

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Cheltenham in Gloucestershire

Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions

*June 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Cheltenham in Gloucestershire.

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





## Local Government Commission for England

26 June 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 27 June 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Cheltenham under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 2001 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although a modification has been made (see paragraph 77) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Cheltenham.

We recommend that Cheltenham Borough Council should be served by 40 councillors representing 20 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

The Local Government Act 2000 contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Cheltenham on 27 June 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 January 2001, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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

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

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 77–78) are that:

- **Cheltenham Borough Council should have 40 councillors, one fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 14 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified and no wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

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

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 6 August 2001:

**The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

*Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
1	All Saints'	2	All Saints' ward (part); St Paul's ward (part)
2	Battledown	2	All Saints' ward (part); Charlton Kings ward (part); Pittville ward (part)
3	Benhall & The Reddings	2	Hatherley & The Reddings ward (part)
4	Charlton Kings	2	Charlton Kings ward (part)
5	Charlton Park	2	All Saints' ward (part); College ward (part)
6	College	2	All Saints' ward (part); College ward (part); Lansdown ward (part)
7	Hesters Way	2	Hesters Way ward (part); Hatherley & The Reddings ward (part); St Mark's ward (part)
8	Lansdown	2	Lansdown ward (part); St Paul's ward (part)
9	Leckhampton	2	Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward (part – Leckhampton East parish ward); College ward (part); Park ward (part)
10	Oakley	2	Pittville ward (part); Prestbury ward (part – Prestbury South parish ward)
11	Park	2	Park ward (part); Hatherley & The Reddings ward (part)
12	Pittville	2	Pittville ward (part); All Saints' ward (part); St Paul's ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
13	Prestbury	2	Prestbury ward (part – Prestbury East parish ward)
14	St Mark's	2	St Mark's ward (part); Lansdown ward (part)
15	St Paul's	2	St Paul's ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
16	St Peter's	2	St Peter's ward (part); Lansdown ward (part); St Paul's ward
17	Springbank	2	Hesters Way ward (part)
18	Swindon Village	2	Prestbury ward (part – Prestbury West parish ward); St Peter's ward (part); Swindon ward
19	Up Hatherley	2	Hatherley & The Reddings ward (part); Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward (part – Leckhampton Broad Oak Way parish ward and Up Hatherley West parish ward)
20	Warden Hill	2	Hatherley and The Reddings ward (part); Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward (part – Leckhampton West parish ward and Up Hatherley East parish ward); Park ward (part)

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Cheltenham

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 All Saints'	2	3,991	1,996	-3	4,133	2,067	-3
2 Battledown	2	3,601	1,801	-13	4,133	2,067	-3
3 Benhall & The Reddings	2	3,919	1,960	-5	4,093	2,047	-4
4 Charlton Kings	2	4,249	2,125	3	4,284	2,142	1
5 Charlton Park	2	4,124	2,062	0	4,128	2,064	-3
6 College	2	3,889	1,945	-6	4,266	2,133	0
7 Hesters Way	2	4,204	2,102	2	4,492	2,246	6
8 Lansdown	2	3,769	1,885	-9	4,079	2,040	-4
9 Leckhampton	2	4,023	2,012	-3	4,040	2,020	-5
10 Oakley	2	4,044	2,022	-2	4,073	2,037	-4
11 Park	2	4,393	2,197	6	4,453	2,227	5
12 Pittville	2	3,987	1,994	-3	4,174	2,087	-2
13 Prestbury	2	4,511	2,256	9	4,532	2,266	7
14 St Mark's	2	4,284	2,142	4	4,368	2,184	3
15 St Paul's	2	4,042	2,021	-2	4,091	2,046	-4
16 St Peter's	2	4,165	2,083	1	4,217	2,109	-1
17 Springbank	2	4,292	2,146	4	4,333	2,167	2
18 Swindon Village	2	4,403	2,202	7	4,403	2,202	4
19 Up Hatherley	2	4,242	2,121	3	4,272	2,136	1
20 Warden Hill	2	4,396	2,198	7	4,404	2,202	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82,528</b>	-	-	<b>84,968</b>	-	-
<b>Averages</b>	-	-	<b>2,063</b>	-	-	<b>2,124</b>	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The total electorate figures in 2005 differ marginally from Figure 3; however, we consider that this has a negligible effect on electoral variances.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire. We have now reviewed the six districts in Gloucestershire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Cheltenham. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1979 (Report No. 334). The electoral arrangements of Gloucestershire County Council were last reviewed in May 1982 (Report No. 424). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

