

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire in Wiltshire

Further electoral review

September 2006

Translations and other formats

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What is the Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Director:

Archie Gall

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of North Wiltshire is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each district councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake this review on 12 May 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 13 wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. During the previous review population growth predicted to occur was only partially realised. However, the current Calne Lickhill ward has continued to grow and currently has 24% more electors than the district average.

Every review is conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	21 June 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 September 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	31 January 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	25 April 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We based our recommendations on the proposals of the District Council, subject to a number of amendments to further improve electoral equality. In the rural areas, we proposed combining a number of proposed wards to form two- and, in some cases, three-member wards. We proposed amendments to the current arrangements in Calne and Wootton Bassett and significant amendments in Chippenham.

Responses to consultation

We received 40 submissions at Stage Three, including one district wide submission from North Wiltshire District Council. We received submissions from 17 Parish and Town Councils, two Councillors, one Member of Parliament and 19 local residents.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The District Council has predicted a growth in electorate of 6% over the five-year period 2004 to 2009. It expects most of the growth to be in Calne Lickhill ward and the Corsham area.

Council size

We did not receive any further submissions regarding council size. We propose adopting the council size of 54 members as final.

General analysis

We propose endorsing the majority of the draft recommendations as final. We have been persuaded by the evidence received to make significant changes in the south east of the district, in the two wards of Lyneham and Calne Without. We propose to change our draft recommendations within the three wards of Kington Langley, Pickwick and Yatton Keynell in the south west of the district. Additionally we propose minor modifications within Calne Abberd, Calne Chilvester and Calne Lickhill wards.

What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission through the contact details below. The Commission will not make an Order implementing them before 24 October 2006. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purpose.

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Bremhill	1	Part of the existing Bremhill ward (the parish of Bremhill and Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish); part of the existing Calne Without ward (West parish ward and Sandy Lane parish ward of Calne Without parish)
2	Box & Rudloe	2	Part of the existing Box and Pickwick wards (the parish of Box and the proposed Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish)
3	Brinkworth	2	Unchanged – the existing Brinkworth & The Somerfords ward (the parishes of Brinkworth, Charlton, Dauntsey, Hankerton, Lea & Cleverton, Little Somerford and Great Somerford)
4	Calne Abberd	1	Part of the existing Calne Abberd, Calne Chilvester and Calne Priestley wards (the proposed Abberd parish ward of Calne parish)
5	Calne Chilvester	1	Part of the existing Calne Chilvester ward and part of the existing Calne Lickhill ward (the proposed Chilvester parish ward of Calne parish; Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish)
6	Calne Lickhill	2	Part of the existing Calne Lickhill and Calne Abberd wards (the proposed Calne Lickhill parish ward of Calne parish)
7	Calne Marden	1	Unchanged (Marden parish ward of Calne parish)
8	Calne Priestley	1	Part of the existing Calne Priestley ward (the proposed Priestley parish ward of Calne parish)
9	Calne Quemerford	1	Unchanged (the proposed Quemerford parish ward of Calne parish)
10	Calne Without	1	Part of the existing Calne Without ward (Middle parish ward of Calne Without parish); part of the existing Hilmarton ward (the parishes of Cherhill, Compton Bassett, Heddington and East parish ward of Calne Without parish)

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
11	Chippenham Allington	2	Part of the existing Chippenham Allington, Cepen Park and Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward (the proposed Allington parish ward of Chippenham parish and the proposed Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish)
12	Chippenham Avon	2	The existing Chippenham Avon and part of the existing Chippenham Audley and Chippenham London Road wards (the proposed Avon parish ward of Chippenham parish)
13	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	Part of the existing Chippenham Hill Rise ward (the proposed Hill Rise parish ward of Chippenham parish)
14	Chippenham London Road	1	Part of the existing Chippenham London Road ward (the proposed London Road parish ward of Chippenham parish)
15	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	Unchanged (the proposed Monkton Park parish ward of Chippenham parish)
16	Chippenham Park	2	Part of the existing Cepen Park, Chippenham Hill Rise and Chippenham Park wards (the proposed Park parish ward of Chippenham parish; the proposed Cepen Park Central parish ward of Chippenham Without parish; the proposed Cepen Park North parish ward of Langley Burrell parish)
17	Chippenham Pewsham	2	The existing Chippenham Pewsham ward and part of the existing Chippenham London Road ward (the proposed Pewsham parish ward of Chippenham parish)
18	Chippenham Redland	2	The existing Chippenham Redland ward and part of the existing Chippenham Allington and Chippenham Audley ward (the proposed Redland parish ward of Chippenham parish)
19	Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	Part of the existing Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward (the proposed Westcroft/Queens parish ward of Chippenham parish)

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
20 Colerne	1	Unchanged – the existing Colerne ward (the parish of Colerne)
21 Corsham & Lacock	3	The existing Corsham ward (Corsham parish ward of Corsham parish); the existing Lacock with Neston & Gastard ward (the parish of Lacock and Gastard and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish)
22 Cricklade	2	Unchanged – the existing Cricklade ward (the parishes of Cricklade, Latton and Marston Maisey)
23 Hullavington & Crudwell	1	Part of the existing Ashton Keynes & Minety ward (the parish of Crudwell); part of the existing Malmesbury ward (the parish of Brokenborough); part of the existing St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston ward (the parishes of Hullavington and Norton)
24 Kington Langley	1	Part of the existing Nettleton ward (the parish of Grittleton and Stanton St Quintin); Part of the existing Kington Langley ward (the parish of Kington Langley); part of the existing Kington St Michael ward (the parish of Kington St Michael and Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish)
25 Lyneham	2	The existing Lyneham ward (the parishes of Lyneham & Bradenstoke, Clyffe Pypard and Tockenham); part of the existing Hilmarton ward (the parish of Hilmarton)
26 Malmesbury	2	Part of the existing Malmesbury ward (the parish of Malmesbury)
27 Minety & Purton	3	Part of the existing Ashton Keynes & Minety ward (the parishes of Ashton Keynes, Leigh, Minety and Oaksey) and the existing Purton ward (the parishes of Braydon and Purton)
28 Pickwick	2	Part of the existing Box and Pickwick wards (the proposed Pickwick parish ward of Corsham Parish)

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
29	Sherston	1	Part of the existing St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston ward (the parishes of Easton Grey, Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth)
30	St Paul Malmesbury Without	1	Part of the existing St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston ward (the parish of St Paul Malmesbury Without)
31	Sutton Benger	1	Part of the existing Kington Langley ward (the parishes of Seagry and Sutton Benger); part of the existing Bremhill ward (Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell Without parish and Christian Malford parish)
32	The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	Unchanged – the existing Lydiards & Broad Town ward (the parishes of Broad Town, Lydiard Tregoze and Lydiard Millicent)
33	Wootton Bassett North	2	Part of the existing Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards (the proposed Wootton Bassett North parish ward of Wootton Bassett parish)
34	Wootton Bassett South	3	Part of the existing Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards (the proposed Wootton Bassett South parish ward of Wootton Bassett)
35	Yatton Keynell	1	Part of the existing Nettleton ward (the parishes of Castle Combe, Nettleton and North Wraxall); part of the existing Kington St Michael ward (the parishes of Yatton Keynell and Biddestone)

Notes:

- 1 The whole district is parished.
- 2 The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.
- 3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Final recommendations for North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bremhill	1	1,951	1,951	6	1,945	1,945	0
2	Box & Rudloe	2	3,640	1,820	-1	4,062	2,031	4
3	Brinkworth	2	3,636	1,818	-1	3,669	1,835	-6
4	Calne Abberd	1	1,936	1,936	5	1,923	1,923	-1
5	Calne Chilvester	1	1,777	1,777	-3	1,903	1,903	-2
6	Calne Lickhill	2	2,258	1,129	-39	3,633	1,817	-7
7	Calne Marden	1	1,865	1,865	2	1,976	1,976	2
8	Calne Priestley	1	1,847	1,847	1	1,835	1,835	-6
9	Calne Quemerford	1	1,843	1,843	0	1,910	1,910	-2
10	Calne Without	1	1,913	1,913	4	1,931	1,931	-1
11	Chippenham Allington	2	3,571	1,786	-3	3,679	1,840	-5

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Chippenham Avon	2	3,529	1,765	-4	3,771	1,886	-3
13	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	1,907	1,907	4	1,958	1,958	1
14	Chippenham London Road	1	1,708	1,708	-7	1,885	1,885	-3
15	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	1,680	1,680	-9	2,027	2,027	4
16	Chippenham Park	2	3,838	1,919	5	3,818	1,909	-2
17	Chippenham Pewsham	2	4,093	2,047	11	4,068	2,034	5
18	Chippenham Redland	2	3,324	1,662	-9	3,758	1,879	-3
19	Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	1,982	1,982	8	1,956	1,956	1
20	Colerne	1	1,932	1,932	5	1,932	1,932	-1
21	Corsham & Lacock	3	5,984	1,995	9	6,336	2,112	9

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22	Cricklade	2	3,905	1,953	6	3,960	1,980	2
23	Hullavington & Crudwell	1	1,989	1,989	8	2,009	2,009	3
24	Kington Langley	1	2,164	2,164	18	2,151	2,151	11
25	Lyneham	2	4,264	2,132	16	4,276	2,138	10
26	Malmesbury	2	3,694	1,817	-1	3,729	1,865	-4
27	Minety & Purton	3	6,119	2,040	11	6,173	2,058	6
28	Pickwick	2	2,617	1,309	-29	3,580	1,790	-8
29	Sherston	1	1,777	1,777	-3	1,880	1,880	-3
30	St Paul Malmesbury Without	1	1,460	1,460	-20	1,880	1,880	-3
31	Sutton Benger	1	1,819	1,819	-1	1,808	1,808	-7
32	The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	2,144	2,144	17	2,139	2,139	10

Table 2 (continued): Final recommendations for North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
33	Wootton Bassett North	2	3,652	1,826	-1	3,847	1,924	-1
34	Wootton Bassett South	3	5,240	1,747	-5	5,547	1,849	-5
35	Yatton Keynell	1	2,098	2,098	14	2,086	2,086	7
	Totals	54	99,156	-	-	105,040	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,836	-	-	1,945	-

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

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Wiltshire District Council.

