

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
the Vale of White Horse in Oxfordshire

*February 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

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



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for the Vale of White Horse on 25 July 2000.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in the Vale of White Horse:

- **in 21 of the 31 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 11 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 20 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 11 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 100-101) are that:

- **Vale of White Horse District Council should have 51 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 29 wards, instead of 31 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 25 of the proposed 29 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in 28 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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 Longworth, Milton, Grove, St Helen Without, East Challow and Wantage Town;**
- **revised warding arrangements and an increase in the number of councillors serving Abingdon Town Council.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for nine weeks from 20 February 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 23 April 2001:

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Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

|    | <b>Ward name</b>    | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>  | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1  | Abingdon Abbey      | 2                            | Abbey ward (part – Abbey and Barton parish wards of Abingdon parish (part))   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 2  | Abingdon Caldecott  | 2                            | Caldecott ward (part – Caldecott East parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 3  | Abingdon Fitzharris | 2                            | Abbey ward (part – Abbey parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Fitzharris ward (part – Fitzharris parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Ock ward (part – Ock parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))                                   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 4  | Abingdon Northcourt | 2                            | Abbey ward (part – Barton parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Fitzharris ward (part – Fitzharris parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Northcourt ward (part – Northcourt parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))                    | Map 2 and large map  |
| 5  | Abingdon Ock        | 2                            | Abbey ward (part – Abbey parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Caldecott ward (part – Caldecott East parish ward (part) and Caldecott West parish ward of Abingdon parish); Ock ward (part – Ock parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)) | Map 2 and large map  |
| 6  | Abingdon Peachcroft | 2                            | Abbey ward (part – Barton parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 7  | Abingdon Wildmoor   | 2                            | Fitzharris ward (part – Fitzharris parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Northcourt ward (part – Northcourt parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 8  | Appleton & Cumnor   | 3                            | Appleton ward (part – the parish of Appleton-with-Eaton); Cumnor ward (the parish of Cumnor)  | Map 2                |
| 9  | Blewbury            | 1                            | Upton & Blewbury ward (the parishes of Blewbury and Upton)  | Map 2                |
| 10 | Challows            | 1                            | Greendown ward (part – the parishes of Childrey, Letcombe Bassett, Letcombe Regis and West Challow and the proposed East Challow North parish ward of East Challow parish)  | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 11 | Drayton             | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Drayton)  | Map 2                |
| 12 | Faringdon           | 3                            | Faringdon & Littleworth ward (part – the parish of Faringdon); The Coxwells ward (part – the parishes of Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Great Coxwell and Little Coxwell)   | Map 2                |
| 13 | Grove               | 3                            | Grove ward (part – the parish wards of Grove East and Grove West (part) of Grove parish)  | Maps 2 & A2          |

| <b>Ward name</b>                    | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 14 Hanneys                          | 1                            | Appleton ward (part – the parish of Fyfield & Tubney); Island Villages ward (part – the parishes of East Hanney, Lyford and West Hanney); Marcham (part – the parishes of Frilford and Garford)  | Map 2                |
| 15 Harwell                          | 2                            | Harwell & Chilton ward (the parishes of Chilton and Harwell); Sutton Courtenay ward (part – the proposed Village parish ward of Milton parish)   | Maps 2 and A5        |
| 16 Hendreds                         | 2                            | Hendred ward (the parishes of Ardington, East Hendred, Lockinge and West Hendred); Sutton Courtenay ward (part – the proposed Heights parish ward of Milton parish); Steventon ward (the parish of Steventon)  | Maps 2 and A5        |
| 17 Hinksey                          | 2                            | Hinksey ward (part – the parishes of North Hinksey and Wytham)   | Map 2                |
| 18 Kennington & South Hinksey       | 2                            | Hinksey ward (part – the parish of South Hinksey); Kennington ward (the parish of Kennington)  | Map 2                |
| 19 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor | 1                            | Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor ward (the parish of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor); Longworth ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Longworth parish)   | Maps 2 and A3        |
| 20 Longworth                        | 1                            | Island Villages ward (part – the parishes of Charney Bassett, Denchworth and Goosey); Faringdon & Littleworth ward (part – the parish of Littleworth); Longworth ward (the parishes of Buckland, Hinton Waldrist and Pusey and the proposed North parish ward of Longworth parish) | Maps 2 and A3        |
| 21 Marcham                          | 1                            | Marcham ward (part – the parish of Marcham); St Helen Without ward (part – the proposed Dry Sandford parish ward of St Helen Without parish)   | Maps 2 and A4        |
| 22 Radley                           | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Radley)  | Map 2                |
| 23 Shrivenham                       | 2                            | Shrivenham ward (the parishes of Bourton, Shrivenham and Watchfield); The Coxwells ward (part – the parish of Longcot)   | Map 2                |
| 24 Stanford                         | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Hatford, Shellingford and Stanford in the Vale)  | Map 2                |
| 25 Sunningwell & Wootton            | 2                            | Appleton ward (part – the parish of Besselsleigh); St Helen Without ward (part – the proposed Shippon parish ward of St Helen Without parish); Sunningwell & Wootton ward (the parishes of Sunningwell and Wootton)  | Map 2 and A4         |
| 26 Sutton Courtenay                 | 1                            | Sutton Courtenay ward (part – the parishes of Appleford and Sutton Courtenay)  | Map 2                |

|    | <b>Ward name</b> | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 27 | Uffington        | 1                            | Craven ward (the parishes of Ashbury, Baulking, Compton Beauchamp, Kingston Lisle, Sparsholt, Uffington, Woolstone); The Coxwells ward (part – the parish of Fernham)  | Map 2                |
| 28 | Wantage Charlton | 3                            | Icknield ward (part – the proposed Charlton parish ward (part) of Wantage parish); Segsbury ward (part – the proposed Charlton parish ward (part) of Wantage parish)   | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 29 | Wantage Segsbury | 2                            | Greendown ward (part – the proposed South East parish ward of East Challow parish); Grove ward (part – the proposed Mably parish ward of Grove parish); Segsbury ward (part – the proposed Segsbury parish ward of Wantage parish) | Maps 2 and A2        |

*Notes: 1 The whole district is 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.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for the Vale of White Horse

|    | <b>Ward name</b>                 | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Electorate (2000)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> | <b>Electorate (2005)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> |
|----|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Abingdon Abbey                   | 2                            | 3,403                    | 1,702                                    | 0                              | 3,757                    | 1,879                                    | 6                              |
| 2  | Abingdon Caldecott               | 2                            | 3,250                    | 1,625                                    | -5                             | 3,431                    | 1,671                                    | -5                             |
| 3  | Abingdon Fitzharris              | 2                            | 3,252                    | 1,626                                    | -4                             | 3,562                    | 1,781                                    | 1                              |
| 4  | Abingdon Northcourt              | 2                            | 3,491                    | 1,746                                    | 3                              | 3,492                    | 1,746                                    | -1                             |
| 5  | Abingdon Ock                     | 2                            | 3,150                    | 1,575                                    | -7                             | 3,447                    | 1,724                                    | -2                             |
| 6  | Abingdon Peachcroft              | 2                            | 3,409                    | 1,705                                    | 0                              | 3,410                    | 1,705                                    | -4                             |
| 7  | Abingdon Wildmoor                | 2                            | 3,701                    | 1,851                                    | 9                              | 3,706                    | 1,853                                    | 5                              |
| 8  | Appleton & Cumnor                | 3                            | 5,141                    | 1,714                                    | 1                              | 5,155                    | 1,718                                    | -3                             |
| 9  | Blewbury                         | 1                            | 1,619                    | 1,619                                    | -5                             | 1,625                    | 1,625                                    | -8                             |
| 10 | Challows                         | 1                            | 1,783                    | 1,783                                    | 5                              | 1,795                    | 1,795                                    | 2                              |
| 11 | Drayton                          | 1                            | 1,803                    | 1,803                                    | 6                              | 1,870                    | 1,870                                    | 6                              |
| 12 | Faringdon                        | 3                            | 5,229                    | 1,743                                    | 2                              | 5,575                    | 1,858                                    | 5                              |
| 13 | Grove                            | 3                            | 5,521                    | 1,840                                    | 8                              | 5,670                    | 1,890                                    | 7                              |
| 14 | Hanneys                          | 1                            | 1,789                    | 1,789                                    | 5                              | 1,825                    | 1,825                                    | 3                              |
| 15 | Harwell                          | 2                            | 2,933                    | 1,467                                    | -14                            | 3,480                    | 1,740                                    | -2                             |
| 16 | Hendreds                         | 2                            | 3,144                    | 1,572                                    | -8                             | 3,190                    | 1,595                                    | -10                            |
| 17 | Hinksey                          | 2                            | 3,545                    | 1,773                                    | 4                              | 3,570                    | 1,785                                    | 1                              |
| 18 | Kennington & South Hinksey       | 2                            | 3,447                    | 1,724                                    | 1                              | 3,485                    | 1,743                                    | -1                             |
| 19 | Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor | 1                            | 1,651                    | 1,651                                    | -3                             | 1,739                    | 1,739                                    | -2                             |
| 20 | Longworth                        | 1                            | 1,873                    | 1,873                                    | 10                             | 1,816                    | 1,816                                    | 3                              |
| 21 | Marcham                          | 1                            | 1,907                    | 1,907                                    | 12                             | 1,925                    | 1,925                                    | 9                              |
| 22 | Radley                           | 1                            | 1,924                    | 1,924                                    | 13                             | 1,935                    | 1,935                                    | 10                             |
| 23 | Shrivenham                       | 2                            | 3,053                    | 1,527                                    | -10                            | 3,390                    | 1,695                                    | -4                             |

