

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
KENNET  
IN WILTSHIRE

*Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions*

*March 1999*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Kennet in Wiltshire.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray

Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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## Local Government Commission for England

2 March 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 24 February 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Kennet under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in September 1998 and undertook a twelve-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 117) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Kennet.

We recommend that Kennet District Council should be served by 43 councillors representing 29 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

We note that you have now set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Kennet on 24 February 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 1 September 1998, after which we undertook a twelve-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 22 of the 31 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, while 15 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **this level of electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly over the next five years.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 117-118) are that:

- **Kennet District Council should be served by 43 councillors, three more than at present;**
- **there should be 29 wards, two less than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 26 of the 31 existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections for the whole council 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, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 22 of the 29 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, with only one ward, Roundway, varying by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is projected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor varying by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all 29 wards by 2003.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for Devizes and Marlborough town councils and Bishops Cannings, Enford, Grafton, Ham, Ludgershall, Pewsey and Wilcot parish councils.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 13 April 1999:

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

Figure 1:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Aldbourne	1	Aldbourn ward (part – Aldbourne parish)	Map 2
2 All Cannings	1	Cannings ward (part – All Cannings parish); Wilcot ward (part – North Newton parish); Woodborough ward (part – the parishes of Beechingstoke, Chirton and Patney)	Map 2
3 Bedwyn	1	Bedwyn ward (part – the parishes of Great Bedwyn and Little Bedwyn); Burbage ward (part – Grafton North ward of Grafton parish (as proposed))	Maps 2 and A5
4 Bishops Cannings	1	Cannings ward (part – the parishes of Bishops Cannings and Etchilhampton)	Map 2
5 Bromham & Rowde	2	Bromham ward (Bromham parish); Seend ward (part – Rowde parish)	Map 2
6 Burbage	1	Burbage ward (part – Burbage parish)	Map 2
7 Cheverell	1	Cheverell ward (part – the parishes of Cheverell Magna, Cheverell Parva, Erlestoke Marston and Worton)	Map 2
8 Collingbourne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Collingbourne Ducis, Collingbourne Kingston and Everleigh)	Map 2
9 Devizes East	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (East ward of Devizes Town Council)	Large map
10 Devizes North	2	Devizes North ward (North ward of Devizes Town Council); Devizes South ward (part – South ward of Devizes Town Council (part))	Large map
11 Devizes South	2	Devizes South ward (part – South ward of Devizes Town Council (part))	Large map
12 Lavingtons	2	Market Lavington ward (part - Market Lavington parish); West Lavington ward (West Lavington parish)	Map 2
13 Ludgershall	2	Ludgershall ward (part – Ludgershall North ward of Ludgershall parish as proposed)	Maps 2 and A3

Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
14 Marlborough East	2	Marlborough East ward (part – Marlborough East ward of Marlborough Town Council (part))	Map A2
15 Marlborough West	2	Marlborough East ward (part – Marlborough East ward of Marlborough Town Council (part)); Marlborough West ward (Marlborough West ward of Marlborough Town Council)	Map A2
16 Milton Lilbourne	1	Milton Lilbourne ward (the parishes of Easton, Milton Lilbourne and Wootton Rivers); Ogbourne ward (part – Mildenhall parish); West Overton ward (part – Savernake parish)	Map 2
17 Netheravon	1	Netheravon ward (part – the parishes of Fittleton and Netheravon and Enford South parish ward of Enford parish (as proposed))	Maps 2 and A4
18 Ogbourne	1	Ogbourne ward (the parishes of Ogbourne St Andrew and Ogbourne St George); West Overton ward (part – the parishes of Fyfield, Preshute and West Overton)	Map 2
19 Pewsey	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Pewsey parish)	Map 2
20 Pewsey Vale	1	West Overton ward (part – West Overton parish); Wilcot ward (part – the parishes of Huish and Wilcot); Woodborough ward (the parishes of Alton, Stanton St Bernard and Woodborough); Upavon ward (part – the parish of Manningford)	Map 2
21 Potterne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Potterne parish)	Map 2
22 Ramsbury	2	Aldbourne ward (part – Baydon parish); Bedwyn ward (part – Froxfield parish); Ramsbury ward (the parishes of Chilton Foliat and Ramsbury)	Map 2
23 Roundway	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Roundway parish)	Map 2
24 Seend	1	Cheverell ward (part – Poulshot parish); Seend ward (part – Seend parish)	Map 2

*continued overleaf*

*Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
25 Shalbourne	1	Burbage ward (part – Grafton South ward of Grafton parish as proposed); Shalbourne ward (the parishes of Buttermere, Chute, Chute Forest, Ham, Shalbourne and Tidcombe & Fosbury)	Maps 2 and A5
26 Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South	3	Ludgershall ward (part – Ludgershall South ward of Ludgershall parish as proposed); Tidworth ward (the parishes of North Tidworth and South Tedworth)	Maps 2 and A3
27 Upavon	1	Netheravon ward (part – Enford North ward of Enford parish as proposed); Upavon ward (the parishes of Charlton, Rushall, Wilsford and Upavon); Woodborough ward (part – the parish of Marden)	Maps 2 and A4
28 Urchfont	1	Market Lavington ward (part – Easterton parish); Urchfont ward (the parishes of Stert and Urchfont)	Map 2
29 West Selkley	1	West Selkley ward (the parishes of Avebury, Berwick Bassett, Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton); West Overton ward (part – East Kennett parish)	Map 2

Figure 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Kennet

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldbourne	1	1,465	1,465	12	1,531	1,531	7
2 All Cannings	1	1,368	1,368	4	1,385	1,385	-3
3 Bedwyn	1	1,412	1,412	8	1,551	1,551	8
4 Bishops Cannings	1	1,295	1,295	-1	1,348	1,348	-6
5 Bromham & Rowde	2	2,570	1,285	-2	2,586	1,293	-10
6 Burbage	1	1,319	1,319	1	1,579	1,579	10
7 Cheverell	1	1,384	1,384	6	1,425	1,425	0
8 Collingbourne	1	1,262	1,262	-4	1,304	1,304	-9
9 Devizes East	3	3,848	1,283	-2	4,536	1,512	6
10 Devizes North	2	2,463	1,232	-6	2,904	1,452	1
11 Devizes South	2	2,632	1,316	0	3,103	1,552	8
12 Lavingtons	2	2,592	1,296	-1	2,737	1,369	-4
13 Ludgershall	2	2,391	1,196	-9	2,695	1,348	-6
14 Marlborough East	2	2,926	1,463	12	3,118	1,559	9
15 Marlborough West	2	2,894	1,447	10	3,085	1,543	8
16 Milton Lilbourne	1	1,384	1,384	6	1,447	1,447	1
17 Netheravon	1	1,491	1,491	14	1,544	1,544	8
18 Ogbourne	1	1,485	1,485	13	1,558	1,558	9
19 Pewsey	2	2,464	1,232	-6	2,636	1,318	-8
20 Pewsey Vale	1	1,377	1,377	5	1,385	1,385	-3
21 Potterne	1	1,286	1,286	-2	1,340	1,340	-6

*continued overleaf*

Figure 2 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Kennet

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Ramsbury	2	2,566	1,283	-2	2,635	1,318	-8
23 Roundway	2	1,629	815	-38	2,853	1,427	0
24 Seend	1	1,257	1,257	-4	1,305	1,305	-9
25 Shalbourne	1	1,525	1,525	16	1,576	1,576	10
26 Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South	3	3,959	1,320	1	4,127	1,376	-4
27 Upavon	1	1,292	1,292	-1	1,334	1,334	-7
28 Urchfont	1	1,454	1,454	11	1,519	1,519	6
29 West Selkley	1	1,357	1,357	4	1,410	1,410	-2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56,347</b>	—	—	<b>61,556</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,310</b>	—	—	<b>1,432</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Kennet 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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Kennet in Wiltshire. We have now reviewed all the districts in Wiltshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

3 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996, supplemented in September 1996 and updated in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 24 February 1998, when we wrote to Kennet District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Wiltshire County Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Member of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published notices in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 8 June 1998. At Stage Two, we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three was extended by four weeks at the request of a number of local authorities in Wiltshire to enable them to take into account the implications of the Government's White Paper. It began on 1 September 1998 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Kennet in Wiltshire*, and ended on 23 November 1998. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. During Stage Four, we reconsidered our draft recommendations and, in the light of new evidence received relating to several wards in the centre of the district, sought further views from the District Council, affected parish councils and affected district councillors. We now publish our final recommendations.



## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

6 The district of Kennet covers an area of some 97,000 hectares, and is bounded by the districts of North Wiltshire and Swindon to the north, West Wiltshire and Salisbury to the west and south respectively, and the counties of Berkshire and Hampshire to the east. The district is predominantly rural in character, and is partly covered by both the Marlborough Downs and Salisbury Plain. While the majority of residents live in scattered rural settlements, the two largest towns, Devizes and Marlborough, contain around a quarter of the district's population. The district is fully parished, with a total of 76 parishes.

7 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'.

8 The electorate of the district (February 1998) is 56,347. The Council presently has 40 councillors who are elected from 31 wards, 17 of whom represent the urban area and 23 of whom represent the rural area (Map 1 and Figure 3). One ward is represented by three councillors, seven wards are each represented by two councillors, while the remaining 23 are each represented by a single councillor. The Council holds whole-council elections every four years.

9 Since the last electoral review, there has been an increase in the electorate of the district, with around 27 per cent more electors than 1980. There has been significant growth over the last 20 years, in particular in the Market Lavington and Seend areas.

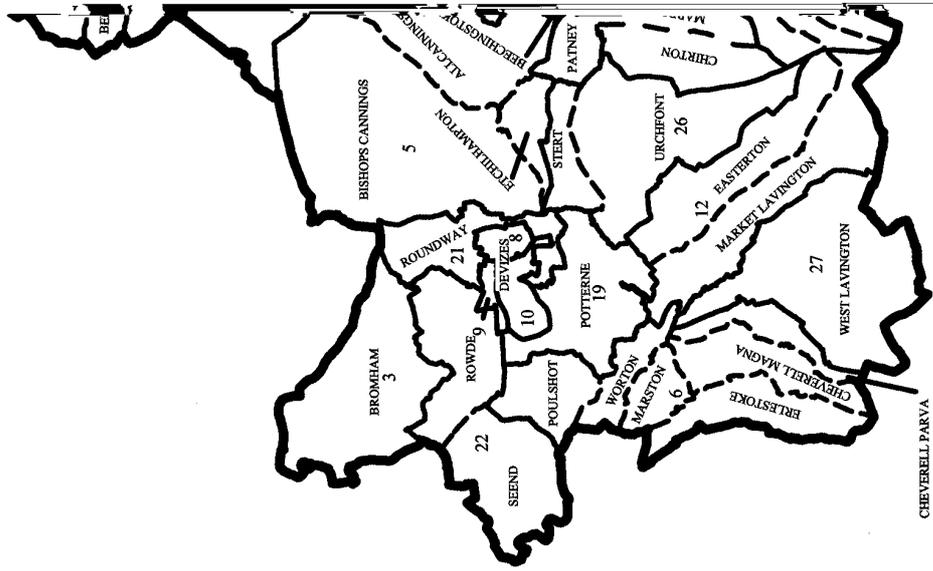
10 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,409 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,539 by the year 2003. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 22 of the 31 wards varies

by more than 10 per cent from the district average, and in 15 wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Market Lavington ward, which has 46 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Kennet



- Key to Wards
- 1 Aldbourne
  - 2 Bedwyn
  - 3 Bromham
  - 4 Burbage
  - 5 Cannings
  - 6 Cheverell
  - 7 Collingbourne
  - 8 Devizes East
  - 9 Devizes North
  - 10 Devizes South
  - 11 Ludgershall
  - 12 Market Lavington
  - 13 Marlborough East
  - 14 Marlborough West
  - 15 Milton Lilbourne
  - 16 Netheravon
  - 17 Ogbourne
  - 18 Pewsey
  - 19 Potterne
  - 20 Ramsbury
  - 21 Roundway
  - 22 Seend
  - 23 Shalbourne
  - 24 Tidworth
  - 25 Upavon
  - 26 Urchfont
  - 27 West Lavington
  - 28 West Overton
  - 29 West Selkley
  - 30 Wilcot
  - 31 Woodborough



