

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire in Wiltshire

Further electoral review

January 2006

Translations and other formats

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by The Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)

Robin Gray

Joan Jones CBE

Ann M. Kelly

Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. These are undertaken in order to ensure that, as far as possible, each local authority has equal representation across the authority as a whole and that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector having a vote of equal weight, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Boundary Committee conducts such reviews when directed to do so by The Electoral Commission. On the basis of the levels of electoral inequality in North Wiltshire, The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to undertake an electoral review on 12 May 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 13 wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. During the previous review growth between the five-year period that occurred between 1998 and 2003 was only partially realised, however, the current Calne Lickhill ward has continued to grow and currently has 24% more electors than the district average.

Every review is conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	21 June 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 September 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	31 January 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	24 April 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

At Stage One we received 13 submissions. The District Council provided proposals for the rural areas of the district and made suggestions in the more urban areas.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The District Council has predicted a growth in electorate of 6% over the five-year period 2004 – 2009. It expects most of the growth to be in Calne Lickhill ward and the Corsham area.

Council size

The District Council proposed a council size of 54, an increase of one. It stated that there was no reason to suggest that the current number of councillors, 53, was

unreasonable. However, in order to fit its own arithmetical model it considered a council size of 54 to be appropriate. We noted that the Council had not approached the issue of council size from the perspective of its political management arrangements and therefore we considered putting forward the current council size as part of our draft recommendations. However, we noted that it was not possible to allocate the correct number of councillors to the distinct areas in the district under a council size of 53. Therefore, given the lack of evidence available and relative allocations for a number of different council sizes we propose minimal change and propose a council size of 54. However, we would be like to hear from interested parties on the issue at Stage Three.

General analysis

We propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals in the rural areas subject to a number of amendments to improve the level of electoral equality. We are putting forward our own proposals in the town areas of the district and in Corsham and the surrounding area.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire contained in the report. We welcome views from all parts of the community and believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 24 April 2006. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the Chippenham, Corsham and Lyneham areas to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. We would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

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This report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Box & Rudloe	2	Box parish and the proposed Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish
2	Brinkworth	2	The parishes of Brinkworth, Charlton, Dauntsey, Hankerton, Lea & Cleverton, Little Somerford and Great Somerford
3	Calne Abberd	1	The proposed Abberd parish ward of Calne parish
4	Calne Chilvester	1	The proposed Chilvester parish ward of Calne parish; Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish
5	Calne Lickhill	2	The proposed Calne Lickhill parish ward of Calne parish
6	Calne Marden	1	The proposed Marden parish ward of Calne parish
7	Calne Priestly	1	The proposed Priestly parish ward of Calne parish
8	Calne Quemerford	1	The proposed Quemerford parish ward of Calne parish
9	Calne Without	1	East, Middle, Sandy Lane and West parish wards of Calne Without parish
10	Chippenham Allington	2	The proposed Allington parish ward of Chippenham parish and the proposed Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish
11	Chippenham Avon	2	The proposed Avon parish ward of Chippenham parish
12	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	The proposed Hill Rise parish ward of Chippenham parish
13	Chippenham London Road	1	The proposed London Road parish ward of Chippenham parish
14	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	The proposed Monkton Park parish ward of Chippenham parish
15	Chippenham Park	2	The proposed Park parish ward of Chippenham parish; the proposed Cepen Park Central parish ward of Chippenham Without parish; the proposed Cepen Park North parish ward of Langley Burrell Without parish

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
16	Chippenham Pewsham	2	The proposed Pewsham parish ward of Chippenham parish
17	Chippenham Redland	2	The proposed Redland parish ward of Chippenham parish
18	Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	The proposed Westcroft/Queens parish ward of Chippenham parish
19	Colerne	1	(Unchanged) Colerne parish
20	Corsham & Lacock	3	Lacock parish and Corsham, Gastard and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish
21	Cricklade	2	(Unchanged) Cricklade, Latton and Marston Maisey parishes
22	Hullavington & Crudwell	1	The parishes of Brokenborough, Crudwell, Hullavington and Norton & Foxley
23	Kington Langley	1	The parishes of Grittleton, Kington Langley, Kington St Michael and Stanton St Quintin
24	Lyneham	3	The parishes of Brenhill, Cherhill, Clyffe Pypard, Compton Bassett, Hilmarton, Lyneham & Bradenstoke and Tockenham and Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish
25	Malmesbury	2	The parish of Malmesbury
26	Minety & Purton	3	The parishes of Ashton Keynes, Braydon, Leigh, Minety, Oaksey and Purton
27	Pickwick	2	Biddestone parish and the proposed Pickwick parish ward of Corsham parish
28	Sherston	1	The parishes of Easton Grey, Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth
29	St Paul Malmesbury Without	1	The parish of St Paul Malmesbury Without
30	Sutton Benger	1	The parishes of Christian Malford, Seagry, and Sutton Benger and Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell Without parish
31	The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	(Unchanged) The parishes of Broad Town, Lydiard Millicent and Lydiard Tregoze

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
32	Wootton Bassett North	2	The proposed Wootton Bassett North parish ward of Wootton Bassett parish
33	Wootton Bassett South	3	The proposed Wootton Bassett South parish ward of Wootton Bassett
34	Yatton Keynell	1	The parishes of Castle Combe, Nettleton, North Wraxall and Yatton Keynell; Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish

Notes:

1. The whole district is parished.
2. The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.
3. We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft recommendations for North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Box & Rudloe	2	3,640	1,820	-1	4,062	2,031	4
2	Brinkworth	2	3,636	1,818	-1	3,669	1,835	-6
3	Calne Abberd	1	1,925	1,925	5	1,912	1,912	-2
4	Calne Chilvester	1	1,777	1,777	-3	1,903	1,903	-2
5	Calne Lickhill	2	2,263	1,132	-38	3,644	1,822	-6
6	Calne Marden	1	1,865	1,865	2	1,976	1,976	2
7	Calne Priestly	1	1,847	1,847	1	1,835	1,835	-6
8	Calne Quemerford	1	1,843	1,843	0	1,910	1,910	-2
9	Calne Without	1	2,119	2,119	15	2,136	2,136	10
10	Chippenham Allington	2	3,571	1,786	-3	3,679	1,840	-5
11	Chippenham Avon	2	3,529	1,765	-4	3,771	1,886	-3

