

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Cheltenham in Gloucestershire

*January 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 borough.

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# CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>23</i>
 APPENDICES	
A Cheltenham Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	 <i>25</i>
B The Statutory Provisions	 <i>27</i>

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



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Cheltenham on 27 June 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 Cheltenham:

- **in five of the 14 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in four wards and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 63-66) are that:

- **Cheltenham Borough Council should have 40 councillors, one less than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 14 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of six;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 19 of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 20 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Up Hatherley.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 January 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 5 March 2001:

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Local Government Commission for England  
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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>
1	All Saints'	2	All Saints' ward (part); St Paul's ward (part)
2	Battledown	2	All Saints' ward (part); Charlton King's ward (part); Pittville ward (part)
3	Benhall & The Reddings	2	Hatherley and the Reddings ward (part)
4	Charlton Kings	2	Charlton Kings ward (part)
5	Charlton Park	2	All Saints' ward (part); College ward (part)
6	College	2	All Saints' ward (part); College ward (part); Lansdown ward (part)
7	Hesters Way	2	Hesters Way ward (part); Hatherley and the Reddings ward (part); St Mark's ward (part)
8	Lansdown	2	Lansdown ward (part); St Paul's ward (part)
9	Leckhampton	2	Leckhampton with Up Hatherley ward (part - Leckhampton East parish ward); College ward (part); Park ward (part)
10	Oakley	2	Pittville ward (part); Prestbury ward (part - Prestbury South parish ward)
11	Park	2	Park ward (part); Hatherley & the Reddings ward (part);
12	Pittville	2	Pittville ward (part); All Saints' ward (part); St Paul's ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
13	Prestbury	2	Prestbury ward (part - Prestbury East parish ward)
14	St Mark's	2	St Mark's ward (part); Lansdown ward (part)
15	St Paul's	2	St Paul's ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
16	St Peter's	2	St Peter's ward (part); Lansdown ward (part); St Paul's ward
17	Springbank	2	Hester's Way ward (part)
18	Swindon Village	2	Prestbury ward (part - Prestbury West parish ward); St Peter's ward (part); Swindon ward
19	Up Hatherley	2	Hatherley & the Reddings ward (part); Leckhampton with Up Hatherley ward (part - Leckhampton Broad Oak Way parish ward and Up Hatherley West parish ward)
20	Warden Hill	2	Hatherley and the Reddings ward (part); Leckhampton with Up Hatherley ward (part - Leckhampton West parish ward and Up Hatherley East parish ward); Park ward (part)

*Note: Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Cheltenham

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 All Saints'	2	3,991	1,996	-3	4,133	2,067	-3
2 Battledown	2	3,601	1,801	-13	4,133	2,067	-3
3 Benhall & The Reddings	2	3,919	1,960	-5	4,093	2,047	-4
4 Charlton Kings	2	4,249	2,125	3	4,284	2,142	1
5 Charlton Park	2	4,124	2,062	0	4,128	2,064	-3
6 College	2	3,889	1,945	-6	4,266	2,133	0
7 Hesters Way	2	4,204	2,102	2	4,492	2,246	6
8 Lansdown	2	3,769	1,885	-9	4,079	2,040	-4
9 Leckhampton	2	4,023	2,012	-3	4,040	2,020	-5
10 Oakley	2	4,379	2,190	6	4,408	2,204	4
11 Park	2	4,393	2,197	6	4,453	2,227	5
12 Pittville	2	3,987	1,994	-3	4,174	2,087	-2
13 Prestbury	2	4,176	2,088	1	4,197	2,099	-1
14 St Marks	2	4,284	2,142	4	4,368	2,184	3
15 St Pauls	2	4,042	2,021	-2	4,091	2,046	-4
16 St Peters	2	4,165	2,083	1	4,217	2,109	-1
17 Springbank	2	4,292	2,146	4	4,333	2,167	2
18 Swindon Village	2	4,403	2,202	7	4,403	2,202	4
19 Up Hatherley	2	4,242	2,121	3	4,272	2,136	1
20 Warden Hill	2	4,396	2,198	7	4,404	2,202	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82,528</b>	–	–	<b>84,968</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>2,063</b>	–	–	<b>2,124</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Cheltenham Borough Council's submission.

