

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Slough

Report to The Electoral Commission

June 2002

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Slough is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Kru Desai
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 councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Slough.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Slough's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 15 January 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Slough:

- **In six of the 14 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and three wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in seven wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 97-98) are that:

- **Slough Borough Council should have 41 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 14 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In 10 of the proposed 14 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 14 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 18 July 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Map reference |
|----|----------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | Baylis & Stoke | 3 | part of Baylis ward; part of Farnham ward; part of Stoke ward | Large map |
| 2 | Britwell | 3 | part of Britwell ward; part of Farnham ward | Large map |
| 3 | Central | 3 | part of Central ward; part of Baylis ward; part of Stoke ward | Large map |
| 4 | Chalvey | 3 | part of Chalvey ward; part of Baylis ward; part of Farnham ward | Large map |
| 5 | Cippenham Green | 3 | part of Cippenham ward | Large map |
| 6 | Cippenham Meadows | 3 | part of Cippenham ward; part of Chalvey ward | Large map |
| 7 | Colnbrook with Poyle | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> ; Colnbrook with Poyle parish | Large map |
| 8 | Farnham | 3 | part of Farnham ward; part of Baylis ward; part of Britwell ward | Large map |
| 9 | Foxborough | 3 | part of Foxborough ward; part of Langley St Mary's ward | Large map |
| 10 | Haymill | 3 | <i>Unchanged</i> ; Haymill ward | Large map |
| 11 | Kedermister | 3 | Kedermister ward; part of Central ward | Large map |
| 12 | Langley St Mary's | 3 | part of Langley St Mary's ward; part of Central ward | Large map |
| 13 | Upton | 3 | Upton ward; part of Foxborough ward | Large map |
| 14 | Wexham Lea | 3 | Wexham Lea ward; part of Central ward | Large map |

Notes: 1 The borough contains the parishes of Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Slough

| 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 Baylis & Stoke | 3 | 6,775 | 2,258 | 16 | 6,045 | 2,015 | 3 |
| 2 Britwell | 3 | 5,843 | 1,948 | 0 | 5,777 | 1,926 | -1 |
| 3 Central | 3 | 6,558 | 2,186 | 12 | 5,997 | 1,999 | 2 |
| 4 Chalvey | 3 | 5,740 | 1,913 | -2 | 5,576 | 1,859 | -5 |
| 5 Cippenham Green | 3 | 5,963 | 1,988 | 2 | 5,719 | 1,907 | -2 |
| 6 Cippenham Meadows | 3 | 6,404 | 2,135 | 9 | 6,075 | 2,025 | 4 |
| 7 Colnbrook with Poyle | 2 | 3,808 | 1,904 | -3 | 3,526 | 1,763 | -10 |
| 8 Farnham | 3 | 6,111 | 2,037 | 4 | 6,032 | 2,011 | 3 |
| 9 Foxborough | 3 | 4,360 | 1,453 | -26 | 5,477 | 1,826 | -6 |
| 10 Haymill | 3 | 6,190 | 2,063 | 6 | 6,232 | 2,077 | 6 |
| 11 Kedermister | 3 | 5,797 | 1,932 | -1 | 5,841 | 1,947 | 0 |
| 12 Langley St Mary's | 3 | 5,220 | 1,740 | -11 | 5,664 | 1,888 | -3 |
| 13 Upton | 3 | 5,336 | 1,779 | -9 | 5,845 | 1,948 | 0 |
| 14 Wexham Lea | 3 | 6,054 | 2,018 | 3 | 6,184 | 2,061 | 6 |
| Totals | 41 | 80,159 | - | - | 79,990 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,955 | - | - | 1,951 | - |

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Slough. The six unitary authorities of Berkshire have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Slough's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1979 (Report no. 363). Since undertaking that review, Slough became a unitary authority 1998. The change in unitary status has led to the loss of 11 county councillors, bringing the total number of councillors for Slough from 52 to 41.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Slough Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, Berkshire Local Councils Association, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a

press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 September 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 15 January 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Slough*, and ended on 11 March 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The borough of Slough comprises the north-east section of the county of Berkshire, and was granted unitary status in 1998. The borough covers an area of some 3,000 hectares and has a population of approximately 108,000. It adjoins the county of Buckinghamshire to the north and west and part of Surrey to the east. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead is to the south. The borough is well served by road and rail communications, including the M4 to the south, the M25 to the east and a main line rail connection with central London. The borough has a traditionally strong economic base; Heathrow Airport is situated nearby and the Slough Trading Estate, one of the largest of its kind in Europe, is situated in the borough.

11 The borough contains the parishes of Colnbrook with Poyle, in the south of the borough, and Britwell and Wexham Court in the north. The three parishes comprise 13 per cent of the borough's total electorate. The total electorate of the borough is 80,159 (February 2001). The Council presently has 41 members who are elected from 14 wards – 13 of the wards are each represented by three councillors, and one (Colnbrook & Poyle) is represented by two councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

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

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,955 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will decrease to 1,951 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 six of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Cippenham ward where each of its three councillors represents 54 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Slough

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Baylis | 3 | 5,360 | 1,787 | -9 | 5,118 | 1,706 | -13 |
| 2 Britwell | 3 | 6,153 | 2,051 | 5 | 6,139 | 2,046 | 5 |
| 3 Central | 3 | 6,282 | 2,094 | 7 | 5,700 | 1,900 | -3 |
| 4 Chalvey | 3 | 7,979 | 2,660 | 36 | 7,662 | 2,554 | 31 |
| 5 Cippenham | 3 | 9,034 | 3,011 | 54 | 8,664 | 2,888 | 48 |
| 6 Colnbrook & Poyle | 2 | 3,808 | 1,904 | -3 | 3,526 | 1,763 | -10 |
| 7 Farnham | 3 | 5,180 | 1,727 | -12 | 5,078 | 1,693 | -13 |
| 8 Foxborough | 3 | 3,979 | 1,326 | -32 | 5,015 | 1,672 | -14 |
| 9 Haymill | 3 | 6,190 | 2,063 | 6 | 6,232 | 2,077 | 6 |
| 10 Kedermister | 3 | 4,743 | 1,581 | -19 | 4,827 | 1,609 | -18 |
| 11 Langley St Mary's | 3 | 5,539 | 1,846 | -6 | 6,175 | 2,058 | 6 |
| 12 Stoke | 3 | 5,359 | 1,786 | -9 | 4,631 | 1,544 | -21 |
| 13 Upton | 3 | 5,018 | 1,673 | -14 | 5,510 | 1,837 | -6 |
| 14 Wexham Lea | 3 | 5,535 | 1,845 | -6 | 5,713 | 1,904 | -2 |
| Totals | 41 | 80,159 | - | - | 79,990 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,955 | - | - | 1,951 | - |

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Upton ward were relatively over-represented by 14 per cent, while electors in Haymill ward were relatively under-represented by 6 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received nine representations, including borough-wide schemes from Slough Borough Council, Slough Borough Council Conservative Group and Slough Borough Council Independent, Liberal and Liberal Democrat Group. The LGCE also received representations from Slough Conservative Association, the United Kingdom Independence Party, a parish council and three local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Slough*.