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the district of North Wiltshire.

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

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

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

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of North Wiltshire. North Wiltshire's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1999. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 22 October 1999 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 2003.

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

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

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

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

7 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for any parish and town councils in the district. We cannot consider changes to the external boundaries of either the district or of parish areas as part of this review.

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

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

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

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

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

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an

unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

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

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	21 June 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 September 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	31 January 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	25 April 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 21 June 2005, when we wrote to North Wiltshire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Wiltshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Wiltshire Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, Members of the European Parliament for the South West Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited North Wiltshire district Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 September 2005.

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

17 Stage Three began on 31 January 2006 with the publication of the report *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire in Wiltshire* and ended on 24 April 2006.

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

Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

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

2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The district of North Wiltshire is bounded by the Cotswolds to its north, by the unitary authorities of Swindon, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset and by the Wiltshire districts of West Wiltshire and Kennet. It shares good rail and road links with London and Bristol which have helped attract modern manufacturing industrial investment while tourism remains a growth industry for the district.

22 North Wiltshire is entirely parished and includes the towns of Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett.

23 The electorate of the district is 99,156 (2004). The Council presently has 53 members who are elected from 38 wards, over half of which are relatively urban with the remainder being predominantly rural. There are 24 one-member wards, 13 two-member wards and one three-member ward. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district by the total number of councillors representing them on the council. At present, each councillor represents a district average of 1,871 electors which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,982 by the year 2009 if the present number of councillors is maintained.

24 During the last review of North Wiltshire the District Council forecast there would be an increase of approximately 6,853 electors between 1998 and 2003. However, electorate decline since that time has resulted in a significant amount of electoral inequality between wards. To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the borough average in percentage terms.

25 Data from the December 2004 electoral register showed that under these arrangements, electoral equality across the district met the criteria that the Electoral Commission agreed would warrant further investigation. The number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 38 wards (34%) varies by more than 10% from the district average. The worst imbalance is in Calne Lickhill ward where the councillor represents 24% more electors than the district average. Having noted that this level of electoral inequality is unlikely to improve, the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of North Wiltshire District Council on 12 May 2005.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashton Keynes & Minety	2	3,696	1,848	-1	3,715	1,858	-6
2	Box	2	3,297	1,649	-14	3,719	1,860	-6
3	Bremhill	1	1,731	1,731	-9	1,721	1,721	-13
4	Brinkworth & The Somerfords	2	3,636	1,818	-5	3,669	1,835	-7
5	Calne Abberd	1	2,004	2,004	5	1,991	1,991	0
6	Calne Chilvester	1	1,511	1,511	-21	1,637	1,637	-17
7	Calne Lickhill	1	2,372	2,372	24	3,753	3,753	89
8	Calne Marden	1	1,865	1,865	-2	1,976	1,976	0
9	Calne Priestley	1	1,925	1,925	1	1,913	1,913	-3
10	Calne Quemerford	1	1,843	1,843	-4	1,910	1,910	-4

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Calne Without	1	1,593	1,593	-17	1,613	1,613	-19
12	Cepen Park	2	3,930	1,965	3	3,906	1,953	-1
13	Chippenham Allington	1	1,989	1,989	4	2,218	2,218	12
14	Chippenham Audley	1	1,909	1,909	0	2,049	2,049	3
15	Chippenham Avon	1	1,911	1,911	0	2,342	2,342	18
16	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	1,943	1,943	2	1,994	1,994	1
17	Chippenham London Road	1	1,927	1,927	1	2,104	2,104	6
18	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	1,680	1,680	-12	2,027	2,027	2
19	Chippenham Park	1	2,093	2,093	10	2,080	2,080	5
20	Chippenham Pewsham	2	4,119	2,060	8	4,094	2,047	3

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21	Chippenham Redland	1	2,041	2,041	7	2,029	2,029	2
22	Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	2,090	2,090	9	2,077	2,077	5
23	Colerne	1	1,932	1,932	1	1,932	1,932	-3
24	Corsham	2	3,824	1,912	0	3,856	1,928	-3
25	Cricklade	2	3,905	1,953	2	3,960	1,980	0
26	Hilmarton	1	1,949	1,949	2	1,937	1,937	-2
27	Kington Langley	1	1,670	1,670	-13	1,659	1,659	-16
28	Kington St Michael	1	1,696	1,696	-11	1,688	1,688	-15
29	Lacock with Neston & Gastard	1	2,160	2,160	13	2,480	2,480	25
30	Lyneham	2	3,643	1,822	-5	3,659	1,830	-8
31	Malmesbury	2	3,864	1,932	1	3,901	1,951	-2

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
32	Nettleton	1	1,933	1,933	1	1,920	1,920	-3
33	Pickwick	2	2,960	1,480	-23	3,923	1,962	-1
34	Purton	2	3,244	1,622	-15	3,287	1,644	-17
35	St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston	2	4,235	2,118	11	4,768	2,384	20
36	The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	2,144	2,144	12	2,139	2,139	8
37	Wootton Bassett North	2	4,101	2,051	7	4,296	2,148	8
38	Wootton Bassett South	3	4,791	1,597	-16	5,098	1,699	-14
	Totals	53	99,156	-	-	105,040	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,871	-	-	1,982	-

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 2004, Pickwick ward had 23% fewer electors per councillor than the district average, while Calne Lickhill ward had 24% more electors per councillor than the district average. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Wiltshire District Council.

3 Draft recommendations

26 During Stage One 13 submissions were received. We received no district-wide schemes but the Council provided proposals in the rural areas of the district and made suggestions in the urban areas. We also received representations from 12 parish and town councils. 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 North Wiltshire in Wiltshire*.

27 Our draft recommendations were based on the proposals of the District Council, in the rural areas, where good levels of electoral equality were achieved. This was subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality. It is noted that no specific proposals were received from the District Council for the town areas which accounted for more than half of the councillors district-wide. To further improve electoral equality, in the rural areas, we proposed combining a number of proposed wards to form two- and in some cases three-member wards. We proposed amendments to the current arrangements in Calne and Wootton Bassett and significant amendments in Chippenham. We proposed that:

- North Wiltshire District Council should be served by 54 councillors, one more than at present, representing 34 wards, four fewer than present
- the boundaries of 31 of the existing wards were modified, while three wards retained their existing boundaries
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Calne, Chippenham, Chippenham Without, Corsham and Wootton Bassett to reflect the proposed district wards

28 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in seven of the 34 wards varying by no more than 10% from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10% from the average by 2009.

4 Response to consultation

29 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 40 representations were received, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the District Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

North Wiltshire District Council

30 The District Council supported the proposal for a council size of 54 and proposed changes to our draft recommendations for the towns of Chippenham and Calne. It objected to our proposals for the wards of Corsham & Lacock, Pickwick, Lyneham, Malmesbury and Minety & Purton and proposed alternative arrangements which it stated would better reflect community identities.

Members of Parliament

31 James Gray MP opposed our proposal to include Biddestone Parish in our proposed Pickwick ward.

Parish and town councils

32 Representations were received from 17 parish and town councils. We received three submissions from parish councils who opposed our proposed three-member Minety & Purton ward. Calne Town Council supported our proposals for Calne Town, subject to dividing the proposed Calne Lickhill into two single-member wards and the transfer of a small number of electors into Calne Lickhill ward. Three parish councils objected to our proposed three-member Lyneham ward and two parish councils objected to our proposed Corsham & Lacock ward. In Chippenham, the Town Council expressed support for single-member wards throughout the district and proposed amendments to our draft recommendations. One parish council supported their submission. With regard to our proposed Brinkworth ward, we received three objections and one representation in support. Dauntsey Parish Council proposed that it be represented in a single-member ward with Brinkworth parish.

