

Draft Recommendations  
on the future electoral arrangements for  
Gosport in Hampshire

*January 2000*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Gosport in Hampshire.

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# CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>21</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Gosport: Detailed Mapping	<i>23</i>
B Gosport Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	<i>25</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>27</i>

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



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Gosport on 20 July 1999.

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

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

- **in two of the 10 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in five wards and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 66-67) are that:

- **Gosport Borough Council should have 34 councillors, four more than at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, instead of 10 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of seven;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 13 of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 18 January 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 13 March 2000:

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

*Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Alverstoke	2	Alverstoke ward (part); Anglesey ward (part); Leesland ward (part)	Large map
2	Anglesey	2	Anglesey ward (part); Leesland ward (part)	Large map
3	Bridgemary North	2	Bridgemary ward (part)	Large map
4	Bridgemary South	2	Bridgemary ward (part); Brockhurst ward (part); Rowner ward (part)	Large map
5	Brockhurst	2	Brockhurst ward (part); Leesland ward (part)	Large map
6	Christchurch	2	Hardway & Forton ward (part); Leesland ward (part); Town ward (part)	Map A1 and large map
7	Elson	2	Elson ward (part)	Large map
8	Forton	2	Elson ward (part); Hardway & Forton ward (part)	Large map
9	Grange	2	Alverstoke ward (part)	Large map
10	Hardway	2	Elson ward (part); Hardway & Forton ward (part)	Large map
11	Lee East	2	Lee ward (part)	Large map
12	Lee West	2	Lee ward (part)	Large map
13	Leesland	2	Hardway & Forton ward (part); Leesland ward (part)	Large map
14	Peel Common	2	Rowner ward (part)	Large map
15	Privett	2	Alverstoke ward (part); Anglesey ward (part); Brockhurst ward (part)	Large map
16	Rowner & Holbrook	2	Alverstoke ward (part); Brockhurst ward (part); Rowner ward (part)	Large map
17	Town	2	Town ward (part)	Large map

*Notes: 1 The whole borough is unparished.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Gosport

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alverstoke	2	3,562	1,781	4	3,615	1,808	1
2 Anglesey	2	3,119	1,560	-9	3,435	1,718	-4
3 Bridgemary North	2	3,678	1,839	7	3,622	1,811	2
4 Bridgemary South	2	3,670	1,835	7	3,524	1,762	-1
5 Brockhurst	2	3,686	1,843	7	3,626	1,813	2
6 Christchurch	2	3,293	1,647	-4	3,516	1,758	-1
7 Elson	2	3,736	1,868	9	3,536	1,768	-1
8 Forton	2	3,479	1,740	1	3,661	1,831	3
9 Grange	2	3,989	1,995	16	3,707	1,854	4
10 Hardway	2	2,622	1,311	-24	3,719	1,860	4
11 Lee East	2	2,532	1,266	-26	3,464	1,732	-3
12 Lee West	2	3,462	1,731	1	3,595	1,798	1
13 Leesland	2	3,246	1,623	-5	3,542	1,771	-1
14 Peel Common	2	3,575	1,788	4	3,389	1,695	-5
15 Privett	2	3,382	1,691	-1	3,458	1,729	-3
16 Rowner & Holbrook	2	3,795	1,898	11	3,688	1,844	3
17 Town	2	3,492	1,746	2	3,563	1,782	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>58,318</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60,660</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,715</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Gosport Borough Council's submission.

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

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Gosport in Hampshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 11 districts in Hampshire, and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils, as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Gosport. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1977 (Report No. 201). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in October 1980 (Report No. 397). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties*. This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 Second, the broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. For example, we will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 Third, we are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that borough

but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a borough's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other boroughs.

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

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the borough and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the borough council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Hampshire districts and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

12 Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Gosport Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, the Member of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 November 1999.

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

14 Stage Three began on 18 January 2000 and will end on 13 March 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

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



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Gosport is situated on the peninsula on the western side of Portsmouth Harbour and has a coastline of six miles to the Solent. It is bounded to the north by the borough of Fareham. Gosport is mainly urban, covering some 2,518 hectares, and with a population of some 75,060, it has a population density of around 30 people per hectare.

17 With a strategic location at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour, Gosport has developed mainly in response to the growth and requirements of the Royal Navy, with which it has been closely linked for over 250 years. Apart from the Service establishments, there are some industries including boat-building, plastics and chemicals. Gosport's main transport links are the ferry service which operates across Portsmouth Harbour between Gosport and Portsmouth, and the A32 (Fareham Road). There are no parishes in the borough.

