

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Hart in Hampshire

January 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

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

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

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Hart 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 Hart.

- **In 11 of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent 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 12 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 10 wards (in one ward over 50 per cent).**

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

- **Hart District Council should have 35 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, instead of 16 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two;**
- **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 14 of the proposed 18 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, and two wards would vary by more than 20 per cent.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in three wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2004.**

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 parishes of Crookham Village and Blackwater & Hawley.**

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

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

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

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Blackwater & Hawley	2	Hawley ward (part – the Blackwater and proposed Minley parish wards of Blackwater & Hawley parish)	Large map
2	Church Crookham East (in Fleet)	2	Church Crookham ward (part)	Large map
3	Church Crookham West (in Fleet)	2	Church Crookham ward (part); Crondall ward (part – the proposed Zebon parish ward of Crookham Village parish); Fleet Courtmoor ward (part)	Map A4 and large map
4	Crondall	2	Crondall ward (part – the parish of Crondall and the proposed Crookham Village parish ward of Crookham Village parish)	Maps A3, A4 and large map
5	Eversley	1	Eversley ward; Whitewater ward (part – the parishes of Heckfield and Mattingley)	Map 2 and large map
6	Fleet Central	2	Fleet West ward (part); Fleet Pondtail ward (part)	Large map
7	Fleet Courtmoor	2	Fleet Courtmoor ward (part)	Large map
8	Fleet North	2	Fleet West ward (part); Hawley ward (part – the proposed Ancells parish ward of Blackwater & Hawley parish)	Large map
9	Fleet Pondtail	2	Fleet Pondtail ward (part)	Large map
10	Fleet West	2	Crondall ward (part – the proposed Netherhouse parish ward of Crookham Village parish); Fleet West ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
11	Frogmore & Darby Green	2	Frogmore & Darby Green ward (part – the proposed Frogmore & Darby Green parish ward of Yateley parish)	Large map
12	Hartley Wintney	2	Hartley Wintney ward (part – the parish of Hartley Wintney parish)	Map 2 and large map
13	Hook	3	Hook ward (the parish of Hook); Whitewater ward (part – the parish of Rotherwick)	Maps 2 and A2
14	Long Sutton	1	Long Sutton ward; Odiham ward (part – the Odiham Airfield parish ward of Odiham parish)	Maps 2 and A2
15	Odiham	2	Crondall ward (part – the parish of Dogmersfield); Hartley Wintney ward (part – the parish of Winchfield); Odiham ward (part – the Odiham and North Warnborough parish wards of Odiham parish)	Maps 2 and A2
16	Yateley East	2	Yateley East ward (the proposed Yateley East parish ward of Yateley parish)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
17	Yateley North	2	Yateley North ward (the proposed Yateley North parish ward of Yateley parish)	Large map
18	Yateley West	2	Yateley West ward (the proposed Yateley West parish ward of Yateley parish)	Large map

*Notes: 1 The district of Hart is parished except for the town of Fleet comprising the seven wards indicated above.
2 Map 2 and Appendix A and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Hart

	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	Blackwater & Hawley	2	3,472	1,736	-6	3,532	1,766	-8
2	Church Crookham East	2	3,888	1,944	5	3,865	1,933	1
3	Church Crookham West	2	3,499	1,750	-5	3,696	1,848	-4
4	Crondall	2	2,911	1,456	-21	3,541	1,771	-8
5	Eversley	1	2,063	2,063	12	2,060	2,060	7
6	Fleet Central	2	3,820	1,910	3	3,770	1,885	-2
7	Fleet Courtmoor	2	3,920	1,960	6	3,863	1,932	1
8	Fleet North	2	2,181	1,091	-41	3,322	1,661	-13
9	Fleet Pondtail	2	3,820	1,910	3	3,783	1,892	-1
10	Fleet West	2	3,840	1,920	4	3,733	1,867	-3
11	Frogmore & Darby Green	2	4,279	2,140	16	4,261	2,131	11
12	Hartley Wintney	2	3,948	1,974	7	4,257	2,129	11
13	Hook	3	5,660	1,887	2	6,026	2,009	5
14	Long Sutton	1	1,713	1,713	-7	1,740	1,740	-9
15	Odiham	2	3,556	1,778	-4	3,680	1,840	-4
16	Yateley East	2	4,076	2,038	10	4,078	2,039	6
17	Yateley North	2	3,982	1,991	8	3,951	1,976	3
18	Yateley West	2	4,021	2,011	9	4,016	2,008	5
	Totals	35	64,649	-	-	67,174	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,847	-	-	1,919	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Hart 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 Hart 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 Hart. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1976 (Report No. 129). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in 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, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* 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*. 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 arise only 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, or 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 Hampshire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

