

Draft Recommendations
on the future electoral arrangements for
Fareham in Hampshire

January 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
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 Fareham in Hampshire.

© Crown Copyright 2000

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

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 Fareham Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	<i>23</i>
B The Statutory Provisions	<i>25</i>

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

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Fareham 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 Fareham:

- **in eight of the 14 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and three wards vary 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 10 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 71-72) are that:

- **Fareham Borough Council should have 31 councillors, 11 fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 15 wards, instead of 14 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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 13 of the proposed 15 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 expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 7 per cent from the average for the district 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:

**Review Manager
Fareham 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**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Fareham East	2	Fareham East ward (part); Fareham South ward (part); Portchester West ward (part);	Map 2
2 Fareham North	2	Fareham North ward ; Fareham North-West ward (part); Fareham West ward (part)	Map 2
3 Fareham North-West	2	Fareham North-West ward (part)	Map 2
4 Fareham South	2	Fareham East ward (part); Fareham South ward (part)	Map 2
5 Fareham West	2	Fareham West ward (part); Titchfield ward (part)	Map 2
6 Hill Head	2	Hill Head ward (part)	Map 2
7 Locks Heath	2	Locks Heath ward (part)	Map 2
8 Park Gate	2	Locks Heath ward (part); Sarisbury ward (part); Warsash ward (part)	Map 2
9 Portchester Central & East	3	Portchester Central ward; Portchester East ward; Portchester West ward (part)	Map 2
10 Portchester West	2	Portchester West ward (part)	Map 2
11 Sarisbury	2	Sarisbury ward (part)	Map 2
12 Stubbington	2	Hill Head ward (part); Stubbington ward	Map 2
13 Titchfield	2	Locks Heath ward (part); Titchfield ward (part)	Map 2
14 Titchfield Common	2	Locks Heath ward (part); Titchfield ward (part)	Map 2
15 Warsash	2	Locks Heath ward (part); Warsash ward (part)	Map 2

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 Fareham

	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	Fareham East	2	5,173	2,587	-3	5,356	2,678	-5
2	Fareham North	2	5,435	2,718	2	5,604	2,802	-1
3	Fareham North-West	2	5,587	2,794	5	5,470	2,735	-3
4	Fareham South	2	5,047	2,524	-5	5,319	2,660	-6
5	Fareham West	2	5,478	2,739	3	5,567	2,784	-2
6	Hill Head	2	5,889	2,945	11	6,030	3,015	7
7	Locks Heath	2	5,380	2,690	1	5,685	2,843	0
8	Park Gate	2	4,903	2,452	-8	5,681	2,841	0
9	Portchester Central & East	3	8,661	2,887	9	8,831	2,944	4
10	Portchester West	2	5,500	2,750	4	5,523	2,762	-3
11	Sarisbury	2	4,467	2,234	-16	5,755	2,878	2
12	Stubbington	2	5,529	2,765	4	5,952	2,976	5
13	Titchfield	2	5,066	2,533	-5	5,655	2,828	0
14	Titchfield Common	2	5,110	2,555	-4	5,703	2,852	1
15	Warsash	2	5,019	2,510	-5	5,705	2,853	1
	Totals	31	82,244	-	-	87,816	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,653	-	-	2,833	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Fareham 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 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 borough of Fareham 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 Fareham. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report No. 59). 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 B).

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 district 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 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, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the 11 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 *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 Fareham 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 Members 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 25 October 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 Fareham lies on the south coast between Portsmouth and Southampton and covers some 30 square miles. The borough has seen significant growth in recent years, with housing, industrial and commercial development. However, it retains extensive areas of open countryside in the north and along the Solent coastline. The main commercial and business centre for the borough is the town of Fareham, while the remainder of the borough's population is centred around former villages. These villages have seen considerable residential development. The population of the borough is 99,262 (1999), with a population density of around 31 people per hectare. There are no parishes in the borough.

