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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Herefordshire to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in 2011.

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
27 March 2012	Consultation on council size
20 June 2012	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
29 August 2012	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
13 November 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
8 January 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Single-member ward review request

In September 2012 the Council wrote to the Commission informing it that members had passed a resolution for a single-member ward review. There is a presumption in legislation that the Commission should agree to such requests and seek to provide a uniform pattern of single-member wards across the authority, providing this does not conflict with our statutory criteria. The Commission agreed to the request and we have provided for such a pattern of wards as part of our final recommendations.

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 53 members comprising 53 single-member wards. During the consultation period on warding patterns for Herefordshire, we received 92 submissions, including three authority-wide proposals from Herefordshire Conservatives and two local residents. Herefordshire Council did not submit a warding pattern, but we did have sight of the proposal considered by members.

Having considered all the submissions received, we broadly based our draft recommendations on a combination of the Conservative proposals, the warding pattern considered by Herefordshire Council, and the submission of one of the local residents. We considered that these authority-wide proposals generally provided for good electoral equality, reflected evidence received for community identity, and broadly used clear boundaries, though some modifications were required.

Submissions received

During the consultation on the draft recommendations for Herefordshire, we received 125 submissions. These included submissions from Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Conservatives, Herefordshire Independents Group, 16 district councillors, 28 parish councils, one local organisation and 78 local residents.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2013. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.2% from 2012 to 2018. Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content that the Council's projected figures are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of the final recommendations.

General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations and, where possible, have sought to reflect the evidence received in these final recommendations. We have proposed modifications to the boundaries in Ledbury, and modified the boundary between our proposed Mortimer and Kingsland wards. We have also proposed several name changes to wards throughout the authority. Elsewhere, we have confirmed our draft recommendations as final.

Our final recommendations for Herefordshire are that the Council should have 53 members, each representing a single ward. Our recommendations result in two wards forecast to have a variance of more than 10% from the average for the authority by 2018. Having taken into account the evidence we have received during consultation, we believe that our final recommendations will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Herefordshire Council, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk. **You can also view our final recommendations for Herefordshire Council on our interactive maps at consultation.lgbce.org.uk**

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Herefordshire Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to Herefordshire Council, as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during the consultation on warding patterns informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council*, which were published on 13 November 2012. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 7 January 2013.

What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Herefordshire?

5 We decided to conduct this review as the latest electorate data shows that 30% of Herefordshire wards have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the authority. Of these, the largest variance is in Hollington ward which has a variance of -34%.

6 Additionally, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 allows a local authority that holds whole-council elections every four years to request an electoral review with the presumption of delivering single-member wards or divisions.

7 Herefordshire Council submitted a request to the Commission to undertake this single-member ward review. The Commission agreed to the request. The legislation makes clear that, when conducting such a review, the Commission must continue to have regard to the statutory criteria that governs all electoral reviews, outlined in Chapter Two. This, in effect, means that the Commission is not required to

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

recommend single-member wards or divisions if to do so would conflict with the statutory criteria.

How will the recommendations affect you?

8 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change as a result of our recommendations.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Herefordshire is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

11 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

12 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

13 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Herefordshire Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not therefore able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Submissions received

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Herefordshire Council ('the Council') and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 125 submissions during the consultation period on our draft recommendations. All submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

15 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions received were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations. Officers from the Commission have been assisted by officers at Herefordshire Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review.

Electorate figures

16 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2013. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 4% to 2018. Forecast electorate growth varied by area but was particularly high in the areas of Hereford, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Holmer & Shelwick and Hampton Bishop.

17 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content that the Council's projected figures remain the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis for the final recommendations.

Council size

18 Herefordshire currently has 58 councillors elected from 27 single-member wards, eight two-member wards and five three-member wards. At the beginning of the electoral review, we met Council officers and elected members to discuss council size. The Council made a submission for a council size of 54, four fewer than the existing council size. Having considered the evidence received, we consulted on the basis of reducing the council size to 54 members.

19 During the consultation on council size we received 54 submissions. These included a submission from Hereford & South Herefordshire Conservatives supporting a council size of 54 members, and a submission from the It's Our County (IOC) group on the Council proposing a council size of 70. The other representations proposed council sizes ranging from 52 to 60.