15 The draft recommendations were based on the Conservative Group's proposals for the west of the borough, which achieved significant improvement in electoral equality. However, the LGCE moved away from the Conservative Group's proposals for the east of Slough and based its draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. To accommodate both borough-wide schemes, the LGCE formulated its own proposals for the centre of the borough, although its proposals reflected parts of both borough-wide schemes. It proposed that:

- Slough Borough Council should be served by 41 councillors, the same as at present, representing 14 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries.

Draft Recommendation

Slough Borough Council should comprise 41 councillors, serving 14 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 10 of the 14 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

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

Slough Borough Council

18 The Borough Council “unanimously welcomed” the draft recommendations and considered that they would secure significantly improved electoral equality across the borough.

Slough Borough Council Conservative Group

19 Slough Borough Council Conservative Group (‘the Conservative Group’) supported the draft recommendations, noting that electoral equality would be achieved “as far as practical”. They particularly welcomed the retention of the existing two-member Colnbrook with Poyle ward, and the existing council size of 41 members. The Conservative Group noted that the proposed wards utilised clearly defined and logical boundaries and concluded that the draft recommendations would ensure that existing communities in Slough would retain their core identities.

Slough Borough Council Independent, Liberal and Liberal Democrat Group

20 Slough Borough Council Independent, Liberal and Liberal Democrat Group (‘the ILLD Group’) noted that elements of their Stage One proposals had been incorporated in the draft recommendations. While they had minor reservations regarding some aspects of the LGCE’s proposals, the ILLD Group stated that they were “willing to overlook them for the common good” and gave their “full-hearted support” to the draft recommendations.

Parish Councils

21 Wexham Court Parish Council broadly supported the draft recommendations in its area and considered there is a “genuine community of interest” between the Borderside area and the remainder of the proposed Wexham Lea ward. However, it argued that areas to the west of Borderside and north of Shaggy Calf Lane do not share community identities and interests and should not be included in the proposed ward. The Chairman of Wexham Court Parish Council, writing in a personal capacity, concurred with the Parish Council. He considered that an amendment to the western boundary of the proposed Wexham Lea ward would still secure good electoral equality.

Other Representations

22 A further three representations were received in response to the draft recommendations from a local political group and residents. Slough Conservative Association broadly supported the draft recommendations and particularly welcomed the proposed warding arrangements in the Cippenham and Chalvey areas of the borough. However, it expressed reservations over the proposals in the Foxborough and Kederminster areas, noting that the A4 London Road would be divided between three borough wards “within only a few hundred yards”. A member of the public supported the draft recommendations. A local resident supported the draft recommendations. However she proposed alternative names for the proposed Baylis ward in order to reflect the fact that the Stoke community comprises a significant proportion of the proposed ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

23 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Slough 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 borough”.

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 within 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 the 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 identities 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 13 per cent increase in the electorate of Slough borough. At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting a slight decrease in the electorate of less than 1 per cent from 80,159 to 79,990 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects the largest decline in electorate to be in Stoke ward, although a significant decrease is also expected in Central ward. However, there are a number of development sites in the town, and the Borough Council projected that the electorate of the existing Foxborough ward will increase by approximately 20 per cent over the next five years. 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. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

28 The Borough Council justified the projected decline in electorate in the existing Stoke and Central wards by stating that there were no significant housing developments in these wards and argued that declining household size and birth rates made such a decline in electorate likely. Furthermore, it noted that Stoke ward in particular had a high proportion of younger electors and argued that an element of this population would move out of the ward by 2006. In respect of Foxborough ward, the Borough Council noted that a number of major housing developments would be completed over the course of the next five years, particularly the Ditton Road site and the caravan site on Ditton Park Road.

29 The Conservative Group questioned the Borough Council's projections for the existing Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards. It noted that a number of objections had been

raised with regard to the proposed Market Lane development in Langley St Mary's ward and argued that a further planning inquiry was likely before consent would be given for the development. It also argued that a number of demolitions in Foxborough ward would have an impact on the Borough Council's projected increase in electorate for this ward. However, both the Conservative Group and the ILLD Group used the Borough Council's electorate forecasts as the basis of their proposed warding arrangements.

30 The LGCE carefully considered the Borough Council's electorate projections for Slough and the evidence provided by the Conservative Group. It noted that, notwithstanding its reservations, the Conservative Group had used the Borough Council's projections as the basis of its proposed warding arrangements. Having accepted that this is an inexact science, and acknowledging the difference of opinion in respect of electorate projections for some parts of the borough, the LGCE stated that it was satisfied that the Borough Council's electorate projections represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

31 No comments on the Council's electorate forecasts were received during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

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

33 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the Borough Council's, and Conservative and ILLD Groups' proposal to retain the existing council size of 41-members. It noted the consensus in support of retaining the existing council size and was persuaded that a council of 41 members would ensure an equitable distribution of councillors between the primary areas of the borough.

34 During Stage Three the Borough Council, the Conservative Group, the ILLD Group and Slough Conservative Association all supported the draft recommendation to retain a council of 41 members. Having considered the evidence received, we concur with the LGCE that a council size of 41 will ensure the effective representation of the constituent communities of Slough. Having noted the consensus in support of retaining the existing council size, we have decided to confirm the LGCE's draft recommendation for a council size of 41 members as final.