KEY

————— EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY

- - - - - EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY

Figure 3:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldbourne	1	1,860	1,860	32	1,937	1,937	26
2 Bedwyn	1	1,589	1,589	13	1,723	1,723	12
3 Bromham	1	1,503	1,503	7	1,514	1,514	-2
4 Burbage	1	1,850	1,850	31	2,131	2,131	38
5 Cannings	1	1,762	1,762	25	1,821	1,821	18
6 Cheverell	1	1,671	1,671	19	1,712	1,712	11
7 Collingbourne	1	1,262	1,262	-10	1,304	1,304	-15
8 Devizes East	3	3,848	1,283	-9	4,536	1,512	-2
9 Devizes North	2	2,205	1,103	-22	2,600	1,300	-16
10 Devizes South	2	2,890	1,445	3	3,407	1,704	11
11 Ludgershall	2	2,945	1,473	5	3,319	1,660	8
12 Market Lavington	1	2,055	2,055	46	2,170	2,170	41
13 Marlborough East	2	3,036	1,518	8	3,235	1,618	5
14 Marlborough West	2	2,784	1,392	-1	2,968	1,484	-4
15 Milton Lilbourne	1	859	859	-39	908	908	-41
16 Netheravon	1	1,592	1,592	13	1,650	1,650	7
17 Ogbourne	1	1,051	1,051	-25	1,124	1,124	-27
18 Pewsey	2	2,464	1,232	-13	2,636	1,318	-14
19 Potterne	1	1,286	1,286	-9	1,340	1,340	-13
20 Ramsbury	1	1,869	1,869	33	1,927	1,927	25
21 Roundway	1	1,629	1,629	16	2,853	2,853	85
22 Seend	1	2,037	2,037	45	2,090	2,090	36

*continued overleaf*

Figure 3 (continued):  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Shalbourne	1	1,119	1,119	-21	1,154	1,154	-25
24 Tidworth	2	3,405	1,703	21	3,503	1,752	14
25 Upavon	1	1,071	1,071	-24	1,108	1,108	-28
26 Urchfont	1	1,003	1,003	-29	1,057	1,057	-31
27 West Lavington	1	988	988	-30	1,029	1,029	-33
28 West Overton	1	1,050	1,050	-25	1,072	1,072	-30
29 West Selkley	1	1,266	1,266	-10	1,311	1,311	-15
30 Wilcot	1	1,172	1,172	-17	1,177	1,177	-24
31 Woodborough	1	1,226	1,226	-13	1,240	1,240	-19
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>56,347</b>	—	—	<b>61,556</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>1,409</b>	—	—	<b>1,539</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Kennet 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. For example, in 1998, electors in Milton Lilbourne ward were relatively over-represented by 39 per cent, while electors in Market Lavington ward were relatively under-represented by 46 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>11</sup> During Stage One, we received representations from Kennet District Council, Michael Ancram MP, Devizes Constituency Liberal Democrats, 18 parish and town councils, seven district councillors and eight 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 Kennet in Wiltshire*. Our draft recommendations were based on the District Council's scheme, which we considered achieved the best balance between electoral equality and the need to reflect community identities and interests in the district, provided good boundaries and maintained the present mix of single- and multi-member wards. However, we proposed departing from the District Council's scheme in relation to the proposed wards of Bishops Cannings, Bromham, Ludgershall, Pewsey North, Pewsey South, Roundway South, Rowde, Shalbourne and Urchfont. We proposed that:

- (a) Kennet District Council should be served by 43 councillors representing 29 wards;
- (b) the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (c) there should be new warding arrangements for Devizes and Marlborough town councils, and Bishops Cannings, Enford, Grafton, Ham, Ludgershall, Pewsey and Wilcot parish councils.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Kennet District Council should comprise 43 councillors, serving 29 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

<sup>12</sup> Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 23 of the 29 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve by 2003, with the number of electors per councillor in all 29 wards projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

13 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 45 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Kennet District Council and the Commission.

### **Kennet District Council**

14 The District Council stated that it was “pleased” the Commission had adopted its proposals as the basis for its draft recommendations. However, it made more detailed comments in relation to several of the areas where the Commission had introduced modifications to the Council’s original proposals. In particular, the Council reaffirmed its support for two single-member wards to cover the Pewsey area, while it also supported the inclusion of Stert parish in Urchfont ward rather than Bishops Cannings ward, and Chute Forest parish in Shalbourne ward rather than Ludgershall ward. The Council also stated that it was content to “raise no objection” to our draft recommendations to retain the boundaries of the existing Roundway ward and to increase its representation to two councillors, and to create a new ward comprising Bromham and Rowde parishes.

### **Michael Ancram, MP**

15 Michael Ancram, MP, expressed concern regarding our draft recommendation for the Tidworth area. He noted that the overall representation for the area had been reduced by one as a result of a change to the boundary of the County Council several years ago, and endorsed Tidworth Parish Council’s view in relation to under-registration in the district on the grounds that military personnel and their families do not register on the electoral roll.

### **Devizes Constituency Conservative Association**

16 The Devizes Constituency Conservative Association considered that the existing arrangements “work very well” and that there was little desire for change in the district. It argued that

there should be greater flexibility regarding the number of electors each councillor represented, and supported the retention of the existing arrangements.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

17 A total of 18 parish and town councils submitted representations during Stage Three. Marlborough Town Council opposed the draft recommendation for a boundary modification between Marlborough East and Marlborough West district wards, while Roundway Parish Council supported the draft recommendation for the retention of the existing Roundway district ward. Ludgershall Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for its area, and reaffirmed its support for the retention of the existing arrangements. Chute and Chute Forest parish councils opposed our draft recommendation to include Chute Forest parish in a revised Ludgershall district ward, while Tidworth Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for a new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South district ward.

18 Market Lavington and West Lavington parish councils both expressed opposition to our draft recommendation for a new Lavingtons ward comprising both parishes, and supported the retention of the existing arrangements. Urchfont Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for a new ward comprising Easterton and Urchfont parishes, and reaffirmed its support for a warding arrangement which would link the parish with Chirton, Etchilhampton and Stert parishes. All Cannings Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for a new All Cannings district ward.

19 Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council expressed concern regarding the shared community identity of the constituent parishes within our proposed Pewsey Vale ward, and instead supported an alternative proposal put forward by Councillor Watson. Alton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to include West Overton parish in a new Pewsey Vale ward, while Preshute Parish Council had “no objections” to our draft

recommendation for a new Ogbourne ward. Savernake Parish Council expressed a preference for a warding arrangement in which it would be combined with other rural parishes surrounding Marlborough, rather than with Milton Lilbourne parish, as under our draft recommendations, while Broad Hinton & Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council supported our draft recommendation for a revised West Selkley ward.

20 Baydon and Froxfield parish councils opposed our draft recommendations for their respective areas, while Grafton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for revised Bedwyn and Shalbourne wards. The Parish Council expressed concern at the consequential warding of the parish, and therefore proposed an alternative configuration of parishes in the area. Ramsbury Parish Council stated that the two councillors who would represent the revised Ramsbury ward should “work as a team”.

## Other Representations

21 A further 26 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from councillors, local organisations and residents.

22 Councillor Edwards supported our draft recommendation for a new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South wards. However, Councillors Colling and Connolly both expressed concern at the possible under-registration of service personnel in this area, and therefore opposed this draft recommendation. Councillors Combe and Smith both opposed our draft recommendations for modifications to the existing Cannings and Urchfont wards.

23 Councillor Watson, in a submission supported by Councillor Bromwich, argued that West Overton parish had few community ties with parishes in the Pewsey Vale, and put forward an alternative warding arrangement for the area. Councillor Humphries expressed concern regarding our draft recommendation for a revised Ramsbury ward, which would place the parishes of Aldbourne and Baydon in different district wards, while Councillor Booth supported the submission of Grafton Parish Council. Councillor Veasey proposed that Chute and Chute Forest parishes should remain in the same district ward.

24 Lt Col Wheatley, Garrison Adjutant in Tidworth, also expressed concern as to the possible under-registration of service personnel in the area, as did one local resident. The Ludgershall Environment Group and three other local residents opposed our draft recommendation to include part of Ludgershall parish in the new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South district ward, while five local residents opposed our draft recommendation that Chute Forest parish should form part of the revised Ludgershall district ward. Market Lavington Community Hall Management Trust and three local residents opposed our draft recommendation for a new Lavingtons ward comprising Market Lavington and West Lavington parishes.

25 One local resident supported our draft recommendation to include Fyfield parish in the revised Ogbourne ward, while one resident expressed concern regarding the draft recommendation to include Fyfield and West Overton parishes in separate district wards.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

26 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Kennet is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

27 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. First, 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. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

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

29 Our *Guidance* states that, while 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, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year

forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an 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**

30 At Stage One, Kennet District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 9 per cent from 56,347 to 61,556 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It expected most of the growth to be in Roundway parish, at the southern edge of Devizes. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report, we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

31 At Stage Three, Tidworth Parish Council expressed concern that the District Council had under-estimated the likely growth of Tidworth over the next five years. It argued that a combination of new development and the refurbishment of properties which are currently empty would lead to a significant increase in the electorate of the existing Tidworth ward, and therefore supported the retention of the existing ward.

32 During Stage Four, we sought further clarification from the District Council regarding their forecasts for the Tidworth area. Having reconsidered electorate projections in the light of representations made at Stage Three, and following further advice from the District Council, we remain

satisfied that the electorate projections used in our draft recommendations report provide the best estimates presently available.

## Council Size

33 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a district or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

34 Kennet District Council is at present served by 40 councillors. At Stage One, the District Council proposed a council size of 43. It argued that this proposal had regard to a “substantial increase” in the electorate of the district since the last review, but was primarily a consequence of the need to secure the best level of electoral equality in the area. In our draft recommendations report, we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 43 members.

35 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendation. No other representations were received. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for a council size of 43 as final.

## Electoral Arrangements

36 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the District Council’s scheme. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

37 First, there was general agreement that there should be a moderate increase in council size. The District Council put forward a proposal, with which we concurred, for a council size of 43. Although the Commission is generally cautious about any increase in council size, there has been considerable growth in the electorate since the last review, and this is expected to continue over the next five years.

38 Second, most respondents preferred the continuation of the existing combination of single- and multi-member wards. We therefore concluded

that there was a clear overall local preference for the continuation of mixed-member wards, and proposed that there should be two three-member wards, 10 two-member wards and 17 single-member wards.

39 Third, respondents asked the Commission to take into account established communities. We sought to achieve this while also seeking electoral equality across the district, taking into account the development which is expected, particularly in the existing Roundway ward. In this case, we have sought electoral equality by the year 2003. This would inevitably result in some electoral imbalance in the short term.

40 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council’s proposals had been subject to local consultation and had achieved a measure of local agreement. In the light of this, we concluded that we should base our draft recommendations on the District Council’s scheme, which we considered would represent a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further, we departed from the Council’s scheme in relation to the proposed wards of Bishops Cannings, Bromham, Ludgershall, Pewsey North, Pewsey South, Roundway South, Rowde, Shalbourne and Urchfont.

41 Having considered the representations received during Stages One and Three of the review, we have further considered our draft recommendations in the light of new evidence. We are pleased to note that our draft recommendations would appear to have been well received locally, with opposition limited to certain areas within the district. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) The Urban Areas
  - Devizes East, Devizes North and Devizes South wards;
  - Marlborough East and Marlborough West wards;
  - Pewsey ward;
  - Ludgershall and Tidworth wards;
- (b) The Rural Area
  - Bromham, Roundway and Seend wards;
  - Cheverell and Potterne wards;
  - Market Lavington, Urchfont and West Lavington wards;
  - Cannings and West Selkley wards;

- Netheravon, Upavon, Wilcot and Woodborough wards;
- Ogbourne and West Overton wards;
- Collingbourne and Milton Libourne wards;
- Bedwyn, Burbage and Shalbourne wards;
- Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards.

