

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Telford & Wrekin

Report to the Electoral Commission

April 2002

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Report no: 272

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for the urban area of Telford & Wrekin is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to the Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Telford & Wrekin's electoral arrangements on 27 March 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 October 2001, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, the Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received by the LGCE during consultation on its draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.**

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Telford & Wrekin:

- **In nine of the 34 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.**
- **By 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 17 wards and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 110–111) are that:

- **Telford & Wrekin Council should have 54 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 33 wards, instead of 34 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and five wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 24 of the proposed 33 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Ironbridge Gorge, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Great Dawley, Hadley, Lilleshall & Donnington, Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, Stirchley & Brookside, The Gorge and Wellington;**

- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Church Aston, Dawley Hamlets, Ketley, Lawley & Overdale, St Georges & Priorslee and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 15 May 2002:

**The Secretary
Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
30 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Apley Castle	1	the proposed Apley Castle parish ward of Hadley parish	Map 2 and large map
2	Arleston	1	the proposed Arleston town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
3	Brookside	2	the proposed Brookside parish ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish	Map 2 and large map
4	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	the parishes of Chetwynd Aston and Preston Upon the Weald Moors, the proposed Church Aston parish ward of Church Aston parish and the proposed Lilleshall parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish	Map 2, Map A2 and large map
5	College	1	the proposed College town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
6	Cuckoo Oak	2	the proposed Cuckoo Oak parish ward of Madeley parish	Map 2 and large map
7	Dawley Magna	3	the proposed Aqueduct parish ward of Dawley Hamlets parish and the proposed Dawley parish ward of Great Dawley parish	Map 2 and large map
8	Donnington	2	the proposed Donnington parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish	Map 2 and large map
9	Dothill	1	the proposed Dothill town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
10	Edgmond	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Chetwynd, Edgmond and Tibberton & Cherrington	Map 2
11	Ercall	1	the proposed Ercall town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
12	Ercall Magna	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Ercall Magna, Eyton Upon the Weald Moors, Kynnersley and Waters Upton	Map 2 and large map
13	Hadley & Leegomery	3	the proposed Hadley & Leegomery parish ward of Hadley parish and the proposed Beveley parish ward of Ketley parish	Map 2 and large map
14	Haygate	1	the proposed Haygate town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
15	Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	the proposed Dawley Hamlets parish ward of Dawley Hamlets parish, the proposed Lawley parish ward of Lawley & Overdale parish and the proposed Lightmoor parish ward of The Gorge parish	Map 2 and large map
16	Ironbridge Gorge	1	the proposed Ironbridge Gorge parish ward and the existing Coalport & Jackfield parish ward of The Gorge parish	Map 2 and large map
17	Ketley & Oakengates	3	the proposed Ketley parish ward of Ketley parish and the proposed Oakengates town ward of Oakengates town	Map 2 and large map
18	Lawley & Overdale	2	the proposed Central parish ward of Lawley & Overdale parish	Map 2 and large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
19	Madeley	2	the proposed Madeley parish ward of Madeley parish	Map 2 and large map
20	Malinslee	2	the proposed Malinslee parish ward of Great Dawley parish	Map 2 and large map
21	Muxton	2	the proposed Muxton parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish	Map 2 and large map
22	Newport East	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the existing East town ward of Newport town	Map 2
23	Newport North	1	the proposed North town ward of Newport town	Map 2 and Map A2
24	Newport South	1	the proposed Wallshead parish ward of Church Aston parish and the existing South town ward of Newport town	Map 2 and Map A2
25	Newport West	1	the proposed West town ward of Newport town	Map 2 and Map A2
26	Park	1	the proposed Park town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
27	Priorslee	2	the proposed Priorslee parish ward of St Georges & Priorslee parish and the proposed East parish ward of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish	Map 2 and large map
28	Shawburch	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the existing Shawburch town ward of Wellington town	Map 2 and large map
29	St Georges	2	the proposed St Georges parish ward of St Georges & Priorslee parish and the proposed Wrockwardine Wood parish ward of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish	Map 2 and large map
30	The Nedge	3	the parish of Hollinswood & Randlay and the proposed Stirchley parish ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish	Map 2 and large map
31	Woodside	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the existing Woodside parish ward of Madeley parish	Map 2 and large map
32	Wrockwardine	2	the parishes of Little Wenlock, Rodington and Wrockwardine and the proposed West parish ward of Lawley & Overdale parish	Map 2 and large map
33	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	2	the proposed North town ward of Oakengates town and the proposed Trench parish ward of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish	Map 2 and large map

Notes: 1 The district is entirely parished.

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

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Apley Castle	1	1,920	1,920	-11	2,256	2,256	0
2	Arleston	1	2,273	2,273	6	2,217	2,217	-2
3	Brookside	2	4,931	2,466	15	4,809	2,405	6
4	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2,463	2,463	14	2,382	2,382	5
5	College	1	2,190	2,190	2	2,132	2,132	-6
6	Cuckoo Oak	2	4,176	2,088	-3	4,150	2,075	-8
7	Dawley Magna	3	7,343	2,448	14	7,271	2,424	7
8	Donnington	2	4,396	2,198	2	4,306	2,153	-5
9	Dothill	1	2,077	2,077	-3	2,143	2,143	-5
10	Edgmond	1	2,172	2,172	1	2,126	2,126	-6
11	Ercall	1	2,322	2,322	8	2,261	2,261	0
12	Ercall Magna	1	2,270	2,270	6	2,257	2,257	0
13	Hadley & Leegomery	3	7,050	2,350	9	7,336	2,445	8
14	Haygate	1	2,128	2,128	-1	2,099	2,099	-7
15	Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	2,024	1,012	-53	4,384	2,192	-3
16	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2,016	2,016	-6	1,957	1,957	-14
17	Ketley & Oakengates	3	6,898	2,299	7	7,115	2,372	5
18	Lawley & Overdale	2	3,193	1,597	-26	4,618	2,309	2
19	Madeley	2	4,241	2,121	-1	4,136	2,068	-9
20	Malinslee	2	4,191	2,096	-3	4,179	2,090	-8
21	Muxton	2	4,062	2,031	-6	4,497	2,249	-1
22	Newport East	1	2,108	2,108	-2	2,059	2,059	-9
23	Newport North	1	2,181	2,181	1	2,133	2,133	-6
24	Newport South	1	2,137	2,137	-1	2,109	2,109	-7
25	Newport West	1	2,149	2,149	0	2,075	2,075	-8
26	Park	1	2,154	2,154	0	2,101	2,101	-7
27	Priorslee	2	3,863	1,932	-10	4,619	2,310	2
28	Shawbirch	1	2,274	2,274	6	2,247	2,247	-1

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29	St Georges	2	4,885	2,443	14	4,762	2,381	5
30	The Nedge	3	6,917	2,306	7	7,339	2,446	8
31	Woodside	2	4,577	2,289	6	4,753	2,377	5
32	Wrockwardine	2	3,554	1,777	-17	4,712	2,356	4
33	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	2	5,035	2,518	17	4,894	2,447	8
	Totals	54	116,170	-	-	122,434	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,151	-	-	2,267	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council.

Note 1 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.

2 There is a small anomaly in the electorate figures supplied between the total electorate data for 2001 and 2006 shown in Tables 2 and 4 which is due to rounding.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin Council. The five two-tier districts in Shropshire were reviewed in 1999 as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 The Shropshire (District of The Wrekin) (Structural Change) Order 1996, SI 1996 No. 1866 created a unitary authority for Telford & Wrekin which came into existence on 1 April 1998. The establishment of a unitary authority was preceded by a Directed Electoral Review (DER), carried out by the LGCE following a direction from the Secretary of State dated 2 April 1996. This DER increased the number of councillors from 46 to 54 and the number of wards from 33 to 34. However, the DER did not fulfil the LGCE's obligation under section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 to undertake a periodic electoral review of Telford & Wrekin.