Electoral Arrangements

35 A number of considerations emerged which assisted the LGCE in preparing its draft recommendations. It recognised that Slough is a diverse borough that has been subject to notable changes in the size and distribution of its electorate over recent years. It acknowledged that all three borough-wide schemes put forward at Stage One would secure much improved electoral equality by 2006 and noted some areas of consensus. In particular, the LGCE noted that all three borough-wide schemes had proposed retaining the existing Colnbrook & Poyle ward and the substantial re-warding of the Cippenham area in order to take account of substantial residential development that has taken place in this area over recent years.

36 The LGCE based its draft recommendations for the east of Slough on the Borough Council's proposals, which it considered would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria. In particular, it considered that the Council's proposals would result in the establishment of wards that adhere to clearly defined ground detail. The LGCE was not persuaded that the Conservative Group and ILLD Group's proposals for this area would provide sufficiently clear and logical ward boundaries, particularly in the Kedermister area. In the west of the borough the LGCE based its draft recommendations on the Conservative

Group's proposals. It noted that they would provide excellent long-term levels of electoral equality while not radically altering the existing warding configuration in this area. The LGCE concluded that the ILLD Group's proposals would not provide sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundaries and therefore would not facilitate the effective and convenient representation of electors in Slough. However, the LGCE noted that the ILLD Group's proposed warding arrangements reflected parts of the Conservative Group's proposals, particularly in the north and west of the borough.

37 In order to accommodate both the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposals as part of its draft recommendations, the LGCE put forward its own warding arrangements for the centre of the borough and proposed revised three-member Central and Wexham Lea wards. It considered that its proposals in this area would provide an accurate reflection of the views expressed by interested parties at Stage One. The LGCE also made minor amendments to several of the proposed wards, affecting no electors, to secure ward boundaries that would be tied to clearly identifiable ground detail.

38 At Stage Three there was a substantial degree of consensus in support of the draft recommendations. All three political groups on the Council as well as Slough Conservative Association and two local residents supported the draft recommendations. Wexham Court Parish Council and its Chairman broadly supported the draft recommendations in their area but requested a further modification to the proposed Wexham Lea ward. A local resident put forward alternative ward names for the proposed Baylis ward to more accurately reflect the geographical extent of the proposed ward.

39 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations as final, subject to adopting an alternative ward name for the proposed Baylis ward. We consider that our final recommendations will provide a better balance between the statutory criteria than the current arrangements and ensure the effective and convenient representation of electors in Slough. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards;
- (b) Baylis, Central, Stoke and Wexham Lea wards;
- (c) Chalvey, Cippenham and Upton wards;
- (d) Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards;
- (e) Colnbrook & Poyle ward.

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

Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards

41 The existing wards of Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's are located in the east of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards have 32 per cent, 19 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (14 per cent fewer, 18 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2006).

42 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Foxborough ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies broadly to the east of Ditton Park Road, and the part of Langley St Mary's ward that lies to the south of Willoughby Road, Kennet Road and Burroway Road. The Borough Council argued that its proposed ward would utilise a clear boundary formed by main roads in the area. It stated that local amenities and facilities situated on Parlaunt Road (which forms the current boundary between the existing Foxborough and Langley St Mary's wards) provide a community focus for residents on either side of this road. It proposed a revised three-member Langley St Mary's ward comprising the remainder of the

existing ward and the part of the existing Central ward that lies to the north of Langley Road and up to the rear of properties on the west side of Gilmore Crescent and Foxherne. The Borough Council argued that electors in the west of its proposed ward identify with the Langley area of the borough and that it would combine similar medium-density housing developments in the same borough ward. The Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Kedermister ward comprising the existing ward, the part of Central ward that lies to the south of Langley Road and the part of Foxborough ward that lies broadly to the west of Ditton Park Road. The Borough Council argued that its proposed ward utilised clear boundaries and united communities that share numerous local amenities and facilities.

43 The Conservative Group proposed a revised three-member Foxborough ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the north of the A4 Bath Road and the part of Kedermister ward that lies to the east of the footpath that runs adjacent to Langleywood School. It stated that its proposed ward would combine housing estates of a similar nature and would enable the “core community to be retained”. The Conservative Group proposed that the rest of the existing Kedermister ward be combined with the part of Foxborough ward that lies to the south of the A4 Bath Road and that part of Central ward to the east of Uxbridge Road, in a revised three-member Kedermister ward. It acknowledged that its proposals would divide the Trelawney estate between separate borough wards but argued that this was “inevitable and necessary” to achieve electoral equality and stated that its proposed ward would not divide the core communities of the area. The Conservative Group proposed retaining the existing three-member Langley St Mary’s ward, stating that the current ward secured good electoral equality and adhered to clear and well-defined ward boundaries.

44 The ILLD Group proposed a revised three-member Langley St Mary’s ward comprising the part of the existing ward up to the rear of properties on the west side of Chestnut Avenue and The Drive. It stated that the ward would contain the “core of the ancient village of Langley Marish”. It proposed a revised three-member Foxborough ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the north of the A4 Bath Road and the part of Kedermister ward that lies to the east of the footpath that runs south from Langley Road to the A4 Bath Road. It stated that the proposed ward would combine post-war London overspill housing, and that many residents of the proposed ward worked at Heathrow Airport. As detailed below, it proposed that the remainder of the existing Foxborough ward be transferred to a revised three-member Upton ward and that the remainder of the existing Kedermister ward be combined in a new three-member Central North ward.

45 Slough Conservative Association expressed support for the Conservative Group’s proposals arguing that they would avoid “unnecessary change” and separation of established communities. A local resident and representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party reiterated these views. While noting that the proposed Kedermister ward was “somewhat of an anomaly”, he argued that this was due to the topography of the town and stated that the Conservative Group’s proposals utilised clear and distinct ward boundaries. A member of the public proposed that Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary’s wards should be named Langley East, Langley South and Langley North respectively.

46 In its draft recommendations the LGCE noted that all the proposals for this area would ensure much improved electoral equality by 2006. However, it concluded that the Borough Council’s proposals would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria. It considered that the Conservative Group’s and the ILLD Group’s proposals would divide communities in the Kedermister area. It considered that the Conservative Group’s proposed Kedermister ward would not utilise a sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundary and would combine a number of distinct communities that are separated from each other by a number of main roads. In particular, the LGCE considered that the Goodman Park area identifies with adjoining communities towards the centre of Slough, and noted that the Conservative Group proposed combining it with communities to the south of the A4 Bath Road with which it shares few direct communication links.