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

19 The electorate of the borough is 58,318 (February 1999). The Council presently has 30 members who are elected from 10 wards, all of which are relatively urban. All of the wards are each represented by three councillors, and the Council is elected by thirds.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Gosport borough, with around 17 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Lee and Alverstoke wards, with approximately 50 per cent more electors in both wards than 20 years ago.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,944 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,022 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in two of the 10 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and in one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Alverstoke ward where the councillor represents 37 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Gosport*

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alverstoke	3	7,998	2,666	37	7,493	2,498	24
2 Anglesey	3	5,223	1,741	-10	5,691	1,897	-6
3 Bridgemary	3	4,954	1,651	-15	4,780	1,593	-21
4 Brockhurst	3	6,115	2,038	5	6,092	2,031	0
5 Elson	3	5,409	1,803	-7	5,214	1,738	-14
6 Hardway & Forton	3	5,391	1,797	-8	6,704	2,235	11
7 Lee	3	5,994	1,998	3	7,059	2,353	16
8 Leesland	3	5,631	1,877	-3	5,673	1,891	-6
9 Rowner	3	5,936	1,979	2	5,722	1,907	-6
10 Town	3	5,667	1,889	-3	6,232	2,077	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58,318</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>60,660</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,944</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Bridgemary ward were relatively over-represented by 15 per cent, while electors in Alverstoke ward were relatively under-represented by 37 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Gosport Borough Council.

23 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received one representation during Stage One, a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

#### **Gosport Borough Council**

24 The Council submitted a borough-wide scheme based on 17 two-member wards (instead of the existing 10 three-member wards) proposing an increase in council size of four, from 30 to 34. The Council provided details of how it had carried out its own local consultation on its proposed scheme and enclosed copies of the responses that it had received. It contended that its proposed scheme would better reflect community identity than the current arrangements and provide for better representation with improved boundaries.

25 The Council argued that in proposing a pattern of all two-member wards it had taken account of the Government's *Modernising Local Government* White Paper and its proposals for future electoral arrangements. The Council also stated that it was in the process of reviewing its internal political management arrangements and argued that the slight increase in the number of councillors would facilitate its proposed Leader with Cabinet system. The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

26 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Gosport is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, but we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

30 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 4 per cent from 58,318 to 60,660 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Hardway & Forton ward, although significant growth is also expected in Lee ward. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

## **Council Size**

32 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

33 Gosport Borough Council presently has 30 members. The Council proposed a council of 34 members, based on 17 two-member wards, an increase of four councillors. It argued that in proposing a pattern of all two-member wards it had taken account of the Government's *Modernising Local Government* White Paper and its proposals for future electoral arrangements. The Council also stated that it was in the process of reviewing its internal political management arrangements and argued that the slight increase in the number of councillors would facilitate a proposed Leader with Cabinet system.

34 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representation received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 34 members. While we are generally cautious about increases in council size, we note the cross-party support for this increase, and judge that it would facilitate a scheme which gives good electoral equality and reflects local communities, particularly in the south-west of the borough.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

35 In view of the broad degree of consensus behind the Council's proposals, and given the broad support from the local residents who responded to the Council's consultation exercise, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, in order to provide for more identifiable boundaries, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in one area. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Lee ward;
- (b) Bridgemaury and Rowner wards;
- (c) Alverstoke and Brockhurst wards;
- (d) Elson and Hardway & Forton wards;
- (e) Leesland, Town and Anglesey wards.

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

### **Lee ward**

37 The three-member Lee ward is situated in the south-west of the borough and covers the area to the west of the River Alver and the settlement of Lee-on-the-Solent. The number of electors per councillor in the ward is currently 3 per cent above the borough average; however, this is expected to deteriorate to 16 per cent above the borough average by 2004 due to forecast housing development in the area.

38 As detailed earlier, we received only one submission during Stage One, a borough-wide scheme based on a uniform pattern of 17 two-member wards put forward by the Borough Council. In order to address the forecast under-representation of Lee ward and to facilitate a good scheme across the borough as a whole, the Council proposed dividing the existing ward into two new two-member wards: Lee East and Lee West.

39 It proposed that the area to the west of the River Alver, to the north of Gosport Road, to the east of Russell Road/Leamington Crescent, and to the east of the northern section of Broom Way, should form the new Lee East ward. The remainder of the ward (predominantly the coastal area) would form Lee West ward. Under the Council's scheme the proposed Lee East ward would be over-represented by 26 per cent initially; however, this level of electoral inequality is forecast to improve to 3 per cent by 2004 due to projected housing development. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Lee West ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average both initially and by 2004.