3 In making final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - (c) achieve equality of representation;
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Telford & Wrekin was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Telford & Wrekin is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and said that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes

should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 27 March 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Telford & Wrekin Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Mercia Police Authority, the local authority associations, Shropshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands region, the headquarters of the main political parties and local residents' associations and community groups. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Telford & Wrekin Council to publicise the review further. The LGCE's Stage One consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 until 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; the closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 July 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 9 October 2001 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin*, and ended on 3 December 2001. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 Telford & Wrekin district is situated in the east of Shropshire and is bordered by Staffordshire to the east and the districts of North Shropshire to the north, Shrewsbury & Atcham to the west and Bridgnorth to the south. It was designated a New Town in 1968. Telford & Wrekin is an industrial district, comprising the ex-mining and steel towns of Dawley, Donnington, Madeley and Oakengates. Its largest urban centre is the old market town of Wellington. In the south of the district is the major tourist attraction of Ironbridge Gorge. Successful inward development policies have led to a mix of manufacturing and service industries developing within Telford & Wrekin and a growing population, which is currently approximately 151,500. Covering some 28,950 hectares, Telford & Wrekin has a population density of approximately 5 persons per hectare. It became a unitary authority in 1998. The district is entirely parished and contains 28 parishes.

11 The electorate of the district is 116,172 (February 2001). The Council presently has 54 members who are elected from 34 wards, three of which are relatively rural in the northern and western parts of the district with the remainder being predominantly urban. Three of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 14 are each represented by two councillors and 17 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,151 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,267 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in nine of the 34 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average. The worst imbalance is in St Georges & Priorslee ward where each of the three councillors represents 19 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Telford & Wrekin

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arleston	1	2,056	2,056	-4	2,007	2,007	-11
2	Brookside	2	3,715	1,858	-14	3,623	1,812	-20
3	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2,292	2,292	7	2,249	2,249	-1
4	College	1	2,189	2,189	2	2,136	2,136	-6
5	Cuckoo Oak	2	4,040	2,020	-6	4,012	2,006	-12
6	Dawley Magna	3	6,954	2,318	8	7,577	2,526	11
7	Donnington	2	3,644	1,822	-15	3,554	1,777	-22
8	Donnington Wood & Muxton	2	4,974	2,487	16	5,375	2,688	19
9	Dothill	1	2,287	2,287	6	2,347	2,347	4
10	Edgmond	1	2,172	2,172	1	2,132	2,132	-6
11	Ercall	1	2,012	2,012	-6	1,964	1,964	-13
12	Ercall Magna	1	2,270	2,270	6	2,256	2,256	-1
13	Hadley	2	4,238	2,119	-2	4,185	2,093	-8
14	Haygate	1	2,202	2,202	2	2,178	2,178	-4
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	2	4,404	2,202	2	4,365	2,183	-4
16	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2,047	2,047	-5	2,960	2,960	31
17	Ketley	1	2,547	2,547	18	3,190	3,190	41
18	Ketley Bank	1	2,063	2,063	-4	2,063	2,063	-9
19	Lawley	2	3,796	1,898	-12	6,857	3,429	51
20	Leegomery	2	4,751	2,376	10	5,014	2,507	11
21	Madeley	2	4,375	2,188	2	4,268	2,134	-6
22	Malinslee & Langley	3	6,007	2,002	-7	5,867	1,956	-14
23	Newport East	1	2,097	2,097	-3	2,045	2,045	-10
24	Newport North	1	2,331	2,331	8	2,275	2,275	0
25	Newport South	1	2,034	2,034	-5	1,984	1,984	-12
26	Newport West	1	1,986	1,986	-8	1,937	1,937	-15
27	Park	1	2,398	2,398	11	2,339	2,339	3
28	Shawbirch	1	2,274	2,274	6	2,247	2,247	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29 St Georges & Priorslee	3	7,685	2,562	19	8,356	2,785	23
30 Stirchley	2	3,729	1,865	-13	4,161	2,081	-8
31 Wombridge	2	4,397	2,199	2	4,300	2,150	-5
32 Woodside	2	4,579	2,290	6	4,751	2,376	5
33 Wrockwardine	2	3,518	1,759	-18	3,854	1,927	-15
34 Wrockwardine Wood	2	4,109	2,055	-5	4,011	2,006	-12
Totals	54	116,172	–	–	122,439	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,151	–	–	2,267	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Telford & Wrekin Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Wrockwardine ward were relatively over-represented by 18 per cent, while electors in St Georges & Priorslee ward were relatively under-represented by 19 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received nine representations, including a district-wide scheme from Telford & Wrekin Council. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were broadly based on the Council's proposals. These achieved some improvement in electoral equality and continued to provide for a mixed pattern of single, two and three-member wards in the district, with a significant amount of parish warding and re-warding. However, the LGCE moved away from the Council's scheme in three areas, affecting seven wards, both to reflect concerns raised by parish councils and to achieve improved electoral equality. It proposed that:

- Telford & Wrekin Council should be served by 54 councillors, as at present, representing 33 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Great Dawley, Hadley, Lilleshall & Donnington, Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, Stirchley & Brookside, The Gorge and Wellington;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Church Aston, Dawley Hamlets, Ketley, Lawley & Overdale, St Georges & Priorslee and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench.

Draft Recommendation

Telford & Wrekin Council should comprise 54 councillors, serving 33 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 24 of the 33 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward, Ironbridge Gorge, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, three representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Telford & Wrekin Council.

Telford & Wrekin Council

18 The Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, although it requested that the Council's original proposals regarding the Ironbridge Gorge and Lawley & Overdale areas be reconsidered. It stated that it accepted the need for changes in the proposed Newport wards following the revision of the electorate figures in that area. It also forwarded a letter from Lawley & Overdale Parish Council, which wrote on behalf of Councillor Barber (Lawley ward) stating that, in view of the amendments made to the Council's scheme in the draft recommendations, "there will be no further objections".

Other Representations

19 Two further representations were received in response to the draft recommendations. Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations, and proposed retaining the existing Wrockwardine Wood ward, stating that "we cannot see why Wrockwardine Wood Ward is being changed". It also considered that the new arrangements, which would result in the parish being divided between three district wards, would be confusing for electors. The final representation came from two local residents who supported the draft recommendations with particular reference to Wellington.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

20 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, reflect the identities and interests of local communities and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

24 At Stage One the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 5 per cent from 116,172 to 122,439 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Lawley ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Dawley Magna, Ironbridge Gorge, Ketley and St Georges & Priorslee wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

25 During the LGCE’s analysis of proposals received during Stage One, it noted that figures which the Council had provided for part of its scheme in and around Newport town were inaccurate. The Council resubmitted electorate figures for the area concerned, and also confirmed that they were satisfied that the electorate figures for the remainder of the district were accurate. Advice from the Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the revised forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

26 One comment on the Council's electorate forecasts was received during Stage Three from Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council. It stated that it considered that the projected electorate for the existing Wrockwardine Wood ward was "on the low side" and that "we do not believe that all the proposed housing likely to take place in our ward has been taken into consideration". The LGCE sought clarification from the Council on this issue, and was content to accept the Council's projected electorate figures. We therefore remain satisfied that the estimates represent the best forecasts currently available.

Council Size

27 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

28 Telford & Wrekin Council presently has 54 members. The Council's submission stated that the scheme would be based on retaining the present council size. It therefore proposed a council of 54 members, based on a mix of single, two and three-member wards, the same as at present.

29 As part of its Stage One submission, the Council forwarded a proposal from Oakengates Regeneration Partnership which, in order to facilitate its proposals in the Wombridge/Oakengates area, would have resulted in an increase in council size by one to 55 members. However, this proposal was not consulted upon locally, and the LGCE received no other support for an increase in council size.

30 The LGCE noted that the Council's scheme divided the district into three for the purposes of achieving the correct allocation of councillors across the district as a whole. However, on closer inspection it noted that, in order to gain the correct balance, part of an urban parish, Lawley & Overdale, needed to be included in the rural area. While the LGCE did not consider this arrangement to be ideal, it based its draft recommendations on the Council's scheme, as any alternative involved changing the proposed council size and significant re-warding of the district as a whole.

31 During Stage Three no comments were received on council size. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we have concluded that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council size of 54 members, and therefore confirm the draft recommendations as final.

Electoral Arrangements

32 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, the LGCE broadly based its recommendations on the Council's scheme. It considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between reflecting the identities and interests of local communities, securing effective and convenient local government and achieving electoral equality than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, the LGCE decided to move away from the Council's proposals in three areas, both to reflect concerns raised by parish councils and to achieve improved electoral equality.

