

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Herefordshire

*January 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)  
Peter Brokenshire  
Kru Desai  
Pamela Gordon  
Robin Gray  
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective 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, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

© Crown Copyright 2001

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.  
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

# CONTENTS

|   | page      |
|---|-----------|
| SUMMARY   | <i>v</i>  |
| 1 INTRODUCTION  | <i>1</i>  |
| 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL<br>ARRANGEMENTS   | <i>5</i>  |
| 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED  | <i>9</i>  |
| 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT<br>RECOMMENDATIONS   | <i>11</i> |
| 5 NEXT STEPS  | <i>35</i> |
| <br>  |           |
| APPENDICES  |           |
| A Draft Recommendations for Herefordshire:<br>Detailed Mapping  | <i>37</i> |
| B Proposed Electoral Arrangements from:<br>- Herefordshire Council<br>- Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats | <i>43</i> |
| C The Statutory Provisions  | <i>47</i> |

Four A3 maps showing existing and proposed warding arrangements for Herefordshire can be found at the back of this report.

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Hereford City is inserted inside the back cover.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Herefordshire on 27 June 2000.

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

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

- **in 19 of the 44 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 19 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 10 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 112-113) are that:

- **Herefordshire Council should have 58 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 34 wards, instead of 44 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of 10, with four wards retaining their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 31 of the proposed 34 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster, Lower Bullingham, Ross-on-Wye, Ross Rural and Withington Group Parish Council.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 January 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 5 March 2001:

**Review Manager  
Herefordshire Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142**

**E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)**

**Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

|    | <b>Ward name</b>    | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>  | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1  | Aylestone           | 2                            | Aylestone and Tupsley wards (the proposed Aylestone parish ward of Hereford parish)   | Map 2 and Large map  |
| 2  | Belmont             | 3                            | Belmont ward (the proposed Belmont parish ward of Hereford parish); Clehonger ward (the parish of Belmont Rural)  | Map 2 and Large map  |
| 3  | Bircher             | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> ; Bircher ward (the parishes of Croft & Yarpole, Kingsland, Lucton, Orleton and Richards Castle)   | Map 2                |
| 4  | Bringsty            | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> : Bringsty ward (the parishes of Bredenbury, Brockhampton, Collington, Edwin Loach & Salt Marshe, Edwyn Ralph, Grendon Bishop, Hampton Charles, Linton, Norton, Tedstone Delamere, Tedstone Wafer, Thornbury, Upper Sapey, Wacton, Whitbourne and Wolferlow)   | Map 2                |
| 5  | Bromyard            | 2                            | Bromyard ward (part – the parishes of Bromyard & Wimslow, Moreton Jeffries and Stoke Lacy); Frome ward (part – the parishes of Acton Beauchamp, Avenbury, Bishop's Frome, Evesbatch, Much Cowarne and Stanford Bishop)  | Map 2                |
| 6  | Castle              | 1                            | Castle ward (part – the parishes of Almeley, Brobury with Monnington on Wye, Eardisley, Kinnersley, Letton, Norton Canon, Sarnesfield, Staunton on Wye, Whitney on Wye and Willersley & Winforton); Kington ward (part – the parishes of Brilley and Huntington)  | Map 2                |
| 7  | Central             | 1                            | Central and Holmer wards (the proposed Central parish ward of Hereford parish)  | Map 2 and Large map  |
| 8  | Credenhill          | 3                            | Burmarsh ward (part – the parishes of Holmer and Pipe & Lyde); Credenhill ward (the parishes of Breinton, Credenhill, Kenchester and Stretton Sugwas); Dinmore Hill ward (the parishes of Burghill, Dinmore, Moreton on Lugg and Wellington); Weobley ward (part – the parishes of Bishopstone, Bridge Sollers, Brinsop & Wormsley, Byford, Canon Pyon, Mansell Gamage, Mansell Lacy and Yazor) | Map 2                |
| 9  | Doward              | 2                            | Doward ward (the parishes of Ganerew, Goodrich, Llangarron, Marstow, Welsh Bicknor and Whitchurch); Pontrilas ward (part – the parishes of Llanrothal and Welsh Newton); Wilton ward (part – the parishes of Bridstow, Hentland, Peterstow and Sellack)   | Map 2                |
| 10 | Golden Cross        | 1                            | Golden Cross ward (part – the parishes of Dilwyn and Eardisland); Weobley ward (part – the parishes of Birley with Upper Hill, King's Pyon and Weobley)   | Map 2                |
| 11 | Golden Valley North | 1                            | Castle ward (part – the parishes of Blakemere, Moccas and Preston on Wye); Golden Valley ward (part – the parish of Peterchurch) Merbach ward (part – the parishes of Bredwardine, Clifford, Cussop and Dorstone); Stoney Street ward (part – the parish of Tyberton)   | Map 2                |

|    | <b>Ward name</b>        | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 12 | Golden Valley South     | 1                            | Golden Valley ward (part – the parishes of Abbey Dore, Bacton, St Margarets, Turnastone and Vowchurch); Merbach ward (part – the parishes of Craswall, Llanveynoe, Longtown, Michaelchurch Escley, Newton and Walterstone); Pontrilas ward (part – the parishes of Dulas, Ewyas Harold, Llancillo and Rowstone)  | Map 2                |
| 13 | Hagley & Backbury       | 2                            | Backbury ward (part – the parishes of Dormington, Fownhope, Hampton Bishop, Mordiford, Stoke Edith and Weston Beggard); Frome ward (part – the parish of Tarrington); Hagley ward (the parishes of Bartestree, Lugwardine, Preston Wynne, Westhide and Withington)   | Map 2                |
| 14 | Hampton Court           | 2                            | Bromyard ward (part – the parishes of Felton, Little Cowarne, Ocle Pychard, Pencombe with Grendon Warren and Ullingswick); Burmarsh ward (part – the parishes of Marden and Sutton); Hampton Court ward (the parishes of Bodenham, Docklow & Hampton Wafer, Ford & Stoke Prior, Hatfield & Newhampton, Hope under Dinmore, Humber, Newton and Puddlestone) | Map 2                |
| 15 | Hollington              | 1                            | Hollington ward (part – the parishes of Ballingham, Bolstone, Dinedor, Holme Lacy and Little Dewchurch and the Lower Bullingham parish ward of Lower Bullingham parish); Kingsthorpe ward (part – the parishes of Callow, Dewsall, Grafton and Haywood)  | Map 2                |
| 16 | Hope End                | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i> ; the parishes of Bosbury, Cradley, Coddington, Colwall, Mathon and Wellington Heath  | Map 2                |
| 17 | Kington Town            | 1                            | Kington Town ward (part – the parishes of Kington, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton)  | Map 2                |
| 18 | Ledbury                 | 3                            | Ledbury ward (part – the parish of Eastnor and the proposed Ledbury town parish ward of Ledbury parish)  | Map 2 and Map A2     |
| 19 | Ledbury Rural           | 1                            | Frome ward (part – the parishes of Ashperton, Canon Frome, Castle Frome, Eggleton, Stretton Grandison and Yarkhill); Ledbury ward (part – the parish of Donnington); Marcle Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Aylton, Little Marcle, Munsley, Pixley, Putley and the proposed Ledbury Rural parish ward of Ledbury parish)                                | Map 2                |
| 20 | Leominster East & South | 2                            | Leominster East & South ward (part – the proposed Leominster East and Leominster South parish wards of Leominster parish)  | Map 2 and Map A4     |
| 21 | Leominster North        | 2                            | Leominster North ward (part – the proposed Leominster North parish ward of Leominster parish); Golden Cross ward (part – the parish of Monkland & Stretford)   | Map 2 and Map A4     |
| 22 | Mortimer                | 1                            | Lyonshall with Titley ward (part – the parishes of Byton, Combe, Kinsham and Stapleton); Mortimer ward (the parishes of Adforton, Aymestry, Brampton Bryan, Buckton & Coxhall, Burrington, Downton, Elton, Leinthall Starks, Leintwardine, Lingen, Pipe Aston, Walford, Letton & Newton, Wigmore and Willey)   | Map 2                |



|    | <b>Ward name</b>                  | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>   | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 23 | Old Gore                          | 1                            | Backbury ward (part – the parish of Brockhampton); Hollington ward (part – the parish of Kings Caple); Marcle Ridge ward (part – the parishes of Much Marcle and Woolhope); Old Gore ward (part – the parishes of Brampton Abbots, Foy, How Caple, Sollershope, Upton Bishop and Yatton)   | Map 2                |
| 24 | Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley | 1                            | Golden Cross ward (part – the parish of Pembridge); Lyonshall with Titley ward (part – the parishes of Knill, Lyonshall, Rodd, Nash & Little Brampton, Shobdon, Staunton on Arrow and Titley)  | Map 2                |
| 25 | Penyard                           | 1                            | Old Gore ward (part – the parishes of Aston Ingham and Linton); Penyard ward (part – the parishes of Hope Mansell, Lea and Weston under Penyard)   | Map 2                |
| 26 | Pontrilas                         | 1                            | Kingsthorne ward (part – the parishes of Aconbury, Little Birch and Much Birch); Pontrilas ward (part – the parishes of Garway, Orcop and St Weonards); Wilton ward (part – the parishes of Harewood, Llandinabo, Llanwarne, Pencoyd and Tretire with Michaelchurch)   | Map 2                |
| 27 | Ross-on-Wye East                  | 2                            | Ross-on-Wye East ward (the proposed Ross-on-Wye East parish ward of Ross-on-Wye parish and the proposed Ross Rural East parish ward of Ross Rural parish)  | Map 2 and Map A3     |
| 28 | Ross-on-Wye West                  | 2                            | Ross-on-Wye East ward (part – the proposed Ross Rural West parish ward of Ross Rural parish) Ross-on-Wye West ward (part – the proposed Ross-on-Wye West parish ward of Ross-on-Wye parish); Penyard ward (part – the parish of Walford)   | Map 2 and Map A3     |
| 29 | St Martins & Hinton               | 3                            | St Martins and Hinton wards (the proposed St Martins & Hinton parish ward of Hereford parish); Hollington ward (part – the proposed Withy Brook parish ward of Lower Bullingham parish)  | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 30 | St Nicholas                       | 2                            | St Nicholas and Three Elms wards (the proposed St Nicholas parish ward of Hereford parish)   | Map 2 and Large Map  |
| 31 | Stoney Street & Kingsthorne       | 2                            | Golden Valley ward (part – the parishes of Kingstone, St Deverux, Treville, Thrupton and Wormbridge); Kingsthorne ward (part – the parishes of Allensmore and Much Dewchurch); Pontrilas ward (part – the parishes of Kenderchurch, Kentchurch and Kilpeck); Stoney Street ward (part – the parishes of Clehonger, Eton Bishop and Madley) | Map 2                |
| 32 | Three Elms                        | 3                            | Three Elms, Central and Homer wards (the proposed Three Elms parish ward of Hereford parish)   | Map 2 and Large map  |
| 33 | Tupsley                           | 3                            | Tupsley and Aylestone wards (the proposed Tupsley parish ward of Hereford parish)  | Map 2 and Large map  |
| 34 | Upton                             | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i> ; the parishes of Brimfield, Eye, Moreton & Ashton, Eyton, Leysters, Little Hereford, Luston, Kimbolton and Middleton on the Hill   | Map 2                |

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished..