20 Having considered the evidence received we were minded to adopt a council size of 54 and invited proposals for warding patterns based on this number of councillors.

21 In the development of our draft recommendations we noted that all submissions for Hereford were based on an allocation of 15 councillors. Under a council size of 54, this would lead to the remainder of the authority being allocated 39 councillors. However, given the number of electors living in Hereford, 16 councillors should be allocated to the City and 38 to the remainder of the authority. However, this allocation of members in Hereford is difficult to achieve given the significant barrier of the River Wye dividing the City. When looking at the allocation of councillors north and south of

the river, the number of electors results in the part of the City south of the river being allocated four councillors and the part of the City to the north of the river, 11. Therefore, to allocate the City 16 councillors would require wards that crossed the river. We did not consider that wards crossing the River Wye in the City would represent a good balance between our criteria.

22 Additionally, the authority-wide schemes based on a council size of 54 proposed that the remainder of the authority be allocated 39 councillors. However, under a council size of 54 the remainder of the authority should only be allocated 38 councillors. Having considered the allocation of members between Hereford and the remainder of the authority, we proposed reducing the council size to 53 members under our draft recommendations. This resulted in 15 councillors being allocated to Hereford and 38 councillors to the remainder of the authority. This ensured a scheme for Hereford and the remainder of the authority which provided for good levels of electoral equality. Therefore, our draft recommendations for Herefordshire Council were based on a council size of 53.

23 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received one submission suggesting we revert to a council size of 54 but providing no evidence to support this change.

24 In proposing a council size of 53 as part of our draft recommendations we were of the view that such a council size would not impact adversely on councillor workload or councillors' representational role. We have not received any evidence to suggest otherwise. We have therefore confirmed a council size of 53 members for Herefordshire Council as final.

Electoral fairness

25 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

26 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The authority average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the authority (142,114 in 2012 and 148,055 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 53 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 2,681 in 2012 and 2,793 by 2018.

27 Under our final recommendations, only two of our proposed 53 wards will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the authority by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Herefordshire.

General analysis

28 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations, we received 92 submissions in response to our consultation on warding patterns, including three authority-wide schemes, from Herefordshire Conservatives and two local residents. Herefordshire

Council did not formally submit a warding proposal. However, we did have sight of what was considered by members, since it was published on the Council's website. We also received localised submissions from 12 Herefordshire councillors, 29 parish/town councils and 47 local residents.

29 The warding pattern proposed by Herefordshire Conservatives was broadly identical to the warding pattern considered by the Council, but proposed some modifications to wards in Hereford. The warding pattern considered by the Council was based on 54 single-member wards. However, it would result in some wards with poor levels of electoral equality and some wards without complete internal access.

30 In response to the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received a submission from Herefordshire Council that broadly supported our proposals. The Council did suggest an amendment to the boundary between our proposed Mortimer and Kingsland wards. The Council also proposed a number of changes to names of wards across the authority.

31 We received a submission from Herefordshire Conservatives which was similar to that of the Council. Herefordshire Conservatives broadly supported our proposed pattern of single-member wards, suggested the same change to the boundary between our proposed Kingsland and Mortimer wards and suggested a number of changes to ward names.

32 The other submissions we received at this stage largely focused on specific areas. We received representations in regard to the parish of Richards Castle, Ledbury town, the St Nicholas area of Hereford, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and parts of rural Herefordshire. A number of these submissions opposed a uniform pattern of single-member wards. Some of the submissions proposed alternative warding arrangements based on multi-member wards. These representations are detailed in the relevant part of the report.

33 As noted on page 1, the Council submitted a formal request that the Commission recommend a uniform pattern of single-member wards covering the authority. In light of this request we sought at draft recommendation stage to propose a uniform pattern of single-member wards for Herefordshire.

34 We received a number of submissions in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations which argued passionately that in areas of the authority our proposed single-member wards would divide communities. We considered the representations received but were not persuaded that sufficient evidence had been provided to persuade us that single-member wards would conflict with our statutory criteria.

