

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Chiltern in Buckinghamshire

Report to the Secretary of State for Transport,
Local Government and the Regions

November 2001

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Report number 258

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

WHAT IS THE 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 on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Chiltern in Buckinghamshire.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Chiltern's electoral arrangements on 5 September 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 2001. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore, the closing date for the receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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

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

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 102-103) are that:

- **Chiltern District Council should have 40 councillors, 10 less than at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of 30 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

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

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

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

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing them before 2 January 2002:

**The Secretary of State
Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions
Democracy and Local Leadership Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Amersham Common	1	the proposed Amersham Common parish ward of Amersham parish.	Large map
2	Amersham-on-the Hill	2	the proposed Amersham-on-the-Hill parish ward of Amersham parish.	Large map
3	Amersham Town	2	the proposed Amersham Town parish ward of Amersham parish.	Large map
4	Asheridge Vale & Lowndes	2	the proposed Asheridge Vale and Lowndes parish wards of Chesham parish.	Large map
5	Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies	1	the parishes of Ashley Green, Chenies and Latimer.	Map 2
6	Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge	1	Ballinger & South Heath parish ward of Great Missenden parish and Chartridge parish ward of Chartridge parish.	Map 2
7	Chalfont Austenwood	1	<i>Unchanged</i> - the Austenwood parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish.	Map A2
8	Chalfont Central	2	the proposed Chalfont Central parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish.	Map A2
9	Chalfont Common	2	the proposed Chalfont Common parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish ward.	Map A2
10	Chalfont Gold Hill	1	the proposed Chalfont Gold Hill parish ward of Chalfont St Peter parish.	Map A2
11	Chalfont St Giles	3	Chalfont St Giles parish.	Map 2
12	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	the parish of Chesham Bois and the proposed Weedon Hill parish ward of Amersham parish.	Large map
13	Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon	1	the Bellingdon & Asheridge parish ward of Chartridge parish and the parishes of Cholesbury-cum-St-Leonards and The Lee.	Map 2
14	Great Missenden	1	the proposed Great Missenden parish ward of Great Missenden parish.	Map A3
15	Hilltop & Townsend	2	the proposed Hilltop and Townsend parish wards of Chesham parish.	Large map
16	Holmer Green	2	<i>Unchanged</i> - Holmer Green parish ward of Little Missenden parish.	Map 2
17	Little Chalfont	2	the proposed Little Chalfont parish ward of Amersham parish.	Large map
18	Little Missenden	1	<i>Unchanged</i> - Hyde Heath, Little Kingshill and Little Missenden parish wards of Little Missenden parish.	Map 2
19	Newtown	1	the proposed Newtown parish ward of Chesham parish.	Large map
20	Penn & Coleshill	2	the parishes of Coleshill and Penn.	Map 2
21	Prestwood & Heath End	3	the proposed Prestwood and Heath End parish wards of Great Missenden parish.	Map A3

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
22	Ridgeway	1	the proposed Ridgeway parish ward of Chesham parish.	Large map
23	St Mary's & Waterside	2	the St Mary's and Waterside parish wards of Chesham parish.	Large map
24	Seer Green	1	Seer Green parish.	Map 2
25	Vale	1	the proposed Vale parish ward of Chesham parish.	Large map

Notes: 1 Chiltern district is entirely parished.

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

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Chiltern

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Amersham Common	1	1,839	1,839	3	1,727	1,727	3
2	Amersham-on-the Hill	2	3,777	1,889	6	3,547	1,773	6
3	Amersham Town	2	3,614	1,807	1	3,394	1,697	1
4	Asheridge Vale & Lowndes	2	3,553	1,777	-1	3,336	1,668	-1
5	Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies	1	1,742	1,742	-2	1,636	1,636	-2
6	Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge	1	1,803	1,803	1	1,693	1,693	1
7	Chalfont Austenwood	1	1,687	1,687	-6	1,584	1,584	-6
8	Chalfont Central	2	3,398	1,699	-5	3,191	1,595	-5
9	Chalfont Common	2	3,386	1,693	-5	3,179	1,590	-5
10	Chalfont Gold Hill	1	1,676	1,676	-6	1,574	1,574	-6
11	Chalfont St Giles	3	5,568	1,856	4	5,228	1,743	4
12	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	3,723	1,862	4	3,496	1,748	4
13	Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon	1	1,917	1,917	7	1,800	1,800	7
14	Great Missenden	1	1,873	1,873	5	1,759	1,759	5
15	Hilltop & Townsend	2	3,453	1,727	-3	3,242	1,621	-3
16	Holmer Green	2	3,327	1,664	-7	3,124	1,562	-7
17	Little Chalfont	2	3,686	1,843	3	3,461	1,731	3
18	Little Missenden	1	1,995	1,995	12	1,873	1,873	12
19	Newtown	1	1,811	1,811	1	1,701	1,701	1
20	Penn & Coleshill	2	3,580	1,790	0	3,362	1,681	0
21	Prestwood & Heath End	3	5,186	1,729	-3	4,870	1,623	-3