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

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

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

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

11 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Cheltenham in Gloucestershire*, and ended on 5 March 2001. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

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

15 Since the last electoral review there has been a increase in the electorate of around 21 per cent in Cheltenham borough, mainly as a result of new housing developments.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,013 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,072 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in five of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Swindon ward where the councillor represents 30 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Cheltenham*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 All Saints'	3	6,696	2,232	11	6,991	2,330	12
2 Charlton Kings	3	6,287	2,096	4	6,339	2,113	2
3 College	3	6,704	2,235	11	6,736	2,245	8
4 Hatherley & The Reddings	4	7,636	1,909	-5	7,842	1,961	-5
5 Hesters Way	3	7,095	2,365	17	7,424	2,475	19
6 Lansdown	3	5,801	1,934	-4	6,197	2,066	0
7 Leckhampton With Up Hatherley	3	6,553	2,184	9	6,568	2,189	6
8 Park	3	5,620	1,873	-7	5,688	1,896	-9
9 Pittville	3	5,582	1,861	-8	6,158	2,053	-1
10 Prestbury	3	6,043	2,014	0	6,063	2,021	-2
11 St Mark's	3	5,023	1,674	-17	5,101	1,700	-18
12 St Paul's	3	6,291	2,097	4	6,622	2,207	7
13 St Peter's	3	5,797	1,932	-4	5,837	1,946	-6
14 Swindon	1	1,400	1,400	-30	1,400	1,400	-32
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>82,528</b>	–	–	<b>84,966</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>2,013</b>	–	–	<b>2,072</b>	–

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Swindon ward were relatively over-represented by 30 per cent, while electors in Hesters Way ward were relatively under-represented by 17 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received four representations, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Cheltenham in Gloucestershire*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved good electoral equality while generally providing a good reflection of the statutory criteria. We also put forward one amendment where we judged that the Borough Council's scheme could be further improved upon. We proposed that:

- Cheltenham Borough Council should be served by 40 councillors, compared with the current 41, representing 20 wards, six more than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to take place by thirds.

**Draft Recommendation**

Cheltenham Borough Council should comprise 40 councillors, serving 20 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 105 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Cheltenham Borough Council and the Commission.

### **Cheltenham Borough Council**

21 At Stage Three the Borough Council generally supported the draft recommendations, but had concerns over the transfer of part of Prestbury ward into the proposed new ward of Oakley and wished the Commission to give weight to the local opposition. The Council also reiterated its view that the introduction of elections by halves would help improve the public's understanding of the electoral system and turn-out at elections.

### **Parish Councils**

22 Leckhampton and Up Hatherley parish councils supported the draft recommendations in full, particularly as they related to their respective areas. Prestbury Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations as they related to Prestbury ward. It saw no need to divide Prestbury parish into three wards, preferring to maintain the status quo. It supported the Borough Council's position concerning the transfer of part of Prestbury ward to the proposed Oakley ward, requesting that some roads near the centre of Prestbury village remain in Prestbury ward on community identity and historical grounds. Prestbury Parish Council's submission included a petition from Glebe Road residents with 49 signatures, copies of petitions from residents of Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row and 40 letters from local residents and residents' associations opposing the draft recommendations for Prestbury ward.

### **Members of Parliament**

23 Laurence Robertson, MP for Tewkesbury, also expressed concern about the proposal for Prestbury ward. He requested that the proposed changes be reconsidered on the basis that Prestbury village has "been shipped from pillar to post as far as boundaries are concerned" and that "Oakley and Whaddon are very much identified with Cheltenham and not with Prestbury". He also commented that "those residents in the part of Oakley that was originally Prestbury will still be in the Tewkesbury constituency. This will cause confusion when it comes to Parliamentary elections."

### **Other Representations**

24 Representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from two councillors and three local organisations. Councillors Buckland and MacDonald (members for Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward) both supported the draft recommendations, while Councillor Buckland also made comments concerning external parish boundaries. The Lanes Residents' Association expressed support for the proposal for The Lanes development to be in

Leckhampton ward rather than Warden Hill ward. Coronation Road Residents' Association objected to the proposal to move several roads from Prestbury ward to Oakley ward, stating that the roads in question (Bouncers Lane, Glebe Road, the northern end of Priors Road, Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row) are "very much part of Prestbury". The association enclosed a petition, containing signatures from 50 residents, stating opposition to the proposals. Priors Road Neighbourhood Watch, representing households at the northern end of Priors Road, also expressed concern about this aspect of the draft recommendations, believing it would "harm the future integration of new developments in close proximity to this area".