| Ward name                | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 24 Stanford              | 1                     | 1,660             | 1,660                             | -2                      | 1,755             | 1,755                             | -1                      |
| 25 Sunningwell & Wootton | 2                     | 3,303             | 1,652                             | -3                      | 3,360             | 1,680                             | -5                      |
| 26 Sutton Courtenay      | 1                     | 1,970             | 1,970                             | 16                      | 2,030             | 2,030                             | 15                      |
| 27 Uffington             | 1                     | 1,801             | 1,801                             | 6                       | 1,800             | 1,800                             | 2                       |
| 28 Wantage Charlton      | 3                     | 4,756             | 1,585                             | -7                      | 4,909             | 1,636                             | -7                      |
| 29 Wantage Segsbury      | 2                     | 3,275             | 1,638                             | -4                      | 3,406             | 1,703                             | -4                      |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>51</b>             | <b>86,783</b>     | –                                 | –                       | <b>90,110</b>     | –                                 | –                       |
| <b>Averages</b>          | –                     | –                 | <b>1,702</b>                      | –                       | –                 | <b>1,767</b>                      | –                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Vale of White Horse District Council's submission.

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Vale of White Horse in Oxfordshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five districts in Oxfordshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of the Vale of White Horse. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1977 (Report No. 232). The electoral arrangements of Oxfordshire County Council were last reviewed in June 1982 (Report No. 428). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

*Figure 3: Stages of the Review*

| <b>Stage</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| One          | Submission of proposals to the Commission                     |
| Two          | The Commission’s analysis and deliberation                    |
| Three        | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| Four         | Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State       |

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 25 July 2000, when we wrote to the Vale of White Horse District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review

further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 October 2000.

12 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

13 Stage Three began on 20 February 2001 and will end on 23 April 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 Vale of White Horse district is bounded by West Oxfordshire to its north, by Oxford and South Oxfordshire to its east, by Swindon to its west and by West Berkshire to its south. The district is mainly rural in character although it contains the main town of Abingdon in the north-east, one of the fifty towns listed as worthy of special conservation for its architectural merit and historic associations, and the smaller towns of Wantage in the south and Faringdon in the north-west. Covering some 58,099 hectares and with a population of some 113,300, Vale of White Horse has a population density of just under two people per hectare. The district is entirely parished and comprises 69 parishes. Abingdon town comprises 27 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 86,783 (February 2000). The Council presently has 51 members who are elected from 31 wards, five of which are relatively urban in the town of Abingdon with the remainder being predominantly rural. One ward is represented by four councillors, three are each represented by three councillors, 11 are each represented by two councillors and 16 are single-member wards. The whole council is elected every four years.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Vale of White Horse district, with around 29 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,702 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,767 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 21 of the 31 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eleven wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Faringdon & Littleworth ward where each of the two councillors represents 39 per cent more electors than the district average.

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name                           | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Abbey                             | 4                     | 8,270             | 2,068                             | 22                      | 8,985             | 2,246                             | 27                      |
| 2 Appleton                          | 1                     | 1,197             | 1,197                             | -30                     | 1,200             | 1,200                             | -32                     |
| 3 Caldecott                         | 3                     | 6,026             | 2,009                             | 18                      | 6,205             | 2,068                             | 17                      |
| 4 Craven                            | 1                     | 1,640             | 1,640                             | -4                      | 1,640             | 1,640                             | -7                      |
| 5 Cumnor                            | 2                     | 4,413             | 2,207                             | 30                      | 4,425             | 2,213                             | 25                      |
| 6 Drayton                           | 1                     | 1,803             | 1,803                             | 6                       | 1,870             | 1,870                             | 6                       |
| 7 Faringdon & Littleworth           | 2                     | 4,724             | 2,362                             | 39                      | 5,070             | 2,535                             | 43                      |
| 8 Fitzharris                        | 2                     | 3,363             | 1,682                             | -1                      | 3,365             | 1,683                             | -5                      |
| 9 Greendown                         | 1                     | 1,983             | 1,983                             | 17                      | 1,995             | 1,995                             | 13                      |
| 10 Grove                            | 3                     | 5,812             | 1,937                             | 14                      | 5,970             | 1,990                             | 13                      |
| 11 Harwell & Chilton                | 2                     | 2,510             | 1,255                             | -26                     | 3,030             | 1,515                             | -14                     |
| 12 Hendred                          | 1                     | 1,520             | 1,520                             | -11                     | 1,520             | 1,520                             | -14                     |
| 13 Hinksey                          | 3                     | 3,817             | 1,272                             | -25                     | 3,845             | 1,282                             | -27                     |
| 14 Icknield                         | 2                     | 3,955             | 1,978                             | 16                      | 4,070             | 2,035                             | 15                      |
| 15 Island Villages                  | 1                     | 1,577             | 1,577                             | -7                      | 1,615             | 1,615                             | -9                      |
| 16 Kennington                       | 2                     | 3,175             | 1,588                             | -7                      | 3,210             | 1,605                             | -9                      |
| 17 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor | 1                     | 1,482             | 1,482                             | -13                     | 1,500             | 1,500                             | -15                     |
| 18 Longworth                        | 1                     | 1,393             | 1,393                             | -18                     | 1,400             | 1,400                             | -21                     |
| 19 Marcham                          | 1                     | 1,604             | 1,604                             | -6                      | 1,620             | 1,620                             | -8                      |
| 20 Northcourt                       | 2                     | 4,355             | 2,178                             | 28                      | 4,355             | 2,178                             | 23                      |
| 21 Ock                              | 1                     | 1,642             | 1,642                             | -4                      | 1,895             | 1,895                             | 7                       |
| 22 Radley                           | 1                     | 1,924             | 1,924                             | 13                      | 1,935             | 1,935                             | 10                      |
| 23 Segsbury                         | 2                     | 3,585             | 1,793                             | 5                       | 3,745             | 1,873                             | 6                       |
| 24 Shrivenham                       | 2                     | 2,657             | 1,329                             | -22                     | 2,990             | 1,495                             | -15                     |
| 25 St Helen Without                 | 1                     | 1,093             | 1,093                             | -36                     | 1,100             | 1,100                             | -38                     |
| 26 Stanford                         | 1                     | 1,660             | 1,660                             | -2                      | 1,755             | 1,755                             | -1                      |

| Ward name                | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 27 Steventon             | 1                     | 1,194             | 1,194                             | -30                     | 1,200             | 1,200                             | -32                     |
| 28 Sunningwell & Wootton | 2                     | 2,745             | 1,373                             | -19                     | 2,800             | 1,400                             | -21                     |
| 29 Sutton Courtenay      | 2                     | 2,823             | 1,412                             | -17                     | 2,950             | 1,475                             | -17                     |
| 30 The Coxwells          | 1                     | 1,222             | 1,222                             | -28                     | 1,225             | 1,225                             | -31                     |
| 31 Upton & Blewbury      | 1                     | 1,619             | 1,619                             | -5                      | 1,625             | 1,625                             | -8                      |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>51</b>             | <b>86,783</b>     | –                                 | –                       | <b>90,110</b>     | –                                 | –                       |
| <b>Averages</b>          | –                     | –                 | <b>1,702</b>                      | –                       | –                 | <b>1,767</b>                      | –                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the Vale of White Horse District Council

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in St Helen Without ward were relatively over-represented by 36 per cent, while electors in Faringdon & Littleworth ward were relatively under-represented by 39 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in the Vale of White Horse*

### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 21 representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and the Labour Group on the Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

#### **Vale of White Horse District Council**

23 During Stage One, the Vale of White Horse District Council undertook local consultation before submitting its preferred scheme. It proposed a 51-member council, the same as at present, serving 27 wards, four fewer than at present. It proposed a mix of single and multi-member wards throughout the district.

