

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Coventry

*October 2002*

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# WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones  
Ann M Kelly  
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

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



## SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of the electoral arrangements for Coventry on 4 December 2001. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us to complete the work of the LGCE.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Coventry:

- **in five of the 18 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the city;**
- **by 2006 this situation is only expected to improve slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in four wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 64-65) are that:

- **Coventry City Council should have 54 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.**

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

- **The number of electors per councillor in all 18 wards would vary by no more than 10% from the city average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue with the number of electors per councillor in all of the proposed 18 wards expected to vary by no more than 4% from the average for the city in 2006.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 22 October 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 16 December 2002:

**Team Leader  
Coventry Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

*Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Large map reference</b>
1	Bablake	3	the parishes of Allesley and Keresley, part of Bablake ward; part of Holbrook ward	1 and 2
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	part of Binley & Willenhall ward; part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Lower Stoke ward; part of Wyken ward	4
3	Cheylesmore	3	part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Earlsdon ward	4
4	Earlsdon	3	part of Earlsdon ward; part of Wainbody ward; part of Whoberley ward	3 and 4
5	Foleshill	3	part of Foleshill ward; part of Longford ward	2
6	Henley	3	part of Henley ward; part of Wyken ward	2
7	Holbrook	3	part of Bablake ward; part of Holbrook ward	2
8	Longford	3	part of Foleshill ward; part of Henley ward; part of Holbrook ward; part of Longford ward	2
9	Lower Stoke	3	part of Binley & Willenhall ward; part of Lower Stoke ward	2 and 4
10	Radford	3	part of Radford ward	2
11	St Michael's	3	part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Earlsdon ward; part of St Michael's ward; part of Upper Stoke ward	2 and 4
12	Sherbourne	3	part of Sherbourne ward; part of Radford ward; part of Whoberley ward	1, 2, 3 and 4
13	Upper Stoke	3	part of Longford ward; part of Upper Stoke ward; part of Wyken ward	2 and 4
14	Wainbody	3	part of Wainbody ward; part of Westwood ward	3 and 4
15	Westwood	3	part of Westwood ward; part of Woodlands ward	3
16	Whoberley	3	part of Sherbourne ward; part of Whoberley ward	1, 3 and 4
17	Woodlands	3	part of Woodlands ward	1 and 3
18	Wyken	3	part of Binley & Willenhall ward; part of Lower Stoke ward; part of Wyken ward	2 and 4

*Notes: 1 Bablake ward contains the parishes of Allesley and Keresley.*

*2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*

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

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Coventry

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bablake	3	12,252	4,084	-2	12,364	4,121	-3
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	12,658	4,219	2	12,784	4,261	0
3	Cheylesmore	3	12,268	4,089	-2	12,312	4,104	-3
4	Earlson	3	12,251	4,084	-2	12,290	4,097	-3
5	Foleshill	3	12,680	4,227	2	13,038	4,346	2
6	Henley	3	12,644	4,215	1	12,987	4,329	2
7	Holbrook	3	12,100	4,033	-3	12,331	4,110	-3
8	Longford	3	13,029	4,343	5	13,243	4,414	4
9	Lower Stoke	3	12,572	4,191	1	12,609	4,203	-1
10	Radford	3	12,163	4,054	-2	12,996	4,332	2
11	St Michael's	3	12,122	4,041	-3	12,951	4,317	2
12	Sherbourne	3	12,407	4,136	0	12,497	4,166	-2
13	Upper Stoke	3	12,987	4,329	4	13,055	4,352	3
14	Wainbody	3	12,633	4,211	1	12,683	4,228	0
15	Westwood	3	11,957	3,986	-4	12,595	4,198	-1
16	Whoberley	3	12,576	4,192	1	12,578	4,193	-1
17	Woodlands	3	12,720	4,240	2	12,720	4,240	0
18	Wyken	3	12,306	4,102	-1	12,942	4,314	2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>224,325</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>228,975</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,240</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Please note that the 2006 figures in tables 2 and 4 differ slightly. This does not have a substantive effect on our proposals and is due to rounding.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the city of Coventry, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven metropolitan boroughs in the West Midlands as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Coventry. Coventry's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1979 (Report no. 316).