12 Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Hart District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district 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 District 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 14 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 district of Hart is situated in the north of the county of Hampshire, with the districts of Rushmoor to its east and Basingstoke & Deane to its west, and the counties of Surrey to the east and Berkshire to the north. The district covers an area of over 21,500 hectares, and with a population of nearly 81,000 has a population density of nearly 4 persons per hectare. The area has experienced considerable growth in the last 20 years due to the district being in the M3 corridor, with good road links to surrounding areas, and having good rail links to surrounding towns (such as Basingstoke, Farnborough and Guildford) and London.

17 The main town in the district is Fleet, with smaller settlements in Yateley, Hook and Hartley Wintney. The district contains 17 parishes, but Fleet town itself is unparished and comprises nearly 30 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

19 The electorate of the district is 64,649 (February 1999). The Council presently has 35 members who are elected from 16 wards, nine of which are relatively urban, of which four are in Fleet, three in Yateley and one each in Hook and Hartley Wintney, the remainder being predominantly rural. Six of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and three are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Hart district, with around 44 per cent more electors per councillor than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Fleet, Church Crookham and Hook.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,847 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,919 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 11 of the 16 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in eight wards by more than 20 per cent and in five wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Hook ward where the councillor represents 42 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Hart

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	Hawley	3	4,247	1,416	-23	4,289	1,430	-26
2	Church Crookham	3	4,987	1,662	-10	4,957	1,652	-14
3	Crondall	2	5,100	2,550	38	5,944	2,972	55
4	Eversley	1	1,326	1,326	-28	1,317	1,317	-31
5	Fleet Courtmoor	3	5,371	1,790	-3	5,291	1,764	-8
6	Fleet Pondtail	3	5,378	1,793	-3	5,326	1,775	-7
7	Fleet West	3	6,528	2,176	18	7,556	2,519	31
8	Frogmore & Derby Green	3	4,294	1,431	-23	4,276	1,425	-26
9	Hartley Wintney	2	4,416	2,208	20	4,725	2,363	23
10	Hook	2	5,233	2,617	42	5,591	2,796	46
11	Long Sutton	1	1,159	1,159	-37	1,186	1,186	-38
12	Odiham	2	3,382	1,691	-8	3,508	1,754	-9
13	Whitewater	1	1,164	1,164	-37	1,178	1,178	-39
14	Yateley East	2	3,747	1,874	1	3,749	1,875	-2
15	Yateley North	2	3,294	1,647	-11	3,264	1,632	-15
16	Yateley West	2	5,023	2,512	36	5,017	2,509	31
	Totals	35	64,649	–	–	67,174	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,847	–	–	1,919	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Hart 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 1999, electors in Long Sutton and Whitewater wards were relatively over-represented by 37 per cent, while electors in Hook ward were relatively under-represented by 42 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Hart District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

23 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the District Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 14 representations during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the District Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Hart District Council

24 The District Council proposed a council of 35 members, the same as at present, serving 18 wards, compared to the existing 16. It proposed one three-member ward, 15 two-member wards and two single-member wards with modifications to all existing wards.

25 The Council proposed that Fleet town be divided into seven wards instead of the existing four, that the boundaries of the four Yateley wards be amended slightly, that Hartley Wintney ward boundary be coterminous with the parish boundary and that Hook ward be enlarged to incorporate Rotherwick parish. In the rural areas it proposed reconfiguring the parishes in the current Whitewater ward between the surrounding Eversley and Hook wards. It proposed that the Odiham Airfield parish ward of Odiham parish be combined with the existing Long Sutton ward in order to improve electoral equality in both the Long Sutton and Odiham wards. The proposed Odiham ward would then incorporate the remainder of Odiham parish with Winchfield parish, currently in Hartley Wintney ward, and Dogmersfield parish, currently in Crondall ward.

26 It proposed creating a new parish ward in Blackwater & Hawley parish, which would then be included in the proposed Fleet North ward, with the remainder of the ward being renamed Blackwater & Hawley ward. It also proposed creating two new parish wards in Crookham Village parish for the east of the parish which would be incorporated in the proposed Fleet West and Church Crookham West wards, while the remaining parish ward would remain in Crondall ward with Crondall parish.

