

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Chiltern in Buckinghamshire

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

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

SUMMARY

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

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Chiltern.

- **in 21 of the 30 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and seven wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation 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 21 wards and by more than 20 per cent in seven wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 96-97) are that:

- **Chiltern District Council should have 40 councillors, ten fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of the current 30;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five wards, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 24 of the proposed 25 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue with the number of electors per councillor in 24 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parish of Chesham;**
- **revised parish ward boundaries in Amersham, Chalfont St Peter and Great Missenden.**

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

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

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

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Amersham Common	1	Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)	Large Map
2	Amersham-on-the-Hill	2	Amersham-on-the-Hill ward (part –Amersham-on-the-Hill parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)	Large Map
3	Amersham Town	2	Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Common ward (part –Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)	Large Map
4	Asheridge Vale & Lowndes	2	Asheridge Vale ward (Asheridge Vale parish ward of Chesham parish); Lowndes ward (Lowndes parish ward of Chesham parish); Pond Park ward (part–Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish); Townsend ward (part – Townsend ward (part) of Chesham parish)	Large Map
5	Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies	1	Ashley Green and Latimer ward (the parish of Ashley Green and Latimer); Chenies parish ward (the parish of Chenies)	Map 2
6	Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge	1	Ballinger & South Heath ward (Ballinger & South Heath parish ward of Great Missenden parish); Chartridge ward (part – Bellingdon & Asheridge parish ward of Chartridge parish)	Map 2
7	Chalfont Austenwood	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the Austenwood parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish)	Maps 2 and A2
8	Chalfont Central	2	Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)	Maps 2 and A2
9	Chalfont Common	2	Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Chalfont Common ward (Chalfont Common parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish)	Maps 2 and A2
10	Chalfont Gold Hill	1	Chalfont Central ward (part Chalfont Cental parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Gold Hill ward (Chalfont St Peter Gold Hill parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish)	Maps 2 and A2
11	Chalfont St Giles	3	Chalfont St Giles ward (Chalfont St Giles parish ward of Chalfont St Giles parish); Seer Green and Jordans ward (part–the Jordans parish ward of Chalfont St Giles parish)	Map 2
12	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	Amersham-on-the-Hill ward (part – Amersham-on-the-Hill parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Chesham Bois and Weedon Hill ward (Chesham Bois parish and the Weedon Hill parish ward of Amersham parish)	Large Map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
13	Cholesbury, The Lee & Chartridge	1	Chartridge ward (the Chartridge parish ward of Chartridge parish); Cholesbury & the Lee ward (the parishes of Cholesbury-cum-St-Leonards and the Lee)	Map 2
14	Coleshill & Penn Street	2	Coleshill & Penn Street ward (Coleshill parish and the Penn Street parish ward of Penn parish); Penn ward (Penn and Winchmore Hill parish wards of Penn parish)	Map 2
15	Great Missenden	1	Great Missenden ward (part – Great Missenden parish ward (part) of Great Missenden parish)	Maps 2 and A3
16	Hilltop & Townsend	2	Hilltop ward (Hilltop parish ward of Chesham parish); Townsend ward (part –Townsend parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)	Large Map
17	Holmer Green	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Holmer Green parish ward of Little Missenden parish)	Map 2
18	Little Chalfont	2	Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Little Chalfont ward (Little Chalfont ward of Amersham parish)	Large Map
19	Little Missenden	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hyde Heath, and Little Kingshill and Little Missenden parish wards of Little Missenden parish)	Map 2
20	Newtown	1	Newtown ward (part – Newtown parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)	Large Map
21	Pond Park	1	Newtown ward (part – Newtown parish ward (part) of Chesham parish); Pond Park ward (part - Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)	Large Map
22	Prestwood & Heath End	3	Great Missenden ward (part - Great Missenden parish ward (part) of Great Missenden parish); Prestwood and Heath End ward (Prestwood & Heath End parish ward of Great Missenden parish)	Maps 2 and A3
23	Ridgeway	1	Pond Park ward (part – Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)	Large Map
24	Seer Green	1	Seer Green ward (part – the parish of Seer Green)	Map 2
25	St Mary's & Waterside	2	St Mary's ward (St Mary's parish ward of Chesham parish); Waterside ward (Waterside parish ward of Chesham parish)	Large Map

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Chiltern

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Amersham Common	1	1,840	1,840	3	1,728	1,728	3
2	Amersham-on-the-Hill	2	3,777	1,899	6	3,547	1,773	6
3	Amersham Town	2	3,610	1,805	1	3,390	1,695	1
4	Asheridge Vale & Lowndes	2	3,553	1,777	-1	3,336	1,668	-1
5	Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies	1	1,742	1,742	-2	1,635	1,635	-2
6	Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge	1	1,803	1,803	1	1,693	1,693	1
7	Chalfont Austenwood	1	1,687	1,687	-6	1,584	1,584	-6
8	Chalfont Central	2	3,399	1,700	-5	3,192	1,596	-5
9	Chalfont Common	2	3,385	1,693	-5	3,179	1,589	-5
10	Chalfont Gold Hill	1	1,676	1,676	-6	1,574	1,574	-6
11	Chalfont St Giles	3	5,568	1,856	4	5,228	1,743	4
12	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	3,723	1,862	4	3,496	1,748	4
13	Cholesbury, the Lee & Bellingdon	1	1,917	1,917	7	1,800	1,800	7
14	Coleshill & Penn Street	2	3,580	1,790	0	3,362	1,681	0
15	Great Missenden	1	1,873	1,873	5	1,629	1,629	-3
16	Hilltop & Townsend	2	3,453	1,727	-3	3,242	1,621	-3
17	Holmer Green	2	3,327	1,664	-7	3,124	1,562	-7
18	Little Chalfont	2	3,689	1,845	3	3,464	1,732	3
19	Little Missenden	1	1,995	1,995	12	1,873	1,873	12
20	Newtown	1	1,811	1,811	1	1,701	1,701	1
21	Pond Park	1	1,681	1,681	-6	1,578	1,578	-6