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

- a) Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards;
- b) Newport (four wards);
- c) Wellington (seven wards);
- d) Hadley, Ketley, Ketley Bank, Leegomery and Wombridge wards;
- e) Donnington, Donnington Wood & Muxton, St Georges & Priorslee and Wrockwardine Wood wards;
- f) Brookside, Dawley Magna, Hollinswood & Randlay, Lawley, Malinslee & Langley and Stirchley wards;
- g) Cuckoo Oak, Ironbridge Gorge, Madeley and Woodside wards.

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

Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards

35 The three single-member wards of Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond and Ercall Magna and the two-member Wrockwardine ward are situated around the northern and western edge of the district. Church Aston & Lilleshall ward comprises the parishes of Chetwynd Aston and Church Aston and Lilleshall parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish. Edgmond ward contains the parishes of Chetwynd, Edgmond and Tibberton & Cherrington. Ercall Magna ward comprises the parishes of Ercall Magna, Eyton upon the Weald Moors, Kynnersley and Waters Upton. Wrockwardine ward contains the parishes of Little Wenlock, Rodington and Wrockwardine. Under the existing electoral arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 7 per cent above the district average in Church Aston & Lilleshall ward (1 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Edgmond ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent above in Ercall Magna ward (1 per cent below by 2006) and 18 per cent below in Wrockwardine ward (15 per cent below by 2006).

36 At Stage One the Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Edgmond and Ercall Magna wards, although it proposed amending the boundary between the two wards at the western boundary of Tibberton & Cherrington parish. It proposed that the existing Church Aston & Lilleshall ward be extended to include part of the existing Donnington ward (The Humbers area) and the parish of Preston upon the Weald Moors, currently in Hadley ward. It also proposed that Church Aston parish be warded so that a small part of the northernmost area be included in Newport South ward, to be discussed later. This ward would continue to be represented by a single councillor. Finally, it proposed that the existing Wrockwardine ward be extended eastwards to include a new development being built in the western area of Lawley & Overdale parish, while continuing to be represented by two councillors.

37 Under the Council's proposals, using their original figures, the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the district average in Church Aston & Lilleshall ward (1 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Edgmond ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent above in Ercall Magna ward (equal to the average by 2006) and 17 per cent below in Wrockwardine ward (4 per cent above by 2006).

38 As part of the Council's submission, it was noted that both Newport Town Council and Church Aston Parish Council objected to the Council's proposed warding of Church Aston parish. Also forwarded by the Council as part of its submission were letters from Little Wenlock and Waters Upton parish councils, which raised no objections to the proposed Wrockwardine ward and the retention of the existing Ercall Magna ward respectively. However, Waters Upton Parish Council and Councillor Sadler (Ercall Magna ward) proposed transferring a small number of properties between Ercall Magna ward and Wrockwardine ward. The Council was unable to address this issue as it is not possible to modify external parish boundaries under the remit of this review, nor were there enough electors involved to form a parish ward.

39 The Liberal Democrats objected to the Council's proposed warding of Church Aston parish and instead proposed that the whole of Church Aston parish be transferred to a revised Newport South ward, as it was of the view that "the whole of a parish Council should be in one District/Unitary ward".

40 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. As stated earlier, it was noted on detailed examination that the figures in the Council's submission for the Newport/Church Aston area were inaccurate, and the electorate projections for its proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall and Newport South wards were affected by this. When the correct figures were applied to the Council's proposed wards, it resulted in the electoral variance for Church Aston & Lilleshall ward being 15 per cent above the district average (5 per cent above by 2006), while the electoral variance for Newport South ward would be 6 per cent below the district average (13 per cent below by 2006).

41 In considering the area as a whole, it was noted that including part of Lawley & Overdale parish in the scheme for this area secured the correct allocation of councillors based on a council size of 54, while achieving improved levels of electoral equality. The LGCE therefore considered that the Council's proposals provided a balance between the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities, securing effective and convenient local government and providing for improved electoral equality, and based the draft recommendations in this area on the Council's scheme, while addressing the issue of the revised figures.

42 The LGCE retained the existing Edgmond and Ercall Magna wards, as proposed by the Council, in the light of the good electoral equality achieved and local support. However, it did not adopt the Council's proposed boundary amendment to the western boundary of Tibberton & Cherrington parish as this would have created a parish ward comprising no electors.

43 It was noted that the warding of Church Aston parish was opposed by Church Aston Parish Council, Newport Town Council and the Liberal Democrats. However, notwithstanding the revised electorate figures (detailed above), the LGCE agreed with the Council that some parish warding was necessary to secure good electoral equality in this area. It therefore adopted the Council's proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall ward, subject to a minor amendment, while making the necessary adjustments to the figures in order to correctly reflect the number of electors in the proposed ward. It amended the northern boundary of Church Aston & Lilleshall ward so that all of Richmond Close was transferred to the proposed Newport South ward. It proposed two further minor amendments to tie the boundaries of Church Aston & Lilleshall ward to ground detail, to ensure that the southern boundary follows firm ground detail. In the remainder of the rural area, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposed Wrockwardine ward.

44 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above the district average in Church Aston & Lilleshall ward (5 per cent above by 2006), 1 per cent above in Edgmond ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent above in Ercall Magna ward (equal to the average by 2006) and 17 per cent below in Wrockwardine ward (4 per cent above by 2006).

45 At Stage Three the Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

46 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals for these four wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Newport (four wards)

47 The town of Newport is situated in the north-east of the district. The town comprises four single-member wards: Newport East, Newport North, Newport South and Newport West, which are all coterminous with the town wards of the same names. Under the existing electoral arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent below the district average in Newport East ward (10 per cent below by 2006), 8 per cent above in Newport North ward (equal to the average by 2006), 5 per cent below in Newport South ward (12 per cent below by 2006) and 8 per cent below in Newport West ward (15 per cent below by 2006).

48 At Stage One the Council proposed retaining a pattern of four single-member wards in Newport. However, it proposed modifying the boundaries to secure better electoral equality. In addition, as described earlier, it proposed transferring part of Church Aston parish into its proposed Newport South ward in order to increase the electorate in its proposed Newport South ward and secure better electoral equality. It proposed a revised Newport North ward, comprising the existing Newport North ward less the whole of Farm Grove, Vauxhall Terrace and properties on Longford Road to the south-west of Broomfield Road, which would be transferred to a revised Newport West ward. The Council proposed that its revised Newport West ward would comprise the existing Newport West ward and the properties from the existing Newport North ward as described above, in addition to numbers 1–21 (odd numbers) Wellington Road and 1–33 (odd numbers) Upper Bar from the existing Newport South ward. As a consequence, it proposed further modifying the existing Newport South ward by incorporating part of Church Aston parish into the ward, as described earlier. This would involve transferring the northern part of Wallshead Way, Mulberry Close, Primrose Drive and properties on the north side of Richmond Close into its proposed Newport South ward. In addition, the boundary between Newport South and Newport East wards would be modified to continue along the centre of Meadow Road, to the rear of properties on Meadow View Close, then northwards along the rear of properties on Stafford Road so that numbers 62–92 (even numbers) and all of the properties on High Meadows would be transferred to a modified Newport East ward.

49 Under the Council's proposals, using its original figures, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the district average in Newport East ward (6 per cent

below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Newport North ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Newport South ward (6 per cent below by 2006) and 2 per cent above in Newport West ward (6 per cent below by 2006).

50 As part of the Council's submission, both Church Aston Parish Council and Newport Town Council objected to the proposed transfer of part of Church Aston parish to the Council's proposed Newport South ward, as described earlier.

51 Similarly, the Liberal Democrats objected to the warding of Church Aston parish and instead proposed that the whole of Church Aston parish be incorporated into a revised Newport South ward. However, they supported the Council's proposal to retain a pattern of single-member wards in the town.

52 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. As stated earlier, the Council provided revised figures for both its proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall and Newport South wards. This revision resulted in the electoral variances for Newport South changing to 6 per cent below the district average and 13 per cent below by 2006. Consequently, given that the LGCE adopted the Council's proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall ward, as detailed earlier, albeit with a minor amendment, the Council's proposed wards in Newport required some modification to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality, given that Newport South would be significantly over-represented by 2006. First, the LGCE retained the existing Newport East ward. It adopted the Council's proposed Newport North ward and as a consequence adopted the Council's modification to the north-western boundary of its proposed Newport West ward, although it retained the existing eastern boundary of Newport West ward. In Newport South ward it retained the existing ward boundaries, other than the addition of the parish ward from Church Aston parish, as described earlier. These modifications ensured that all four Newport wards achieved as good levels of electoral equality as possible, based on the revised electorate figures, while also securing identifiable boundaries.