47 The LGCE acknowledged that the existing Langley St Mary's ward would ensure a good level of electoral equality and accepted that Parlaunt Road would provide a clear and recognisable feature on which to base borough ward boundaries. However, the LGCE emphasised that it must adopt a borough-wide approach when formulating its recommendations and concluded that the Borough Council's proposals for this part of Slough would respect existing community identities while ensuring clearly identifiable borough ward boundaries. The LGCE considered that the existing ward names of Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's would reflect the constituent communities of the proposed wards and was not persuaded that the proposed ward names put forward by a member of the public would sufficiently identify the geographical extent of the proposed wards in this area. It acknowledged the limitations caused by the particular shape of the borough in this area. However, the LGCE concluded that the Borough Council's proposals would utilise clearly identifiable ward boundaries that respect community identities and interests. The LGCE therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements for this area as part of its draft recommendations.

48 At Stage Three the Borough Council, the Conservative Group and the ILLD Group fully supported the draft recommendations for this area. Slough Conservative Association expressed reservations in respect of the proposed Foxborough and Kedermister wards. It noted that a section of the A4 London Road would be divided between three borough wards "within only a few hundred yards" and requested that an alternative warding configuration be considered in this area.

49 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and note the broad consensus in support of the draft recommendations for this area. While we note the views of the Conservative Association, we consider that the draft recommendations would ensure clearly defined and recognisable ward boundaries. As acknowledged by the Conservative Association, the particular topography of the borough is a constraining factor when considering alternative warding arrangements for this area, and we consider that the draft recommendations provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in the Foxborough and Kedermister areas. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards as final.

50 Under our final recommendations, Foxborough, Kedermister and Langley St Mary's wards would have 26 per cent, 1 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent fewer, equal to, and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Our final proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Baylis, Central, Stoke and Wexham Lea wards

51 The existing wards of Baylis, Central, Stoke and Wexham Lea are situated in the central and northern part of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Wexham Lea ward comprises the parish of Wexham Court and an unparished area of the borough. Under existing arrangements, Baylis, Central and Stoke wards have 9 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. (13 per cent, 3 per cent and 21 per cent fewer than the average by 2006). Wexham Lea ward has 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently, which is forecast to improve to 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2006.

52 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Wexham Lea ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the west of the A412 Uxbridge Road and the part of the existing Central ward that lies to the north of the Grand Union Canal. It argued that Wexham Road provided a focus for communities situated either side of this road and stated that its proposed ward utilised clearly identifiable boundaries. It proposed a revised three-member Central ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies broadly to the

west of Gilmore Crescent and Foxherne, the part of the existing Baylis ward that lies broadly to the east of the B416 Stoke Road and William Street, and the Rochford's Gardens area from the existing Wexham Lea ward. The Borough Council acknowledged that its proposed Central ward had an "irregular shape" but stated that its boundaries adhered to clear geographical detail and united communities that identify with the centre of Slough. Furthermore, it noted that its proposals would retain the whole of the commercial area known as the Business Village in the same borough ward.

53 The Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Baylis ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the west of the B416 Stoke Road and north of the London to Penzance railway line, and the part of the existing Stoke ward that lies broadly to the south of Granville Avenue. It also proposed that the part of the existing Farnham ward that lies broadly to the east of Liverpool Road and south of Hampshire Drive, and including the south-east part of Slough Trading Estate, be incorporated in the proposed ward. As detailed below, the Borough Council proposed that the rest of the existing Stoke ward, broadly to the north of Baylis Court School and Granville Playing Field, be combined in a new three-member Manor Park ward. The Borough Council stated that its proposed Baylis ward utilised clear ward boundaries and comprised areas of high-density housing that share clear and convenient communication links.

54 The Conservative Group proposed a revised three-member Central ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the west of the A412 Uxbridge Road, the part of Baylis ward that lies to the north of the London to Penzance railway line and east of Stoke Poges Lane, and that part of Stoke ward to the rear of properties on the east side of Hawthorne Crescent. It argued that the proposed ward followed a clear and logical boundary and would combine areas that share a distinct socio-economic make-up. The Conservative Group proposed that the remainder of Stoke ward be combined with the part of Baylis ward that lies to the north of the London to Penzance railway line and broadly to the rear of properties on Belfast Avenue in a revised three-member Baylis ward. It stated that the proposed ward would "create a more cohesive community" and noted that residents in both the Baylis and Stoke areas make use of retail facilities situated on Oatlands Drive. The Conservative Group proposed retaining the existing three-member Wexham Lea ward. It argued that the existing ward would ensure good electoral equality and reflect community identities in this area.

55 The ILLD Group proposed a new three-member Central North ward comprising the part of the existing Kedermister ward that lies to the west of the footpath that runs south from Langley Road to the A4 London Road, the part of Central ward that lies broadly to the east of Wexham Road and William Street, and the part of Langley St Mary's ward that lies to the west of Chestnut Avenue and The Drive. It stated that the proposed ward would contain an "eclectic" mix of industry, social and private housing and would reflect the diverse social composition of Slough as a whole. The ILLD Group proposed a new three-member Stoke North ward comprising the existing ward and the part of Central ward that lies broadly to the north of Kendal Drive. It also proposed a new three-member Stoke South or Baylis ward comprising the part of the existing Baylis ward that lies to the north of the London to Penzance railway line and the part of Central ward that lies to the west of Wexham Road and south of Shaggy Calf Lane. The ILLD Group stated that its proposed wards would contain a mix of private and ex-council housing and argued that communities on either side of Stoke Road (which would be situated in its proposed Stoke North ward) have a strong relationship in that they share tenants' meetings and a housing association. It proposed that the existing Wexham Lea ward be retained, arguing that the area has a strong community identity.