25 A further 70 representations were received from local residents expressing opposition to the proposed boundary between Prestbury and Oakley wards, mainly on the grounds that the area proposed to be transferred to Oakley ward is part of the Prestbury community and close to the village centre and amenities. In their opinion it shares no community identity with Oakley. Some did not wish to be included in an "area of deprivation in need of regeneration". Some residents were concerned that their quality of representation by councillors would deteriorate, some expressed concern that their properties would drop in value while others were concerned that children would have to change schools. It was pointed out in some submissions that the roads in question open onto Prestbury Road in the north and have no direct link with the Whaddon/Oakley area. A petition was enclosed containing 28 signatures of residents in Fir Tree Close and York Row. Another representation generally supported our recommendations but suggested a western boundary for Prestbury ward based on Evesham Road, rather than the railway line.

26 Twenty submissions were also received from Leckhampton residents who expressed their support for the proposals for their ward, while one resident was against. Two submissions expressed support for the proposed changes to the Cheltenham ward boundaries. A resident whose house would be transferred from Prestbury ward to Swindon Village ward commented on the consequential relationship between his parish, borough and parliamentary constituency boundaries.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

31 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 82,528 to 84,966 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expected most of the growth to be in the wards of All Saints’, Hesters Way, Lansdown, Pittville and St Paul’s. 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. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given careful consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

32 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## **Council Size**

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

34 Cheltenham Borough Council is at present served by 41 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a council of 40 members, representing 20 two-member wards, which it considered would permit substantial improvements to electoral equality while allowing a good reflection of local community identities and interests. We received no other proposal for an alternative council size.

35 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council size of 40 members.

36 During Stage Three we received no further proposals or evidence regarding council size. Therefore we are confirming our draft recommendations for a council size of 40 as final.

## **Parish Administrative Boundaries**

37 During Stage Three we received two submissions concerning external parish boundaries. Councillor Buckland (member for Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward) commented on “the complications the parishes face due to not having a similar boundary to the ward boundary”. Up Hatherley Parish Council looked forward “to a review of our parish boundary, in order to consolidate and complement the good work which has been done” in the draft recommendations. We have no power to recommend changes to parish administrative boundaries as part of this PER. Nevertheless, given that, where they exist, parishes form the building blocks for district wards, we feel it appropriate to draw attention to the fact that, during the course of our review, a number of parish boundary anomalies have been identified.

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

## **Electoral Arrangements**

39 We gave careful consideration to the views which we received during Stage One. In particular we noted that there was consensus between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrat Party in support of a pattern of two-member wards for the borough. However, we also noted that the Liberal Democrat Party did not consider that wards should cross parliamentary constituency boundaries, as proposed by the Borough Council. Therefore, while we recognised the general agreement regarding utilisation of a pattern of two-member wards, we also recognised

that there was not consensus as to the positions of proposed ward boundaries for the borough. With regard to the concerns of the Liberal Democrat Party about wards which cross constituency boundaries, we stated that, as the Parliamentary Boundary Commission will utilise our new wards as the basis for its own forthcoming review of parliamentary constituency boundaries, we have no regard for the current boundaries. We judged, therefore, that the Borough Council's proposals would provide substantial improvements to electoral equality while generally providing a good reflection of the other statutory criteria. Therefore, in the absence of detailed alternative proposals, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals as the basis for our draft recommendations. We also put forward one amendment where we judged that the Borough Council's scheme could be further improved upon.

40 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of the further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. We noted that comments were received regarding the existing parliamentary constituency boundary in Cheltenham. However, as outlined above and in our *Guidance*, we acknowledge that in devising electoral schemes it may be necessary to recommend ward boundaries which do not coincide with existing parliamentary constituency boundaries, but we are of the view that this is not a sufficient reason to justify modifying our proposals. The new borough wards created by the periodic electoral review will form the 'building blocks' for the forthcoming Fifth General Review of parliamentary constituencies.