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 borough is 82,244 (February 1999). The Council presently has 42 members who are elected from 14 wards. All of the wards are represented by three councillors each. The Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Fareham borough, with around 40 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Lock Heath and Sarisbury wards.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,958 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,091 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 eight of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, three wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Locks Heath ward where the councillor represents 90 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Fareham

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	Fareham East	3	5,310	1,770	-10	5,604	1,868	-11
2	Fareham North	3	4,784	1,595	-19	4,894	1,631	-22
3	Fareham North-West	3	5,643	1,881	-4	5,587	1,862	-11
4	Fareham South	3	4,773	1,591	-19	4,939	1,646	-21
5	Fareham West	3	5,480	1,827	-7	5,444	1,815	-13
6	Hill Head	3	6,181	2,060	5	6,336	2,112	1
7	Locks Heath	3	11,184	3,728	90	12,096	4,032	93
8	Portchester Central	3	4,512	1,504	-23	4,594	1,531	-27
9	Portchester East	3	4,009	1,336	-32	4,076	1,359	-35
10	Portchester West	3	5,772	1,924	-2	5,793	1,931	-8
11	Sarisbury	3	6,938	2,313	18	9,107	3,036	45
12	Stubbington	3	5,237	1,746	-11	5,646	1,882	-10
13	Titchfield	3	5,664	1,888	-4	6,374	2,125	2
14	Warsash	3	6,757	2,252	15	7,326	2,442	17
	Totals	42	82,244	-	-	87,816	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,958	-	-	2,091	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Fareham 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Portchester East ward were relatively over-represented by 32 per cent, while electors in Locks Heath ward were relatively under-represented by 90 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 Fareham Borough Council.

22 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 five representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Fareham Constituency Labour Party, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

Fareham Borough Council

23 The Council proposed a council size of 32 members, 10 fewer than at present, representing 16 two-member wards. Under its proposals all of the present 14 wards would be modified. The Council proposed two new wards in the west of the Borough, Park Gate and Titchfield Common, in order to address the high level of under-representation that exists in the area, resulting from a large growth in the electorate due to housing development.

24 The Council proposed a uniform pattern of two-member wards, stating that it considered that this would readily lend itself to the Government's proposed changes in the structure of the decision-making process in local government. The Council stated that its proposals sought to maintain community ties and minimise the change to voters' understanding of and attachment to wards. The Council's proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

Fareham Constituency Labour Party

25 Fareham Constituency Labour Party proposed maintaining the existing pattern of three-member wards throughout the Borough, but proposed increasing the number of wards from 14 to 16 and the number of councillors from 42 to 48, six more than at present.

26 The Labour Party stated that its proposed increase in council size reflected the "substantial population increase which the Borough has witnessed". It argued that the Council's proposals did not sufficiently address the issue of electoral equality and contended that the Portchester area would, under the Council's proposals, "have too few electors". In the west of the borough the Labour Party's proposals were broadly similar to the Council's but with some minor adjustments to further improve electoral equality.

Fareham Conservative Association

27 Fareham Conservative Association supported Fareham Borough Council's proposals for 16 wards across the borough. However, it stated that it could not support the Council's proposals for three two-member wards in Portchester, contending that the "number equalisation" [electoral equality] was its paramount concern, and therefore proposed that Portchester should be represented by five councillors, rather than six as put forward by the Council.

Other Representations

28 We received two further representations, from the Fareham Society, a local amenity society, and Councillor Pritchard. The Fareham Society stated that it supported the move to two-member wards for the borough. It supported the Council's proposal for three two-member wards in the Portchester area, contending that while the proposal would result in the area being over-represented, it would be preferable to the possibility of a single-member ward in the area. The Society argued that, in its view, single member wards result in a perceived "poorer" level of representation, stating that "it is very important that local people are adequately represented at all times."

29 Councillor Pritchard, who represents Fareham West ward, supported the Council's proposed 13 wards between the Hamble River, the western boundary of the borough, and the Deleme Arms viaduct in eastern Fareham. However, he argued that the area would be more fairly represented by five councillors, rather than six as proposed by the Council. Councillor Pritchard proposed that Portchester should be represented by one two-member and one three-member ward.

30 He also suggested an alternative warding configuration for Portchester which would include a single-member Central Portchester ward and two two-member wards. However, he argued that a single-member ward may have potential disadvantages, including member isolation and the lack of an alternative member for local residents to consult. He also noted that there may well be a local perception that single-member wards were somehow inferior and that the electors would be "missing out".

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

31 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Fareham 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”.

32 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.

33 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.

34 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, 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

35 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 7 per cent from 82,244 to 87,816 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Sarisbury ward, although significant growth is also expected in the neighbouring Locks Heath 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.

36 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

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

38 Fareham Borough Council presently has 42 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 32 members, a reduction of 10. It stated that it had taken into account the Government's White Paper, *Local Leadership, Local Choice*, and that it had considered how its revised arrangements would operate and how a reduced council size would affect the alternative political management models (although it had not yet concluded which alternative model of governance it would wish to introduce). The Fareham Conservative Association proposed a reduction in council size to 31 members, contending that it would make a considerable efficiency and monetary saving to the electorate.