2 The maps in Appendix A, the large map attached to the back cover and Map 2 in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Herefordshire

|    | <b>Ward name</b>                  | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Electorate (2000)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> | <b>Electorate (2005)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Aylestone                         | 2                            | 5,012                    | 2,506                                    | 9                              | 5156                     | 2,578                                    | 4                              |
| 2  | Belmont                           | 3                            | 6,510                    | 2,170                                    | -6                             | 7,375                    | 2,458                                    | -1                             |
| 3  | Bircher                           | 1                            | 2,252                    | 2,252                                    | -2                             | 2,363                    | 2,363                                    | -5                             |
| 4  | Bringsty                          | 1                            | 2,325                    | 2,325                                    | 1                              | 2,430                    | 2,430                                    | -2                             |
| 5  | Bromyard                          | 2                            | 4,743                    | 2,364                                    | 3                              | 4,918                    | 2,459                                    | -1                             |
| 6  | Castle                            | 1                            | 2,359                    | 2,359                                    | 2                              | 2,548                    | 2,548                                    | 2                              |
| 7  | Central                           | 1                            | 2,213                    | 2,213                                    | -4                             | 2,509                    | 2,509                                    | 1                              |
| 8  | Credenhill                        | 3                            | 7,226                    | 2,409                                    | 5                              | 8,174                    | 2,725                                    | 9                              |
| 9  | Doward                            | 2                            | 4,250                    | 2,125                                    | -8                             | 4,445                    | 2,223                                    | -11                            |
| 10 | Golden Cross                      | 1                            | 2,458                    | 2,458                                    | 7                              | 2,604                    | 2,604                                    | 5                              |
| 11 | Golden Valley North               | 1                            | 2,290                    | 2,290                                    | -1                             | 2,474                    | 2,474                                    | -1                             |
| 12 | Golden Valley South               | 1                            | 2,316                    | 2,316                                    | 1                              | 2,561                    | 2,561                                    | 3                              |
| 13 | Hagley & Backbury                 | 2                            | 4,947                    | 2,474                                    | 7                              | 5,196                    | 2,598                                    | 4                              |
| 14 | Hampton Court                     | 2                            | 4,572                    | 2,294                                    | 0                              | 4,955                    | 2,478                                    | 0                              |
| 15 | Hollington                        | 1                            | 1,988                    | 1,988                                    | -14                            | 2,490                    | 2,490                                    | 0                              |
| 16 | Hope End                          | 2                            | 4,453                    | 2,227                                    | -3                             | 4,724                    | 2,362                                    | -5                             |
| 17 | Kington Town                      | 1                            | 2,389                    | 2,389                                    | 4                              | 2,742                    | 2,742                                    | 10                             |
| 18 | Ledbury                           | 3                            | 5,354                    | 1,785                                    | -23                            | 7,110                    | 2,370                                    | -5                             |
| 19 | Ledbury Rural                     | 1                            | 2,448                    | 2,448                                    | 6                              | 2,489                    | 2,489                                    | 0                              |
| 20 | Leominster East & South           | 2                            | 4,412                    | 2,206                                    | -3                             | 4,756                    | 2,378                                    | -4                             |
| 21 | Leominster North                  | 2                            | 4,378                    | 2,189                                    | -5                             | 4,755                    | 2,378                                    | -4                             |
| 22 | Mortimer                          | 1                            | 2,322                    | 2,322                                    | 1                              | 2,579                    | 2,579                                    | 4                              |
| 23 | Old Gore                          | 1                            | 2,378                    | 2,378                                    | 3                              | 2,531                    | 2,531                                    | 2                              |
| 24 | Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley | 1                            | 2,273                    | 2,273                                    | -1                             | 2,368                    | 2,368                                    | -5                             |
| 25 | Penyard                           | 1                            | 2,501                    | 2,501                                    | 9                              | 2,643                    | 2,643                                    | 6                              |
| 26 | Pontrilas                         | 1                            | 2,241                    | 2,241                                    | -3                             | 2,389                    | 2,389                                    | -4                             |
| 27 | Ross-on-Wye East                  | 2                            | 4,739                    | 2,370                                    | 3                              | 5,034                    | 2,517                                    | 1                              |
| 28 | Ross-on-Wye West                  | 2                            | 4,319                    | 2,160                                    | -6                             | 4,656                    | 2,328                                    | -6                             |
| 29 | St Martins & Hinton               | 3                            | 7,110                    | 2,370                                    | 3                              | 7,618                    | 2,539                                    | 2                              |

|    | <b>Ward name</b>        | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Electorate (2000)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> | <b>Electorate (2005)</b> | <b>Number of electors per councillor</b> | <b>Variance from average %</b> |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 30 | St Nicholas             | 2                            | 4,839                    | 2,420                                    | 5                              | 4,989                    | 2,495                                    | 0                              |
| 31 | Stoney St & Kingsthorpe | 2                            | 4,641                    | 2,321                                    | 1                              | 4,885                    | 2,443                                    | -2                             |
| 32 | Three Elms              | 3                            | 7,939                    | 2,646                                    | 15                             | 8,219                    | 2,740                                    | 10                             |
| 33 | Tupsley                 | 3                            | 7,062                    | 2,354                                    | 2                              | 7,272                    | 2,424                                    | -3                             |
| 34 | Upton                   | 1                            | 2,314                    | 2,314                                    | 0                              | 2,428                    | 2,428                                    | -2                             |
|    | <b>Totals</b>           | <b>58</b>                    | <b>133,573</b>           | <b>-</b>                                 | <b>--</b>                      | <b>144,385</b>           | <b>-</b>                                 | <b>-</b>                       |
|    | <b>Averages</b>         | <b>--</b>                    | <b>-</b>                 | <b>2,303</b>                             | <b>--</b>                      | <b>-</b>                 | <b>2,489</b>                             | <b>-</b>                       |

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

*Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor 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 recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the unitary authority of Herefordshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing Herefordshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Herefordshire. The last such review of the former City of Hereford was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1976 (Report No. 168). Since undertaking that review, Herefordshire District has become a unitary authority on revised boundaries (April 1998). The new unitary authority area comprises the previous Hereford City and South Herefordshire areas and parts of the former districts of Leominster and Malvern Hills. Electoral arrangements were also considered as part of the Commission's reviews of local government structure, although given the constraints on the timetable for those reviews and the need to afford priority to structural concerns, a detailed review of electoral arrangements was not possible. The electoral arrangements of the new unitary authority were put in place as part of the Structural and Boundary Change Order which abolished Hereford & Worcester County Council electoral divisions covering the area of the new authority.

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

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

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

*Figure 3: Stages of the Review*

| <b>Stage</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| One          | Submission of proposals to the Commission                     |
| Two          | The Commission’s analysis and deliberation                    |
| Three        | Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them |
| Four         | Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State       |

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including Herefordshire, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Herefordshire Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified West Mercia Police Authority, the local authority associations, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the

Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 October 2000.

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

13 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 and will end on 5 March 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an Order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.





## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Herefordshire District Council (hereafter referred to as “Herefordshire Council”) is a unitary authority serving a population of 167,000. It was formed in 1998 from the former County Council of Hereford and Worcester. It is situated on the Welsh border, with Powys lying to the west, Shropshire to the north, Worcestershire to the east and Gloucestershire to the south-east of the district. The district includes Hereford City, with a population of 55,000, and the five primary market towns of Leominster, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Kington. The remainder of the area is primarily rural comprising many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation areas.

16 Herefordshire is linked to the West Midlands via the M50 and M5, while direct trains run from Hereford to London Paddington. Bristol and Cardiff airports are also situated within easy travelling distance. The electorate of the district is forecast to increase by 6 per cent from 133,573 to 144,385 in the next five years, with the majority of the growth forecast to take place in the town of Ledbury and the newly created parish of Belmont Rural.

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

18 The electorate of the district is 133,573 (October 2000). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 44 wards, 15 of which are relatively urban in Hereford City and the towns of Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye with the remainder being predominantly rural. 16 are each represented by two councillors and 28 are single-member wards. The whole Council is elected every four years. The district comprises 237 parishes, of which there are 139 separate or grouped parish councils.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,226 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,406 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 44 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, six wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Marcle Ridge ward, where the councillor represents 65 per cent more electors than the district average.

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

|    | Ward name               | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average (%) | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average (%) |
|----|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1  | Aylestone               | 2                     | 4,423             | 2,212                             | -1                        | 4,560             | 2,280                             | -5                        |
| 2  | Backbury                | 1                     | 2,187             | 2,187                             | -2                        | 2,297             | 2,297                             | -5                        |
| 3  | Belmont                 | 2                     | 3,894             | 1,947                             | -13                       | 4,007             | 2,004                             | -17                       |
| 4  | Bircher                 | 1                     | 2,252             | 2,252                             | 1                         | 2,363             | 2,363                             | -2                        |
| 5  | Bringsty                | 1                     | 2,325             | 2,325                             | 4                         | 2,430             | 2,430                             | 1                         |
| 6  | Bromyard                | 2                     | 4,198             | 2,099                             | -6                        | 4,367             | 2,184                             | -9                        |
| 7  | Burmarsh                | 1                     | 3,139             | 3,139                             | 41                        | 3,280             | 3,280                             | 36                        |
| 8  | Castle                  | 1                     | 2,410             | 2,410                             | 8                         | 2,595             | 2,595                             | 8                         |
| 9  | Central                 | 2                     | 3,914             | 1,957                             | -12                       | 4,210             | 2,105                             | -13                       |
| 10 | Clehonger               | 1                     | 2,317             | 2,317                             | 4                         | 3,069             | 3,069                             | 28                        |
| 11 | Credenhill              | 1                     | 2,331             | 2,331                             | 5                         | 2,629             | 2,629                             | 9                         |
| 12 | Dinmore Hill            | 1                     | 2,482             | 2,482                             | 11                        | 2,922             | 2,922                             | 21                        |
| 13 | Doward                  | 1                     | 2,430             | 2,430                             | 9                         | 2,579             | 2,579                             | 7                         |
| 14 | Frome                   | 1                     | 2,432             | 2,432                             | 9                         | 2,580             | 2,580                             | 7                         |
| 15 | Golden Cross            | 1                     | 1,943             | 1,943                             | -13                       | 2,079             | 2,079                             | -14                       |
| 16 | Golden Valley           | 1                     | 2,335             | 2,335                             | 5                         | 2,579             | 2,579                             | 7                         |
| 17 | Hagley                  | 1                     | 2,581             | 2,581                             | 16                        | 2,720             | 2,720                             | 13                        |
| 18 | Hampton Court           | 1                     | 1,991             | 1,991                             | -11                       | 2,220             | 2,220                             | -8                        |
| 19 | Hinton                  | 2                     | 3,569             | 1,785                             | -20                       | 3,956             | 1,978                             | -18                       |
| 20 | Hollington              | 1                     | 2,348             | 2,348                             | 5                         | 2,847             | 2,847                             | 18                        |
| 21 | Holmer                  | 2                     | 5,509             | 2,755                             | 24                        | 5,697             | 2,849                             | 18                        |
| 22 | Hope End                | 2                     | 4,453             | 2,227                             | 0                         | 4,724             | 2,362                             | -2                        |
| 23 | Kingsthorpe             | 1                     | 2,223             | 2,223                             | 0                         | 2,335             | 2,335                             | -3                        |
| 24 | Kington Town            | 1                     | 2,674             | 2,674                             | 20                        | 3,071             | 3,071                             | 28                        |
| 25 | Ledbury                 | 2                     | 4,285             | 2,143                             | -4                        | 5,923             | 2,962                             | 23                        |
| 26 | Leominster East & South | 2                     | 4,310             | 2,155                             | -3                        | 4,654             | 2,327                             | -3                        |
| 27 | Leominster North        | 2                     | 4,305             | 2,153                             | -3                        | 4,648             | 2,324                             | -3                        |
| 28 | Lyonshall-with-Titley   | 1                     | 1,777             | 1,777                             | -20                       | 1,867             | 1,867                             | -22                       |
| 29 | Marcle Ridge            | 1                     | 3,677             | 3,677                             | 65                        | 3,820             | 3,820                             | 59                        |