33 Brokenborough Parish Council supported our proposed Hullavington & Crudwell ward.

Other representations

34 A further 21 representations were received, from two local Councillors and 19 local residents. One Councillor objected to our proposed three-member Lyneham ward whilst the other opposed our recommendations in Chippenham. Three local residents objected to our proposed three-member Lyneham ward. One local resident opposed multi-member wards and our proposed three-member Corsham and Lacock ward. Twelve local residents opposed our draft recommendations to include Biddestone parish in our proposed Pickwick ward. Three local residents opposed our draft recommendations for Chippenham Town.

Responses to further consultation

35 During Stage Three we received alternative proposals for the south east and south west areas of North Wiltshire. We considered that given the community identity evidence we received for these areas during Stage Three the alternative proposals could better represent the communities in these parts of the district. We therefore undertook further consultation to gauge respondents' opinions on the appropriateness of these amended wards in light of their comments made to us during Stage Three. This was not an additional period of consultation inviting new proposals and ideas. Rather it was to assess whether the alternative proposals put to us at Stage Three would be more suitable than our draft recommendations. As these were new proposals at Stage Three we did not feel we could recommend them in our final recommendations without first conducting some level of consultation. We conducted further consultation on revised proposals for this area for a period of four weeks between 19 June and 17 July 2006.

36 In the south west area (the area that comprises the existing Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Pickwick wards) the District Council put forward alternative proposals. We asked respondents whether our draft recommendations or the alternative ward arrangement proposed by the District Council would better represent the communities in the area. We received 15 responses from local interested parties. Fourteen respondents considered that the District Council proposals would be best suited to the area. The remaining respondent did not agree with either proposal.

37 In the south east (the area that comprises the existing Bremhill, Calne Without and Hilmarton wards) the District Council put forward alternative proposals. We asked respondents whether our draft recommendations or the alternative ward arrangement proposed by the District Council would better represent the communities in the area. We received six responses from local interested parties. Five respondents considered that the District Council proposals would be best suited to the area. The remaining respondent was strongly opposed to either proposal.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

38 We have now finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire.

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

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

40 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing clearly identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

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

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

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

Electorate figures

44 As part of the previous review of North Wiltshire district, the District Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 7% between 1998 and 2003. The actual increase was just 4%. However, between 1998 and the start of this review in 2004 the electorate has increased by 5%. There has been significant growth in Calne Lickhill ward and parts of Chippenham, while growth in other areas, such as Calne Chilvester ward and Pickwick wards has either not taken place or has been slower than expected. This has resulted in a knock-on effect across the district with 13

wards having electoral variances of more than 10%. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2009, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 99,156 to 105,040 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009. It expects most of the growth to be in Calne Lickhill ward but also expects significant growth in Box and Pickwick wards.

45 We recognise that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the District Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

46 We received no comments on the District Council's electoral forecasts during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

47 North Wiltshire District Council presently has 53 members. At Stage One the District Council proposed a council of 54 members, one more than at present. It stated that there was no reason to believe that the present number of councillors, 53, was unreasonable. However, in order to fit its own arithmetical model it considered a council size of 54 to be appropriate. In addition, it stated that it was mindful of the costs of appointing additional councillors. We requested further information on the Council's proposed council size and it forwarded details of a number of working groups, task groups and project boards currently operating that will involve Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and Non-Executive members. It also stated that the work of non-executive members in task-focused work was growing and provided some detail as to internal arrangements such as Scrutiny and forwarded schedules highlighting councillors' involvement with outside bodies and partnership bodies. We noted that although the Council had provided some further detail it had not approached the issue of council size with specific regard to its proposed council size of 54.

48 We proposed a council size of 54 and noted it would provide for the correct allocation of councillors and was less likely to necessitate a mixture of urban and rural areas. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we concluded that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members.

49 At Stage Three the District Council proposed that the district be represented by 54 councillors. We did not receive any other representations regarding council size. We therefore are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Electoral equality

50 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. However, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where no justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure

that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

51 We noted in our draft recommendations that, while securing some improvement in electoral equality, there would still be a number of significant imbalances under the District Council's proposals. Five wards would vary by more than 10% from the district average by 2009. We noted that there was little community identity argument to justify these imbalances and we therefore sought to secure improved levels of electoral equality across the district. While we noted that seven of our proposed wards would have variances of more than 10% currently we noted that due to growth in the district the variances in the wards are expected to improve by 2009. By 2009 none of our proposed wards would vary by more than 10% from the district average.

52 Given the generally good allocation of councillors between urban and rural areas it was possible to secure improved levels of electoral equality across the district. We noted that the Council's proposal for the majority of Calne Without parish and Heddington parish would result in an electoral variance of 18% by 2009 for which we did not consider there was sufficient argument. Therefore we looked at a number of options to secure an improved level of electoral equality in the area. We noted that, given the size and distribution of electors in Calne Without parish transferring Pewsham parish ward to a neighbouring ward was perhaps the best option. Therefore we considered transferring the parish ward to either our proposed Chippenham Pewsham, Corsham & Lacock or Lyneham wards. We did not consider that any of the options were ideal but noted that transferring Pewsham parish ward to Lyneham ward would secure the best overall levels of electoral equality in the area. However, we invited views on these options at Stage Three

53 During Stage Three we received much improved evidence of community identity and linkages in the district. This has led us to move away from our draft recommendations in two areas resulting in higher levels of electoral inequality.

54 The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district 96,156 by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 54 under our final proposals. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,836 for 2004.

General analysis

55 Our draft recommendations were a combination of the District Council's and our own proposals. While we drew on its proposals we looked to provide greatly improved levels of electoral equality across the district and proposed combining a number of wards to form new two- and three-member wards. We did not receive detailed proposals in the more urban areas of the district and therefore proposed our own wards.

56 During Stage Three we received alternative proposals from the District Council for the areas in the south east and south west. In light of the community identity received regarding these areas, we considered that the District Council's proposals in the south east and the south west (with some of our own amendments) could better reflect communities in the areas and maintain fair levels of electoral equality, although some variances did deteriorate overall. However, as both of these proposals were significantly different from the existing ward arrangement, our draft recommendations and any other ward pattern discussed in our draft recommendations, we took the view we could not recommend them in our final recommendations without first gauging local opinion. We therefore conducted a further four-week consultation period for the south east and south west areas of North Wiltshire beginning on 19 June 2006 and concluding on 17 July 2006.

57 We sought views from all those who wrote to us regarding these areas at Stage Three on whether the alternative electoral arrangements proposed by the District Council would be more appropriate for the area than our draft recommendations. Respondents were given maps of ours and the District Council's proposals as well as the electoral variances that our draft recommendations and the new proposals would return for the relevant area, south east or south west. Respondents were then asked to complete and return a form stating which option was preferred; our draft recommendations (Option A) or the new proposal (Option B). Respondents were also given an opportunity to make comments supporting their choice. This was not an opportunity for respondents to propose new arrangements, or make comments on other areas of the borough, rather a chance for us to assess the appropriateness of the alternative proposals put to us at Stage Three compared with our draft recommendations.

58 As a result of the consultation on our draft recommendations, we considered that we received strong and persuasive arguments in terms of community identity leading us to amend our proposed Lyneham, Calne Without, Pickwick, Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley wards. These are discussed in more detail in paragraphs 95 to 99 and 122 to 126 respectively.

59 It should also be noted that the District Council is currently undertaking a parish review. At the start of the review we recommended that it put the review on hold. However, given its advanced state the Council did not feel it could be further delayed. It has now reached the consultation stage. In meetings with the Council we stated that the ideal solution would be that our proposals reflect the more major parishing proposals in Calne and Chippenham. However, we stated that the purpose of an electoral review is to secure the best possible electoral arrangements for the Council and that any dovetailing of the two reviews would be coincidental. We noted that our proposals would not affect the major proposals being put forward as part of the Council's parish review.

Warding arrangements

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

- Brinkworth & the Somerfords, St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston and Malmesbury wards (page 35)
- Cricklade, Purton and Ashton Keynes & Minety wards (page 37)

- Lyneham, Hilmarton, Bremhill, Kington Langley, The Lydiards & Broad Town and Calne Without wards (page 40)
- Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards (page 43)
- Box, Pickwick, Corsham and Lacock with Neston & Gastard wards (page 45)
- Chippenham area (11 wards) (page 48)
- Calne (six wards) (page 50)
- Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards (page 53)

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

Brinkworth & The Somerfords, St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston and Malmesbury wards

62 The above three wards are located in the north of the district. Table 5 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 5: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Brinkworth & the Somerfords	Brinkworth, Charlton, Dauntsey, Great Somerford, Hankerton, Lea & Cleverton, Little Somerford parishes	2
St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston	Easton Grey, Hullavington, Luckington, Norton & Foxley, Sherston, Sopworth, St Paul Malmesbury Without parishes	2
Malmesbury	Malmesbury and Brokenborough parishes	2

63 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new single-member ward comprising the parishes of Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth, a new single-member ward comprising the parishes of Brokenborough, Crudwell, Easton Grey, Hullavington and Norton & Foxley and a new single-member ward comprising the parish of St Paul Malmesbury Without to be named St Paul Malmesbury Without ward. To the east of this area it proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Great Somerford, Lea & Cleverton and Little Somerford and a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Brinkworth, Charlton and Dauntsey. In Malmesbury it recommended that the town be divided equally between two new wards but did not provide detailed proposals. With the exception of its proposed St Paul Malmesbury Without ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards. We did not receive any further submissions regarding these areas.