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Coventry was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit on the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan city ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan city wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very

exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Stages of the review*

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

10 Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Coventry City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Midlands Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Warwickshire & West Midlands County Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish councils in the city, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Coventry City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 April 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 22 October 2002 and will end on 16 December 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.**

13 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

14 Coventry is a compact, self-contained city on the eastern edge of the West Midlands. It is predominantly industrial and grew with the development of the engineering industry. The city centre was comprehensively redeveloped following heavy bombing during World War II. It is mainly surrounded by countryside and includes the rural parishes of Allesley and Keresley which were transferred into the city boundary in 1974. It has good road and rail links with the rest of the West Midlands and the south.

15 Since 1975 Coventry's electorate has decreased by 5% from 236,769 to 224,325 but is forecast to increase by 2% to 228,975 over the next five years. The Council currently has 54 members serving 18 three-member wards. The city contains two parishes, Allesley and Keresley, both situated in the north of the city.

16 The electorate of the city is 224,325 (December 2001). At present, each councillor represents an average of 4,154 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 4,240 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in five of the 18 wards varies by more than 10% from the city average. The worst imbalance is in Woodlands ward where each councillor represents 14% more electors than the city average.

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 city average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

*Map 1: Existing wards in Coventry*

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bablake	3	11,802	3,934	-5	11,875	3,958	-7
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	13,800	4,600	11	14,140	4,713	11
3	Cheylesmore	3	11,007	3,669	-12	11,432	3,811	-10
4	Earlsdon	3	13,118	4,373	5	13,237	4,412	4
5	Foleshill	3	11,568	3,856	-7	11,908	3,969	-6
6	Henley	3	11,982	3,994	-4	12,322	4,107	-3
7	Holbrook	3	13,380	4,460	7	13,625	4,542	7
8	Longford	3	13,033	4,344	5	13,261	4,420	4
9	Lower Stoke	3	11,729	3,910	-6	11,766	3,922	-7
10	Radford	3	12,627	4,209	1	13,514	4,505	6
11	St Michael's	3	10,945	3,648	-12	11,291	3,764	-11
12	Sherbourne	3	12,591	4,197	1	12,627	4,209	-1
13	Upper Stoke	3	12,739	4,246	2	12,807	4,269	1
14	Wainbody	3	13,027	4,342	5	13,083	4,361	3
15	Westwood	3	10,901	3,634	-13	11,319	3,773	-11
16	Whoberley	3	12,726	4,242	2	12,745	4,248	0
17	Woodlands	3	14,155	4,718	14	14,376	4,792	13
18	Wyken	3	13,195	4,398	6	13,620	4,540	7
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>224,325</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>228,948</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,240</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Coventry City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

18 At the start of the review, members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to the LGCE giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Coventry City Council and its constituent parish councils.

19 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. The LGCE received two representations during Stage One, including a city-wide scheme from the City Council, both of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council.

#### **Coventry City Council**

20 The City Council proposed a council of 54 members serving 18 wards, the same as at present. The City Council's proposals would provide good electoral equality throughout the city, with no wards having a variance over 10% by 2006.

#### **Other representations**

21 A further representation was received from a local resident who made suggestions for other electoral arrangements which we are unable to consider as part of this review.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

**22 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Coventry and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, 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.**

23 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Coventry is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or city'.