35 Our final recommendations would result in 53 councillors representing 53 single-member wards. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 24-29) and on the map accompanying the report.

Electoral arrangements

36 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Herefordshire. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Hereford (pages 9–10)
- Ledbury (pages 10–11)
- Bromyard (pages 11–12)
- Leominster (page 12)
- Ross-on-Wye (pages 12–13)
- Rural Herefordshire (pages 13–16)

37 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 24–29 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Hereford

38 The City of Hereford is completely parished and represented by a City Council. The draft recommendations for Hereford were for 15 single-member wards, 11 wards to the north of the River Wye and four wards to the south. Our draft recommendations were broadly similar to the pattern considered by the Council and proposed by the Conservative Group, but with some modifications to improve electoral equality.

39 In response to our draft recommendations, we received 52 representations for this area. These mainly focused on our Broomy Hill, Whitecross, Holmer and Hinton & Hunderton wards.

40 To the north of the River Wye, we proposed single-member Broomy Hill and Whitecross wards. Our proposed Whitecross ward included an area to the north of Whitecross Road (A438) in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality. We received representations from Councillor Powers (St Nicholas), Councillor Michael (St Nicholas), Councillor Nicholls (Three Elms) and 42 local residents which opposed these wards. Respondents considered that our proposed single-member wards divided the community and that the existing two-member St Nicholas ward should be retained.

41 We noted that combining our proposed Broomy Hill and Whitecross wards to form a two-member ward would result in a variance of 2% by 2018. However, many submissions commented that the area to the north of Whitecross Road (A438) should not be included in this two-member ward. Removing this area would result in a two-member St Nicholas having 5% fewer electors than the authority average by 2018. However, the electors to the north of Whitecross Road (A438) could only be included in our Kings Acre ward, which would result in the Kings Acre ward having 14% more electors than the authority average by 2018.

42 Having considered the alternative proposals for the area, we do not consider that evidence has been received to suggest that a two-member ward covering this part of Hereford would provide for a better balance between the criteria. We therefore

confirm the boundaries of our proposed single-member Whitecross and Broomy Hill wards as final.

43 To the north of the River Wye, we received representations from Hereford City Council and Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council opposing our proposed Holmer ward. Both representations expressed concern at the inclusion of the Victoria Park area in Holmer ward. However, neither representation proposed an alternative warding pattern for the area. Having considered the evidence received, we confirm our proposed Holmer ward as final.

44 To the south of the River Wye we received a representation from a local resident who opposed the inclusion of Hinton in our Hinton & Hunderton ward. The resident suggested increasing the council size to 54 and creating a new ward that would link Hinton with Putson. This modification would result in a complete reconfiguration of wards in Hereford. Additionally, as noted in paragraph 21, the inclusion of an additional councillor in Hereford would result in wards that spanned the River Wye. We do not consider that we have received evidence to warrant us adopting these modifications and therefore confirm our Hinton & Hunderton ward as final.

45 The other representations we received proposed changes to ward names. Herefordshire Council suggested that Grove Farm be named Saxon Gate, after a large estate in the area, and that Broomy Hill be named Greyfriars, after the Greyfriars Bridge, a notable local landmark in the proposed ward. Additionally, Hereford City Council proposed that our City ward be renamed Central. Having considered the proposals, we have decided to include the ward names of Saxon Gate, Greyfriars and Central as part of our final recommendations for Herefordshire.

46 We received no other representations on our draft recommendations in Hereford. We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations in this area, with the exception of the changes to ward names outlined above. Under our final recommendations none of the proposed wards in Hereford would have a variance of greater than 10% by 2018.

Ledbury

47 Ledbury currently has one three-member ward, including the parish of Donnington to the south and Eastnor in the east, but not including Wellington Heath, to the north of the town. Our draft recommendations were for Ledbury to be represented by three single-member wards, with the parishes of Eastnor and Donnington included in a Ledbury South ward and the parish of Wellington Heath included in a Ledbury North ward.

48 In response to the consultation on the draft recommendations we received 22 submissions. All respondents opposed the draft recommendations on the basis that they disagreed with single-member wards for Ledbury. The authority-wide submissions we received from Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Conservatives did not comment on the wards specifically proposed for Ledbury but supported the principle of single-member wards covering Herefordshire.