64 Given that the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Little Somerford would have a variance of 16% by 2009 we considered alternative options in the area. We noted that the only practical solution, given the size and distribution of electors in the area and in order to avoid parish warding, was to combine this ward

with the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Brinkworth. This proposed two-member ward would secure only a slightly improved level of electoral equality by 2009 (-12%). We therefore proposed to transfer Hankerton parish to this proposed two-member ward. These proposals secured an acceptable level of electoral variance of -6% by 2009. We also noted that the composite areas of our proposed two-member Brinkworth ward share good road links.

65 We noted that the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Sherston would have 7% fewer electors than the district average by 2009 while its proposed single-member ward centred on Brokenborough would have 7% more electors. We noted that transferring Easton Grey parish to the Council's proposed ward centred on Sherston secured an improvement in electoral equality whilst maintaining single-member wards in the area. Under this proposal both wards would secure variances of 3% by 2009. We proposed a single-member Sherston ward comprising the parishes of Easton Grey, Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth and a single-member Hullavington & Crudwell ward comprising the parishes of Brokenborough, Crudwell, Hullavington and Norton & Foxley.

66 We noted that the Council's proposed single-member St Paul Malmesbury Without ward would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009 and were content to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations. We also noted that the Council proposed that Malmesbury be divided equally between two single-member wards. However, we noted that no detailed proposals were forwarded and that a two-member ward for the town would secure a comparatively good level of electoral equality by 2009 (-4%). Therefore, given that we did not have any evidence to suggest where the appropriate division of the town should be and that we had an alternative option available to us we proposed a two-member Malmesbury ward.

67 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Brinkworth, Hullavington & Crudwell, St Paul Malmesbury Without, Malmesbury and Sherston wards would have 6% fewer, 3% more, 3% fewer, 4% fewer and 3% fewer electors respectively per councillor than the district average by 2009.

68 At Stage Three we received four submissions regarding our draft recommendations for Brinkworth ward. We received three objections and one letter of support for our draft recommendations. Dautsey Parish Council proposed that it be represented in a single-member ward 'joined only with' Brinkworth parish. Great Somerford and Charlton parish councils objected to our proposals stating 'it is felt that a single-member ward best represents local electors in rural areas'. Little Somerford Parish council supported our draft recommendations for a two-member Brinkworth ward, stating 'this best represents local electors'.

69 The District Council objected to our proposed two-member Malmesbury ward. It proposed we divide the two-member ward into two single-member wards and provided a list of roads along which the ward boundary could be aligned. It stated the 'key to achieving a solution for Malmesbury would be to define a suitable internal ward boundary'. However, it noted that the majority of its predicted growth would be in the north of the ward. It suggested the proposed ward names of Westport and Malmesbury Town & Filands. It suggested name changes to the St Paul Malmesbury Without parish ward to avoid 'possible confusion'. Brokenborough Parish Council fully supported our recommendations to include their parish council in our proposed Hullavington & Crudwell ward.

70 Having considered the representations received we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Brinkworth, Hullavington & Crudwell, St Paul Malmesbury Without, Malmesbury and Sherston wards as final. Having considered the District Council’s submission we did not consider we could adopt the proposal for Malmesbury as no community identity evidence was provided and the Council’s proposal would result in high electoral variances of -11% and 1% compared to -4% in our draft recommendations. We note the other submissions put forward did not contain any evidence to justify departing from our draft recommendations.

71 We note we received support for our draft recommendations from Little Somerford Parish Council for our proposed Brinkworth and Hullavington & Crudwell ward. We did not receive any submissions regarding St Paul Malmesbury Without other than the proposed parish ward name change from the District Council, discussed in paragraph 179.

72 Under our final recommendations the proposed Brinkworth, Hullavington & Crudwell, St Paul Malmesbury Without, Malmesbury and Sherston wards would have 6% fewer, 3% more, 3% fewer, 4% fewer and 3% fewer electors respectively per councillor than the district average by 2009.

73 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Brinkworth, Hullavington & Crudwell, St Paul Malmesbury Without, Malmesbury and Sherston wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Cricklade, Purton and Ashton Keynes & Minety wards

74 The above three wards are located in the north east of the district. Table 6 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 6: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Cricklade	Cricklade, Latton and Marston Meysey parishes	2
Purton	Braydon and Purton parishes	2
Ashton Keynes & Minety	Ashton Keynes, Crudwell, Leigh, Minety and Oaksey parishes	2

75 At Stage One the District Council proposed two two-member wards and a single-member ward in the area. It proposed that the parishes of Hankerton, Minety and Oaksey be combined to form a new single-member ward and that the parishes of Ashton Keynes, Braydon, Leigh and Purton be combined to form a new two-member ward. It proposed that the current Cricklade ward be retained. With the exception of its proposed Cricklade ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed wards.

76 Purton Parish Council proposed that Purton and Braydon retain two district councillors.

77 We noted that the Council's proposed ward based around Purton and Ashton Keynes would have an electoral variance of 20% by 2009. Therefore, given the high level of electoral imbalance and lack of relevant community identity evidence, we considered alternative options in the area. We noted the good level of electoral equality that would be secured by maintaining the current Cricklade ward and were therefore content to put this ward forward as part of our draft recommendations. However, in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the area we proposed combining the Council's proposed ward comprising the parishes of Ashton Keynes, Braydon, Leigh and Purton with the parishes of Oaksey and Minety in a three-member ward. Our proposed three-member Minety & Purton ward would secure an electoral variance of 6% by 2009. We also noted the proposal of Purton Parish Council that Purton and Braydon retain two district councillors. However, we noted that a two-member ward comprising these parishes would have an electoral imbalance of -15% by 2009 and therefore given the alternative option available to us, we were not persuaded that the parish council's proposal would provide the best balance between our statutory criteria.

78 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Cricklade and Minety & Purton wards had 2% more and 6% more electors respectively per councillor than the district average.

79 At Stage Three we received four submissions regarding our Minety & Purton ward. The District Council objected to our proposed three-member Minety & Purton ward stating that it was 'geographically very large' and argued it 'transcends existing Community areas'. It stated 'the Community area issue is more pronounced, in that Minety and Oaksey naturally look towards Malmesbury, whereas from Ashton Keynes southwards, the natural gravitation is towards Swindon'. It argued 'there is no common synergy between Oaksey and Purton' and children in Purton attend local schools whilst in Minety they go to Malmesbury, and in Ashton Keynes they go to Cirencester.

80 The District Council did not provide any specific proposals. Rather it proposed we should consider a two-member ward based on the parishes of Purton and Braydon with the parishes of Oaksey and Minety included in a 'westerly facing ward'. Additionally, it stated that electorate growth is expected to be high within the Purton area and asked that we take this into consideration.

81 Purton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations for the proposed Minety & Purton ward. It reiterated the District Council's assertion that considerable development is due to take place within Purton. It proposed a two-member ward of Purton and Braydon and stated it would rather be linked to the Lydiard Millicent parish than being included in a ward with Ashton Keynes and Minety. Ashton Keynes and Minety Parish Councils opposed the creation of a large three-member ward with differing parishes. Both argued they had few links with Purton. Ashton Keynes Parish Council stated it would 'prefer one district councillor for our village and Minety'. Minety Parish Council objected 'very strongly', stating 'Minety's [...] natural links are with other rural communities in the Malmesbury direction'.

82 Having considered the District Council's and Purton Parish Council's submission we note their predicted growth for Purton is still in the 'local plan' enquiry stage and specific figures were not provided. Accordingly, we are not proposing moving away from the electorate figures used in our draft recommendations. It should be noted that we can only consider electorate forecasts over a five year period and cannot take account of potential growth beyond that period.

83 The District Council stated that the parishes of Minety and Oaksey look towards Malmesbury, and Ashton Keynes naturally looks to the south, gravitating towards Swindon. However, we are not persuaded with the District Council's assertion that Oaksey and Minety parishes have better communication links to the parishes in the westerly wards of Malmesbury and Hullavington & Crudwell ward rather than our proposed Minety & Purton ward. Having looked at the geography of the area we consider the parishes of Minety and Oaksey have closer communication and road links to our proposed Minety & Purton ward. We consider the parishes naturally look towards the Minety and Purton area and we consider there to be a greater distance from these parishes to the proposed Malmesbury and Hullavington & Crudwell wards which are not as easily accessible. The Council suggested we revisit the area and proposed 'a better solution would be to have a double member ward centred on Purton and Braydon'. As stated in the paragraph below, we note this proposal would have a serious impact on electoral equality.

84 We considered a number of different options for this area. We looked at combining Ashton Keynes and Minety parishes, Purton and Braydon parishes to form two single-member wards. However, this would result in the wards having variances of 14% and -16% respectively by 2009. We considered transferring Leigh parish to our proposed Cricklade two-member district ward resulting in a 9% variance by 2009. We note that the District Council's proposed representation involved including Oaksey parish within our Hullavington & Crudwell ward, this would result in an electoral variance of 23% by 2009. Under our draft recommendations our proposed Cricklade and Minety & Purton wards would have 2% and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009. We did not receive any submissions with regard to our proposed Cricklade ward.