41 However, we have noted that there has been significant opposition to the boundary between our proposed Prestbury and Oakley wards on community grounds. In the light of this opposition, and evidence received from local respondents, we are proposing a minor modification to our draft recommendations in this area. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

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

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

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

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

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

45 We gave careful consideration to the Borough Council’s proposals for this area. We noted that these proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judged, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. Therefore, in the absence of evidence of opposition to these proposals, we adopted the proposed wards of Benhall & The Reddings, Leckhampton, Park, Up Hatherley and Warden Hill as part of our draft recommendations.

46 At Stage Three Cheltenham Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for these wards, as did Councillors Buckland and MacDonald (members for Leckhampton With Up Hatherley ward). Leckhampton and Up Hatherley parish councils supported the draft recommendations as they related to their respective areas. The Lanes Residents’ Association expressed support for the proposal for The Lanes development to be in Leckhampton ward rather than Warden Hill ward. Twenty submissions were received supporting our proposals for the Leckhampton area, while one objected to them as he was concerned they would affect school catchment areas. However, we are unable to take school catchment areas into consideration, and they are usually unaffected by changes to borough warding arrangements.

47 In the light of the large majority of respondents supporting our draft recommendations in this area, we have decided to confirm them as final. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. The electoral variances would be identical to the Council’s original proposals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

53 In formulating our draft recommendations we gave careful consideration to the views which we received in this area. While we noted Charlton Kings Parish Council's opposition to the Borough Council's proposals, we stated that the purpose of this review is to seek improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We also noted that we had not received alternative proposals to those put forward by the Borough Council in this area. We considered that the Borough Council's proposals would provide a satisfactory reflection of the statutory criteria while, we noted, achieving substantial improvements to electoral equality. Consequently we adopted the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of All Saints', Battledown, Charlton Kings, Charlton Park and College as part of our draft recommendations.

54 At Stage Three Cheltenham Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for these wards. We received no further representations regarding our proposals in this area and we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. The electoral variances would be identical to the Council's original proposals.

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

55 These three wards are situated in the north of the borough. Swindon ward is represented by a single councillor while Pittville and Prestbury wards are each represented by three councillors. Pittville ward is unparished while Prestbury and Swindon wards each comprise the parishes of those names. The area as a whole is over-represented: the number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent below the borough average in Pittville ward (1 per cent below in 2005), equal to the average in Prestbury ward (2 per cent below in 2005) and 30 per cent below in Swindon ward (32 per cent below in 2005).

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

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

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

59 We carefully considered the proposals which we received in relation to this area. In particular we were concerned at the poor electoral equality which would result under the Borough Council's proposals for Oakley and Prestbury wards. While we noted that the Borough Council received a substantial number of representations opposing any modification to the existing boundary in this

area, we also noted that many of the respondents expressed concerns regarding the adverse affect which such a change would have on the value of their properties and on their postal addresses. In our draft recommendations report we emphasised that this review would not adversely affect property values and would also not affect postal addresses in the area concerned. Furthermore, we did not consider that the evidence which we received regarding community identities and interests in this area justified the substantial electoral inequalities which would remain in these two wards under the Borough Council's proposals. Consequently we modified the Borough Council's proposals in this area, transferring an area to the south of Prestbury Road and to the west of Bouncers Lane from Prestbury ward to Oakley ward. We considered that this would provide a substantial improvement to electoral equality while also having regard to the statutory criteria. We also proposed a minor amendment to the boundary in the west of Prestbury ward, to ensure that it followed recognisable ground details. Subject to these amendments we adopted the Council's proposals for the wards of Oakley, Pittville, Prestbury and Swindon Village as part of our draft recommendations.

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

61 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for this area with one exception. In its submission it stated, "Whilst the Council supports Prestbury as a two-member ward, the Council still has concerns over the transfer of part of Prestbury ward into the new ward called Oakley, and wishes the LGCE to give weight to local opposition to this change." Prestbury Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations as they related to Prestbury ward. It saw no need to divide Prestbury into three wards, preferring to maintain the status quo. It supported the Borough Council's position concerning the transfer of part of Prestbury ward to the proposed Oakley ward, requesting that some roads near the centre of Prestbury village remain in the ward on community identity and historical grounds. The parish council's submission included a petition from Glebe Road residents with 49 signatures, copies of petitions from residents of Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row and 40 letters from local residents and residents' associations opposing the draft recommendations for Prestbury. Laurence Robertson, MP for Tewkesbury, also expressed concern about the proposal for Prestbury ward on the basis that Prestbury village has experienced much change over the years and that "Oakley and Whaddon are very much identified with Cheltenham and not with Prestbury". He requested that the proposed changes be reconsidered, commenting that "those residents in the part of Oakley that was originally Prestbury will still be in the Tewkesbury constituency. This will cause confusion when it comes to Parliamentary elections."