24 Under the District Council's proposals, electoral equality would improve with all but one ward varying by no more than 10 per cent by 2005. However, its proposed Sutton Courtenay ward would vary by 15 per cent. In addition to warding the towns of Abingdon and Wantage, the Council's proposals would result in the warding of five other parishes, East Challow and Grove, in order to include urban overspill in two Wantage wards, and Longworth, Milton and St Helen Without in order to facilitate a good electoral scheme. The Council's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

#### **Vale of White Horse District Council Labour Group**

25 The Labour Group on the District Council proposed a 51-member council, serving 37 wards. It proposed a mixture of single and two-member wards throughout the district, together with a three-member Faringdon ward. It only submitted electorate figures for 2005, however, its scheme would secure comparable electoral equality to the Council's scheme at that time. However, in addition to the urban overspill around Wantage, its proposals would result in the warding of five further parishes (as well as the towns of Abingdon and Wantage). Its proposals would also create a detached ward.

#### **Vale of White Horse Conservative Group**

26 The Vale of White Horse Conservative Group supported the majority of the District Council's proposals but proposed alternative ward patterns in the towns of Abingdon, Wantage and Grove, in addition to boundary modifications affecting a number of parishes in the north-eastern rural area and in the area around Faringdon in the north-west. It only submitted 2005 electorate figures for its scheme, however, its proposals would secure reasonable electoral equality, with only one ward, Sutton Courtenay, varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average.

## **Oxfordshire County Council**

27 Oxfordshire County Council stated that proposals for two and three-member wards within the Abingdon and Wantage areas would cause problems for the creation of electoral divisions in the future.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

28 We received representations from 13 parish and town councils. The parish councils of East Challow, Great Coxwell, Kennington, Longcot and Shrivenham all objected to the District Council's proposals, with a number of them suggesting alternative proposals for their areas. The parish councils of Drayton, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Wantage Town Council supported the District Council's proposals for their areas. Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council proposed that it be combined in a single-member ward with Sutton Courtenay parish. Abingdon Town Council proposed that Abingdon be represented by 14 district councillors and put forward a broad outline of proposed wards. Grove Parish Council opposed the proposal to include the urban overspill in the south of the parish within a Wantage ward and proposed that the parish be split between two wards each represented by two councillors. Harwell Parish Council proposed that Milton parish be added to the current Harwell & Chilton ward. The parish council of St Helen Without put forward three single-member wards for its area.

## **Other Representations**

29 We received a further four representations, including a joint submission from Councillors S Patterson and J Patterson and from two local residents. Wantage Constituency Conservative Association submitted proposals for five single-member wards in Wantage which were the same as the Conservative Group's proposals. Councillors S Patterson and J Patterson supported the District Council's proposed three-member Kennington & Radley ward. A local resident objected to the District Council's proposals for the Longworth parish area and another resident proposed that the parishes of Appleford-on-Thames and Sutton Courtenay be combined in a single-member ward.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

33 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

34 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of just under 4 per cent from 86,783 to 90,110 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Abingdon, although a significant amount is also expected in Faringdon & Littleworth and Harwell & Chilton wards. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

35 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

36 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

37 Vale of White Horse District Council presently has 51 members. The District Council and the Labour Group both proposed a council of 51 members, the same as at present, which was also supported by the Conservative Group.

38 Given the general consensus between the political groups on the district council in favour of retaining the current council size of 51 members, and having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 51 members.

## **Parish Administrative Boundaries**

39 We have no power to recommend changes to parish administrative boundaries as part of this PER. Nevertheless, given that, where they exist, parishes form the building blocks for district wards, we feel it appropriate to draw attention to the fact that during the course of our review, a number of parish boundary anomalies have been identified.

40 Under the provisions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, two-tier district councils and unitary may undertake reviews of the parish arrangements in their areas and make recommendations to the Secretary of State. When we have completed our PER of the Vale of White Horse, we believe there would be considerable benefit in the Vale of White Horse District Council conducting such a review.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

41 We have given careful consideration to the views which we received during Stage One, including the two district-wide schemes received from the District Council and the Labour Group. We have noted that the District Council undertook a consultation exercise with local interested parties and that the Conservative Group supported a large number of the Council's proposals. We have also noted that the District Council's scheme would result in less parish warding than the Labour Group's scheme which, in our view, would provide for a slightly better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities. Furthermore, the Labour Group's scheme would also result in the creation of a detached Hanneys ward. We are of the view that detached wards do not lend themselves to the creation of electoral areas which reflect local community identities and we will not normally put them forward as part of our recommendations, other than to recognise the particular circumstances of, for example, offshore islands.

42 We have noted the comments made by Oxfordshire County Council that "two and three-member wards in the towns of Abingdon ... [and] ... Wantage ... are likely to create difficulties for the County Council in formulating their proposals ... for future electoral divisions". It

contended that, as a consequence, “some of the proposed district council wards for these areas will need to be divided into smaller units ... to remedy this situation”. This is an issue which has arisen in a number of review areas. It is indicative of the tensions which can arise between the achievement of electoral equality within the individual districts of a county, each of whose electoral arrangements can vary significantly in terms of councillor:elector ratios and ward sizes, and across county council electoral divisions, while also seeking some measure of coterminosity between the two. These tensions are not readily reconciled.

43 In certain cases, it has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe ward patterns and sizes that would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be a viable approach. As a Commission, we rely heavily on local authorities and others to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved. We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria, and achieve a high level of electoral equality.

44 Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and district wards is capable of being conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of County Council electoral arrangements.

45 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council’s proposals, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council’s scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, in order to improve electoral equality further and to secure more identifiable boundaries, while having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the District Council’s proposals in three areas. In the town of Abingdon we propose basing our proposals on the Conservative Group’s scheme in the south and west of the town, with our own proposals in the north and east. In the north-east of the district we propose basing our draft recommendations on the proposals of the Labour Group and Kennington Parish Council and in Wantage we are proposing our own scheme. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Craven, Faringdon & Littleworth, Shrivenham, Stanford and The Coxwells wards;
- (b) Island Villages, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Longworth and Marcham wards;
- (c) Appleton, Cumnor, Hinksey, Kennington, Radley, St Helen Without and Sunningwell & Wootton wards;
- (d) Drayton, Harwell & Chilton, Hendred, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Upton & Blewbury wards;
- (e) Greendown, Grove, Icknield and Segsbury wards;
- (f) Abingdon town (five wards).

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

## **Craven, Faringdon & Littleworth, Shrivenham, Stanford and The Coxwells wards**

47 These five wards are situated in the west of the district. Craven ward, comprising the parishes of Ashbury, Baulking, Compton Beauchamp, Kingston Lisle, Sparsholt, Uffington and Woolstone, is represented by one councillor and has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (7 per cent fewer in 2005). Faringdon & Littleworth ward, comprising the parishes of Great Faringdon and Littleworth, is represented by two councillors and is the most under-represented ward in the district with 39 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (43 per cent more in 2005). Shrivenham ward, comprising the parishes of Bourton, Shrivenham and Watchfield, is represented by two councillors and has 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (15 per cent fewer in 2005). Stanford ward, comprising the parishes of Hatford, Shellingford and Stanford in the Vale, is represented by one councillor and has 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent fewer in 2005). The Coxwells ward, comprising the parishes of Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Fernham, Great Coxwell, Little Coxwell and Longcot, is represented by one councillor and has 28 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (31 per cent fewer in 2005).

48 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parishes of Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Great Coxwell, Great Faringdon and Little Coxwell be combined to form a three-member Faringdon ward. It argued that it supported Faringdon Town Council's opposition to parish warding in the area. The proposed Faringdon ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (5 per cent more in 2005). The District Council also proposed that the existing single-member Stanford ward be maintained, which has 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent fewer in 2005). It also proposed that Fernham parish be added to the existing Craven ward to form a single-member Uffington ward, which would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more in 2005). The Council further proposed that the parish of Longcot be combined with the existing Shrivenham ward to form a revised two-member Shrivenham ward which would have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (4 per cent fewer in 2005).

49 The Conservative Group supported the District Council's proposals in the majority of this area but objected to its proposed Faringdon ward. It proposed that Great Faringdon parish be split, with the town area forming a two-member Town ward while the remaining area would be combined with the parishes of Buscot, Coleshill, Eaton Hastings, Great Coxwell and Little Coxwell to form a single-member Faringdon C.B.E. ward. The Conservative Group did not provide us with current figures for its proposed wards. Its proposed Faringdon Town and Faringdon C.B.E. wards would have 1 per cent more and 5 per cent more electors than the district average in 2005.