| Ward name           | Number of councillors | Electorate (2000) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average (%) | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average (%) |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 30 Merbach          | 1                     | 2,054             | 2,054                             | -8                        | 2,218             | 2,218                             | -8                        |
| 31 Mortimer         | 1                     | 2,059             | 2,059                             | -8                        | 2,287             | 2,287                             | -5                        |
| 32 Old Gore         | 1                     | 2,156             | 2,156                             | -3                        | 2,289             | 2,289                             | -5                        |
| 33 Penyard          | 1                     | 2,501             | 2,501                             | 12                        | 2,642             | 2,642                             | 10                        |
| 34 Pontrilas        | 1                     | 2,465             | 2,465                             | 11                        | 2,609             | 2,609                             | 8                         |
| 35 Ross-on-Wye East | 2                     | 4,504             | 2,252                             | 1                         | 4,799             | 2,400                             | 0                         |
| 36 Ross-on-Wye West | 2                     | 3,468             | 1,734                             | -22                       | 3,762             | 1,881                             | -22                       |
| 37 St Martins       | 2                     | 3,397             | 1,699                             | -24                       | 3,498             | 1,749                             | -27                       |
| 38 St Nicholas      | 2                     | 3,408             | 1,704                             | -23                       | 3,509             | 1,755                             | -27                       |
| 39 Stoney Street    | 1                     | 2,224             | 2,224                             | 0                         | 2,328             | 2,328                             | -3                        |
| 40 Three Elms       | 2                     | 4,504             | 2,252                             | 1                         | 4,649             | 2,325                             | -3                        |
| 41 Tupsley          | 2                     | 5,307             | 2,654                             | 19                        | 5,471             | 2,736                             | 14                        |
| 42 Upton            | 1                     | 2,314             | 2,314                             | 4                         | 2,428             | 2,428                             | 1                         |
| 43 Weobley          | 1                     | 2,489             | 2,489                             | 12                        | 2,705             | 2,705                             | 12                        |
| 44 Wilton           | 1                     | 2,009             | 2,009                             | -10                       | 2,163             | 2,163                             | -10                       |
| <b>Totals</b>       | <b>60</b>             | <b>133,573</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                  | <b>144,385</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                  |
| <b>Averages</b>     | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,226</b>                      | <b>-</b>                  | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,406</b>                      | <b>-</b>                  |

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in St Martins ward were relatively over-represented by 24 per cent, while electors in Marcle Ridge ward were relatively under-represented by 65 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the Council. We received 24 representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the Council and Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Council and the Commission.

#### **Herefordshire Council**

22 By the end of the Stage One consultation period Herefordshire Council had submitted two incomplete district-wide schemes which the full council would be considering at its next meeting. The Council was considering two different sizes of council (50 and 58 members). A preference for the 58-member scheme was not expressed until 3 November 2000. It proposed one scheme with a council size of 58-members (a decrease of two from the current 60 members) covering 43 wards and consisting entirely of single and two-member wards. This provided for reasonable levels of electoral equality across the district. It also proposed a 50-member scheme consisting of 39 wards, all of which were single and two-member wards. The Council submitted extremely limited argumentation in support of its preferred council size, none in support of its proposed warding arrangements, and it did not provide names for its proposed wards.

#### **Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats**

23 We also received a district-wide scheme from Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats (hereafter referred to as the “Liberal Democrats”) proposing no change to the existing council size of 60 members. The Liberal Democrats proposed entirely single- and two-member wards but did not submit detailed warding arrangements for Hereford City, Ross-on-Wye and Leominster. The argumentation for their proposed warding arrangements was also limited, although they did comment that it is difficult to justify extending existing wards that already cover large geographical areas. They further contended that major geographical features act as natural barriers throughout the district, stating that “the River Wye is a natural boundary, with only limited crossing points making it difficult to link parishes within wards across the river.” The Liberal Democrats insisted that “single-member wards [are] essential in the rural areas”.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

24 We received representations from one town council and 17 parish councils. Leominster Town Council supported the retention of Leominster’s town boundaries, arguing that outward extension of town wards to incorporate surrounding rural parishes would be to the disadvantage of the rural areas in the democratic process.

25 Withington Group Parish Council proposed an increase in the number of parish councillors representing Withington parish from nine to ten. As a consequence of the “rapid growth” in Lower Bullingham Parish Council’s electorate, it also proposed an increase in the number of its parish councillors but did not suggest how many would be appropriate. Walford Parish Council stated that it would be reluctant for the number of its parish councillors to be reduced.

26 Pembridge Parish Council stated that it was content with the present warding arrangements in the Council and opposed wards with more than one councillor. It suggested that the existing Golden Cross ward could be enlarged to integrate one or more adjoining parishes. Staunton-on-Wye Group Parish Council, Yarkhill Parish Council and Eaton Parish Council also argued that the present arrangements are satisfactory, with Staunton-on-Wye Group Parish Council further contending that Castle district ward should continue to be represented by a single councillor. Almley Parish Council proposed that consideration should be given to the number of “authority wards” being reduced by two but did not submit any reasons for this proposal or specify to which wards it was referring. Linton Parish Council resolved that the time allowed to make representations had been inadequate. Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council requested that we consider amending the boundary between Abbeydore and Eywas Harold parishes.

27 Credenhill, Whitchurch & Ganarew, Breinton, Much Birch, Fownhope, Moreton and Hampton Bishop parish councils all proposed retaining the existing number of parish councillors.

## **Other Representations**

28 We also received responses from a parish councillor and three residents. Parish Councillor Guthrie requested that we consider including all of Dinmore within the parish of Dinmore. A resident proposed that the boundaries of the current Ledbury Town ward be amended to include the urban overspill currently in Marcle Ridge ward. Another resident argued that Herefordshire Council should have only one councillor per ward and suggested that Bromyard Town Council should only have 10 councillors. Another resident proposed that if Bromyard Town Council consisted of nine members, there would be more elections and a more representative local democracy.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

32 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective 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 start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

33 Herefordshire Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 8 per cent from 133,573 to 144,385 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Ledbury, although a significant amount is also expected in Clehonger ward. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

34 The Liberal Democrats submitted only 2005 forecasts for their scheme. There was no disparity between their 2005 figures and the Council’s.

35 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

## **Council Size**

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

37 Herefordshire Council presently has 60 members. The Council initially proposed two schemes, a 50-member scheme and a 58-member scheme. It stated that the 50-member scheme provides "a better fit into the Commission's principles" but contended that "members do see this as a minimum level of representation given the geographic size of the county." In conclusion, when it subsequently expressed a preference, the Council contended that the 58-member option was its preferred option "as it results in little change to the existing historic arrangements and the elimination of some multi-member wards with local agreement."

38 The Liberal Democrats suggested that the council could function with as low as 20-25 members if the Council "extended delegation of budget setting and decision making." However, the Liberal Democrats acknowledged that this would not be viable at the present time and contended that the current council size of 60 members would give greatest equality of representation.

39 We have considered whether the current council size of 60 members (as proposed by the Liberal Democrats) would give greater parity of representation than either 50 or 58 members (as proposed by the Council) and note the general lack of consensus regarding council size. We concluded that although a 50-member council would provide a better allocation of councillors across the district as a whole, a 58-member council would be more appropriate in view of the overall support for minimal change to the existing council size and lack of cross-party support for such a large decrease. Similarly, we were not persuaded that we should propose a decrease in council size to 20 or 25, as suggested by the Liberal Democrats.

40 We note that a 58-member council would also provide reasonable representation and electoral equality throughout the district. We considered the Liberal Democrats' resolution to propose an unchanged council size of 60 members but having calculated the appropriate allocation of councillors across the district as a whole, we note that a 58-member council would give better representation based on the 2005 electorate figures.

41 Therefore, in view of the improvement to the balance of representation and having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 58 members. However, we would welcome views regarding council size at Stage Three.

## **Ward Names**

42 In its Stage One submission the Council did not provide ward names for any of its proposed wards, which were simply numbered for identification. The district-wide scheme submitted by the Liberal Democrats also used numbering for all of their proposed wards.



43 Given that we have not received proposals for ward names, we are putting forward our own proposed ward names for consultation, in which we have attempted to reflect the identities of the proposed wards, while also having regard to existing ward names and the names of the parishes which have been grouped to form wards where relevant. However, we would welcome views on all our proposed ward names during Stage Three.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

44 Stage One of this review has been unusual, in that we have not received any comprehensive schemes for the authority. Both schemes received lacked ward names, and details of ward boundaries and projected electorates were incomplete.

45 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. Given that we received incomplete submissions at the end of the consultation period, we are putting forward our own recommendations based on the existing warding arrangements where possible. The Liberal Democrats put forward a scheme of entirely single-member wards in the rural area, and did not provide detailed warding arrangements for the urban areas. However, we have not been persuaded that a pattern of single-member wards in the rural area would best represent these communities and are therefore putting forward a mixture of multi- and single-member wards.

46 While we recognise that Herefordshire Council's scheme provides reasonable levels of electoral equality, we have not been persuaded to base our recommendations on its proposals for the following reasons. First, in the absence of any supporting argumentation, it has been difficult to interpret the underlying rationale for its proposals. In particular, we were concerned that grouped parish councils were being split in an arbitrary fashion, and the arrangements proposed did not appear to reflect geographical detail such as valleys and the River Wye. Second, Herefordshire Council had not sought to consult locally on either the 50- or 58-member scheme and we therefore received no other submissions either in support of or in opposition to the Council's scheme. Although we consider that the Council's proposed warding patterns achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality, we have reservations about their impact on community identity and interest throughout the district, particularly in the rural area.

47 Third, we consider that around both Hereford City and the town of Ledbury it is necessary to address the urban overspill in the surrounding parishes. This issue was not addressed by the Council in either of its submissions. Since we consider that these new urban areas have more in common with the town and city wards than the more rural wards in which the Council's scheme had placed them, we are minded to place them in wards with other more urban areas.

48 We have therefore developed our own scheme for Herefordshire based on a mixture of the existing warding arrangements and the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We are also of the opinion that more easily identifiable boundaries are available in the City of Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Consequently, we are recommending our own scheme for Herefordshire which we consider would address the current levels of electoral inequality while having regard to the statutory criteria. Although it results in slightly worse levels of electoral equality than the Council's scheme in the rural part of the district, we consider that our scheme uses more easily

identifiable boundaries and better reflects community ties. We also note that it reflects the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the northern and western part of the district.

49 We have sought to utilise the strong, easily identifiable boundaries in the area such as the River Wye in Hereford City and the south of the district, the M50, and arterial roads within the urban areas. We have also attempted to combine parishes with similar geographical characteristics, such as the parishes within and around the Golden Valley. We have endeavoured where possible to preserve parish groupings within the same wards. We recognise that given the size of electorate of the parishes in the district, there are numerous warding options available in the rural areas. However, we are unable to consider any areas in isolation and in formulating our scheme, we have endeavoured to consider the most suitable warding arrangement across the district as a whole. Where possible, we have created single and two-member wards within the rural area and we have maintained existing ward boundaries in the north. We would welcome alternative warding proposals at Stage Three but would request that any schemes consider the consequential effects across the district as a whole and achieve comparable levels of electoral equality.