56 The Chairman of Wexham Court Parish Council argued that the Borough Council's proposed Wexham Lea ward was intended to offer an electoral advantage to the Labour Group, which has a majority on the Borough Council. He argued that the Rochford's Gardens area identifies with communities in Wexham Lea, and that both areas share numerous local amenities and facilities. He stated that the Borderside area of the existing Central ward has a

“natural affinity” with the Wexham Lea area and considered its transfer to a revised Wexham Lea ward to be an “appropriate grouping” for the purposes of borough warding. A local resident and representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party supported the Conservative Group’s proposals in this area, arguing that its proposals would retain and strengthen established communities. A member of the public proposed that Wexham Lea ward be renamed Upton Lea & Wexham Court.

57 The LGCE based its draft recommendations for part of this area on the Conservative Group’s proposals. Notwithstanding the significant improvement in electoral equality achieved by all three borough-wide schemes, it was not persuaded that the Borough Council’s proposals would adequately reflect community identities and interests in this area. In particular, it considered that the Rochford’s Gardens area shares close links with communities to its west, and the LGCE expressed concern over the extent to which it identifies with areas contained within the Borough Council’s proposed Central ward. The LGCE considered that the Grand Union Canal provides an effective community boundary between the Rochford’s Gardens and Goodmans Park areas and concluded that it should be retained as the ward boundary between the Central and Wexham Lea areas of the borough. It considered that electors to the south of Shaggy Calf Lane identify with communities towards the centre of Slough and was not persuaded that this area should be transferred to a revised Wexham Lea ward.

58 The LGCE was not persuaded that the ILLD Group’s proposals would adequately reflect community identities and interests. In particular, it noted that the proposed Central North ward would include the area to the east of Hawtrey Close which it considered identifies with communities to its east rather than with areas situated towards the centre of Slough. It also noted that this area shares convenient communication links with the Langley St Mary’s area. The LGCE recognised that the ILLD Group’s proposed Stoke North and Baylis wards would utilise clear ward boundaries and would result in the least change to warding arrangements in this area but concluded that further improvement in the long-term level of electoral equality for these wards was achievable.

59 The LGCE concluded that the Conservative Group’s proposed Baylis ward would provide a more accurate reflection of community identities and interests than the other two warding proposals. However, it proposed a number of relatively minor amendments to the proposed ward in order to further reflect community identities while also ensuring clear and distinct ward boundaries. As detailed below, the LGCE considered that Buckingham Avenue East should be incorporated in the Conservative Group’s proposed Farnham ward. It considered that this amendment would have greater regard for community identities in this area.

60 As stated earlier, the LGCE proposed adopting the Borough Council’s proposals in the east of the borough. In order to accommodate its proposals, and those of the Conservative Group to the west, the LGCE put forward its own warding arrangements for the Central and Wexham Lea areas of the borough. As stated above, it considered that the Rochford’s Gardens area should remain within a revised Wexham Lea ward. However, it concurred with the views expressed by the Chairman of Wexham Court Parish Council that the Borderside area identifies with adjacent communities in the Wexham Lea area. The LGCE therefore proposed a revised three-member Wexham Lea ward comprising the existing ward and the part of Central ward that lies to the rear of properties on the north side of Shaggy Calf Lane. It also proposed a revised three-member Central ward comprising that part of the existing ward up to the rear of properties on the east side of Goodmans Park and Hawtrey Close, up to the rear of properties on the north side of Shaggy Calf Lane and broadly to the north of Wellington Street. The LGCE’s proposed Central ward would also include that part of Baylis ward to the east of Stoke Poges Lane, to the north of the London to Penzance railway line, and that part of Stoke ward up to the rear of Hawthorne Crescent.

61 In respect of ward names, the LGCE was not persuaded to adopt the alternative name of Upton Lea & Wexham Court that was put forward by a member of the public at Stage One. It considered that the existing ward name of Wexham Lea adequately reflects the constituent communities of the proposed ward and noted that all three borough-wide schemes proposed retaining this ward name.

62 At Stage Three the Borough Council and the ILLD Group supported the draft recommendations. The Conservative Group also supported the draft recommendations and noted that they broadly reflected its Stage One proposals in the Wexham Lea and Central areas of the borough. Slough Conservative Association concurred with the Conservative Group and supported the draft recommendations for this area.

63 Wexham Court Parish Council broadly supported the proposed Wexham Lea ward and supported the transfer of the Borderside area to the proposed ward. However, it argued that areas to the west of Borderside and north of Shaggy Calf Lane do not share identities and interests with the Wexham Lea area and requested that the western boundary of the proposed ward be amended to reflect this. The Chairman of Wexham Court Parish Council (writing in a personal capacity) concurred with the views of the Parish Council. He also argued that the area of the proposed ward to the west of Borderside and north of Shaggy Calf Lane does not share community identities and interests with the Wexham Lea area and considered that its inclusion would “over-inflate” the electorate of the proposed ward. A local resident supported the draft recommendations and considered that the proposed Baylis ward would be “more compact” and reflect the statutory criteria. However, she argued that the Stoke area should be recognised in the name of the proposed ward and therefore put forward the alternative ward names of Stoke-Baylis and Stoke Manor.

64 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and note the significant degree of consensus in support of the draft recommendations. We note the views of Wexham Court Parish Council and its Chairman in respect of the proposed Wexham Lea ward and recognise that their proposed amendment to the western boundary of this ward would secure good electoral equality in Wexham Lea ward. However, we must adopt a borough-wide approach when formulating our recommendations and consider the impact on adjoining wards. We consider that Shaggy Calf Lane provides a clear and effective boundary between the proposed Central and Wexham Lea wards and note the cross-party support for the proposed ward on the Borough Council.

65 Having considered the evidence received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for the proposed Baylis, Central and Wexham Lea wards as final, subject to one amendment to the proposed ward name of Baylis. We recognise that the Stoke community comprises a significant part of the proposed Baylis ward and concur with the views expressed by a local resident that this should be reflected in the proposed ward name. We therefore propose that Baylis ward be renamed Baylis & Stoke in order to more accurately reflect the constituent communities of the proposed ward. Under our final recommendations, Baylis & Stoke, Central and Wexham Lea wards would have 16 per cent, 12 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 2 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2006). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Chalvey, Cippenham and Upton wards

66 The existing wards of Chalvey, Cippenham and Upton are situated in the south of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Chalvey, Cippenham and Upton wards have 36 per cent more, 54 per cent more and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (31 per cent more, 48 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2006).