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Ridgeway	1	1,957	1,957	10	1,838	1,838	10
23 St Mary's & Waterside	2	3,484	1,742	-2	3,271	1,636	-2
24 Seer Green	1	1,791	1,791	0	1,682	1,682	0
25 Vale	1	1,622	1,622	-9	1,524	1,524	-9
Totals	40	71,448	-	-	67,091	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,786	-	-	1,677	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Chiltern in Buckinghamshire. We have now reviewed the four districts in Buckinghamshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

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

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained 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* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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 also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors,

nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper called *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. In unitary authorities the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. 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 and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 5 September 2000, when we wrote to Chiltern District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 May 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Chiltern in Buckinghamshire*. During this period we sought comments from the public and other interested parties on our preliminary conclusions. The Commission's Stage Three consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 to 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; therefore, the closing date for the receipt of submissions at the end of Stage Three was 6 August 2001. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

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

13 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated, in percentage terms, 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'.

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

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

Map 1: Existing Wards in Chiltern

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Amersham Common	2	2,536	1,268	-11	2,381	1,191	-11
2	Amersham-on-the-Hill	3	4,092	1,364	-5	3,842	1,281	-5
3	Amersham Town	2	3,249	1,625	14	3,051	1,526	14
4	Asheridge Vale	1	1,341	1,341	-6	1,259	1,259	-6
5	Ashley Green & Latimer	1	1,556	1,556	9	1,461	1,461	9
6	Austenwood	1	1,687	1,687	18	1,584	1,584	18
7	Ballinger & South Heath	1	1,021	1,021	-29	959	959	-29
8	Chalfont St Peter Central	2	3,230	1,615	13	3,033	1,517	13
9	Chalfont Common	2	3,295	1,648	15	3,094	1,547	15
10	Chalfont St Giles	3	5,014	1,671	17	4,708	1,569	17
11	Chartridge	1	1,318	1,318	-8	1,238	1,238	-8
12	Chenies	1	186	186	-87	175	175	-87
13	Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill	2	3,408	1,704	19	3,200	1,600	19
14	Cholesbury & The Lee	1	1,381	1,381	-3	1,297	1,297	-3
15	Coleshill & Penn Street	1	1,135	1,135	-21	1,066	1,066	-21
16	Gold Hill	2	1,935	968	-32	1,817	909	-32
17	Great Missenden	1	2,003	2,003	40	1,881	1,881	40
18	Hilltop	1	1,346	1,346	-6	1,264	1,264	-6
19	Holmer Green	2	3,327	1,664	16	3,124	1,562	16
20	Little Chalfont	2	3,354	1,677	17	3,149	1,575	17
21	Little Missenden	1	1,995	1,995	40	1,873	1,873	40
22	Lowndes	1	1,560	1,560	9	1,465	1,465	9
23	Newtown	2	3,013	1,507	5	2,829	1,415	5
24	Penn	2	2,445	1,223	-14	2,296	1,148	-14
25	Pond Park	2	2,473	1,237	-13	2,322	1,161	-13
26	Prestwood & Heath End	3	5,056	1,685	18	4,748	1,583	18

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Seer Green & Jordans	2	2,345	1,173	-18	2,202	1,101	-18
28 St Mary's	1	1,035	1,035	-28	972	972	-28
29 Townsend	2	2,663	1,332	-7	2,501	1,251	-7
30 Waterside	2	2,449	1,225	-14	2,300	1,150	-14
Totals	50	71,448	-	-	67,091	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,429	-	-	1,342	-

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

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

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

16 During Stage One we received 17 representations, including district-wide schemes from Chiltern District Council and the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association. We also received representations from eight town and parish councils, a councillor, one residents' association and five local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Chiltern in Buckinghamshire*.

17 Our draft recommendations for Amersham, the Chalfonts and much of the rural area were based on the District Council's proposals. In Chesham we based our recommendations on the proposals from Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association and Chesham Town Council. However, we proposed our own boundaries for the Great Missenden area. We proposed that:

- Chiltern District Council should be served by 40 councillors, compared with the current 50, representing 25 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Chesham and Amersham town councils and for Chalfont St Peter and Great Missenden parish councils.

Draft Recommendation

Chiltern District Council should comprise 40 councillors, serving 25 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

18 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 24 of the 25 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to be maintained, with one ward, Little Missenden, having a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

19 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 18 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Chiltern District Council.