42 Details of our final recommendations for the future electoral arrangements in Kennet are summarised in Figures 1 and 2 and illustrated on Map 2, the maps at Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report.

## **The Urban Areas**

### **Devizes East, Devizes North and Devizes South wards**

43 At present, Devizes North and Devizes South wards are both represented by two councillors, and have 22 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively. Devizes East ward is represented by three councillors, and has 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average.

44 At Stage One, the District Council proposed relatively limited change in the town. It proposed no change for Devizes East ward, and argued that the increase in council size would improve the level of electoral equality in the existing ward. However, it proposed a minor boundary modification in the town centre between Devizes North and Devizes South wards in the interests of electoral equality. This proposal would involve an area around the Castle being transferred from Devizes South to Devizes North ward. No change was proposed to the current level of representation in the town. The Council's proposals would provide for improved electoral equality, resulting in the number of electors per councillor being equal to the district average in Devizes South, while the number of electors per councillor in Devizes East and Devizes North wards would vary by 2 per cent and 6 per cent from the district average respectively. By 2003, the number of electors per councillor in Devizes South, Devizes East and Devizes North wards would vary by 8 per cent, 6 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

45 In our draft recommendations report, we concluded that we should endorse the District Council's proposals for this area. We considered that the area which the Council had proposed should be transferred to Devizes North ward from Devizes

South ward shared a number of community ties with the area to its north, and that this proposal would ensure that a large part of the town centre is contained within the same district ward.

46 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for the Devizes area. No other representations were received. Given this support, and in the absence of any further views, we have concluded that we should confirm our draft recommendations as final. These recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Marlborough East and Marlborough West wards**

47 Under current arrangements, the town of Marlborough is divided into two district wards, Marlborough East and Marlborough West, both of which are represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Marlborough East currently varies by 8 per cent from the district average, while the number of electors per councillor in Marlborough West ward varies by 1 per cent from the district average.

48 At Stage One, the District Council proposed modifying the boundary between the two wards, in order to transfer a total of 110 electors in an area either side of the A346 Marlborough to Swindon road from Marlborough East ward to Marlborough West ward. It argued that while both wards secured reasonable electoral equality on their existing boundaries, the proposed increase in council size would impact on this level of electoral equality. The Council's proposals would mean that Marlborough East and Marlborough West wards, which would both continue to be represented by two councillors, would vary by 12 per cent and 10 per cent from the district average number of electors per councillor respectively (9 per cent and 8 per cent by 2003).

49 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the District Council's proposals in Marlborough. We noted that the increase in council size would impact upon the level of electoral equality achieved by the existing wards in Marlborough, and that modifications to the current warding arrangements were therefore necessary.

50 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for the Marlborough area. However, Marlborough Town Council

opposed our draft recommendation for a boundary modification between Marlborough East and Marlborough West wards. It argued that it was “highly likely” that population growth over the next few years in the town would render electorate forecasts inaccurate by the time the first elections are held under the new arrangements, and therefore supported the retention of the existing arrangements in the town.

51 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for the Marlborough area as final. While we have noted the arguments put forward by Marlborough Town Council for the retention of the existing arrangements, we have not been persuaded that the benefits in community identity terms would outweigh the consequent electoral inequality. In particular, we note that if the existing arrangements in Marlborough East ward were retained under a council size of 43, the number of electors per councillor would vary by 16 per cent from the district average. Furthermore, we consider that the area which would be transferred from Marlborough East ward shares several community ties with Marlborough West ward.

#### **Pewsey ward**

52 Pewsey ward covers one of the larger parishes in the district, and is currently represented by 2 councillors. The ward lies in the centre of the district, and contains one of only two railway stations in Kennet. Under existing arrangements, it has 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

53 At Stage One, the District Council proposed dividing the existing ward into two single-member wards, Pewsey North and Pewsey South. This proposal would mean that the new Pewsey North and Pewsey South wards would have 15 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (10 per cent and 6 per cent fewer by 2003).

54 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the proposals put forward by the District Council would achieve a poorer level of electoral equality than the retention of the existing arrangements, which would improve as a result of the increase in council size. While we acknowledged there may be benefits in the area being represented by single-member wards, we

considered that the retention of the existing Pewsey ward would represent the best balance between the statutory criteria and electoral equality available, and put it forward as our draft recommendation. Under a council size of 43, Pewsey ward would vary by 6 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor initially, and 8 per cent by 2003.

55 At Stage Three, the District Council reaffirmed its support for its original proposal that the existing Pewsey ward be divided into two new district wards. It argued that given the proposed new warding arrangements for Pewsey Parish Council, it would be “confusing” to the electorate to deal with the District Council’s electoral arrangements in the area in a different manner.

56 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendation for the area. Although we are sympathetic to the Council’s arguments regarding the different approaches to the electoral arrangements of the Parish Council and District Council, we have noted that this situation also applies to several other parishes in the district. In addition, we remain concerned at the level of electoral inequality that would arise as a result of the division of the existing Pewsey ward, and consider that such a proposal would not offer the most appropriate solution. Accordingly, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

#### **Ludgershall and Tidworth wards**

57 Ludgershall and Tidworth wards are both represented by two councillors and lie in the south-eastern corner of the district, abutting the county boundary with Hampshire. Tidworth ward, which includes a substantial military base, covers the parishes of North Tidworth and South Tidworth and currently has 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Ludgershall ward covers Ludgershall parish, and at present varies by 5 per cent from the district average.

58 As part of its Stage One submission, the District Council proposed modifications to both wards in this area. It argued that although Tidworth had “outgrown its existing representation”, it did not justify an extra councillor in its own right. It therefore proposed dividing Ludgershall parish into two new parish wards, using the railway line as the new boundary. This would result in the new Ludgershall South parish ward being included in a

new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South district ward, which would be represented by three councillors, while the revised Ludgershall ward would continue to be represented by two councillors. This proposal would mean that the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Ludgershall and Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South would vary by 9 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average respectively (6 per cent and 4 per cent by 2003).

59 In our draft recommendations report, we noted the concerns of several respondents concerning the Council's proposals for this area. Several argued that the area of Ludgershall parish which would be transferred out of the existing Ludgershall district ward has no community ties with the Tidworth area, while others considered that the Council had under-estimated the level of likely growth in the electorate of Tidworth parish, and that a degree of under-registration of military personnel existed in the area. Nevertheless, we concluded that the current high level of electoral inequality in Tidworth ward should be addressed as part of this review, while we also noted that this situation would be exacerbated by the proposed increase in council size. We therefore concluded that the Council's proposals offered the most suitable solution in the circumstances, and adopted them as our draft recommendations, subject to one modification. In the interests of electoral equality, we concluded that we should include the parish of Chute Forest in the revised Ludgershall ward, which would therefore vary by 4 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor now, and 2 per cent by 2003.

60 Our draft recommendations provoked several responses at Stage Three. The District Council supported our draft recommendations for the area, as did Councillor Edwards. Councillor Colling opposed our draft recommendations, and considered that Ludgershall and Tidworth were "two distinctly different communities". He further argued that the electoral register for the existing Tidworth ward gives a false picture as a result of the under-registration of military personnel, and that this situation would worsen as further regiments are stationed in the area. He therefore supported an additional councillor for the existing ward, a view endorsed by Councillor Connolly.

61 Tidworth Parish Council also opposed our draft recommendation for its area. While it also expressed concern at the lack of community ties

between Ludgershall and Tidworth parishes and the under-registration of military personnel, the Parish Council additionally argued that the District Council had under-estimated the level of development in the parish over the next five years, particularly in regard to housing stock formerly owned by the Ministry of Defence. It therefore contended that the correct electorate figure, particularly for 2003, was significantly higher than in the District Council's Stage One submission. Ludgershall Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to transfer that part of the parish south of the railway line to the proposed Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South ward. It argued that the electoral equality provided by our draft recommendations would be achieved at the expense of community identities in the area, a view endorsed by the Ludgershall Environment Group and three local residents.

62 We received two further submissions regarding our draft recommendation for a new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South ward. Lt Col Wheatley, Garrison Adjutant of Tidworth & Bulford Garrison, reiterated the concerns he expressed at Stage One regarding the under-registration of service personnel in the area. In particular, he argued that the majority of service personnel in the area were registered on the electoral roll elsewhere, and that this led to a distorted total number of electors in the parish, a situation which would be exacerbated in the future as more military personnel were stationed in the area. Lt Col Wheatley's concerns were echoed by the Community Development Project.

63 Chute and Chute Forest parish councils opposed our proposal to include Chute Forest parish in the revised Ludgershall district ward, as did five residents. The parish councils argued that both parishes were rural in nature, and that they share a number of close community ties with each other and with other parishes in the revised Shalbourne ward. In contrast, they considered that Chute Forest had little, if any, affinity with Ludgershall parish, which they argued was more urban in character. Both parish councils supported the District Council's original proposals for the area.

64 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted the different issues raised in response to our draft recommendation for a new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South ward. We have considered the case for the retention of the existing

arrangements, but continue to consider that the high level of electoral inequality in the existing Tidworth ward should be addressed, particularly as this would be exacerbated by the proposed increase in council size. As a consequence, we consider that modifications to the existing arrangements in the area cannot be avoided. In addition, the geography of the area is such that we consider the inclusion of parts of either Fittleton or Collingbourne Ducis parishes to the north and west in a revised Tidworth ward would give a less satisfactory reflection of communities in the area than our draft recommendation, particularly as we propose confirming our draft recommendation for the retention of the existing Collingbourne ward to the north.

65 As indicated in our draft recommendations report, we had considered the possibility of increasing the number of councillors representing Tidworth ward to three, as proposed by several respondents. However, on the basis of the electorate figures provided by the District Council, this would provide a significantly poorer level of electoral equality than our draft recommendation, and would result in an increase in council size to 44, as opposed to the general consensus for a 43-member council.

66 We note the arguments put forward by some respondents regarding the under-registration of service personnel in the Tidworth area. However, we are obliged to conduct this review on the basis of the number of electors which appear on the 1998 electoral register. As we explain in our *Guidance*, we can take account of claimed under-registration for the purposes of five-year forecasts, but only where credible evidence is put to us of steps being taken which are likely to increase registration. Notwithstanding a specific request in our draft recommendations report for such evidence, none was received. Accordingly, we are satisfied that the figures provided by the District Council are the most accurate assessment of the electorate in the area.

67 We have also sought further clarification from the District Council regarding its electorate projections for the area, as a result of Tidworth Parish Council's contention that the level of likely growth for the parish over the next five years had been under-estimated. In the light of further information about the methodology for producing these projections, we continue to consider the Council's figures represent the best estimate that can be made, given their basis in the Local Plan.

68 We recognise that our draft recommendation for a new Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South ward has proved to be contentious locally, and that there are limited community ties between Tidworth and Ludgershall parishes. Nevertheless, given the lack of viable alternatives, we continue to consider that it offers the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and have decided to confirm it as final. However, we have noted the views of those respondents, including the District Council, who opposed our draft recommendation to include Chute Forest parish in Ludgershall ward. On balance, we are persuaded that the identities and interests of communities in the area would be better served by including the parish in a revised Shalbourne ward to the north. Under our final recommendations, Ludgershall ward, which would be represented by two councillors, would vary by 9 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and by 6 per cent by 2003. Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South ward, which would be represented by three councillors, would vary by 1 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and 4 per cent by 2003.

## **The Rural Area**

### **Bromham, Roundway and Seend wards**

69 Bromham ward comprises Bromham parish, and lies in the north-western corner of the district. It is represented by one councillor, and currently has 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Seend ward, which comprises the parishes of Rowde and Seend, is situated to the north of Devizes. It is also represented by a single councillor, and has 45 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Roundway ward comprises Roundway parish, and stretches from the district boundary in the north to the area adjacent to the western and southern boundary of Devizes, and chiefly consists of urban overspill from Devizes. It is also currently represented by one councillor. While the number of electors per councillor in Roundway ward presently varies by 16 per cent from the district average, it is projected to have 85 per cent more electors per councillor by 2003, as a result of the significant development planned for the area.