49 Several respondents, including Ledbury Town Council, expressed concern that single-member wards would remove residents' ability to choose which local councillor

they approach with their concerns. We consider this is not in itself a reason for us to depart from a pattern of single-member wards, as it is a principle-based argument rather than one relating to our statutory criteria. Councillor Harvey also expressed support for a three-member ward covering Ledbury.

50 Despite the evident passion with which residents and councillors have argued for a multi-member ward covering Ledbury, we do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to justify that community identity will be negatively affected by a change to single-member wards. Herefordshire currently has a predominately single-member pattern of wards, albeit in the rural areas, and we have seen no evidence that this mitigates against effective representation.

51 As noted above, the submission from Councillor Harvey argued for a multi-member ward for Ledbury. In her submission, Councillor Harvey also suggested some modifications to the wards we had proposed as part of our draft recommendations, but only wanted these to be considered if we had not been persuaded to recommend a multi-member ward for the area.

52 Councillor Harvey proposed minor modifications to all of the ward boundaries in Ledbury. She suggested that a block of houses at the junction of Bridge Street and Long Acres, up to the junction with St George Close, be included in our Ledbury West ward rather than our Ledbury North ward. She also suggested that both sides of Woodleigh Road be included in our Ledbury North ward, so that all the electors in the road were not divided between wards. Her final suggested modification was to include Horse Lane Orchard in our Ledbury North ward.

53 These modifications would result in our Ledbury North, Ledbury South and Ledbury West wards having 2% fewer, 2% fewer and 6% fewer electors than the authority average by 2018, respectively. We consider that these modifications would provide for identifiable boundaries, whilst providing for reasonable levels of electoral equality. We have therefore decided to adopt these modifications as part of our final recommendations.

Bromyard

54 Bromyard is currently represented by a two-member ward. Our draft recommendations for the area proposed two single-member wards, Bromyard East and Bromyard West.

55 In addition to the authority-wide submissions, we received two other submissions. Bromyard & Winslow Town Council stated that they found the division of the town to be unacceptable, but did not explain why, or suggest an alternative warding pattern.

56 The other submission was from a local resident who suggested a new boundary between the wards of Bromyard East and Bodenham. The resident proposed including the area around Bodkin Hall in our Bromyard East ward. We investigated this proposal and noted it would require the creation of a parish ward in Edwyn Ralph parish with fewer than 10 electors. We consider a parish ward of this size to be unviable. When creating parish wards we generally consider a parish ward with less than 100 electors to be unviable. We have therefore decided not to make this modification.

57 The authority-wide submission from Herefordshire Conservatives proposed that our Bromyard East ward be renamed Bromyard Bringsty. They explained that including Bringsty in the ward name would reflect the local landmark of Bringsty Common and the rural nature of the ward.

58 In summary, we therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations in this area, with the exception of renaming the ward Bromyard Bringsty.

Leominster

59 Leominster is currently represented by two two-member wards. Under our draft recommendations we proposed three single-member wards covering Leominster to the south of Kenwater brook and included the area of Leominster to the north of the brook in a Kimbolton ward.

60 In addition to the authority-wide submission, we received three other submissions. We received a representation from Leominster Town Council which expressed its opposition to single-member wards for the town and supported retaining the existing two-member wards. We noted that under a council size of 53 the existing wards of Leominster North and Leominster South would have 12% fewer and 11% fewer electors than the authority average by 2018, respectively.

61 We also received a representation from Leominster and North Herefordshire Green Party which proposed one three-member ward covering the whole of Leominster town. We noted that this proposal would result in a three-member Leominster ward with 18% more electors than the authority average by 2018. Having considered the evidence received we have decided not to modify the boundaries of our proposed Leominster wards.

62 We also received a number of submissions which were concerned that the ward name Kimbolton did not reflect the inclusion of an area of Leominster. To address this, Herefordshire Council suggested renaming the ward Leominster North & Upton. We did not consider that this ward name was appropriate as not all of the Upton area is within the ward boundary. We have therefore decided to name the ward Leominster North & Rural, to better reflect the nature of the ward. With the exception of the name change, we confirm as final the draft recommendations in this area.