53 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the district average in Newport East ward (9 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Newport North ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent below in Newport South ward (7 per cent below by 2006) and equal to the average in Newport West ward (8 per cent below by 2006).

54 At Stage Three the Council stated that "the Cabinet did accept the need for the changes proposed in the Newport area which had arisen due to an error on the part of the original counting of electors in that area" and consequently endorsed the LGCE's draft recommendations for this area.

55 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for the four Newport wards as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received support from the Council. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for Newport East, Newport North, Newport South and Newport West would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals for these four wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Wellington (seven wards)

56 The town of Wellington is situated in the centre of the district. The town is currently represented by seven single-member district wards: Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch, which are all coterminous with the town wards of the same names. Under the existing electoral arrangements the number of electors is 4 per cent below the district average in Arleston ward (11 per cent below by 2006), 2 per cent above in College ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent above in Dothill ward (4 per cent above by 2006), 6 per cent below in Ercall ward (13 per cent below by 2006), 2 per cent above in Haygate ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 11 per cent above in Park ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Shawbirch ward (1 per cent below by 2006).

57 At Stage One the Council proposed retaining a pattern of seven single-member wards in Wellington. However, it proposed modifying a number of boundaries to secure better electoral equality. It proposed retaining the existing Shawbirch ward. It proposed a modified Dothill ward, broadly transferring the area to the east of St Margarets Drive and Lime Tree Way into a revised College ward. The revised College ward would comprise most of the existing College ward and the properties transferred from the existing Dothill ward, with its revised southern boundary following the centre of the High Street, Mill Bank and Bank Road before running along the rear of properties on the south side of Regent Street, then running southwards to Watling Street. The properties to the south of this proposed southern boundary would be transferred to a revised Arleston ward. The Council proposed an enlarged Ercall ward, which would also include the area to the south of Haygate Road from Haygate ward. Haygate ward would be further modified so that its northern boundary would follow the centre of Sycamore Close and Elmpark Drive before running southwards along Admaston Road until it rejoined the existing boundary. The revised Park ward would then reflect these transfers to the modified Haygate ward.

58 Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the district average in Arleston ward (2 per cent below by 2006), 2 per cent above in College ward (6 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent below in Dothill ward (5 per cent below by 2006), 8 per cent above in Ercall ward (equal to the average by 2006), 1 per cent below in Haygate ward (7 per cent below by 2006), equal to the average in Park ward (7 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Shawbirch ward (1 per cent below by 2006).

59 Included in the Council's submission was a letter from Wellington Town Council proposing alternative boundaries for the seven wards in the town. Under the Town Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the district average in Arleston ward (7 per cent below by 2006), 2 per cent above in College ward (5 per cent below by 2006), 2 per cent above in Dothill ward, both now and by 2006, 2 per cent below in Ercall ward (10 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent above in Haygate ward (5 per cent below by 2006), 7 per cent above in Park ward (5 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Shawbirch ward (1 per cent below by 2006).

60 The Liberal Democrats supported the Council's proposals to retain seven single-member wards within Wellington. A local resident objected to the Town Council's proposal to transfer Haybridge Road from College ward to Arleston ward, which had been submitted to the Council during its own consultation period. She also included copies of five letters and a 34-signature petition which had been sent to Wellington Town Council, and proposed that Haybridge Road should remain in College ward.

61 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. The LGCE noted Wellington Town Council's alternative proposals, but did not consider that they utilised such strong boundaries as those proposed by the Council. Furthermore, the proposals did not improve upon the good levels of electoral equality achieved by the Council's proposals. It also noted that the Town Council's proposals included transferring an area of the existing College ward around Haybridge Road to its proposed Arleston ward, which attracted some opposition during Stage One. Therefore, given the better boundaries and slightly better electoral equality, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposals for seven single-member wards in Wellington as part of its draft recommendations. It proposed some very minor boundary modifications to ensure that all boundaries were tied to firm ground detail.

62 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch wards would be the same as under the Council's proposals.

63 At Stage Three the Council supported the draft recommendations. Two local residents also submitted a representation supporting the draft recommendations, with particular regard to the Haybridge Road area in Wellington, and stated that they hoped that the "final recommendations will have no changes from the draft".

64 All the representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We note the local support for the draft recommendations in this area, and as such, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for the seven single-member Wellington wards as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Hadley, Ketley, Ketley Bank, Leegomery and Wombridge wards

65 These five wards are situated in the centre of the district. The two-member Hadley ward contains the parish of Preston upon the Weald Moors and Hadley parish ward of Hadley parish. The single-member Ketley ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Ketley Bank ward, which is also represented by a single member, contains Ketley Bank town ward of Oakengates town. The two-member Leegomery ward comprises Leegomery parish ward of Hadley parish. The two-member Wombridge ward comprises Wombridge town ward of Oakengates town. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 2 per cent below the district average in Hadley ward (8 per cent below by 2006), 18 per cent above in Ketley ward (41 per cent above by 2006), 4 per cent below in Ketley Bank ward (9 per cent below by 2006), 10 per cent above in Leegomery ward (11 per cent above by 2006) and 2 per cent above in Wombridge ward (5 per cent below by 2006).

66 At Stage One the Council proposed that the north-western parts of the existing Hadley and Leegomery wards form a new single-member Apley Castle ward, with the boundary following the centre of Leegate Avenue, and then westwards to the north of Leegomery Cottages and properties on Granger Drive, before following the path westwards to the north of the playing fields to Whitchurch Drive. The remainder of the existing Leegomery ward would be joined with the remainder of the existing Hadley ward, less Preston upon the Weald Moors parish, which would be transferred to Church Aston & Lilleshall ward (detailed earlier) together with the Beveley area of the existing Ketley ward. This new three-member ward would be named Hadley & Leegomery ward. The remainder of the existing Ketley ward

would be joined with the existing Ketley Bank ward and the southern part of the existing Wombridge ward (the area to the south of Queensway) to form a new three-member Ketley & Oakengates ward.

67 Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent below the district average in Apley Castle ward (equal to the average by 2006), 9 per cent above in Hadley & Leegomery ward (8 per cent above by 2006) and 7 per cent above in Ketley & Oakengates ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

68 As part of the Council's submission, Oakengates Town Council objected to the Council's proposal that Ketley and Ketley Bank form part of the same ward "as they feel that Ketley and Ketley Bank do not relate to each other in any way". As an alternative, Oakengates Town Council proposed that the existing Wombridge ward should be retained, and that the area around Shepherds Lane, in Ketley parish, should be transferred to the existing Ketley Bank ward to improve electoral equality. Oakengates Regeneration Partnership proposed retaining the Wombridge and Oakengates area of Oakengates town as a two-member ward, while taking in the Beveley area from the proposed Hadley & Leegomery ward and transferring the area around Shepherds Lane, currently in Ketley ward, into the existing Ketley Bank ward. In order to facilitate these proposals, the size of Telford & Wrekin Council would need to increase by one to 55. However, it did provide an alternative proposal to avoid the need for an increase in council size, which would involve reducing the representation in the proposed St Georges ward to a single councillor, "transferring the North-Western part of the proposed Saint George's Ward to Oakengates".

69 The Council also forwarded a letter from Councillor Barnes (Wombridge ward) who objected to the Council's proposals for the existing Wombridge ward. He expressed concerns that the proposals would lead to Wombridge losing both community identity and identifiable boundaries.