67 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed only a minor realignment to the eastern boundary of Upton ward, proposing the transfer of the area that lies broadly to the east of Courtlands Avenue and Drake Avenue to a revised three-member Kedermister ward (as detailed earlier). The Borough Council stated that its proposed Upton ward combined areas that share clear communication and transport links and would ensure that the identity of the Upton area was preserved. It proposed combining the part of the existing Chalvey ward that lies broadly to the east of the A355 Tuns Lane, but including the Chalvey Grove area, with the part of Baylis ward that lies to the south of the London to Penzance railway line and west of Stoke Poges Lane in a revised three-member Chalvey ward. It argued that the proposed ward recognised community identities and interests.

68 The Borough Council recognised that warding arrangements in the Cippenham area needed to reflect the extensive housing development that had occurred in recent years. As a consequence, it proposed a new three-member Cippenham Meadows ward comprising the part of the existing Cippenham ward that lies broadly to the south of Mercian Way and up to the rear of properties on the north side of Lower Cippenham Lane. It proposed that this ward also contain the part of Chalvey ward that lies broadly to the west of the A355 Tuns Lane and the Ajax Avenue area from the existing Farnham ward. The Borough Council argued that the proposed ward would contain all the recent housing development in the Cippenham area and combine areas of similar demographic composition. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Cippenham ward be combined with the part of Farnham ward that lies to the south of the London to Penzance railway line and west of Leigh Road, and the part of Haymill ward that lies to the south of the London to Penzance railway line and east of Whittle Parkway in a new three-member Cippenham Green ward. The Borough Council argued that its proposed ward recognised the identity of the more established communities in the Cippenham area and argued that communities to the north of the A4 Bath Road which are currently situated in Haymill ward identify with the Cippenham area.

69 The Conservative Group proposed retaining the existing three-member Upton ward, stating that this would have regard for community identities. It proposed a revised three-member Chalvey ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the east of the A355 Tuns Lane, Paxton Avenue and Tintern Close, the part of Baylis ward that lies to the south of the London to Penzance railway line and the part of Farnham ward that lies to the east of Galvin Road. It considered that its proposed ward would combine areas that have a distinct “socio-economic composition”. The Conservative Group proposed that the remainder of Chalvey ward, broadly to the west of the A355 Tuns Lane, be combined with the part of the existing Cippenham ward that lies to the south of Mercian Way, Warner Close and Lower Cippenham Lane in a new three-member Cippenham Meadows ward. It proposed that the remainder of the existing Cippenham ward form a new three-member Cippenham Green ward. The Conservative Group argued that its proposed warding arrangements in the Cippenham area would adhere to clearly identifiable ward boundaries that respected community identities. It argued that the Borough Council’s proposal to combine part of Haymill ward to the north of the A4 Bath Road in a new Cippenham Green ward was illogical and would not secure an easily identifiable ward boundary.

70 The ILLD Group proposed a revised three-member Upton ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies broadly to the east of Datchet Road, St Lawrence Way and Wexham Road and the part of Foxborough ward that lies broadly to the south of the A4 London Road. It proposed that the remainder of Upton ward be combined with the part of Chalvey ward that lies broadly to the east of the A355 Tuns Lane and the railway line, and north of Church Street in a new three-member Central South ward. The ILLD Group stated that its proposed Upton ward would contain a “solid homogeneous community” and argued that its proposed Central South ward combined areas that have the town centre as their focal point. The ILLD Group proposed that the part of Chalvey ward broadly to the south of Cippenham Lane and Church Street be combined with the part of Cippenham ward lying broadly to the south of Warner Close and containing areas of recent housing development in a new Chalvey or Windsor

Meadows ward. It proposed that the remainder of Cippenham ward form a revised three-member Cippenham West ward. The ILLD Group argued that a majority of its proposed Chalvey ward comprised recent housing developments with no “centre of community” under the existing arrangements. It argued that its proposals would combine a natural socio-economic community and “generate community spirit”. It stated that its proposed Cippenham West ward would comprise the established Cippenham community to the south of the A4 Bath Road.

71 A local resident and representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party supported the Conservative Group’s proposals in this area. He argued that its proposals would retain and strengthen established communities and noted that it proposed only minor changes to the existing Chalvey ward. He stated that Upton was one of the oldest settlements in the town and supported the Conservative Group’s proposal to retain the existing ward. A member of the public proposed that Chalvey ward retain its existing name and that the proposed Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows wards be named Cippenham West and Cippenham East wards respectively in order to reflect the distinctive nature of communities in this area.

72 In its draft recommendations the LGCE recognised that all three borough-wide schemes put forward would provide much improved electoral equality and also noted a degree of consensus as to warding arrangements in the Cippenham area. It concluded that the Borough Council’s proposed Upton ward provided the best balance between the statutory criteria and considered that it utilised clear and distinguishable features as the basis of its proposed ward boundary. While acknowledging that the existing ward would facilitate reasonable electoral equality, the LGCE considered that the minor amendment to its boundary with Foxborough ward would further improve electoral equality in the long term.

73 The LGCE was not persuaded that the ILLD Group’s proposals would utilise sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundaries. In particular, it considered that the proposed Chalvey/Windsor Meadows ward would divide established communities in the Chalvey area. Furthermore, it considered that the A4 Bath Road provides a clear divide between communities situated either side of this road. As detailed below, the LGCE was not persuaded that the transfer of the area to the north of Cippenham Lane to a revised Farnham ward would have sufficient regard for community identities and interests.

74 The LGCE concluded that the Conservative Group’s proposals in the Chalvey area would best reflect community identities and interests. It considered that Tuns Lane provides an effective boundary in the west of the proposed ward and was not persuaded that the Borough Council’s proposal to include the Chalvey Grove area in a revised Chalvey ward would sufficiently reflect community identities. The LGCE therefore based its draft recommendations in the Chalvey area on the Conservative Group’s proposals, subject to one amendment. In order to reflect community identities and ensure a clearly identifiable ward boundary in this area, it proposed that Paxton Avenue and Tintern Close be warded with areas to their west and therefore proposed that the west boundary of the proposed Chalvey ward be amended to follow Tuns Lane from the A4 Bath Road to the M4 Motorway in the south.