50 The Labour Group supported the District Council's proposed three-member Faringdon ward but proposed that the parish of Fernham be added to the District Council's proposed two-member Shrivenham ward. It also proposed that the parish of Shellingford be added to the existing Craven ward to form a single-member Ashbury ward. It proposed that the parishes of Goosey, Hatford

and Stanford in the Vale be combined to form a single-member Stanford in the Vale ward. The Labour Group did not provide us with current figures for its proposed wards. Its proposed Shrivenham, Ashbury and Stanford in the Vale wards would have equal to, equal to and 2 per cent fewer electors than the district average in 2005.

51 Great Coxwell Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposed Faringdon ward, arguing that it was an independent rural community which did not wish to be linked in a ward with the more urban Faringdon. Its preference was to retain the existing The Coxwells ward. However, it also suggested a number of alternative options, which would link the existing ward with more rural parishes to the south, in order to secure improved electoral equality. It further noted that if it had to be linked with a more urban community then it would prefer to be linked to Watchfield rather than Faringdon, contending that this would better represent its interests.

52 The parishes of Longcot and Shrivenham objected to the District Council's proposed Shrivenham ward. Longcot Parish Council stated that it would prefer to be linked with the smaller rural communities in the parishes of Ashbury, Compton Beauchamp, Fernham, Uffington and Woolstone in a single-member ward. Shrivenham Parish Council proposed that it be combined with the parish of Bourton in a single-member ward with the parish of Watchfield being combined with other parishes. It argued that the areas have different concerns and that a single district councillor would better be able to "focus on local matters".

53 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. We considered the Conservative Group's proposal to ward the parish of Great Faringdon but note that it would split the town area between two wards, which was opposed by Faringdon Town Council. The District Council's proposed Faringdon ward would secure a good level of electoral equality and would avoid the need to ward the parish of Faringdon. We have noted that there is some local opposition to this proposal, and that alternative configurations have been proposed. However, we noted that Great Coxwell Parish Council's preference to retain the existing The Coxwells ward would maintain a ward that would have 31 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in 2005 which we believe to be an unacceptable level of electoral imbalance. Furthermore, a number of its other proposals would involve warding parishes in the area. We are of the opinion that we cannot view any area in isolation and that we should try to secure the best balance between securing electoral equality, providing identifiable boundaries and reflecting local communities across the district as a whole. As such we are of the view that the Council's proposal in this area would secure the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria and therefore propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. We also note that the area is well connected by transport links. We would welcome the views of interested parties at Stage Three.

54 We also note that the District Council's proposed Shrivenham ward would secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We considered other combinations of parishes in this area but noted that they would produce higher levels of electoral imbalance. We considered the Labour Group's proposed Ashbury ward but are of the view that the parish of Shellingford shares better links with the parishes of Hatford and Stanford in the Vale. We note that the current Stanford ward already secures a good level of electoral equality and consider that maintaining the current arrangements would better reflect community identity

in the area. We also note that there are good links between the parish of Fernham and the current Craven ward and have therefore been persuaded that the District Council's proposed Uffington ward would be the most appropriate reflection of community identity while also securing a good level of electoral equality. We are therefore content to endorse the District Council's proposed Faringdon, Shrivenham, Stanford and Uffington wards as we consider that they provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

55 Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Faringdon, Shrivenham, Stanford and Uffington wards would have 2 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (5 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2. We would very much welcome comments on our proposals during Stage Three.

### **Island Villages, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Longworth and Marcham wards**

56 These four wards are situated in the north and centre of the district. Island Villages ward comprises the parishes of Charney Bassett, Denchworth, East Hanney, Goosey, Lyford and West Hanney and is represented by a single councillor. Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor ward comprises the parish of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and is represented by a single councillor. Longworth ward comprises the parishes of Buckland, Hinton Waldrist, Longworth and Pusey and is represented by a single councillor. Marcham ward comprises the parishes of Frilford, Garford and Marcham and is represented by a single councillor. Island Villages, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Longworth and Marcham wards currently have 7 per cent fewer, 13 per cent fewer, 18 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent fewer, 15 per cent fewer, 21 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer in 2005).

57 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parish of Longworth be split between two wards. It proposed dividing Longworth parish along the A420 and that the area to the north of this road be combined with the parishes of Buckland, Charney Bassett, Denchworth, Goosey, Hinton Waldrist, Littleworth, Longworth and Pusey in a single-member Longworth ward. It argued that this linked "the village part of Longworth north of the A420 with several villages and hamlets". It proposed that the area to the south of the A420 be combined with the parish of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor to form a revised Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor ward, arguing that the Kingston Bagpuize by-pass has "effectively split the parish of Longworth into two separate entities". It proposed that the parishes of East Hanney, Frilford, Fyfield & Tubney, Garford, Lyford and West Hanney be combined to form a single-member Hanneys ward, arguing that these parishes lie in the centre of the district and that three of these parishes already form part of the existing Island Villages ward. Its proposed Longworth, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Hanneys wards would have 10 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more in 2005).

58 The Conservative Group supported the District Council's proposals in this area. The Labour Group proposed that the parishes of Buckland, Charney Bassett, Hinton Waldrist, Littleworth,

Longworth and Pusey be combined to form a single-member Longworth ward. It also proposed that the parishes of Denchworth, East Hanney, Frilford, Lyford and West Hanney be combined to form a single-member Hanneys ward. It proposed that the parish of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor be combined with the parish of Garford and the remainder of the parish of Fyfield and Tubney in a single-member Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor ward. The Labour Group's proposed Longworth, Hanneys and Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor wards would have 1 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in 2005.

59 Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals for its area, arguing that it has more affinity to areas to the east and west than to the south. A local resident objected to the District Council's proposals for the Longworth area, arguing that the area to the south of the A420 has traditional ties with the rest of Longworth parish. He proposed that the existing Longworth ward be combined with the parishes of Charney Bassett and Littleworth in order to secure a reasonable level of electoral equality.

60 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We noted that the Labour Group's proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality but that it would create a detached Hanneys ward. As outlined earlier in this chapter, we are of the view that detached wards do not lend themselves to the creation of wards which reflect local communities, and we therefore do not propose endorsing the Labour Group's proposals in this area. We have also noted the local resident's objection to the District Council's proposal to divide Longworth parish between two wards. However, we consider that the area to the south of the A420 does look more towards its east than its north and that the A420 provides for an identifiable boundary in this area. Therefore, given the degree of support for the District Council's proposals we are content to endorse its proposed Hanneys, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Longworth wards as part of our draft recommendations.

61 Under our draft proposals, Hanneys, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Longworth wards would have 5 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated in Map 2 and in Map A3 in Appendix A. We would very much welcome comments on our proposals during Stage Three.

### **Appleton, Cumnor, Hinksey, Kennington, Radley, St Helen Without and Sunningwell & Wootton wards**

62 These seven wards are situated in the north-east of the district. Appleton ward comprises the parishes of Appleton with Eaton, Besselsleigh and Fyfield & Tubney and is represented by a single councillor. Cumnor ward comprises the parish of Cumnor and is represented by two councillors. Hinksey ward comprises the parishes of North Hinksey, South Hinksey and Wytham and is represented by three councillors. Kennington ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by two councillors. Radley ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by a single councillor. St Helen Without ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by a single councillor. Sunningwell & Wootton ward comprises the parishes of Sunningwell and Wootton and is represented by two councillors. Appleton, Cumnor,

Hinksey, Kennington, Radley, St Helen Without and Sunningwell & Wootton wards have 30 per cent fewer, 30 per cent more, 25 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer, 13 per cent more, 36 per cent fewer and 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (32 per cent fewer, 25 per cent more, 27 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer, 10 per cent more, 38 per cent fewer and 21 per cent fewer in 2005).

63 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parishes of Appleton with Eaton and Cumnor be combined to form a three-member Appleton & Cumnor ward. It proposed that the parishes of North Hinksey and Wytham be combined to form a revised two-member Hinksey ward and that the parishes of Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey be combined to form a new three-member Kennington & Radley ward. It also proposed that the parish of St Helen Without be split between two wards. It proposed that the Dry Sandford area of St Helen Without parish, to the north of Honeybottom Lane, be combined with the parishes of Besselsleigh, Sunningwell and Wootton to form a two-member Sunningwell & Wootton ward. It proposed that the Shippon area, to the south of Honeybottom Lane, be combined with the parish of Marcham to form a single-member Marcham ward. It argued that a “Village appraisal in 1993 supported the amalgamation of the Dry Sandford and Wootton communities”. Its proposed Appleton & Cumnor, Hinksey, Kennington & Radley, Marcham and Sunningwell & Wootton wards would have 1 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 12 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 9 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2005).