70 At Stage One, the Council proposed dividing Roundway parish into two parish wards, with the new Roundway North parish ward being combined with Rowde parish to form a single-

member district ward, and the new Roundway South parish ward forming a new two-member district ward. The Council proposed no change to Bromham ward, but proposed modifying Seend ward, by combining it with Poulshot parish from the neighbouring Cheverell ward. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bromham and Seend wards would vary by 15 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Rowde ward would be approximately equal to the average. However, while there would initially be 47 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average in Roundway South ward, the projected development of this area would mean that there would be 10 per cent fewer than the district average by 2003.

71 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the significant growth projected for Roundway parish was the key factor in this area. While we noted that the Council's proposals would achieve better electoral equality than the current arrangements, and would also reflect the difference in characteristics between the two areas within Roundway parish, we considered that a more suitable alternative existed, both in terms of electoral equality and the interests and identities of communities. Accordingly, we proposed the retention of the existing Roundway ward, with Bromham and Rowde parishes being combined to form a new district ward. This proposal also reflected the views of Roundway Parish Council. Under our draft recommendations, Roundway ward would initially vary by 38 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district. However, as a result of the development planned for the area over the next five years, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed ward would be approximately equal to the average by 2003. The number of electors per councillor in Bromham & Rowde and Seend wards would vary by 2 per cent and 4 per cent from the average for the district now, and 10 per cent and 9 per cent by 2003.

72 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations for Bromham & Rowde, Roundway and Seend wards were supported by the District Council, while Roundway Parish Council supported our draft recommendation for its area. Given this support, and in the absence of any further views, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### **Cheverell and Potterne wards**

73 Cheverell ward comprises a collection of rural parishes at the western edge of the district, while Potterne ward comprises Potterne parish and lies south-west of Devizes. Both wards are represented by a single councillor. Currently, Cheverell ward has 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Potterne ward has 9 per cent fewer.

74 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of Poulshot to a revised Seend ward, as already discussed. No further changes were proposed to Cheverell or Potterne wards, which the Council argued had strong identities and satisfied its own criterion for single-member rural wards. We received no further submissions on this area during Stage One.

75 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council's proposals would continue to reflect the identities and interests of the parishes concerned, while also securing a reasonable level of electoral equality. Under a council size of 43, Cheverell and Potterne wards would vary by 6 per cent and 2 per cent respectively from the average number of electors per councillor for the district (approximately equal to and 6 per cent from the average by 2003). We therefore endorsed the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

76 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Cheverell and Potterne wards. No other representations were received. Given this support, and in the absence of any further views, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### **Market Lavington, Urchfont and West Lavington wards**

77 Market Lavington ward is represented by one councillor and comprises the parishes of Market Lavington and Easterton. It is currently the most under-represented ward in the district, with 46 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. In contrast, West Lavington and Urchfont wards are two of the most over-represented wards in the district, with 30 per cent and 29 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively.

78 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a new two-member Lavingtons ward consisting of Market Lavington and West Lavington parishes, with Easterton parish being transferred to Urchfont ward. These proposals would mean that the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Lavingtons ward would vary by 1 per cent from the district average (4 per cent by 2003), while the number of electors per councillor in Urchfont ward would vary 11 per cent from the district average (6 per cent by 2003).

79 In our draft recommendations report, we noted the arguments put forward by several respondents that the existing arrangements in this area work reasonably well, and that the Council's proposals would not satisfactorily reflect community ties. Nevertheless, we considered that the current high level of electoral inequality in the area should be addressed, and that the Council's proposals offered a more appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, subject to one modification. In the interests of electoral equality, we proposed including Stert parish in Bishops Cannings ward rather than Urchfont ward. This modification would mean that the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Urchfont ward would vary by 1 per cent from the district average (3 per cent by 2003).

80 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendation for a new Lavingtons ward. However, it reaffirmed its support for its original proposal that Stert parish should be retained in Urchfont ward. The Council stated that there were "long-standing links" between Stert and Urchfont parishes, and that it considered there were no advantages to be gained from our modifications to its proposals.

81 West Lavington Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation for a new two-member ward comprising Market Lavington and West Lavington parishes. It supported a warding arrangement which involved single-member wards, and argued that this would be possible by creating a district ward comprising West Lavington parish and part of Market Lavington parish, although it did not define the precise boundaries required. Market Lavington Parish Council also opposed our draft recommendation on the grounds that the parish would be located in a separate district ward to Easterton parish, with which it argued it shares many community ties. Urchfont Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation that Stert

parish should be transferred to Bishops Cannings ward, arguing that the two parishes had a long history of close community ties. It therefore supported a warding arrangement which would place the two in the same district ward.

82 We received a further six submissions regarding this area of the district. Councillor Smith opposed our draft recommendation to include Easterton parish in a revised Urchfont ward, and argued that the two parishes are separated by open countryside and have no shared community identity, while Councillor Combe contended that there are several community ties between Stert and Urchfont parishes. Market Lavington Community Hall Trust and three local residents expressed concern at our draft recommendation for a new Lavingtons ward, and supported the retention of the existing Market Lavington ward.

83 We note the views put to us during Stage Three regarding the lack of community ties between Market Lavington and West Lavington parishes. While we acknowledge that these are somewhat limited, we are not persuaded that there are any viable alternatives. Under the current arrangements, the existing wards of Market Lavington and West Lavington contain significant electoral imbalances, and as we indicated in our draft recommendations report, we consider that this situation should be addressed. We note that a number of options would combine this area with neighbouring parishes, and that this would impact upon our final recommendations for adjoining wards. We have carefully considered West Lavington Parish Council's proposal to form a revised West Lavington ward which would include part of Market Lavington parish, but note that no precise boundaries have been defined. Furthermore, we consider that such a proposal would involve warding Market Lavington parish, and may involve creating an arbitrary boundary. On balance therefore, we continue to consider our draft recommendation for a new Lavingtons ward offers the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and have decided to endorse it as our final recommendation.

84 We also note the arguments put to us regarding the community ties of Stert parish. We have reconsidered our draft recommendation in the light of these views, and have been persuaded that the proposal to retain Stert parish in Urchfont ward would provide a more satisfactory reflection of the

interests and identities of communities in the area. We also note that this proposal would have a minimal effect on the level of electoral equality in the area. Accordingly, we have been persuaded that we should depart from our draft recommendations in this area, and recommend that Stert parish remain in Urchfont ward. This modification would mean that Urchfont ward would have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially, and 6 per cent by 2003.

### **Cannings and West Selkley wards**

85 Cannings ward comprises the parishes of All Cannings, Bishops Cannings and Etchilhampton, and is represented by one councillor. It currently has 25 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. West Selkley ward, which is also represented by a single councillor, comprises the parishes of Avebury, Berwick Bassett, Broad Hinton, Winterbourne Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton, and currently contains 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Both wards adjoin the boundary with North Wiltshire district.

86 At Stage One, the District Council proposed limited change to these wards. It proposed that the parish of All Cannings be transferred from Bishops Cannings ward, and instead form part of a new All Cannings district ward, and that West Selkley ward be expanded to include East Kennett parish. Its proposals provided for improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in the revised Bishops Cannings and West Selkley wards varying by 1 per cent and 4 per cent from the district average respectively (6 per cent and 2 per cent by 2003).

87 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council's proposals appeared to group together parishes with similar characteristics and interests, and adopted them as our draft recommendations, subject to the modification regarding Stert parish, as already indicated. This modification would mean that the number of electors per councillor in the revised Bishops Cannings ward would vary by 9 per cent from the average for the district now, and 3 per cent by 2003.

88 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, All Cannings Parish Council expressed concern regarding our proposal for a new All Cannings district ward, and argued that the parish "does not

share any facilities" with any of the other constituent parishes. Broad Hinton & Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for a council size of 43, and in particular for a revised West Selkley ward.

89 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we are satisfied that our draft recommendations represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, subject to the modification regarding Stert parish, as already discussed. While we note the concerns of All Cannings Parish Council, no alternative warding arrangements have been proposed at Stage Three. Additionally, the transfer of All Cannings parish to a different district ward would impact on the level of electoral equality in surrounding wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to Stert parish being included in Urchfont ward. Under these recommendations, Bishops Cannings and West Selkley wards would vary by 1 per cent and 4 per cent respectively from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and 6 per cent and 2 per cent by 2003.

### **Upavon, Wilcot and Woodborough wards**

90 Upavon, Wilcot and Woodborough wards are all represented by a single councillor, and comprise collections of rural parishes. Currently, Upavon, Wilcot and Woodborough wards are all relatively over-represented, with 24 per cent, 17 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively.

91 At Stage One, the Council proposed warding the parish of Enford (currently in Netheravon ward), and including the proposed Enford North parish ward in a revised Upavon district ward, together with the parish of Manningford, (currently in Wilcot ward). As already indicated, it also proposed a new All Cannings ward, which would comprise the parish of All Cannings (currently in Cannings ward), Beechingstoke, Chirton, Marden and Patney (currently in Woodborough ward) and North Newnton parish (currently in Wilcot ward). It further proposed a new Pewsey Vale ward, which would comprise the parishes of Alton, Huish, Stanton St Bernard, West Overton and Woodborough, together with a new Wilcot West parish ward of Wilcot parish. All three wards would be represented by a single councillor. As a result of these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed All

Cannings and Upavon wards would each vary by 14 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was projected to improve over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by 5 per cent and 7 per cent respectively by 2003. Pewsey Vale ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average now, and 5 per cent fewer by 2003.

92 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the District Council's proposals had attracted a degree of opposition, and that the shared community ties between some parishes were somewhat limited. However, we also acknowledged the difficulty that exists, particularly in sparsely populated rural areas, in reconciling the achievement of electoral equality with the need to reflect the interests and identities of communities. While we were sympathetic to the nature of the concerns that were brought to our attention in relation to these wards, we considered that the District Council's proposals offered the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Accordingly, we endorsed the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

93 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for the area. However, Councillor Watson opposed our proposals for the area, and put forward an alternative arrangement for these and other wards surrounding the towns of Marlborough and Pewsey. Councillor Watson argued that West Overton parish had "strong historical, community and topographical ties" with other parishes surrounding Marlborough, but none with the other parishes in the proposed Pewsey Vale ward, and therefore proposed West Overton should be included in the revised Ogbourne ward. As this modification would have implications in terms of electoral equality, Councillor Watson also proposed further modifications elsewhere. In particular, he proposed that Marden parish should be included in Upavon ward rather than All Cannings ward, that Manningford parish should be included in Pewsey Vale ward rather than Upavon ward, and that the whole of Wilcot parish should be included in Pewsey Vale ward rather than being divided between two wards. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in All Cannings and Upavon wards would vary by 4 per cent and 1 per cent from the district average

now, and 3 per cent and 7 per cent by 2003. The number of electors per councillor in Pewsey Vale ward would vary by 5 per cent from the average initially, and 3 per cent by 2003.

94 We received a further three submissions regarding this area of the district. Councillor Bromwich endorsed Councillor Watson's proposals, as did Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council. The Parish Council argued that "no associations ... exist" between Fyfield and West Overton parishes and the Pewsey Vale communities, while Alton Parish Council contended that West Overton has an affiliation eastwards towards Marlborough. One local resident supported a warding arrangement which retained East Kennett, Fyfield and West Overton parishes within the same district ward.

95 Having given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage Three, we noted that the proposals put forward by Councillor Watson would appear to better reflect the identities and interests of communities in certain areas, particularly in regard to West Overton parish. However, given that these proposals had not been subject to public consultation, we sought the views of the District Council, affected parish councils and the relevant district councillors.