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Prestwood & Health End	3	5,186	1,729	-3	4,992	1,664	-1
23 Ridgeway	1	1,898	1,898	6	1,782	1,782	6
24 Seer Green	1	1,791	1,791	0	1,682	1,682	0
25 St Mary's & Waterside	2	3,484	1,742	-2	3,271	1,636	-2
Totals	40	71,448	-	-	67,091	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,786	-	-	1,677	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Chiltern. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 62). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1982 (Report No. 438). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

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

issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2000.

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

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

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The district of Chiltern in Buckinghamshire is a predominantly rural area situated in the very south of the county and a short distance from Greater London. The district is protected by the Metropolitan Green Belt and Conservation Areas and includes an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The district has a population of 93,082 and covers an area of 19,648 hectares. The most populous areas are the towns of Amersham, Chesham and the villages known collectively as the Chalfonts, in the south of the district. The district is easily accessible from London with mainline and underground rail links to Marylebone, Baker Street and the City. The district is also served by the M60 and M25. This accessibility has made the district an attractive location for various national and international businesses.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 71,448 (February 2000). The Council presently has 50 members who are elected from 30 wards. Three of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 14 are each represented by two councillors and 13 are single-member wards. The Council holds whole council elections. There are 16 parishes in the district.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Chiltern borough, with around 10 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Great Missenden and Little Missenden wards.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,429 electors, which the District Council forecasts will decrease to 1,342 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 21 of the 30 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, seven wards by more than 20 per cent and four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Chenies ward where, following a boundary review that took much of the ward into Hertfordshire, the councillor represents 87 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Chiltern

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Amersham Common	2	2,536	1,268	-11	2,381	1,191	-11
2	Amersham-on-the-Hill	3	4,092	1,364	-5	3,842	1,281	-5
3	Amersham Town	2	3,249	1,625	14	3,051	1,526	14
4	Asheridge Vale	1	1,341	1,341	-6	1,259	1,259	-6
5	Ashley Green & Latimer	1	1,556	1,556	9	1,461	1,461	9
6	Austenwood	1	1,687	1,687	18	1,584	1,584	18
7	Ballinger & South Heath	1	1,021	1,021	-29	959	959	-29
8	Chalfont St Peter Central	2	3,230	1,615	13	3,033	1,517	13
9	Chalfont Common	2	3,295	1,648	15	3,094	1,547	15
10	Chalfont St Giles	3	5,014	1,671	17	4,708	1,569	17
11	Chartridge	1	1,318	1,318	-8	1,238	1,238	-8
12	Chenies	1	186	186	-87	175	175	-87
13	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	3,408	1,704	19	3,200	1,600	19
14	Cholesbury & The Lee	1	1,381	1,381	-3	1,297	1,297	-3
15	Coleshill & Penn Street	1	1,135	1,135	-21	1,066	1,066	-21
16	Gold Hill	2	1,935	968	-32	1,817	909	-32
17	Great Missenden	1	2,003	2,003	40	1,881	1,881	40
18	Hilltop	1	1,346	1,346	-6	1,264	1,26	-6

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Holmer Green	2	3,327	1,664	16	3,124	1,562	16
20 Little Chalfont	2	3,354	1,677	17	3,149	1,575	17
21 Little Missenden	1	1,995	1,995	40	1,873	1,873	40
22 Lowndes	1	1,560	1,560	9	1,465	1,465	9
23 Newtown	2	3,013	1,507	5	2,829	1,415	5
24 Penn	2	2,445	1,223	-14	2,296	1,148	-14
25 Pond Park	2	2,473	1,237	-13	2,322	1,161	-13
26 Prestwood & Heath End	3	5,056	5,056	18	4,748	1,583	18
27 Seer Green & Jordans	2	2,345	1,173	-18	2,202	1,101	-18
28 St Mary's	1	1,035	1,035	-28	972	972	-28
29 Townsend	2	2,663	1,332	-7	2,501	1,251	-7
30 Waterside	2	2,449	1,225	-14	2,300	1,150	-14
Totals	50	71,448	-	-	67,091	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,429	-	-	1,342	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Chiltern District Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Chenies ward were relatively over-represented by 87 per cent, while electors in Little Missenden ward were relatively under-represented by 40 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 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 Chiltern District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 17 representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Chiltern District Council

23 The District Council proposed a reduction in council size of 50 to 40 members, serving 25 wards. The District Council's scheme would provide for 12 single-member wards, 11 two-member wards and 2 three-member wards. The District Council argued that this reduction was justified, firstly on the grounds that many of its significant functions had been devolved to outside agencies and secondly that the restructuring of its scrutiny and executive procedures would mean that 50 members would provide less effective local government.