Chiltern District Council

20 The District Council supported the proposed reduction in council size from 50 to 40 members. It noted that the majority of the Council's Stage One proposals had been adopted as our draft recommendations and commented on those areas where our proposals differed from its own.

21 In particular it proposed that Hilltop and Townsend wards in Chesham should remain single-member wards, and that there should be no change to the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End. It also proposed a number of alternative ward names.

Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association

22 The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association supported the majority of our draft recommendations but reiterated its view that Chalfont St Giles "would be better served by having two wards", rather than the three-member ward we proposed. It also argued that the Coleshill and Penn area should be divided into two single-member wards, but that if the Commission continued to recommend a two-member ward in this area, it should be named Penn & Coleshill.

Great Missenden & Prestwood Liberal Democrats

23 The Great Missenden & Prestwood Liberal Democrats put forward an alternative proposal for the current wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End. This proposal was based on a pattern of two two-member wards, as opposed to the single- and two-member wards we proposed.

Parish and Town Councils

24 Chesham Town Council expressed general support for our proposals for Chesham, but proposed a minor boundary realignment and an alternative ward name. Amersham Town Council sought clarification on a detailed boundary and put forward some minor boundary realignments.

25 Chalfont St Peter Parish Council wrote in support of the District Council's initial proposal that Gold Hill and Austenwood wards should be joined in a two-member ward. Coleshill Parish Council wrote in support of our draft recommendations, while Penn Parish Council supported the earlier proposals for the parishes of Coleshill and Penn to be divided into two single-member wards.

26 Great Missenden Parish Council stated that it did not accept the Commission's primary objective of seeking electoral equality and opposed our proposals for Great Missenden.

Chartridge Parish Council objected to the proposals to divide the parish of Chartridge between district wards.

Other Representations

27 A further eight representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a Member of Parliament, a district councillor, local organisations and residents.

28 David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury (which covers the Great Missenden area), expressed support for our draft recommendations. Councillor Brown, representing Hilltop ward, expressed concern over the motives behind the proposals for Chesham and supported alternative proposals for two single-member wards for Hilltop and Townsend. Councillor Stacey, representing Cholesbury & The Lee ward, put forward alternative proposals for parishes in the north and west of the district.

29 The Chesham and District Residents' Association expressed general support for our draft recommendations for Chesham, but proposed a minor boundary modification and an alternative ward name. One local resident of Chesham also proposed that there should be two single-member wards for the Hilltop and Townsend areas.

30 The Little Chalfont Rural Preservation Society stated that it was opposed to having elections every year. It further stated that the proposed district ward of Little Chalfont should be amended to more accurately reflect the extent of the community.

31 We received one submission from a resident of Great Missenden objecting to our proposals to realign the ward boundary between Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End ward, and another from a resident supporting this proposal.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

34 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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 we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorates must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

36 Since 1975 there has been an 11 per cent increase in the electorate of Chiltern district. At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting a decrease in the electorate of approximately 6 per cent from 71,448 to 67,091 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects this decrease to occur throughout the district. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council 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. We accept that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

37 At Stage Three Councillor Stacey argued that the electorate may not fall as forecast. No, other comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts were received. Given the general acceptance of the electorate figures we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

38 As already explained, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

39 At Stage One, the District Council and the Amersham & Chesham Liberal Democrats both proposed a reduction in council size from 50 members to 40. The Council argued that this reduction was justifiable, firstly on the basis that many of its functions have been recently out-sourced. Secondly, the restructuring of its committee procedures has meant there is likely to be a substantial number of members with insufficient work to do.

40 We received both support and opposition to the proposals for a reduction in council size as well as an alternative proposal for a council size of 46. However, in the light of the evidence provided by the council and the degree of support demonstrated for such a proposal we recommended a reduction in council size from 50 to 40 members.

41 During Stage Three, the District Council and one local resident expressed support for a council size of 40 members. Councillor Stacey put forward alternative proposals, discussed later, and stated that the variances produced under these alternatives would be reduced under a council size of around 42.

42 We have considered Councillor Stacey's alternative council size but, given the weight of argument both during Stage One and Stage Three for a 40-member council, we are confirming our draft recommendation for council size as final.

Electoral Arrangements

43 We based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, moving away from them in Chesham (where we based our proposals on the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association's proposals), Chalfont St Peter and Great Missenden (where we put forward our own proposals). We considered that all the schemes received had merit and we were able to use locally generated proposals as the basis for the majority of our draft recommendations. Under these proposals only one ward, Little Missenden, would have a variance of over 10 per cent, both initially and in 2005.

44 We received 18 submissions in response to our draft recommendations report. Many of the comments received concerned our proposals for Chesham and Great Missenden, although we also received comments on a number of other areas. We received a number of submissions generally supporting our draft recommendations but proposing minor boundary modifications to address some anomalies.