Ross-on-Wye

63 The area of Ross is currently represented by four councillors. Our draft proposals for the Ross area were for three single-member wards that included parts of Ross Rural parish in wards with Ross-on-Wye town.

64 In addition to the authority-wide submissions, we received three other submissions covering this part of the authority. We received representations from Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross Rural Parish Council, both supporting our draft recommendations.

65 We also received a submission from a local resident suggesting an alternative boundary between our proposed Ross North and Ross East wards. The resident proposed that the boundary between the two wards should follow Rudhill Brook rather than Millpond Street in order that all of the Ashburton Industrial estate was

included in one ward. We investigated this proposal and considered that Rudhill Brook did not provide for an easily identifiable boundary, as when the brook approaches the town it changes course to flow underground. This would result in the ward boundary being undefined.

66 Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to confirm our proposed wards of Ross North, Ross East and Ross West as final.

Rural Herefordshire

67 Our draft recommendations for the rural area of Herefordshire were for a warding pattern that was based on the principle of not dividing parishes that are grouped or have joint working arrangements. We have maintained this in our final recommendations.

North Rural Herefordshire

68 Our draft recommendations in this area were for single-member wards of Mortimer, Kingsland, Kington and Pembridge. Our draft recommendations for Mortimer and Kingsland were identical to those considered by the Council and proposed by Herefordshire Conservatives. Under our draft recommendations both wards would have electoral variances of 4% by 2018.

69 During our consultation on warding patterns we received a representation from Councillor Bowen, who proposed that the parish of Richards Castle should be included in the Kingsland ward, rather than the Mortimer ward. Councillor Bowen identified the links Richards Castle has with Orleton and Luston. We investigated this proposal and noted that including Richards Castle in the proposed Kingsland ward would result in an electoral variance of 13% by 2018. At the time we considered that sufficient evidence had not been received to justify such a variance.

70 In response to the consultation on the draft recommendations we received 17 submissions regarding Richards Castle, including from Herefordshire Council, the Conservative group, the Independent group and Richards Castle Parish Council. Every submission opposed the draft recommendations, and proposed that Richards Castle parish be included in our Kingsland ward. We received evidence informing us that children in Richards Castle parish attend schools in Orleton and that residents of Richards Castle use Orleton for the post office and GP surgery. The representation from Richards Castle Parish Council also explained the poor road connections that Richards Castle has to Mortimer and that a local bus service runs between Richards Castle and Orleton.

71 We have considered the evidence and are persuaded that Richards Castle does have community links with Orleton. We note that including Richards Castle results in our Kingsland ward having a variance of 13% by 2018, but consider that the evidence received justifies this imbalance and provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. Consequently, this modification would result in our Mortimer ward having 4% fewer electors than the authority average by 2018.

72 We also received a number of submissions for this part of Herefordshire suggesting changes to ward names. Lyonshall Parish Council, Councillor Phillips and one resident in the Pembridge area proposed the ward be renamed Arrow, after the River Arrow, which runs east to west in the ward. A number of respondents, including

Herefordshire Council, Luston Group Parish Council, and Councillor Bowen, proposed that Kingsland ward be renamed Bircher, the name of the current ward. Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to include the ward names of Arrow and Bircher as part of our final recommendations.

73 Our final recommendations for north rural Herefordshire are for the wards of Mortimer, Bircher, Kington and Arrow. These wards would have variances of -4%, 13%, -5% and 6% by 2018, respectively.

East Rural Herefordshire

74 Our draft recommendations in this area were for the single-member wards of Bodenham, Ashperton, Colwall and Bishops Frome. We received five submissions covering this area.

75 We received a representation from Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council which noted that our proposed Bodenham ward would be divided between two Parliamentary constituencies. As detailed in paragraph 13, this is not a consideration we take into account when formulating our recommendations.

76 We received a representation from a Bishops Frome Parish Councillor who objected to Bishops Frome being included in a ward with Cradley parish. The parish councillor indicated in his submission that residents use services and amenities in Bromyard, Ledbury and Hereford rather than Cradley. We note that including Bishops Frome parish in wards with either of Bromyard or Ledbury would require the reconfiguration of wards across Herefordshire. We do not consider that evidence has been received to justify these significant modifications.