Note: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The total number of electors per councillors in 2005 vary marginally from those shown in Figure 4, which would have a negligible effect on electoral variances and the average number of electors per councillor.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the six districts in Gloucestershire 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 Cheltenham. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1979 (Report No. 334). The electoral arrangements of Gloucestershire County Council were last reviewed in May 1982 (Report No. 424). 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 B).

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

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). 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 borough 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 borough 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 borough’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*

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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, 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 areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Gloucestershire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. 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*.

12 Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Cheltenham Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Gloucestershire Local Councils Association, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 2 October 2000.

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

14 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 and will end on 5 March 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.**

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



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 Cheltenham borough is situated in the centre of Gloucestershire and is bordered to the north, west and south by Tewkesbury borough and to the east by Cotswold district. The borough covers an area of around 4,680 hectares and has a population of 106,700. The town is an important manufacturing centre, with aerospace electronics and other precision engineering companies located in the borough. It also contains the offices of several large financial organisations and is home to GCHQ. In addition, tourism in Cheltenham plays an important role in the local economy. The borough contains five parishes on its periphery, although the majority of the town is unparished.

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 borough 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 borough is 82,528 (September 2000). The Council presently has 41 members who are elected from 14 wards, the majority of which are relatively urban. One ward is represented by four councillors, 12 wards are each represented by three councillors and one ward is a single-member ward. The Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Cheltenham borough, mainly as a result of new housing developments.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,013 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,072 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 five of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Swindon Village ward, where the councillor represents 30 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Cheltenham*

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 All Saints'	3	6,696	2,232	11	6,991	2,330	12
2 Charlton Kings	3	6,287	2,096	4	6,339	2,113	2
3 College	3	6,704	2,235	11	6,736	2,245	8
4 Hatherley & The Reddings	4	7,636	1,909	-5	7,842	1,961	-5
5 Hesters Way	3	7,095	2,365	17	7,424	2,475	19
6 Lansdown	3	5,801	1,934	-4	6,197	2,066	-0
7 Leckhampton with Up Hatherley	3	6,553	2,184	9	6,568	2,189	6
8 Park	3	5,620	1,873	-7	5,688	1,896	-9
9 Pittville	3	5,582	1,861	-8	6,158	2,053	-1
10 Prestbury	3	6,043	2,014	0	6,063	2,021	-2
11 St Marks	3	5,023	1,674	-17	5,101	1,700	-18
12 St Pauls	3	6,291	2,097	4	6,622	2,207	7
13 St Peters	3	5,797	1,932	-4	5,837	1,946	-6
14 Swindon Village	1	1,400	1,400	-30	1,400	1,400	-32
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>85,528</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>84,966</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,072</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cheltenham Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Swindon Village ward were relatively over-represented by 30 per cent, while electors in Hesters Way ward were relatively under-represented by 17 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 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 Cheltenham Borough Council and its constituent parish councils.

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

#### **Cheltenham Borough Council**

23 The Borough Council proposed a council of 40 members, one less than at present, serving 20 wards, compared to 14 at present. The Council considered that the population growth in Cheltenham and the local government modernisation agenda requires “a warding structure more appropriate to today’s environment, and which can better represent the communities in Cheltenham and respond to their needs.” The Council proposed that each ward should be represented by two members, as such a ward size was suitable to “reflect the village communities in those wards.” Under the Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in three wards. By 2005, two wards would be forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average. The Council’s proposal is summarised in Appendix A.

#### **Cheltenham Liberal Democrat Party**

24 Cheltenham Liberal Democrat Party supported “in principle” the two-member wards proposal, but expressed concerns that members of the public were not given enough time to consider the proposals and make any comments. It opposed the Borough Council’s proposed ward boundary changes, as they would divide four wards between different parliamentary seats. The Liberal Democrat Party considered that this would lead to confusion, and distance the electorate from the Council.

#### **Parish Councils**

25 We received representations from one parish council, Charlton Kings Parish Council. It opposed the Borough Council’s proposed boundary changes, as it felt that these did not reflect local community identities.