45 The issue of the relative merits of single- versus multi-member wards has arisen throughout the review. As stated in our *Guidance*, "we have not been prescriptive and have generally made recommendations which provide for a combination of single- and multi-member wards". During Stage Three a number of respondents have taken our decision to recommend either a particular single-member ward or multi-member ward as support for that pattern of warding in general. This is not the case. We have found that having the flexibility to recommend wards represented by one, two or three members in two-tier districts has assisted us in meeting our objectives of securing electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria.

46 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a) Chesham (eight wards);
- b) Amersham and Chesham Bois (five wards);
- c) Chalfont St Peter (four wards);
- d) Chalfont St Giles, Coleshill & Penn Street, Penn and Seer Green & Jordans wards;
- e) Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden, Prestwood & Heath End wards;
- f) Ballinger & South Heath, Chartridge, Cholesbury & The Lee wards;
- g) Ashley Green & Latimer and Chenies wards.

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

Chesham (eight wards)

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

49 At Stage One we received two different schemes for this area; the District Council put forward proposals for seven single-member wards and one two-member ward, while the Chesham and Amersham Liberal Democrat Association, supported by Chesham Town Council, put forward a mixed pattern of single- and two-member wards. Both schemes would allocate nine councillors to the town, the correct level of representation under a 40-member council. We adopted the majority of the Liberal Democrats' and Town Council's scheme, proposing some alternative ward names in the north of the town. Given that there was no local consensus on the proposals, we adopted this scheme as it would produce marginally better levels of electoral equality.

50 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed two-member wards of Asheridge Vale & Lowndes, Hilltop & Townsend, and St Mary's & Waterside wards would be 1 per cent below the average, 3 per cent below the average and 2 per cent below the average respectively (unchanged by 2005). In the proposed single-member wards of Newtown, Pond Park and Ridgeway the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the district average, 6 per cent below and 6 per cent above respectively (unchanged in 2005).

51 At Stage Three the Council, although accepting some of the proposals in this area, expressed strong opposition to our proposed Hilltop & Townsend ward. It argued that a single-member Hilltop & Botley ward would unite more rural areas in one ward and that the issues facing these areas were different to those facing the more urban Townsend ward. The Council also proposed a minor boundary modification, retaining Shelley Road in Pond Park ward.

Finally, the Council proposed that Pond Park ward should be renamed Vale. The Council's proposals for Hilltop & Townsend wards were supported by Councillor Brown, who stated that "none of the suggestions for the Chesham warding from Chiltern District Council did anything to change the current political status quo, but tried to recognise the many different characters of the various wards". Chesham and District Residents' Association and a local resident also supported proposals for two single-member wards of Hilltop and Townsend.

52 Chesham Town Council generally supported our draft recommendations for this area but suggested that Batchelors Way be included in the new Ridgeway ward, given that there would be no direct access from this road to the remainder of Pond Park ward. They also proposed that Pond Park ward be renamed Vale. Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association expressed support for our proposals for Chesham but opposed the alternative name of Vale for Pond Park, stating that it could cause confusion with Asheridge Vale ward.

53 We have considered all the representations received and have identified a number of issues arising. First there is the issue of single- versus multi-member wards. As stated earlier, we do not have a preference for either single- or multi-member wards. Our decision to recommend wards that are represented by one or two members in Chesham has been made in order to achieve the best balance between the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria. There is no clear local preference for a uniform pattern of single- or two-member wards in this area and we have therefore proposed a mixed pattern of wards in order to meet our objectives.

54 We have also received a number of comments on the political outcome that could arise under any new warding pattern. While we recognise that there are political implications to any scheme that we may propose, it is not our aim to retain the current political mix on the council, nor to alter it. We are, however, attempting to recommend a warding pattern that ensures that each elector has a vote of equal weight, and therefore that the choice of electors is reflected in the composition of the District Council, so far as this is possible in a first-past-the-post electoral system.

55 There has continued to be no local consensus on the pattern of warding for Chesham, particularly with regards to the current Hilltop and Townsend wards. We have noted the District Council's and councillor's arguments that placing the Botley area with Hilltop would create a ward covering areas with a similar rural character. However, such a ward, while not including parts of the town centre, would include the more densely populated area around West View, Nalders Road etc. We have not, therefore, been persuaded that two single-member wards would provide a better reflection of local communities.

56 We have noted the boundary modification proposed by the Town Council and Residents' Association that Batchelors Way should form part of Ridgeway ward, given that the access is from the remainder of the ward. We concur with the view that this would provide for more convenient and effective local government. We have also considered the District Council's proposal to include Shelley Road in Pond Park ward, but as this area is accessed from the remainder of Ridgeway ward we consider that Shelley Road should remain in this ward.