77 The other submissions we received covering this part of Herefordshire concerned ward names. The Council proposed that all four wards be renamed, in order to better reflect local identities. The Council suggested that our proposed Bodenham ward be renamed Hampton, Colwall as Hope End and Bishops Frome as Bishops Frome & Cradley. We have decided to include these ward names as part of our final recommendations as they better reflect community identity. The Council also suggested that our proposed Ashperton ward be renamed Trumpet, Newtown & Burley Gate. We are concerned that this ward name might not reflect all of the communities included in the ward. We note from minutes on the Council website that at its meeting on 4 January 2013 the Council also considered renaming our Ashperton ward Three Crosses after the three crossroads along the A417 in the ward. We understand that the ward name of Three Crosses would reflect local landmarks in the ward and be understood locally. Having considered the evidence, we have decided to rename our Ashperton ward as Three Crosses.

78 Our final recommendations for east rural Herefordshire are for the wards of Hampton, Hope End, Bishops Frome & Cradley and Three Crosses. The wards would have variances of 2%, 4%, -7% and 0% by 2018, respectively.

South Rural Herefordshire

79 Our draft recommendations for this area were for the single-member wards of Birch, Llangarron, Walford, Penyard, Much Marcle and Fownhope. In addition to the authority-wide submissions we received six other representations covering this area.

80 We received representations from Fownhope Parish Council and a resident, both of which proposed a revised Fownhope ward consisting of the parishes of

Fownhope, Dormington & Mordiford, Brockhampton, Hampton Bishop and Woolhope. This proposal would result in a Fownhope ward with a variance of 3% by 2018. However, this modification would also require significant consequential modifications to most wards in the south and east of rural Herefordshire. We also received a submission from Dormington & Mordiford Group Parish Council, supporting our proposed Fownhope ward. Having considered the evidence received we have decided not to modify the boundaries of our proposed Fownhope ward.

81 The other submissions we received covering this part of Herefordshire related to ward names. Herefordshire Council and Walford Parish Council both suggested that our proposed Walford ward be renamed Kerne Bridge, as both considered the existing ward name should be retained. For the same reason, Herefordshire Council suggested that our proposed Much Marcle ward be renamed Old Gore. Herefordshire Council and Dormington & Mordiford Group Parish Council both suggested that our proposed Fownhope ward should be renamed Backbury, as the ward we had proposed was broadly similar to the existing Backbury ward. Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to include the ward names of Kerne Bridge, Old Gore and Backbury as part of our final recommendations.

82 Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Conservatives suggested renaming Birch ward as Golden Valley East. We did not accept that this name would be appropriate as our Birch ward is not directly to the east of Golden Valley North or South. We have therefore decided to retain the ward name Birch as part of our final recommendations.

83 Our final recommendations for south rural Herefordshire are for the wards of Birch, Llangarron, Penyard, Kerne Bridge, Old Gore and Backbury. These wards would have variances of -10%, -2%, -2%, -6%, -6% and -3% by 2018, respectively.

West Rural Herefordshire

84 Our draft recommendations for this part of Herefordshire were for the single-member wards of Eardisley, Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South. In addition to the authority-wide submissions we received only one other representation covering this area.

85 Kinnersley & District Group Parish Council and Herefordshire Council both suggested that our proposed Eardisley ward be named Castle, as our proposed Eardisley ward was identical to the existing Castle ward. We have decided to include this ward name as part of our final recommendations.

86 Our final recommendations for west rural Herefordshire are for the wards of Golden Valley North, Golden Valley South and Castle. These wards would have variances of -11%, -5% and -10% by 2018, respectively.

Hereford Hinterland

87 Our draft recommendations for this part of Herefordshire were for the single-member wards of Credenhill, Clehonger, Kingstone, Belmont Rural, Burghill, Dinedor, Lugwardine and Sutton Walls. In addition to the authority-wide submission we received 11 other representations covering this area. These were primarily concerned with ward names.