75 As stated above, the LGCE noted the degree of consensus with regard to warding arrangements in the Cippenham area of the borough. The LGCE based its draft recommendations for Cippenham ward on the Conservative Group’s proposals. While acknowledging that the Borough Council’s proposals would facilitate improved electoral equality, it was not persuaded that the Council’s proposed Cippenham Green ward would have sufficient regard for community identities. In particular, it considered that the A4 Bath Road provides a strong community boundary and concluded that it constitutes a clearly defined feature on which to base ward boundaries. Furthermore, it considered that communities to the north of the A4 Bath Road identify more closely with the Haymill area than the Cippenham area to the south. The LGCE noted that under the existing arrangements several wards straddle the London to Penzance railway line, and considered that communities

on either side of this feature identify with each other. The LGCE concluded that the Conservative Group's proposed Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows wards had regard for community identities and interests while ensuring that the established Cippenham community and those areas of more recent development were not divided between borough wards.

76 The LGCE was not persuaded that the alternative ward names put forward by a member of the public at Stage One would adequately reflect the constituent communities of the proposed Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows wards. It noted the broad degree of consensus at Stage One in favour of the proposed ward names of Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows and considered that they would most accurately reflect community identities in this area.

77 At Stage Three the Borough Council, the Conservative Group, the ILLD Group and Slough Conservative Association supported the draft recommendations. The Conservative Association particularly welcomed the proposed warding arrangements in the Chalvey and Cippenham areas, which it considered would rectify existing anomalies and ensure good electoral equality.

78 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note the unanimous support for the draft recommendations in this area and concur with the LGCE that they will ensure a good balance between the statutory criteria. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Chalvey, Cippenham Green, Cippenham Meadows and Upton wards as final. Under our final recommendations, Chalvey and Upton wards would have 2 per cent fewer and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent fewer and equal to the borough average by 2006). Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows wards would have 2 per cent more and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more than the average by 2006). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards

79 Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards are situated in the north-west of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Britwell ward comprises the parish of Britwell as well as an unparished area of the borough, while Haymill and Farnham wards are unparished. Under existing arrangements, Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards have 5 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent more, 13 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2006).

80 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a new three-member Manor Park ward comprising the part of Stoke ward that lies broadly to the north of Baylis Court School and Granville Playing Field, and that part of Farnham ward up to and including properties on the south side of Hampshire Avenue. The Borough Council argued that the proposed ward reflected an identifiable community with clearly defined ward boundaries. It stated that retail facilities on the A335 Farnham Road were utilised by residents on either side of this road, and that the proposed ward contained housing of similar construction and design. The Borough Council proposed a revised three-member Haymill ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the north of the A4 Bath Road, up to Whittle Parkway, and the part of the existing Farnham ward broadly to the west of Liverpool Road. The Borough Council argued that its proposed Haymill ward would utilise recognisable ward boundaries and have greater regard to community identities and interests than the existing arrangements. The Borough Council proposed that the remainder of Cowper Road and Long Redding's Lane, which are currently situated in Farnham ward, be transferred to a revised three-member Britwell ward.

As stated earlier, it proposed that the remainder of the existing Haymill ward, to the south of the London to Penzance Railway line, be transferred to a new three-member Cippenham Green ward.

81 The Conservative Group proposed largely retaining the existing three-member Farnham ward, but proposed incorporating that part of Baylis ward up to the rear of properties on the south side of Belfast Avenue, and including Melbourne Avenue and Northampton Avenue, in its proposed ward. It also proposed transferring those properties that access onto the north side of Crofthill Road from Britwell ward to its proposed Farnham ward. It proposed that the remainder of Britwell ward continue to be represented by three councillors. The Conservative Group stated that the proposed Farnham ward would secure good electoral equality while retaining the “core community” and argued that its proposed Britwell ward respected community identities and interests. The Conservative Group argued that given its distinct community and geographical location, the existing Haymill ward should be retained for borough warding purposes.

82 The ILLD Group proposed retaining the existing three-member Britwell and three-member Haymill wards. It stated that the existing Britwell ward utilised “natural boundaries” and constituted a cohesive geographical area. In respect of Haymill ward, it argued that the existing ward utilised clear and distinct ward boundaries and would ensure the continuation of a “strong community spirit”. It proposed a revised three-member Farnham ward comprising the existing ward and that part of Chalvey ward up to and including properties on the south side of Cippenham Lane. It argued that expansion of the existing Farnham ward was essential in order to meet the “Commission’s numerical criteria”.

83 A local resident and representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party supported the Conservative Group’s proposals in this area. He noted that it proposed retaining the existing Haymill ward and put forward only minor amendments to the existing Britwell ward, and argued that these proposals would retain and strengthen established communities in Slough. A member of the public proposed that Britwell ward retain its existing name, arguing that it reflects community identities in this area.

84 In the draft recommendations report, the LGCE recognised that all three borough-wide schemes would secure much improved electoral equality. However, having considered the Borough Council’s proposals, it was not persuaded that they would reflect the identities and interests of local communities. It noted that the Borough Council proposed that part of Haymill ward be transferred to a new Cippenham Green ward. While the LGCE acknowledged that the London to Penzance railway line would appear to provide a significant feature on which to base borough ward boundaries, it considered that communities in the Haymill area identify with each other across the railway line. The LGCE was persuaded that the A4 Bath Road would provide a strong and clearly identifiable feature on which to base borough ward boundaries and noted that the existing ward configuration combines areas on either side of the railway line. The LGCE considered that the Conservative Group’s and ILLD Group’s proposal to retain the existing Haymill ward would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria and concluded that the A4 Bath Road should be retained as the ward boundary between Haymill and Cippenham Green wards.

85 The LGCE acknowledged that the Council’s proposed Manor Park ward would utilise a clearly defined ward boundary and would ensure improved electoral equality in this area. However, it considered that areas in the west of this proposed ward identify with the Haymill area. Moreover, it considered that the Conservative Groups and ILLD Group’s proposal to broadly maintain existing ward boundaries in this area would provide a better balance between the statutory criteria. As stated above, the LGCE considered that the existing Haymill ward should be retained and was not persuaded that the Council’s proposed Manor Park ward had sufficient regard for community identities and interests in the west of the proposed ward.