57 Finally, we are content to propose that Pond Park ward should be renamed Vale, as proposed by the District Council, the Town Council and Chesham & District Residents' Association.

58 Having considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation for the wards of Asheridge Vale, Hilltop & Townsend, Newton, and St Mary's & Waterside as final. However, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendation and modify the proposed boundary between Pond Park and Ridgeway wards to include Batchelors Way in Ridgeway ward. We also propose that Pond Park ward should be renamed Vale.

59 Under our final recommendations, the electoral variances in Asheridge Vale & Lowndes, Hilltop & Townsend, Newtown and St Mary's & Waterside wards would be the same as under our draft recommendations. In Ridgeway and Vale wards the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the average and 9 per cent below the district average respectively, both initially and in 2005. These proposals are illustrated and named in Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Amersham and Chesham Bois (five wards)

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

61 We received similar schemes for this area from the District Council and the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association and based our proposals on those of the District Council. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Amersham Common, Amersham-on-the-Hill, Amersham Town, Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill and Little Chalfont would be 3 per cent above the average, 6 per cent above, 1 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent above respectively both initially and in 2005.

62 At Stage Three the District Council did not make specific comments on our proposals for Amersham and Chesham Bois. Amersham Town Council made a number of suggested boundary modifications as follows:

- (a) the boundary between the proposed wards of Little Chalfont and Amersham Common be amended to include one additional property in Amersham Common ward;
- (b) the boundary between Amersham Town and Amersham Common wards around Quarrendon Road/Sheepfold Lane be amended to "provide a recognisable ward boundary";
- (c) the boundary between Amersham Town and Amersham Common be amended to include electors in Hundred Acres Lane in Amersham Town ward.

63 The Town Council also sought clarification on some of the proposed boundaries around Batchelors Way. Finally in this area, we received a submission from the Little Chalfont Rural Preservation Society proposing alternative boundaries for Little Chalfont ward which, it stated, would better reflect the extent of the village.

64 We have considered our draft recommendations in the light of comments received. We concur with the Town Council that minor boundary modifications should be made between the wards of Little Chalfont and Amersham Common and between Amersham Town and Amersham Common around Hundred Acres Lane. These minor modifications would have minimal effect on electoral equality and would provide for more identifiable boundaries.

65 We have also considered the Town Council's and our own boundary between the proposed wards of Amersham Town and Amersham Common, around Quarrendon Road/Sheepfold Lane. In this area we continue to consider that our proposals do provide a clear boundary, while meeting our statutory criteria. With regards to the boundary around Batchelors Way, between the proposed Amersham Town and Amersham Common wards, we are proposing only one change to the boundary in this area, ie that Hazell Drive should be included in Amersham Common ward. Electors in Batchelors Way would not be affected by this amendment, with those electors on the east side of Batchelors Way continuing to be included in Amersham Common ward.

66 We note the comments made by the Little Chalfont Rural Preservation Society, however, its proposals would involve warding Chalfont St Giles parish. We do not consider that this would facilitate the provision of convenient and effective local government at parish level and are unaware of any wide-spread support for such a proposal.

67 We are, therefore, confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to two minor boundary modifications, between Amersham Town and Amersham Common wards, and between Amersham Common and Little Chalfont wards. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under our draft recommendations. These proposals are illustrated and named in Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Chalfont St Peter (four wards)

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

69 At Stage One we received proposals for these wards from the District Council, the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association and Chalfont St Peter Parish Council. We adopted an earlier scheme developed by the District Council for this area, which would involve no change to Austenwood ward and boundary realignments between Chalfont Common and Chalfont St Peter Central wards, and between Gold Hill and Chalfont St Peter Central wards. We also proposed that these four wards be prefixed with the name Chalfont.

70 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Chalfont Austenwood, Chalfont Central, Chalfont Common and Chalfont Gold Hill would be 6 per cent below, 5 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 6 per cent below the district average both initially and in 2005.

71 At Stage Three the District Council supported our proposals for Austenwood and Gold Hill wards and suggested a minor boundary realignment between Chalfont Central and Chalfont Common wards. It did not support the renaming of these wards.

72 Chalfont St Peter Parish Council supported the District Council's earlier proposals for a two-member Austenwood and Gold Hill ward. The Parish Council argued that a two-member ward would provide electors with a choice of councillors and that it preferred to deal with uniform two-member wards. While we accept that multi-member wards do provide electors with a choice of councillor we do not consider that this is sufficient justification for us to move away from our draft recommendations. We have not received evidence as to why the specific single-member wards proposed would not meet our statutory criteria. As stated earlier we do not favour a pattern of either single- or multi-member wards, but will attempt to propose a warding pattern which meets our objective of providing electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria.

