

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Coventry

Report to The Electoral Commission

*May 2003*

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones CBE  
Ann M Kelly  
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Coventry.



# Summary

We began a review of Coventry's electoral arrangements on 4 December 2001. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 22 October 2002, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

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

- **in five of the 18 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the city;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to improve slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 85-86) are that:

- **Coventry City Council should have 54 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.**

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

- **In all of the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the city average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the proposed 18 wards expected to vary by no more than 9% from the average for the city in 2006.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 24 June 2003. *The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.*

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*Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Large map reference</b>
1	Bablake	3	the parishes of Allesley and Keresley, part of Bablake ward; part of Holbrook ward	1 and 2
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	part of Binley & Willenhall ward; part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Lower Stoke ward	4
3	Cheylesmore	3	part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Earlsdon ward	4
4	Earlsdon	3	part of Earlsdon ward; part of Radford ward; part of Wainbody ward	3 and 4
5	Foleshill	3	part of Foleshill ward	2
6	Henley	3	part of Henley ward; part of Longford ward; part of Wyken ward	2
7	Holbrook	3	part of Bablake ward; part of Holbrook ward	2
8	Longford	3	Part of Foleshill ward; part of Henley ward; part of Holbrook ward; part of Longford ward	2
9	Lower Stoke	3	part of Binley and Willenhall ward; part of Lower Stoke ward	2 and 4
10	Radford	3	part of Radford ward	2
11	St Michael's	3	part of Cheylesmore ward; part of Earlsdon ward; part of St Michael's and Upper Stoke ward	2 and 4
12	Sherbourne	3	part of Sherbourne ward; part of Radford ward; part of Whoberley ward	1,2,3 and 4
13	Upper Stoke	3	part of Longford ward; part of Upper Stoke ward; part of Wyken ward	2 and 4
14	Wainbody	3	part of Wainbody ward; part of Westwood ward	3 and 4
15	Westwood	3	part of Westwood ward; part of Woodlands ward	3
16	Whoberley	3	part of Sherbourne ward; part of Whoberley ward	1,3 and 4
17	Woodlands	3	part of Woodlands ward	1 and 3
18	Wyken	3	Part of Binley & Willenhall ward; part of Lower Stoke ward; part of Wyken ward	2 and 4

**Notes:**

- 1 *Bablake ward contains the parishes of Allersley and Keresley.*
- 2 *The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*
- 3 *We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Final recommendations for Coventry

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bablake	3	12,252	4,084	-2	12,364	4,121	-3
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	12,658	4,219	2	12,784	4,261	0
3	Cheylesmore	3	12,268	4,089	-2	12,312	4,104	-3
4	Earlsdon	3	12,251	4,084	-2	12,290	4,097	-3
5	Foleshill	3	11,596	3,865	-7	11,954	3,985	-6
6	Henley	3	13,460	4,487	8	13,803	4,601	9
7	Holbrook	3	12,100	4,033	-3	12,331	4,110	-3
8	Longford	3	13,297	4,432	7	13,511	4,504	6
9	Lower Stoke	3	12,572	4,191	1	12,609	4,203	-1
10	Radford	3	12,163	4,054	-2	12,996	4,332	2
11	St Michael's	3	12,122	4,041	-3	12,951	4,317	2
12	Sherbourne	3	12,407	4,136	0	12,497	4,166	-2
13	Upper Stoke	3	12,987	4,329	4	13,055	4,352	3
14	Wainbody	3	12,633	4,211	1	12,683	4,228	0
15	Westwood	3	11,957	3,986	-4	12,595	4,198	-1
16	Whoberley	3	12,576	4,192	1	12,578	4,193	-1
17	Woodlands	3	12,720	4,240	2	12,720	4,240	0
18	Wyken	3	12,306	4,102	-1	12,942	4,314	2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>224,325</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>228,975</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,240</b>	<b>-</b>

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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



# 1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the city of Coventry. We are reviewing the seven metropolitan boroughs in the West Midlands as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Coventry. Coventry's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1979 (Report no. 316).