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

**Hereford City**

- (a) Aylestone, Belmont, Central, Hinton, Holmer, St Martins, St Nicholas, Three Elms and Tupsley wards

**Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye**

- (b) Ledbury, Leominster East & South, Leominster North, Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards

**Rural area**

- (c) Bircher, Bringsty, Hampton Court, Mortimer and Upton wards
- (d) Castle, Golden Cross, Golden Valley, Kington Town, Lyonshall with Titley and Merbach wards
- (e) Burmarsh, Clehonger, Credenhill, Dinmore Hill, Hagley, Stoney Street and Weobley wards
- (f) Backbury, Bromyard, Frome, Hope End, Marcle Ridge and Old Gore wards
- (g) Doward, Hollington, Kingsthorpe, Pontrilas, Penyard and Wilton wards

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

## **Hereford City**

### **Aylestone, Belmont, Central, Hinton, Holmer, St Martins, St Nicholas, Three Elms and Tupsley wards**

52 These nine wards comprise the City of Hereford, and are bounded by Hereford parish boundary. Belmont, St Martins and Hinton wards lie to the south of the River Wye and are each represented by two councillors. Aylestone, Central, Holmer, St Nicholas, Three Elms and Tupsley wards lie to the north of the River Wye and are also each represented by two councillors. Under the existing council size of 60 members the number of electors per councillor in Aylestone, Belmont, Central, Hinton and Holmer wards is 1 per cent below (5 per cent below by 2005), 13 per cent below (17 per cent below by 2005), 12 per cent below (13 per cent below by 2005), 20 per cent below (18 per cent below by 2005) and 24 per cent above (18 per cent above by 2005) the district average respectively. In St Martins, St Nicholas, Three Elms and Tupsley wards the number of electors per councillor is 24 per cent below (27 per cent below by 2005), 23 per cent below (27 per cent below by 2005), 1 per cent above (3 per cent below by 2005) and 19 per cent above (14 per cent above by 2005) the district average respectively.

53 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed under its 58-member scheme that Hereford should comprise eight two-member wards, with minor amendments to all of the existing wards. However, it did not submit argumentation in support of its proposals other than acknowledging that “multi-member wards have some benefit offering the electorate a choice of representative in the more urban areas of the county”. To the south of the River Wye, the Council proposed two two-member wards, suggesting a small extension to the current Belmont ward and a combined St Martins and Hinton ward (minus properties bounded by Hinton Road and Holme Lacy Road). To the north of the River Wye, the Council proposed small amendments to the existing boundaries and proposed including the area bounded by Hinton Road and Holme Lacy Road to the south of the River Wye in its proposed Central ward, north of the river.

54 Under Herefordshire Council’s proposed 58-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Areas 1– 8 (Hereford City wards, labelled A-H on Map A3 at the back of the report) would be 2 per cent above the district average (3 per cent below by 2005), 4 per cent above (1 per cent above by 2005), 2 per cent above (2 per cent below by 2005), 5 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005), 4 per cent below (3 per cent below by 2005), 9 per cent above (4 per cent by 2005), 4 per cent above (1 per cent below by 2005) and 1 per cent above (1 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

55 The Liberal Democrats commented that the Commission’s Guidance “suggested that elections would in future be by thirds.” Consequently, they resolved not to attempt to re-ward Hereford at this stage as their proposals would largely depend on the future electoral cycle of the district. They further stated that “those details can be worked out once there is general understanding of the way forward.” Therefore they did not put forward any detailed warding arrangements for the city of Hereford.

56 In order to secure improvements to electoral equality, together with a better reflection of local communities in Hereford City, we propose amendments to all of the existing wards. We were

concerned that the Council proposed a ward straddling the River Wye and we propose using the river as the boundary between the two proposed wards to the south and the five wards to the north. Moreover, we note that the Council's proposals had not accounted for the urban overspill in the new Belmont Rural parish and in Lower Bullingham parish. We consider that these areas have more affinity with Hereford City and should therefore be included in Hereford City's urban wards. Consequently we propose an enlarged three-member Belmont ward including Belmont rural parish (currently comprising Clehonger ward) while utilising the Great Western Way and cycle path as the eastern boundary, which incorporates the urban overspill to the west of the city. We propose creating a three-member St Martins & Hinton ward comprising the area to the east of this boundary as we consider that this area is encapsulated within easily identifiable boundaries and does not involve breaching the strong natural boundary of the river. We are also proposing that a new Withy Brook parish ward of Lower Bullingham parish be created to the north of the railway line. This parish ward would be included in the proposed St Martins & Hinton ward, thereby including the urban overspill to the east of the city in an urban ward.

57 To the north of the River Wye we propose endorsing the Council's proposed St Nicholas ward as it utilises clearly identifiable boundaries while maintaining reasonable electoral equality. However, we considered that the Council's proposed wards to the north of Kings Acre Road and White Cross Road divided this area without using the more easily identifiable boundaries available. We have also not been convinced that these arrangements would best reflect community identity and ties in the area. Accordingly, we propose a three-member Three Elms ward comprising the existing Three Elms ward and the majority of Holmer ward (less the area to the east of the railway line), with the addition of those properties to the west of Edgar Street, currently in Central ward. We propose a revised two-member Aylestone ward including that part of Holmer ward east of the railway line and half of polling district XC from the current Tupsley ward. In our amended three-member Tupsley ward, we propose extending the boundaries to include part of polling district PC from the existing Aylestone ward, with the addition of those properties south of Ledbury Road, St James Road and Nelson Street, currently in Central ward.

58 As a consequence of our proposals in this area, we propose a more compact single-member Central ward, less the aforementioned properties to be included in our proposed Tupsley and Three Elms wards, as shown on the large map at the back of the report.

59 Under our draft recommendations for a 58-member council, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Belmont and St Martins & Hinton wards would be 6 per cent below the district average (1 per cent below by 2005) and 3 per cent above (2 per cent above by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Central, St Nicholas and Three Elms wards would be 4 per cent below the district average (1 per cent above by 2005), 5 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005) and 15 per cent above (10 per cent above by 2005) respectively. We would welcome the views of interested parties at Stage Three.

## **Ledbury, Leominster East & South and Leominster North, Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards**

60 Ledbury ward is currently a detached ward and incorporates the town of Ledbury and the parishes of Eastnor and Donnington in the east of the district. It is currently served by two councillors and under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 4 per cent below the district average (23 per cent above by 2005).

61 The parish of Leominster is currently divided between the wards of Leominster East & South and Leominster North. These two wards cover the town of Leominster in the north of the district and are both represented by two councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Leominster East & South and Leominster North wards is 3 per cent below the district average (3 per cent below by 2005) and 3 per cent below (3 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

62 Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards are situated in the town of Ross-on-Wye in the south of the district. Ross-on-Wye East ward incorporates the Ross-on-Wye (East) parish ward of Ross-on-Wye parish, while Ross-on-Wye West ward incorporates both the Ross-on-Wye (West) parish ward of Ross-on-Wye parish and Ross Rural parish. Both wards are currently represented by two councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards is 1 per cent above the district average (equal to the average by 2005) and 22 per cent below (22 per cent by 2005) respectively.

63 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed under its 58-member scheme that Donnington parish, currently in Ledbury ward, be transferred to a ward with the rural area of Ledbury parish (Ward 35). In Leominster town, it proposed linking the parish of Monkland & Stretford with Leominster North ward (Ward 16). It also proposed transferring the parish of Newton to Leominster East & South ward (Ward 15). In Ross-on-Wye, the Council proposed that the existing Ross-on-Wye West ward should be combined in a ward with the parishes of Bridstow and Brampton Abbots (Ward 33) but proposed no change to the current Ross-on-Wye East ward (Ward 32) respectively.

64 Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Ward 34 would be 13 per cent below the district average (13 per cent above by 2005). In Wards 15 and 16 the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the district average (6 per cent below by 2005) and 3 per cent below (2 per cent below by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 32 and 33 would be 2 per cent below the district average (4 per cent below by 2005) and 5 per cent below (5 per cent below by 2005).

65 Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats proposed that the whole of Ledbury parish (including the town and the rural area) and Wellington Heath parish be represented by three members. This would result in Ward 46 having 16 per cent more electors than the district average in 2005 under a 60-member council. In Leominster and Ross-on-Wye they proposed four councillors representing each area (Wards 7-10 and Wards 57 & 58 respectively), but did not provide a detailed scheme for either area.

66 Leominster Town Council recommended retaining the “historic boundaries of Leominster Town”. It contended that the outward extension of existing town wards to incorporate surrounding rural areas “would be to the disadvantage of those rural areas in the democratic process, through the strong weighting of the urban concentration.”

67 A resident argued that the current Ledbury ward is anomalous, as part of the urban area of the town forms part of the existing Marcle Ridge ward which is predominantly rural. He therefore proposed that Ledbury ward boundaries should be amended to include this area with the remainder of the town.

68 We have given careful consideration to the views expressed with regard to this area. We consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposal results in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality given the alternative warding arrangements available in the area. Having considered Herefordshire Council’s proposal for Ledbury town, we are of the opinion that it fails to address the urban overspill at the edge of the town, currently in Marcle Ridge ward. We are therefore concerned that it would not provide the most appropriate reflection of local communities. In acknowledging this situation, we propose extending the boundaries of the town ward to include this area in a three-member Ledbury district ward, while retaining the parish of Eastnor in Ledbury ward. We also note that our proposed Ledbury ward would result in improved electoral equality by 2005.

69 Having considered the representations received for Leominster, we propose adopting the Council’s proposals subject to a number of amendments. We recommend a slight amendment to improve the boundary between the two-member wards of Leominster East & South and Leominster North so that it follows the centre of Bargates and Kenwater. Having received no supporting argumentation for the Council’s proposal, we are unsure as to the rationale for linking Newton parish with Leominster East & South ward and therefore propose that this parish be included in the new Hampton Court ward (detailed later). We also note Leominster Town Council’s opposition to combining the town wards with rural parishes. Nevertheless, we consider that Herefordshire Council’s proposal to combine Leominster North ward with Monkland & Stretford parish would address the electoral inequality in Leominster North ward without any detrimental effect on the identity of Monkland & Stretford parish. We would welcome the views of the Parish Council at Stage Three.

70 In Ross-on-Wye town, we consider that the Council’s submission does not address some of the current anomalies between the two wards. In particular, we recognise that the area to the west of Brampton Road, north of the railway line, has more affinity to the Ross-on-Wye West ward than Ross-on-Wye East ward and we therefore propose creating a Ross Rural West parish ward of Ross Rural parish, to be incorporated in an amended two-member Ross-on-Wye West district ward. As a consequence of this proposal, we propose modifying the existing boundary between the two wards so that it follows the centre of Kennedy Place, Brampton Street and Brampton Road. We propose that the remainder of Ross Rural parish, to be included in Ross-on-Wye East district ward, be named Ross Rural East parish ward (detailed at the end of the chapter). We also consider that there is a closer affinity between Ross-on-Wye and Walford parish, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, than there is between Ross-on-Wye and the parishes of Brampton Abbots and Bridstow, as proposed by the Council. We are therefore proposing that Walford parish be

combined with the proposed Ross-on-Wye West parish ward and Ross Rural West parish ward of Ross Rural parish to form a two-member Ross-on-Wye West ward.