96 Councillor Bromwich and All Cannings and Manningford parish councils all supported Councillor Watson's proposals. Fyfield & West Overton parish also supported these modifications, on the grounds that they would preserve historic links between parishes and would better reflect the geography of the area. However, Councillor Wookey argued that these proposals would not provide a better reflection of communities in the area than our draft recommendations, and that Manningford parish shared a number of community ties with Upavon and Rushall parishes. Furthermore, the District Council argued that although Councillor Watson's proposals would retain Fyfield and West Overton parishes in the same district ward, they would separate Chirton, Marden and Patney parishes, all three of which had equally strong ties.

97 We have given careful consideration to the views expressed during Stage Three, including those from parties affected by Councillor Watson's proposals, and have therefore reconsidered our draft recommendations against the alternative

proposal. We note the concerns of those respondents who have argued that there is a lack of community ties between West Overton parish and the remainder of the constituent parishes in the proposed Pewsey Vale ward, and that the interests and identities of communities in the area would be better reflected by including West Overton parish in the revised Ogbourne ward. However, we also note the views of other respondents, including the District Council, that Councillor Watson's proposals would appear to create similar problems in community identity terms in other areas, notably regarding Chirton, Marden and Patney parishes. We consider that the arguments are very finely balanced, but that it would be pointless to move away from our draft recommendations in order to better reflect communities in one area, only for such a modification to create similar disadvantages elsewhere. We also note that the District Council's original proposals, which we adopted as our draft recommendations, had been subject to public consultation, and achieved a measure of local agreement. On balance therefore, we have not been persuaded that we should move away from our draft recommendations, which we confirm as final.

#### **Milton Lilbourne, Ogbourne and West Overton wards**

<sup>98</sup> Milton Lilbourne ward lies to the east of Pewsey, and comprises the parishes of Easton, Milton Lilbourne and Wootton Rivers. It is represented by a single councillor, and currently has 39 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Ogbourne and West Overton wards lie to the north and west of Marlborough, and are also both represented by a single councillor. Similarly, both wards are also currently over-represented, with 25 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

<sup>99</sup> At Stage One, the Council proposed addressing the current level of electoral inequality by expanding Milton Lilbourne ward to include Savernake parish, in addition to the new Wilcot East ward of Wilcot parish. This would comprise the village of Oare, which the Council argued was distinct from the rest of the parish. As already indicated, the District Council also proposed that East Kennett parish should be transferred from West Overton ward to a revised West Selkley ward, with West Overton parish being included in the new Pewsey Vale ward. It further proposed that the remaining parishes in the existing West Overton

ward (with the exception of Savernake) be included with the existing Ogbourne ward. Under these proposals, the revised Milton Lilbourne and Ogbourne wards would vary by 4 per cent and 2 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district now, and 9 per cent and 2 per cent by 2003.

<sup>100</sup> In our draft recommendations report, we considered that the Council's proposals for a revised Ogbourne ward had merit. In particular, we noted that the proposed ward would comprise a collection of rural parishes and that it would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, while we also considered the Council's proposal for a revised Milton Lilbourne ward to be an appropriate warding arrangement. We therefore endorsed the Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

<sup>101</sup> At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations, although Councillor Watson proposed modifications. As already indicated, he argued that West Overton parish has an affinity with other parishes in the Kennet Valley, and should therefore be included in the revised Ogbourne ward rather than the new Pewsey Vale ward. In order to retain a reasonable level of electoral equality, Councillor Watson also proposed transferring Mildenhall parish from the revised Ogbourne ward to Milton Lilbourne, and the inclusion of the whole of Wilcot parish in the new Pewsey Vale ward. Under these proposals, Milton Lilbourne and Ogbourne wards would initially vary by 6 per cent and 13 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor now, and by 1 per cent and 9 per cent by 2003. As indicated above, Councillor Watson's proposals were supported by Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council and Councillor Bromwich.

<sup>102</sup> We received two further representations regarding this area of the district. Savernake Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to include the parish in a revised Milton Lilbourne ward. It argued that the parish has "no identity with Milton Lilbourne", and that the geography of the area made this proposal impractical, and supported a warding arrangement which would include it with "other rural parishes around Marlborough". Preshute Parish Council stated that it had "no objections" to our draft recommendation for a revised Ogbourne ward.

103 As already indicated, we considered that Councillor Watson's proposals had merit, and concluded that we should seek further views as to their suitability. We therefore wrote to the parish councils concerned, the relevant district councillors and Kennet District Council.

104 As discussed above, respondents put forward conflicting views regarding Councillor Watson's proposals. Fyfield & West Overton, Ogbourne St Andrew, Preshute and Stanton St Bernard parish councils all supported these modifications to our draft recommendations, as they argued that they would better reflect local ties and the geography of the Vale of Pewsey and the Kennet Valley. Councillor Bromwich also supported these proposals, particularly as they would obviate the need to divide Wilcot parish between district wards. However, the District Council and Mildenhall, Milton Lilbourne, Ogbourne St George and Wootton Rivers parish councils all expressed support for our draft recommendations. Several of these respondents expressed concern at the lack of community ties between Mildenhall and Milton Lilbourne parishes, which would be placed under the same district ward as part of these proposals.

105 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three and the further views expressed in response to Councillor Watson's proposals, we have noted the arguments put forward regarding the community identity and ties of West Overton parish. It is clear that the parish shares a greater sense of affinity with the parishes in the Kennet Valley than those in the Vale of Pewsey. However, as with the other wards affected by Councillor Watson's proposals, modifications to our draft recommendations may simply transfer the problem of a lack of shared community identity to a different district ward and its constituent parishes, in this case Mildenhall and Milton Lilbourne parishes. We therefore consider that our draft recommendations for Milton Lilbourne and Ogbourne wards continue to offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and have decided to confirm them as final.

#### **Bedwyn, Burbage, Collingbourne and Shalbourne wards**

106 These four wards cover the south-eastern corner of the district, and are all represented by a single councillor. Bedwyn and Burbage wards currently have 13 per cent and 31 per cent more than the average number of electors per councillor

for the district respectively, while Shalbourne ward has 21 per cent fewer than the district average. Collingbourne ward currently has 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

107 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that Burbage parish should form a revised ward as a result of substantial recent development in the area, which it argued justified separate representation for the parish. It also proposed warding the parish of Grafton, with the new Grafton North parish ward (effectively the village of Wilton) joining the parishes of Great Bedwyn and Little Bedwyn in a revised Bedwyn district ward. The Council also proposed that the new Grafton South parish ward should join the existing Shalbourne ward, while it proposed no change to Collingbourne ward. Under these proposals, Bedwyn, Burbage and Shalbourne wards, all represented by a single councillor, would have 8 per cent, 1 per cent and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average now, and 8 per cent, 10 per cent and 10 per cent more by 2003. Collingbourne ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average now, and 9 per cent fewer by 2003.

108 In our draft recommendations report, we considered the Council's proposals for Burbage and Collingbourne wards provided a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and reflecting communities in the area. However, we expressed concern that this may not be the case with the Council's proposals for modifications to the existing Bedwyn and Shalbourne wards. In particular, we considered that the Council's proposal to divide Grafton parish between different district wards may not reflect the identities and interests of communities in the area. Nevertheless, in the absence of any alternative proposals for the area, we endorsed the Council's proposals as our draft recommendations, subject to the inclusion of Chute Forest parish in the revised Ludgershall ward, as indicated earlier.

109 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for this area. However, Grafton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to divide the parish between different district wards, which it argued would cause "a loss of focus and unity" for the village. It therefore proposed an alternative arrangement for the area, which would involve the whole of Grafton parish being included in the revised Shalbourne

ward. Under these modifications to our draft recommendations, Bedwyn and Shalbourne wards would initially vary by 2 per cent and 17 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor respectively, and 1 per cent and 11 per cent by 2003. Councillor Booth considered that dividing parishes between wards is “not popular” locally, and that the Commission should take Grafton Parish Council’s proposals “very seriously”.

110 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note the support of the District Council for our draft recommendations in this area. However, we have also noted the concerns of Grafton Parish Council regarding our draft recommendation for a revised Bedwyn ward, and acknowledge that dividing the parish between two different district wards may be a less than satisfactory reflection of the identities and interests of communities in the area. Notwithstanding these concerns, we consider that the benefits in community identity terms that would result if the whole of Grafton parish was included in Shalbourne ward are outweighed in this instance by the electoral inequality that would arise. Were we to recommend such an arrangement, Shalbourne ward would contain 26 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. In the circumstances, we therefore consider our draft recommendations continue to offer the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and have decided to confirm them as final, subject to the modification regarding Chute Forest parish already indicated. Under our final recommendations, Shalbourne ward would vary by 16 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor initially, and 10 per cent by 2003.

### **Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards**

111 Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards, both of which are represented by a single councillor, lie in the north-eastern corner of the district, abutting the district boundary with Swindon and the county boundary with Berkshire. Aldbourne ward, which comprises the parishes of Aldbourne and Baydon, currently has 32 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Ramsbury ward, which comprises the parishes of Chilton Foliat and Ramsbury, currently has 33 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average.

112 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the parish of Aldbourne should form a revised single-member ward in its own right, largely as a

result of the growth in the area since the last electoral review of the district. It also proposed that Baydon parish should be transferred from Aldbourne ward to Ramsbury ward (to be represented by an additional councillor), together with the parish of Froxfield (currently in Bedwyn ward). These proposals would mean that the number of electors per councillor in the revised Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards would vary by 12 per cent and 2 per cent from the district average now, and 7 per cent and 8 per cent by 2003.

113 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that there were limited community ties between certain parishes in the revised Ramsbury ward. However, other than the retention of the existing arrangements, no alternative proposals were put forward at Stage One. Given that this would lead to electoral variances of some 40 per cent in both Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards under a council size of 43, we considered that this proposal would not represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria that is available. Similarly, while a three-member ward encompassing both Albourne and Ramsbury wards would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, we considered it would not satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities in the area. Given these factors, we endorsed the Council’s proposals as our draft recommendations for Aldbourne and Ramsbury wards.

114 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for the area, while Froxfield Parish Council also supported our draft recommendation for a revised Ramsbury ward. It stated that the parish has “strong links” with Ramsbury parish to the north, but few, if any, with those parishes which lie to the south in the proposed Shalbourne ward. Ramsbury Parish Council stated that the two councillors to represent the revised ward should “work as a team”. Baydon Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation that the parish should form part of the revised Ramsbury ward, and argued that the parish was geographically separate from the other constituent parishes. In addition, the Council contended that the parish has close social and economic links with the neighbouring parish of Aldbourne, and that the two should remain within the same district ward. Councillor Humphries endorsed the view of the Parish Council, arguing that there was a “sense of belonging” between the two parishes, and therefore supported the retention of the existing Aldbourne ward.

115 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we acknowledge that the existing arrangements in this corner of the district appear to work reasonably well, and that Aldbourne and Baydon parishes share several community ties. Nevertheless, we consider that we cannot recommend the retention of the existing arrangements purely for the purpose of preserving these links, largely because of the very significant electoral inequality that would arise as a result. Additionally, no alternative warding arrangements have been proposed at Stage Three. Indeed, as with other areas of the district, any modifications to our draft modifications would have consequential effects on the level of electoral equality in neighbouring wards. Given these factors, we have concluded that our draft recommendations remain the most appropriate balance available between the statutory criteria and electoral equality, and have decided to confirm them as final.