70 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. The LGCE adopted the Council's proposed Apley Castle ward, as it considered that it utilised strong boundaries and did not receive any opposition during the Council's consultation period. It noted the objections raised to the Council's proposed Hadley & Leegomery and Ketley & Oakengates wards. However, it considered that the Council's proposals secured the best balance currently available between electoral equality, reflecting local communities in the area and securing effective and convenient local government, while also taking into account the significant growth forecast in some areas. Furthermore, the alternative proposal put forward by Oakengates Regeneration Partnership would involve an increase in council size of one, for which no evidence of wider support was found, nor was it considered to facilitate the provision of a good electoral scheme across the district as a whole. The LGCE was unable to consider any one area in isolation, but had to consider the district as a whole, and Oakengates Regeneration Partnership's alternative proposal would have had consequential effects on other wards in the district which the LGCE did not consider justified given the viable scheme for these wards put forward by the Council. It therefore adopted the Council's proposed Apley Castle, Hadley & Leegomery and Ketley & Oakengates wards, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between Hadley & Leegomery and Church Aston & Lilleshall wards, as detailed earlier.

71 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Apley Castle, Hadley & Leegomery and Ketley & Oakengates wards would be the same as under the Council's proposals.

72 At Stage Three the Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

73 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for these wards, given the local support received. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Apley Castle, Hadley & Leegomery and Ketley & Oakengates wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Donnington, Donnington Wood & Muxton, St Georges & Priorslee and Wrockwardine Wood wards

74 The two-member wards of Donnington, Donnington Wood & Muxton and Wrockwardine Wood and the three-member ward of St Georges & Priorslee are situated in the east of the district. Donnington ward comprises Donnington parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish and Donnington Wood & Muxton ward comprises Donnington Wood & Muxton parish ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish. St Georges & Priorslee ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Wrockwardine Wood ward is coterminous with Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent below the district average in Donnington ward (22 per cent below by 2006), 16 per cent above in Donnington Wood & Muxton ward (19 per cent above by 2006), 19 per cent above in St Georges & Priorslee ward (23 per cent above by 2006) and 5 per cent below in Wrockwardine Wood ward (12 per cent below by 2006).

75 At Stage One the Council proposed that the existing two-member Donnington ward should retain most of its existing boundaries, although an area in the far north of the ward, known as The Humbers, would be transferred to its proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall ward, as detailed earlier. In addition, the western part of the existing Donnington Wood & Muxton ward (the area to the west of Donnington Wood Way, to the north of The Fields, to the north-west of Church Road/St Matthews Road/Ashlea Drive and to the north of St Georges Road) would also be transferred to the Council's revised Donnington ward. As a consequence, the remainder of Donnington Wood & Muxton ward would form a new two-member Muxton ward.

76 To the south of these wards, the Council proposed a new two-member St Georges ward and a new two-member Priorslee ward. Its proposed St Georges ward would comprise the south-western part of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish, to the south of Wrockwardine Wood Way and to the west of Moss Road, together with the north-western part of the existing St Georges & Priorslee ward, that area to the west of the Ragged Robin estate, to the west of the area around Duke Street and St Georges Methodist Church, to the west of Snow Hill and to the north-west of St Georges by-pass/Church Road. Its proposed Priorslee ward would comprise the remainder of the existing St Georges & Priorslee ward together with the south-eastern part of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish, to the south of Wrockwardine Wood Way and to the east of Moss Road. Finally, its proposed Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward would comprise the existing Wrockwardine Wood ward less the most southern part transferred to the proposed St Georges and Priorslee wards, together with the northern part of the existing Wombridge ward (to the north of the A442) as described earlier.

77 Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the district average in Donnington ward (5 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent below in Muxton ward (1 per cent below by 2006), 10 per cent below in Priorslee ward (2 per cent

above by 2006), 14 per cent above in St Georges ward (5 per cent above by 2006) and 17 per cent above in Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward (8 per cent above by 2006).

78 As part of its submission, the Council forwarded a letter from St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council, which supported the Council's proposals for the parish. It also forwarded a letter from Councillor Barnes (Wombridge ward) who objected to the Council's proposals for the existing Wombridge ward, as described earlier.

79 Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council proposed that Wrockwardine Wood Way should form the entire southern boundary of the proposed Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward, while it agreed that part of Wombridge ward should remain with the Oakengates area.

80 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. It was noted that the Council's proposed Donnington and Muxton wards retain most of their existing boundaries while achieving good electoral equality. It was also noted that its proposed St Georges and Priorslee wards would address the significant growth forecast in the east of the parish, while having the support of St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council. The LGCE noted the objections to the Council's proposed Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward, but considered that the Council's proposals reflected the identities and interests of local communities, secured effective and convenient local government and achieved good electoral equality. The alternative southern boundary proposed by Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council would mean that residents in the Holyhurst Road/Wombridge Road area would have no direct vehicular access to the rest of the proposed Ketley & Oakengates ward. The LGCE therefore adopted the Council's scheme for this area in full.

81 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Donnington, Muxton, Priorslee, St Georges and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards would be the same as under the Council's proposals.

82 At Stage Three the Council supported the draft recommendations for this area. Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council reiterated its objection to the proposals, stating that "given that Wrockwardine Wood Ward is currently very stable and the figures are in our opinion not outside your parameters we believe that the ward should remain as it is". It also considered that the new proposals would cause confusion for electors as the parish would be divided between three different district wards.

83 All the representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We have noted Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council's objections to the proposals, but we do not consider that the retention of the existing Wrockwardine Wood ward, being over-represented by 12 per cent by 2006, is justified, given the urban nature of the area and the viable scheme proposed by the Council. It would also have a detrimental effect on the surrounding wards, not only with regard to electoral equality but in terms of reflecting local communities, as the southern boundary of the existing ward, in our view, divides the residential area either side of Wombridge Road quite arbitrarily. We are therefore confirming the draft recommendations in this area as final.

84 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Donnington, Muxton, Priorslee, St Georges and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Brookside, Dawley Magna, Hollinswood & Randlay, Lawley, Malinslee & Langley and Stirchley wards

85 These six wards are situated in the south of the district, to the south of the M54 and broadly to the north of the A4169 (Queensway). Brookside ward is served by two councillors and comprises Brookside parish ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish. The three-member Dawley Magna ward comprises Dawley Hamlets parish and Dawley Central parish ward of Great Dawley parish. Hollinswood & Randlay ward is served by two councillors and is coterminous with the parish of the same name. The two-member Lawley ward comprises Lawley & Overdale parish. Malinslee & Langley ward is represented by three councillors and contains Malinslee and Langley parish wards of Great Dawley parish. The two-member Stirchley ward comprises Stirchley parish ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 14 per cent below the district average in Brookside ward (20 per cent below by 2006), 8 per cent above in Dawley Magna ward (11 per cent above by 2006), 2 per cent above in Hollinswood & Randlay ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 12 per cent below in Lawley ward (51 per cent above by 2006), 7 per cent below in Malinslee & Langley ward (14 per cent below by 2006) and 13 per cent below in Stirchley ward (8 per cent below by 2006).

86 At Stage One the Council proposed extending the existing two-member Brookside ward northwards to include the area to the south-west of the playing fields and to the south-east of Stirchley Road, and the area to the south of Holmer Farm Road from the existing Stirchley ward, in order to reduce the current over-representation in the ward. The remainder of the current Stirchley ward would be joined with the existing Hollinswood & Randlay ward to form a new three-member The Nedge ward.

87 The Council proposed warding Lawley parish so that the parish would be divided between four district wards. It proposed that the western part of the existing Lawley ward (to the west of Lawley Drive) should be transferred to its proposed Wrockwardine ward, as detailed earlier. Its proposed two-member Lawley & Overdale ward would comprise the area to the south of the M54, to the west of Old Park Way and Dawley Green Way, to the north of Station Road and to the east of Lawley Drive. The south-western area of Lawley parish, to the south of Station Road and the Newdale roundabout, would be transferred to its proposed two-member Horsehay & Lightmoor ward, which would also include the part of Dawley Hamlets parish to the west of Fence Road/Pool Hill Road/Doseley Road and the dismantled railway in addition to the northern part of The Gorge parish, to the north of the A4169. The remainder of Lawley & Overdale parish, the area to the east of Old Park Way, known as Old Park, would be transferred to its proposed two-member Malinslee ward, which would also comprise the majority of the existing Malinslee & Langley ward, less the area to the west of King Street and south of Dawley Green Road, the area around Conroy Drive and the area to the south of Hinksay Road (around Beechwood Road). Finally in this area, the Council's Dawley Magna ward would be modified to comprise the parts of the existing Malinslee & Langley ward described above and the remainder of Dawley Hamlets parish. This ward would continue to be represented by three councillors.