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	1,907	1,907	4	1,958	1,958	1
13	Chippenham London Road	1	1,708	1,708	-7	1,885	1,885	-3
14	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	1,680	1,680	-8	2,027	2,027	4
15	Chippenham Park	2	3,838	1,919	5	3,818	1,909	-2
16	Chippenham Pewsham	2	4,093	2,047	12	4,068	2,034	5
17	Chippenham Redland	2	3,324	1,662	-9	3,758	1,879	-3
18	Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	1,982	1,982	8	1,956	1,956	1
19	Colerne	1	1,932	1,932	5	1,932	1,932	-1
20	Corsham & Lacock	3	5,984	1,995	9	6,336	2,112	9
21	Cricklade	2	3,905	1,953	6	3,960	1,980	2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22	Hullavington & Crudwell	1	1,989	1,989	8	2,009	2,009	3
23	Kington Langley	1	2,018	2,018	10	2,005	2,005	3
24	Lyneham	3	6,015	2,005	9	6,016	2,005	3
25	Malmesbury	2	3,634	1,817	-1	3,729	1,865	-4
26	Minety & Purton	3	6,119	2,040	11	6,173	2,058	6
27	Pickwick	2	3,002	1,501	-18	3,965	1,983	2
28	Sherston	1	1,777	1,777	-3	1,880	1,880	-3
29	St Paul Malmesbury Without	1	1,460	1,460	-20	1,880	1,880	-3
30	Sutton Benger	1	1,819	1,819	-1	1,808	1,808	-7
31	The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	2,144	2,144	17	2,139	2,139	10
32	Wootton Bassett North	2	3,652	1,826	0	3,847	1,924	-1

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
33	Wootton Bassett South	3	5,240	1,747	-5	5,547	1,849	-5
34	Yatton Keynell	1	1,859	1,859	1	1,847	1,847	-5
	Totals	54	99,096	-	-	105,040	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,835	-	-	1,945	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Wiltshire District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the district. 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 draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of North Wiltshire, on which we are now consulting.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 The Electoral Commission agreed that The Boundary Committee should make ongoing assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a Periodic Electoral Review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be a closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average; or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average.

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of North Wiltshire. North Wiltshire's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1999. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 22 October 1999 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 2003.

5 In carrying out our work, The Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework¹. This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
- secure effective and convenient local government; and
- achieve equality of representation.

In addition we are required to work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of North Wiltshire is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by The Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful in both understanding the approach taken by The Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for any parish and town councils in the district. We do not in these reviews consider changes to the external boundaries of areas.

¹ As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962).

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

11 As indicated in its *Guidance*, The Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence for this.

12 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an

unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

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

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	21 June 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 September 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	31 January 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	24 April 2006	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 21 June 2005, when we wrote to North Wiltshire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Wiltshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Wiltshire Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, 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 North Wiltshire district Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 September 2005.

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

17 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 31 January 2006 and will end on 24 April 2006, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation about them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report The Boundary Committee has had regard to:

- The general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to:

- eliminating unlawful racial discrimination;
- promoting equality of opportunity; and
- promoting good relations between people of different racial groups.

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The district of North Wiltshire is bounded by Cotswold to its north, by the unitary authorities of Swindon, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset and by the Wiltshire districts of West Wiltshire and Kennet. It shares good rail and road links with London and Bristol which have helped attract modern manufacturing industrial investment while tourism remains a growth industry for the district.

22 North Wiltshire is entirely parished and includes the towns of Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett. The Boundary Committee was directed to undertake initial research into electoral imbalances in the district as 13 of the current 38 wards had variances of more than 10% from the district average. As a result of the further research undertaken into the continuing levels of electoral inequality, The Electoral Commission directed The Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of North Wiltshire District Council on 12 May 2005.

23 The electorate of the district is 99,096 (2004). The Council presently has 53 members who are elected from 38 wards, over half of which are relatively urban with the remainder being predominantly rural. There are 24 one-member wards, 13 two-member wards and one three-member ward.

24 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,871 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,982 by the year 2009 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to variations in forecast growth the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 38 wards varies by more than 10% from the district average and three wards by more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Calne Lickhill ward where the councillor represents 24% more electors than the district average.

25 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the district average in percentage terms. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (99,096) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, currently 53. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor is currently 1,871. In Box ward, currently represented by two councillors, there are currently 3,297 electors, therefore, each councillor represents, on average, 1,649 electors, 14% fewer than the current district average.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements in North Wiltshire district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashton Keynes & Minety	2	3,696	1,848	-1	3,715	1,858	-6
2	Box	2	3,297	1,649	-14	3,719	1,860	-6
3	Bremhill	1	1,731	1,731	-9	1,721	1,721	-13
4	Brinkworth & The Somerfords	2	3,636	1,818	-5	3,669	1,835	-7
5	Calne Abberd	1	2,004	2,004	5	1,991	1,991	0
6	Calne Chilvester	1	1,511	1,511	-21	1,637	1,637	-17
7	Calne Lickhill	1	2,372	2,372	24	3,753	3,753	89
8	Calne Marden	1	1,865	1,865	-2	1,976	1,976	0
9	Calne Priestly	1	1,925	1,925	1	1,913	1,913	-3
10	Calne Quemerford	1	1,843	1,843	-4	1,910	1,910	-4
11	Calne Without	1	1,593	1,593	-17	1,613	1,613	-19

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Cepen Park	2	3,930	1,965	3	3,906	1,953	-1
13	Chippenham Allington	1	1,989	1,989	4	2,218	2,218	12
14	Chippenham Audley	1	1,909	1,909	0	2,049	2,049	3
15	Chippenham Avon	1	1,911	1,911	0	2,342	2,342	18
16	Chippenham Hill Rise	1	1,943	1,943	2	1,994	1,994	1
17	Chippenham London Road	1	1,927	1,927	1	2,104	2,104	6
18	Chippenham Monkton Park	1	1,680	1,680	-12	2,027	2,027	2
19	Chippenham Park	1	2,093	2,093	10	2,080	2,080	5
20	Chippenham Pewsham	2	4,119	2,060	8	4,094	2,047	3
21	Chippenham Redland	1	2,041	2,041	7	2,029	2,029	2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Chippenham Westcroft/Queens	1	2,090	2,090	9	2,077	2,077	5
23 Colerne	1	1,932	1,932	1	1,932	1,932	-3
24 Corsham	2	3,824	1,912	0	3,856	1,928	-3
25 Cricklade	2	3,905	1,953	2	3,960	1,980	0
26 Hilmarton	1	1,949	1,949	2	1,937	1,937	-2
27 Kington Langley	1	1,670	1,670	-13	1,659	1,659	-16
28 Kington St Michael	1	1,696	1,696	-11	1,688	1,688	-15
29 Lacock with Neston & Gastard	1	2,160	2,160	13	2,480	2,480	25
30 Lyneham	2	3,643	1,822	-5	3,659	1,830	-8
31 Malmesbury	2	3,864	1,932	1	3,901	1,951	-2
32 Nettleton	1	1,933	1,933	1	1,920	1,920	-3
33 Pickwick	2	2,960	1,480	-23	3,923	1,962	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
34 Purton	2	3,244	1,622	-15	3,287	1,644	-17
35 St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston	2	4,235	2,118	11	4,768	2,384	20
36 The Lydiards & Broad Town	1	2,144	2,144	12	2,139	2,139	8
37 Wootton Bassett North	2	4,101	2,051	7	4,296	2,148	8
38 Wootton Bassett South	3	4,791	1,597	-16	5,098	1,699	-14
Totals	53	99,156	-	-	105,040	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,871	-	-	1,982	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North Wiltshire District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2004, electors in Calne Chilvester ward were relatively over-represented by 21%, while electors in Calne Lickhill ward were significantly under-represented by 24%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Submissions received