71 Under our draft recommendations for a 58-member council, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Ledbury, Leominster East & South and Leominster North wards would be 23 per cent below the district average (5 per cent below by 2005), 4 per cent below (4 per cent below by 2005) and 5 per cent below (4 per cent below by 2005) respectively. In Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the district average (1 per cent above by 2005) and 6 per cent below (6 per cent below by 2005). These wards are illustrated on maps A2, A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

### **Bircher, Bringsty, Hampton Court, Mortimer and Upton wards**

72 These five wards are situated in the north of the district and are each currently represented by a single councillor. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Bircher ward (comprising the parishes of Croft, Yarpole & Bircher, Kingsland, Lucton, Orleton and Richards Castle), Bringsty ward (comprising the parishes of Linton, Tedstone Delamere, Whitbourne, Hampton Charles, Norton, Brockhampton, Wolferow, Upper Sapey, Thornbury, Edwyn Ralph, Tedstone Wafre, Edwin Loach & Saltmarshe, Collington, Wacton, Grendon Bishop and Bredenbury) and Hampton Court ward (comprising the parishes of Docklow & Hampton Wafre, Hatfield & Newhampton, Pudleston, Bodenham, Hope-under-Dinmore, Newton, Humber and Ford & Stoke Prior) are 1 per cent above the district average (2 per cent below by 2005), 4 per cent above (1 per cent by 2005) and 11 per cent below (8 per cent below by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in Mortimer ward (comprising the parishes of Aymestrey, Burrington, Downton, Pipe Aston, Elton, Leinthall Starkes, Wigmore, Adforton, Stanway, Paytoe & Grange, Walford, Letton & Newton, Brampton Bryan, Buckton & Coxall, Leintwardine and Lingen) and Upton ward (comprising the parishes of Eye, Moreton & Ashton, Kimbolton, Middleton-on-the-Hill, Leysters, Eyton, Luston, Brimfield and Little Hereford) is 8 per cent below the district average (5 per cent below by 2005) and 4 per cent above (1 per cent above by 2005) respectively.

73 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed boundary amendments to all five wards. It proposed that Bircher ward be divided between its proposed Wards 1, 2, 7 and 8. It proposed that Bringsty ward be divided between its proposed Wards 14 and 26. It proposed that Hampton Court ward be divided between its proposed Wards 8, 14, 15, 17 and 26. It proposed that Mortimer ward constitute part of its proposed Ward 1 and Ward 2 and that Upton ward form part of its proposed Wards 7 and 14. Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member scheme, the number of electors in its proposed Wards 1, 2, 7 and 14 would be 2 per cent below the district average (1 per cent below by 2005), 3 per cent above (3 per cent above by 2005), 7 per cent above (3 per cent above by 2005) and 7 per cent above (4 per cent above by 2005) respectively.

74 The Liberal Democrats proposed including the parishes of Combe and Byton in the existing Mortimer ward (their proposed Ward 1). They proposed no change to the existing Bircher, Bringsty, Hampton Court and Upton wards (Wards 2, 12, 11, and 3 respectively). Under a 60-member council this would result in Wards 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and having electoral variances of 7 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 8 per cent and 1 per cent in 2005.

75 Having given consideration to all the proposals for warding arrangements in this area, we note the merit in the Liberal Democrats' scheme to retain the existing wards for this area largely unchanged, given that reasonable electoral equality would be achieved. We therefore propose endorsing the Liberal Democrats' Mortimer ward and retaining the existing arrangements for Bircher, Bringsty and Upton wards. However, as a consequence of our proposals elsewhere in the district, we are unable to endorse the Liberal Democrats' proposals in full and propose some amendments to the existing Hampton Court ward. We propose extending the boundaries of Hampton Court ward to incorporate the parishes of Pencombe with Grendon Warren, Ullingswick, Little Cowarne, Felton, Ocle Pychard, Sutton and Marden. While we note that there is a preference for single-member wards in the rural areas, we consider that the area is well defined geographically, with good road links from north to south, and that our proposed ward would appear to reflect community interests. We are also unable to consider any area in isolation and must account for the formation of a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the rural area. Although we note that Herefordshire Council's proposals would result in reasonable levels of electoral equality throughout this area, we have some reservations about their impact on community interest and identity. Furthermore, in the absence of supporting argumentation we are unable to justify dividing the existing wards where it appears to be unnecessary.

76 Under our draft proposals for a 58-member council the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bircher ward (comprising the parishes of Croft & Yarpole, Kingsland, Lucton, Orleton and Richards Castle), Bringsty ward (comprising the parishes of Bredenbury, Brockhampton, Collington, Edwin Loach & Salt Marshe, Edwyn Ralph, Grendon Bishop, Hampton Charles, Linton, Norton, Tedstone Delamere, Tedstone Wafer, Thornbury, Upper Sapey, Wacton, Whitbourne and Wolferlow) and Hampton Court ward (comprising the parishes of Felton, Little Cowarne, Ocle Pychard, Pencombe with Grendon Warren, Ullingswick, Marden, Sutton, Bodenham, Docklow & Hampton Wafer, Ford & Stoke Prior, Hatfield & Newhampton, Hope under Dinmore, Humber, Newton and Pudleston ) would be 2 per cent below the district average (5 per cent below by 2005), 1 per cent above (2 per cent below by 2005) and equal to the average (equal to the average by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Mortimer ward (comprising the parishes of Byton, Combe, Kinsham and Stapleton, Adforton, Aymestry, Brampton Bryan, Buckton & Coxhall, Burrington, Downton, Elton, Leinthall Starkes, Leintwardine, Lingen, Pipe Aston, Walford Letton & Newton, Wigmore and Willey) and Upton ward (comprising the parishes of Brimfield, Eye, Moreton & Ashton, Eyton, Laysters, Little Hereford, Luston, Kimbolton and Middleton on the Hill) would be 1 per cent above the district average (4 per cent by 2005) and equal to the average (2 per cent below by 2005) respectively. The above wards are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

### **Castle, Golden Cross, Golden Valley, Kington Town, Lyonshall with Titley and Merbach wards**

77 These six wards are situated in the west of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Castle ward (comprising the parishes of Eardisley, Whitney-on-Wye, Willersley & Winforton, Almeley, Kinnersley, Letton, Norton Canon, Sarnesfield, Blakemere, Preston-on-Wye, Moccas, Brobury with Monnington-on-Wye and Staunton-on-Wye), Golden Cross ward (comprising the parishes of Pembridge, Monkland & Stretford, Dilwyn and Eardisland) and Golden Valley ward



(comprising the parishes of Kingstone, Thructon, St Devereux, Treville, Wormbridge, Abbeydore, Bacton, Peterchurch, St Margarets, Turnastone and Vowchurch) are 8 per cent above the district average (8 per cent above by 2005), 13 per cent below (14 per cent below by 2005) and 5 per cent above (7 per cent above by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in Kington Town ward (comprising the parishes of Brilley, Kington, Huntington, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton), Lyonshall with Titley ward (comprising the parishes of Lyonshall, Staunton-on-Arrow, Rodd, Nash & Little Brampton, Titley, Knill, Shobdon, Byton, Coombe, Kinsham and Stapleton) and Merbach ward (comprising the parishes of Clifford, Cusop, Dorstone, Bredwardine, Craswall, Michaelchurch Escley, Llanveynoe, Longtown, Walterstone and Newton) are 20 per cent above the district average (28 per cent above by 2005), 20 per cent below (22 per cent by 2005) and 8 per cent below (8 per cent below by 2005).

78 At Stage One Herefordshire Council proposed that Castle ward be divided between its proposed Wards 4, 5, 9 and 10. It proposed that Golden Cross ward be split between its proposed Wards 8, 9 and 16. The Council recommended that Golden Valley ward form part of its proposed Wards 6 and 12 and that Lyonshall-with-Titley ward be divided between its proposed Ward 2 and Ward 9. It put forward a revised Kington Town ward comprising the parishes of Kington and Kington Rural and proposed that Merbach ward form part of its proposed Wards 4, 5 and 6.

79 Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in Wards 2, 3, 4 and 6 would be 3 per cent above the district average (3 per cent above by 2005), 3 per cent above (9 per cent above by 2005), 3 per cent above (2 per cent above by 2005) and 3 per cent above (3 per cent above by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 8, 9 and 12 would be 3 per cent above the district average (1 per cent above by 2005), 2 per cent above (1 per cent below by 2005) and 3 per cent below (1 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

80 The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring Pembridge parish from the existing Golden Cross ward to a revised Lyonshall-with-Titley ward (Ward 5). They proposed a reduced Kington Town ward comprising the parishes of Kington, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton (Ward 4) and put forward an amended Castle ward less the parishes of Moccas, Preston on Wye and Blakemere but proposed including the parishes of Brilley and Huntington. The Liberal Democrats also put forward two new wards covering the Golden Valley area. They proposed a single-member ward incorporating the area to the north of the Golden Valley (Ward 23) and another single-member ward covering the south of the Golden Valley (Ward 49). Under a 60-member council this would result in electoral variances of 2 per cent, 14 per cent, 3 per cent and 6 per cent by 2005 respectively.

81 Staunton-on-Wye Group Parish Council stated that Castle ward should continue to be represented by a single councillor. Almeley Parish Council requested that consideration is given for the number of authority wards overall to be reduced by two.

82 We have given careful consideration to the views received with regard to this area. We note that Herefordshire Council's scheme would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality but are concerned that it does not appear to reflect the geographical characteristics of the Golden Valley. We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposal did achieve this distinction while maintaining an

effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and therefore propose adopting their proposal in this area. With regard to Castle ward, we note that the Liberal Democrats' proposal retains the body of the existing ward. Although it encompasses some surrounding parishes, we consider that it would achieve good electoral equality and would not adversely affect their interests and identity.

83 We note that the Council and Liberal Democrats proposed similar arrangements for Kington Town and we recognise that there are limited options in this area. We are content that these proposals accurately reflect the nature of the area but propose endorsing the Liberal Democrats' proposal, as it includes Lower Harpton parish, which is part of Kington Rural & Lower Harpton Group Parish Council. We considered the Council's proposals for the existing Golden Cross and Lyonshall-with-Titley wards and have reservations about its proposed Ward 2. We note that this proposed ward combines groups of parishes linked only by a narrow area and therefore consider that this does not constitute an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and would not provide effective and convenient local government. Similarly, we consider that the Council's proposed Wards 8 and 9 unnecessarily divide the existing Golden Cross ward, given the alternative warding arrangements. Consequently, we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' scheme for this area. We note that their proposals build on the existing wards without adversely affecting community interests and identity and therefore consider that this arrangement attains an effective balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

84 Under our scheme for a 58-member council, the number of electors in our proposed Castle ward (comprising the parishes of Almeley, Brobury with Monnington on Wye, Eardisley, Kinnersley, Letton, Norton Canon, Sarnesfield, Staunton on Wye, Whitney on Wye, Willersley & Winforton, Brilley and Huntington), Golden Cross ward (comprising the parishes of Dilwyn, Eardisland, Birley with Upper Hill, King's Pyon and Weobley), Golden Valley North ward (comprising the parishes of Blakemere, Moccas, Preston on Wye, Peterchurch, Bredwardine, Clifford, Cussop, Dorstone and Tyberton) and Golden Valley South ward (comprising the parishes of Abbey Dore, Bacton, St Margarets, Turnastone, Vowchurch, Craswall, Llanveynoe, Longtown, Michaelchurch Escley, Newton, Walterstone, Dulas, Ewyas Harold, Llancillo and Rowlstone) would be 2 per cent above the district average (2 per cent above by 2005), 7 per cent above (5 per cent above by 2005), 1 per cent below (1 per cent below by 2005) and 1 per cent above (3 per cent above by 2005) respectively. In our proposed Kington Town ward (comprising the parishes of Kington, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton) and Pembridge & Lyonshall-with-Titley ward (comprising the parishes of Knill, Lyonshall, Pembridge, Rodd, Nash & Little Brampton, Shobdon, Staunton on Arrow and Titley), the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above (10 per cent above by 2005) and 1 per cent below (5 per cent below by 2005) respectively. These wards are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

### **Burmarsh, Clehonger, Credenhill, Dinmore Hill, Hagley, Stoney Street and Weobley wards**

85 These seven wards are situated in the centre of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Under the existing arrangements the number of electors in Burmarsh Ward (comprising the parishes of Holmer & Shelwick, Marden, Pipe & Lyde and Sutton), Clehonger ward (comprising the parish of Belmont Rural), Credenhill ward (comprising the parishes of Breinton,

Credenhill, Kenchester and Stretton Sugwas) and Dinmore Hill ward (comprising the parishes of Burghill, Moreton-on-Lugg, Dinmore and Wellington) is 41 per cent above the district average (36 per cent above by 2005), 4 per cent above (28 per cent above by 2005), 5 per cent above (9 per cent above by 2005) and 11 per cent above (21 per cent above by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in Hagley ward (comprising the parishes of Bartlestree, Lugwardine, Preston Wynne, Westhide and Withington), Stoney Street ward (comprising the parishes of Clehonger, Eaton Bishop, Madley and Tyberton) and Weobley ward (comprising the parishes of Birley with Upper Hill, Canon Pyon, Kings Pyon, Weobley, Byford, Bishopstone, Bridge Sollars, Mansel Gamage, Brinsop & Wormsley, Mansel Lacy and Yazor) is 16 per cent above the district average (13 per cent above by 2005), equal to the average (3 per cent below by 2005) and 12 per cent above (12 per cent above by 2005) respectively.