73 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and have, therefore, decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to a minor boundary realignment between the proposed Chalfont Common and Chalfont Central wards, to include the Waggon & Horses public house on Cophall Lane in Chalfont Common ward. We are also confirming the ward names proposed as part of our draft recommendations. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Chalfont Austenwood, Chalfont Central, Chalfont Common and Chalfont Gold Hill would be the same as under our draft recommendations. These recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2.

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

74 The four wards lie in the south of the district. Chalfont St Giles ward comprises the Chalfont St Giles parish ward of Chalfont St Giles parish. The remainder of the parish, Jordans parish ward, forms part of Seer Green & Jordans district ward with Seer Green parish. Coleshill & Penn Street ward comprises the parish of Coleshill and the Penn Street parish ward of Penn parish. The remainder of Penn parish forms the district ward of Penn. The number of electors per councillor in Chalfont St Giles ward is currently 17 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005), 21 per cent below the average in Coleshill & Penn Street ward (unchanged in 2005), 14 per cent below the average in Penn ward (unchanged in 2005) and 18 per cent below the average in Seer Green & Jordans ward (unchanged in 2005).

75 At Stage One the District Council and the Liberal Democrats put forward proposals for these wards and we received comments from Penn Parish Council. We adopted the District Council's Stage One proposals for these wards, proposing that the whole of Chalfont St Giles ward should form a three-member ward; the parishes of Coleshill and Penn should form a two-member ward; and that Seer Green parish form a single-member ward. We did not adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals for a pattern of single-member wards in this area, as we did not consider that the division of parishes between wards would reflect community identity, nor would it improve electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Chalfont St Giles ward would be 4 per cent above the district average, while in the wards of Coleshill & Penn and Seer Green it would be equal to the average.

76 At Stage Three the District Council requested that our proposed Coleshill & Penn ward be named Penn & Coleshill. Coleshill Parish Council accepted the recommendations, while Penn

Parish Council stated a “strong preference for the ... alternative proposal for two separate wards”. Penn Parish Council considered that having two single-member wards would ensure that one councillor would come from outside Knotty Green, the main settlement in the area. The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association stated its preference that there should be two wards covering Chalfont St Giles parish and two single-member wards covering the parishes of Coleshill and Penn. Both the Parish Council and the Liberal Democrat Association stated that, if the Commission were to confirm its draft recommendation as final, the ward should be renamed Penn & Coleshill.

77 We have considered the submissions received and the views expressed. We have not been convinced by the arguments put forward by Penn Parish Council concerning the election of candidates from specific parts of the ward. Prospective councillors do not have to be residents of the ward in which they wish to stand and it does not therefore follow that both councillors in a two-member ward would be from Knotty Green.

78 In the light of the lack of local consensus for an alternative arrangement and given the improved levels of electoral equality achieved, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation for the wards of Chalfont St Giles and Seer Green. However, while we are endorsing the proposed ward boundaries for Coleshill & Penn ward, we propose that it be renamed Penn & Coleshill.

79 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Chalfont St Giles, Penn & Coleshill and Seer Green would be the same as under our draft recommendations. These recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

Great Missenden, Holmer Green, Little Missenden, Prestwood & Heath End wards

80 These wards are situated to the west of the district and are all significantly under-represented. The wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End each cover part of the parish of Great Missenden, while the wards of Little Missenden and Holmer Green cover the parish of Little Missenden. Prestwood & Heath End ward is represented by three councillors, Holmer Green ward is represented by two councillors, while both Great Missenden and Little Missenden wards are single-member wards. The number of electors per councillor in Great Missenden ward is currently 40 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005), 16 per cent above the average in Holmer Green ward (unchanged in 2005), 40 per cent above the average in Little Missenden ward (unchanged in 2005) and 18 per cent above the average in Prestwood & Heath End ward (unchanged in 2005).

81 At Stage One the District Council and Great Missenden Parish Council proposed no change for these wards. The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association proposed three single-member wards covering the current Little Missenden and Holmer Green wards, but did not make proposals for the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End, as this area falls outside their constituency.

82 We adopted the District Council’s scheme for no change to the wards of Little Missenden and Holmer Green, which would achieve much improved levels of electoral equality under a 40-member council, but proposed amending the boundary between the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End to provide higher levels of electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per council would be 5 per cent above the average in Great Missenden ward, 7 per cent below in Holmer Green ward, 12 per cent above in

Little Missenden and 3 per cent below in Prestwood & Heath End ward (no change under 2005 figures).