26 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

27 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met with officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their cooperation and assistance. We received 13 representations during Stage One. We received no district-wide schemes but the Council provided proposals in the rural areas of the district and made suggestions in the urban areas. All of the representations may be inspected at both our offices and those of the District Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

North Wiltshire District Council

28 The District Council proposed a council of 54 members, one more than at present. The Council provided proposals for the rural areas of the district only. In the more urban areas of Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett it made suggested recommendations as to how The Boundary Committee should proceed. In Calne and Chippenham it proposed the correct allocation of councillors but did not provide any warding details. In the Corsham area and in Malmesbury it made a number of proposals but in some areas did not provide precise ward boundaries. In Wootton Bassett it stated that the area be represented by either five single-member wards or a two- and a three-member ward but again provided no detailed ward boundaries.

Parish and town councils

29 Representations were received from 12 parish and town councils. The parish councils of Cherhill and Nettleton stated that they considered the current arrangements to be satisfactory. Colerne Parish Council and Yatton Keynell Parish Council proposed that the current arrangements be maintained in their areas. Calne Town Council proposed a number of amendments to the ward boundaries in the town. Tockenham Parish Council proposed that it be placed in a ward with surrounding rural parishes. Corsham Town Council made a number of proposals regarding its parish warding arrangements. Grittleton Parish Council and Langley Burrell Parish Council stated that they were content with their current parishing arrangements. Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council proposed single-member wards in the district. Purton Parish Council proposed that the current district warding arrangements be maintained in its area and that it continue to be represented by two district councillors. Ashton Keynes Parish Council stated that its current district ward was too large.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

30 Before finalising our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire we invite views on our initial thoughts as expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from all those interested relating to the number of councillors, proposed ward boundaries, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Chippenham town, the Corsham area and Lyneham ward to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence received from local interested parties during Stage One. In these cases, we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

31 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) which covers the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government;
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

33 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

34 If electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

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

Electorate figures

36 As part of the previous review of North Wiltshire district, the District Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 7% between 1998 and 2003. The actual increase was just 4%. However, between 1998 and the start of this review in 2004 the electorate has increased by 5%. There has been significant growth in Calne Lickhill ward and parts of Chippenham, while growth in other areas, such as Calne Chilvester ward and Pickwick wards has either not taken place or has been slower than expected. This has resulted in a knock-on effect across the district with 13 wards having electoral variances of more than 10%. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2009, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 99,096 to 105,040 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009. It expects most of the growth to be in Calne Lickhill ward but also expects significant growth in Box and Pickwick wards.

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

Council size

38 North Wiltshire District Council presently has 53 members. The District Council proposed a council of 54 members, one more than at present. It stated that there was no reason to believe that the present number of councillors, 53, was unreasonable. However, in order to fit its own arithmetical model it considered a council size of 54 to be appropriate. In addition, it stated that it was mindful of the costs of appointing additional councillors. We requested further information on the Council's proposed council size and it forwarded details of a number of working groups, task groups and project boards currently operating that will involve Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and Non-Executive members. It also stated that the work of non-executive members in task-focused work was growing and provided some detail as to internal arrangements such as Scrutiny and forwarded schedules highlighting councillors' involvement with outside bodies and partnership bodies. We noted that although the Council had provided some further detail it had not approached the issue of council size with specific regard to its proposed council size of 54.

39 Therefore given that we were not specifically persuaded that the optimum council size for North Wiltshire was 54 we examined a number of alternative council sizes. We are of the view that a limited argument has been made for an increase in council size and have therefore balanced the limited evidence we had received against issues such as the allocation of councillors in the district and a consideration of whether an alternative size would better facilitate the reflection of community identities. Having looked at the relative allocation of councillors across the district we noted that, in the range 51-55, only council sizes of 51 and 54 provided for the correct allocation of councillors. Having looked at the district we were of the view that the town areas of Calne, Chippenham, Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett form fairly discrete urban areas and that although Corsham is fairly urban in nature much of the surrounding area is pinned against the district boundary. Therefore we looked at the relative allocations between the urban and rural areas while considering Corsham and its surrounding area in isolation. Given these allocations we noted that under council sizes of 52, 53 and 55 it would not be possible to secure good levels of

electoral equality without combining a number of urban and rural areas which we would normally try to avoid. Given the size and distribution of electors across the district, the relative councillor elector ratios under each council size and the correct allocation of councillors to the different areas in the district, a council size of 52-members would merit 53 councillors overall, a council size of 53-members would merit 54 councillors overall and a council size of 55-members would merit 56 councillors overall.

40 We looked at the relative merits of both 51- and 54-member councils and concluded that overall a council size of 54 would provide for a slightly better allocation of councillors than a 51-member council and therefore was less likely to necessitate a mixture of urban and rural areas. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members.

Electoral equality

41 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects The Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. Therefore, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where inadequate justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

42 We noted that, while securing some improvement in electoral equality, there would still be a number of significant imbalances under the Council's proposals with five wards varying by more than 10% from the district average by 2009. We noted that there was little community identity argument to justify these imbalances and have therefore sought to secure improved levels of electoral equality across the district. While we note that seven of our proposed wards would have variances of more than 10% currently we note that due to growth in the district the variances in the wards are expected to improve by 2009. By 2009 none of our proposed wards would vary by more than 10% from the district average.

43 Given the generally good allocation of councillors between urban and rural areas it has been possible to secure improved levels of electoral equality across the district. However, we found our decision for the proposed Lyneham ward to be particularly difficult. We noted that the Council's proposal for the majority of Calne Without parish and Heddington parish would result in an electoral variance of 18% by 2009 for which we did not consider there was sufficient argument. Therefore we looked at a number

of options to secure an improved level of electoral equality in the area. We noted that, given the size and distribution of electors in Calne Without parish transferring Pewsham parish ward to a neighbouring ward was perhaps the best option. Therefore we considered transferring the parish ward to either our proposed Chippenham Pewsham, Corsham & Lacock or Lyneham wards. We did not consider that any of the options were ideal but noted that transferring Pewsham parish ward to Lyneham ward would secure the best overall levels of electoral equality in the area. However, we would invite views on these options at Stage Three.