24 The Council proposed a reduction in the number of wards from 30 to 25. It proposed that Chesham should be represented by nine councillors in a predominately single-member ward pattern. It proposed that the Amersham and Chesham Bois area should be represented by nine councillors, and proposed a number of boundary modifications to improve electoral equality. It also proposed boundary modifications to the wards in Chalfont St Peters, which would be divided into three two-member wards.

25 The Council proposed no change to the wards of Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End.

26 As part of its submission the Council attached details of earlier schemes which it had considered. The Council's proposal is summarised in Appendix B.

Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats

27 Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats submitted a scheme based on a 40-member council representing 34 wards, 26 single-member and seven two-member wards. The Liberal Democrats proposed that Chesham should be represented by three two-member wards and three single-member wards. For Amersham they proposed that there be three two-member wards and three single-member wards. In comparison to the District Council's proposals the Liberal Democrats' scheme for the remainder of the district provided for more single-member wards.

28 The Liberal Democrats did not make specific proposals for the Great Missenden area as it falls outside of their Parliamentary Constituency.

Parish and Town Councils

29 We received representations from eight parish and town councils. Amersham Town Council put forward amendments to the District Council's proposals for the Amersham area and objected to an earlier Council scheme to link part of Amersham parish with Chartridge ward. Chesham Town Council generally supported an earlier scheme produced by the Council, which would also have allocated nine councillors to the area, but would have divided the town into three two-member wards and three single-member wards. Chalfont St Peters Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals

30 Chenies Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals to include the parish in a ward with Ashley Green and Latimer parishes. Chesham Bois Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for a modified two-member ward for Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill ward. Great Missenden Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for no change in the area. Penn Parish Council made no specific recommendations, but expressed the concern that local ties should not be sacrificed in favour of mathematical accuracy.

31 Chartridge Parish Council opposed the reduction from 50 to 40 members. It rejected any proposal to include the Bellingdon parish ward in a district ward with Cholesbury and The Lee parishes and place Chartridge with the parishes of Ballinger and South Heath, citing the need to maintain community identity.

Other Representations

32 Chesham & District Residents' Association proposed retaining a 50-member council, with 12 councillors representing Chesham. However it stated that if the proposition to reduce the total council size to 40 members was accepted the town should be represented by nine councillors. It proposed a pattern of four two-member wards, generally combining current wards, and one single-member ward.

33 We received a further six submissions, four of which supported that Council's proposals for Chesham. Councillor Mrs Stacey wrote proposing a council size of around 46, but did not provide detailed proposals, while a resident of Chalfont St Giles commented on the siting of polling stations in that ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

34 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Chiltern is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

36 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.

37 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

38 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting a decrease in the electorate of some 6 per cent from 71,448 to 67,091 spread throughout the district, over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. 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 District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

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

41 Chiltern District Council presently has 50 members. The Commission will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but will be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. The District Council proposed a reduction of ten to a council of 40 members. The District Council argued that this reduction was justifiable, firstly on the basis that many of its functions have been recently out-sourced. Secondly, the restructuring of its committee procedures has meant there is likely to be a substantial number of members with insufficient work to do.

42 The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats supported the Council's proposal to reduce council size and, among the other respondents, there was a general acceptance of the District Council's proposals for 40 members. However, the Chesham Residents' Association and Chartridge parish stated a preference for retaining the current council size and Councillor Mrs Stacey proposed an alternative council size of around 46 members.

43 We have considered that evidence received in support of a reduction in council size in Chiltern. In the light of the representations received, we are persuaded that there has been sufficient investigation into how the council will function with a greatly reduced council size. We also note the general support for the proposals.

44 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 40 members.

Electoral Arrangements

45 We have considered all the district-wide schemes presented to us and taken into account all the submissions received. In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council's scheme. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we are putting forward alternative proposals in the town of Chesham, in the light of other proposals, primarily from the Town Council, and in the parishes of Chalfont St Peters and Great Missenden.

- (a) Chesham (eight wards);
- (b) Amersham and Chesham Bois (five wards);
- (c) Chalfont St Peter (four wards);
- (d) Chalfont St Giles, Coleshill and Penn Street, Penn and Seer Green and Jordans wards;

- (e) Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden, Prestwood and Heath End wards;
- (f) Ballinger and South Heath, Chartridge, Cholesbury and The Lee wards;
- (g) Ashley Green and Latimer and Chenies wards.

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

Chesham (eight wards)

47 The town of Chesham is situated in the northeast of the district and comprises around 22 per cent of the electorate of the district. The wards of Asheridge Vale, Hilltop, Lowndes and St Mary's are each represented by a single member, while the wards of Newtown, Pond Park, Townsend and Waterside are all two-member wards. The number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below the district average in Asheridge Vale ward (unchanged in 2005), 6 per cent below in Hilltop ward (unchanged in 2005), 9 per cent above in Lowndes ward (unchanged in 2005), 5 per cent above in Newtown ward (unchanged in 2005), 13 per cent below in Pond Park ward (unchanged in 2005), 28 per cent below in St Mary's ward (unchanged in 2005), 7 per cent below in Townsend ward (unchanged in 2005) and 14 per cent below in Waterside ward (unchanged in 2005).

48 During Stage One the District Council proposed that the town should be represented by seven single-member wards and one two-member ward, retaining the general ward pattern in the area, with only a marginal reallocation of the electorate in order to achieve equality of representation. The District Council proposed transferring 96 electors from Pond Park ward to Asheridge Vale ward. It further proposed including 440 electors in the Botley Road area of Townsend ward in a modified Hilltop ward.