86 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed that Burmarsh ward be divided between Wards 17, 19 and 20. It proposed that Clehonger ward become part of Ward 11 and that Credenhill ward comprise part of the proposed Wards 10 and 11. It proposed that Dinmore Hill ward be divided between its proposed Wards 18 and 19 and that Hagley ward form part of its proposed Wards 19, 20 and 21. It recommended that Stoney Street ward constitute part of its proposed Wards 5 and 11 and that Weobley ward be divided between its proposed Wards 8, 9, 10, 18 and 19.

87 Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member council the number of electors in its proposed Wards 5, 10 and 11 would be equal to the district average (1 per cent below by 2005), 7 per cent below (1 per cent below by 2005) and 10 per cent below (equal to the average by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 18, 19, 20 and 21 would be 9 per cent below the district average (1 per cent below by 2005), 5 per cent below (2 per cent below by 2005), 3 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005) and 3 per cent above (1 per cent above by 2005) respectively.

88 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Burmarsh ward be divided between its proposed Wards 16, 17 and 18. It suggested that part of Clehonger ward should be included in one of the Hereford City wards but did not submit detailed proposals and proposed an amended Credenhill ward less the parish of Kenchester. The Liberal Democrats proposed that Dinmore Hill ward comprise part of their proposed Wards 14 and 16 and that Hagley ward be divided between its proposed Wards 17, 18 & 44. It put forward a revised Stoney Street ward less the parish of Tyberton (Ward 24) and a revised Weobley ward (Ward 6) less the parish of Weobley and with the addition of Wellington and Dinmore parishes.

89 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 14, 16, 17 and 18 would be 2 per cent above the district average by 2005, 6 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 1 per cent above respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 24 and 44 would be 6 per cent below the district average by 2005 and 3 per cent above respectively.

90 Pembridge Parish Council stated that it did not wish to be warded and contended that there is "no need for the pattern of representation to be drastically altered". It further opposed the creation of large wards with more than one councillor. Parish Councillor Guthrie requested an

amendment to its external parish boundaries but was informed by the Commission that this does not fall within the remit of this review.

91 We have given careful consideration to the views received in this area. We note that the Council's proposals provide good levels of electoral equality but are again concerned that this factor is not balanced with the other statutory criteria. We note that the Liberal Democrats' scheme also achieves reasonable electoral equality by 2005 and uses the existing wards as the foundation of its new wards. Although these wards achieve a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, the lack of detail in their scheme elsewhere in the district does not permit us to endorse these proposals. We are unable to consider any area in isolation and we have concluded that the consequential effects of implementing this scheme on surrounding wards would be to detrimentally affect both the levels of electoral equality and community interests and identity. Furthermore, the River Wye, Hereford City and the pattern of development within these wards restricts the number of available options.

92 With these considerations in mind, we propose our own scheme in this area. We have attempted to create a single-member wards or one two- member and one single member ward to comprise the existing wards of Credenhill, Weobley, Dinmore Hill and Burmarsh but have been unable to do so due to the aforementioned constraints. We therefore propose a three-member Credenhill ward comprising the existing Credenhill and Dinmore Hill wards with the addition of Pipe & Lyde and Holmer parishes from Burmarsh ward and Weobley ward (less Weobley and Kings Pyon parishes). We propose that Clehonger ward be linked to Belmont ward in Hereford City as described earlier. We have noted the preference for single-member wards in the rural area but we consider there to be good communications within our proposed Credenhill ward, and also consider that our proposal combines parishes of a similar nature. Similarly, we propose a two-member Stoney Street & Kingsthorpe ward which combines the parishes to the east of the Golden Valley and appears to reflect the identity of the constituent parishes. In creating a new two-member Hagley & Backbury ward, we recognise the characteristic nature of the parishes to the east of the River Wye in the current Hagley ward and have retained this arrangement while including parishes to the south, which we consider to be well linked, with similar identities. We would welcome comments from local interests at Stage Three.

93 Under our draft recommendations for a 58-member council, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Credenhill ward (comprising the parishes of Holmer, Pipe & Lyde, Breinton, Credenhill, Kenchester, Stretton Sugwas, Burghill, Dinmore, Moreton on Lugg, Wellington, Bishopstone, Bridge Sollers, Brinsop & Wormsley, Byford, Canon Pyon, Mansell Gamage, Mansell Lacy and Yazor), Hagley & Backbury ward (comprising the parishes of Dormington, Fownhope, Hampton Bishop, Mordiford, Stoke Edith, Weston Beggard, Tarrington, Bartestree, Lugwardine, Preston Wynne, Westhide and Withington) and Stoney Street & Kingsthorpe ward (comprising the parishes of Kingstone, St Deverux, Treville, Thruxton and Wormbridge, Allensmore, Much Dewchurch, Kenderchurch, Kentchurch, Kilpeck, Clehonger, Eton Bishop and Madley) would be 5 per cent above the district average (9 per cent above by 2005), 7 per cent above (4 per cent above by 2005) and 1 per cent above (2 per cent below by 2005) respectively. These wards are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

## **Backbury, Bromyard, Frome, Hope End, Marcle Ridge and Old Gore wards**

94 These six wards are situated in the east of the district. Backbury ward (comprising the parishes of Brockhampton with Much Fawley, Dormington, Fownhope, Hampton Bishop, Mordiford, Stoke Edith and Weston Beggard), Frome ward (comprising the parishes of Acton Beauchamp, Ashperton, Avenbury, Bishops Frome, Canon Frome, Castle Frome, Eggleton, Evesbatch, Much Cowarne, Stanford Bishop, Stretton Grandison, Tarrington and Yarkhill), Marcle Ridge ward (comprising the parishes of Aylton, Ledbury (part), Little Marcle, Much Marcle Munsley, Pixley, Putley and Woolhope) and Old Gore ward (comprising the parishes of Aston Ingham, Brampton Abbots, Foy, How Caple, Linton, Sollershope and Upton Bishop) are each represented by a single councillor. The number of electors per councillor in these wards is 2 per cent below the district average (5 per cent below by 2005), 9 per cent above (7 per cent above by 2005), 65 per cent above (59 per cent above by 2005) and 3 per cent below (5 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

95 Bromyard ward (comprising the parishes of Bromyard & Winslow, Felton, Little Cowarne, Moreton Jefferies, Ocle Pychard, Pencombe with Grendon Warren, Stoke Lacy and Ullingswick) and Hope End ward (comprising the parishes of Bosbury, Coddington, Colwall, Cradleigh, Mathon and Wellington Heath) are both represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in these wards is 6 per cent below the district average (9 per cent below by 2005) and equal to the average (2 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

96 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed that Backbury ward be extended to include the parish of Kings Caple (Ward 22) but suggested transferring the parish of Weston Beggard to its proposed Ward 21. Bromyard ward would be divided between its proposed wards 17, 20, 21 and 26. It proposed that Frome ward comprise part of its proposed Wards 21, 26, 27 and 29 and that Hope End ward form part of its proposed Wards 27, 28 and 29. It proposed that the existing Marcle Ridge ward be divided between its proposed Wards 29, 30 and 35 and that Old Gore ward form part of its proposed wards 22 and 30.

97 Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed wards 17, 26 and 27 would be 2 per cent below the district average (3 per cent below by 2005), 5 per cent above (2 per cent above by 2005) and equal to the average (2 per cent below by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in its proposed wards 28, 29, 30 and 35 would be 4 per cent above the district average (2 per cent above by 2005), 1 per cent below (3 per cent below by 2005), equal to the average (3 per cent below by 2005) and 1 per cent above (2 per cent below by 2005).

98 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Backbury ward comprise part of its proposed Wards 18, 19, 44 and 52 while proposing that Bromyard ward be divided between its proposed Wards 17, 19 and 20–21. It proposed that Frome ward form part of its proposed Wards 19 and 20–21 and put forward an amended Hope End ward, less the parishes of Colwall and Coddington but with the inclusion of Munsley parish (Ward 22). It proposed merging the remainder of Hope End ward with Eastnor parish currently in Ledbury ward. The Liberal Democrats resolved that Marcle Ridge ward should be divided amongst its proposed Wards 19, 46 and 52 while recommending that Old Gore ward should be divided among its proposed Wards 52 and 56.

99 Under the Liberal Democrats' 60-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 18, 19, 20 & 21 and 22 would be 1 per cent above the district average by 2005, 1 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent below. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 46, 52 and 56 would be 16 per cent above the district average by 2005, 6 per cent below and equal to the average.

100 Yarkhill Parish Council stated that "the present system of electoral arrangements suits the area very well" and therefore opposed any changes.

101 We have carefully considered the representations received in relation to this area. We acknowledge that the available warding arrangements in the south-west of the district are restricted by the River Wye. We considered Herefordshire Council's proposals and note that they have built on existing wards while providing reasonable levels of electoral equality. However, in conducting a periodic electoral review we are unable to look at the proposals for any single area in isolation but must consider the impact which any modification would have on the proposals for the district as a whole. Similarly, we are unable to endorse the Liberal Democrats' proposed wards in this area because they would detrimentally affect electoral equality in our proposed surrounding wards. Consequently we have created our own wards in this area which we consider provide reasonable electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria.

102 As mentioned earlier, we are proposing to combine Hagley and Backbury wards to form a two-member ward and have incorporated the urban overspill at the edge of Ledbury town in the proposed three-member Ledbury ward. As a consequence of our proposal in this area, we propose creating a single-member Ledbury Rural ward, incorporating the remainder of Ledbury parish (Ledbury Rural parish ward of Ledbury parish) with parishes to the west which are linked by the A4172 road. We propose retaining the existing ward of Hope End as it represents a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In considering our proposed Bromyard ward, we have again combined parishes which are well linked and have similar geographical characteristics and have created a two-member ward, comprising the parishes of Bromyard & Winslow, Moreton Jeffries and Stoke Lacy from the current Bromyard ward and parishes of Avenbury, Acton Beauchamp, Evesbatch, Bishop's Frome, Much Cowarne, Stanford Bishop and Stoke Lacy from the northern half of the existing Frome ward. We also propose maintaining part of the existing single-member Old Gore ward with the inclusion of Kings Caple, Brockhampton with Much Fawley, Much Marcle and Woolhope parishes, less the parishes of Aston Ingham and Linton. In creating the new Old Gore ward, we have sought to incorporate the parishes to the east of the River Wye using the M50 as the southern boundary. We welcome alternative proposals at Stage Three.