#### **Other Representations**

26 We received a further representation from a local resident, who expressed concern that the proposed boundary changes in the Prestbury area might have an adverse effect upon the value of a relative’s property.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

28 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.

29 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.

30 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 also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

31 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 82,528 to 84,966 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in the wards of All Saints’, Hesters Way, Lansdown and Pittville. 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 Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

## **Council Size**

33 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.

34 Cheltenham Borough Council presently has 41 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 40 members, representing 20 two-member wards, which it considered would permit substantial improvements to electoral equality while allowing a good reflection of local community identities and interests. We received no other proposal for an alternative council size.

35 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 40 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

36 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received during Stage One. In particular we note that there is consensus between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrat Party in support of a pattern of two-member wards for the borough. However, we also note that the Liberal Democrat Party did not consider that wards should cross parliamentary constituency boundaries as proposed by the Borough Council. Therefore, while we recognise the general agreement regarding utilisation of a pattern of two-member wards, we also recognise that there is not consensus as to the positions of proposed ward boundaries for the borough. With regard to the concerns of the Liberal Democrat Party about wards which cross constituency boundaries, it should be noted that the Parliamentary Boundary Commission will utilise our new wards as the basis for its own forthcoming review of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and therefore we have no regard for the current boundaries.

37 We judge, therefore, that the Borough Council's proposals would provide substantial improvements to electoral equality while generally providing a good reflection of the other statutory criteria. Therefore, in the absence of detailed alternative proposals, we are adopting the Borough Council's proposals as the basis for our draft recommendations. We have also put forward some of our own amendments where we judge that the Borough Council's scheme can be further improved upon. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Hatherley & The Reddings, Leckhampton with Up Hatherley and Park wards;
- (b) All Saints', Charlton Kings and College wards;
- (c) Pittville, Prestbury and Swindon wards;
- (d) Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's wards;
- (e) Hesters Way and St Mark's wards.

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

## **Hatherley & The Reddings, Leckhampton with Up Hatherley and Park wards**

39 These three wards are situated in the south-west of the borough. Hatherley & The Reddings ward is represented by four members while Leckhampton with Up Hatherley and Park wards are each represented by three. Leckhampton with Up Hatherley ward comprises the parishes of those names while Hatherley & The Reddings and Park wards each comprise unparished areas of the town. The number of electors per councillor is 5 per cent below the borough average in Hatherley & The Reddings both now and in 2005, 9 per cent above in Leckhampton with Up Hatherley ward (6 per cent above in 2005) and 7 per cent below in Park ward (9 per cent below in 2005).

40 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that a new two-member Up Hatherley ward should comprise part of Up Hatherley parish to the west of Caernarvon Road together with part of Hatherley and The Reddings ward to the south of the railway line and part of Leckhampton parish around Broad Oak Way. A new two-member Warden Hill ward would comprise the remainder of Up Hatherley parish together with part of Leckhampton parish to the west of Shurdington Road, part of Hatherley & The Reddings ward around Alma Road and an area in the south-west of Park ward. The Borough Council considered that its proposals for these two wards would provide improvements to electoral equality while facilitating the local “sense of community and co-operation”. The Borough Council proposed that the remainder of Leckhampton parish should be combined with an area of Park ward to the south-east of Shurdington Road and an area of College ward around Charlton Lane to form a new two-member Leckhampton ward. The Council proposed that a revised Park ward should be further modified to include part of Hatherley & The Reddings ward around Shelburne Road and return two members. The Borough Council considered that its proposals in this area would generally reflect local community identities and interests. Under the Borough Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the borough average in Leckhampton ward (5 per cent below in 2005), 6 per cent above in Park ward (5 per cent above in 2005), 3 per cent above in Up Hatherley ward (1 per cent above in 2005) and 7 per cent above in Warden Hill ward (4 per cent above in 2005). We received no further views in relation to this area during Stage One.

41 We have given careful consideration to the Borough Council’s proposals for this area. We note that these proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. Therefore, in the absence of evidence of opposition to these proposals, we are adopting the proposed wards of Leckhampton, Park, Up Hatherley and Warden Hill as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report. We would welcome comments from the parish councils and local residents on these proposals at Stage Three.