62 Coronation Road Residents' Association objected to the proposal to move several roads from Prestbury ward to Oakley ward, stating that the roads in question (Bouncers Lane, Glebe Road, the northern end of Priors Road, Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row) are "very much part of Prestbury". It enclosed a petition, containing signatures from 50 residents, stating their opposition to the proposals. Priors Road Neighbourhood Watch, representing households at the northern end of Priors Road, also expressed concern about this part of the draft recommendations, believing it would "harm the future integration of new developments in close proximity to this area".

63 A further 70 representations were received expressing opposition to the proposed boundary change, mainly on the grounds that the area which we proposed transferring to Oakley ward is part of the Prestbury community and close to the village centre and amenities. Many of the respondents were of the view that this area shared no community identity with Oakley and others did not wish to be included in an “area of deprivation in need of regeneration”. Some residents were concerned that their quality of representation by councillors would deteriorate, some expressed concern that their properties would drop in value and others were concerned that children would have to change schools. It was pointed out in some submissions that the roads in question open onto Prestbury Road in the north and have no direct link with the Whaddon/Oakley area. A petition was enclosed containing 28 signatures of residents in Fir Tree Close and York Row. Two Glebe Road residents suggested an alternative ward boundary which would ensure Glebe Road stayed in Prestbury ward. A resident whose house would be transferred from Prestbury ward to Swindon Village ward commented on the consequential relationship between his parish, borough and parliamentary constituency boundaries.

64 We have given careful consideration to the views we have received regarding this area, particularly in relation to the boundary between Prestbury ward and the proposed Oakley ward. However, we are still of the opinion that the evidence we have received regarding community identities and interests in this area is insufficient to justify the substantial electoral inequalities which would remain in these two wards under the Borough Council’s original proposals. Also, the existing boundary (which would remain as the boundary between the proposed Prestbury and Oakley wards under the Borough Council’s original proposals) would have to be modified as it is not currently tied to ground detail in a number of places. In addition, we are unable to take either school catchment areas or existing parliamentary boundaries into consideration in carrying out this review.

65 However, we have been persuaded that, in the interests of community identity and in the light of local views, the roads at the northern edge of the proposed Oakley ward, namely Glebe Road, the northern end of Priors Road, Prescott Walk, Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row, should form part of Prestbury ward as they have historical links, are close to the heart of Prestbury village, open onto Prestbury Road and are regarded as part of the Prestbury community. Including these roads in Prestbury ward would ensure that electoral variances in the two wards are below 10 per cent. Subject to this amendment, we are confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final.

66 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the borough average in Oakley ward (4 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent below in Pittville ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 9 per cent above in Prestbury ward (7 per cent above in 2005) and 7 per cent above in Swindon Village ward (4 per cent above in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

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

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

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

69 We gave careful consideration to the Borough Council's proposals for this area. We noted that these proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judged, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. Therefore we adopted the proposed wards of Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's as part of our draft recommendations.

70 At Stage Three Cheltenham Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for these wards. In the light of this support, and as we received no further views regarding our proposals for this area, we are confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of Lansdown, St Paul's and St Peter's as final. Our proposals for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. The electoral variances would be identical to the Council's original proposals.

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

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

72 In its Stage One submission the Borough Council proposed that this area should comprise three two-member wards. It proposed that a new Springbank ward should comprise an area of the existing Hesters Way ward generally to the north and west of Hesters Way Road. The Borough Council proposed that Hesters Way ward should be further modified to include an area of Hatherley & The Reddings ward around Amfurlong Lane and an area of St Mark's ward to the west of, and including, Orchard Avenue. St Mark's ward would be further modified to include part of Lansdown ward around Roman Road. The Borough Council considered that its proposals would achieve substantial improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory

criteria. Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the borough average in Hesters Way ward (6 per cent above in 2005), 4 per cent above in St Mark's ward (3 per cent above in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Springbank ward (2 per cent above in 2005).

73 We carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals in this area, noting in particular the good levels of electoral equality achieved, together with the clearly identifiable boundaries which would be utilised. In the absence of alternative proposals, or other evidence, we judged that the Borough Council's proposals would secure substantial improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Hesters Way, St Mark's and Springbank as part of our draft recommendations.