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

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

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

### **Electorate forecasts**

27 Since 1975 there has been a 5% decrease in the electorate of Coventry city. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2% from 224,325 to 228,975 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Radford ward although a significant amount is also expected in the Westwood and Wyken wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

28 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the City Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

### **Council size**

29 Coventry City Council presently has 54 members. The City Council proposed maintaining the existing council size stating that 'there is no suggestion in the Government's guidance and other statements in relation to the modernisation of local government that there should be a reduction in the number of councillors. The changed roles that members have in the new

arrangements may lead to increased demands being placed upon them and will certainly not diminish those demands'. It stated further that the Council was in its second year of operating the Cabinet and Leader model of executive arrangement and had submitted a formal proposal to the Secretary of State to continue with it. It argued that councillors would increasingly spend less time in formal meetings and more time fulfilling their representational roles. It stated that the ten cabinet members would spend more time in informal discussions on policy and service delivery matters and that the 44 non-executive members would all serve on one or more Scrutiny Boards and Best Value Review Groups. It added that all councillors serve on at least one Area Forum and that it was expected that their wider policy scrutiny and development roles would be developed this year.

30 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members.

### **Electoral arrangements**

31 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have based our recommendations on the City Council's scheme. The Council made its scheme available for viewing at its Council Offices and libraries in the city. It also publicised its availability for inspection in the Council's own newspaper, which is distributed to every home in the city. The Council's scheme was based on current polling districts in the city but moved away from utilising whole polling districts in a number of areas in order to satisfy the statutory criteria. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards;
- (b) Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards;
- (c) Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards;
- (d) Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley wards;
- (e) Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards;
- (f) Bablake and Holbrook wards.

32 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

### **Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards**

33 These three wards cover the north east of the city and currently have 7% fewer, 4% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% fewer, 3% fewer and 4% more than the city average in 2006).

34 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the area to the north of the Coventry to Nuneaton railway line and south of the Coventry canal should be transferred to its proposed Longford ward, from the current Foleshill ward, and that the area located in polling district Hh that lies south of the canal be transferred from Longford ward to the proposed Foleshill ward. The City Council proposed that polling districts Tj and Tk be transferred from the current Wyken ward to Henley ward. It was also proposed that the following areas be transferred from the current Henley ward to the proposed Longford ward: part of Woodway Lane, part of Lentons Lane and part of Shilton Lane (the area north of the Oxford canal) and the area in the north-west of Henley ward to the east of Alderman's Green Road. It argued that its proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards achieved a good level of electoral equality and were readily identifiable by reference to roads and property boundaries.

35 The City Council also recommended that the area consisting of polling district Gk in the far north of the current Holbrook ward be transferred to neighbouring Longford ward. As well as the transfer of the area comprising the Sewall Highway from the current Longford ward to the Upper Stoke ward.

36 Under the City Council's proposals its proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards would initially have 2%, 1% and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (2%, 2% and 4% more in 2006).

37 We are broadly satisfied with the council's proposals and propose adopting them, subject to a minor modification to one of the boundaries in Henley Ward. Our proposed alternative boundary would follow the polling district boundary Ff so that the area to the east of and including Lentons Lane Farm and the cemetery would remain in the proposed Henley ward rather than being transferred to neighbouring Longford ward. We are of the view that these properties share slightly better community ties and links with the proposed Henley ward than with the majority of the proposed Longford ward.

38 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards would initially have 2% more, 1% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (2% more, 2% more and 4% more in 2006).

### **Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards**

39 These four wards are situated in the east (Upper Stoke and Wyken) and south-east of the city. Binley & Willenhall currently has 11% more, Lower Stoke 6% fewer, Upper Stoke 2% more and Wyken 6% more electors per councillor than the city average (11% more, 7% fewer, 1% more and 7% more than the city average in 2006).

40 At Stage One Coventry City Council proposed that the boundary of the current Binley & Willenhall ward be readjusted by the transfer of polling district Bi in the north-east of the ward to neighbouring Wyken ward, arguing that the new housing estate in this area was geographically separated from the rest of the current ward. In addition, it proposed that the length of the boundary which follows the River Sowe also be realigned to follow Binley Road, Allard Way and London Road. The Council also proposed that the area that makes up polling district Ta, presently in Wyken ward, should be transferred to its proposed Lower Stoke ward.