49 The District Council proposed that Newtown ward continue to be represented by two councillors, but that it additionally include 417 electors from Pond Park ward. In Lowndes ward, the District Council proposed including a further 556 electors, west of Bellingdon Road, currently in Townsend ward, but also proposed that the 293 electors generally east of Beechcroft Road be transferred to Asheridge Vale ward. Finally in this area, the District Council proposed transferring 631 electors from Waterside ward to St Mary's ward, with each ward being represented by a single councillor.

50 Under these proposals, based on a council size of 40, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Asheridge Vale, Newtown, St Mary's and Townsend ward would be 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 7 per cent below the district average respectively (unchanged in 2005). However the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Lowndes, Pond Park and Waterside would be 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (unchanged in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Hilltop ward would be the same as the district average on both 2000 and 2005 figures.

51 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new two-member St Mary's & Waterside, combining the two current wards; a new two-member Asheridge Vale & Lowndes ward generally combining the

two current wards; and a new two-member Hilltop & Townsend ward, generally comprising the two current wards.

52 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the remainder of the town of Chesham be divided into three single-member wards; Newtown, Pond Park and a new ward which they suggested be named Jubilee to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Queen Elizabeth II's coronation.

53 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor in the new or modified wards of Asheridge Vale & Lowndes, Hilltop & Townsend, Jubilee and St Mary's & Waterside would be 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent below the average both initially. For the 2005 projections the averages are 1 per cent above, zero, 6 per cent below and 3 per cent below respectively. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Newtown and Pond Park wards would be 1 per cent above and 6 per cent above the district average, initially and 2 per cent and 9 per cent above on 2005 figures.

54 Chesham Town Council stated that it was not for the "Town Council to determine the membership of Chiltern District. However, [its] submission [was] based on the assumption that the District Council will approve a reduction in membership from 50 to 40 members". It proposed the creation of three two-member wards. These would combine St Mary's and Waterside wards, Lowndes and Asheridge Vale wards, and Hilltop and Townsend wards. The remainder of the town area would be represented by three single-member wards. These proposals reflect those proposed by the Liberal Democrats and would provide for the same levels of electoral equality.

55 We received a further one submission from the Chesham & District Residents' Association proposing the retention of 50 members. However in the event of a 40 member scheme it proposed, that Chesham should be represented by 9.

56 We have noted the general consensus regarding proposals for the Chesham areas, with all schemes being based on a council size of 40 members and allocating nine councillors to the town. The differences between the schemes related to how the wards within the town would actually be configured, with the Town Council and the Liberal Democrats putting forward a pattern of three two-member wards and three single-member wards and the District Council proposing a mainly single-member ward pattern. The District Council considered that "the particular ridge and valley topography of Chesham lent itself to single rather than two-member wards". It further argued, with specific reference to the Hilltop and Townsend wards that "representations from local residents and the Council's desire to encourage single-member wards in Chesham" had led it to propose a single-member ward pattern in this area. We received four further representations supporting the District Council's proposals in this area.

57 The Chesham Town Council wrote outlining its proposals for this area which it had also forwarded to the District Council and which it understood had been adopted by the District Council's sub-committee. However, such proposals were not subsequently adopted by the Council and the Town Council argued that its final proposals did not reflect communities, particularly in the St Mary's and Waterside areas.

58 We note that both schemes would reduce the current electoral imbalances, although the Town Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals would achieve slightly improved levels of electoral equality. In the light of the lack of local consensus on the delineation of communities with the town, the resulting levels of electoral equality and having visited the area, we are proposing to adopt the Town Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would propose naming the new ward, Pond Park, given that the Pond Park area would form part of this ward rather than remaining in the modified ward. We also propose naming the remainder of the current Pond Park ward Ridgeway, which we consider provides a clearly recognisable name. We would, however, welcome views on our proposals in this area including the naming of wards.

59 Our proposals would provide for the same levels of electoral equality as under the Town Council's and Liberal Democrats' wards and are illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Amersham and Chesham Bois (five wards)

60 The parishes of Amersham and Chesham Bois lie directly south of the town of Chesham and are covered by five wards. The ward of Amersham-on-the-Hill is currently represented by three members, while the remaining four wards each return two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Amersham Common ward is currently 11 per cent below the average (unchanged in 2005), 5 per cent below the average in Amersham-on-the-Hill ward (unchanged in 2005), 14 per cent above the average in Amersham Town ward (unchanged in 2005), 17 per cent above the average in Little Chalfont ward (unchanged in 2005) and 19 per cent above the average in Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill ward (unchanged in 2005).

61 At Stage One, the District Council proposed modifications to all five wards. It proposed a modified Amersham-on-the-Hill ward, with 315 electors west of Sycamore Grove being included in a modified Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill ward. It further proposed transferring 472 electors, generally south of Hundred Acres Lane and west of Sheepfold Lane, from Amersham Common ward to the Amersham Town ward. Also the transfer of 275 electors, east of and including Chiltern Heights, from Amersham Common ward to the Little Chalfont ward, and the transfer of 57 electors to Little Chalfont from Amersham Town ward, to create more geographically identifiable wards.