44 The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (99,156) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 54 under our draft proposals. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,835 for 2004.

General analysis

45 While the District Council's proposals secured some improvement in the levels of electoral equality in the rural areas a number of its proposed wards did not secure good levels of electoral equality. We also noted that we received very little detailed evidence of community identities at Stage One. The Council considered the issue of community identity through its Area committee system and on the basis of the previous review in 1999. In each area it briefly summarised the views of respondents and some of the Local Government Commission's decisions at this time. However, it did not provide specific and current arguments. It should be noted that this is a different review and that we cannot assume that community factors have necessarily remained the same. Therefore, while drawing on its proposals we have looked to provide greatly improved levels of electoral equality across the district and propose combining a number of wards to form new two and three-member wards. We did not receive detailed proposals in the more urban areas of the district and therefore propose our own wards. At Stage Three we would invite interested parties to provide community identity evidence.

Warding arrangements

46 For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a Brinkworth & the Somerfords, St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston and Malmesbury wards (page 33)
- b Cricklade, Purton and Ashton Keynes & Minety wards (page 34)
- c Lyneham, Hilmarton, Bremhill, Kington Langley and Calne Without wards (page 35)
- d Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards (page 38)
- e Box, Pickwick, Corsham and Lacock with Neston & Gastard wards (page 39)
- f Chippenham area (11 wards) (page 41)
- g Calne (six wards) (page 43)
- h Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards (page 45)

47 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Brinkworth & the Somerfords, St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston and Malmesbury wards

48 The above three wards are located in the north of the district. Table 5 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 5: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Brinkworth & the Somerfords	Brinkworth, Charlton, Dauntsey, Great Somerford, Hankerton, Lea & Cleverton, Little Somerford parishes	2
St Paul Malmesbury Without & Sherston	Easton Grey, Hullavington, Luckington, Norton & Foxley, Sherston, Sopworth, St Paul Malmesbury Without parishes.	2
Malmesbury	Malmesbury and Brokenborough parishes	2

49 At Stage One the District Council proposed a new single-member ward comprising the parishes of Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth, a new single-member ward comprising the parishes of Brokenborough, Crudwell, Easton Grey, Hullavington and Norton & Foxley and a new single-member ward comprising the parish of St Paul Malmesbury Without to be named St Paul Malmesbury Without ward. To the east of this area it proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Great Somerford, Lea & Cleverton and Little Somerford and a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Brinkworth, Charlton and Dauntsey. In Malmesbury it recommended that the town be divided equally between two new wards but did not provide detailed proposals. With the exception of its proposed St Paul Malmesbury Without ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards.

50 Under the Council's proposals these proposed wards would have 7% fewer, 7% more, 3% fewer, 16% fewer and 8% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the district average by 2009. Two equally divided wards in the town of Malmesbury would each have 4% fewer electors respectively than the district average by 2009.

51 We have carefully considered the proposals of the District Council in this area and note the arguments put forward during the PER in 1999 (as mentioned in paragraph 45). However, we cannot assume that information received at that time is still accurate now and note further that little new evidence has been forwarded to us as part of this review. We also note that, while securing some improvement in the level of electoral equality, one of the Council's proposed wards would have an electoral variance of 16% by 2009. Therefore, given this electoral imbalance and a lack of relevant community identity argument we have examined a number of alternative options.

52 Given that the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Little Somerford would have a variance of 16% by 2009 we have considered alternative options in the area. We noted that the only practical solution, given the size and distribution of electors in the area and in order to avoid parish warding in the area, was to combine this ward with the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Brinkworth. This proposed two-member ward would secure only a slightly improved level of electoral equality by 2009 (-12%). Therefore we propose to transfer Hankerton parish to this proposed two-member ward. These proposals would secure an acceptable level of electoral variance of -6% by 2009. We also note that the composite areas of our proposed two-member Brinkworth ward share good road links.

53 We noted that the Council's proposed single-member ward centred on Sherston would have 7% fewer electors than the district average by 2009 while its proposed single-member ward centred on Brokenborough would have 7% more electors. Given that we received very limited community identity arguments to justify these two wards we considered combining the two wards to form a new two-member ward that would secure an electoral variance equal to the district average by 2009. We also noted that transferring Easton Grey parish to the Council's proposed ward centred on Sherston secured an improvement in electoral equality whilst maintaining single-member wards in the area. Under this proposal both wards would secure variances of 3% by 2009. While a combined two-member ward would secure a variance equal to the average by 2009 we noted that the alternative option to transfer Easton Grey parish would secure good levels of electoral equality while creating two more compact single-member wards. Therefore, given the availability of this option we propose a single-member Sherston ward comprising the parishes of Easton Grey, Luckington, Sherston and Sopworth and a single-member Hullavington & Crudwell ward comprising the parishes of Brokenborough, Crudwell, Hullavington and Norton & Foxley.

54 We note that the Council's proposed single-member St Paul Malmesbury Without ward would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009 and are content to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations. We also note that the Council proposed that Malmesbury be divided equally between two single-member wards. However, we note that no detailed proposals were forwarded and that a two-member ward for the town would secure a comparative level of electoral equality by 2009 (-4%). Therefore, given that we do not have any evidence to suggest where the appropriate division of the town should be and that we have an alternative option available to us we propose a two-member Malmesbury ward.

55 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Brinkworth, Hullavington & Crudwell, St Paul Malmesbury, Malmesbury and Sherston wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Cricklade, Purton, Ashton Keynes & Minety wards

56 The above three wards are located in the north east of the district. Table 6 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 6: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Cricklade	Cricklade, Latton and Marston Meysey parishes	2
Purton	Braydon and Purton parishes	2
Ashton Keynes & Minety	Ashton Keynes, Crudwell, Leigh, Minety and Oaksey parishes	2

57 At Stage One the District Council proposed two two-member wards and a single-member ward in the area. It proposed that the parishes of Hankerton, Minety and Oaksey be combined to form a new single-member ward and that the parishes of Ashton Keynes, Braydon, Leigh and Purton be combined to form a new two-member ward. It proposed that the current Cricklade ward be retained. With the exception of its proposed Cricklade ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed wards. Under the Council's proposals these proposed wards would have 9% fewer, 20% more and 2% more electors per councillor respectively than the district average by 2009.