## **All Saints’, Charlton Kings and College wards**

42 These three three-member wards are situated in the south-east of the borough. All Saints’ and College wards are unparished, while Charlton Kings ward comprises Charlton Kings parish. The area as a whole is under-represented: the number of electors per councillor is 11 per cent above the borough average in All Saints’ ward (12 per cent above in 2005), 4 per cent above in Charlton Kings ward (2 per cent above in 2005) and 11 per cent above in College ward (8 per cent above in 2005).

43 In its Stage One submission, the Borough Council proposed that, in addition to the modification to the southern boundary of College ward (detailed earlier), College ward should be further modified to include an area of All Saints' ward around College Road and an area of Lansdown ward generally to the east of Glensanda Court, Trafalgar Street and The Promenade and should return two members. It proposed that a modified two-member All Saints' ward should be further modified in the east so that the boundary would follow Hale's Road, while in the west it should be modified to include a small area of St Paul's ward around Albion Street. The Borough Council considered that its proposals for these two wards would achieve improvements to electoral equality while generally reflecting local community identities and interests.

44 The Borough Council proposed three new two-member wards generally to cover the eastern part of the existing College ward together with Charlton Kings parish. It proposed that a new Charlton Park ward should comprise an area of the existing College ward generally to the east of the Old Bath Road together with a small area of All Saints' ward around Keynsham Road. The Borough Council proposed that a modified Charlton Kings ward should cover an area of Charlton Kings parish to the south of the River Chelt. The remainder of Charlton Kings parish would be combined with an area of All Saints' ward to the east of Hale's Road and an area of Pittville ward around the GCHQ site to form a new Battledown ward.

45 Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below in All Saints' ward both now and in 2005, 13 per cent below in Battledown ward (3 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent above in Charlton Kings ward (1 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Charlton Park ward (3 per cent below in 2005) and 6 per cent below in College ward (equal to the average in 2005).

46 Charlton Kings Parish Council opposed the proposals for this area as it considered that it would not reflect local community identities and interests and paid too much attention to the need to achieve electoral equality.

47 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. While we note Charlton Kings Parish Council's opposition to the Borough Council's proposals, the purpose of this review is to seek improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We also note that we have not received alternative proposals to those put forward by the Borough Council in this area. We consider that the Borough Council's proposals would provide a satisfactory reflection of the statutory criteria while, we note, achieving substantial improvements to electoral equality. Consequently we are adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of All Saints', Battledown, Charlton Kings, Charlton Park and College as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report. We would welcome the views of local residents at Stage Three.

### **Pittville, Prestbury and Swindon wards**

48 These three wards are situated in the north of the borough. Swindon ward is represented by a single councillor while Pittville and Prestbury wards are each represented by three councillors. Pittville ward is unparished while Prestbury and Swindon wards each comprise the parishes of

those names. The area as a whole is over-represented: the number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent below the borough average in Pittville ward (1 per cent below in 2005), equal to the average in Prestbury ward (2 per cent below in 2005) and 30 per cent below in Swindon Village ward (32 per cent below in 2005).

49 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a pattern of four two-member wards in this area. Specifically it proposed that a new Oakley ward should comprise an area of Pittville ward to the east of Prestbury Road and Selkirk Close, although not including an area around GCHQ. Additionally, the Borough Council proposed that Prestbury ward should be further modified so that an area to the west of the railway line and Evesham Road should be transferred from Prestbury ward to the revised Swindon ward. In addition it stated that in its own consultation exercise, it had “also suggested removing part of Prestbury adjacent to Oakley ward but a large number of letters and a 110 signature petition were organised against this”. The Borough Council, therefore, did not propose an amendment in the area, although it recognised that failing to make such a modification would have a detrimental effect on electoral equality in Oakley and Prestbury wards. Therefore under the Borough Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent below the borough average in Oakley ward (13 per cent below in 2005) and 19 per cent above in Prestbury ward (16 per cent above in 2005).