62 The Liberal Democrats generally supported the District Council's proposals for Amersham and Chesham Bois but proposed including Hazell Park, currently in Amersham Town ward, in Amersham Common ward. They proposed including a smaller area of Amersham-on-the-Hill ward in Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill ward, similar to that proposed by the District Council. They also proposed a similar transfer of electors between Amersham Common and Little Chalfont wards, but further proposed that Little Chalfont ward be divided into two single-member wards: Little Chalfont Elizabeth and Little Chalfont Snellswood. The Liberal Democrats' proposals would result in identical electoral variances for the wards of Amersham-on-the-Hill and Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill as under the Council's scheme. In the Liberal Democrats' proposed wards of Amersham Common, Amersham Town, Little Chalfont Elizabeth and Little Chalfont Snellswood the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above, 1 per cent below,

4 per cent above and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 5 per cent above and 1 per cent above in 2005).

63 Chesham Bois Parish Council supported the District Council's scheme for the wards of Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill and Amersham-on-the-Hill. Amersham Town Council objected to the linking of Amersham Parish with the Chartridge and Bellingdon district ward and also the District Council's proposals for Amersham Common. Amersham Town Council proposed a 50 member scheme, with the transfer of electors from Amersham-on-the-Hill to Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill and alternative boundary arrangements between Amersham Common and Little Chalfont wards.

64 We were pleased to note that in this area there was a high degree of general consensus, although with a number of different boundaries being proposed. We propose adopting the District Council's proposals for Amersham-on-the-Hill and Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill wards as we consider that they address the current electoral imbalance while utilising clear and identifiable boundaries and command some degree of local support. We also propose basing our draft recommendations for the wards of Amersham Common, Amersham Town and Little Chalfont on the District Council's proposals. We are, however, proposing a minor modification to the boundary between Amersham Common and Amersham Town wards, to include Hazell Park in Amersham Common ward, as there is no direct access to the remainder of Amersham Town ward. This would affect 51 electors. We are not adopting the Town Council's alternative ward boundary between Amersham Town and Little Chalfont as it would not be tied to ground detail.

65 We have considered the Liberal Democrats' proposals to divide Little Chalfont ward into two single-member wards but in the absence of any local support we are not minded to accept this proposal.

66 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Amersham Common, Amersham-on-the Hill, Amersham Town, Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill and Little Chalfont would be 3 per cent, 6 per cent above, 1 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (unchanged in 2005). These proposals are illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back on this report.

Chalfont St Peter (four wards)

67 Chalfont St Peter is situated to the south east of the district. The area is represented by four district wards: Austenwood is a single-member ward, while Chalfont Common, Chalfont St Peter Central and Gold Hill wards are each represented by two members. The number of electors per councillor in Austenwood ward is currently 18 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005), 15 per cent above the average in Chalfont Common ward (unchanged in 2005), 13 per cent above the average in Chalfont St Peter Central ward (unchanged in 2005) and 32 per cent below the average in Gold Hill ward (unchanged in 2005).

68 The District Council proposed combining Austenwood and Gold Hill wards and 135 electors from Chalfont Central ward in a new two-member ward. It also proposed a transfer of 259 electors from Gold Hill to Chalfont Central ward. The Council proposed transferring 90 electors

from Chalfont Central ward to the Chalfont Common ward and, as noted above, transferring 135 electors to Austenwood. As mentioned above, the District Council proposed expanding Chalfont Common ward to additionally include 90 electors from the Chalfont Central ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in the modified wards of Austenwood & Gold Hill, Chalfont Central and Chalfont Common would be 2 per cent below, 9 per cent below and 5 per cent below the district average, both initially and in 2005.

69 The Liberal Democrats proposed dividing Chalfont St Peter into six single-member wards. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Chalfont Common, Chalfont Newlands, Chalfont Park, Chalfont St Peter Central and Gold Hill would be 7 per cent below, 9 per cent below, 11 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 2 per cent below the average respectively. Under projections for 2005 the number of electors per councillor in each of these wards would be of 4 per cent below the average, except in Chalfont Park where it would be 11 per cent below the average. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in Austenwood ward would be 2 per cent above the district average, rising to 4 per cent above in 2005.

70 We have considered the schemes received from the District Council and the Liberal Democrats. We have also considered earlier schemes which the District Council produced. From this information we have concluded that little change is necessary in this area to improve electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We are therefore proposing only minimal change to the current arrangements. We are proposing no change to the current Austenwood ward. We also propose that those electors generally east of Nicol Road, currently in Gold Hill ward, be included in Chalfont Central ward, and those electors in Copthall Close and Copthall Lane, currently in Chalfont Central ward, be included in Chalfont Common ward. Gold Hill ward would then be represented by a single councillor, while Chalfont Central and Chalfont Common would continue to each be represented by two councillors.

71 Chalfont St Peter Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for the area.

72 Given the evidence available so far, the Commission does not consider that there is a need for significant change for the wards of Chalfont St Peter and we are therefore adopting the Council's initial proposals. We are also proposing that all four wards in this area be prefixed by the name Chalfont to be consistent throughout the area. These ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map A2.

Chalfont St Giles, Coleshill & Penn Street, Penn, and Seer Green & Jordans (four wards)

73 These four wards lie in the south of the district. Chalfont St Giles ward comprises the Chalfont St Giles parish ward of Chalfont St Giles parish. The remainder of the parish, Jordans parish ward, forms part of Seers Green & Jordans district ward with the parish of that name. Coleshill & Penn Street ward comprises the parish of Coleshill and the Penn Street parish ward of Penn parish. The remainder of Penn parish forms the district ward of Penn. The number of electors per councillor in Chalfont St Giles ward is currently 17 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005), 21 per cent below the average in Coleshill & Penn Street ward

(unchanged in 2005), 14 per cent below the average in Penn ward (unchanged in 2005) and 18 per cent below the average in Seer Green & Jordans ward (unchanged in 2005).