85 Having considered the representations received we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for our Cricklade and Minety & Purton wards. We would not normally wish to propose a three-member ward in such a rural area. However, we have tried a number of different permutations of one- and two-member wards, all resulting in significant electoral imbalances. We also note that to move away from our draft recommendations we would need a considerable degree of justification in terms of community identity. We consider there is a distinct lack of detailed evidence of communities and linkages and the case for moving away from our Stage Three proposals has not been made. Therefore we confirm our draft recommendations as final.

86 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Cricklade, Purton and Ashton Keynes & Minety wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Lyneham, Hilmarton, Bremhill, Kington Langley, The Lydiards & Broad Town and Calne Without wards

87 The above five wards are located in the south east of the district. Table 7 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 7: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Lyneham	Clyffe Pypard, Lyneham & Bradenstoke and Tockenham parishes	2
Hilmarton	East parish ward of the parish of Calne Without, Cherhill, Compton Bassett and Hilmarton parishes	1
Bremhill	Bremhill parish, Pewsham ward of the parish of Calne Without, Langley Burrell Without parish ward of the parish of Langley Burrell Without parish and Christian Malford parish	1
Kington Langley	Kington Langley, Seagry and Sutton Benger parishes	1
The Lydiards & Broad Town	Broad Town, Lydiard Millicent and Lydiard Tregoz parishes	1
Calne Without	Middle, West and Sandy Lane parish wards of the parish of Calne Without and Heddington parish	1

88 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current two-member Lyneham and the single-member The Lydiards & Broad Town wards be retained. It also proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Bremhill, Cherhill, Compton Bassett and Hilmarton to form a new single-member ward and proposed combining the parishes of Christian Malford, Seagry and Sutton Benger and the Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell parish to form a new single-member ward. It proposed that all of the parish wards of Calne Without parish, with the exception of Calne Without parish ward, be combined with Heddington parish to form a new single-member ward. It proposed that Calne Without parish ward be included within a ward in Calne town. With the exception of its proposed Lyneham and The Lydiards & Broad Town wards the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards.

89 Cherhill Parish Council stated that it considered the current arrangements to be satisfactory. Tockenham Parish Council requested that our recommendations should take into account the rural nature of the parish and stated that its best interests would be served by being placed in a ward with Clyffe Pypard, Broad Town, Bushton, Broad

Hinton and Hilmarton. It considered that these parishes had similar issues in terms of provision of services and amenities. Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council considered that 'there should be a balance of residents to district councillors and therefore request one district councillor to each ward'.

90 We noted that the District Council's proposals secured some improvement in the levels of electoral equality in the area. However, we also noted that its proposed ward centred on Hilmarton parish and its proposed ward based on the majority of Calne Without parish would have 13% and 18% more electors than the district average by 2009.

91 Given our draft recommendations in the north-east of the district (paragraph 85), the fact that the current The Lydiards & Broad Town ward is situated on the edge of the district and the distribution of electors in the surrounding area, we proposed retaining the ward as part of our draft recommendations. We did not consider we could improve upon an expected electoral variance of 10% by 2009 without dividing parishes between different wards or combining areas with Wootton Bassett, neither of which we considered would better reflect the statutory criteria. We noted the proposals put forward by Tockenham Parish Council and considered whether we could place Tockenham and Clyffe Pypard within the proposed The Lydiards & Broad Town ward. However, we noted that this would result in an electoral variance of 33% by 2009, which we did not consider could be justified given the evidence available to us.

92 Having considered alternative options for the Council's proposed ward centred on Sutton Benger we were of the view that the Council's proposal would provide for the best level of electoral equality available given the size and distribution of electors in the area. Therefore we proposed a single-member Sutton Benger ward comprising the parishes of Christian Malford, Seagry and Sutton Benger and Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell parish as part of our draft recommendations.

93 Given the lack of evidence provided in support of the Council's proposed wards and the 13% variance that would result from its proposed ward centred on Hilmarton parish, we proposed combining this ward with its proposed Lyneham ward to form a new three-member Lyneham ward. We also noted the high level of electoral inequality in the Council's Calne Without ward and proposed transferring Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish to our proposed Lyneham ward. We invited further submissions on this proposal, backed with substantive evidence, at Stage Three. We noted Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council's proposals for one district councillor for each ward. However, given the distribution of electors in the district it would not be possible to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality without dividing parishes between different district wards. We had no evidence to suggest that dividing parishes to secure electoral equality would reflect community identity and effective and convenient local government.

94 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Lyneham, Sutton Benger, The Lydiards & Broad Town and Calne Without wards had 3% more, 7% fewer, 10% more and 10% more electors respectively per councillor than the district average.

95 At Stage Three we received eight submissions. The District Council opposed our draft recommendations to create a three-member Lyneham ward. It considered the

villages of Tockenham, Clyffe Pypard and Broad Town to have a 'triangular relationship being on the edge of Wootton Bassett' and stated 'Lyneham primarily looks to Wootton Bassett with some parts looking to Calne'. It stated the proposed ward had few community links and proposed an alternative proposal to 'arrive at a different permutation, grouping local connections better'. The Council provided an alternative formation of wards for Lyneham and utilised our proposed Calne Without ward. It proposed a two-member Lyneham ward comprising the parishes of Tockenham, Clyffe Pypard, Lyneham & Bradenstoke and Hilmarton. It proposed two single member wards: Calne Without ward would comprise the parishes of Compton Bassett, Cherhill, Heddington and the parish wards of Middle ward; and East ward of Calne Without parish and a newly named Bremhill ward comprising of the parish of Bremhill and the parish wards of Pewsham, West and Sandy Lane of Calne Without parish.

96 We received a further seven submissions from Councillor Bucknell, Compton Bassett, Hilmarton and Clyffe parish councils and three local residents. Councillor Bucknell objected to our proposals and reaffirmed the District Council's comments regarding the 'geography and synergy' of the area. She objected to the creation of a large three-member rural ward. Compton Bassett Parish Council strongly objected to our proposal and expressed 'concern [...] at the size and diversity of the proposed ward' and proposed we retain the existing single-member Hilmarton ward. Clyffe, and Hilmarton parish councils and three local residents opposed our proposals to create a three-member ward for this area.

97 We note the District Council's proposals secure electoral variances of 10% and - 1%, as well as one ward having a councillor:elector ratio equal to the district average, whilst our draft recommendations secure variances of 3% and 10% by 2009. We consider that the evidence of community identity at Stage Three is strong and are persuaded that the District Council's proposals for the south east area are the most feasible options having regard to the community identity evidence we have received. We note that the electoral variances are acceptable and that the proposed change reflects the natural boundary in Calne, that being the River Marden.

98 We conducted further consultation on this area for a period of four weeks between 19 June and 17 July 2006. In that time we received six responses from local interested parties. Option A reflected our draft recommendations and Option B reflected the amended draft recommendations. The five respondents, including the District Council, supported our amended proposal for Lyneham and Calne Without. However, Hilmarton Parish Council strongly opposed both proposals, which placed their parish in Lyneham ward. Councillor Bucknell considered Option B (amended draft recommendations) to be the best proposal. However, she stated that 'ideally Lyneham would be left as it currently is, the only reason for including Hilmarton was numbers'. Clyffe Parish Council and two local residents expressed preferences for Option B.

99 Given the response to our further consultation we are proposing to move away from our draft recommendations and adopt the District Council's warding arrangement as final for the Lyneham and Calne Without wards. We note the opinion of Hilmarton Parish Council on its inclusion in the Lyneham ward. While we do acknowledge the Parish Council's views, we note to remove the parish from the proposed Lyneham ward would necessitate further division of the District Council's

proposals which would have a negative impact on electoral equality. If their parish were to be included in Bremhill ward this would result in a variance of 32% by 2009.

100 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Lyneham, Kington Langley, The Lydiards & Broad Town, Calne Without and Sutton Bengerwards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards

101 The above three wards are located in the west of the district. Table 8 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 8: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Nettleton	Castle Combe, Grittleton, Nettleton, North Wraxall and Stanton St Quintin parishes	1
Kington St Michael	Biddeston, Kington St Michael and Yatton Keynell parishes and Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish	1
Colerne	Colerne parish	1

102 At Stage One the District Council proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Castle Combe, Nettleton, North Wraxall, Yatton Keynell and Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish. It also proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Grittleton, Kington Langley, Kington St Michael and Stanton St Quinton. It proposed that the current Colerne ward be retained. With the exception of its proposed Colerne ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards.

103 Colerne Parish Council proposed that the current Colerne ward remain unchanged. Nettleton Parish Council stated that it considered the current arrangements to be satisfactory. Yatton Keynell Parish Council proposed that the current electoral arrangements in its area remain unchanged.

104 We noted that the District Council's proposal to retain the existing Colerne ward would secure a good level of electoral equality. We were of the view that given the level of electoral equality (-1% by 2009) that would be achieved, the size and distribution of the electorate in the area and Colerne's position on the edge of the district, which limit the options available, that the statutory criteria would be best reflected by retaining the current single-member Colerne ward.