58 Purton Parish Council proposed that Purton and Braydon retain two district councillors.

59 We note that under the Council's proposals its proposed ward based around Purton and Ashton Keynes would have an electoral variance of 20% by 2009. Therefore, given this high level of electoral imbalance and a lack of relevant community identity evidence we have considered alternative options in the area. We note the good level of electoral equality that would be secured by maintaining the current Cricklade ward and are therefore content to put this ward forward as part of our draft recommendations. However, in order to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the area we propose combining the Council's proposed ward comprising the parishes of Ashton Keynes, Braydon, Leigh and Purton with the parishes of Oaksey and Minety in a three-member ward. Our proposed three-member Minety & Purton ward would secure an electoral variance of 6% by 2009. We also note the proposal of Purton Parish Council that Purton and Braydon retain two district councillors, however, we note that a two-member ward comprising these parishes would have an electoral imbalance of -15% by 2009 and therefore given the alternative option available to us we have not been persuaded that this would be the best balance between our statutory criteria.

60 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Cricklade, Purton and Ashton Keynes & Minety wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Lyneham, Hilmarton, Bremhill, Kington Langley and Calne Without wards

61 The above five wards are located in the south east of the district. Table 7 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on page 22-25) outlines the

existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 7: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Lyneham	Clyffe Pypard, Lyneham & Bradenstoke and Tockenham parishes	2
Hilmarton	East parish ward of the parish of Calne Without, Cherhill, Compton Bassett and Hilmarton parishes	1
Bremhill	Bremhill parish, Pewsham ward of the parish of Calne Without, Langley Burrell Without parish ward of the parish of Langley Burrell Without parish and Christian Malford parish	1
Kington Langley	Kington Langley, Seagry and Sutton Benger parishes	1
Calne Without	Middle, West and Sandy Lane parish wards of the parish of Calne Without and Heddington parish	1

62 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current two-member Lyneham and the single-member The Lydiards & Broad Town wards be retained. It also proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Bremhill, Cherhill, Compton Bassett and Hilmarton to form a new single-member ward and proposed combining the parishes of Christian Malford, Seagry and Sutton Benger and Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell parish to form a new single-member ward. It proposed that all of the parish wards of Calne Without parish with the exception of Calne Without parish ward be combined with Heddington parish to form a new single-member ward. It proposed that Calne Without parish ward be included within a ward in Calne town. With the exception of its proposed Lyneham and The Lydiards & Broad Town wards the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards. Under the Council's proposals these proposed wards would have 6% fewer, 10% more, 13% more, 7% fewer and 18% more electors than the district average by 2009 respectively.

63 Cherhill Parish Council stated that it considered the current arrangements to be satisfactory. Tockenham Parish Council requested that our recommendations took into account the rural nature of the parish and stated that its best interests would be served by being placed in a ward with Clyffe Pypard, Broad Town, Bushton, Broad Hinton and Hilmarton as these parishes have similar issues in terms of provision of services and amenities. Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council considered that 'there should be a balance of residents to district councillors and therefore request one district councillor to each ward'.

64 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We noted that the District Council's proposals secured some improvement in the levels of

electoral equality in the area, however we also noted that its proposed ward centred on Hilmarton parish and its proposed ward based on the majority of Calne Without parish would have 13% and 18% more electors than the district average by 2009. Given that we have received little argument to justify this level of imbalance we have considered a number of alternative options in the area.

65 Given our draft recommendations in the north-east of the district (paragraph 59), the fact that the current The Lydiards & Broad Town ward is situated on the edge of the district and the distribution of electors in the surrounding area, we are proposing to retain the ward as part of our draft recommendations as we do not consider we can improve on upon an expected electoral variance of 10% by 2009 without dividing parishes between different wards or combining areas with Wootton Bassett, neither of which we considered would better reflect the statutory criteria. We note the proposals put forward by Tockenham Parish Council and considered whether we could place Tockenham and Clyffe Pypard within the proposed The Lydiards & Broad Town ward. However, we noted that this would result in an electoral variance of 33% by 2009 which we did not consider could be justified given the evidence available to us.

66 Having considered alternative options for the Council's proposed ward centred on Sutton Benger we are of the view that the Council's proposal would provide for the best level of electoral equality available given the size and distribution of electors in the area. Therefore we are proposing a single-member Sutton Benger ward comprising the parishes of Christian Malford, Seagry and Sutton Benger and Langley Burrell Without parish ward of Langley Burrell parish as part of our draft recommendations.

67 Given the lack of evidence provided in support of the Council's proposed wards and the 13% variance that would result from its proposed ward centred on Hilmarton parish we are proposing to combine this ward with its proposed Lyneham ward to form a new three-member Lyneham ward. We have also noted the high level of electoral inequality in the Council's proposed Calne Without ward and propose transferring Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish to our proposed Lyneham ward.

68 We considered a number of different options for this area, including transferring the parish ward to our proposed Chippenham Pewsham and Corsham & Lacock wards. While Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish has good transport links with Chippenham Pewsham ward we have looked to avoid mixing urban and rural areas in the same ward where possible as we consider that, in general, this does not provide for effective and convenient local government. We also note that transferring the area to the proposed Corsham & Lacock ward would result in an electoral imbalance of 11% by 2009. We note that transferring the area to the proposed Lyneham ward would secure an improved level of electoral equality overall. Our proposed Lyneham ward would have an electoral variance 3% more than the district average by 2009. Therefore we propose that Pewsham parish ward be included within the proposed Lyneham ward. However, we would invite further submissions on this proposal, backed up with substantive evidence at Stage Three. While we note the proposal of Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council for one district councillor for each ward, given the distribution of electors in the district it would not be possible to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality without dividing parishes between different district wards and we have no evidence to suggest that dividing parishes to

secure electoral equality would reflect community identity and effective and convenient local government.

69 We note the Council’s proposal in Calne Without parish for a new single-member ward uniting the entirety of the parish with the exception of Calne Without parish ward. However, we also note that it would have an electoral variance of 18% by 2009 and we have therefore looked at a number of alternative options in the area (paragraph 43). We received little evidence in support of such a high electoral variance and propose transferring Pewsham parish ward of Calne Without parish to our proposed Lyneham ward in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations the proposed Calne Without and Lyneham wards would have 10% more and 3% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

70 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Lyneham, Kington Langley, The Lydiards & Broad Town and Calne Without wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Nettleton, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards

71 The above three wards are located in the west of the district. Table 8 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 8: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Nettleton	Castle Combe, Grittleton, Nettleton, North Wraxall and Stanton St Quintin parishes	1
Kington St Michael	Biddeston, Kington St Michael and Yatton Keynell parishes and Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish	1
Colerne	Colerne parish	1

72 At Stage One the District Council proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Castle Combe, Nettleton, North Wraxall, Yatton Keynell and Chippenham Without parish ward of Chippenham Without parish. It also proposed a single-member ward comprising the parishes of Grittleton, Kington Langley, Kington St Michael and Stanton St Quinton. It proposed that the current Colerne ward be retained. With the exception of its proposed Colerne ward the Council did not provide names for its proposed new wards.