50 In addition to the modification to the boundary between Swindon ward and Prestbury ward the Borough Council proposed that a revised Swindon Village ward should be expanded to include an area of St Peter’s ward to the north of Tewkesbury Road. In addition to the modifications to Pittville ward, outlined earlier, the Borough Council proposed that it should include an area in the north of All Saints’ ward around York Street and an area in the west of St Peter’s ward around the allotment gardens. Under the Borough Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the borough average in Pittville ward (2 per cent below in 2005) and 7 per cent above in Swindon Village ward (4 per cent above in 2005).

51 A resident of the area opposed any proposal to transfer part of Prestbury ward to Oakley ward, as she considered that it would have an adverse effect upon the value of a relative’s property.

52 We have carefully considered the proposals which we have received in relation to this area. In particular we are concerned at the poor electoral equality which would result under the Borough Council’s proposals for Oakley and Prestbury wards. While we note that the Borough Council received a substantial number of representations opposing any modification to the existing boundary in this area, we also note that many of the respondents expressed concerns regarding the adverse affect which such a change would have on the value of their properties and to their postal addresses. We would emphasise that this review will not adversely affect property values and will also not affect postal addresses in the area concerned. Furthermore, we do not consider that the evidence which we have received regarding community identities and interests in this area justifies the substantial electoral inequalities which would remain in these two wards under the Borough Council’s proposals. Consequently we are modifying the Borough Council’s proposals in this area to transfer an area to the south of Prestbury Road and to the west of Bouncers Lane from Prestbury ward to Oakley ward. We consider that this would provide a substantial improvement to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We

also propose a minor amendment to the boundary in the west of Prestbury ward, to ensure that it follows recognisable ground details. Subject to these amendments we are adopting the Council's proposals for the wards of Oakley, Pittville, Prestbury and Swindon Village as part of our draft recommendations, which are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

53 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the borough average in Oakley ward (4 per cent above in 2005), 3 per cent below in Pittville ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 1 per cent above in Prestbury ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 7 per cent above in Swindon Village ward (4 per cent above in 2005).

### **Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's wards**

54 The three three-member wards of Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's are situated in the centre of the borough. Each ward is entirely unparished. The number of electors per councillor is 4 per cent below the borough average in Lansdown ward (equal to the average in 2005), 4 per cent above in St Paul's ward (7 per cent above in 2005) and 4 per cent below in St Peter's ward (6 per cent below in 2005).

55 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that St Peter's ward should be modified to include an area of Lansdown ward around Gloucester Road and an area of St Paul's ward around Burton Street. In addition to the amendment to Lansdown ward's boundaries, detailed earlier, the Borough Council proposed that the ward should be expanded to include an area of St Paul's ward around St George's Place. It proposed that St Paul's ward should comprise part of the existing ward around St Paul's Lane and an area of St Peter's ward around Marsh Lane. The Borough Council considered that its proposals would provide improvements to electoral equality while generally retaining the identities of the existing wards. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 9 per cent below the borough average in Lansdown ward (4 per cent below in 2005), 2 per cent below in St Paul's ward (4 per cent below in 2005) and 1 per cent above in St Peter's ward (1 per cent below in 2005).

56 We received no further views in relation to the wards in this area.

57 We have given careful consideration to the Borough Council's proposals for this area. We note that these proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. Therefore, in the absence of evidence of opposition to these proposals, we are adopting the proposed wards of Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report. We would welcome the views of local residents at Stage Three.

### **Hesters Way and St Mark's wards**

58 These two unparished three-member wards are situated in the west of the borough. Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 17 per cent above in Hesters Way ward (19 per cent above in 2005) and 17 per cent below in St Marks ward (18 per cent below in 2005).

59 In its Stage One submission, the Borough Council proposed that this area should comprise three two-member wards. It proposed that a new Springbank ward should comprise an area of the existing Hesters Way ward generally to the north and west of Hesters Way Road. The Borough Council proposed that Hesters Way ward should be further modified to include an area of Hatherley & The Reddings ward around amfurlong Lane and an area of St Mark's ward to the west of, and including, Orchard Avenue. St Mark's ward would be further modified to include part of Lansdown ward around Roman Road. The Borough Council considered that its proposals would achieve substantial improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the borough average in Hesters Way ward (6 per cent above in 2005), 4 per cent above in St Mark's ward (3 per cent above in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Springbank ward (2 per cent above in 2005).