41 The Council also recommended a number of changes to the current Upper Stoke ward. It was proposed that the area in the south west of Longford ward, comprising part of Bell Green Road, Navigation Way and Stuart Court, be transferred to Upper Stoke ward, as well as the transfer of the area comprising the Sewall Highway. It also proposed that Gosford Green, which currently has no electors, should be transferred from Upper Stoke ward to the proposed St Michael's ward. In addition to the changes mentioned above, the Council proposed transferring the areas comprising polling districts Tj and Tk, currently situated in the north of Wyken ward, to neighbouring Henley ward. It argued that its proposed Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features.

42 Under the City Council's proposals Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards would initially have equal to, 1% more, 4% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the city (1% fewer, 1% fewer, 2% more and 3% more in 2006).

43 We propose adopting the City Council's scheme in this area with a couple of slight modifications to the proposed Wyken ward in order to better reflect community identity in the area. Our alternative involves modifying the boundary so that the part of Binley Road currently within Wyken ward becomes part of Binley & Willenhall ward. We also propose moving the

boundary in polling district Th behind the houses on Armscott Road, so that the area north of this will be transferred to Upper Stoke ward. We consider that the revised wards would better reflect local communities.

44 Under our draft proposals the proposed Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards would initially have 2% more, 1% more, 4% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (equal to, 1% fewer, 3% more and 2% more in 2006).

### **Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards**

45 These three wards are located in the centre (St Michael's ward) and south of the city and currently have 12% fewer, 5% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (10% fewer, 4% more and 11% fewer than the city average in 2006).

46 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the area in the north-western tip of Cheylesmore ward, currently polling district Ck, be transferred to St Michael's ward. It also proposed that polling districts Dh and Df currently in Earlsdon ward, as well as the area consisting of part of Daventry Road and part of Dillot Avenue and the area comprising Bigbury close, Modbury Close and Postbridge Road should be transferred to neighbouring Cheylesmore ward. It also proposed that that the polling district Dj currently situated in the north of Earlsdon ward be transferred to St Michael's ward.

47 It is proposed that the area presently in the south west of Whoberley ward, consisting of Broad Lane and Broadlands Close, as well as the polling district Rg excluding Guphill Avenue be transferred from Whoberley ward to Earlsdon ward, and that the area presently situated in the north of Wainbody ward (north of Kenpass Highway up to the Coat of Arms Bridge Road) also be transferred to the proposed Earlsdon ward. It proposed that the Gosford Green area, which currently has no electors, should be transferred from Upper Stoke ward to St Michael's ward. It argued that its proposed Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features.

48 Under the City Council's proposals its proposed Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards would initially have 2% fewer, 2% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (3% fewer, 3% fewer and 2% more in 2006).

49 After careful consideration of the evidence, we propose adopting the Council's scheme in this area without modification. We consider that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality in the area. These recommendations would result in the same levels of electoral equality as under the council's proposals.

### **Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley wards**

50 These three wards are situated in the centre of the city and currently have 1% more, 1% more and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% more, 1% fewer and equal to the city average in 2006).

51 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the ward boundary of the current Radford ward be adjusted to effect the transfer of polling district Kg from Radford ward to Sherbourne ward. It proposed that the area in the south of the ward around Spon End and Broomfield Place currently in the Whoberley ward be transferred to its proposed Sherbourne ward. Similarly it also proposed that part of polling district Mb, namely Prince of Wales Road, Merrivale Road and part of Allesley Old Road, which is presently in Sherbourne ward, be transferred to Whoberley ward.

52 It was also proposed that polling district Rg, with the exception of Guphill Avenue in the north east of Whoberley ward, as well as the area directly to the north of that, consisting of Broad Lane and Broadlands Close, be transferred to Earlsdon ward. It argued that its proposed Radford and Sherbourne wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features. It argued that its proposed Whoberley ward achieved a good level of electoral equality, was readily identifiable to local features and stated that it had considered an objection to its proposals but that it was ‘impossible to meet the objectors’ wishes without having consequential effects on electoral equality across much of the remainder of the City’.