73 Under the Council’s proposals these proposed wards would have 5% fewer, 3% more and 1% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

74 The Parish Council of Colerne proposed that the current Colerne ward remain unchanged, arguing that the community considered that a district councillor representing coincident district and parish boundaries was a strength and was democratic. Nettleton Parish Council stated that it considered the current arrangements to be satisfactory. Yatton Keynell Parish Council proposed no change to the current electoral arrangements in its area.

75 We have carefully considered the submissions received during Stage One and note that the District Council’s proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality. We also note, in common with the District Council, that Colerne Parish Council proposed that the current Colerne ward be maintained. We are of the view that given the level of electoral equality (-1% by 2009) that would be achieved, the size and distribution of the electorate in the area and Colerne’s position on the edge of the district, which limit the options available, that the statutory criteria would be best reflected by retaining the current single-member Colerne ward.

76 We have also carefully considered the proposals to retain the existing wards made by the parish councils of Nettleton and Yatton Keynell. While we note that the current Nettleton ward would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009 (-3%) we also note that the current Kington St Michael and Kington Langley wards would not (-15% and -16%). Given the need to secure an improved level of electoral equality across the area as a whole it has not been possible to view these areas in isolation. Therefore, given the improved level of electoral equality secured under the Council’s proposals we propose adopting the Council’s proposed single-member wards centred on Yatton Keynell and Kington St Michael as part of our draft recommendations. We propose that these new wards be named Yatton Keynell and Kington Langley.

77 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Yatton Keynell, Kington St Michael and Colerne wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Box, Pickwick, Corsham and Lacock with Neston & Gastard wards

78 The above three wards are located in the south west of the district. Table 9 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

Table 9: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Box	Box parish and Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish.	2
Pickwick	Pickwick parish ward of Corsham parish	2

Corsham	Corsham parish ward of Corsham parish	2
Lacock with Neston & Gastard	Gastard and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish and Lacock parish.	1

79 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the parish of Biddestone be combined with Pickwick parish ward of Corsham parish to form a new two-member ward and that the current two-member Corsham ward be maintained. It proposed that the parish of Lacock be combined with Gastard parish ward of Corsham parish and part of the current Neston parish ward of Corsham parish to form a new single-member ward. It also proposed that the remainder of Neston parish ward be combined with Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish and part of Box parish to form a new single-member ward. It did not provide detailed proposals as to where Neston parish ward and Box parish should be divided. It proposed that the remainder of Box parish form a new single-member ward.

80 Corsham Town Council proposed that the current Corsham ward be combined with Gastard parish ward of Corsham parish to form a new three-member ward and that Pickwick ward be combined with Neston parish ward of Corsham parish in a new three-member ward.

81 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We note that the District Council did not provide us with detailed proposals for much of the area, that its proposals would divide a number of areas, that it did not provide detailed evidence and that its proposal for Pickwick parish ward and Biddestone parish would have an electoral variance of 11% by 2009. We also note that Corsham Town Council's proposal for a three-member ward combining Corsham ward and Gastard parish ward of Corsham parish would have 27% fewer electors than the district average by 2009 (as a two-member ward it would have 9% more electors by 2009). Its proposal to combine Pickwick and Neston parish wards of Corsham parish would secure an electoral variance of -11% by 2009. Therefore, given the lack of detail provided by the Council and the high level of electoral inequality under Corsham Parish Council's proposals we have looked at a number of alternative options that would secure improved levels of electoral equality and would avoid dividing parishes.

82 We note that under the Council's proposals Box parish would be divided between two wards and we have sought to avoid this as we have received no evidence that dividing the parish between wards would provide for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. We note that combining Box parish with Rudloe parish ward of Corsham parish in a two-member Box & Rudloe ward would secure an improved level of electoral equality (-4% by 2009). However, given an 11% variance in the Council's proposal centred on Pickwick ward we propose amendments between this proposed Pickwick ward and our proposed Box & Rudloe ward in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality in our proposed Pickwick ward. We propose that the boundary be amended so that the properties between Bath Road and Park Lane and the properties to the west of Randall Court and Nine Acre Drive be included within the proposed Box & Rudloe ward. Our proposed Box & Rudloe ward would have 4% more electors than the district average by 2009. Our proposed two-member Pickwick ward, based on the proposal of the Council and subject to our

proposed amendment, would have 2% more electors than the district average by 2009.

83 We also propose that Corsham, Neston and Gastard parish wards of Corsham parish be combined with Lacock parish to form a new three-member Corsham & Lacock ward which would have 9% more electors than the district average by 2009.

84 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Box, Pickwick and Corsham & Lacock wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 4 accompanying this report.

Chippenham area (11 wards)

85 Chippenham is a parish situated in south of the district and divided into 10 district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Chippenham Allington, Chippenham Audley, Chippenham Avon, Chippenham Hill Rise, Chippenham London Road, Chippenham Monkton Park, Chippenham Park, Chippenham Pewsham, Chippenham Redland and Chippenham Westcroft/Queens. The area also includes the district ward Cepen Park which comprises two parish wards: Cepen Park North of the Langley Burrell parish and Cepen Park South ward of the Chippenham Without parish. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

86 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Chippenham town be represented by 14 single-member wards and that the current Cepen Park North ward of Langley Burrell parish and Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish be included in any new warding structure for the town. However, it did not provide detailed proposals for the area.

87 We note that the District Council did not provide detailed proposals in this area and we are therefore making our own proposals. We have sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the town while utilising strong boundaries. We note that the current Chippenham Monkton ward is somewhat isolated from the remainder of the town by Monkton Park and the railway line and secures a good level of electoral equality (4% by 2009) and we therefore propose adopting the current single-member Chippenham Monkton Park ward as part of our draft recommendations. We also propose retaining the current single-member Chippenham Hill Rise ward subject to a minor amendment to improve the level of electoral equality and to provide for a more identifiable boundary. We propose that the properties on Malmesbury Road and Milestone Way be transferred from our proposed Chippenham Hill Rise ward to our proposed Chippenham Park ward.