40 In view of the broad support for the Council's scheme, and given that its proposals in this area would provide for improved electoral equality by 2004, in addition to facilitating a good scheme elsewhere in the borough, we propose adopting the Council's proposed Lee East and Lee West wards as our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map at the back of this report.

### **Bridgemary and Rowner wards**

41 The three-member wards of Bridgemary and Rowner are situated in the northern part of the borough. Bridgemary ward is currently the most over-represented ward in the borough, with an electoral variance of 15 per cent, forecast to deteriorate to 21 per cent by 2004. The number of electors per councillor in Rowner ward is 2 per cent above the borough average (6 per cent below by 2004).

42 In order to improve electoral equality and provide for a better reflection of local community identities and interests, the Council proposed creating three new two-member wards in this area. It proposed a new Bridgemary North ward comprising the GJ3, GJ4 and GJ5 polling districts and part of the GJ2 polling district (to the north of Gregson Avenue) from the existing Bridgemary ward. It also proposed a new Bridgemary South ward, comprising the remainder of the existing Bridgemary ward, together with the eastern part of the current Rowner ward (to the east of Wych Lane/Rowner Lane, excluding Alliance Close) and Acorn Close from the existing Brockhurst ward. The remainder of the existing Rowner ward (to the west of Wych Lane and to the north of Rowner Road) would comprise the Council's proposed Peel Common ward.

43 Under the Council's scheme the proposed Bridgemary North and Bridgemary South wards would both vary from the borough average by 7 per cent initially (2 per cent and 1 per cent by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Peel Common ward would be 4 per cent above the borough average initially (5 per cent below by 2004).

44 We have noted that the proposed Peel Common ward would possess the worst level of electoral equality in the borough by 2004, varying from the borough average by 5 per cent. However, we are of the view that this is acceptable given that the proposed ward is constrained

by the borough boundary to the west and Rowner Road to the south. Given the broad support for the Council's scheme, and the improved electoral equality and better reflection of local community identities that would be secured, we propose adopting the Council's proposals as our draft recommendations in this area, as shown on the large map in the back of this report. We would very much welcome comments on these proposals, particularly the proposed ward names, during Stage Three.

### **Alverstoke and Brockhurst wards**

45 The three-member wards of Alverstoke and Brockhurst are situated in the centre of the borough, to the east of the Alver River and to the west of the A32 (Brockhurst Road/Fareham Road). Alverstoke is currently the most under-represented ward in the borough, with an electoral variance of 37 per cent. However, this level of electoral inequality is forecast to improve slightly to 24 per cent by 2004 due to housing redevelopment. The number of electors per councillor in Brockhurst ward is 5 per cent above the borough average (equal to the average by 2004).

46 In this area the Council proposed two new two-member wards, Rowner & Holbrook and Grange, and a revised two-member Brockhurst ward. The Council's proposed Rowner & Holbrook ward would comprise the northern part of Alverstoke ward (the area to the north of St Nicholas Avenue) and the northern part of Brockhurst ward (to the north of Rowner Road). Its proposed Grange ward would comprise the majority of the remainder of the existing Alverstoke Road (to the north of Privett Road). The new wards of Rowner & Holbrook and Grange would be under-represented initially by 11 per cent and 16 per cent, improving to 3 per cent and 4 per cent by 2004.

47 The Council also proposed a revised Brockhurst ward which would be represented by two councillors rather than the present three. The revised ward would comprise the GF2, GF3 and GF4 polling districts from the current Brockhurst ward, the eastern side of Brockhurst Road and an area to the south of Chantry Road, the east of Vale Grove and the north of Avery Lane (currently in Elson ward). The number of electors per councillor in this revised two-member Brockhurst ward would be 5 per cent above the average for the borough initially (1 per cent below by 2004).

48 We have considered the Council's proposals in this area and, in view of the improved level of electoral equality and better reflection of local community identity and interests that would be secured, we have been persuaded that the proposed Rowner & Holbrook and Grange wards should be adopted as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map at the back of this report.

49 However, we have also considered the Council's proposed Brockhurst ward and do not agree that the inclusion of the area to the south of Chantry Road (currently in Elson ward) in the revised ward would provide for an identifiable northern boundary. We are of the view that the ward should be modified slightly in order to secure more identifiable boundaries, therefore providing for more effective and convenient local government, and as a consequence providing a better reflection of local community identities and interests.