74 At Stage Three Cheltenham Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for these wards. In the light of this support and as we received no further views regarding our proposals for this area, we are confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of Hesters Way, St Mark's and Springbank as final. Our proposals for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. The electoral variances would be identical to the Council's original proposals.

## **Electoral Cycle**

75 At Stage One the Borough Council stated that it had "considered the Government's intention to move two-tier areas such as Gloucestershire to elections by halves", and considered that such a change "would improve electorate understanding of the system and would increase voter turnout". In our draft recommendations we pointed out, however, that until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the Local Government Act 2000 we could only continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas. We therefore proposed no change to the Council's present system of elections by thirds at this time.

76 At Stage Three the Borough Council reiterated its view on elections by halves, stating that its introduction "would be of benefit in making the electoral system clearer and thereby improving the public's understanding and turn-out". It stated that it would be writing to the Secretary of State to ask him to consider this change as soon as possible. No further comments were received regarding this aspect of our draft recommendations, and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

## Conclusions

77 Having carefully considered all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendment:

- we propose amending the boundary between Prestbury ward and the proposed Oakley ward to retain Glebe Road, the northern end of Priors Road, Prescott Walk, Coronation Road, Fir Tree Close and York Row in a revised Prestbury ward.

78 We conclude that, in Cheltenham:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 41 to 40;
- there should be 20 wards, six more than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

79 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	41	40	41	40
Number of wards	14	20	14	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,013	2,063	2,072	2,124
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	5	1	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

80 As Figure 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 five to one. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

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

**Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

81 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Prestbury and Up Hatherley to reflect the proposed borough wards.

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

83 At Stage Three no further comments were received in response to our consultation report. Therefore we are confirming our draft recommendation for warding Charlton Kings parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

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

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

85 At Stage Three Leckhampton Parish Council supported the draft recommendations in full. No further comments were received. In the light of this local support we are confirming our draft recommendation for warding Leckhampton parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

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

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

87 At Stage Three Prestbury Parish Council stated that it saw no need to divide Prestbury into three parish wards and preferred to maintain the status quo. However, in view of the proposal for a consistent pattern of two-member borough wards, the council accepted the transfer of part of Prestbury borough ward to Oakley ward and the creation of Prestbury South parish ward, but opposed the scale of the transfer proposed in the draft recommendation. As outlined earlier, we are proposing a modification to our proposals for borough wards in this area. Therefore, in the light of our final recommendation for Prestbury borough ward, we are confirming our draft recommendation for warding Prestbury parish as final, subject to an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Prestbury East and Prestbury South parish wards. As a consequence of this amendment, the size of the electorate of Prestbury South parish ward has decreased. Therefore we also propose decreasing the number of parish councillors representing Prestbury South parish ward to one and increasing the representation in Prestbury East parish ward to 10 to provide a better balance of representation.

**Final Recommendation**

Prestbury Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Prestbury East (returning 10 councillors), Prestbury South (one) and Prestbury West (two). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

88 The parish of Up Hatherley is currently served by nine councillors and is unwarded. In the light of our draft recommendations in this area we proposed creating two new parish wards, Up Hatherley East and Up Hatherley West, to reflect the borough ward boundaries in this area. Under our draft recommendations Up Hatherley East parish ward would be represented by two councillors and Up Hatherley West parish ward would be represented by seven.

89 At Stage Three Up Hatherley Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. No further comments were received in response to our consultation report, and so we are confirming our draft recommendations for warding Up Hatherley parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

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

90 In our draft recommendations we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough, and we are confirming this as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Parish and town council elections should continue to take place by thirds, at the same time as elections for the borough wards of which they are part.

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Cheltenham*



## 6 NEXT STEPS

91 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Cheltenham and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

92 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 6 August 2001.

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

The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



## APPENDIX A

### Draft Recommendations for Cheltenham

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of two wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

*Figure A1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Oakley ward	Pittville ward (part); Prestbury ward (part – Prestbury South parish ward)
Prestbury ward	Prestbury ward (part – Prestbury East parish ward)

*Figure A2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Oakley	2	4,379	2,190	6	4,408	2,204	4
Prestbury	2	4,176	2,088	1	4,197	2,099	-1

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

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



## APPENDIX B

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-departmental public bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

#### *Commission compliance with Code criteria*

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