83 During Stage Three the District Council only made comments on those areas where the Commission had moved away from its Stage One proposals and did not therefore comment on our proposals for Little Missenden and Holmer Green, however Councillor Stacey expressed support for our proposals for these wards. The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association “reluctantly accept[ed] the recommendations for Holmer Green and Little Missenden”.

84 The District Council reiterated its Stage One proposal for no change to the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End wards. Great Missenden Parish Council opposed the recommendations for Great Missenden area, stating that the transfer of electors between the Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End wards “appears quite arbitrary and unnecessary”.

85 Great Missenden & Prestwood Liberal Democrats put forward alternative proposals for Great Missenden parish. It proposed that this area be represented by two two-member wards, “Great Missenden, Heath End and Prestwood North ward would comprise Great Missenden, Heath End and all the roads in Prestwood running north of Prestwood High Street. Prestwood South would comprise the current Prestwood ward minus these roads and Heath End. The High Street itself and its closes would be part of Prestwood South”.

86 The Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association expressed support for this alternative warding pattern, and a local resident also proposed the creation of two wards, one to “include Great Missenden with the northern part of Prestwood, and possibly Heath End”

87 David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury, supported our proposals for the wards covering Great Missenden. We received one further response concerning this area from a local resident who also supported the Commission’s recommendations for Great Missenden ward.

88 We have noted the general support for our draft recommendations for no change to the wards of Little Missenden and Holmer Green and therefore confirm them as final. We have also noted the comments on our proposals for Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End, including the alternative proposals for two two-member wards.

89 We are concerned that the alternative two-member ward proposal would create an almost detached ward, linking Heath End (to the south of Prestwood) with the northern section of Prestwood and the current Great Missenden ward. The Great Missenden & Prestwood Liberal Democrats recognise this, but state that Heath End is equidistant from Great Missenden and Prestwood. We continue to be of the opinion that there is no clear break between the settlements of Prestwood and Great Missenden and that our draft recommendations would not be detrimental to community identities. We further note that our proposal attracted some support as well as opposition. We are therefore confirming our proposals for the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End as final. The levels of electoral equality would be the same as under our draft recommendations. These proposals are illustrated and named in Map 2 and on Map A3 in Appendix A.

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

90 These three single-member wards are situated in the north west of the district. The number of electors per councillor in Ballinger & South Heath ward is currently 29 per cent below the

district average (unchanged in 2005), 8 per cent below the average in Chartridge ward (unchanged in 2005) and 3 per cent below the average in Cholesbury & The Lee ward (unchanged in 2005).

91 We adopted the District Council's Stage One proposals for these wards, which were supported by the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association, but opposed by Chartridge Parish Council. We proposed joining the current Ballinger & South Heath ward with the Chartridge parish ward of Chartridge parish in a new single-member Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge ward. We also proposed joining the current Cholesbury & The Lee ward with the Bellingdon & Asheridge parish ward of Chartridge parish in a new single-member Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Ballinger, South Heath & Chartridge, and Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellingdon would be 1 per cent above and 7 per cent above the district average respectively (both initially and in 2005).

92 During Stage Three the District Council did not make specific reference to these proposals, as they did not differ from its own Stage One submission. The Great Missenden & Prestwood Liberal Democrats and the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association supported our recommendations for these wards. Great Missenden Parish Council stated that it "very much regrets the linking of Ballinger and South Heath with Chartridge as these communities have much more in common with Great Missenden than with Chartridge". Chartridge Parish Council opposed the recommendation to divide Chartridge parish between district wards.

93 Councillor Mrs Stacey argued that these two wards would be geographically large and sparsely populated, questioning what community of interests electors in different parts of the ward would share. Councillor Stacey also expressed concern that these district wards would have numerous polling stations, comprise several parishes and that Chartridge parish could be split between two different parliamentary constituencies. She further considered the number of electors in the proposed Cholesbury, The Lee & Bellindon ward to be high. She put forward alternative proposals for the area, retaining Cholesbury & The Lee and Chartridge wards and joining Ballinger & South Heath ward with Great Missenden ward.

94 We have reconsidered our recommendations in the light of all responses received. We have considered Councillor Stacey's alternative proposals, but note that they would result in very high levels of electoral inequality under of 40-member council. The siting of polling stations will be a matter of concern for the District Council once Orders are made for any changes to the electoral arrangements. It is not uncommon for there to be separate polling stations for each community or parish ward within a district ward. As stated in our *Guidance* "we take no account of Parliamentary constituency boundaries in recommending new patterns of wards boundaries". The Parliamentary Boundary Commission will be undertaking a review of constituencies in the future, using the district wards created as a result of this electoral review as building blocks. At this time it is impossible to speculate on how many constituencies will be appropriate in Buckinghamshire and what the new boundaries of constituencies would be.