74 The District Council proposed that the ward of Chalfont St Giles be expanded to cover the whole of the parish of the same name. This new three-member ward would have an electoral variance of 4 per cent. It further proposed that the wards of Coleshill & Penn Street and Penn be combined in a two-member ward which would have the same number of electors per councillor as the district average. Finally, in this area the District Council proposed that Seer Green parish form a single-member ward which would also have the same number of electors per councillor as the district average, both initially and in 2005.

75 The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's proposals to include the Jordans parish ward with the rest of the parish of Chalfont St Giles. However, they suggested that the parish be split into two wards, divided north and south of the A413, Chalfont St Giles Village & Jordans and Nightingales. The Liberal Democrats opposed joining Penn and Coleshill parishes together to form a two-member ward. They argued that there are six distinct settlements which could be better served by two single-member wards: Knotty Green & Forty Green and Penn Rural. The Liberal Democrats fully supported the District Council's proposals for Seer Green. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Chalfont St Giles Village & Jordans and Nightingales wards would be 2 per cent above and 8 per cent above the district average respectively (and 2 per cent and 4 per cent in 2005 respectively). In the Liberal Democrats' proposed Knotty Green & Forty Green and Penn Rural wards, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below and 1 per cent below the district average, and (in 2005) 3 per cent below and then 1 per cent above respectively .

76 No other submissions concerning this area were received.

77 We have considered the options put forward for Chalfont St Giles, Coleshill & Penn Street and Penn and note that both schemes would give similar levels of electoral equality. During Stage One there was local consensus for a new Seer Green ward covering the parish of the same name. This ward would have the same number of electors as the district average, both initially and on 2005 figures, and we are therefore adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. Elsewhere we consider that the District Council's proposals would better reflect local communities as they would unite whole parishes rather than dividing parishes between different district wards and we therefore adopt them as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome further views and evidence from all local interests and residents on these proposals which are illustrated and named on Map 2.

Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden, Prestwood & Heath End (four wards)

78 These wards are situated to the west of the district and are all significantly under-represented. Prestwood & Heath End is represented by three councillors, Holmer Green is represented by two councillors, while both Great Missenden and Little Missenden are single-member wards. The number of electors per councillor in Great Missenden ward is currently 40 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005), 16 per cent above the average in Holmer Green ward

(unchanged in 2005), 40 per cent above the average in Little Missenden ward (unchanged in 2005) and 18 per cent above the average in Prestwood & Heath End ward (unchanged in 2005).

79 The District Council proposed no change to the ward boundaries of Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End, which under a council size of 40 would councillor:elector ratios 12 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 12 per cent above and 6 per cent below the district average respectively (unchanged by 2005).

80 The Liberal Democrats proposed that there should be some joining of Little Missenden and Holmer Green. They recommended that there should be three single member wards; Holmer Green South Central; Holmer Green North & Little Missenden: and Little Kingshill & Hyde Heath . They did not make proposals for Great Missenden and Prestwood as these fell outside their parliamentary constituency area. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Holmer Green North & Little Missenden, Holmer Green South Central and Little Kingshill & Hyde Heath would initially be 3 per cent below, 1 per cent above and equal to the average respectively, and 3 per cent below, equal to the average and 1 per cent below in 2005.

81 Great Missenden Parish Council supported the District Council's recommendation that there be no change to the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End.

82 We have noted that under the District Council's proposals the ward of Great Missenden would be 12 per cent over-represented, while Prestwood & Heath End would be 6 per cent under-represented. Officers from the Commission have visited the area and note that while the communities of Prestwood and Great Missenden have two separate centres, there is not a clear break between the two communities, with a continuous area of settlement linking them. We also note that these areas constitute parts of the same parish.

83 Given these factors we propose realigning the boundary between the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End to provide for more equitable representation at district council level. We would welcome views on these proposals. We are also proposing consequential modifications to parish warding arrangements in Great Missenden, which are outlined later in this chapter. Under existing arrangements Great Missenden has variance of 40 per cent above the average, whilst Prestwood & Heath End has a variance of 18 per cent. These figures would be repeated for the 2005 projections.

84 Under the Council's proposals Little Missenden ward would have a variance of 12 per cent, while under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the three wards in this area would have electoral variances of 3 per cent or less. However, we do not consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposed warding arrangements in this area reflect the differing, and in this case separate, communities within Little Missenden parish. The Liberal Democrats' proposals would, in our view, divide the settlement of Holmer Green in an arbitrary manner, linking Holmer Green North with the village of Little Missenden. We do not consider that these areas are similar in character, nor that they have similar community interests.

85 In the light of the evidence received so far and having visited the area we consider that the District Council's proposals represent the best balance between the achievement of electoral

equality and reflecting the statutory criteria in the remainder of this area and we are therefore adopting them as our draft recommendations. We would welcome further views and evidence during Stage Three. These proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on Map A3.

Ballinger & South Heath, Chartridge, Cholesbury & The Lee (three wards)

86 These three single-member wards are situated in the north west of the district. The number of electors per councillor in Ballinger & South Heath ward is currently 29 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2005), 8 per cent below the average in Chartridge ward (unchanged in 2005) and 3 per cent below the average in Cholesbury & The Lee ward (unchanged in 2005).