50 We therefore propose retaining the ward's existing northern boundary (the A32 Brockhurst Road), in addition to following a longer section of the A32 (Brockhurst Road/Forton Road) until

it reaches Reeds Place. We also propose transferring the area to the west of Reeds Place and to the north of Donnelly Street/St Anne's Crescent into the proposed Brockhurst ward, in order to secure a reasonable level of electoral equality. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Brockhurst ward, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report, would be 7 per cent above the borough average initially (2 per cent above by 2004). We would welcome views on our proposals during Stage Three.

### **Elson and Hardway & Forton wards**

51 The three-member Elson and Hardway & Forton wards are situated in the eastern part of the borough, to the east of the A32 (Fareham Road/Brockhurst Road/Forton Road). Elson ward is currently over-represented by 7 per cent, a variance which is forecast to deteriorate to 14 per cent by 2004. Hardway & Forton ward is also over-represented at present, by 8 per cent; however, by 2004 the ward is forecast to be under-represented by 11 per cent due to housing development.

52 The Council proposed three new two-member wards in this area. Its proposed two-member Elson ward would comprise the majority of the existing Elson ward (that area to the north of Chantry Road), although it proposed transferring the eastern side of Brockhurst Road and an area to the south of Chantry Road into a revised Brockhurst ward (as detailed in paragraph 47), transferring part of Palmyra Road into a new Hardway ward and transferring the area around Welch Road/Avery Lane/Teignmouth Road into a new Forton ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Elson ward would be 7 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent below by 2004).

53 The Council proposed a new two-member Hardway ward comprising the northern part of the current Hardway & Forton ward (to the north of Palmyra Road/Felix Road/St Vincent Road) and the remainder of Palmyra Road currently in Elson ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Hardway ward would be 24 per cent below the borough average initially; however, by 2004 this level of electoral inequality would improve to be 4 per cent above the borough average, due to expected housing development.

54 The Council also proposed a new Forton ward comprising the remaining southern part of the existing Hardway & Forton ward (except Ferrol Road and the area to the east of it, which the Council proposed transferring into a new Christchurch ward), and the area around Welch Road/Avery Lane/Teignmouth Road from Elson ward (as detailed above). The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Forton ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent above by 2004).

55 As outlined earlier, we are proposing to retain the A32 Brockhurst Road as a ward boundary in this area. As a consequence of our modifications to the proposed Brockhurst ward, the proposed Elson ward would also include the north side of Brockhurst Road. Therefore, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Elson ward would be 9 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent below by 2004). Given the more identifiable boundary and improved electoral equality that would be secured, we are proposing to put forward our revised Elson ward, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

56 A further consequence of our revised Brockhurst ward would be that the area to the south of Chantry Road (which the Council proposed including in Brockhurst ward) would be included in our proposed Forton ward. Therefore, in order to secure a reasonable level of electoral equality in the revised ward, we are proposing that an area to the east of The Crossways and to the west of Ferrol Road be transferred into a revised Leesland ward. The number of electors per councillor in our revised Forton ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent above by 2004). Given the more identifiable boundary and the good electoral equality that would be secured in our revised Forton ward, we are proposing to put forward the ward, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, as part of our draft recommendations.

57 Given the broad support for the Council's proposed Hardway ward, and in view of the good electoral equality that would be secured by 2004, we are proposing to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map inserted in the back of this report. We would welcome views on our proposals for this area during Stage Three.

### **Leesland, Town and Anglesey wards**

58 The three-member wards of Leesland, Town and Anglesey are situated in the south of the borough. Leesland ward is situated to the south of the A32 (Forton Road/Mumby Road). Town ward is situated to the east of Leesland ward, comprising the areas surrounding the High Street, South Street and Gosport Park. Anglesey ward covers the most southerly coastal area of the borough, bordering Browndon Training Camp to the west, Privett Park to the north-west, and Little Anglesey Road and Stoke Lake/Haslar Lake to the north. The number of electors per councillor in the Leesland, Town and Anglesey wards is 3 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 10 per cent below the borough average respectively (6 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 6 per cent below by 2004).

59 The Council proposed six new two-member wards in this southern part of the borough. It proposed a new two-member Christchurch ward comprising the south-eastern part of Hardway & Forton ward (to the east of Ferrol Road), the most eastern part of Leesland ward (to the east of Lees Lane/St John's Close) and the GA2 and GA3 polling districts from Town ward. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Christchurch ward would be 3 per cent below the average initially (equal to the average by 2004). The remainder of the existing Town ward (polling districts GA1, GA4 and GA5) would comprise the Council's revised two-member Town ward. The number of electors per councillor in this revised ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average initially (equal to the average by 2004).