60 We received no further views in relation to this area during Stage One.

61 We have carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals in this area, noting in particular the good levels of electoral equality achieved, together with the clearly identifiable boundaries which would be utilised. In the absence of alternative proposals, or other evidence, we judge that the Borough Council's proposals would secure substantial improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We are therefore adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Hesters Way, St Marks and Springbank as part of our draft recommendations, which are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. We would welcome the views of local residents at Stage Three.

## **Electoral Cycle**

62 At Stage One the Borough Council stated that it had "considered the Government's intention to move two tier areas such as Gloucestershire to elections by halves", and considered that such a change "would improve electorate understanding of the system and would increase voter turnout". However until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the Local Government Act 2000, we can only continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas. Statutorily, we have no power to recommend a change to biennial elections. We therefore propose no change to the Council's present system of elections by thirds at this time.

## **Conclusions**

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 41 to 40;
- there should be 20 wards;

- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of six wards;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

64 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose departing from them to modify the boundary between Oakley and Prestbury wards.

65 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*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	41	40	41	40
Number of wards	14	20	14	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,013	2,072	2,063	2,124
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	5	1	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

66 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Cheltenham Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from five to one. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

**Draft Recommendation**

Cheltenham Borough Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

# Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

67 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 borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Up Hatherley to reflect the proposed borough wards.

68 The parish of Charlton Kings is currently served by 13 councillors representing two wards: Charlton Kings North and Charlton Kings South, represented by five and eight councillors respectively. In the light of our draft recommendations in this area we are proposing to modify the boundary between the two parish wards to reflect the borough ward boundary in this area. We are also proposing to modify the level of representation, so that North parish ward would be represented by four councillors and South parish ward would be represented by nine councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Charlton Kings Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning four councillors) and South (nine). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

69 The parish of Leckhampton is currently served by 11 councillors and is unwarded. In the light of our draft recommendations in this area we are proposing to create three parish wards, Leckhampton Broad Oak Way, Leckhampton East and Leckhampton West, to reflect the borough ward boundaries in this area. We propose that Leckhampton Broad Oak Way parish ward should be represented by a single councillor, Leckhampton East parish ward should be represented by three councillors and Leckhampton West parish ward should be represented by seven councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Leckhampton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Leckhampton Broad Oak Way (returning one councillor), Leckhampton East (three) and Leckhampton West (seven). The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

70 The parish of Prestbury is currently served by 13 councillors and is unwarded. In the light of our draft recommendations in this area we are proposing to create three parish wards, Prestbury East, Prestbury South and Prestbury West, to reflect the borough ward boundaries in this area. We propose that Prestbury East parish ward should be represented by nine councillors, Prestbury South parish ward should be represented by two councillors and Prestbury West parish ward should be represented by two councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**

Prestbury Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Prestbury East (returning nine councillors), Prestbury South (two) and Prestbury West (two). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

71 The parish of Up Hatherley is currently served by nine councillors and is unwarded. In the light of our draft recommendations in this area we are proposing to create two new parish wards, Up Hatherley East and Up Hatherley West, to reflect the borough ward boundary in this area. Under our draft recommendation Up Hatherley East parish ward would be represented by two councillors and Up Hatherley West parish ward would be represented by seven.

**Draft Recommendation**

Up Hatherley Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Up Hatherley East (returning two councillors) and Up Hatherley West (seven). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

72 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough.

**Draft Recommendation**

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

**73 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Cheltenham and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish 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 Cheltenham*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

74 We are putting forward our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Cheltenham for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 March 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 Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

75 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Cheltenham 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)

76 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

### Cheltenham Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

*Figure A1: Cheltenham Borough 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 %
Oakley	2	3,646	1,823	-12	3,675	1,838	-13
Prestbury	2	4,909	2,455	19	4,930	2,465	16

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Cheltenham Borough 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*



## APPENDIX B

### 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.

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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.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