87 The District Council proposed that Ballinger & South Heath parish ward of Great Missenden parish be joined with the Chartridge parish ward of Chartridge parish to form a single-member Ballinger, South Heath and Chartridge ward which would have an electoral variance of 1 per cent (unchanged in 2005). The Bellingdon & Asheridge parish ward of Chartridge parish would then form part of a new Cholesbury, the Lee & Bellingdon ward. The number of electors per councillor in this ward would be 7 per cent below the average and 7 per above in 2005.

88 The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's recommendations for these wards. Chartridge Parish Council has expressed opposition to the parish being divided between district wards. It expressed a preference that a single-member Chartridge ward be retained under a council size of 50 members.

89 We have noted the Parish Council's objection to dividing the parish between two district wards, however, having visited that area we are content that the settlements of Chartridge and Bellingdon and Asheridge are self-contained, separate entities. We further note that there is no direct access between the Bellingdon and Asheridge parish and Chartridge parish. Having recommended a change in council size to 40 members it is not possible to retain the current single-member Chartridge ward, which would have an electoral variance of over 20 per cent. Furthermore, we do not consider that the District Council's proposals would be detrimental to community identities in the area.

90 In the light of some local support for these proposals and the improved levels of electoral equality which would be achieved, we are adopting the District Council's proposed wards of Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon and Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome further evidence during Stage Three. These proposals are illustrated and named on Map 2.

Ashley Green & Latimer and Chenies (two wards)

91 These three parishes are located to the east of the district, with the parishes of Ashley Green and Latimer comprising a single-member ward. Chenies parish comprises a single-member ward of the same name and, given an earlier boundary review, is significantly over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor currently 87 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Ashley Green & Latimer ward is currently 9 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005).

92 The District Council proposed combining these three parishes in a single-member Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies ward, which under a council size of 40 would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (unchanged in 2005).

93 This proposal was supported by the Liberal Democrats and Chenies Parish Council. No further representations were received regarding this area.

94 Given the reasonable levels of electoral equality which this proposal would provide, as well as the local support for such a ward, we are adopting the District Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations. These proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

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

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 50 to 40;
- there should be 25 wards, instead of the current 30;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five wards; and three wards should retain their existing boundaries
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.

97 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme but propose departing from it in the following areas.

- in Chesham we propose adopting Chesham Town Council's proposal.
- in Chalfont St Peters we propose no change to Austenwood ward and are putting forward alternative proposals for Gold Hill and Chalfont Central wards. We also propose prefixing all the wards in this area with the name Chalfont.
- we propose one minor modification to the Council's proposals in Amersham.
- the boundary between the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End should be modified to improve electoral equality.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	50	40	50	40
Number of wards	30	25	30	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1429	1,786	1,342	1,677
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	22	1	21	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	7	0

99 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Chiltern District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 21 to one, both initially and in 2005.

Draft Recommendation
 Chiltern District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by whole council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

100 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Chesham, Amersham, Chalfont St Peter and Great Missenden to reflect the proposed district wards.

101 The parish of Chesham is currently served by 19 councillors representing eight wards: Asheridge Vale, Hilltop, Lowndes, Newtown, Pond Park, Townsend, Waterside and St Mary’s.

As a result of our recommendations for district ward boundaries in the Chesham area, including the creation of a new Ridgeway district ward, we are proposing consequential parish warding arrangements.

Draft Recommendation
Chesham Town Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards: Townsend and Waterside (each returning three councillors), Asheridge Vale, Hilltop, Lowndes, Newtown, Pond Park, and Ridgeway (each returning two councillors) and St Mary’s (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

102 The parish of Amersham is currently served by 17 councillors representing five wards. Our draft recommendations propose a modification to the district ward boundaries and therefore we are proposing consequential changes to the parish ward boundaries in Amersham.

Draft Recommendation
Amersham Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Amersham Common (returning three councillors), Amersham-on-the-Hill (returning five councillors), Amersham Town (returning four councillors), Little Chalfont (returning four councillors) and Weedon Hill (returning one councillor). The boundary between the parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary. The parish ward of Weedon Hill would cover that area of Amersham parish in the revised Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill district ward. Our draft recommendations are illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

103 The parish of Chalfont St Peter is currently divided into four parish wards Austenwood, Chalfont Central, Chalfont Common and Gold Hill. In the light of our recommendations at district ward level we are proposing consequential changes to parish warding in this area. We are not proposing any change to the parish ward of Austenwood, but propose alternative parish ward boundaries for Chalfont Central, Chalfont Common and Gold Hill to make them coterminous with district ward boundaries.

Draft Recommendation
Chalfont St Peter Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, representing four wards: Austenwood (returning two councillors), Chalfont Central (five councillors), Chalfont Common (five councillors) and Gold Hill (three councillors). The proposed parish wards of Chalfont Central, Chalfont Common and Gold Hill are illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

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

Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Chiltern

5 NEXT STEPS

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

106 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Chiltern 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
www.lgce.gov.uk

107 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 Chiltern: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Chalfont St Peter parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Great Missenden parish.