105 We also carefully considered the proposals to retain the existing wards made by the parish councils of Nettleton and Yatton Keynell. While we noted that the current Nettleton ward would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009 (-3%) we also noted that the current Kington St Michael and Kington Langley wards would not (-15% and -16%). Therefore, given the improved level of electoral equality secured under the Council's proposals, we proposed adopting the Council's proposed single-member wards centred on Yatton Keynell and Kington St Michael as part of our draft recommendations. We proposed that these new wards be named Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley.

106 At Stage Three we received eight submissions regarding Kington St Michael. James Gray MP stated that Slaughterford and Biddestone parish has 'closer links' with Kington St Michael than 'they could possibly have with any part of Corsham'. Seven local residents expressed opposition to our proposal to move Biddestone out of Kington St Michael and commented that our proposals mixed the small rural area of Biddestone with a larger urban area. One local resident stated 'to include Biddestone parish with Pickwick ward [...] could seriously jeopardise the democratic representation of this completely rural community'.

107 The District Council opposed our draft recommendations to include Biddestone parish in our proposed Pickwick ward. We note that at Stage One the District Council made this proposal. However, at Stage Three it stated that Biddestone Parish Council 'feels strongly that its affinities lie with the Bybrook villages of the proposed Yatton Keynell ward rather than the predominantly urban Pickwick ward of Corsham'. It proposed, to better reflect the community identity evidence that we include Biddestone parish in our proposed Yatton Keynell ward, and move Chippenham Without parish ward from Yatton Keynell to our proposed Kington Langley.

108 We carefully considered the submissions received at Stage Three. We note the District Council proposals and the strong opposition to Biddestone being moved from the existing Kington St Michael ward. We note the District Council's proposals were based on opposition to our draft recommendations for Pickwick ward. These issues are discussed in paragraphs 122-129.

109 Having considered the representations received we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Colerne ward. We have decided to adapt the District Council's proposals to include Biddestone parish in our proposed Yatton Keynell ward and transfer Chippenham Without parish ward to our proposed Kington Langley wards. We have considered the arguments put forward and we undertook a period of further consultation on these specific areas. Again this is examined more closely on pages 45-47.

110 We note that departing from our draft recommendations would result in Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley having electoral variances of 7%, and 11% respectively, in comparison to our proposals of 5% and 3% respectively. We are confirming Colerne, Kington Langley and Yatton Keynell wards as final.

111 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Yatton Keynell, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Box, Pickwick, Corsham and Lacock with Neston & Gastard wards

112 The above four wards are located in the south west of the district. Table 9 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 9: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Box	Box parish and Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish.	2
Pickwick	Pickwick parish ward of Corsham parish	2
Corsham	Corsham parish ward of Corsham parish	2
Lacock with Neston & Gastard	Lacock parish and the Gastard and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish.	1

113 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parish of Biddestone be combined with Pickwick ward of Corsham parish to form a new two-member ward and that the current two-member Corsham ward be maintained. It proposed that the parish of Lacock be combined with Gastard ward of Corsham parish and part of the current Neston parish ward of Corsham parish to form a new single-member ward. It also proposed that the remainder of Neston parish ward be combined with Rudloe ward of Corsham parish and part of Box parish to form a new single-member ward. It did not provide detailed proposals as to where Neston parish ward and Box parish should be divided. It proposed that the remainder of Box parish form a new single-member ward.

114 Corsham Town Council proposed that the current Corsham ward be combined with Gastard ward of Corsham parish to form a new three-member ward and that Pickwick ward be combined with Neston ward of Corsham parish in a new three-member ward.

115 We noted that the District Council's proposals for Pickwick parish ward and Biddestone parish would result in a electoral variance of 11% by 2009. We also noted that Corsham Town Council's proposal for a three-member ward would have 27% fewer electors than the district average by 2009 (as a two-member ward it would have 9% more electors by 2009). Its proposal to combine Pickwick and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish would secure an electoral variance of -11% by 2009. We looked at a number of alternative options that would secure improved levels of electoral equality and would avoid dividing parishes.

116 We noted that combining Box parish with Rudloe ward of Corsham parish in a two-member Box & Rudloe ward would secure an improved level of electoral equality

(-4% by 2009). However, given an 11% variance in the Council's proposal centred on Pickwick ward we proposed amendments between this proposed Pickwick ward and our proposed Box & Rudloe ward in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality in our proposed Pickwick ward. We proposed that the boundary be amended so that the properties between Bath Road and Park Lane and the properties to the west of Randall Court and Nine Acre Drive would be included within the proposed Box & Rudloe ward. Our proposed Box & Rudloe ward would have 4% more electors than the district average by 2009. Our proposed two-member Pickwick ward, based on the proposal of the Council and subject to our proposed amendment, would have 2% more electors than the district average by 2009.

117 We also proposed that Corsham, Neston and Gastard parish wards of Corsham parish be combined with Lacock parish to form a new three-member Corsham & Lacock ward which would have 9% more electors than the district average by 2009.

118 At Stage Three we received four submissions regarding our proposed three-member Corsham & Lacock ward. The District Council, Corsham Town Council, Lacock Parish Council and a local resident all opposed the rural parish wards of Lacock, Nestard and Gastard being combined with the urban parish ward of Corsham in our proposed Corsham & Lacock ward. Lacock Parish Council stated its objection to multi-member wards on principle and commented that in our proposed ward councillors 'attention will be given to the Corsham area'.

119 The District Council proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Lacock, Gastard and part of Neston parish and a two-member ward comprising our proposed Box & Rudloe ward and the remaining part of Neston parish. Lacock Parish Council and a local resident supported the proposal to form a single-member ward comprising of Lacock, Gastard and part of Neston parish.

120 The District Council did not provide any evidence to justify the proposed boundary changes. We note its proposals for dividing our proposed three-member ward requires dividing the parish ward of Neston of Corsham parish. However, we note all other submissions regarding the area do not propose to divide the parish ward of Neston. They state that Lacock parish and Neston and Gastard parish wards of Corsham parish should form a ward on their own. We note that at Stage One Corsham Town Council proposed that the current Corsham ward be combined with Gastard parish ward of Corsham parish. Additionally, the Council's proposals result in an electoral variance, for the two revised wards, of 14% and -10%. In comparison, our proposed Corsham & Lacock and Box & Rudloe wards secure variances of 9% and 4% respectively by 2009.

121 Having considered the submissions received we propose confirming our draft recommendations for our proposed Corsham & Lacock ward. We do not consider that we should adopt the District Council's proposals for a single-and two-member ward in light of the worsened electoral equality and the requirement to further divide the parish ward of Neston. We do not consider that we received compelling evidence to depart from our draft recommendations and therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final in this area.

122 The District Council opposed our draft recommendations to include Biddestone parish in our proposed Pickwick ward. We note that our draft

recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals. However, at Stage Three it stated that Biddestone Parish Council 'feels strongly that its affinities lie with the Bybrook villages of the proposed Yatton Keynell ward rather than the predominantly urban Pickwick ward of Corsham'. To reflect community identity it proposed we include Biddestone parish in our proposed Yatton Keynell ward, move Chippenham Without parish ward from Yatton Keynell to our proposed Kington Langley ward and considered a further revision to move approximately 150 electors from their proposed two-member Corsham & Lacock ward to Pickwick ward to address electoral equality.

123 Our draft recommendation to include Biddestone parish in our proposed Pickwick ward was also opposed by James Gray MP and 12 local residents. We received strong community identity evidence from local residents that placing the rural area of Biddestone to Pickwick ward within Corsham Town would not reflect community identity and decided to seek views on the District Council's alternative proposal.

124 We conducted further consultation on this area for a period of four weeks between 19 June and 17 July 2006. In that time we received 15 responses from local interested parties. Fourteen respondents, including the District Council supported the District Council's proposal for Pickwick, Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley wards. However, Corsham Town Council opposed both proposals. Chippenham Without Parish Council, James Gray MP and 11 local residents expressed a preference for the District Council's proposals and supported the view that Biddestone belonged with Yatton Keynell ward. Chippenham Without Parish Council also resubmitted the proposals they had sent in at Stage One.

125 Given the support for the alternative proposals for this area we are proposing to move away from our draft recommendations for Pickwick, Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley wards and adopt this warding arrangement as final. We note the opinion of Corsham Town Council and Chippenham Without Parish. However, we would highlight that this further consultation was not an opportunity to put forward new proposals, but to allow us to gauge the appropriateness of those proposals we received during Stage Three as these had not previously been consulted on.

126 As stated in paragraph 125 we propose to move away from our draft recommendations and adopt the District Council's proposals. However, this is subject to one amendment. We do not propose to adopt the Council's proposals to move electors from their proposed two-member Corsham & Lacock ward to Pickwick ward. As stated earlier in paragraph 121, we do not propose to depart from our draft recommendations regarding our three-member Corsham & Lacock ward. We do not consider that dividing the Corsham parish wards would reflect community identity. We note that departing from our draft recommendations would result in Yatton Keynell, Kington Langley and Pickwick wards having electoral variances of 7%, 11% and -8% respectively, in comparison to our draft recommendations of 5%, 3% and 2% respectively.