27 The District Council's proposals would greatly improve electoral equality throughout the district, although two wards, Crondall and Fleet North, would have electoral variances in excess of 20 per cent currently, forecast to improve to 8 per cent and 21 per cent in 2004. The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

Parish and Town Councils

28 We received representations from one town council and eight parish councils. Blackwater & Hawley Town Council proposed combining the Frogmore & Darby Green area of Yateley with the northern part of the existing Hawley ward. It also proposed that the southern part of Hawley ward, around the Ancells Farm area, be warded and placed in a district ward with Fleet or Church Crookham.

29 Crookham Village Parish Council opposed the Council's proposals for Crondall ward. It proposed retaining Dogmersfield parish and the Council's proposed Zebon parish ward within Crondall ward, and redrawing the boundary between Crondall and Church Crookham West wards. Hook Parish Council proposed that Hook parish not be warded, and that instead it should be represented by three district councillors and, if necessary, placed in a ward with other parishes, because of its strong community spirit. Odiham Parish Council proposed creating a three-member Odiham ward incorporating Long Sutton ward. It argued that this configuration would better reflect community ties than hiving off the RAF Station from the remainder of the parish, and that this proposal would strengthen the ties between Odiham and the parishes to its south and west. Winchfield Parish Council opposed the proposal to place Winchfield parish in a ward with Odiham, Dogmersfield and Long Sutton parishes. It stated a preference to remain in a ward with Hartley Wintney parish. It also expressed support for the four-member ward proposed by the six district councillors (described later), as did Hartley Wintney, Heckfield, Mattingley and Rotherwick parish councils.

Other Representations

30 We received a further four representations from a group of six district councillors, one county councillor and two district councillors. The group of six councillors proposed creating a four-member ward comprising the parishes of Bramshill, Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Heckfield, Hook, Mattingley, Rotherwick and Winchfield, situated in the north-west of the district. This would result in the district being represented by 36 councillors in total. They considered that this ward would be manageable and cohesive and that it would reflect the close links between the parishes. This proposal received support from the parish councils mentioned above, and also from a county councillor, who stated that the position in this north-western area represents a very exceptional circumstance.

31 Councillor Leversha, district councillor for Crondall ward, opposed the Council's proposal to place the parishes of Dogmersfield and Winchfield in Odiham ward, arguing that this ward would be too large, and that interests of those living in the north and south of the ward would not be adequately represented. Councillor Parker, district councillor for Fleet West ward, stated a preference for single-member wards and biennial elections, and proposed that two council seats be held in abeyance for the Elvetham Heath development until the area contains 2,500 registered electors.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

33 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.

34 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.

35 Our *Guidance* states that although 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 of 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

36 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of nearly 4 per cent from 64,649 to 67,174 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. 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. It predicted most of the growth would be in Fleet and Crondall wards, with the most significant growth expected in the Elvetham Heath development in the proposed Fleet North ward. Over the next five years the electorate for this area is expected to increase by over 1,000, and by 2010 is expected to be over 3,500. However, in this review we may only have regard to the projected electorate figures to the year 2004 rather than on completion of the development, expected in 2010.

37 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 available at this time. Crookham Village Parish Council questioned the projections used by the District Council, but were not specific about the reasons for their concern. However, District Council officers have confirmed that their forecast electorate represents the best estimate currently available, based on Hampshire County Council's Small Area Population Forecasts. We are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time, although we would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

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

39 Hart District Council presently has 35 members, and the District Council proposed retaining the existing council size. The group of six councillors who proposed a four-member ward in the north-eastern part of the district proposed increasing the council size to 36 in order to incorporate this four-member ward. However, we consider that a four-member ward could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate, as stated in our *Guidance*, and the consequential effects on surrounding wards would also result in worse levels of electoral equality in Odiham ward. Therefore, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, and given that we consider that the District Council's scheme provides the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 35 members.

Electoral Arrangements

40 The District Council put forward the only district-wide scheme for Hart, and its proposals build on the current warding arrangements. It put forward a mixture of single- and multi-member wards, with a large increase in the number of two-member wards in light of the Government's White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*. Councillor Parker argued that single-member wards would be beneficial, but did not provide a detailed scheme.