88 Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 15 per cent above the district average in Brookside ward (6 per cent above by 2006), 14 per cent above in Dawley Magna ward (7 per cent above by 2006), 53 per cent below in Horsehay & Lightmoor ward (3 per cent below by 2006), 28 per cent below in Lawley & Overdale ward (7 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent below in Malinslee ward (1 per cent above by 2006) and 7 per cent above in The Nedge ward (8 per cent above by 2006).

89 As part of the Council's submission a letter was forwarded from Councillor Barber (Lawley ward) who objected to the Council's plans to ward Lawley & Overdale parish for community reasons. He was also concerned about what effect the proposals might have on the Sure Start funding which the existing Lawley ward currently receives.

90 The Wrekin Area Committee objected to the Council's proposals to re-ward Stirchley & Brookside parish and to ward Lawley & Overdale parish for community reasons. Lawley & Overdale Parish Council also objected to the Council's proposals for its parish, proposing that the whole parish should form a three-member ward.

91 Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council initially objected to the Council's proposed The Nedge ward, considering that the variances for the existing Hollinswood & Randlay ward were within acceptable levels, and proposed retaining the existing arrangements for the ward. However, it later withdrew its objections after receiving reassurances that the Council Leader would not seek a subsequent parish boundary review in the foreseeable future. Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council objected to the Council's proposed Brookside and The Nedge wards. It stated that "the outcome of the proposal to combine part of Stirchley with Hollinswood & Randlay would be to include Stirchley with a community with whom it has no significant existing relationship and no combined activities". As an alternative, it proposed combining the existing Brookside ward with the majority of the existing Stirchley ward to form a three-member ward.

92 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. The LGCE noted the objections to the Council's proposed The Nedge ward from both the Wrekin Area Committee and Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council. However, it considered that the Council's proposed Brookside ward utilised strong boundaries and secured reasonable electoral equality. Furthermore, it considered that the Council's proposed The Nedge ward would unite the residential areas to the north and south of Randlay Avenue, which it considered to share a community of interest. The alternative warding arrangements proposed by Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council would result in its proposed Stirchley & Brookside ward being under-represented by 14 per cent by 2006. The LGCE did not consider this level of electoral imbalance justified, given the viable alternative proposed by the Council. Additionally, it noted that Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council had withdrawn its opposition to the Council's proposed The Nedge ward. It therefore adopted the Council's proposed Brookside and The Nedge wards as part of its draft recommendations, subject to two minor amendments to the boundary between the two wards to ensure that it was tied to firm ground detail.

93 The LGCE also noted the objections to the Council's proposed warding of Lawley & Overdale parish. It did not adopt the proposal from Lawley & Overdale Parish Council that the whole parish form a three-member ward, given the consequential effects on the district-wide scheme which would result. Furthermore, it was unable to take into account socio-economic factors when considering proposals. However, it did consider that the parish warding of Lawley & Overdale could be reduced and it therefore moved away from the Council's proposals in one area. It amended the Council's Lawley & Overdale and Malinslee wards to retain the Old Park area within Lawley & Overdale ward. This amendment would have a minimal effect upon electoral equality while, it considered, better reflecting community identities within the area. In the remainder of this area it adopted the Council's proposed Dawley Magna and Horsehay & Lightmoor wards. It considered that these proposals achieved good levels of electoral equality while addressing the issue of significant future growth.

94 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 15 per cent above the district average in Brookside ward (6 per cent above by 2006), 14 per cent above in Dawley Magna ward (7 per cent above by 2006), 53 per cent below in Horsehay & Lightmoor ward (3 per cent below by 2006), 26 per cent below in Lawley & Overdale ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 3 per cent below in Malinslee ward (8 per cent below by 2006) and 7 per cent above in The Nedge ward (8 per cent above by 2006).

95 At Stage Three the Council “requested that the Commission reconsider the amendments proposed to...the Lawley/Malinslee Ward”, reiterating its original proposals, while supporting the draft recommendations in the remainder of this area. The Council also forwarded a letter from Lawley & Overdale Parish Council, writing on behalf of Councillor Barber (Lawley ward), stating that “He is of the opinion that...[the] recommendations are more favourable than those proposed by Telford & Wrekin Council and as such there will be no further objections”.

96 All the representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We note that the Council supported the majority of the draft proposals for this area but reiterated its Stage One proposals for Lawley & Overdale and Malinslee wards. However, we agree with the LGCE that the draft recommendations better reflect community identities within the Lawley & Overdale area, while having a minimal effect upon electoral equality. We also note that the proposals received some local support. We have not been persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations in this area and have therefore decided to confirm them as final.

97 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for Brookside, Dawley Magna, Horsehay & Lightmoor, Lawley & Overdale, Malinslee and The Nedge wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Cuckoo Oak, Ironbridge Gorge, Madeley and Woodside wards

98 These four wards are situated in the very south of the district. The two-member Cuckoo Oak ward comprises Cuckoo Oak parish ward of Madeley parish. The single-member Ironbridge Gorge ward comprises The Gorge parish. The two-member Madeley ward comprises Madeley Central parish ward of Madeley parish. The two-member Woodside ward comprises Woodside parish ward of Madeley parish. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below the district average in Cuckoo Oak ward (12 per cent below by 2006), 5 per cent below in Ironbridge Gorge ward (31 per cent above by 2006), 2 per cent above in Madeley ward (6 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Woodside ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

99 At Stage One the Council proposed broadly retaining the existing two-member Cuckoo Oak and Madeley wards, although it proposed transferring an area around Kemberton Drive and Oak Close from the existing Madeley ward to a revised Cuckoo Oak ward. The Council proposed modifying the western boundary of Woodside ward so that the area to the west of Woodside Avenue, which is due to have a significant new development built on it, would be transferred to a revised Ironbridge Gorge ward. Its modified Woodside ward would continue to be represented by two councillors, and its revised Ironbridge Gorge ward (less the area being transferred to the proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward, as described earlier) would continue to be represented by a single councillor.

100 Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the district average in Cuckoo Oak ward (8 per cent below by 2006), 3 per cent above in Ironbridge Gorge ward (6 per cent above by 2006), 1 per cent below in Madeley ward (9 per cent below in 2006) and 2 per cent above in Woodside ward (5 per cent below by 2006).

101 As part of its submission the Council forwarded a letter it had received from The Gorge Parish Council, which objected to the Council's proposals to transfer the new properties due to be built in the existing Woodside ward to the proposed Ironbridge Gorge ward. It stated that "members consider that to add the new estates off Woodside Road to the Gorge Parish, when these have no community association with the Gorge, is a misplaced strategy". It proposed that, if part of the existing Woodside ward needed to be transferred to Ironbridge Gorge ward, "a more appropriate strategy would be to extend the boundaries up Lincoln Hill and Madeley Bank to include the older housing in the area of Beech Road, Roberts Road and School Road in the Gorge". However, regarding the new development at Lightmoor to the north of the A4169, which the Council proposed should be transferred to its new Horsehay & Lightmoor ward, it stated that it "can see the logic in excluding this area from the Gorge by 2006".

102 Madeley Parish Council also objected to the Council's proposals for the existing Woodside and Ironbridge Gorge wards, stating that "there is no relationship with Ironbridge Gorge – no road access – no service delivery – no history or affinity".

103 All the representations received during Stage One were carefully considered. It was noted that the Council's proposed Cuckoo Oak and Madeley wards retained most of the existing boundaries while achieving good electoral equality. The LGCE therefore adopted the Council's proposals for these two wards, subject to a minor amendment so that the boundary between the two wards would follow Legges Way, and a further amendment to the proposed boundary in order to tie it to firm ground detail, which did not affect any electors.

104 The LGCE also noted the objections from both Madeley Parish Council and The Gorge Parish Council regarding the Council's proposed Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside wards. It agreed that the proposal to transfer the westernmost part of the existing Woodside ward to a revised Ironbridge Gorge ward would not provide a good reflection of communities in this area, particularly given that this area would not have direct road links to the proposed Ironbridge Gorge ward. Therefore, in the light of local opposition, it retained the existing boundary between Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside wards, in order to better reflect community identity in the area. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the district average in Ironbridge Gorge ward (14 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Woodside ward (5 per cent above by 2006). While this would have the effect of worsening electoral equality in the area when compared with the Council's proposals, it considered that the better reflection of community identities within both areas outweighed the potentially negative effect of the electoral imbalance which would occur. However, it did agree with the Council's proposals to create a parish ward in the northern part of The Gorge parish to place the proposed new development in the proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward.