88 We propose that the current Chippenham Park ward and that part of the current Chippenham Hill Rise ward mentioned in the previous paragraph be combined with the current Cepen Park North parish ward of Langley Burrell Without parish and the proposed Cepen Park Central parish ward of Chippenham Without parish. We consider that this would provide for strong boundaries and note that it would secure a good level of electoral equality by 2009. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Park ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

89 In the centre of Chippenham town we investigated whether we could utilise the railway line as a boundary between the east of the town and the west of the town as we consider that it provides a good dividing line in the town. However, it was not possible to use this boundary and secure good levels of electoral equality and therefore we have had to breach the railway line. We have had to consider where to propose a ward that includes electors on both sides of the line and concluded that it would be easier to divide the current Chippenham Audley ward than the current Chippenham Avon ward. We noted that the housing in Chippenham Avon ward was of more varied types and that it would be less easy to neatly divide. Therefore we propose combining the current Chippenham Avon ward with that part of the current Chippenham Audley to the east of Ladyfield Road, Woodlands Road (as far as Canterbury Street) and Audley Road. We note that the areas are linked across the railway line with the Avon area. In order to secure improved levels of electoral equality we also propose transferring electors from the current Chippenham London Road ward. We propose that the area to the north of Avenue La Fleche west of and including Wood Lane and the area to the north of Common Slip and including St Mary Street be transferred to our proposed Chippenham Avon ward. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Avon ward would have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

90 We propose that the remainder of the current Chippenham London Road ward form a new single-member Chippenham London Road ward subject to two minor amendments. We propose that Cricketts Lane be included within the ward from Chippenham Pewsham ward but that Charter County Primary School be transferred to our proposed Chippenham Pewsham ward. We are of the view that these proposals would provide for more identifiable boundaries. Our proposed Chippenham London Road and Chippenham Pewsham wards would have 3% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

91 We propose that the current Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward be largely maintained subject to two amendments to secure an improved level of electoral equality. We propose that Farleigh Close and the area to the north of Queens Crescent as far as Hungerdown Lane be transferred to a new Chippenham Allington ward. Our proposed single-member Chippenham Westcroft/Queens would have 1% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

92 Our proposed Chippenham Allington ward would comprise those areas of the current Chippenham Westcroft/Queens ward mentioned previously (paragraph 91). It would also comprise the area of Chippenham Without parish to the east of West Cepen Way and to the south of Bristol Road which would form a new Cepen Park South parish ward of Chippenham Without parish. Our proposed Chippenham Allington ward would also comprise that part of the current Chippenham Allington ward to the south of Lords Mead, south of and including Frogwell Park. Our proposed two-member Chippenham Allington ward would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

93 Our proposed Chippenham Redland ward would comprise the current Chippenham Redland ward and the remainder of the current Chippenham Allington and Chippenham Audley ward that we do not propose combining with our proposed Chippenham Avon or Chippenham Allington wards. Our proposed two-member

Chippenham Redland ward would have 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009.

94 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the wards of Chippenham. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

Calne (six wards)

95 Calne is located in the south east of the district. It is divided into six district wards: Calne Abberd, Calne Chilvester, Calne Lickhill, Calne Marden, Calne Priestley and Calne Quemerford, and comprises the parish of Calne and the Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish in Calne Chilvester ward. Table 4 (on page 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

96 At Stage One the District Council proposed seven councillors for Calne town and proposed that Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish be included in any new warding structure for the town, arguing that the area has 'more in keeping with its urban neighbour' than the rural areas of the same parish. However, it did not provide detailed proposals for the area. Calne Town Council proposed a number of amendments to district ward boundaries in the town. It proposed that both sides of London Road be transferred to Calne Quemerford ward, that both sides of Curzon Street be transferred to Calne Marden ward and that Alma Terrace and Victoria Terrace be included within Calne Chilvester ward. It further proposed that Wood Street and Curzon Street from the junction with the mini roundabout to The Square be included within Calne Marden ward, that William Street be wholly contained within Calne Abberd ward and that all new housing south east of Greenacres Way be included within Chilvester ward at both district and parish level.

97 We note that neither the District Council nor Town Council made full proposals for wards across the town. Therefore we are making our own proposals in this area. We have sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality while utilising strong boundaries. We noted that by 2009, under a council size of 54, Calne town (including Calne Without parish ward of Calne Without parish) would merit seven councillors rather than the current six. We are satisfied that Calne Without parish ward constitutes overspill from Calne town and are therefore proposing that it remains in a ward with areas from the town itself as we consider that it is likely to have stronger community links than with the surrounding rural areas. We also noted the significant growth in the current Calne Lickhill ward and that by 2009 the current ward would merit that extra councillor. However, we also noted that the current Calne Chilvester ward would be significantly overrepresented by 2009. Therefore we propose adding an additional councillor to the current Calne Lickhill ward and making boundary amendments in the north of the town to rectify the imbalance in Calne Chilvester ward.

98 We propose the roads to the west of and including North End be transferred to a revised Calne Chilvester ward. We also propose that the properties on the northern side of Curzon Street and the western side of Wood Street also be transferred to the proposed Calne Chilvester ward from Calne Lickhill ward. Our proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality in our proposed single-member Calne

Chilvester ward which would have 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

99 Given the transfer of electors between our proposed Calne Chilvester ward and the current Calne Lickhill ward it has been necessary to propose the transfer of electors between Calne Lickhill and Calne Abberd wards in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality and to secure identifiable boundaries. Therefore we propose that the area south of and including Victoria Terrace in the current Calne Lickhill ward be transferred to our proposed Calne Abberd ward. In order to provide for the correct balance in the number of electors in each ward we are also proposing that Dunnet Close, Hungerford Road, Ernle Road, Warren Crescent, Guthrie Close, Charles Court, The Kilns and Oxford Road (north of and including numbers 193 and 216) be transferred from our proposed Calne Abberd ward to our proposed Calne Lickhill ward.

100 We note that the transfer of electors in the north of the town has had a knock-on effect and we therefore propose that Page Close be transferred from the current Calne Priestly ward to our proposed Calne Abberd ward. These proposed amendments in the north of the town would result in our proposed single-member Calne Abberd and two-member Calne Lickhill wards having 2% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009. We considered further amendments in order to improve the level of electoral equality in our proposed Calne Lickhill ward but noted that we could not maintain a balance of electors without dividing roads which we have tried to avoid to provide a better reflection of community identity.

101 We note that our proposal to transfer electors from Calne Priestly ward to Calne Abberd ward would result in Calne Priestly ward having 6% fewer electors than the district average and we therefore considered whether further amendments could be made to improve this level of electoral equality. Having considered the options available we did not consider that it would be practical to transfer electors from either ward to our proposed Calne Priestly ward. We acknowledged that it would not be possible to transfer discrete areas from either Calne Marden or Calne Quemerford wards, noting that New Road and the River Marden provided further complications. We were not persuaded that dividing these discrete areas would provide for a good reflection of community identity. We also noted that the current Calne Marden and Calne Quemerford wards secure excellent levels of electoral equality. Therefore we propose accepting a 6% variance in our proposed Calne Priestly ward. Under our draft recommendations the single-member Calne Marden, Calne Priestly and Calne Quemerford wards would have 2% more, 6% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

102 We noted the submission made by the Town Council and sought to reflect its proposals where possible. However, we have, in the first instance, had to consider a viable warding pattern for the town as a whole and have only reflected the proposals of the Town Council where possible. We support its proposals that Calne Without parish ward remain in Calne Chilvester ward for district elections, however, we are unable to consider transferring the area to Calne parish as part of this review. We also support the proposal that the new housing south east of Beversbrook Road be contained within the proposed Lickhill ward. In order to secure good levels of electoral equality we have are not proposing to put forward the remainder of its proposals.