127 We consider that the District Council's proposals for the south west area are the most appropriate, having regard to the community identity evidence that we have received. We are content that adoption of the Council's proposals will result in higher

electoral variances (see paragraph 126) that will result from the revised draft recommendations.

128 We received no submissions for the remaining ward of Box & Rudloe and therefore are proposing to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

129 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Box, Pickwick and Corsham & Lacock wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 4 accompanying this report.

Chippenham area (11 wards)

130 Chippenham is a parish situated in south of the district and divided into 10 district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Chippenham Allington, Chippenham Audley, Chippenham Avon, Chippenham Hill Rise, Chippenham London Road, Chippenham Monkton Park, Chippenham Park, Chippenham Pewsham, Chippenham Redland and Chippenham Westcroft/Queens. The area also includes the district ward Cepen Park which comprises two parish wards: Cepen Park North parish ward of the Langley Burrell parish and Cepen Park South parish ward of the Chippenham Without parish. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

131 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Chippenham town be represented by 14 single-member wards and that the current Cepen Park North parish ward of Langley Burrell parish and Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish be included in any new warding structure for the town. However, it did not provide detailed proposals for the area.

132 As we did not receive detailed proposals in this area we developed our own proposals. We sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the town while utilising strong boundaries. We noted that the current Chippenham Monkton ward was somewhat isolated from the remainder of the town by Monkton Park and the railway line and secured a good level of electoral equality (4% by 2009). We therefore proposed adopting the current single-member Chippenham Monkton Park ward as part of our draft recommendations. We also proposed retaining the current single-member Chippenham Hill Rise ward subject to a minor amendment to improve the level of electoral equality and to provide for a more identifiable boundary. We proposed that the properties on Malmesbury Road and Milestone Way be transferred from our proposed Chippenham Hill Rise ward to our proposed Chippenham Park ward.

133 We proposed that the current Chippenham Park ward and that part of the current Chippenham Hill Rise ward mentioned in the previous paragraph be combined with the current Cepen Park North parish ward of Langley Burrell Without parish and the proposed Cepen Park Central ward of Chippenham Without parish. We considered that this would provide for strong boundaries and noted that it would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Park ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

134 In the centre of Chippenham town we investigated whether the railway line could be used as a boundary between the east and west of the town. However, it was not possible to use this boundary while also securing good levels of electoral equality. We concluded that we had no alternative but to breach the railway line at some point. We had to consider where to propose a ward that includes electors on both sides of the line and took the view that it would be easier to divide the current Chippenham Audley ward than the current Chippenham Avon ward. We noted that the housing in Chippenham Avon ward had more varied types and that it would be less easy to neatly divide. Therefore we proposed combining the current Chippenham Avon ward with that part of the current Chippenham Audley to the east of Ladyfield Road, Woodlands Road (as far as Canterbury Street) and Audley Road. We noted that the areas are linked across the railway line with the Avon area. In order to secure improved levels of electoral equality we also proposed transferring electors from the current Chippenham London Road ward. We proposed that the area to the north of Avenue La Fleche west of and including Wood Lane and the area to the north of Common Slip and including St Mary Street be transferred to our proposed Chippenham Avon ward. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Avon ward would have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

135 We proposed that the remainder of the current Chippenham London Road ward form a new single-member Chippenham London Road ward subject to two minor amendments. We proposed that Cricketts Lane be included within the ward from Chippenham Pewsham ward but that Charter County Primary School be transferred to our proposed Chippenham Pewsham ward. We were of the view that these proposals would provide for more identifiable boundaries. Our proposed Chippenham London Road and Chippenham Pewsham wards would have 3% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

136 We proposed that the current Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward be largely retained subject to two amendments to secure an improved level of electoral equality. We proposed that Farleigh Close and the area to the north of Queens Crescent as far as Hungerdown Lane be transferred to a new Chippenham Allington ward. Our proposed single-member Chippenham Westcroft/Queens would have 1% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

137 Our proposed Chippenham Allington ward would comprise those areas of the current Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward mentioned previously (paragraph 136). It would also comprise the area of Chippenham Without parish to the east of West Cepen Way and to the south of Bristol Road which would form a new Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish. Our proposed Chippenham Allington ward would also comprise that part of the current Chippenham Allington ward to the south of Lords Mead, south of and including Frogwell Park. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Allington ward would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

138 Our proposed Chippenham Redland ward would comprise the current Chippenham Redland ward and the remainder of the current Chippenham Allington and Chippenham Audley ward that we do not propose combining with our proposed Chippenham Avon or Chippenham Allington wards. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Redland ward would have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

139 At Stage Three we received eight submissions with regard to Chippenham Town. The District Council supported Chippenham Town Council's submission for single-member wards in principle. The District Council proposed dividing our proposed Redland ward into two single-member wards to be renamed Redland and Audley respectively. It also proposed amendments to the boundaries of Chippenham Avon and Chippenham Hill Rise ward. Chippenham Town Council proposed that the area covered by Cepen Park North parish ward be represented separately from Chippenham Park and become a single-member district ward. Neither submission provided any evidence to support these proposals. Two local residents opposed our draft proposals to include Cepen Park North Parish ward in Chippenham Park ward. To address this, one local resident proposed creating two extra wards in the west of the town.

140 Chippenham Without Parish Council objected to the District Council simultaneously carrying out a parish review at the same time as the Further Electoral Review. Accordingly, their submission concentrated on the current parish review. Reverend Pettifer wrote in regarding the district's parish review in the town. Langley Burrell Parish Council wrote a letter of support for Reverend Pettifer and Chippenham Without Parish Council.

141 Having considered the submissions received we do not consider that we have received any compelling evidence to warrant moving away from our draft recommendations in Chippenham town. We received a number of submissions regarding the parish review of Chippenham. However, the majority of the issues covered in these submissions relate to the parish review and therefore cannot be considered as part of the FER. We consider there was a lack of community identity evidence to warrant departing from our draft recommendations. We have considered the proposals to create two extra wards in the west of the town to enable Cepen Park North Parish ward to become a single member ward. However, we do not consider that we can adopt these proposals in light of the fact they would require two additional councillors and would have an impact on the district's council size. Therefore we propose to confirm our draft recommendations in Chippenham Town as final.

142 We received no submissions for the remaining wards and therefore are proposing to confirm our draft recommendations as final in the wards of Chippenham Allington, Chippenham Avon, Chippenham Hill Rise, Chippenham London Road, Chippenham Monkton Park, Chippenham Park, Chippenham Pewsham, Chippenham Redland and Chippenham Westcroft/Queens.

143 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the wards of Chippenham. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

Calne (six wards)

144 Calne is located in the south east of the district. It is divided into six district wards: Calne Abberd, Calne Chilvester, Calne Lickhill, Calne Marden, Calne Priestley and Calne Quemerford, and comprises the parish of Calne and the Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish in Calne Chilvester ward. Table 4 (on page 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances

which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

145 At Stage One the District Council proposed seven councillors for Calne town and proposed that Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish be included in any new warding structure for the town, arguing that the area has 'more in keeping with its urban neighbour' than the rural areas of the same parish. However, it did not provide detailed proposals for the area. Calne Town Council proposed a number of amendments to district ward boundaries in the town. It proposed that both sides of London Road be transferred to Calne Quemerford ward, that both sides of Curzon Street be transferred to Calne Marden ward and that Alma Terrace and Victoria Terrace be included within Calne Chilvester ward. It further proposed that Wood Street and Curzon Street from the junction with the mini roundabout to The Square be included within Calne Marden ward, that William Street be wholly contained within Calne Abberd ward and that all new housing south east of Greenacres Way be included within Chilvester ward at both district and parish level.

146 We noted that neither the District Council nor the Town Council had made full proposals for wards across the town. We therefore developed our own proposals in this area. We sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality while using strong boundaries. We noted that by 2009, under a council size of 54, Calne town (including Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish) would merit seven councillors rather than the current six. We are satisfied that Calne Without parish ward constitutes overspill from Calne town and therefore proposed that it remain in a ward with areas from the town itself. We considered Calne Without is likely to have stronger community links to the town than with the surrounding rural areas. We also noted the significant growth in the current Calne Lickhill ward and that by 2009 the current ward would merit that extra councillor. However, we also noted that the current Calne Chilvester ward would be significantly over represented by 2009. We therefore proposed adding an additional councillor to the current Calne Lickhill ward and making boundary changes in the north of the town to rectify the imbalance in Calne Chilvester ward.