41 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. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further, and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the District Council's proposals in relation to four areas in the unparished area of Fleet.

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

- (a) Fleet (four wards);
- (b) Yateley (four wards);
- (c) Crondall, Odiham and Long Sutton wards;
- (d) Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Hawley, Hook and Whitewater wards.

43 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.

Fleet (four wards)

44 The town of Fleet, the largest in the district, is currently divided into four three-member wards. At present Church Crookham, Fleet Courtmoor and Fleet Pondtail wards have 10 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (14 per cent, 8 per cent and 7 per cent in 2004). Fleet West ward currently has 18 per cent more electors than the district average, increasing to 31 per cent in 2004.

45 At Stage One the District Council proposed increasing the number of wards representing this area from four to seven, each represented by two councillors. It proposed using the Basingstoke Canal as an easily identifiable boundary, with four wards to the north and three wards to the south. It proposed a new Fleet North ward comprising that part of the existing Fleet West ward to the north of the railway line, encompassing the Elvetham Heath area between the railway line and M3 motorway, and the proposed Ancells parish ward of Blackwater & Hawley parish, to the south of the M3 motorway. In the light of the planned housing development in the Elvetham Heath area, it argued that it would be imprudent to plan the re-warding of this part of the urban area without taking account of this assured and continuing growth. It also proposed four minor external parish boundary amendments between the unparished area of Fleet and the parishes of Blackwater & Hawley and Hartley Wintney.

46 The District Council also proposed an amended Fleet Pondtail ward, with those properties to the west of Oakley Park, Albany Court, Crown Gardens, Montrose Close and the Aloes being transferred to the new Fleet Central ward. Under the Council's scheme the new Fleet Central ward would incorporate that area to the west of Fleet Road, south of Kings Road and the western part of the existing Fleet Pondtail ward (described earlier), to the north of the Basingstoke Canal and east of Reading Road South, Reading Road North and Campbell Close, Springfield Lane, The Avenue and Church Road, arguing that this would create a ward of predominantly mature housing. The Council proposed a reduced Fleet West ward including that area to the south of the railway line, north of the Canal and west of Reading Road South, Reading Road North and Campbell Close, Springfield Lane, The Avenue and Church Road. It proposed creating a Netherhouse parish ward of Crookham Village parish comprising Netherhouse Moor and adjoining roads, and incorporating this parish ward in the unparished Fleet West ward.

47 To the south of the Canal the Council proposed three wards instead of the existing Fleet Courtmoor and Church Crookham wards. It proposed an amended Fleet Courtmoor ward incorporating that area to the south and east of the Canal, and north of Coxheath Road, Cranford Avenue and east of Sylvan Way. In the remaining south-western part of the unparished Fleet area the Council proposed a new Church Crookham West ward, with the eastern boundary running to the rear of the properties on the east side of Coxheath Road and Sylvan Way, to the north side of Cranford Avenue, to the rear of the properties on the west side of The Verne, along Aldershot Road and to the rear of the properties on the west side of Atbara Road; a new Church Crookham East ward would lie to the east of these roads. It proposed creating a Zebon parish ward of Crookham Village parish comprising the Zebon Copse area to the north of Watery Lane, and incorporating this parish ward in the unparished Church Crookham West ward. These proposals would result in Church Crookham East, Church Crookham West, Fleet Central, Fleet Courtmoor, Fleet Pondtail and Fleet West wards varying from the average number of electors per councillor by no more than 8 per cent currently, and 3 per cent in 2004. Fleet North ward would have 49 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 21 per cent in 2004.

48 Crookham Village Parish Council opposed the Council's proposal to create new Netherhouse and Zebon parish wards and transfer these areas to the amended Fleet West and new Church Crookham West wards, stating that this would "decimate Crookham Village as a parish" in a subsequent parish boundary review. It proposed alternative boundaries for the Fleet wards, less these proposed parish wards, to be discussed later. Blackwater & Hawley Town Council stated that the residents of Ancells Farm have no real synergy with the remaining area of Blackwater and Hawley, and could therefore be incorporated into one of the Fleet or Church Crookham wards.