## **Electoral Cycle**

116 In the initial stage of the review we did not receive any proposals for change to the District Council's electoral cycle. In our draft recommendations report,

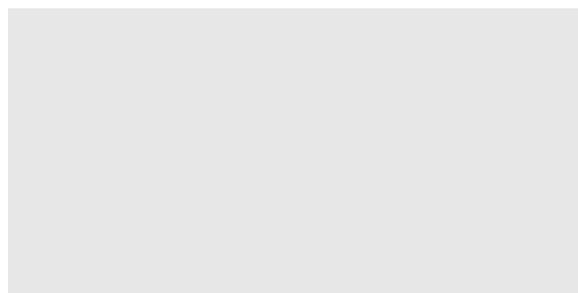


Figure 4 :  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	40	43	40	43
Number of wards	31	29	31	29
Average number of electors per councillor	1,409	1,310	1,539	1,432
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	22	7	25	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	15	1	14	0

<sup>122</sup> In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Devizes Town Council should in future comprise 17 town councillors representing three wards. We proposed that the town wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view, and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

### Final Recommendation

Devizes Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, representing three wards: East ward, represented by seven councillors, and North and South wards, each represented by five councillors. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the district wards in the area, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

<sup>123</sup> In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Marlborough Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards. We proposed that the town wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries.

<sup>124</sup> At Stage Three, Marlborough Town Council opposed our draft recommendation to modify the town council ward boundaries. However, as indicated earlier, we consider that our draft recommendations for district wards in the town offer the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and have decided to endorse them as final. Given this factor, we have also decided to confirm as final our draft recommendations for town council wards.

### Final Recommendation

Marlborough Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards, East and West, both represented by eight councillors. This recommendation is illustrated on Map A2 at Appendix A.

<sup>125</sup> In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Ludgershall Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two new wards. We proposed that the parish wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. At Stage Three, no comments were received in relation to this proposal, and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Ludgershall Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Ludgershall North (represented by 12 councillors) and Ludgershall South (represented by three councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

126 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Enford Parish Council should comprise 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing two new wards. We proposed that the parish wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. At Stage Three, no comments were received in relation to this proposal, and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Enford Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Enford North (represented by three councillors) and Enford South (represented by eight councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A4 at Appendix A.

127 As part of our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Wilcot & Huish Parish Council should comprise nine parish councillors, representing two new wards. We proposed that the parish wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. At Stage Three, no comments were received in relation to this proposal, and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Wilcot & Huish Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Oare (represented by five councillors) and Wilcot & Huish (represented by four councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A5 at Appendix A.

128 As part of our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Grafton Parish Council should comprise nine parish councillors, representing two new wards. We proposed that the parish wards should reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries.

129 At Stage Three, Grafton Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to create two new parish into two new parish wards, and argued that this proposal would “divide our close knit community”. However, given our final recommendations for district wards in the area, we have concluded that we should confirm as final our draft recommendation for new electoral arrangements for Grafton Parish Council.

### **Final Recommendation**

Grafton Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Grafton North (represented by two councillors) and Grafton South (represented by seven councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A6 at Appendix A.

130 As part of our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Bishops Cannings Parish Council should comprise 11 parish councillors, representing two new wards. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view, and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Bishops Cannings Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Cannings Hill (represented by five councillors) and Bishops Cannings (represented by six councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A7 at Appendix A.

131 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Pewsey Parish Council should continue to comprise 21 councillors, representing two new wards. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view, and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

Pewsey Parish Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing two new parish wards: Pewsey North (represented by 10 councillors) and Pewsey South (represented by 11 councillors). This recommendation is illustrated on Map A8 at Appendix A.

132 As part of our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Ham Parish Council should in future comprise six parish councillors. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view, and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

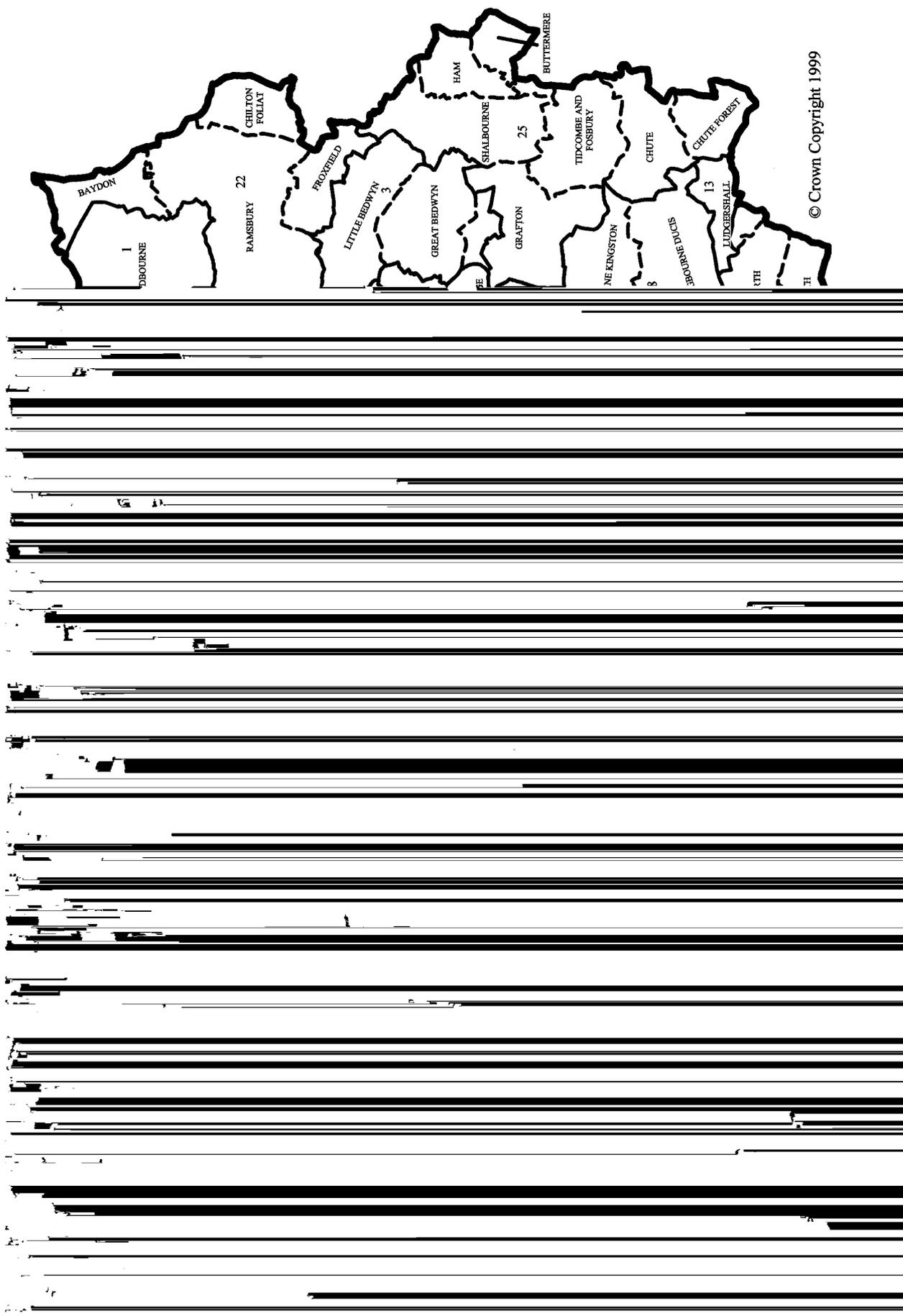
Ham Parish Council should comprise six parish councillors, rather than five as at present.

133 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district. We have received no representations on this issue, and are therefore confirming our draft recommendation as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

For parish councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

Map 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Kennet



## 6. NEXT STEPS

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

135 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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



# APPENDIX A

## Final Recommendations for Kennet: Detailed Mapping

The following maps and the large map inserted in the back of this report illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Kennet area.

**Map A1** illustrates in outline form, the proposed boundaries for Kennet and indicates the areas that are shown in more detail on Maps A2, A3, A4, A5, A6 and A7 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed ward boundaries in Marlborough.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed boundary between Ludgershall and Tidworth, Perham Down & Ludgershall South wards.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed boundary between Netheravon and Upavon wards.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed boundary between Milton Lilbourne and Pewsey Vale wards.

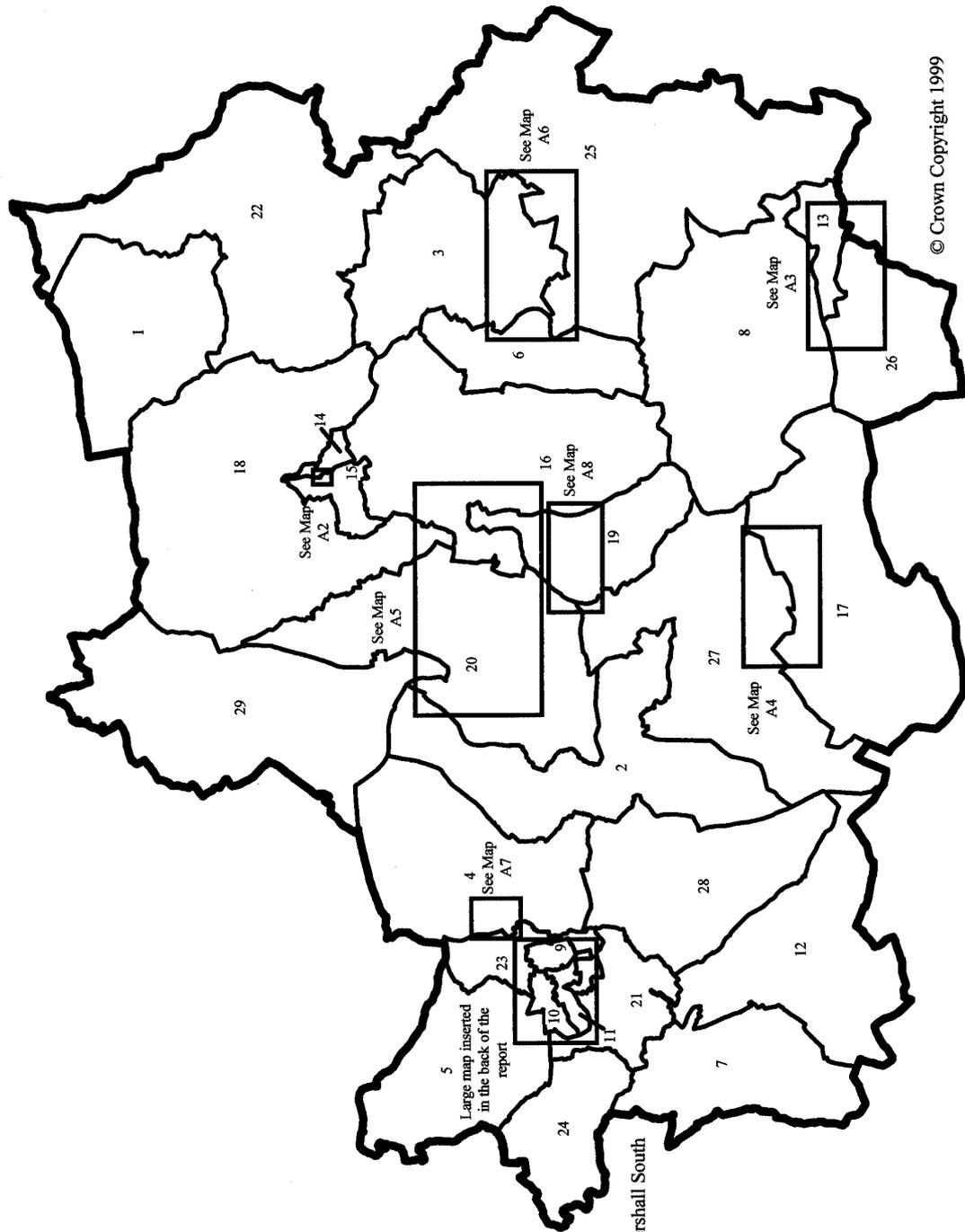
**Map A6** illustrates the proposed boundary between Bedwyn and Shalbourne wards.

**Map A7** illustrates the proposed parish warding arrangements in Bishops Cannings parish.

**Map A8** illustrates the proposed parish warding arrangements in Pewsey parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed ward boundaries in Devizes.