60 The Council also proposed a revised two-member Leesland ward comprising the northern part of the existing Leesland ward (to the north of Bury Road) except that area it proposed transferring into Christchurch ward. The number of electors per councillor in its revised Leesland ward would be 3 per cent below the borough average initially (2 per cent above by 2004). The Council also proposed a revised two-member Anglesey ward comprising the GB1 and GB2 polling districts from the existing Anglesey ward and the south-eastern part of the existing Leesland ward (to the east of Anglesey Road). The number of electors per councillor in the revised ward would be 9 per cent below the borough average initially (4 per cent below by 2004).

61 The Council put forward a revised Alverstoke ward comprising part of the existing Anglesey ward (to the south of Solent Way and to the east of Jellicoe Avenue), the south-western part of

Leesland ward (to the west of Anglesey Road) and part of the southern part of the existing Alverstoke ward (to the south of Privett Road and west of Gower Road). The number of electors per councillor in this revised ward would be 4 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent above by 2004).

62 Finally in this area the Council proposed a new Privett ward comprising the north-eastern part of Anglesey ward (to the north of Solent Way and to the west of Jellicoe Road), the south-eastern part of Alverstoke ward (to the east of Gower Road) and the southern part of Brockhurst ward (to the south of Wilmott Lane). The number of electors per councillor in the new Privett ward would be 1 per cent below the borough average initially (3 per cent below by 2004).

63 As a consequence of our proposal to transfer the northern part of the Council's proposed Leesland ward into Brockhurst ward and to transfer the eastern part of the proposed Forton ward into Leesland ward, we are also proposing to transfer part of the proposed Christchurch ward (to the west of Albert Street) into the proposed Leesland ward in order to secure a reasonable level of electoral equality and to provide for better access points between the areas being joined together. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Leesland and Christchurch wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, would be 5 per cent below and 4 per cent below the borough average initially (1 per cent below in both wards by 2004).

64 In view of the broad support for the Council's scheme, and the better reflection of local community identities and improved electoral equality that would be secured, we also propose adopting the Council's proposed Town, Anglesey, Alverstoke and Privett wards as part of our draft recommendations in this area, as shown on Map A1 and the large map inserted at the back of this report. We would very much welcome comments on these proposals during Stage Three.

## **Electoral Cycle**

65 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

## **Conclusions**

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

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 30 to 34;
- (b) there should be 17 wards, seven more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of seven wards;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

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

- (a) we propose retaining Brockhurst Road as the boundary between the revised Elson and Brockhurst wards;
- (b) as a consequence of this modification, we also propose transferring an area to the east of Ann’s Hill Road into the proposed Brockhurst ward, and transferring an area to the north of Forton Road and to the east of The Crossways, and an area around Halliday Close, into the revised Leesland ward.

68 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

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

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	30	34	30	34
Number of wards	10	17	10	17
Average number of electors per councillor	1,944	1,715	2,022	1,784
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	2	4	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	2	2	0

69 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Gosport Borough Council would initially result in an increase in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from two to four. However, as detailed in our *Guidance* (paragraphs 3.15–3.20) we have to have regard to the five-year forecast of electorate and take into account any changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over the next five years. Consequently, the initial level of electoral inequality is forecast to improve by 2004, when no ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Gosport Borough Council should comprise 34 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

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

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

## 5 NEXT STEPS

71 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Gosport. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 13 March 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

72 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

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

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



## APPENDIX A

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

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

**Map A1** illustrates the proposed boundary between Christchurch and Town wards.

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

*Map A1:  
Proposed Boundary between Christchurch and Town Wards*

## APPENDIX B

### Gosport Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Borough Council only in five wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

*Figure B1: Gosport Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Brockhurst	Brockhurst ward (part); Elson ward (part)
Christchurch	Hardway & Forton ward (part); Leesland ward (part); Town ward (part)
Elson	Elson ward (part)
Forton	Elson ward (part); Hardway & Forton ward (part)
Leesland	Leesland ward (part)

*Figure B2: Gosport Borough Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brockhurst	2	3,604	1,802	5	3,544	1,772	-1
Christchurch	2	3,344	1,672	-3	3,567	1,784	0
Elson	2	3,666	1,833	7	3,466	1,733	-3
Forton	2	3,496	1,748	2	3,678	1,839	3
Leesland	2	3,330	1,665	-3	3,626	1,813	2

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Gosport Borough Council's submission.*

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



## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

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

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to boroughs within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

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

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire boroughs:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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