39 Fareham Constituency Labour Party proposed an increase in council size from 42 to 48 councillors. It contended that its proposals would facilitate the retention of the existing councillor:elector ratio and would also take into account the growth in population which the borough has seen in recent years. It contended that its proposal also fitted with the Government's proposals to introduce an executive/scrutiny split within local councils and would assist in the continued representation of councillors on community organisations' management committees.

40 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. We have noted that the Labour Party proposed increasing council size by six members to 48. However, we have not been persuaded that sufficient evidence has been submitted to support such an increase. We have noted that the Borough Council, Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard all proposed reducing council size. In view of this broad consensus of support for a reduction in council size we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme, albeit with slight modifications.

41 We considered the Council's submission and noted that under its proposed 32-member scheme, the Portchester area would be entitled to 5.51 councillors initially (5.22 by 2004). However, the Council proposed allocating the Portchester area six councillors, which would result in a marked over-representation of electors. The three proposed wards would vary from the borough average by 6 per cent, 9 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (deteriorating to 12 per cent, 13 per cent and 14 per cent by 2004).

42 We also noted that Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard both opposed this proposed level of over-representation in Portchester, arguing that as the area would be entitled to five councillors overall, it should be represented by five councillors. In view of this imbalance of representation under the council's 32-member scheme, and given the alternative suggestions put forward by the Conservatives and Councillor Pritchard, we have considered reducing council size to 31 members, and allocating to Portchester the five councillors to which it would be entitled. Under a 31-member council-size, Portchester would be entitled to 5.34 councillors initially and 5.06 councillors in 2004.

43 Therefore, in view of the improvement to the balance of representation between Portchester and the remainder of the borough, the fact that Portchester would be represented by the appropriate number of councillors, and 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 31 members.

Electoral Arrangements

44 As detailed earlier, given the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and in view of the local consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our draft 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 or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, 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 two areas. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Portchester (three wards);
- (b) Hill Head and Stubbington wards;
- (c) Fareham (five wards);
- (d) Locks Heath, Sarisbury, Titchfield and Warsash wards.

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

Portchester (three wards)

46 The three-member wards of Portchester Central, Portchester East and Portchester West are situated in the most easterly part of the borough. The three wards currently vary above the borough average by 23 per cent, 32 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (27 per cent, 35 per cent and 8 per cent above in 2004).

47 In its Stage One submission, the Council contended that the existing Portchester Central and Portchester East wards possess a distinct community which reflects the former village of Portchester, comprising properties which were built prior to 1970. It stated that the existing Portchester West ward comprises 1930s and 1940s housing which have been linked by more recent housing developments. It stated that it had examined alternative ward configurations for the Portchester area, including extending the western boundary of Portchester West ward into the existing Fareham East ward. However, it contended that natural boundaries of Fareham Creek, the A27/M27 and the railway line prevent any real link between the two communities of Portchester and Fareham.

48 The Council proposed that the three existing three-member Portchester wards should be modified, proposing a reduced two-member Portchester West ward, a two-member Portchester Central ward (comprising the whole of the existing Portchester Central ward with the addition of some 161 electors from Portchester West ward) and a two-member Portchester East ward (comprising the whole of the existing Portchester East ward with the addition of some 637 electors from Portchester West ward). Under its 32-member council size, the Council's three modified Portchester wards would be over-represented by 6 per cent, 9 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (12 per cent, 13 per cent and 14 per cent by 2004).

49 Fareham Constituency Labour Party also proposed that, overall, Portchester be represented by six councillors. As a consequence of its proposal to retain a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough, the Labour Party proposed that Portchester West ward should utilise Cornerway Lane as its western boundary and comprise most of the eastern part of the existing Portchester West ward and the majority of the existing Portchester Central ward. The Labour Party's proposed Portchester East ward would be based on the existing Portchester East ward, although its western boundary would be modified to include part of the existing Portchester Central ward and the west side of Hill Road.

50 Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard both proposed that Portchester should, in total, be represented by five councillors. The Conservative Association proposed that there should be a single-member Portchester Central ward with two two-member wards. Councillor Pritchard proposed a two-member Portchester West ward and a three-member Portchester Central & East ward. His proposals would utilise existing boundaries in the area, with the proposed Portchester West ward retaining the majority of its existing boundaries less properties in Bath Lane and Deanes Park Road which the Borough Council proposed transferring to Fareham East ward.