103 Under our draft recommendations for a 58-member council, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bromyard ward (comprising the parishes of Bromyard & Wimslow, Stoke Lacy, Acton Beauchamp, Avenbury, Bishop's Frome, Evesbatch, Moreton Jeffries, Much Cowarne and Stanford Bishop) and Hope End ward (comprising the parishes of Bosbury, Cradley, Coddington, Colwall, Mathon and Wellington Heath) would be 3 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below by 2005) and 3 per cent below (5 per cent below by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Ledbury Rural (comprising the parishes of Ashperton, Canon Frome, Castle Frome, Eggleton, Stretton Grandison, Yarkhill, Donnington,

Aylton, Little Marcle, Munsley, Pixley, Putley and the proposed Ledbury Rural parish ward of Ledbury parish) and Old Gore ward (comprising the parishes of Brockhampton, Kings Caple, Much Marcle, Woolhope, Brampton Abbots, Foy, How Caple, Sollershope, Upton Bishop and Yatton) would be 6 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005) and 3 per cent above (2 per cent by 2005). These wards are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

### **Doward, Hollington, Kingsthorpe, Penyard, Pontrilas and Wilton wards**

104 These six wards are situated in the south of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. The number of electors per councillor in Doward ward (comprising the parishes of Ganarew, Goodrich, Llangarron, Welsh Bicknor and Whitchurch), Hollington ward (comprising the parishes of Ballingham, Bolstone, Dinedor, Holme Lacy, Kings Caple, Little Dewchurch and Lower Bullingham) and Kingsthorpe ward (comprising the parishes of Aconbury, Allensmore, Calow, Dewsall, Grafton, Haywood, Little Birch, Much Birch and Much Dewchurch) is 9 per cent above the district average (7 per cent above by 2005), 5 per cent above (18 per cent above by 2005) and equal to the average (3 per cent below by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Penyard ward (comprising the parishes of Hope Mansell, Lea, Walford and Weston-under-Penyard), Pontrilas ward (comprising the parishes of Dulas, Ewyas Harold, Garway, Kenderchurch, Kentchurch, Kilpeck, Llancillo, Llanrothal, Orcop, Rowstone, Welsh Newton and St Weonards) and Wilton ward (comprising the parishes of Bridstow, Harewood, Hentland, Llandinabo, Llanwarne, Pencoyd, Peterstow, Sellack and Tretire with Michaelchurch) is 12 per cent above the district average (10 per cent above by 2005), 11 per cent above (8 per cent above by 2005) and 10 per cent below (10 per cent below by 2005) respectively.

105 At Stage One, Herefordshire Council proposed retaining the existing Penyard ward (Ward 31) and proposed a revised Doward ward less the parish of Ganarew (Ward 25). It put forward an amended Hollington ward (Ward 23), less the parish of Little Dewchurch, but incorporating the parishes of Aconbury, Callow and Grafton and proposed dividing Kingsthorpe ward between its proposed Wards 12, 13, 23 and 24. The Council put forward a reduced Pontrilas ward (Ward 13) and proposed that Wilton ward (Ward 24) incorporate the parishes of Little Birch and Much Birch, but proposed transferring the parishes of Pencoyd and Tretire with Michaelchurch to its proposed Ward 13.

106 Under Herefordshire Council's 58-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 23, 24 and 25 would be 12 per cent below the district average (equal to the average by 2005), 1 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005) and 1 per cent above (equal to the average by 2005) respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 13, 22 and 31 would be 2 per cent above the district average (equal to the average by 2005), 5 per cent above (2 per cent above by 2005) and 9 per cent above (6 per cent above by 2005) respectively.

107 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Penyard ward (less the parish of Lea) merge with Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards and allocated this area four councillors as discussed earlier (Wards 57 & 58). It proposed linking the eastern side of Doward and Wilton wards to form a single-member ward (Ward 55) and proposed a reduced single-member Pontrilas ward (Ward 54). It put forward a revised single-member Wilton ward (Ward 53) also comprising

part of Hollington ward. It proposed that the remainder of Hollington ward form its proposed single-member Ward 51.

108 Under the Liberal Democrats' 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Ward 53 and 54 would be 6 per cent below the district average by 2005 and 10 per cent above respectively. The number of electors per councillor in its proposed Wards 55 and 57 & 58 would be equal to the average and 11 per cent above respectively.

109 We have given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One. As discussed previously, the proposals that we are putting forward for the surrounding wards somewhat limit our options for these six wards. Consequently, we are proposing an enlarged two-member Doward ward, incorporating the parishes of Welsh Newton and Llanrothal from the existing Pontrilas ward and the parishes of Bridstow, Hentland, Peterstow and Sellack from the current Wilton ward. We consider that these parishes have good communication links and would appear to share some degree of community identity. This ward would have an electoral variance of 11 per cent in 2005, and while we considered incorporating the parish of Tretire with Michaelchurch in order to improve the electoral equality, we recognise that this is currently grouped with the parishes to its north (Harewood, Llandinabo, Llanwarne and Pencoyd) which form a joint parish council. We therefore consider that combining these parishes within a single ward would better reflect their identity, and have therefore united them within an amended single-member Pontrilas ward. We also propose including the parishes of Aconbury, Little Birch and Much Birch (currently in Kingsthorpe ward), as they are all linked by, or very close to, the A49. As a consequence of our proposal to include Walford parish in an amended Ross-on-Wye West ward, we propose that the remainder of Penyard be combined in an ward with the parishes of Linton and Aston Ingham to form an amended single-member Penyard ward.

110 Under our draft recommendations for a 58-member council, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Doward ward (comprising the parishes of Ganerew, Goodrich, Llangarron, Marstow, Welsh Bicknor, Whitchurch, Llanrothal and Welsh Newton, Bridstow, Hentland, Peterstow and Sellack), Penyard ward (comprising the parishes of Aston Ingham, Linton, Hope Mansell, Lea and Weston under Penyard) and Pontrilas ward (comprising the parishes of Aconbury, Little Birch, Much Birch, Garway, Orcop, St Weonards, Harewood, Llandinabo, Llanwarne, Pencoyd and Tretire with Michaelchurch) would be 8 per cent below (11 per cent below by 2005), 9 per cent above (6 per cent above by 2005) and 3 per cent below (4 per cent below by 2005) respectively. These wards are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

## **Electoral Cycle**

111 We received only one representation from Herefordshire Council regarding the Council's electoral cycle. The Council itself proposed no change to the current whole-council electoral cycle. Accordingly, as part of our draft recommendations, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.



## Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 60 to 58 members;
- there should be 34 wards;
- the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of 10 wards;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.

113 Our draft recommendations would involve modifications to all but four of the existing wards in Herefordshire as summarised below:

- in Hereford City we propose seven wards, using the River Wye as a significant natural boundary;
- in Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and Leominster we propose broadly basing our proposals on the Council's proposed schemes;
- we propose no change to the existing wards of Bircher, Bringsty, Hope End and Upton;
- elsewhere in the district we are putting forward our own proposals, incorporating elements of the Liberal Democrats' proposals to the north and west.

114 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

|   | 2000 electorate      |                       | 2005 forecast electorate |                       |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|   | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations | Current arrangements     | Draft recommendations |
| Number of councillors                     | 60                   | 58                    | 60                       | 58                    |
| Number of wards                           | 44                   | 34                    | 44                       | 34                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 2,226                | 2,303                 | 2,406                    | 2,489                 |

|  | 2000 electorate      |                       | 2005 forecast electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Draft recommendations | Current arrangements     | Draft recommendations |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 19                   | 3                     | 19                       | 1                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 6                    | 1                     | 10                       | 0                     |

115 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Herefordshire Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 19 to three. By 2005 only one ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Herefordshire Council should comprise 58 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, Appendix A and illustrated on Map 2 at the back of the report and the large map attached to the back cover of this report. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

### **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

116 At Stage One we received representations from Breinton, Credenhill, Fownhope, Hampton Bishop, Moreton on Lugg, Much Birch, Walford and Whitchurch & Ganarew parish councils, all requesting that the current parishing arrangements be retained. We are therefore proposing no change to the existing arrangements for these parishes.

117 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 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 Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster, Lower Bullingham, Ross-on-Wye, Ross Rural and the Withington Group.

118 We received two representations from residents proposing that the number of parish councillors representing Bromyard & Winslow Town Council be reduced from 18 to nine or ten. Given that this is a significant decrease in the number of councillors and does not appear to have been consulted on locally, we are not proposing this as part of our draft recommendations. However, we would particularly welcome views at Stage Three on the proposal to reduce the level of representation.

119 The town council of Hereford is currently served by 18 councillors representing nine wards: Aylestone, Belmont, Central, Hinton, Holmer, St Martins, St Nicholas, Three Elms and Tupsley. Each parish ward has the same boundaries as the district wards of the same name, and is represented by two parish councillors. We propose that the level of representation on the town council be retained, but that the number of parish wards be reduced to seven, with the same boundaries as the proposed district wards.

**Draft Recommendation**

Hereford Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Aylestone (returning two councillors), Belmont (returning three councillors), Central (returning one councillor), St Martins & Hinton (returning three councillors), St Nicholas (returning two councillors), Three Elms (returning four councillors) and Tupsley (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

120 The town council of Ledbury is currently served by 18 councillors representing two wards: Town (represented by 12 councillors) and Ledbury Rural (represented by six councillors). We propose that the boundary between these two wards be amended to follow the district ward boundary, thereby incorporating the urban overspill within the urban ward at district level. We do not propose altering the representation of each ward.

**Draft Recommendation**

Ledbury Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Town (returning 12 councillors) and Ledbury Rural (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

121 The town council of Leominster is currently served by 16 councillors representing three wards: Leominster North (represented by six councillors), Leominster East (represented by four councillors) and Leominster South ward (represented by six councillors). We propose that the boundary between Leominster North and Leominster South parish wards be amended to follow the district ward boundary, along the centre of Bargates, and that the boundary between Leominster North and Leominster East parish wards be amended to follow Kenwater as these amendments provide more easily identifiable boundaries. We do not propose altering the representation of each ward.

**Draft Recommendation**

Leominster Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Leominster North (returning six councillors), Leominster East (returning four councillors) and Leominster South (returning six councillors). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

122 The parish of Lower Bullingham is currently represented by six councillors and is not warded. At Stage One Lower Bullingham Parish Council proposed an increase in the number of councillors representing the parish because of the “rapid growth ... in the parish due to the development in close proximity to the city boundary”. It did not specify its preferred number of councillors. We are proposing to create a new Withy Brook parish ward to the north of the railway line which would be incorporated in the proposed St Martins & Hinton district ward. This would incorporate the urban overspill in the parish in the more urban district ward. We are proposing an increase in council size to 10 members but would particularly welcome views at Stage Three on the proposed increase in representation.

**Draft Recommendation**

Lower Bullingham Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, four more than at present, representing two wards: Withy Brook (returning four councillors) and Lower Bullingham (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

123 Ross-on-Wye Town Council currently comprises 12 councillors representing two wards: Ross-on-Wye West and Ross-on-Wye East (both represented by six councillors). We propose that the parish ward boundary be amended to follow the proposed district ward boundary between the proposed Ross-on-Wye West and Ross-on-Wye East district wards.

**Draft Recommendation**

Ross-on-Wye Town Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, representing two wards: Ross-on-Wye West (returning six councillors) and Ross-on-Wye East (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

124 Ross Rural Parish Council is currently represented by eight parish councillors and is not warded. In order to facilitate our proposed district warding proposals we propose that two parish wards be created: Ross Rural East (returning two councillors) and Ross Rural West (returning six

councillors). We propose that the parish ward boundary be amended to follow the proposed district ward boundary between the proposed Ross-on-Wye West and Ross-on-Wye East district wards.

