident expressed support for our proposed Steeple Claydon ward but suggested renaming it Claydon ward in order to reflect the villages contained within the proposed ward. He also expressed support for the proposal to transfer Padbury parish from Steeple Claydon ward to the revised Winslow ward. However, he suggested that Winslow be divided into two single-member wards, Winslow North and Winslow South.

107 We have carefully considered all the evidence received during this stage in relation to this area and are confirming our draft recommendations as final. While we note the proposal put forward by one local resident we also note the absence of any detailed warding arrangements, as well as the absence of local support for such an amendment to our draft recommendations for Winslow ward. Consequently, we have not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations to reflect the proposal outlined above. Under our final recommendations Steeple Claydon and Winslow wards would contain 3 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards**

108 The existing wards of Buckingham North and Buckingham South contain the county town of Buckingham and two outlying parishes. Buckingham North contains the northern part of Buckingham town and Maids Moreton parish, while Buckingham South ward contains the southern part of Buckingham together with Gawcott with Lenborough parish. Both are currently represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards have 16 per cent fewer and 39 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (23 per cent fewer and 53 per cent more than average by 2005).

109 At Stage One the District Council and the Conservatives each proposed transferring Maids Moreton parish from the existing Buckingham North ward to Luffield Abbey ward and retaining its current two-member representation. The District Council and one councillor also proposed using the river Great Ouse as a ward boundary throughout the town resulting in the revised Buckingham South ward containing part of the existing Buckingham North ward to the south of the river Great Ouse. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, also proposed a boundary amendment between Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards that was marginally different to the District Council's proposal and also proposed a revised two-member Buckingham South ward, which they argued would result in an improvement to electoral equality in the current Tingewick ward. We based our draft recommendations on the Conservatives' proposals for revised two-member Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards as we considered that, in view of the growth forecast for the town over the next five years, the area would contain sufficient electors to be represented by four councillors. However, we considered that the District Council's proposed boundary between the two wards had some merit and put this forward as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards would have 16 per cent more and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than average by 2005).

110 At Stage Three we received one representation in relation to this area. Buckingham Town Council stated that although it "was not happy with the warding of the town" it agreed to support the draft recommendations as they affect the Buckingham area. Therefore we are content to confirm as final our draft recommendations for revised Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards. Under our final recommendations Buckingham North and Buckingham South wards would have 16 per cent more and

20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than average by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Maps 2 and A2.

## **Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards**

111 The existing wards of Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick abut the northern boundary of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Great Horwood contains the parishes of Beachampton, Great Horwood, Little Horwood, Nash and Whaddon. Luffield Abbey ward contains the parishes of Akeley, Foscott, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Dayrell with Luffield Abbey, Lillingstone Lovell, Stowe, Thornborough and Thornton. Tingewick ward contains the parishes of Biddlesden, Radclive-cum-Chackmore, Shalstone, Tingewick, Turweston, Water Stratford and Westbury. Currently all three wards are over-represented, and electoral equality in the three wards is forecast to deteriorate further over the next five years. Under existing arrangements, Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards have 9 per cent, 13 per cent and 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent, 18 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than average respectively in 2005).

112 At Stage One the District Council proposed enlarging all three wards and retaining their current single-member representation. The Conservatives, supported by five councillors and 13 local residents, also proposed retaining the three wards based on an alternative configuration of parishes. They proposed an enlarged single-member Tingewick ward, a revised Luffield Abbey ward containing the existing ward, less Thornborough parish, together with Beachampton parish from Great Horwood ward and Maids Moreton parish from Buckingham North ward. Their revised Great Horwood ward comprised the existing ward, less Beachampton parish, together with Thornborough parish from Luffield Abbey ward. We based our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives' proposals, as we concurred with the view that Maids Moreton parish should be included in a revised Luffield Abbey ward and that Tingewick ward should be enlarged to include the parish of Gawcott with Lenborough. Under our draft recommendations Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards would initially contain 11 per cent, 7 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 1 per cent and 8 per cent more than average by 2005).

113 At Stage Three we received one representation in relation to this area. Thornborough Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to include it in the proposed Great Horwood ward. It expressed a preference for remaining in the Luffield Abbey ward and argued that Thornborough has been "an integral part of Luffield Abbey since the end of the twelfth century".