147 We proposed the roads to the west of and including North End be transferred to a revised Calne Chilvester ward. We also proposed that the properties on the northern side of Curzon Street and the western side of Wood Street also be transferred to the proposed Calne Chilvester ward from Calne Lickhill ward. A good level of electoral equality would be secured in our proposed single-member Calne Chilvester ward, which would have 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

148 Given the transfer of electors between our proposed Calne Chilvester ward and the current Calne Lickhill ward it had been necessary to propose the transfer of electors between Calne Lickhill and Calne Abberd wards in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality and to secure identifiable boundaries. We therefore proposed that the area south of and including Victoria Terrace in the current Calne Lickhill ward be transferred to our proposed Calne Abberd ward. In order to provide for the correct balance in the number of electors in each ward we also proposed that Dunnet Close, Hungerford Road, Ernle Road, Warren Crescent, Guthrie Close, Charles Court, The Kilns and Oxford Road (north of and including numbers 193 and 216) be transferred from our proposed Calne Abberd ward to our proposed Calne Lickhill ward.

149 We noted that the transfer of electors in the north of the town has had a knock-on effect and we therefore proposed that Page Close be transferred from the current Calne Priestley ward to our proposed Calne Abberd ward. These proposed amendments in the north of the town would result in our proposed single-member Calne Abberd and two-member Calne Lickhill wards having 2% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009. Under our draft recommendations the single-member Calne Marden, Calne Priestley and Calne Quemerford wards would have 2% more, 6% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

150 We noted the submission made by the Town Council and sought to reflect its proposals where possible. However, we had to consider a viable warding pattern for the town as a whole. We supported its proposals that Calne Without parish ward remain in Calne Chilvester ward for district elections. However, we were unable to consider transferring the area to Calne parish as part of this review. We also supported the proposal that the new housing south east of Beversbrook Road be contained within the proposed Lickhill ward.

151 At Stage Three we received two submissions regarding Calne Town from the District Council and Calne Town Council.

152 The District Council and Calne Town Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations in this area. However, Calne Town Council proposed that we divide our proposed two-member Calne Lickhill ward to form two single-member wards. It proposed a small area in the east of our proposed Calne Lickhill ward remain in Calne Abberd ward. It also proposed the north western boundary of our proposed Calne Chilvester ward reflect its parish boundary proposal.

153 We note the ward of Calne Lickhill is expected to grow significantly, by approximately 1,380 electors by 2009. We acknowledge that the majority of growth will be in the north of the ward, with a growth of 200 electors expected in the south. The District Council has confirmed these figures. Accordingly, adopting the Town Council's proposals for two single member wards could result in a large disparity, between wards to -16% and 3% by 2009.

154 We note that the District Council asked for the north western boundary of Calne Chilvester to be moved to follow the A3102 bypass and reflect what they consider will happen in their parish review. We note this relates to its current parish review and therefore cannot be considered as part of the FER. However, having looked at the mapping we note that moving this boundary provides a stronger boundary for district ward purposes, reflects community identity and has no effect on electoral equality.

155 Having considered the submissions received we propose to adopt the minor modification stated in paragraph 154. In relation to the proposals to divide our proposed Calne Lickhill ward into two single-member wards we do not consider this would be justified given the worsened electoral equality. We considered the proposal to retain the small area in the east of our proposed Calne Lickhill ward in our proposed Calne Abberd ward. This small area of a few electors, does not have a substantive bearing on electoral equality therefore we propose to modify the boundary, to reflect the Town Council's proposals, between Calne Lickhill and Calne Abberd wards.

156 We received no representations in relation to Calne Marden, Calne Priestley and Calne Quemerford wards. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

157 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for the wards of Calne. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards

158 The parish of Wootton Bassett is situated in the east of the district and is divided into two district wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South. Table 4 (on pages 22–25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

159 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Wootton Bassett be represented by five councillors but had no preference as to whether it be divided between a two-member ward and three-member ward or whether it be divided between five single-member wards.

160 We noted that the District Council did not provide detailed proposals in this area and therefore developed our own proposals. We sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the town while using strong boundaries. We proposed to maintain the current two- and three-member ward structure in the town but noted that while Wootton Bassett North ward has 8% more electors per councillor than the district average, Wootton Bassett South ward has 14% fewer electors per councillor than the district average. We therefore proposed that electors be transferred from Wootton Bassett North ward to Wootton Bassett South ward.

161 We proposed that the boundary be amended to run to the north of Badger Close, Otter Way and Squirrel Crescent and then run south along Stoneover Lane. The boundary would then run west to the north of North Bank Rise before rejoining the existing boundary. We proposed that the boundary should then run to the north of Shepherds Breach and The Rosary and continue to the north of Coxstalls and Springfield Crescent before rejoining the current boundary and running to the parish boundary. Our proposed two-member Wootton Bassett North and three-member Wootton Bassett South wards would have 1% fewer and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009. We considered improving the level of electoral equality further but note that it would not be possible to transfer discrete areas given the nature of the housing along the proposed boundary. We did not consider that this would provide for a good reflection of community identity in the area.

162 At Stage Three we did not receive any representations in relation to the wards of Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South. We therefore are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 13, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our final recommendations for Wootton Bassett North

and Wootton Bassett South wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report

Conclusions

163 Table 10 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2004 and 2009 electorate figures.

Table 10: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Final recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	53	53	54	54
Number of wards	38	38	35	35
Average number of electors per councillor	1,871	1,982	1,836	1,945
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	16	21	9	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	3	2	0

164 As shown in Table 10, our final recommendations for North Wiltshire District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 16 to 9. By 2009 only one ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to increase the council size and are recommending a council size of 54 members.

Final recommendation

North Wiltshire District Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 35 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

165 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the district council’s electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish and town councils for changes to parish electoral

arrangements in FERs. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the district council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an FER.

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

167 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Calne, Chippenham, Chippenham Without, Corsham and Wootton Bassett to reflect the proposed district wards.

168 The parish of Calne is currently served by 17 councillors representing six wards: Abberd, Lickhill, Marden, Priestley and Quemerford returning three councillors each and Chilvester returning two councillors.

169 At Stage One Calne Town Council proposed an extra councillor for Calne Chilvester ward to reflect the significant increase in the number of electors expected over the next five years.

170 Given the proposed amendments to the district wards, we proposed new parish warding arrangements in the town. We noted the proposal of the Town Council to increase the number of councillors serving the parish due to the expected growth in the town. However, we required further information as to how this growth would affect councillor workloads and we invited further comment at Stage Three.

171 At Stage Three, Calne Town Council did not provide any further evidence relating to Calne Chilvester. Therefore we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Calne Town Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Abberd (returning three councillors), Lickhill (returning four councillors), Marden (returning four councillors), Priestly (returning three councillors) and Quemerford (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 5.

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

172 The parish of Chippenham is currently served by 22 councillors representing 10 parish wards: Allington, Audley, Avon, Hill Rise, London Road, Monkton Park, Park, Redland and Westcroft/Queens returning two councillors each and Pewsham returning four councillors.

173 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed nine new district wards in Chippenham town. Therefore we proposed amending the parish arrangements in the town. We proposed nine new parish wards coincident with our proposed district wards in the town.

Final recommendation

Chippenham Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards: Avon, Park, Pewsham and Redland (each returning three councillors) and Allington, Hill Rise, London Road, Monkton Park and Westcroft/Queens (each returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 3.

174 The parish of Chippenham Without is currently served by seven councillors representing two parish wards: Cepen Park South returning two councillors and Chippenham Without returning five councillors.

175 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed dividing the current Cepen South parish ward between two district wards, therefore it was necessary to create two new parish wards and reallocate parish councillors between them. We proposed the new parish wards of Cepen Park Central and Cepen Park South which we proposed be represented by one councillor each.

176 At Stage Three we received a number of submissions relating to the District Council's current parish review; however, we cannot consider this as part of the FER. Therefore we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Chippenham Without Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing three parish wards: Cepen Park Central (returning one councillor), Cepen Park South (returning one councillor) and Chippenham Without (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 3.

177 The parish of Corsham is currently served by 20 councillors representing five parish wards: Corsham and Pickwick returning seven councillors each, Neston returning three councillors, Gastard returning two councillors and Rudloe returning one councillor.

178 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed amending the parish ward boundary between Pickwick and Rudloe wards. We proposed that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area.

179 At Stage Three the District Council suggested name changes to the St Paul Malmesbury Without parish ward to avoid 'possible confusion'; however, as we did not adopt their proposals the name will remain the same. We did not receive any further submissions therefore we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Corsham Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Corsham and Pickwick (each returning seven councillors), Neston (returning three councillors), Gastard (returning two councillors) and Rudloe (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 3 and 4.

180 The parish of Wootton Bassett is currently served by 16 councillors representing two parish wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South, both returning eight councillors.

181 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed amending the boundary between Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South district wards. We proposed to amend the boundary between Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South parish wards in order that it be coincident with the district ward boundary.

182 At Stage Three we did not receive any further submissions therefore we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Wootton Bassett Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South (each returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2.

6 What happens next?

183 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation.³

184 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether or not to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 24 October 2006, and the Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representation made to them by that date.

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

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

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

7 Mapping

Final recommendations for North Wiltshire District Council

186 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for North Wiltshire district.

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for North Wiltshire district, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Wootton Bassett town.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Chippenham town.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Corsham and the surrounding area.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed boundaries in Calne town.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

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

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the district
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	<p>The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; – access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; – wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; – established farming use is effectively maintained’
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors

Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single district enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England

Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a cabinet with a leader, or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the district average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

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

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

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

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