49 We have considered the District Council's two-member ward scheme for the unparished Fleet area and are content to put it forward as our draft recommendation, subject to four minor amendments to improve electoral equality and better reflect community identity. We consider that the Council's proposals for Fleet North ward fail to address the high level of electoral inequality and we therefore propose that the boundary between Fleet North, Fleet Central and Fleet West wards be modified. We propose that the boundary run to the rear of the properties on, and roads leading from, Elvetham Road. This would result in improved electoral equality for Fleet North ward, and we consider that after the completion of the Elvetham Heath development the railway line will become a less dominant boundary. In the light of the fact that building is forecast to continue beyond 2004, we consider it to be more appropriate that Fleet North ward is slightly over-represented at the end of the five-year period to which we must have regard. We propose that the boundary between Fleet West and Fleet Central wards run to the west of Peatmoor Close, thereby uniting Peatmoor Close and the two properties to its south with the rest of the properties on Church Road in Fleet Central ward. We are proposing that the boundary between Church Crookham East and Church Crookham West wards run to the rear of the properties on the west side of Chesilton Crescent as this would unite the Verne and Chesilton Crescent within the new Church Crookham East ward and therefore better represent the community identity of the area. In order to unite all of Oakley Park within a single ward and to provide a more easily identifiable ward boundary, we propose that the boundary between Fleet Pondtail and Fleet Central wards runs to the rear of the properties on the south side of Kings Road. The council proposed minor boundary amendments between the proposed Fleet North ward and Hartley Wintney and

Blackwater & Hawley wards, modifying the boundaries between the Fleet unparished area and parishes of Hartley Wintney and Blackwater & Hawley. We recognise that these changes would provide more easily identifiable boundaries for the proposed Fleet North ward and would have a negligible effect on electoral equality, but are unable to put them forward as they do not fall within the remit of this current review.

50 We considered running the boundary between Fleet Pondtail and Fleet Central wards to the rear of the properties on the west side of Kings Road and Albany Close, north and west of Montrose Close and the Aloes to provide a more easily identifiable boundary and unite all the properties on Albany Road within a single ward. However, as this would worsen the balance of electoral equality between the two wards we have not proposed this as part of our draft recommendations, but we would welcome views on this alternative boundary from interested parties at Stage Three.

51 Our draft recommendations would improve upon both the existing arrangements and those put forward by the District Council. They would result in Church Crookham East, Church Crookham West, Fleet Central, Fleet Courtmoor, Fleet North, Fleet Pondtail and Fleet West wards having electoral variances of 5 per cent, 5 per cent, 3 per cent, 6 per cent, 41 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (improving significantly to 1 per cent, 4 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 13 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent in 2004). We have examined alternative arrangements with a view to further improving electoral imbalances, but have been unable to identify better warding arrangements.

Yateley (four wards)

52 The parish of Yateley is situated in the north-east of the district and encompasses the town of Yateley (comprising three two-member wards) and the ward of Frogmore & Darby Green (comprising one three-member ward). The existing Frogmore & Darby, Yateley East, Yateley North and Yateley West wards are all currently under-represented by 23 per cent, 1 per cent, 11 per cent and 36 per cent respectively (26 per cent, 2 per cent, 15 per cent and 31 per cent in 2004).

53 The District Council proposed creating four two-member wards by making four minor boundary changes to the existing four wards within the parish of Yateley in order to improve the levels of electoral equality. It proposed retaining the existing boundary between Yateley North and Yateley West to the west of Westfields school, but running the boundary to the north of those properties on Throgmorton Road, and the roads leading from it, thereby removing the existing anomalous northwards spur. Between the wards of Yateley West and Yateley East it proposed redrawing the boundary to the east of the properties on the east side of Tudor Drive and Walnut Close, while between Yateley East and Yateley North wards the District Council proposed redrawing the boundary along the centre of Firglen Drive, Mill Lane, Chandlers Lane and to the west of Mill Farm. It also proposed running the boundary between Yateley East and Frogmore & Darby Green wards to the east of the properties on Priors Lane. It stated that the Country Park area between Yateley East and Frogmore & Darby Green provides a significant physical gap which restricts the scope to adjust the boundary between the two wards.

54 We received a representation from Blackwater & Hawley Town Council proposing that the Frogmore & Darby Green area of Yateley be combined with Hawley ward. It argued that this would provide more effective and convenient local government and that this arrangement would reflect the natural affinity shared by these two areas.