114 We have carefully considered the representation received in relation to this area and are content to confirm as final our draft recommendations. While we note the concerns of Thornborough Parish Council we also note that our proposals in this area are limited due to the proposed warding arrangements in neighbouring wards. We also note the absence of any alternative or viable warding arrangements and are therefore endorsing in full our draft recommendations in this area. Under our final recommendations Great Horwood, Luffield Abbey and Tingewick wards would initially contain 11 per cent, 7 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 1 per cent and 8 per cent more than average by 2005). Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Electoral Cycle**

115 At Stage One we received two representations regarding the District Council's electoral cycle. The District Council itself supported the retention of whole-council elections. It argued that a four-year term provides a stable period of government and avoids constant change in the political composition of a council, which it considered inherent with elections by thirds. Aylesbury Old Town Residents' Association also supported the retention of whole-council elections, subject to a single-member ward pattern being adopted for the whole district. We carefully considered all representations at Stage One and there appeared to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained. We therefore proposed no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections.

116 At Stage Three the Liberal Democrats supported the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the District Council. No further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

## **Conclusions**

117 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to endorse in full our draft recommendations, subject to the following ward name changes:

- we propose renaming Elmhurst, Mandeville and Walton Court wards as Elmhurst & Watermead, Mandeville & Elm Farm and Walton Court & Hawkslade wards respectively.

118 We conclude that, in Aylesbury Vale:

- there should be an increase in council size from 58 to 59;
- there should be 36 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 35 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two wards;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

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

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	58	59	58	59
Number of wards	38	36	38	36
Average number of electors per councillor	2,050	2,016	2,154	2,118
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	18	12	23	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	3	13	0

120 As Table 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 18 to 12, with three wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with only two wards 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**

Aylesbury Vale District Council should comprise 59 councillors serving 36 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

121 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. As stated in our draft report, the Aylesbury Vale (Parishes) Order 2000 came into effect in April 2001. As a result our proposed wards reflect both existing parish arrangements and parish warding arrangements currently being prepared by the District Council. However, as a result of modifications to district ward boundaries in Aylesbury and Buckingham, we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the towns of Aylesbury and Buckingham and the parishes of Bierton with Broughton and Stoke Mandeville to reflect our proposed district wards.

122 Aylesbury Town Council is currently served by 25 councillors representing nine town council wards. The existing town council wards are coterminous with the existing district wards of the same name, with the exception of Elmhurst town council ward which covers only that part of the current district ward within Aylesbury Town.

123 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed amending eight of the existing district wards. We therefore proposed consequential changes to the existing town council wards so that they would reflect our proposed district warding arrangements in the town. We proposed that Aylesbury Town Council be served by 24 councillors, one fewer than at present, serving ten parish wards. We proposed that Bedgrove ward be served by four town councillors; Central ward be served by a single town councillor; Gatehouse ward be served by three town councillors; and Southcourt ward be served by two town councillors. We proposed that these wards be coterminous with our proposed district wards of the same name. The remaining six of our proposed district wards for the town would include part or all of a number of parishes that adjoin Aylesbury. Therefore, we proposed that the boundaries of the following six town council wards should reflect only those parts of our proposed district wards contained in Aylesbury town itself. We proposed that Elmhurst and Mandeville town council wards be served by three town councillors each and Oakfield, Oxford Road, Quarrendon and Walton Court town council wards be served by two town councillors each.

124 In response to our consultation report we received two representations regarding the proposed parish warding arrangements in Aylesbury Town. The Liberal Democrats broadly accepted our draft recommendations in the Aylesbury Town area, but proposed an amendment to the number of councillors representing Quarrendon as they “could not see any justification” for wards of similar size having different numbers of councillors. They proposed that Quarrendon ward should be represented by three councillors, thus retaining the existing 25 Aylesbury Town Councillors. Aylesbury Old Town Residents’ Association reiterated their Stage One argument for a 38-member town council, but stated that if the Commission should favour the District Council’s scheme “we request that consideration be given to increasing the representation for Central ward to two members”. In the absence of new evidence we have not been persuaded to amend our draft recommendations and are content therefore to confirm our draft recommendations for the Aylesbury Town parish wards as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Aylesbury Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, one fewer than at present, representing ten wards: Bedgrove (returning four councillors), Central (returning one councillor), Elmhurst (returning three councillors), Gatehouse (returning three councillors), Mandeville (returning three councillors), Oakfield (returning two councillors), Oxford Road (returning two councillors), Quarrendon (returning two councillors), Southcourt (returning two councillors) and Walton Court (returning two councillors). The boundary between the ten town council wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