86 The LGCE concluded that the Conservative Group's proposed Farnham ward would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria and was not persuaded that the ILLD Group's proposal to combine areas to the south of the A4 Bath Road in its proposed Farnham ward had sufficient regard for community identities and interests. As stated above, the LGCE considered that this road provides a clear and distinct feature on which to base borough ward boundaries in this area. The LGCE therefore adopted the Conservative Group's proposed Farnham ward as part of its draft recommendations, subject to one amendment. As stated earlier, it proposed that Buckingham Avenue East be included in the proposed ward to ensure a more clearly defined ward boundary.

87 The LGCE recognised a broad degree of consensus in respect of proposed warding arrangements in the Britwell area and noted that all three borough-wide proposals put forward only minimal change to the existing ward. However, it considered that the Conservative Group's proposal to transfer the part of the existing Britwell ward that lies to the north of Crofthill to its proposed Farnham ward would better reflect community identities and ensure excellent levels of electoral equality in the proposed Britwell and Farnham wards. The LGCE also considered that this area shares more convenient communication links with areas to the south of Crofthill Road than with communities to its north and therefore adopted the Conservative Group's proposed Britwell ward as part of its draft recommendations.

88 At Stage Three the Borough Council, the ILLD Group and Slough Conservative Association supported the draft recommendations. The Conservative Group also supported the draft recommendations and particularly welcomed the minor amendments put forward by the LGCE to the proposed Farnham ward.

89 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note the unanimous support for the draft recommendations in this area. We consider that the draft recommendations for warding arrangements in this area reflect the statutory criteria and have a significant degree of local support. We have therefore decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards as final. Under our final recommendations, Britwell, Farnham and Haymill wards would have equal to, 4 per cent more and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more and 6 per cent more than the average by 2006). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Colnbrook & Poyle ward

90 The existing ward of Colnbrook & Poyle is located in the south-east of the borough, to the south of the M4 Motorway, and is coterminous with the parish of Colnbrook with Poyle. Under existing arrangements, Colnbrook & Poyle ward has 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average and is forecast to have 10 per cent fewer than the average by 2006.

91 At Stage One, the Borough Council, the Conservative Group and the ILLD Group proposed retaining the existing two-member Colnbrook & Poyle ward. The Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed that its name be changed to Colnbrook with Poyle to reflect the parish with which it is coterminous. While acknowledging that the existing ward would have a relatively high electoral variance by 2006, all argued that retaining the existing ward was justified due to its relatively isolated location, to the south of the M4 Motorway. Slough Conservative Association expressed support for the Conservative Group's proposal, stating that it would avoid both "unnecessary change" and the separation of established communities in the Colnbrook with Poyle area. Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council supported the retention of the existing ward. It argued that coterminosity between parish and borough ward boundaries made a "positive contribution to the community situation". A local resident and representative of the United Kingdom Independence Party supported the Conservative

Group's proposal in this area, noting that it proposed no change to the existing two-member Colnbrook & Poyle ward.

92 A local resident noted that, while the Colnbrook with Poyle area is situated in Slough Borough, it forms part of Windsor parliamentary constituency. He proposed that either the borough or constituency boundary be amended to rationalise the situation. He also stated that the Parish Council was a "burden" to the local community and favoured its abolition. As stated earlier, we are unable as part of this review to recommend the abolition of parish councils. Nor do we have powers to recommend changes to existing district or parliamentary boundaries. A member of the public proposed that Colnbrook & Poyle ward be renamed Colnbrook with Poyle to reflect the name of the parish and have regard to community identities in this area.

93 In its draft recommendations, the LGCE noted the consensus in support of retaining the existing ward. While it noted that it would have a relatively high electoral variance in five years' time, it recognised that the M4 Motorway provides a clear demarcation line between communities either side of the motorway. The LGCE concluded that the retention of the existing ward would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria and therefore put this forward as part of its draft recommendations. In respect of an appropriate name for the proposed ward, the LGCE recognised that the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed ward name of Colnbrook with Poyle would reflect the name of the parish of Colnbrook with Poyle and therefore more accurately identify the geographical extent of the proposed ward. It therefore proposed that this ward be named Colnbrook with Poyle.

94 At Stage Three, the Borough Council, the Conservative Group, the ILLD Group, Slough Conservative Association and a member of the public supported the draft recommendations in this area. The Conservative Group and Conservative Association particularly welcomed the fact that no change had been recommended to the existing warding configuration in this area.

95 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note the unanimous support for the draft recommendations in this area. We concur with the LGCE that the M4 Motorway provides a clear and distinct divide between communities and should be retained as the borough ward boundary in the north of the proposed Colnbrook with Poyle ward. We consider that the draft recommendations will ensure the best balance between the statutory criteria and have therefore decided to confirm the LGCE's proposed Colnbrook with Poyle ward as final. Under our final recommendations Colnbrook with Poyle ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average now and 10 per cent fewer than the average by 2006. Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

96 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

Conclusions

97 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse those draft recommendations, subject to the following amendment:

- We propose that Baylis ward be renamed Baylis & Stoke ward to more accurately reflect community identities.

98 We conclude that, in Slough

- a council of 41 members should be retained;
- there should be 14 wards;
- the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;

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

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

| | 2001 electorate | | 2006 forecast electorate | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 |
| Number of wards | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 1,955 | 1,955 | 1,951 | 1,951 |
| Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average | 6 | 4 | 7 | 0 |
| Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

100 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from six to four, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Slough Borough Council should comprise 41 councillors serving 14 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and on the large map inside the back cover.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

101 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. At Stage One, no proposals for change to the electoral arrangements of the constituent parish councils of Slough were received. Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council stated that it supported the retention of the existing electoral arrangements for the parish, while a local resident proposed the abolition of the Parish Council, arguing that it was a burden to the local community.

102 As stated in the draft recommendations, we do not have the power as part of this review to abolish existing parish councils. Under the 1997 Local Government Act this power

resides with the local authority. A parish can be abolished as part of a parish review, but no such changes can be effected without prior consultation with local interested parties and residents. No further comments on parish council electoral arrangements were received at Stage Three. Accordingly, we propose no change to the existing electoral arrangements for Britwell, Colnbrook with Poyle and Wexham Court parish councils as part of our final recommendations.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Slough

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

104 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 18 July 2002.

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

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