Map A1:  
Final Recommendations for Kennet: Key Map

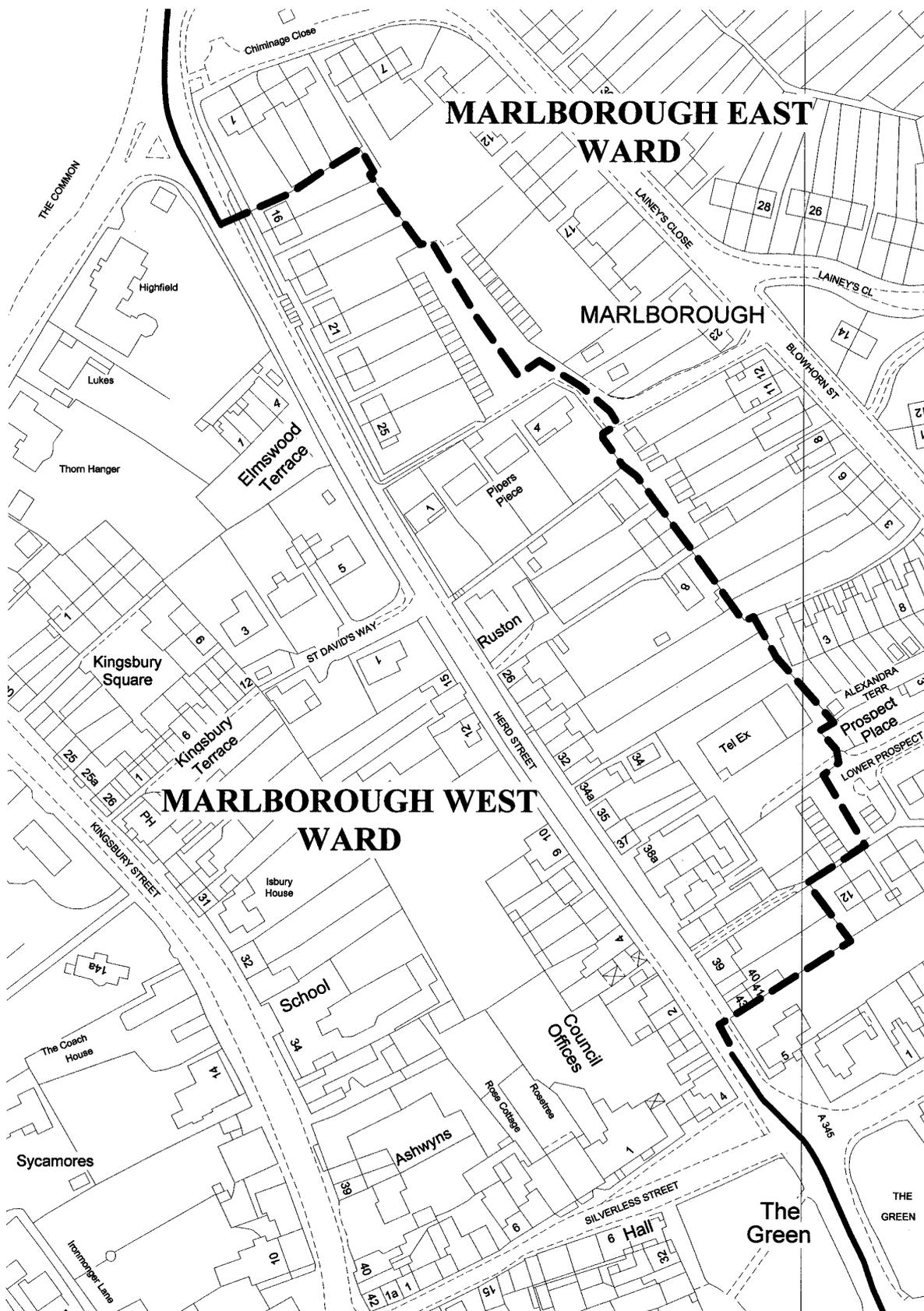


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Key to Wards

- 1 Aldbourne
- 2 All Cannings
- 3 Bedwyn
- 4 Bishops Cannings
- 5 Bromham and Rowde
- 6 Burbage
- 7 Cheverell
- 8 Collingbourne
- 9 Devizes East
- 10 Devizes North
- 11 Devizes South
- 12 Lavingtons
- 13 Ludgershall
- 14 Marlborough East
- 15 Marlborough West
- 16 Milton Lilbourne
- 17 Netheravon
- 18 Ogbourne
- 19 Pewsey
- 20 Pewsey Vale
- 21 Potterne
- 22 Ramsbury
- 23 Roundway
- 24 Seend
- 25 Shalbourne
- 26 Tidworth, Perham Down and Ludgershall South
- 27 Upavon
- 28 Urchfont
- 29 West Selkley

Map A2:  
Proposed Ward Boundaries in Marlborough

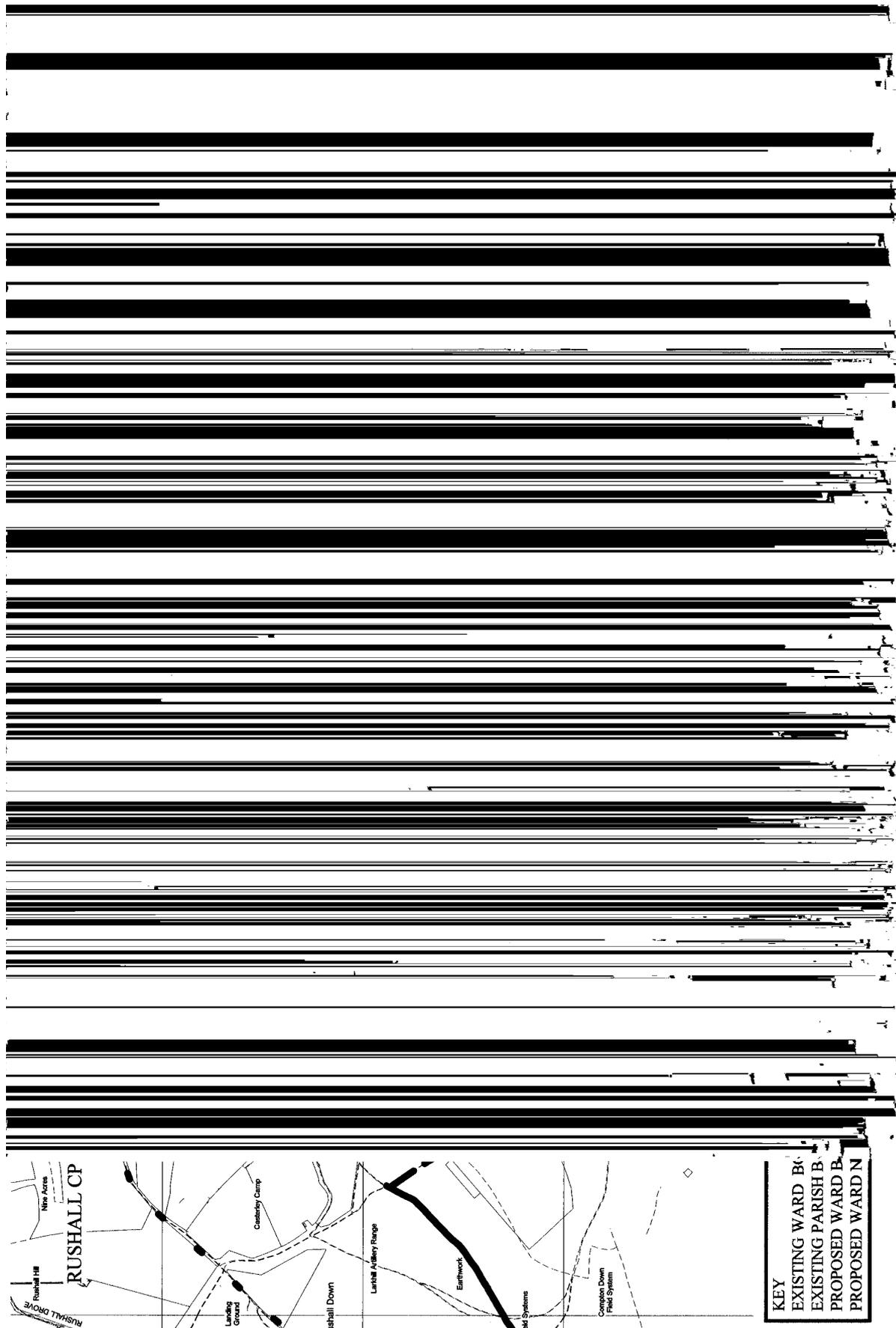


KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	—————
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	- - - - -

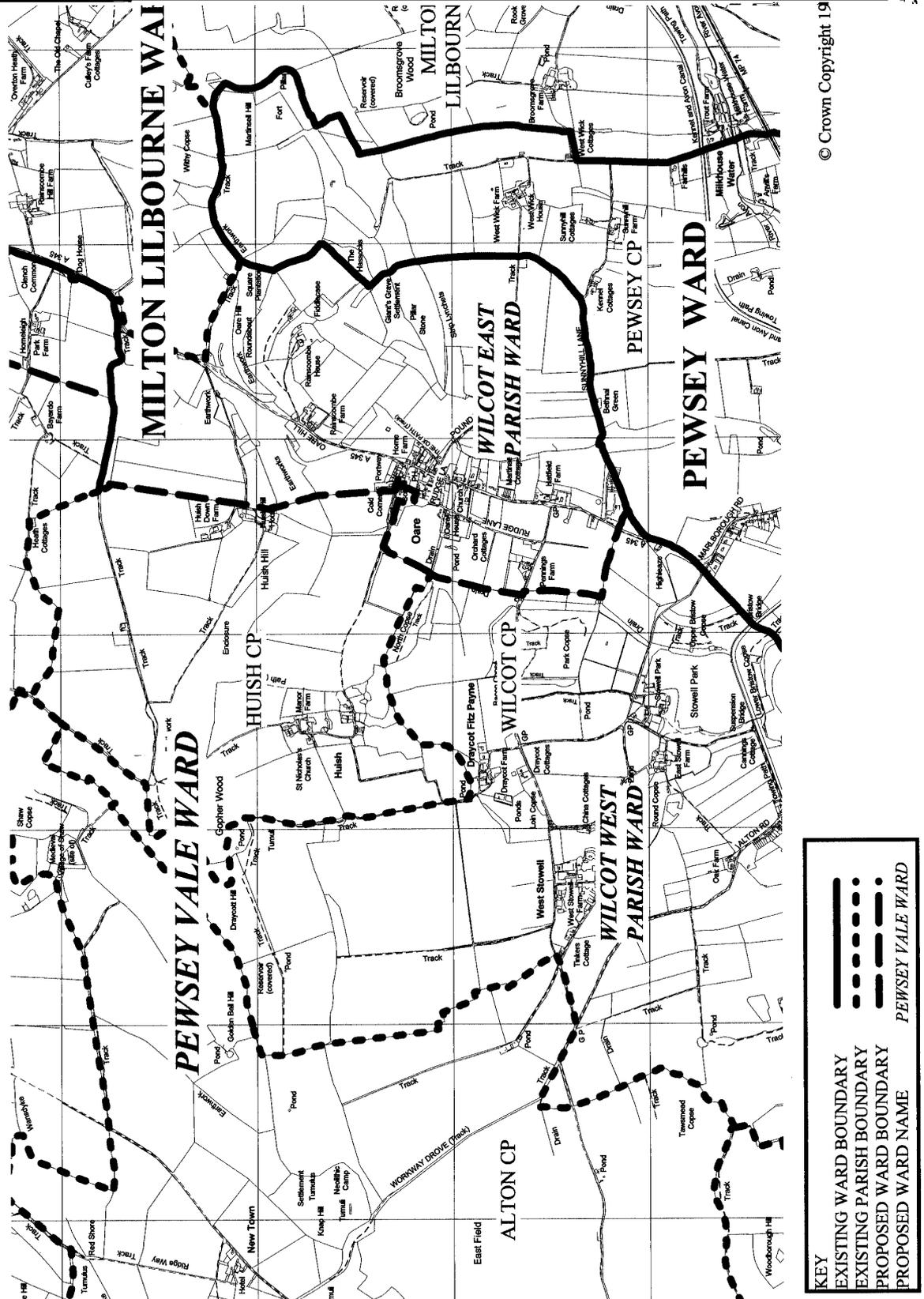
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Map A4:  
*Proposed Boundary Between Netheravon and Upavon Wards*