125 The town of Buckingham is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we based our draft recommendation for a revised boundary between the two district wards of Buckingham on the District Council’s proposals. We also put forward the District Council’s proposals for new town council wards which would reflect our proposed district warding arrangements for the town. We proposed a new Buckingham North town council ward returning eight town councillors which would be coterminous with our proposed Buckingham North district ward, and a new

Buckingham South town council ward returning seven town councillors which would also be coterminous with our proposed Buckingham South district ward.

126 In response to our consultation report we received one representation regarding the proposed parish warding arrangements in the town of Buckingham. Buckingham Town Council, although not happy with the prospect of warding the town, agreed to support our draft recommendations as they affect the town of Buckingham. We are content therefore to confirm our draft recommendations for Buckingham Town as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Buckingham Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Buckingham North (returning eight councillors) and Buckingham South (returning seven councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 at Appendix A.

127 The parish of Bierton with Broughton is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we proposed that the Oldhams Meadow area of the parish should form part of a revised Elmhurst district ward in Aylesbury town. We considered this area to be a self-contained part of the parish with a greater affinity with neighbouring parts of Aylesbury than with Bierton village. In order to facilitate our proposed warding arrangements in this area, we therefore proposed that Bierton with Broughton parish be warded. For parish council purposes, we proposed a new Oldhams Meadow parish ward represented by a single parish councillor. We proposed that the remainder of the parish form a new Bierton Village parish ward and be represented by eight parish councillors.

128 In response to our consultation report we received one representation. Bierton with Broughton Parish Council expressed its full support for the proposals affecting the parish. We are therefore content to endorse in full our draft recommendations for Bierton with Broughton parish.

**Final Recommendation**

Bierton with Broughton Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Bierton Village (returning eight councillors) and Oldhams Meadow (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

129 The parish of Stoke Mandeville is currently served by 12 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations we proposed creating four new parish wards - Hawkslade and Stoke Grange, each returning three parish councillors, Stoke Leys returning two parish councillors and Stoke Mandeville Village returning four parish councillors.

130 In response to our draft recommendations we received two representations regarding the proposed parish warding arrangements in the Stoke Mandeville parish. The Liberal Democrats stated that they “regretted the proposals that will lead to the warding” of parishes such as Stoke Mandeville, however, they did not provide any alternative warding arrangements. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council stated that

“a majority of the councillors are opposed” to the proposed warding of the parish and argued that the three urban estates “have little in common with the more rural village”. It also stated that it was “unfair” that the urban wards would have a total of eight councillors, while the rural village would have four councillors. However, it did not propose any alternative electoral arrangements. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for the parish of Stoke Mandeville as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Hawkslade (returning three councillors): Stoke Grange (returning three councillors): Stoke Leys (returning two councillors) and Stoke Mandeville Village (returning four councillors). The boundary between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

131 The parish of Aston Abbots is currently served by five parish councillors. At Stage One, the Parish Council requested an increase of two parish councillors, arguing that it would thereby be able to widen its representation of parish residents. We were content to put forward the Parish Council’s proposal for further consultation.

132 In response to our consultation report we received no representations regarding the proposed increase to seven parish councillors. We are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Aston Abbots parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Aston Abbots Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, two more than at present.

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

**Final Recommendation**

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

*Map 2: Final Recommendations for Aylesbury Vale*

## 6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

135 It is now up to the Secretary of State to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 2 January 2002.

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Aylesbury Vale: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Aylesbury Vale area.

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Buckingham town.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed ward boundary between Edlesborough and Pitstone wards and the boundaries between Ivinghoe and Ivinghoe Aston parish wards.

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

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Aylesbury Vale: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Buckingham Town*

*Map A3: Proposed Boundary Between Edlesborough and Pitstone wards*