51 As outlined earlier in this report, we are of the view that the retention of six councillors and the over-representation of the Portchester area cannot be justified and that the area would most properly be served by five councillors. Although Councillor Pritchard's proposal would move away from a universal pattern of two-member wards throughout the borough, it would result in a greater level of electoral equality than both the existing arrangements and those proposed by the Council.

52 Given that most representations supported multi-member wards in the area, we have therefore decided to adopt the proposals put forward by Councillor Pritchard, for one two-member and one three-member ward, as part of our draft recommendations. However, we are also proposing to include Hill Road in the proposed Portchester Central & East ward, as put forward by the Council and Fareham Constituency Labour Party. Our proposed wards of Portchester Central & East and Portchester West would vary by 9 per cent and 4 per cent from the borough average initially (4 per cent and 3 per cent by 2004). We would very much welcome views on our proposals in this area during Stage Three, particularly with regard to ward names. Details of our proposed boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Hill Head and Stubbington wards

53 The wards of Hill Head and Stubbington lie on the southern coastal boundary of the borough and are relatively isolated from the rest of the borough, separated from Fareham by open farmland. Currently Hill Head ward is relatively under-represented and Stubbington ward is over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor in the two wards being 5 per cent above and 11 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above and 10 per cent below respectively by 2004).

54 The Borough Council proposed that 180 electors should be transferred from Hill Head ward into Stubbington ward in order to improve electoral equality and continue reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. Under the Council's proposals, the revised Hill Head and Stubbington wards would vary by 11 per cent and 4 per cent from the borough average initially. However, Hill Head ward would improve to 7 per cent from the borough average by 2004 while Stubbington ward would worsen slightly to 5 per cent from the borough average by 2004.

55 Both Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard supported the Borough Council's proposals for two revised wards in this area. The Conservative Association stated that it supported the boundaries, "in view of the practicality of having to include electors from across a wide swathe of farmland".

56 Fareham Constituency Labour Party proposed modifying the two wards in order to improve electoral equality. It proposed that the northern part of Stubbington should be joined with an area on the western edge of Fareham to create a new Fareham West & Stubbington North ward.

57 Although the proposals from the Labour Party would further improve electoral equality, they would not, in the Commission's view, provide for a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities in the area. We therefore propose adopting the Council's modified Hill Head and Stubbington wards as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on our proposals, as shown on the large map at the back of this report, during Stage Three.

Fareham (five wards)

58 Fareham is the largest centre of population in the borough. The town is currently divided into five three-member wards; Fareham East, Fareham North, Fareham North-West, Fareham South and Fareham West, and is served by 15 councillors. The five wards currently suffer from a relatively high level of electoral inequality and are all over-represented, varying by 10 per cent, 19 per cent, 4 per cent, 19 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average respectively (11 per cent, 22 per cent, 11 per cent, 21 per cent and 13 per cent respectively by 2004).

59 The Council proposed that Fareham should be represented by 10 councillors overall, putting forward five two-member wards. It proposed minor modifications to the boundaries of the existing wards in order to improve electoral equality. Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard supported the Council's proposals for Fareham.

60 The Labour Party proposed maintaining a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough, consequently retaining 15 councillors for the Fareham area. However, it proposed an alternative configuration of wards to the Council. The Labour Party stated that its submission was based on its objection to the levels of under- and over-representation in which the Council's scheme would result, particularly in the Hill Head/Stubbington and Portchester areas. Consequently it proposed boundary and council size modifications which would produce significantly improved levels of electoral equality, although in the Commission's opinion a poorer reflection of local community identities and interests.

61 The Labour Party's proposed two new wards, Fareham East & Downend (comprising the central part of the existing Fareham East ward and the Downend area) and a new Fareham West & Stubbington North ward (comprising the south-western corner of Fareham and north Stubbington). It supported the Council's proposed Fareham North-West ward.

62 As outlined earlier, we are basing our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme, and we support the Council's premise that the Stubbington/Hill Head area is, within the context of the Borough's geography, somewhat isolated and should retain two wards. We do not support the Labour Party's proposal to include part of Fareham with Stubbington and therefore propose adopting the Council's proposed wards for Fareham, which are also supported by the Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard.

63 However, although under a 32-member scheme the Council's proposals would produce a good level of electoral equality by 2004, as a consequence of our proposal to adopt a 31-member scheme, Fareham would be very slightly over-represented. We therefore propose modifying the Council's proposed boundary between Fareham West and Titchfield wards; in addition to the houses which the Council propose transferring from Titchfield ward into to Fareham West ward, we also propose including houses from Sandisplatt and Sharpness Close in Fareham West ward in order to further improve the electoral equality overall.