64 The Conservative Group proposed that Dean Court parish ward of Cumnor parish form a single-member Dean Court ward, and that the parishes of Appleton with Eaton and Besselsleigh be combined with the parish wards of Cumnor Village and Cumnor Farmoor to form a two-member Cumnor & Appleton ward. It also proposed that the Dry Sandford area of the parish of St Helen Without be combined with the parish of Marcham to form a single-member Marcham ward while the Shippon area would be combined with the parish of Sunningwell and the Whitecross area of Wootton parish to form a single-member Sunningwell & Shippon ward. It proposed that the remainder of Wootton parish form a single-member Wootton ward. It also proposed that the parish of Kennington be split between a Kennington North ward, combining Kennington North parish ward and South Hinksey parish, and a Kennington South & Radley ward, combining Kennington South parish ward and the parish of Radley. Its proposed Dean Court, Cumnor & Appleton, Marcham, Sunningwell & Shippon, Kennington North and Kennington South wards would have 8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and equal electors per councillor than the district average in 2005.

65 The Labour Group proposed that the parishes of Appleton with Eaton, Besselsleigh and Wytham be combined with part of Cumnor parish to form a single-member Appleton & Farmoor ward. It further proposed that the remainder of Cumnor parish form a two-member Central & North Cumnor ward, that the parishes of Kennington and South Hinksey be combined to form a two-member South Hinksey & Kennington ward and that North Hinksey parish form a two-member North Hinksey ward. In addition, it proposed that the existing single-member Radley ward be maintained but that a small area of the parish be combined with part of Abingdon, however, it did not provide detailed proposals. It also proposed that the parish of St Helen Without be split, with part being combined with Marcham parish in a single-member Marcham

ward and part being combined with the parishes of Sunningwell and Wootton in a two-member Sunningwell ward. Its proposed wards of Appleton & Farmoor, Central & North Cumnor, South Hinksey & Kennington, North Hinksey and Radley would have equal to, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor in 2005.

66 Kennington Parish Council proposed that the parishes of Kennington and South Hinksey be combined to form a two-member Kennington South Hinksey ward arguing that representatives of such a ward would “be addressing common and shared problems”. The Parish Council of St Helen Without stated that a clear majority of its council supported the proposals put forward by the Conservative Group for the area. Councillors S Patterson & J Patterson argued that a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey would “make the greatest sense in community terms”, supporting the District Council’s proposed Kennington & Radley ward.

67 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. We noted that the District Council’s proposals for the parishes of Appleton with Eaton and Cumnor secured a good level of electoral equality without the necessity of parish warding. Therefore, we consider that the District Council’s proposed Appleton & Cumnor ward would best secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We also consider that the District Council’s proposed Hinksey ward would better reflect the local communities than the proposals of the Labour Group. We also considered all the proposals affecting the parishes of Kennington, South Hinksey and Radley. We have noted that there is little consensus locally as to the most appropriate ward pattern in this area. However, we have noted that Kennington Parish Council supported the Labour Group’s proposal to join the parishes of Kennington and South Hinksey in a two-member ward, with Radley parish (or the majority of the parish) forming a single-member Radley ward. In view of this level of local support we agree that these proposals would provide for the best balance between securing electoral equality and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities, and would avoid the need to ward the parish of Kennington.

68 While we have noted the Conservative Group’s proposals for the parish of St Helen Without and its contention that the Spey Road area of Wootton parish shares more affinity with the Shippon area of St Helen Without parish, we consider that the Dry Sandford area of the parish shares a greater community identity and better links with the parishes of Besselsleigh, Sunningwell and Wootton and that the District Council’s proposals would provide for the most appropriate warding in this area.

69 We have therefore decided to endorse the District Council’s proposed Appleton & Cumnor, Hinksey, Marcham and Sunningwell & Wootton wards. However, we propose endorsing the Labour Group and Kennington Parish Council’s proposal to combine the parishes of Kennington and South Hinksey, and propose broadly adopting the Labour Group’s proposal for Radley parish, maintaining the existing Radley ward on its current boundaries. Under our draft proposals, Appleton & Cumnor, Hinksey, Kennington & South Hinksey, Marcham, Radley and Sunningwell & Wootton wards would have 1 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 1 per cent more, 12 per cent more, 13 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more, 10 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated in Map 2 and Map A4 in Appendix A.

## **Drayton, Harwell & Chilton, Hendred, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Upton & Blewbury wards**

70 These six wards are situated in the south east of the district. Drayton ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by a single councillor. Harwell & Chilton ward comprises the parishes of the same name and is represented by two councillors. Hendred ward comprises the parishes of Ardington, East Hendred, Lockinge and West Hendred and is represented by a single councillor. Steventon ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by a single councillor. Sutton Courtenay ward comprises the parishes of Appleford, Milton and Sutton Courtenay and is represented by two councillors. Upton & Blewbury ward comprises the parishes of Blewbury and Upton and is represented by a single councillor. The wards of Drayton, Harwell & Chilton, Hendred, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay and Upton & Blewbury have, respectively, 6 per cent more, 26 per cent fewer, 11 per cent fewer, 30 per cent fewer, 17 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer, 14 per cent fewer, 32 per cent fewer, 17 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer in 2005).

71 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Drayton ward be maintained on its existing boundaries as a single-member ward. It proposed that the current single-member Upton & Blewbury ward be maintained on its current boundaries but be renamed Blewbury ward. It also proposed that the parishes of Appleford and Sutton Courtenay be combined to form a single-member Sutton Courtenay ward. It argued that although its proposed ward would have 15 per cent more electors than the district average in 2005, “special circumstances prevail in that Appleford is on the boundary between the Vale and South Oxfordshire and is bounded on three sides by the River Thames”. It proposed that the Milton Village area of Milton parish be placed in a ward with the parishes of Chilton and Harwell to form a two-member Harwell ward, while the Milton Heights area would be combined with the parishes of Ardington, East Hendred, Lockinge, Steventon and West Hendred to form a two-member Hendreds ward. It stated that these parishes had been grouped together in order to secure better electoral equality. Under the District Council’s scheme Drayton, Blewbury, Sutton Courtenay, Harwell and Hendreds would have 6 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 16 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 15 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer in 2005).

72 The Conservative Group supported the District Council’s proposals in the area. The Labour Group supported the District Council’s proposals for Blewbury and Drayton wards but proposed that Blewbury ward be named Blewbury & Upton ward. However, it proposed that the parishes of Chilton, East Hendred, Steventon and West Hendred be combined to form a two-member Hendreds, Chilton & Steventon ward, that the parishes of Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtenay and part of Harwell be combined to form a two-member Sutton Courtenay, Appleford & Milton ward, and that the village area of Harwell form a single-member ward. It opposed the Council’s proposal to divide the parish of Milton along the A34, arguing that this would reinforce community division. Its proposed wards of Blewbury & Upton, Hendreds, Chilton & Steventon, Sutton Courtenay, Appleford & Milton and Harwell would have 8 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district in 2005.

73 Drayton Parish Council supported the Council's proposal to retain the existing single-member Drayton ward. Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal to combine the parish with Sutton Courtenay parish in a ward, represented by a single councillor, which was also supported by a local resident. Harwell Parish Council proposed that Milton be added to the current Harwell & Chilton ward to form a revised two-member ward.

74 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. Given the degree of local support shown for the District Council's proposals we propose adopting them in this area as part of our draft recommendations as we consider that this would best reflect local communities. We are content that Drayton ward be maintained on its current boundaries. Given the constraints of the district boundary, we are also content that Upton & Blewbury ward be maintained on its current boundaries and support the District Council's proposal that it be renamed Blewbury ward. We note that the District Council's proposed Sutton Courtenay ward would vary from the district average by more than 15 per cent by 2005 but given the constraints of the district boundary in this area we accept the District Council's argument that "special circumstances prevail" and are therefore content to endorse the District Council's proposed Sutton Courtenay ward as part of our draft recommendations. We are also content to endorse the District Council's proposed Harwell and Hendreds wards as we consider that they secure a good level of electoral equality while better reflecting local communities. We have considered the Labour Group's proposals which secure a comparable level of electoral equality, but note that they have received little support locally and would result in the rural parishes of Ardington and Lockinge being combined with the town of Wantage, which in our opinion would not provide for the best reflection of local community identity.

75 Under our draft proposals, Drayton, Blewbury, Sutton Courtenay, Harwell and Hendreds would have 6 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 16 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 15 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A5 in Appendix A.