55 We have considered the submissions for this area that we received at Stage One. We are content to endorse the Council's amendments for Yateley in light of the improved electoral equality resulting from this scheme and the better reflections of community identity and more easily identifiable boundaries. We are not persuaded that Frogmore & Darby Green and Hawley wards should be combined to form a four-member ward as we consider that this could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. Our draft recommendations would result in Frogmore & Darby Green, Yateley East, Yateley North and Yateley West wards having 16 per cent, 10 per cent, 8 per cent and 9 per cent more electors respectively than the district average (11 per cent, 6 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent in 2004).

Crandall, Odiham and Long Sutton wards

56 These three wards are situated in the south of the district. Crandall ward currently comprises the parishes of Crandall, Crookham Village and Dogmersfield, is represented by two councillors and has 38 per cent more electors than the district average (55 per cent in 2004). Long Sutton ward, comprising the parishes of Greywell, Long Sutton and South Warnborough, is represented by a single councillor and currently has 37 per cent fewer electors than the district average (38 per cent in 2004). Odiham ward, comprising the parish of Odiham, is represented by two councillors and has 8 per cent fewer electors than the district average (9 per cent in 2004).

57 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Dogmersfield parish be transferred from Crandall ward to Odiham ward, and that the proposed Zebon and Netherhouse parish wards of Crookham Village parish be incorporated in the unparished Fleet wards, as described earlier. It argued that this would combine the urban area with two areas which are very closely related to it. It proposed that Odiham ward be expanded to incorporate Winchfield parish, but that the Odiham Airfield parish ward be transferred from Odiham ward to Long Sutton ward.

58 Crookham Village Parish Council did not support the proposals put forward by the District Council for Crookham Village parish. It opposed the removal of Dogmersfield parish and the proposed Netherhouse and Zebon parish wards of Crookham Village parish from the existing Crandall ward. It proposed instead that the eastern parish and ward boundary be transferred eastwards, and that this amended ward be represented by three councillors. Odiham Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer Odiham Airfield parish ward to Long Sutton ward, proposing instead that Long Sutton and Odiham wards be combined to form a three-member ward. It argued that there are strong community links between RAF Odiham in Odiham Airfield parish ward and Odiham village that it does not wish to break, and that there are existing links between Odiham and the parishes of Long Sutton ward that would be strengthened through this union. Councillor Leversha, district councillor for Crandall ward, opposed the Council's proposal to remove Dogmersfield parish from Crandall ward and place it in Odiham ward. He stated that the amended Odiham ward would be a very long finger of land and that a councillor elected from the southern end of this ward would have little interest in the northern end.

59 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and on balance we have concluded that the proposals put forward by the District Council offer the best compromise between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We consider that the Zebon Copse and Netherhouse Moor areas of Crookham Village parish have a stronger community identity with the more urban Fleet area, and are therefore content to incorporate the proposed Zebon parish ward in Church Crookham West ward, and the proposed Netherhouse parish ward in Fleet West ward. We are also content to transfer the parishes of Winchfield and Dogmersfield to Odiham ward, given the improved levels of electoral equality which would result. While we have some sympathy with Odiham Parish Council's proposal for a three-member ward incorporating the proposed Odiham and Long Sutton wards, we consider that this proposal would not be in the interest of community identity, given the geographical size of the resulting three-member ward and the opposition from the parishes comprising Long Sutton ward during the Council's own consultation period on this option. However, we would welcome views from interested parties at Stage Three on these alternative proposals.

60 Under these proposals all three wards would be over-represented, with the two-member Crondall ward (comprising the Crookham Village parish ward of Crookham Village parish and Crondall parish) having 21 per cent fewer electors than the district average (improving to 8 per cent in 2004). The single-member Long Sutton ward (comprising the parishes of Greywell, Long Sutton and South Warnborough and the Odiham Airfield parish ward of Odiham parish) would have 7 per cent fewer electors than the average (9 per cent in 2004), and the two-member Odiham ward (comprising the parishes of Dogmersfield and Winchfield and the Odiham and North Warnborough parish wards of Odiham parish) would have 4 per cent fewer electors than the average, both now and in 2004.

Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Hawley, Hook and Whitewater wards

61 These five wards lie across the middle and to the north of the district. Eversley ward, represented by a single councillor and comprising the parishes of Bramshill and Eversley, is over-represented by 28 per cent (31 per cent in 2004), while Hartley Wintney ward, comprising the parishes of Hartley Wintney and Winchfield, is currently represented by two district councillors and is under-represented by 20 per cent (23 per cent in 2004). Hawley ward, coterminous with the parish of Blackwater & Hawley, is currently represented by three councillors and is over-represented by 23 per cent (26 per cent in 2004). Hook ward, coterminous with the parish of Hook, is currently represented by two councillors and is under-represented by 42 per cent (46 per cent in 2004) while the current Whitewater ward, comprising the parishes of Heckfield, Mattingley and Rotherwick, is represented by a single councillor and is over-represented by 37 per cent (39 per cent in 2004).