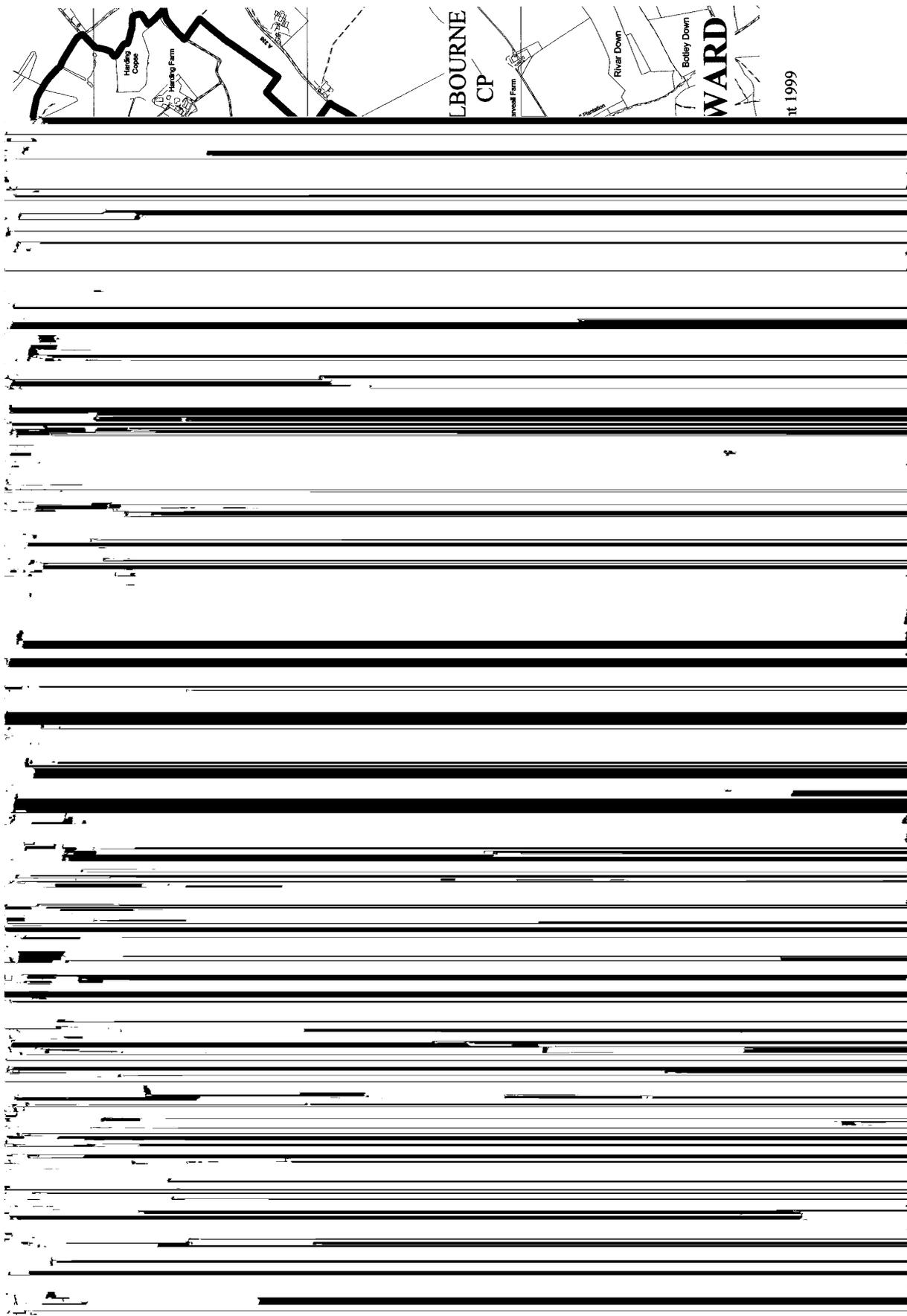


Map A5:  
 Proposed Boundary Between Milton Lilbourne and Pewsey Vale Wards

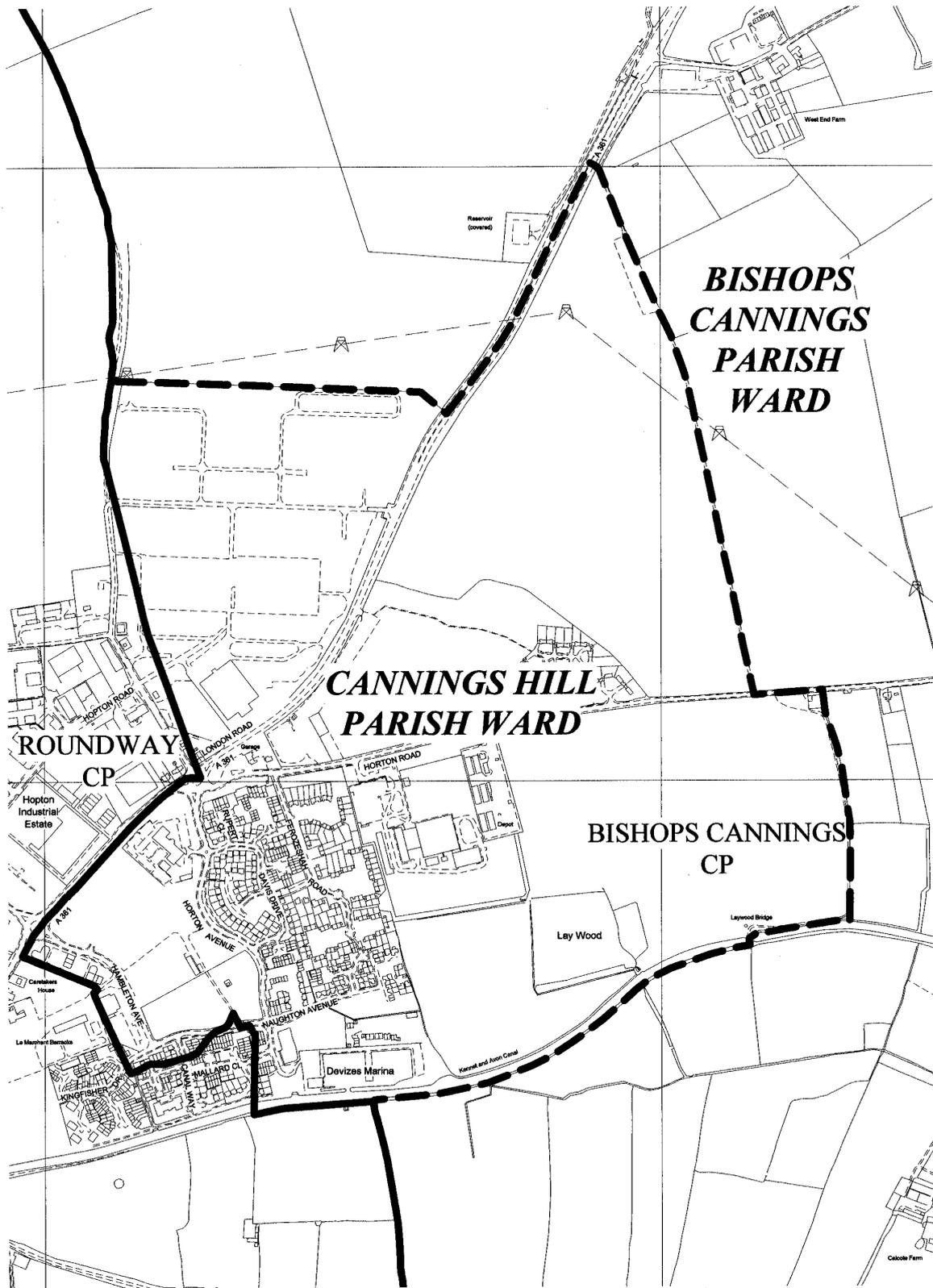


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Map A6:  
*Proposed Boundary Between Bedwyn and Shalbourne Wards*



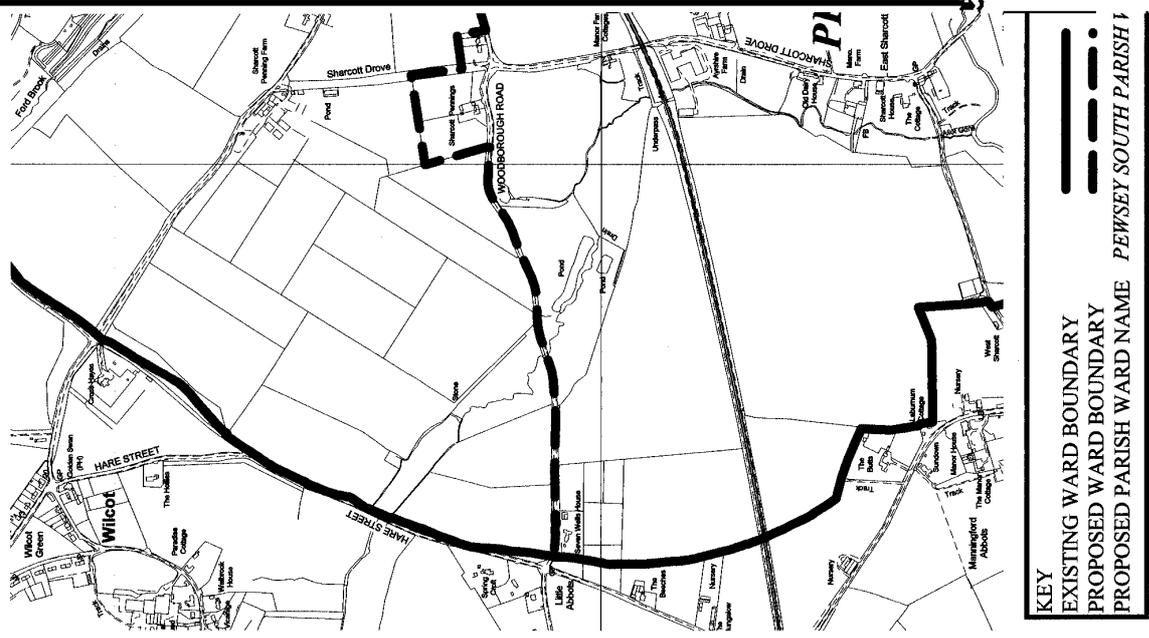
Map A7:  
Proposed Parish Warding Arrangements in Bishops Cannings Parish



<b>KEY</b>	
EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY	
PROPOSED PARISH WARD BOUNDARY	
PROPOSED PARISH WARD NAME	<b>CANNINGS HILL PARISH WARD</b>

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Map A8:  
*Proposed Parish Warding Arrangements in Pewsey Parish*





# APPENDIX B

## Draft Recommendations for Kennet

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 4, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

*Figure B1:  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bishops Cannings	Bishops Cannings ward (part – the parishes of Bishops Cannings and Etchilhampton); Urchfont ward (part – Stert parish)
Ludgershall	Ludgershall ward (part – Ludgershall North ward of Ludgershall parish as proposed); Shalbourne ward (part – Chute Forest parish)
Shalbourne	Burbage ward (part – Grafton South ward of Grafton parish as proposed); Shalbourne ward (part – the parishes of Buttermere, Chute, Ham, Shalbourne and Tidcombe & Fosbury)
Urchfont	Market Lavington ward (part – Easterton parish); Urchfont ward (part – Urchfont parish)

*Figure B2:  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bishops Cannings	1	1,422	1,422	9	1,478	1,478	3
Ludgershall	2	2,510	1,255	-4	2,816	1,408	-2
Shalbourne	1	1,406	1,406	7	1,455	1,455	2
Urchfont	1	1,327	1,327	1	1,389	1,389	-3

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Kennet 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.*