### **Greendown, Grove, Icknield and Segsbury wards**

76 These four wards are situated in the south of the district. Greendown ward comprises the parishes of Childrey, East Challow, Letcombe Bassett, Letcombe Regis and West Challow and is represented by a single councillor. Grove ward comprises the parish of the same name and is represented by three councillors. Icknield ward comprises Icknield parish ward of Wantage Town and is represented by two councillors. Segsbury ward comprises Segsbury parish ward of Wantage Town and is represented by two councillors. The wards of Greendown, Grove, Icknield and Segsbury have 17 per cent more, 14 per cent more, 16 per cent more and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent more, 13 per cent more, 15 per cent more and 6 per cent more in 2005).

77 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Greendown ward be maintained with the exception of the south-eastern part of East Challow parish which it argued "abuts the town of Wantage" and should be included in a Wantage ward. It proposed that this revised ward be renamed Challows ward. In Wantage it proposed that the town be split between two new

wards, Wantage North and Wantage South. It proposed that the boundary between these wards run east along Challow Road and Mill Street. It proposed that Rolls Court, Limborough Road, small sections of Mill Street and Wallingford Street be included within Wantage South ward along with Charlton Park and Coopers Lane and that the boundary should then follow eastwards and then along Charlton Road as far as the parish boundary. It proposed that the small area of urban overspill in the south-east of East Challow parish be included within Wantage South ward and that the area of urban overspill to the south of Mably Way, within the parish of Grove, be combined with Wantage North ward. It proposed that the remainder of the current three-member Grove ward be maintained, with the exception of the area to the south of Mably Way, as detailed above. The Council's proposed wards of Challows, Wantage North, Wantage South and Grove would have 5 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more in 2005).

78 The Conservative Group supported the District Council's proposed Challows ward and the proposal that the two areas of urban overspill in the parishes of East Challow and Grove be included in Wantage wards. However, it proposed that the town of Wantage be split into five single-member wards. Its proposed Segsbury ward included the area to the west of Ham Road and Denchworth Road, excluding an area around St Mary's Way. It also proposed that the urban overspill in the south-east of East Challow ward be included within the ward. Its proposed Wayland ward included the area to the east of Denchworth Road, to the west of Grove Road and to the north of Rolls Court and Limborough Road, and included the area of Grove parish to the south of Mably Way. Its proposed Alfreds ward comprised the area to the west of the A336, Manor Road and Newbury Street, to the north of Wallingford Street, Charlton Park, Charlton Gardens and Coopers Lane and to the east of Ham Road. Its proposed Charlton ward included the area in the north-east of the parish to the east of Grove Road and to the north of and including Hampden Road and Palmers. Its proposed Icknield ward included the area to the west of the A336, Manor Road and Newbury Street and to the south of Wallingford Street and Charlton Road (including Charlton Park, Charlton Gardens and Coopers Lane). Its proposed Segsbury, Wayland, Alfreds, Charlton and Icknield wards would have 2 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2005.

79 The Conservative Group proposed that Grove ward be divided into three new single-member wards, excluding the area to be transferred to Wantage. Its proposed Grovelands Park ward would comprise the current TJ polling district along with a small area to its north-east. Its proposed Grove Village ward would comprise the current TI polling district and the properties to the west of Main Street from TH polling district. Its proposed Church ward would comprise the remainder of the parish, to the east of Main Road. Its proposed Grovelands Park, Grove Village and Church wards would have 6 per cent more, 7 per cent more and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in 2005.

80 The Labour Group proposed five single-member wards for the town of Wantage which had some similarities to the Conservative Group's scheme in the north and east of the town although it proposed naming Wayland ward, Belmont ward. It also agreed that the urban overspill in the parishes of East Challow and Grove be included in Wantage wards. However, it proposed that

the parishes of Ardington and Lockinge be included in a single-member Icknield ward in the south-east of the town, to the south of Charlton Road/Ormond Road. It also proposed that the area to the west of Manor Road, north of Ormond Road and Charlton Road be included in a new Central ward. Its proposed wards of Segsbury, Belmont, Charlton, Central and Icknield would have 2 per cent fewer, equal to, equal to, 3 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2005.

81 The Labour Group also proposed that the parish of Grove be divided into three new single-member wards, which were broadly similar to the Conservative Group's proposals. However, it proposed that the ward in the east be named Newlands, the ward in the centre be named Midlands and the ward in the west be named Oldlands. Its proposed Newlands, Midlands and Oldlands would have 4 per cent more, 3 per cent more and 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in 2005.

82 The Labour Group further proposed a single-member Challows ward comprising the remainder of East Challows ward and the parishes of West Challow, Childrey, Letcombe Bassett and Letcombe Regis. Its proposed Challows ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2005.

83 Wantage Constituency Conservative Association proposed an identical scheme to that put forward by the Conservative Group for the town of Wantage. Wantage Town Council supported the District Council's proposals, arguing that the inclusion of areas of the parishes of East Challow and Grove "fit in with the natural community to which the electors attach". Grove Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals to include part of the parish in a Wantage ward and proposed that the parish be split into two two-member wards. East Challow Parish Council also objected to the District Council's proposals to divide it between two district wards, arguing that it would lead to an increase in administration.

84 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. In the Wantage area we have noted that all three schemes propose including the urban overspill in the south-east of East Challow parish and the south of Grove parish in Wantage wards, which is supported by Wantage Town Council, although it has been opposed by the two parishes concerned. However, we are of the view that these two areas share greater links with the town of Wantage and concur that they should be included in a Wantage ward. We have also considered the Labour Group's proposal to include the parishes of Lockinge and Ardington in a revised Icknield ward, however, we are of the view that this would not secure the best reflection of local communities in the area.

85 We are aware that there is little consensus as to the most appropriate ward pattern in the town. Given that our proposals for district wards would impact on the Town Council electoral arrangements, we have noted that the Town Council supports the District Council's proposals for one two-member and one three-member ward in the town rather than five single-member wards. We therefore propose putting forward, for consultation purposes, a scheme based on this ward pattern. However, we are of the view that the Council's proposals would not provide for an identifiable boundary and would result in two areas forming a northern ward which do not share any direct road links. Therefore, we propose creating two new wards using the Conservative Group's proposals as building blocks. We propose merging its single-member Wayland and

Segsbury wards in the north-west of the town to create a two-member Segsbury ward, with the remaining three single-member Alfreds, Icknield and Charlton wards creating a new three-member Charlton ward. We are of the view that this would provide for a better boundary while securing a comparable level of electoral equality and reflecting local communities.

86 In the Grove area we have noted that there is limited agreement as to the most appropriate warding for the parish. We have noted that Grove Town Council proposed that the parish be divided between two two-member wards, although it did not submit any detailed boundaries. We are aware, however, that under a 51-member council, the entire parish of Grove is entitled to 3.4 councillors both initially and in 2005, and as such, on its current boundary, the three-member Grove ward is slightly under-represented. However, with the transfer of the area to the south of Mably Way into a new Segsbury ward, the remainder of Grove ward is entitled to just over three councillors. Therefore, in order to secure the correct allocation of councillors, we propose that this area be represented by three councillors. We have considered the proposals to divide this area into three single-member wards, but we are of the view that the Council's proposal for a revised three-member Grove ward would secure more identifiable boundaries and provide for a more cohesive ward with a better reflection of the local community. We therefore propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would welcome further views and evidence at Stage Three, particularly from the Town Council, as to whether the parish should be further warded for district council purposes.

87 As a consequence of our proposals for Grove and Wantage we also propose adopting the Council's proposed Challows ward, given that there is some local support for it and as it would provide for identifiable boundaries and a better reflection of local communities.

88 Under our draft proposals, the wards of Grove, Wantage Charlton, Wantage Segsbury and Challows would have 8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (7 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

### **Abingdon town (five wards)**

89 The town of Abingdon comprises five wards. Abbey ward is represented by four councillors, Caldecott ward by three councillors, Fitzharris ward by two councillors, Northcourt ward by two councillors and Ock ward by one councillor. The wards currently have 22 per cent more, 18 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 28 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (27 per cent more, 17 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 23 per cent more and 7 per cent more in 2005).