62 The District Council proposed creating a new Ancells parish ward in Blackwater & Hawley parish, with this ward being incorporated in the new Fleet North ward (as described earlier) while renaming the remainder of the existing Hawley ward as Blackwater & Hawley ward. It proposed that the amended Hartley Wintney ward should be coterminous with the parish of Hartley Wintney, and that the parish of Winchfield should be transferred to the amended Odiham ward (as described earlier). The District Council addressed the existing over-representation in Whitewater and Eversley wards by proposing that Whitewater ward be divided between Hook and Eversley wards, with Hook ward being enlarged to incorporate Rotherwick parish, and Heckfield and Mattingley parishes being transferred to Eversley ward.

63 We received a further eight representations regarding this northern area during Stage One. Councillor Band, district councillor for Hartley Wintney ward, Councillor Eastwood, district councillor for Eversley ward, Councillor Flowers, district councillor for Hook ward, Councillor Glen, district councillor for Whitewater ward and county councillor for Hartley Wintney division, Councillor Kirkham, district councillor for Hook ward and Councillor Sallis, district councillor for Hartley Wintney ward, submitted a joint proposal regarding the eight parishes of Bramshill, Eversley, Hartley Wintney, Heckfield, Hook, Mattingley, Rotherwick and Winchfield. As a group, they proposed that Hook ward be coterminous with Hook parish, and that it be represented by three councillors. They proposed that the remaining seven parishes be united in a ward that would be represented by four district councillors as the smaller parishes in this proposal “look to ... Hartley Wintney as their rural centre”, stating that it was their collective conclusion that this would be a manageable and cohesive ward. Councillor Glen also wrote separately supporting this scheme, arguing that these parish’s situation represents a very exceptional circumstance, and that this four-member ward proposal would offer the best possible solution. Support for this four-member ward proposal was also received from Winchfield Parish Council, who expressed a preference for remaining in a ward with Hartley Wintney rather than Odiham, and from Rotherwick Parish Council, who objected to the Council’s proposal to place Rotherwick parish in a ward with Hook parish, arguing that this would reduce the democratic representation of Rotherwick parish. Heckfield and Hartley Wintney parish councils also supported the proposal for a four-member ward arrangement, while Hook Parish Council requested that Hook parish should be represented by three district councillors and warded by itself or with other parishes because of its strong community spirit. Mattingley Parish Council proposed that rural wards should not be under-represented and that the current Whitewater ward should not be divided. It also supported the four-member ward proposal from the six district councillors.

64 We have carefully considered the representations that we received regarding this northern area of Hart. While we have some sympathy with the warding arrangement put forward by the six councillors, we believe that the number of councillors returned from each ward should not exceed three other than in exceptional circumstances, as it could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. In addition, the creation of a four-member ward would result in an electoral inequality of nearly 15 per cent in Odiham ward, and therefore we consider that the District Council’s proposals for three wards in this area provides both more convenient and effective local government, and better levels of electoral equality. We are therefore putting forward the Council’s proposed Blackwater & Hawley, Eversley, Hartley Wintney and Hook wards as part of our draft recommendations but would welcome views from interested parties at Stage Three. The resulting two-member Blackwater & Hawley ward, comprising the Blackwater and Minley parish wards of Blackwater & Hawley parish, would have 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. The single-member Eversley ward would have 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent in 2004). The proposed two-member Hartley Wintney ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (11 per cent in 2004), while the proposed three-member Hook ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (5 per cent in 2004).

Electoral Cycle

65 We received two representations relating to the electoral cycle in Hart District Council. The District Council and Councillor Parker expressed a preference for the electoral cycle to be changed to elections by halves as soon as the necessary legislation is implemented, but proposed retaining elections by thirds until this time. We are guided by the current legislation and therefore propose no change to the Council's present system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

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

- (a) a council of 35 members should be retained;
- (b) there should be 18 wards, two more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of all existing wards should be modified;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

67 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on Hart District Council's proposals, except in the town of Fleet where we have made four minor boundary amendments to improve electoral equality and better reflect community identity.