103 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the wards of Calne. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards

104 The parish of Wootton Bassett is situated in the east of the district and is divided into two district wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South. Table 4 (on pages 22-25) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

105 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Wootton Bassett be represented by five councillors but had no preference as to whether it be divided between a two-member ward and three-member ward or whether it be divided between five single-member wards.

106 We note that the District Council did not provide detailed proposals in this area and we are therefore making our own proposals. We have sought to provide for improved levels of electoral equality in the town while utilising strong boundaries. We are proposing to maintain the current two- and three-member ward structure in the town but note that while Wootton Bassett North ward has 8% more electors per councillor than the district average, Wootton Bassett South ward has 14% fewer electors per councillor than the district average. Therefore we are proposing that electors be transferred from Wootton Bassett North ward to Wootton Bassett South ward.

107 We propose that the boundary be amended to run to the north of Badger Close, Otter Way and Squirrel Crescent and then run south along Stoneover Lane. The boundary would then run west to the north of North Bank Rise before rejoining the existing boundary. We then propose that the boundary run to the north of Shepherds Breach and The Rosary and continue to the north of Coxstalls and Springfield Crescent before rejoining the current boundary and running to the parish boundary. Our proposed two-member Wootton Bassett North and three-member Wootton Bassett South wards would have 1% fewer and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2009. we considered improving the level of electoral equality further but note that it would not be possible to transfer discrete areas given the nature of the housing along the proposed boundary. We did not consider that this would provide for a good reflection of community identity in the area.

108 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9-10 and 12-15 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 2 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

109 Table 10 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2004 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2009.

Table 10: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Draft recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	53	53	54	54
Number of wards	38	38	34	34
Average number of electors per councillor	1,871	1,982	1,835	1,945
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	13	12	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	2	1	0

110 As shown in Table 10, our draft recommendations for North Wiltshire District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 13 to seven. By 2009 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to increase council size and are recommending a council size of 54 members.

Draft recommendation:

North Wiltshire District Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

111 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the district council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish and town councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements in FERs. However, The Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the district council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an FER.

112 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by The Boundary Committee, lies with district councils.² If a district council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or The Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

113 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 district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Calne, Chippenham, Chippenham Without, Corsham and Wootton Bassett to reflect the proposed district wards.

114 The parish of Calne is currently served by 17 councillors representing six wards: Abberd, Lickhill, Marden, Priestly and Quemerford returning three councillors each and Chilvester returning two councillors.

115 Calne Town Council proposed an extra councillor for Calne Chilvester ward to reflect the significant increase in the number of electors expected over the next five years.

116 Given the proposed amendments to the district wards, we are proposing new parish warding arrangements in the town. We note the proposal of the Town Council to increase the number of councillors serving the parish due to the expected growth in the town. However, we would require further information as to how this growth would affect councillor workloads and would invite further comment at Stage Three.

Draft recommendation:

Calne Town Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Abberd (returning three councillors), Lickhill (returning four councillors), Marden (returning four councillors), Priestly (returning three councillors) and Quemerford (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 5.

117 The parish of Chippenham is currently served by 22 councillors representing 10 parish wards: Allington, Audley, Avon, Hill Rise, London Road, Monkton Park, Park, Redland and Westcroft/Queens returning two councillors each and Pewsham returning four councillors.

118 As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing nine new wards in Chippenham town. Therefore we propose amending the parish arrangements in the town. We propose nine new parish wards coincident with our proposed district wards in the town.

² Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

Draft recommendations:

Chippenham Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing nine wards: Avon, Park, Pewsham and Redland (each returning three councillors) and Allington, Hill Rise, London Road, Monkton Park and Westcroft/Queens (each returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 3.

119 The parish of Chippenham Without is currently served by seven councillors representing two parish wards: Cepen Park South returning two councillors and Chippenham Without returning five councillors.

120 As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to divide the current Cepen South parish ward between two district wards, therefore it has been necessary to create two new parish wards and reallocate parish councillors between them. We propose the new parish wards of Cepen Park Central and Cepen Park South which we propose be represented by one councillor each.

Draft recommendations:

Chippenham Without Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing three parish wards: Cepen Park Central (returning one councillor), Cepen Park South (returning one councillor) and Chippenham Without (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 3.

121 The parish of Corsham is currently served by 20 councillors representing five parish wards: Corsham and Pickwick returning seven councillors each, Neston returning three councillors, Gastard returning two councillors and Rudloe returning one councillor.

122 As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to amend the parish ward boundary between Pickwick and Rudloe wards. Therefore we propose that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area.

Draft recommendations:

Corsham Town Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Corsham and Pickwick (each returning seven councillors), Neston (returning three councillors), Gastard (returning two councillors) and Rudloe (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 3 and 4.

123 The parish of Wootton Bassett is currently served by 16 councillors representing two parish wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South, both returning eight councillors.

124 As part of our draft recommendations we propose amending the boundary between Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South district wards. Therefore we are proposing to amend the boundary between Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South parish wards in order that it be coincident with the district ward boundary.

Draft recommendations:

Wootton Bassett Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Wootton Bassett North and Wootton Bassett South (each returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2.

5 What happens next?

125 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 24 April 2006. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

126 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the Chippenham, Corsham and Lyneham areas to be a difficult judgement between the statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence received from local interested parties during Stage One. In these cases, we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

127 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Manager
North Wiltshire Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Submissions can also be made online at
www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm.

128 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of North Wiltshire District Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

129 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

6 Mapping

Draft recommendations for North Wiltshire district:

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for North Wiltshire district.

Sheet 1, Map 1 illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for North Wiltshire district, including constituent parishes.

Sheet 2, Map 2 illustrates the proposed boundaries in Wootton Bassett town.

Sheet 3, Map 3 illustrates the proposed boundaries in Chippenham town.

Sheet 4, Map 4 illustrates the proposed boundaries in Corsham and the surrounding area.

Sheet 5, Map 5 illustrates the proposed boundaries in Calne town.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
The Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
The Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the district
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The twelve National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon

	<p>be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>'an extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; - access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; - wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; - established farming use is effectively maintained'
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single district enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by The Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the

	now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet; a cabinet with a leader; or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the district average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

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

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