90 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Abingdon be represented by fourteen councillors overall, representing four two-member wards and two three-member wards. Its proposed three-member Abbey/Barton ward comprised part of the current Northcourt ward to the east of Oxford Road and the majority of the current Abbey ward with the exception of the area to the north-east of Cherwell Close/Loddon Close, which it proposed should form a new two-member Peachcroft ward, with the exception of the areas to the west of Bridge Street and Stratton

Way. Its proposed two-member Northcourt ward comprised the remainder of Northcourt ward to the west of Oxford Road, with the exception of Hillview Road and Lammas Close. Its proposed two-member Fitzharris ward comprised the current Fitzharris ward and Hillview Road and Lammas Close from the current Northcourt ward. Its proposed two-member Ock ward comprised the current Ock ward, that part of the current Abbey ward to the west of Stratton Way and Winsmore Lane and that part of Caldecott ward to the west of Drayton Road. Its proposed three-member South ward comprised the current Caldecott ward to the east of Drayton Road and that part of the current Abbey ward between Bridge Street and Winsmore Lane. Its proposed Abbey/Barton, Peachcroft, Northcourt, Fitzharris, Ock and South wards would have, respectively, equal to, 4 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average initially (1 per cent more, equal to, 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer in 2005).

91 The Conservative Group proposed a uniform pattern of seven two-member wards, further suggesting that each of these wards form revised Town Council wards to be represented by three town councillors. Its proposed Caldecott ward comprised the current Caldecott ward to the east of Drayton Road and south of, and including Saxton Road. Its proposed Ock ward comprised the remainder of Caldecott ward, that part of the current Ock ward to the south of Marcham Road and Ock Street, and that part of the current Abbey ward to the west of Winsmore Lane. Its proposed Fitzharris ward comprised the remainder of the current Ock ward, part of the current Abbey ward to the west of Stratton Way and that part of the current Fitzharris ward to the west of Wootton Road and south of Boxhill Walk. Its proposed Northcourt ward comprised that part of the current Fitzharris ward to the east of Wootton Road and north of Northcourt Road, and that part of the current Northcourt ward to the north of Sellwood Road and to the west of Oxford Road. Its proposed Peachcroft ward comprised that part of Northcourt ward to the east of Oxford Road and those parts of the current Abbey ward to the north of Norman Avenue, Galley Field, Kennet Road, St Peter's Road and Radley Road. Its proposed Barton ward comprised the area of Abbey ward to the south of this area and to the east of St John's Road, Sherwood Avenue and Curtis Avenue. Its proposed Abbey ward comprised the remaining part of Abbey ward, that part of the current Fitzharris ward to the east of Wootton Road and south of Northcourt Road and to the south of, and including Sellwood Road. Its proposed Caldecott, Ock, Fitzharris, Northcourt, Peachcroft, Barton and Abbey wards, would have, respectively, 1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2005.

92 The Labour Group also proposed that Abingdon should be represented by 14 councillors overall and that the current two-member Fitzharris, two-member Northcourt and single-member Ock wards be maintained on their existing boundaries. It also proposed including a small part of Radley parish in an Abingdon ward but did not put forward any detailed boundary. It proposed that the current Abbey ward be divided between three new wards. It proposed a two-member ward to the north of Radley Road, a two-member ward south of, and including Radley Road and a single-member ward to the west of Audlett Drive, comprising polling district XA. It also proposed that the current Caldecott ward be divided between three new wards. It proposed a single-member ward to the west of Drayton Road, a single-member ward to the north of Caldecott Road and a two-member ward to its south. It did not provide ward names for these six wards and did not submit electoral variances or argumentation in support of its proposals.

93 Abingdon Town Council proposed that the number of district councillors representing the town be increased from 12 to 14. It did not submit a detailed map or information to clearly identify its proposed wards, however there appeared to be a number of similarities with the District Council's proposals. It suggested a three-member Abingdon South or Caldecott ward, a two-member Abingdon West or Ock ward, a two-member Abingdon North West / North/Fitzharry ward, a two-member Abingdon North or Northcourt/Long Furlong ward, a two-member Abingdon North East or Peachcroft/Radley Green ward and a three-member Abingdon East or Barton ward.

94 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We have noted that there is only limited agreement as to the most appropriate warding for Abingdon. We have noted that the District Council and Abingdon Town Council proposed a mixture of two and three-member wards, that the Conservatives proposed a pattern of all two-member wards whereas the Labour Group proposed a mix of one and two-member wards. We have considered all the different configurations of wards, and are of the view that we should adopt the Conservatives' proposals in the south and west of the town as they would provide more identifiable boundaries while also securing excellent electoral equality and reflecting local communities. We therefore propose adopting the Conservative Group's proposed two-member Caldecott, Fitzharris and Ock wards, subject to a slight boundary amendment to provide a more identifiable boundary between the two wards of Caldecott and Ock. We propose that the boundary between Caldecott and Ock wards should run north along Drayton Road as far as Saxton Road, then eastward behind the properties on the northern side of Saxton Road as far as Blacknall Road. We then propose that the boundary run along the centre of Saxton Road to the district boundary.

95 We also propose adopting the Conservative Group's proposed Northcourt ward. However, we propose a minor boundary amendment to its proposed ward and we also propose that it be renamed Abingdon Wildmoor ward. We propose that the southern boundary run along Northcourt Road as far as Shelley Road. We then propose that the boundary run behind the properties on Shelley Road and Northcourt Road as far as Oxford Road where the boundary should run north along the centre of the road. In the north-east of the town we propose endorsing the District Council's proposed two-member Peachcroft ward as we are of the view that it secures good electoral equality and a more identifiable boundary than the Conservative Group's proposal. However, we propose two boundary amendments in order to slightly better reflect community identity in the area. We propose that the boundary run south along the brook behind Rainbow Way and then behind the properties on Appleford Drive and Chilton Close, Cherwell Close and then Radley Road before following the brook as far as the town boundary. We consider that our proposed Abingdon Wildmoor and Abingdon Peachcroft wards would secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria.

96 In the centre of the town we are putting forward our own proposals in order to secure more identifiable boundaries while also reflecting local communities and securing good electoral equality. We propose a new Abingdon Northcourt ward in the centre of the town. We propose that it comprise that area of the current Fitzharris ward to the east of Wootton Road, south of Northcourt Road and north of Boxhill Walk. We propose that its northern boundary run behind the properties of Shelley Close and Northcourt Road to the east of Shelley Close, and that it also include that part of the current Northcourt ward to the east of Oxford Road and that part of the

current Abbey ward between Oxford Road and the rear of the properties on Rainbow Way. We propose that its south-eastern boundary run along the rear of the properties on Chilton Close and Cherwell Close and that its southern boundary run along the centre of Radley Road as far as St John's Road. We propose that the boundary run to the rear of the properties on the western side of St John's Road and those on the southern side of Boxhill Road. We consider that this provides for strong ward boundaries and would secure a good level of electoral equality without having a detrimental effect on community identity.

97 We also propose a new Abingdon Abbey ward which would comprise the area to the south of Radley Road as far as the boundary along the brook which it shares with our proposed Abingdon Peachcroft ward. We also propose that the major part of the town centre area be included in the ward. We consider that our proposal keeps together similar areas of housing, secures strong boundaries and keeps the town centre area predominantly within one ward.

98 Under our draft proposals the wards of Abingdon Abbey, Abingdon Caldecott, Abingdon Fitzharris, Abingdon Northcourt, Abingdon Ock, Abingdon Peachcroft and Abingdon Wildmoor would have equal to, 5 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, equal to and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (6 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005). These proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report. The consequential affects on the electoral arrangements of Abingdon Town Council are discussed at the end of this chapter.

## **Electoral Cycle**

99 The District Council stated that it did not "propose to alter the current electoral cycle". Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

## **Conclusions**

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

- a council of 51 members should be retained;
- there should be 29 wards;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of two wards;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

101 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- in Abingdon we propose adopting the Conservative Group's proposals in the south and west of the town, we propose broadly adopting the Council's proposals in the north-east of the town and we are putting forward our own proposals in the east and centre of the town;
- we propose adopting Kennington Parish Council's and the Labour Group's proposals for a two-member ward comprising the parishes of Kennington and South Hinksey;
- in Wantage we are putting forward our own proposals for two wards in the town.

102 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

|  | 2000 electorate      |                       | 2005 forecast electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations | Current arrangements     | Draft recommendations |
| Number of councillors  | 51                   | 51                    | 51                       | 51                    |
| Number of wards  | 31                   | 29                    | 31                       | 29                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                              | 1,702                | 1,702                 | 1,767                    | 1,767                 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 21                   | 4                     | 20                       | 1                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 11                   | 0                     | 11                       | 0                     |

103 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for the Vale of White Horse District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 21 to 4. By 2005 only one ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

**Draft Recommendation**

Vale of White Horse District Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 29 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

# Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

104 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Abingdon, East Challow, Longworth, Milton, St Helen Without and Wantage to reflect the proposed district wards.

105 Abingdon Town Council is currently served by 18 councillors representing seven wards: Abbey, Barton, Caldecott East, Caldecott West, Fitzharris, Northcourt and Ock. Abingdon Town Council proposed that the number of town councillors be increased from 18 to 20. It proposed that they be distributed amongst seven wards but did not provide detailed boundaries. The Conservative Group proposed increasing the number of Town Councillors to 21, suggesting that the revised town council wards should reflect its proposed district council wards , with each ward being represented by three town councillors.