105 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the district average in Cuckoo Oak ward (8 per cent below by 2006), 6 per cent below in Ironbridge Gorge ward (14 per cent below by 2006), 1 per cent below in Madeley ward (9 per cent below by 2006) and 6 per cent above in Woodside ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

106 At Stage Three the Council “requested that the Commission reconsider the amendments proposed to the Ironbridge Gorge/Woodside Wards”, reiterating its Stage One proposals for these two wards, while supporting the draft recommendations in the remainder of this area.

107 All the representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We note that the Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside wards. However, as stated in the draft recommendations report, the LGCE considered that the draft recommendations better reflect community identity within the area, despite the electoral imbalance which occurs as a result. We have not been persuaded to move away from this view and have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations as final.

108 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor for Cuckoo Oak, Ironbridge Gorge, Madeley and Woodside wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

109 In conducting its review the LGCE sought views in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. However, by virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycles.

Conclusions

110 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the consultation report, we have decided to endorse those draft recommendations without amendment.

111 We conclude that, in Telford & Wrekin:

- a council of 54 members should be retained;
- there should be 33 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 29 of the existing wards should be modified.

112 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	54	54	54	54
Number of wards	34	33	34	33
Average number of electors per councillor	2,151	2,151	2,267	2,267
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	9	9	17	1
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	0	2	5	0

113 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent remaining the same as at present initially. However, by 2006 only one ward, Ironbridge Gorge, is forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Telford & Wrekin Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 33 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

114 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In its draft recommendations report the LGCE proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes and towns of Church Aston, Dawley Hamlets, Great Dawley, Hadley, Ketley, Lawley & Overdale, Lilleshall & Donnington, Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, St Georges & Priorslee, Stirchley & Brookside, The Gorge, Wellington and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench to reflect the proposed district wards.

115 Church Aston Parish Council is currently served by 10 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the Council proposed that Church Aston should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the majority of Church Aston parish and the other parish ward covering the area nearest to Newport. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

116 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in the Church Aston parish area (broadly reflecting the Council's proposals for Church Aston & Lilleshall and Newport

South district wards) the LGCE proposed that Church Aston parish should be warded accordingly. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the main Church Aston settlement, to be included in Church Aston & Lilleshall district ward, should be named Church Aston parish ward and be represented by nine parish councillors, and the parish ward covering the area nearest to Newport around Wallshead Way, to be included in Newport South district ward, should be named Wallshead parish ward and be represented by one parish councillor, a total of 10 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

117 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Church Aston parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Church Aston Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Church Aston (returning nine councillors) and Wallshead (one). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

118 Dawley Hamlets Parish Council is currently served by nine parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the Council proposed that Dawley Hamlets should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the south-eastern part of the parish and the other parish ward covering the remainder of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

119 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Dawley Hamlets parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for Dawley Magna and Horsehay & Lightmoor wards, the LGCE proposed that Dawley Hamlets parish should be warded accordingly. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the south-eastern part of the parish, to be included in Dawley Magna district ward, should be named Aqueduct parish ward and be represented by six parish councillors, and the parish ward covering the remainder of the parish, to be included in Horsehay & Lightmoor district ward, should be named Dawley Hamlets parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors, a total of nine councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

120 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Dawley Hamlets parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Dawley Hamlets Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Aqueduct (returning six councillors) and Dawley Hamlets (three). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

121 Great Dawley Parish Council is currently served by 14 parish councillors representing the three parish wards of Dawley Central, Langley and Malinslee, which are represented by four, four and six councillors respectively.

122 The Council proposed that Great Dawley parish be divided between two district wards and therefore proposed two revised parish wards: Dawley Magna district ward would contain one parish ward, and Malinslee district ward would contain the other parish ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

123 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Great Dawley parish, reflecting the proposals for Dawley Magna and Malinslee wards, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposed parish ward boundaries. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the western part of the parish, to be included in Dawley Magna district ward, should be named Dawley parish ward and be represented by seven parish councillors, and the parish ward covering the eastern part of the parish, to be included in Malinslee district ward, should be named Malinslee parish ward and also be represented by seven parish councillors, a total of 14 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of parish councillors at Stage Three.

124 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Great Dawley parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Great Dawley Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Dawley and Malinslee, each returning seven councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

125 Hadley Parish Council is currently served by 16 parish councillors representing the two parish wards of Hadley and Leegomery, which are each represented by eight councillors.

126 The Council proposed that Hadley parish be divided between two district wards and therefore proposed two revised parish wards: Apley Castle district ward would contain one parish ward, and Hadley & Leegomery district ward would contain the other parish ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

127 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Hadley parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for Apley Castle and Hadley & Leegomery wards, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposed parish ward boundaries. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the north-western part of the parish, to be included in Apley Castle district ward, should be named Apley Castle parish ward and be represented by four parish councillors, and the parish ward covering the remainder of the parish, to be included in Hadley & Leegomery district ward, should be named Hadley & Leegomery parish ward and be represented by 12 parish councillors, a total of 16 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

128 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Hadley parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Hadley Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Apley Castle (returning four councillors) and Hadley & Leegomery (12). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

129 Ketley Parish Council is currently served by 11 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the Council proposed that Ketley parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the Beveley area of the parish and the other parish ward covering the remainder of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

130 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Ketley parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for Hadley & Leegomery and Ketley & Oakengates wards, the LGCE proposed that Ketley parish should be warded accordingly. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the Beveley area of the parish, to be included in Hadley & Leegomery district ward, should be named Beveley parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors and the parish ward covering the remainder of the parish, to be included in Ketley & Oakengates district ward, should be named Ketley parish ward and be represented by nine parish councillors, a total of 11 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

131 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Ketley parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Ketley Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Beveley (returning two councillors) and Ketley (nine). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

132 Lawley & Overdale Parish Council is currently served by eight parish councillors and the parish is not warded. The Council proposed that Lawley & Overdale parish should be warded into four in order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in the area. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

133 However, under the draft recommendations the LGCE proposed reducing the number of proposed parish wards in Lawley & Overdale to three in order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area. It proposed that the parish ward covering the central area of the parish, to be included in Lawley & Overdale district ward, should be named Central parish ward and be represented by five parish councillors, the parish ward covering the south-west of

the parish, to be included in Horsehay & Lightmoor district ward, should be named Lawley parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors and the parish ward covering the western area of the parish, to be included in Wrockwardine district ward, should be named West parish ward and be represented by one parish councillor, a total of eight councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

134 At Stage Three Lawley & Overdale Parish Council, in its submission to Telford & Wrekin Council, forwarded comments from Councillor Barber, stating that there were no further objections to the parish warding in Lawley & Overdale, in view of the amendments made by the LGCE. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Lawley & Overdale parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Lawley & Overdale Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Central (returning five councillors), Lawley (two) and West (one). The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

135 Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council is currently served by 15 parish councillors representing the three parish wards of Donnington, Donnington Wood & Muxton and Lilleshall, which are represented by seven, four and four councillors respectively.

136 The Council proposed that Lilleshall & Donnington parish be divided between three district wards: Church Aston & Lilleshall district ward would contain one parish ward, Donnington district ward would contain another parish ward and Muxton district ward would contain the third parish ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

137 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Lilleshall & Donnington parish, reflecting the modified proposals for Church Aston & Lilleshall ward and the Council’s proposals for Donnington and Muxton wards, the LGCE adopted parish ward boundaries corresponding with the district ward boundaries within the parish. It proposed that the parish ward covering the northern area of the parish, to be included in Church Aston & Lilleshall district ward, should be named Lilleshall parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors, the parish ward covering the western area of the parish, to be included in Donnington district ward, should be named Donnington parish ward and be represented by six parish councillors and the parish ward covering the eastern area of the parish, to be included in Muxton district ward, should be named Muxton parish ward and also be represented by six parish councillors, a total of 15 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

138 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Lilleshall & Donnington parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Donnington (returning six councillors) Lilleshall (three) and Muxton (six). The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

139 Madeley Parish Council is currently served by 17 parish councillors representing the three parish wards of Cuckoo Oak, Madeley Central and Woodside, which are represented by five, five and seven councillors respectively.