88 We received representations from Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges who both suggested that we join our proposed Belmont Rural ward with our proposed

Newton Farm ward to form a two-member ward. We do not consider that compelling evidence has been received to depart from a pattern of single-member wards in this area. We are therefore confirming our proposal for Belmont Rural as final.

89 We also received a representation from a local resident who suggested a change to the boundary between our proposed Newton Farm and Kingstone wards. The resident suggested that all the properties on Merryhill Terrace should be included in our proposed Kingstone ward. We investigated this proposal and noted that including all of Merryhill Terrace in our proposed Kingstone ward would require creating an unviable parish ward in Hereford City. We do not consider that evidence has been received to justify creating an unviable ward in this area and are therefore confirming our proposed ward of Newton Farm as final.

90 To the north of Hereford we received representations from Councillor Robertson, Burghill and Pipe & Lyde parish councils and a local resident all of which expressed concern at the geographic size of our proposed Burghill ward. They considered that the ward contained too many parishes for a single councillor but did not suggest an alternative warding pattern for the area. At the draft recommendations stage we considered alternative warding patterns for the area, but concluded that our proposed Burghill ward provided the best balance between the criteria whilst not splitting parishes which had joint working arrangements. Having considered the evidence received we have decided not to amend the boundaries of our proposed Burghill ward.

91 The other representations we received covering this part of the authority related to ward names. We have made changes to a number of ward names in this area as a result of submissions received: Kingstone will be named Wormside, after the Worm Brook; Clehonger will be named Stoney Street, a name suggested by the Council, after the name of a Roman Road in the area; Burghill will be named Queenswood; and Dinedor will be named Dinedor Hill, to give the ward the name of a local landmark instead of one village. Our proposed Lugwardine ward will be renamed Hagley as it is identical to the current ward of that name.

92 With the exception of the name changes, we confirm our draft recommendations for the Hereford Hinterland area as final.

Conclusions

93 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	53	53
Number of electoral wards	53	53
Average number of electors per councillor	2,681	2,793
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation
 Herefordshire Council should comprise 53 councillors serving 53 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

94 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

95 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Herefordshire Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

96 At draft recommendations stage, consequential parish electoral arrangements were proposed for the parishes of Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury, Bromyard & Winslow, Ross-on-Wye and Ross Rural.

97 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral

arrangements for Bromyard & Winslow parish.

Final recommendation

Bromyard & Winslow Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Bromyard East (returning four members) and Bromyard West (returning 14 members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

98 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Hereford parish.

Final recommendation

Hereford City Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing 16 wards: Aylestone Hill (returning one member), Bobblestock (returning one member), Central (returning one member), College (returning one member), Eign Hill (returning one member), Greyfriars (returning one member), Hinton & Hunderton (returning two members), Kings Acre (returning one member), Newton Farm (returning two members), Racecourse (returning one member), Red Hill (returning one member), Saxon Gate (returning one member), Tupsley (returning one member), Victoria Park (returning one member), Whitecross (returning one member) and Widemarsh (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

99 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Ledbury parish.

Final recommendation

Ledbury Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Ledbury North (returning six members), Ledbury South (returning six members) and Ledbury West (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

100 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Leominster parish.

Final recommendation

Leominster Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Leominster East (returning four members), Leominster North (returning four members), Leominster South (returning four members) and Leominster West (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

101 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Ross-on-Wye parish.

Final recommendation

Ross-on-Wye Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Ross East (returning four members), Ross North (returning four members) and Ross West (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

102 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Ross Rural parish.

Final recommendation

Ross Rural Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Greytrees (returning five members) and Hildersley (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

102 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Herefordshire Council in 2015.