95 Given the levels of electoral equality which would be achieved under our proposals and the degree of support expressed, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. The levels of electoral equality would therefore be the same as under our draft recommendations. These proposals are illustrated and named in Map 2.

Ashley Green & Latimer and Chenies (two wards)

96 These two single-member wards are located in the east of the district and each comprise the parishes of the same names. Chenies ward is significantly over-represented following an earlier boundary review of the district, with the number of electors per councillor currently 87 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Ashley Green & Latimer ward is currently 9 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2005).

97 As part of our draft recommendations we adopted the Council's Stage One proposal that these three parishes form a single-member Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies ward, a proposal supported by the Chesham & Amersham Liberal Democrat Association and Chenies Parish Council. Under a 40-member council this proposed ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors than the district average, unchanged by 2005.

98 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our recommendations for these wards and no further specific comments on them were received.

99 In the light of this support we therefore confirm our recommendation for a single-member Ashley Green, Latimer & Chenies ward as final. The number of electors per councillor would be the same as under our draft recommendations. This proposed ward is illustrated and named on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

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

101 At Stage Three, the Little Chalfont Preservation Society opposed a move to more frequent elections. No further comments were received and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

102 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- in Chesham, we propose amending the boundary between the proposed wards of Pond Park and Ridgeway, and that the proposed Pond Park ward be renamed Vale;
- in Amersham, we propose minor boundary realignments between the proposed wards of Little Chalfont and Amersham Common and between the wards of Amersham Town and Amersham Common;
- in Chalfont St Peter, we propose amending the boundary between the wards of Chalfont Common and Chalfont Central.

103 We conclude that, in Chiltern:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 50 to 40;
- there should be 25 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

104 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	50	40	50	40
Number of wards	30	25	30	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,429	1,786	1,342	1,677
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	21	1	21	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	7	0

105 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 21 to one, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would be maintained over the next five years, with the only one ward, Little Missenden, having a variance more than 10 per cent from the average, at 12 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Chiltern District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 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 whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

106 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, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Chesham, Amersham, Chalfont St Peter and Great Missenden to reflect the proposed district wards.

107 In Chesham, we generally adopted the Town Council's proposals for parish warding. At Stage Three the District Council did not make specific comments on parish warding, while the Town Council proposed minor modifications to both district and parish warding. In response to the submissions received during Stage Three, we have proposed a minor boundary realignment between the wards of Ridgeway and Pond Park and that Pond Park ward should be renamed Vale. We are therefore recommending consequential modifications at parish council level. Following consultation with Ordnance Survey we also propose a modified boundary between the parish wards of Hilltop and Townsend, in order to include all the properties in Stoney Grove in Hilltop parish ward.

Final Recommendation

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

108 Our draft recommendations for Amersham were based on proposals from the District Council and the Town Council. During Stage Three we received general support for our proposals at district ward level. As stated earlier we have made minor modifications to the district ward boundaries in Amersham in the light of Stage Three responses. We are therefore recommending consequential modifications at parish council level. At Stage Three the Town Council proposed an increase of three town councillors, with one additional councillor for each of the parish wards of Amersham Town, Little Chalfont and Weedon Hill. We are content to adopt this proposal as part of our final recommendations.

Final Recommendation

Amersham Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, three more than at present, representing five wards: Amersham Common (returning three councillors), Amersham-on-the-Hill (returning five councillors), Amersham Town (returning five councillors), Little Chalfont (returning five councillors) and Weedon Hill (returning two councillors). The boundary between the parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries. The parish ward of Weedon Hill would cover that area of Amersham parish in the revised Chesham Bois & Weedon Hill district ward. Our final recommendations are illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

109 As stated earlier we have confirmed our draft recommendations for district warding in the Chalfont St Peter area as final, subject to a boundary realignment between the wards of

Chalfont Common and Chalfont Central. We are therefore recommending a consequential modification at parish council level.

Final Recommendation

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

110 As stated earlier we have confirmed our draft recommendations to realign the district ward boundary between the wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood Heath as final. We are therefore recommending a consequential modification at parish council level.

Final Recommendation

Great Missenden should continue to have 13 parish councillors, representing three wards: Ballinger & South Heath (returning two councillors), Great Missenden (four councillors) and Prestwood & Heath End (nine councillors). There should be no change to the current parish ward boundaries of Ballinger & South Heath ward. The proposed parish wards of Great Missenden and Prestwood & Heath End are illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

111 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Chiltern

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

112 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Chiltern and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

113 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 2 January 2002.

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

The Secretary of State
Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions
Democracy and Local Leadership Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Chiltern: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Chiltern area.

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

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

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Great Missenden parish.

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

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Chiltern: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Chalfont St Peter parish.

Map A3: Proposed warding of Great Missenden parish.