140 The Council proposed that Madeley parish be divided between four district wards in order to facilitate its proposed district warding in this area, as described earlier. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed. However, under the draft recommendations the LGCE proposed that Madeley parish be served by three district wards and three coterminous parish wards: Cuckoo Oak district ward would comprise Cuckoo Oak parish ward, Madeley district ward would comprise Madeley parish ward and Woodside district ward would comprise Woodside parish ward. It proposed that Cuckoo Oak parish ward be represented by five parish councillors, Madeley parish ward be represented by five parish councillors and Woodside parish ward be represented by seven parish councillors, a total of 17 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

141 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Madeley parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Madeley Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Cuckoo Oak (returning five councillors), Madeley (five) and Woodside (seven). The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

142 Newport Town Council is currently served by 12 town councillors representing the four town wards of Newport East, Newport North, Newport South and Newport West, which are each represented by three councillors.

143 The Council proposed that Newport town be served by four district wards and four revised town wards. Neither town ward names nor the number and distribution of town councillors was proposed. However, as part of the draft recommendations the LGCE proposed amendments to the Council's proposed boundaries for its proposed Newport East, Newport South and Newport West district wards, which had consequential effects on the boundaries of the town wards.

144 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Newport town, reflecting the Council's proposals for Newport North ward while reflecting the proposed amendments

for Newport East, Newport South and Newport West wards, the LGCE proposed town ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the town. It retained the existing Newport East town ward, comprising Newport East district ward, which would be represented by three town councillors, as at present. The town ward comprising Newport North district ward should be named Newport North town ward and be represented by three town councillors, the town ward comprising the majority of Newport South district ward should be named Newport South town ward and be represented by three town councillors and the town ward covering Newport West district ward should be named Newport West town ward and also be represented by three town councillors. Overall it retained a total of 12 councillors. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

145 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Town Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Newport town as final.

Final Recommendation
Newport Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Newport East, Newport North, Newport South and Newport West, each returning three councillors. The boundaries of the four town wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

146 Oakengates Town Council is currently served by 13 town councillors representing the two town wards of Ketley Bank and Wombridge, which are represented by four and nine councillors respectively.

147 The Council proposed that Oakengates town be divided between two district wards and therefore proposed two modified town wards: Ketley & Oakengates district ward would contain one town ward and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench district ward would contain the other town ward. Neither town ward names nor the number and distribution of town councillors was proposed.

148 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Oakengates town, reflecting the Council’s proposals for Ketley & Oakengates and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench district wards, the LGCE adopted the Council’s proposed town ward boundaries. In addition, it proposed that the town ward covering the southern area of the town, to be included in Ketley & Oakengates district ward, should be named Oakengates town ward and be represented by nine town councillors and the town ward covering the northern area of the town, to be included in Wrockwardine Wood & Trench district ward, should be named North town ward and be represented by four town councillors, a total of 13 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

149 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Town Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Oakengates town as final.

Final Recommendation

Oakengates Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning four councillors) and Oakengates (nine). The boundary between the two town wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

150 St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council is currently served by 11 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the Council proposed that St Georges & Priorslee parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the eastern area of the parish and the other parish ward covering the western area of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

151 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in St Georges & Priorslee parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for St Georges and Priorslee district wards, the LGCE proposed that St Georges & Priorslee parish should be warded accordingly. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the eastern area of the parish, to be included in Priorslee district ward, should be named Priorslee parish ward and be represented by six parish councillors and the parish ward covering the western area of the parish, to be included in St Georges district ward, should be named St Georges parish ward and be represented by five parish councillors, a total of 11 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

152 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding St Georges & Priorslee parish as final.

Final Recommendation

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Priorslee (returning six councillors) and St Georges (five). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

153 Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council is currently served by 13 parish councillors representing the two parish wards of Brookside and Stirchley, which are represented by seven and six councillors respectively.

154 The Council proposed that Stirchley & Brookside parish be divided between two district wards and therefore proposed two revised parish wards: Brookside district ward would contain one parish ward and The Nedge district ward would contain the other parish ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

155 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Stirchley & Brookside parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for Brookside and The Nedge wards, the LGCE

adopted the Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the southern area of the parish, comprising Brookside district ward, should be named Brookside parish ward and be represented by eight parish councillors and the parish ward covering the northern area of the parish, to be included in The Nedge district ward, should be named Stirchley parish ward and be represented by five parish councillors, a total of 13 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

156 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Stirchley & Brookside parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Brookside (returning eight councillors) and Stirchley (five). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

157 The Gorge Parish Council is currently served by eight parish councillors representing the three parish wards of Coalbrookdale, Coalport & Jackfield and Ironbridge, which are represented by three, two and three councillors respectively.

158 The Council proposed that The Gorge parish be divided between two district wards: Horsehay & Lightmoor district ward would contain one parish ward and Ironbridge Gorge district ward would contain the other parish ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

159 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in this area, reflecting the Council’s proposals for Horsehay & Lightmoor ward and the modified Ironbridge Gorge ward, the LGCE proposed modifying the current parish ward boundaries accordingly. It proposed retaining the existing Coalport & Jackfield parish ward, to be included in Ironbridge Gorge district ward, to be represented by two councillors. It proposed that the area to be included in Horsehay & Lightmoor district ward should be named Lightmoor parish ward and be represented by three councillors and the remainder of the parish, which would also be included in Ironbridge Gorge district ward, should form a new Ironbridge Gorge parish ward and be represented by three councillors, a total of eight councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

160 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding The Gorge parish as final.

Final Recommendation

The Gorge Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing three wards. The existing Coalport & Jackfield parish ward (returning two councillors) should be retained. That part of The Gorge parish which lies within the proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor district ward should be named Lightmoor parish ward (returning three councillors). The remainder of the parish which lies in Ironbridge Gorge district ward should be named Ironbridge Gorge parish ward (returning three councillors). The new boundary between the two parish wards of Ironbridge Gorge and Lightmoor is illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

161 Wellington Town Council is currently served by 21 town councillors representing the seven town wards of Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch, which are each represented by three councillors.

162 The Council proposed that Wellington town should continue to be divided between seven district wards and seven coterminous town wards and therefore proposed modified town ward boundaries. Neither town ward names nor the number and distribution of town councillors was proposed.

163 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Wellington town, reflecting the Council's proposals for Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch wards, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposed town ward boundaries. In addition, it proposed that each town ward should be represented by three town councillors, a total of 21 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

164 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council or Town Council. Having considered all the evidence received, and in the light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Wellington town as final.

Final Recommendation

Wellington Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate, Park and Shawbirch, each returning three councillors. The boundaries of the seven town wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

165 Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council is currently served by 11 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the Council proposed that Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish should be divided between three district wards: one parish ward covering the south-eastern area of the parish, another parish ward covering the northern area of the parish and the third parish ward covering the south-western area of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors was proposed.

166 In the light of the draft recommendations for district warding in Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish, reflecting the Council's proposals for Priorslee, St Georges and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards, the LGCE proposed that Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish should be warded accordingly. In addition, it proposed that the parish ward covering the south-eastern area of the parish, to be included in Priorslee district ward, should be named East parish ward and be represented by one parish councillor, the parish ward covering the northern area of the parish, to be included in Wrockwardine Wood & Trench district ward, should be named Trench parish ward and be represented by eight parish councillors and the parish ward covering the south-western area of the parish, to be included in St Georges district ward, should be named Wrockwardine Wood parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors, a total of 11 councillors, as at present. The LGCE stated that it would welcome comments on the names and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

167 At Stage Three no further comments were received from the Council. Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations for district warding, and consequently the parish warding in the area, as it considered that the new arrangements would cause confusion to electors voting in district and parish elections. However, as stated above, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for district warding in this area as final, and therefore we are confirming the draft recommendations for warding Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: East (returning one councillor), Trench (eight) and Wrockwardine Wood (two). The boundaries of the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

168 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Telford & Wrekin and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

169 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 15 May 2002.

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

The Secretary
Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
30 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Telford & Wrekin area.

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Newport Town.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the urban area of Telford & Wrekin.

Erratum: Please note that on the large map two existing ward boundaries are shown by black dotted lines within Church Aston & Lilleshall and Donnington wards which are now obsolete. These should be ignored.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Newport Town