**Draft Recommendation**

Ross Rural Parish Council should comprise eight parish councillors, representing two wards: Ross Rural East (returning two councillors) and Ross Rural West (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

125 Withington Group Parish Council comprises the parishes of Withington (represented by nine councillors), Preston Wynne (represented by three councillors) and Westhide (represented by three councillors). At Stage One Withington Group Parish Council requested that the number of councillors representing Withington be increased from nine to 10 due to recent and future housing development in the area. We are content to endorse this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

**Draft Recommendations**

Withington Group Parish Council should comprise 16 parish councillors representing three parishes: Withington (represented by 10 councillors), Preston Wynne (represented by three councillors) and Westhide (represented by three councillors).

126 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

**Draft Recommendation**

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

**127 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Herefordshire and welcome comments from the Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**



## 5 NEXT STEPS

128 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 March 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

129 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Herefordshire Review  
Local Government Commission for England  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

130 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.





## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Herefordshire: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Herefordshire area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Ledbury parish.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Ross-on-Wye and Ross Rural parishes.

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed warding of Leominster parish.

### **Existing and proposed warding arrangements for Herefordshire**

At the back of the report are four A3 maps.

**Map 1** shows the existing warding arrangements for Herefordshire.

**Map 2** shows the Commission's draft recommendations for Herefordshire.

**Map 3** shows Herefordshire Council's proposals for Herefordshire.

**Map 4** shows Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats' proposals for Herefordshire.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Hereford City.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Herefordshire: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Ledbury Parish*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Ross-on-Wye and Ross Rural Parishes*

*Map A4: Proposed Warding of Leominster Parish*



## APPENDIX B

### Herefordshire Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B1: Herefordshire Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

| Ward number/<br>letter | Number of<br>councillors | Electorate<br>(2000) | Number of<br>electors<br>per<br>councillor | Variance<br>from<br>average<br>% | Electorate<br>(2005) | Number of<br>electors<br>per<br>councillor | Variance<br>from<br>average<br>% |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1                      | 1                        | 2,268                | 2,268                                      | -2                               | 2,462                | 2,462                                      | -1                               |
| 2                      | 1                        | 2,381                | 2,381                                      | 3                                | 2,565                | 2,565                                      | 3                                |
| 3                      | 1                        | 2,364                | 2,364                                      | 3                                | 2,710                | 2,710                                      | 9                                |
| 4                      | 1                        | 2,372                | 2,372                                      | 3                                | 2,541                | 2,541                                      | 2                                |
| 5                      | 1                        | 2,299                | 2,299                                      | 0                                | 2,467                | 2,467                                      | -1                               |
| 6                      | 1                        | 2,371                | 2,371                                      | 3                                | 2,561                | 2,561                                      | 3                                |
| 7                      | 1                        | 2,460                | 2,460                                      | 7                                | 2,575                | 2,575                                      | 3                                |
| 8                      | 1                        | 2,371                | 2,371                                      | 3                                | 2,506                | 2,506                                      | 1                                |
| 9                      | 1                        | 2,343                | 2,343                                      | 2                                | 2,474                | 2,474                                      | -1                               |
| 10                     | 1                        | 2,135                | 2,135                                      | -7                               | 2,463                | 2,463                                      | -1                               |
| 11                     | 2                        | 4,135                | 2,068                                      | -10                              | 4,974                | 2,487                                      | 0                                |
| 12                     | 1                        | 2,232                | 2,232                                      | -3                               | 2,461                | 2,461                                      | -1                               |
| 13                     | 1                        | 2,349                | 2,349                                      | 2                                | 2,485                | 2,485                                      | 0                                |
| 14                     | 1                        | 2,457                | 2,457                                      | 7                                | 2,583                | 2,583                                      | 4                                |
| 15                     | 2                        | 4,354                | 2,177                                      | -5                               | 4,700                | 2,350                                      | -6                               |
| 16                     | 2                        | 4,480                | 2,240                                      | -3                               | 4,857                | 2,429                                      | -2                               |
| 17                     | 1                        | 2,253                | 2,253                                      | -2                               | 2,426                | 2,426                                      | -3                               |
| 18                     | 1                        | 2,106                | 2,106                                      | -9                               | 2,460                | 2,460                                      | -1                               |
| 19                     | 1                        | 2,180                | 2,180                                      | -5                               | 2,434                | 2,434                                      | -2                               |
| 20                     | 1                        | 2,379                | 2,379                                      | 3                                | 2,499                | 2,499                                      | 0                                |
| 21                     | 1                        | 2,381                | 2,381                                      | 3                                | 2,510                | 2,510                                      | 1                                |
| 22                     | 1                        | 2,409                | 2,409                                      | 5                                | 2,544                | 2,544                                      | 2                                |
| 23                     | 1                        | 2,017                | 2,017                                      | -12                              | 2,488                | 2,488                                      | 0                                |

| Ward number/<br>letter | Number of<br>councillors | Electorate<br>(2000) | Number of<br>electors<br>per<br>councillor | Variance<br>from<br>average<br>% | Electorate<br>(2005) | Number<br>of<br>electors<br>per<br>councillor | Variance<br>from<br>average<br>% |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 24                     | 1                        | 2,331                | 2,331                                      | 1                                | 2,488                | 2,488   | 0                                |
| 25                     | 1                        | 2,334                | 2,334                                      | 1                                | 2,483                | 2,483   | 0                                |
| 26                     | 2                        | 4,840                | 2,420                                      | 5                                | 5,063                | 2,532   | 2                                |
| 27                     | 1                        | 2,300                | 2,300                                      | 0                                | 2,450                | 2,450   | -2                               |
| 28                     | 1                        | 2,406                | 2,406                                      | 4                                | 2,545                | 2,545   | 2                                |
| 29                     | 1                        | 2,288                | 2,288                                      | -1                               | 2,419                | 2,419   | -3                               |
| 30                     | 1                        | 2,314                | 2,314                                      | 0                                | 2,421                | 2,421   | -3                               |
| 31                     | 1                        | 2,501                | 2,501                                      | 9                                | 2,642                | 2,642   | 6                                |
| 32                     | 2                        | 4,504                | 2,252                                      | -2                               | 4,799                | 2,400   | -4                               |
| 33                     | 2                        | 4,386                | 2,193                                      | -5                               | 4,727                | 2,364   | -5                               |
| 34                     | 2                        | 4,020                | 2,010                                      | -13                              | 5,618                | 2,809   | 13                               |
| 35                     | 1                        | 2,328                | 2,328                                      | 1                                | 2,428                | 2,428   | -2                               |
| A                      | 2                        | 4,721                | 2,361                                      | 2                                | 4,853                | 2,427   | -3                               |
| B                      | 2                        | 4,786                | 2,393                                      | 4                                | 5,006                | 2,503   | 1                                |
| C                      | 2                        | 4,709                | 2,355                                      | 2                                | 4,857                | 2,429   | -2                               |
| D                      | 2                        | 4,839                | 2,420                                      | 5                                | 4,989                | 2,495   | 0                                |
| E                      | 2                        | 4,408                | 2,204                                      | -4                               | 4,825                | 2,413   | -3                               |
| F                      | 2                        | 5,021                | 2,511                                      | 9                                | 5,174                | 2,587   | 4                                |
| G                      | 2                        | 4,798                | 2,399                                      | 4                                | 4,937                | 2,469   | -1                               |
| H                      | 2                        | 4,643                | 2,322                                      | 1                                | 4,916                | 2,458   | -1                               |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>58</b>                | <b>133,573</b>       | <b>-</b>                                   | <b>-</b>                         | <b>144,385</b>       | <b>-</b>                                      | <b>-</b>                         |
| <b>Averages</b>        | <b>-</b>                 | <b>-</b>             | <b>2,303</b>                               | <b>-</b>                         | <b>-</b>             | <b>2,489</b>                                  | <b>-</b>                         |

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

- Notes: 1 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- 2 Herefordshire Council's proposals are illustrated on Map A3 at the back of the report.
- 3 No ward names were provided..
- 4 Letters A – H denote Hereford City wards.



## Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats' Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B2: The Liberal Democrats' Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

| Ward number | Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1           | 1         | 1                     | 2,579             | 2,579                             | 7                       |
| 2           | 2         | 1                     | 2,363             | 2,363                             | -2                      |
| 3           | 3         | 1                     | 2,428             | 2,428                             | 1                       |
| 4           | 4         | 1                     | 2,742             | 2,742                             | 14                      |
| 5           | 5         | 1                     | 2,368             | 2,368                             | -2                      |
| 6           | 6         | 1                     | 2,564             | 2,564                             | 7                       |
| 7           | 7-10      | 4                     | 9,302             | 2,326                             | -3                      |
| 8           | 11        | 1                     | 2,220             | 2,220                             | -8                      |
| 9           | 12        | 1                     | 2,430             | 2,430                             | 1                       |
| 10          | 13        | 1                     | 2,548             | 2,458                             | 6                       |
| 11          | 14        | 1                     | 2,453             | 2,453                             | 2                       |
| 12          | 15        | 1                     | 2,540             | 2,540                             | 6                       |
| 13          | 16        | 1                     | 2,263             | 2,263                             | -6                      |
| 14          | 17        | 1                     | 2,491             | 2,491                             | 4                       |
| 15          | 18        | 1                     | 2,441             | 2,441                             | 1                       |
| 16          | 19        | 1                     | 2,372             | 2,372                             | -1                      |
| 17          | 20 & 21   | 2                     | 4,995             | 2,498                             | 4                       |
| 18          | 22        | 1                     | 2,361             | 2,361                             | -2                      |
| 19          | 23        | 1                     | 2,474             | 2,474                             | 3                       |
| 20          | 24        | 1                     | 2,260             | 2,260                             | -6                      |
| 21          | 25-34     | 19                    | 42,626            | 2,243                             | -7                      |
| 22          | 44        | 1                     | 2,486             | 2,486                             | 3                       |
| 23          | 45        | 1                     | 2,363             | 2,363                             | -2                      |
| 24          | 46        | 3                     | 8,364             | 2,788                             | 16                      |
| 25          | 49        | 1                     | 2,562             | 2,562                             | 6                       |

| Ward number     | Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2005) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 26              | 50        | 1                     | 2,625             | 2,625                             | 9                       |
| 27              | 51        | 1                     | 2,498             | 2,498                             | 4                       |
| 28              | 52        | 1                     | 2,257             | 2,257                             | -6                      |
| 29              | 53        | 1                     | 2,273             | 2,273                             | -6                      |
| 30              | 54        | 1                     | 2,654             | 2,654                             | 10                      |
| 31              | 55        | 1                     | 2,410             | 2,410                             | 0                       |
| 32              | 56        | 1                     | 2,418             | 2,418                             | 0                       |
| 33              | 57 & 58   | 4                     | 10,655            | 2,664                             | 11                      |
| <b>Totals</b>   |           | <b>60</b>             | <b>144,385</b>    | –                                 | –                       |
| <b>Averages</b> |           | –                     | –                 | <b>2,406</b>                      | –                       |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Liberal Democrats.

- Notes: 1 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
- 2 Liberal Democrats' proposals are illustrated on Map A4 at the back of the report.
- 3 Leominster Constituency Liberal Democrats did not provide 2000 figures for their proposals, nor did they provide detailed warding arrangements for Hereford City, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury. No ward names were provided.

## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish

---

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

#### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

(f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and

(g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

(h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;

(i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.