53 Under the City Council’s proposals its proposed Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley wards would initially have 2% fewer, equal to and 1% more electors per councillor than the city average (2% more, 2% fewer and 1% fewer in 2006).

54 After careful consideration of the evidence, we propose adopting the City Council’s scheme in this area without modification. We consider that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. These recommendations would result in the same levels of electoral equality as under the Council’s proposals.

### **Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards**

55 These three wards are located to the west and south west (Wainbody ward) of the city and currently have 5% more, 13% fewer and 14% more electors per councillor than the city average (3% more, 11% fewer and 13% more than the city average in 2006).

56 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the area currently in the south east of Westwood ward, polling district Qi, be transferred to Wainbody ward and the area presently situated in the north of Wainbody ward (north of Kenpass Highway up to the Coat of Arms Bridge Road) be transferred to Earlsdon ward. The City Council proposed that the area around Bluebell Walk, Tile Hill Lane and Limbrick Avenue, as well as the polling district Sa currently in Woodlands ward, be transferred to its proposed Westwood ward. It argued that its proposed Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features.

57 Under the City Council’s proposals its proposed Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards would initially have 1% more, 4% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average (equal to, 1% fewer and equal to in 2006).

58 After careful consideration of the evidence, we propose adopting the City Council’s scheme in this area without modification. We consider that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. These recommendations would result in the same levels of electoral equality as under the Council’s proposals.

### **Bablake and Holbrook wards**

59 These two wards are situated in the north of the city and currently have 5% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the city average (7% fewer and 7% more than the city average in 2006).

60 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Keresley Parish, currently in the Holbrook ward, be transferred to its proposed Bablake ward. Similarly the area consisting of Bennetts Road South in the south west of Holbrook ward should be transferred to Bablake ward. It was also proposed that the area in the north west part of polling district Ai comprising Taunton Way, Cottage Farm Road, Lowe Road and Wingfield Way be transferred from Bablake ward to Holbrook ward. The City Council also recommended that the area consisting of polling district

Gk in the far north of Holbrook ward be transferred to neighbouring Longford ward. It argued that its proposed Bablake and Holbrook wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features. It also stated that its proposed Bablake ward had been modified in the light of submissions received as part of its consultation process.

61 Under the City Council's proposals its proposed Bablake and Holbrook wards would initially have 2% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (3% fewer and 3% fewer in 2006).

62 After careful consideration of the evidence, we propose adopting the council's scheme in this area without modification. We consider that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. These recommendations would result in the same levels of electoral equality as under the council's proposals.

### **Electoral cycle**

63 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan borough/cities have a system of elections by thirds.

### **Conclusions**

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

- a council of 54 members should be retained;
- there should be 18 wards;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified and no wards should retain their existing boundaries.

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

- we propose boundary amendments between the proposed Henley and Longford wards;
- we propose a boundary amendment between the proposed Binley & Willenhall and Wyken wards;
- we propose a boundary amendment between the proposed Upper Stoke and Wyken wards.

66 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

*Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements*

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	54	54	54	54
Number of wards	18	18	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	4,154	4,154	4,240	4,240
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	5	0	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	0	0

67 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Coventry City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 5 to none. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 4%.

**Draft recommendation**  
 Coventry City Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map A1 and in Appendix A, including the large maps.

*Map 2: Draft recommendations for Coventry*

## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

68 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Coventry contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 16 December 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

69 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Team Leader  
Coventry Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW

70 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft recommendations for Coventry: Detailed mapping**

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

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the city and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Coventry.

*Map A1: Draft recommendations for Coventry: Key map*

## APPENDIX B

### 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. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, 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.

*Table B1: Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria*

Criteria	Compliance/departure
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.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We consult 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.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.