106 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Abingdon town, we propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the proposed district wards within the town. We also propose increasing the number of town councillors representing the town be increased from 18 to 21, as proposed by the Conservative Group, with each ward being represented by three councillors. We are of the view that this would facilitate a more equal distribution of representation at Town Council level, however we would very much welcome views during Stage Three, especially from the Town Council.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Abingdon Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Abbey (returning three councillors), Caldecott (returning three councillors), Fitzharris (returning three councillors), Northcourt (returning three councillors), Ock (returning three councillors), Peachcroft (returning three councillors) and Wildmoor (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

107 The parish of East Challow is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, the District Council, the Conservative Group and the Labour Group all proposed that the south-eastern part of the parish, containing urban overspill from Wantage, should be warded with part of Wantage. However, East Challow Parish Council opposed this proposal. As detailed earlier, we agree that this area should be warded with Wantage for district council purposes. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we are proposing that East Challow parish should comprise two parish wards: East Challow North (represented by five councillors) and South East (represented by two councillors).

**Draft Recommendation**

East Challow Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of East Challow parish which lies within the proposed Challows district ward should be named East Challow North parish ward and be represented by five councillors. That part of East Challow parish which lies within the proposed Segsbury district ward should be named South East parish ward and be represented by two councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

108 The parish of Grove is currently served by 16 councillors representing two parish wards, East and West, each represented by eight councillors. At Stage One, the District Council, the Conservative Group and the Labour Group all proposed that the southern part of the parish to the south of Mably Way, containing urban overspill from Wantage, should be warded with Wantage for district council purposes. However, Grove Parish Council opposed the proposal that this part of the parish be warded with Wantage. It suggested that it should comprise two two-member district council wards. As detailed earlier, we agree that the area to the south of Mably Way should be warded with Wantage for district council purposes. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we are proposing that Grove parish should comprise two parish wards: Mably parish ward represented by one councillor and Wantage North parish ward represented by 15 councillors. We would very much welcome views from local interested parties at Stage Three, particularly with regard to whether our proposed Grove North ward should be further subdivided for Parish Council purposes.

**Draft Recommendation**

Grove Parish Council should comprise 16 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of Grove parish which lies within the proposed Segsbury district ward should be named Mably parish ward and be represented by one councillor. That part of Grove parish which lies within the proposed Grove district ward should be named Grove North parish ward and be represented by 15 councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

109 The parish of Longworth is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we propose adopting the Council's proposals in this area for district council purposes. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose that Longworth parish should be divided into two parish wards: North parish ward (represented by four councillors) and South parish ward (represented by three councillors).

**Draft Recommendation**

Longworth Parish Council should comprise seven parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of Longworth parish which lies within the proposed Longworth district ward should be named North parish ward and be represented by four councillors. That part of Longworth parish which lies within the proposed Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor district ward should be named South parish ward and be represented by three councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

110 The parish of Milton is currently served by seven parish councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we propose adopting the Council's proposals in this area for district council purposes. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose that Milton parish should be divided into two parish wards: Heights parish ward (represented by four councillors) and Village parish ward (represented by three councillors).

**Draft Recommendation**

Milton Parish Council should comprise seven parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of Milton parish which lies within the proposed Harwell district ward should be named Heights parish ward and be represented by four councillors. That part of Milton parish which lies within the proposed Hendred district ward should be named Village parish ward and be represented by three councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A5 in Appendix A.

111 The parish of St Helen Without is currently served by 10 councillors and is not warded. As detailed earlier, we propose adopting the Council's proposals in this area for district council purposes. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose that St Helen Without parish should be divided into two parish wards: Dry Sandford parish ward (represented by five councillors) and Shippon parish ward (represented by five councillors).

**Draft Recommendation**

St Helen Without Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards. That part of St Helen Without parish which lies within the proposed Sunningwell & Wootton district ward should be named Dry Sandford parish ward and be represented by five councillors. That part of St Helen Without parish which lies within the proposed Marcham district ward should be named Shippon parish ward and be represented by five councillors. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

112 Wantage Town Council is currently served by 16 councillors representing two wards: Icknield and Segsbury which are conterminous with the current district wards of the same name. In our draft recommendations we propose that Wantage should be divided between the two district wards of Segsbury and Charlton. Therefore, in order to reflect our proposed district wards in this area, we propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the district wards, creating a Charlton ward (represented by 10 councillors) and Segsbury (represented by six councillors).

**Draft Recommendation**  
Wantage Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Charlton (returning 10 councillors) and Segsbury (returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

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

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

**114 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for the Vale of White Horse and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for the Vale of White Horse*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

115 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 23 April 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

116 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Vale of White Horse Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

117 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Vale of White Horse: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Vale of White Horse area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 to A5 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding for the Wantage area.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Longworth parish.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed warding of St Helen Without parish.

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed warding of Milton parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Abingdon.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Vale of White Horse: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding for the Wantage area*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Longworth Parish*

*Map A4: Proposed warding of St Helen Without parish*

*Map A5: Proposed warding of Milton parish*

## APPENDIX B

### Vale of White Horse District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

*Figure B1: Vale of White Horse District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

| Ward name             | Constituent areas  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Abingdon Abbey/Barton | Abbey ward (part – Abbey and Barton parish wards of Abingdon parish (part)); Northcourt ward (part – Northcourt parish ward (part))  |
| Abingdon Fitzharris   | Fitzharris ward (part – Fitzharris parish ward of Abingdon parish); Northcourt ward (part – Northcourt parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))  |
| Abingdon Northcourt   | Abbey ward (part – Barton parish ward (part)); Northcourt ward (part – Northcourt parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))   |
| Abingdon Ock          | Abbey ward (part – Abbey parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Caldecott ward (part – Caldecott West parish ward of Abingdon parish); Ock ward (part – Ock parish ward of Abingdon parish)               |
| Abingdon Peachcroft   | Abbey ward (part – Barton parish ward of Abingdon parish (part))   |
| Abingdon South        | Abbey ward (part – Abbey parish ward of Abingdon parish (part)); Caldecott ward (part – Caldecott East parish ward of Abingdon parish)   |
| Kennington & Radley   | Kennington ward (the parish of Kennington); Radley ward (the parish of Radley)   |
| Wantage North         | Grove ward (part – East and West parish wards (part)); Icknield ward (part – Icknield parish ward of Wantage parish (part)); Segsbury ward (part – Segsbury parish ward of Wantage parish ward (part))     |
| Wantage South         | Greendown ward (part – the parish of East Challow (part)); Icknield ward (part – Icknield parish ward of Wantage parish (part)); Segsbury ward (part – Segsbury parish ward of Wantage parish ward (part)) |

*Figure B2: Vale of White Horse District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

| Ward name             | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Abingdon Abbey/Barton | 3                     | 5,083             | 1,694                             | 0                       | 5,340             | 1,780                             | 1                       |
| Abingdon Fitzharris   | 2                     | 3,466             | 1,671                             | -2                      | 3,466             | 1,671                             | -5                      |
| Abingdon Northcourt   | 2                     | 3,512             | 1,756                             | 3                       | 3,512             | 1,756                             | -1                      |

| Ward name           | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Abingdon Ock        | 2                     | 3,116             | 1,558                             | -8                      | 3,718             | 1,859                             | 5                       |
| Abingdon Peachcroft | 2                     | 3,528             | 1,764                             | 4                       | 3,528             | 1,764                             | 0                       |
| Abingdon South      | 3                     | 4,951             | 1,650                             | -3                      | 5,241             | 1,747                             | -1                      |
| Kennington & Radley | 3                     | 5,371             | 1,790                             | 5                       | 5,420             | 1,807                             | 2                       |
| Wantage North       | 3                     | 4,765             | 1,588                             | -7                      | 4,983             | 1,661                             | -6                      |
| Wantage South       | 2                     | 3,266             | 1,633                             | -4                      | 3,332             | 1,666                             | -6                      |

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Vale of White Horse District Council's submission.*

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

## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

#### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.



## Appendix D

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code. The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

#### *Commission compliance with Code criteria*

| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Compliance/departure</b>   |
|--|---|
| Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage | The Commission complies with this requirement   |
| It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose  | The Commission complies with this requirement   |
| A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain          | The Commission complies with this requirement   |
| Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals   | The Commission complies with this requirement   |
| Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation   | The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods |
| Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken   | The Commission complies with this requirement   |
| Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated   | The Commission complies with this requirement   |