68 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and 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	35	35	35	35
Number of wards	16	18	16	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1,847	1,847	1,919	1,919
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	4	12	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	2	10	0

69 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Hart District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 11 to four. By 2004 only three wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation
Hart District Council should comprise 35 councillors serving 18 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 thirds.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

70 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable 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 Crookham Village and Blackwater & Hawley in order to reflect the proposed district wards.

71 The parish of Crookham Village is currently served by eight councillors. The District Council proposed three new parish wards with a new Zebon parish ward comprising the Zebon Copse area, represented by five parish councillors, which would be included in Church Crookham West district ward. A new Netherhouse parish ward, comprising the Netherhouse Moor area, would be represented by a single parish councillor and included in Fleet West district ward. It argued that these proposals would bring into urban Fleet areas which relate very closely to it. The remainder of Crookham Village parish would comprise the Crookham Village parish ward, be represented by two parish councillors, and be included in Crondall district ward.

72 We received opposition to this proposal from Crookham Village Parish Council who considered that the whole of the parish should remain within a single district ward, as the District Council’s proposals would decimate Crookham Village as a parish in a subsequent parish boundary review. However, our draft recommendations are based on those put forward by the District Council at Stage One and we consider that the inclusion of Zebon parish ward in Church Crookham West ward and Netherhouse parish ward in Fleet West ward would better reflect the more urban nature of these areas, by placing them with the town of Fleet. It would also give the remainder of Crookham Village parish separate representation on the parish council. We recognise that the parish of Crookham Village is currently unwarded, and we would therefore particularly welcome the views of residents and any other interested parties on these issues at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Crookham Village Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Zebon parish ward (returning five councillors), Netherhouse parish ward (returning a single councillor) and Crookham Village parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

73 The parish of Blackwater & Hawley is currently served by seven town councillors and comprises the two parish wards of Blackwater and Minley. At Stage One the District Council proposed that a new parish ward be created, with the proposed Ancells parish ward, comprising the Ancells Farm area of Minley parish ward to the south of the M3, represented by a single town councillor, being transferred to the proposed Fleet North district ward. The remainder of the existing Minley ward would be represented by three town councillors. Blackwater & Hawley Town Council support this proposal, and we are therefore content to put this recommendation forward as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome views of residents and any other interested parties.

Draft Recommendation

Blackwater & Hawley Town Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Ancells parish ward, returning a single councillor, Blackwater parish ward, returning three councillors, and Minley parish ward, returning three councillors. The boundary between the parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

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

Draft Recommendation

For parish and town councils, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

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

5 NEXT STEPS

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

Draft Recommendations for Hart: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for Hart district.

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, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Odiham parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Crookham Village parish (between the district wards of Crondall and Fleet West).

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Crookham Village parish (between the district wards of Church Crookham West and Crondall).

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Fleet and Yateley, and the proposed warding of Blackwater & Hawley parish.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Hart: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Odiham Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Crookham Village Parish (Between the District Wards of Crondall and Fleet West)

Map A4: Proposed Warding of Crookham Village Parish (Between the District Wards of Church Crookham West and Crondall)

APPENDIX B

Hart District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Church Crookham East (in Fleet)	Church Crookham ward (part)
Church Crookham West (in Fleet)	Church Crookham ward (part); Crondall ward (part – the proposed Zebon parish ward of Crookham Village parish)
Fleet Central	Fleet West ward (part)
Fleet North	Fleet West ward (part); Hawley ward (part – the proposed Ancells parish ward of Blackwater & Hawley parish)
Fleet Pondtail	Fleet Pondtail ward (part)
Fleet West	Crondall ward (part – the proposed Netherhouse parish ward of Crookham Village parish); Fleet West ward (part)

Figure B2: Hart District 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 %
Church Crookham East (in Fleet)	2	3,779	1,890	2	3,756	1,878	-2
Church Crookham West (in Fleet)	2	3,608	1,804	-2	3,805	1,903	-1
Fleet Central	2	3,988	1,994	8	3,938	1,969	3
Fleet North	2	1,891	946	-49	3,032	1,516	-21
Fleet Pondtail	2	3,820	1,910	3	3,783	1,892	-1
Fleet West	2	3,962	1,981	7	3,855	1,928	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on Hart 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.

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to 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.