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

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Chiltern: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Chalfont St Peter Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Great Missenden Parish

APPENDIX B

Chiltern District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

Figure B1: Chiltern District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Amersham Common	Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Amersham Town	Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Austenwood & Gold Hill	Austenwood ward (Austenwood parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish); Gold Hill ward (part – Gold Hill parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Asheridge Vale	Asheridge Vale ward (Asheridge parish ward of Chesham parish); Lowndes ward (part – Lowndes parish ward (part) of Chesham parish); Pond Park ward (part – Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Chalfont Central	Chalfont Central ward (Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Gold Hill ward (part – Gold Hill parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Great Missenden	<i>Unchanged</i> (Great Missenden ward)
Hilltop	Hilltop ward (Hilltop parish ward of Chesham parish); Townsend ward (part – Townsend parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Lowndes	Lowndes ward (Lowndes parish ward of Chesham parish); Townsend ward (part – Townsend parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Newtown	Newtown ward (Newtown parish ward of Chesham parish); Pond Park ward (part – Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Pond Park	Pond Park ward (part – Pond Park parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Prestwood & Heath End	<i>Unchanged</i> (Prestwood and Heath End ward)
St Mary's	St Mary's ward (St Mary's parish ward of Chesham parish); Waterside ward (part – Waterside parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)
Waterside	Waterside ward (part – Waterside parish ward (part) of Chesham parish)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Amersham Common	1	1,789	1,789	0	1,680	1,680	0
Amersham Town	2	3,664	1,832	3	3,440	1,720	3
Austenwood & Gold Hill	2	3,498	1,749	-2	3,285	1,643	-2
Asheridge Vale	1	1,730	1,730	-3	1,624	1,624	-3
Chalfont Central	2	3,264	1,632	-9	3,065	1,533	-9
Great Missenden	1	2,003	2,003	12	1,881	1,881	12
Hilltop	1	1,786	1,786	0	1,677	1,677	0
Lowndes	1	1,823	1,823	2	1,712	1,712	2
Newtown	2	3,430	1,715	-4	3,221	1,611	-4
Pond Park	1	1,960	1,960	10	1,840	1,840	10
Prestwood & Heath End	3	5,056	1,685	-6	4,748	1,583	-6
St Mary's	1	1,666	1,666	-7	1,564	1,564	-7
Waterside	1	1,818	1,818	2	1,707	1,707	2

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

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

Figure B3: Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats' Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Amersham Common	Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Amersham Town	Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Common Ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Austenwood	Austenwood ward (Austenwood parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish); Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Chalfont Common	Chalfont Common ward (part – Chalfont Common parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Chalfont Newlands	Chalfont Common ward (part – Chalfont Common parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Chalfont Park	Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Chalfont St Giles Village & Jordans	Chalfont St Giles ward (part – Chalfont St Giles parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Giles parish); Jordans ward (Jordans parish ward of Chalfont St Giles parish)
Chalfont St Peter Central	Chalfont Central ward (part – Chalfont Central parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish); Gold Hill ward (part – Gold Hill parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Peter parish)
Gold Hill	<i>Unchanged</i> (Gold Hill ward)
Holmer Green North & Little Missenden	Holmer Green ward (part – Holmer Green parish ward (part) of Little Missenden parish); Little Missenden ward (Little Missenden parish ward of Little Missenden parish)
Holmer Green South Central	Holmer Green ward (part – Holmer Green parish ward (part) of Little Missenden parish)
Knotty Green & Forty Green	Penn ward (part – Penn parish ward (part) of Penn parish)
Little Chalfont Elizabeth	Little Chalfont ward (part – Little Chalfont parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Little Chalfont Snellswood	Little Chalfont ward (part – Little Chalfont parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Common ward (part – Amersham Common parish ward (part) of Amersham parish); Amersham Town ward (part – Amersham Town parish ward (part) of Amersham parish)
Little Kingshill & Hyde Heath	Little Kingshill ward (the parish of Little Kingshill ward Little Missenden parish); Hyde Heath ward (the parish of Hyde Heath ward Little Missenden parish)

Ward name	Constituent areas
Nightingales	Chalfont St Giles ward (part – Chalfont St Giles parish ward (part) of Chalfont St Giles parish)
Penn Rural	Coleshill ward (Coleshill parish ward of Coleshill parish); Penn ward (part – Penn parish ward (part) of Penn parish)

Figure B4: Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats' Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Amersham Common	1	1,899	1,899	6	1,790	1,790	7
Amersham Town	2	3,551	1,776	-1	3,494	1,747	4
Austenwood	1	1,822	1,822	2	1,736	1,736	4
Chalfont Common	1	1,666	1,666	-7	1,617	1,617	-4
Chalfont Newlands	1	1,629	1,629	-9	1,603	1,603	-4
Chalfont Park	1	1,583	1,583	-11	1,498	1,498	-11
Chalfont St Giles Village & Jordans	2	3,644	1,822	2	3,433	1,717	2
Chalfont St Peter Central	1	1,697	1,697	-5	1,607	1,607	-4
Gold Hill	1	1,750	1,750	-2	1,617	1,617	-4
Holmer Green North & Little Missenden	1	1,741	1,741	-3	1,622	1,622	-3
Holmer Green South Central	1	1,798	1,798	1	1,675	1,675	0
Knotty Green & Forty Green	1	1,753	1,753	-2	1,633	1,633	-3
Little Chalfont Elizabeth	1	1,865	1,865	4	1,757	1,757	5
Little Chalfont Snellswood	1	1,824	1,824	2	1,700	1,700	1
Little Kingshill & Hyde Heath	1	1,783	1,783	-0	1,659	1,659	-1
Nightingales	1	1,924	1,924	8	1,752	1,752	4
Penn Rural	1	1,827	1,827	-1	1,701	1,701	1

Source: Electorate figures are based on Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrats' submission.

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX D

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Commission compliance with Code criteria

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