Equalities

103 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Herefordshire

104 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Herefordshire Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Herefordshire Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Herefordshire on our interactive maps at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arrow	1	2,884	2,884	8%	2,958	2,958	6%
2	Aylestone Hill	1	2,670	2,670	0%	2,739	2,739	-2%
3	Backbury	1	2,306	2,306	-14%	2,712	2,712	-3%
4	Belmont Rural	1	2,819	2,819	5%	2,872	2,872	3%
5	Birch	1	2,467	2,467	-8%	2,523	2,523	-10%
6	Bircher	1	3,069	3,069	14%	3,146	3,146	13%
7	Bishops Frome & Cradley	1	2,532	2,532	-6%	2,598	2,598	-7%
8	Bobblestock	1	2,746	2,746	2%	2,832	2,832	1%
9	Bromyard Bringsty	1	2,647	2,647	-1%	2,687	2,687	-4%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10	Bromyard West	1	2,558	2,558	-5%	2,795	2,795	0%
11	Castle	1	2,478	2,478	-8%	2,521	2,521	-10%
12	Central	1	2,505	2,505	-7%	2,672	2,672	-4%
13	College	1	2,887	2,887	8%	2,952	2,952	6%
14	Credenhill	1	2,488	2,488	-7%	2,523	2,523	-10%
15	Dinedor Hill	1	2,794	2,794	4%	2,883	2,883	3%
16	Eign Hill	1	2,630	2,630	-2%	2,710	2,710	-3%
17	Golden Valley North	1	2,399	2,399	-11%	2,491	2,491	-11%
18	Golden Valley South	1	2,612	2,612	-3%	2,654	2,654	-5%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19	Greyfriars	1	2,828	2,828	5%	2,947	2,947	5%
20	Hagley	1	2,940	2,940	10%	3,036	3,036	9%
21	Hampton	1	2,796	2,796	4%	2,849	2,849	2%
22	Hinton & Hunderton	1	2,904	2,904	8%	2,998	2,998	7%
23	Holmer	1	2,371	2,371	-12%	2,966	2,966	6%
24	Hope End	1	2,837	2,837	6%	2,910	2,910	4%
25	Kerne Bridge	1	2,558	2,558	-5%	2,612	2,612	-6%
26	Kings Acre	1	2,719	2,719	1%	2,794	2,794	0%
27	Kington	1	2,589	2,589	-3%	2,644	2,644	-5%
28	Ledbury North	1	2,582	2,582	-4%	2,724	2,724	-2%
29	Ledbury South	1	2,644	2,644	-1%	2,729	2,729	-2%
30	Ledbury West	1	2,633	2,633	-2%	2,633	2,633	-6%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
31	Leominster East	1	2,881	2,881	7%	3,023	3,023	8%
32	Leominster North & Rural	1	2,887	2,887	8%	2,981	2,981	7%
33	Leominster South	1	2,686	2,686	0%	2,804	2,804	0%
34	Leominster West	1	2,388	2,388	-11%	2,956	2,956	6%
35	Llangarron	1	2,692	2,692	0%	2,746	2,746	-2%
36	Mortimer	1	2,609	2,609	-3%	2,677	2,677	-4%
37	Newton Farm	1	2,932	2,932	9%	2,997	2,997	7%
38	Old Gore	1	2,577	2,577	-4%	2,630	2,630	-6%
39	Penyard	1	2,682	2,682	0%	2,725	2,725	-2%
40	Queenswood	1	2,695	2,695	1%	2,802	2,802	0%
41	Red Hill	1	2,918	2,918	9%	2,958	2,958	6%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
42 Ross East	1	2,923	2,923	9%	2,935	2,935	5%
43 Ross North	1	2,659	2,659	-1%	2,961	2,961	6%
44 Ross West	1	2,714	2,714	1%	2,809	2,809	1%
45 Saxon Gate	1	2,861	2,861	7%	2,938	2,938	5%
46 Stoney Street	1	2,794	2,794	4%	2,842	2,842	2%
47 Sutton Walls	1	2,496	2,496	-7%	2,567	2,567	-8%
48 Three Crosses	1	2,743	2,743	2%	2,782	2,782	0%
49 Tupsley	1	2,611	2,611	-3%	2,677	2,677	-4%
50 Weobley	1	2,840	2,840	6%	2,930	2,930	5%
51 Whitecross	1	2,691	2,691	0%	2,735	2,735	-2%
52 Widemarsh	1	2,186	2,186	-18%	2,633	2,633	-6%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Herefordshire Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
53 Wormside	1	2,757	2,757	3%	2,837	2,837	2%
Totals	53	142,114	-	-	148,055	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,681	-	-	2,793	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Herefordshire Council.

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

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or district, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or district council
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