64 The number of electors per councillor in our proposed wards of Fareham East, Fareham North, Fareham North-West, Fareham South and Fareham West would initially be 3 per cent below, 2 per cent above, 5 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 3 per cent above the borough average (5 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2004). Details of our draft recommendations for these wards are shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Locks Heath, Sarisbury, Titchfield and Warsash wards

65 The four wards of Locks Heath, Sarisbury, Titchfield and Warsash are situated in the west of the borough. Locks Heath, Sarisbury and Warsash wards are significantly under-represented and currently vary from the borough average by 90 per cent, 18 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. This level of inequality is forecast to deteriorate, with the three wards varying by 93 per cent, 45 per cent and 17 per cent respectively by 2004. Titchfield ward currently varies from the borough average by 4 per cent (2 per cent by 2004).

66 In order to address the electoral inequality that currently exists in this area, the Council proposed creating a new Park Gate ward, comprising parts of the existing Sarisbury, Locks Heath and Warsash wards. It also proposed further modifications to the boundaries of the existing wards of Warsash and Titchfield in order to improve electoral equality. The Council stated that it had considered transferring a number of properties from the Catisfield area out of Titchfield ward into Fareham West ward. However, in the light of the responses to its public consultation exercise, it proposed substituting an area to the west of Peak Lane instead.

67 Both Fareham Conservative Association and Councillor Pritchard supported the Council's proposals in this area. The Labour Party supported the Council's proposed Sarisbury and Park Gate wards, and put forward broadly similar proposals to those of the Council for Titchfield Common, Locks Heath and Warsash wards. It proposed minor boundary adjustments to the Council's proposed wards which would include transferring the Abshot area into the proposed Titchfield Common ward from the proposed Warsash ward.

68 As stated previously, we propose endorsing a reduction in council size to 31 members. However, under the Council's scheme, the western 'rural' wards would be slightly under-represented while the Fareham wards would be slightly over-represented. We are therefore proposing a modification to the boundary between the proposed Titchfield and Fareham West wards in order to address this imbalance as detailed earlier.

69 Subject to our slight modification to the boundary between Fareham West and Titchfield wards, we support the Council's proposals for this area. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Locks Heath, Park Gate, Sarisbury, Titchfield, Titchfield Common and Warsash would be initially 1 per cent above, 8 per cent below, 16 per cent below, 5 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 5 per cent below the borough average respectively (equal to the average, equal to the average, 2 per cent above, equal to the average, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent above by 2004). We would welcome views on our proposals for this area, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report, during Stage Three.

Electoral Cycle

70 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

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

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 42 to 31;
- (b) there should be 15 wards, one more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

72 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) in Portchester we are proposing that the area should be represented by five councillors, rather than six as put forward by the Council, and propose creating a new two-member Portchester West ward and a new three-member Portchester Central & East ward;
- (b) we are also proposing a slight modification to the boundary between the proposed Titchfield and Fareham West wards.

73 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	42	31	42	31
Number of wards	14	15	14	15
Average number of electors per councillor	1,958	2,653	2,091	2,833
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	2	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	0	6	0

74 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Fareham Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from eight to two. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

Draft Recommendation

Fareham Borough Council should comprise 31 councillors serving 15 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.

75 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Fareham 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 Fareham

5 NEXT STEPS

76 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Fareham. 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.

77 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Fareham 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

78 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

Fareham 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 A1: Fareham Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Fareham West	Fareham West ward (part); Titchfield ward (part)
Portchester Central	Portchester Central ward; Portchester West ward (part)
Portchester East	Portchester East ward; Portchester West ward (part)
Portchester West	Fareham East ward (part); Portchester West ward (part)
Titchfield	Locks Heath ward (part); Titchfield ward (part)

Figure A2: Fareham 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 %
Fareham West	2	5,404	2,702	5	5,438	2,719	-1
Portchester Central	2	4,694	2,347	-9	4,777	2,389	-13
Portchester East	2	4,646	2,323	-10	4,717	2,359	-14
Portchester West	2	4,821	2,411	-6	4,840	2,420	-12
Titchfield	2	5,140	2,570	0	5,784	2,892	5

Source: Electorate figures are based on Fareham 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

APPENDIX B

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 districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. 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.

¹The 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 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.