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Coventry was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan city ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan city wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when we wrote to Coventry City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified West Midlands Police Authority, the local authority associations, Warwickshire & West Midlands County Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish councils in the city, the Members of Parliament with constituencies 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 Coventry City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 April 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

10 Stage Three began on 22 October 2002 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Coventry*, and ended on 16 December 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

11 Coventry is a compact, self-contained city on the eastern edge of the West Midlands. It is predominantly industrial and grew with the development of the engineering industry. The city centre was comprehensively redeveloped as a result of heavy bombing during World War II. It is surrounded by countryside and includes the rural parishes of Allesley and Keresley which were transferred into the city boundary in 1974. It has good road and rail links with the rest of the West Midlands and the south.

12 Since 1975 Coventry's electorate has decreased by 5% from 236,769 to 224,325 but is forecast to increase by 2% to 228,975 over the next five years. The Council currently has 54 members serving 18 three-member wards. The city contains two parishes, Allesley and Keresley, both situated in the north of the city.

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 4,154 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 4,240 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in five of the 18 wards varies by more than 10% from the city average. The worst imbalance is in Woodlands ward, where each of the three councillors represents 14% more electors than the city average.

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

*Map 1: Existing wards in Coventry*

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bablake	3	11,802	3,934	-5	11,875	3,958	-7
2	Binley & Willenhall	3	13,800	4,600	11	14,140	4,713	11
3	Cheylesmore	3	11,007	3,669	-12	11,432	3,811	-10
4	Earlsdon	3	13,118	4,373	5	13,237	4,412	4
5	Foleshill	3	11,568	3,856	-7	11,908	3,969	-6
6	Henley	3	11,982	3,994	-4	12,322	4,107	-3
7	Holbrook	3	13,380	4,460	7	13,625	4,542	7
8	Longford	3	13,033	4,344	5	13,261	4,420	4
9	Lower Stoke	3	11,729	3,910	-6	11,766	3,922	-7
10	Radford	3	12,627	4,209	1	13,514	4,505	6
11	St Michael's	3	10,945	3,648	-12	11,291	3,764	-11
12	Sherbourne	3	12,591	4,197	1	12,627	4,209	-1
13	Upper Stoke	3	12,739	4,246	2	12,807	4,269	1
14	Wainbody	3	13,027	4,342	5	13,083	4,361	3
15	Westwood	3	10,901	3,634	-13	11,319	3,773	-11
16	Whoberley	3	12,726	4,242	2	12,745	4,248	0
17	Woodlands	3	14,155	4,718	14	14,376	4,792	13
18	Wyken	3	13,195	4,398	6	13,620	4,540	7
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>224,325</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>228,948</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,240</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Coventry City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Woodlands ward were relatively over-represented by 14%, while electors in Westwood ward were significantly under-represented by 13%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 Draft recommendations

15 During Stage One, two representations were received, including a city-wide scheme from Coventry City Council. A further representation was received from a local resident who made suggestions for other electoral arrangements which we were unable to consider as part of this review. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Coventry*.

16 Our draft recommendations were based on the City Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the City Council's scheme in three areas so as to better reflect local communities. We proposed boundary amendments between the proposed Henley and Longford wards, a boundary amendment between the proposed Binley & Willenhall and Wyken wards, as well as between the proposed Upper Stoke and Wyken wards. We proposed that:

- Coventry City Council should be served by 54 councillors, representing 18 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

*Draft recommendation*

Coventry City Council should comprise 54 councillors, serving 18 wards.

17 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards varying by no more than 5% from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 4% from the average in 2006.



## 4 Responses to consultation

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

### Coventry City Council

19 The City Council decided to support our draft recommendations at a meeting of the City Council held in December. The decision was supported by the Labour and Conservative Groups and the single Liberal Democrat member. The Socialist Alliance Group, comprising three members, abstained.

### Other representations

20 We also received a petition from local residents in Longford ward who stated that they wish to remain in Longford ward and not be transferred to the proposed Foleshill ward. The residents argued that they are cut off from Foleshill by the North-South Road and the Coventry Canal, and as a part of the Bell Green district they believe that they belong solely in Longford ward.

21 In addition, we also received a submission from a local resident, who stated that the draft recommendations were unavailable in Coventry's central library.



## 5 Analysis and final recommendations

22 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Coventry is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

25 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### Electorate forecasts

26 Since 1975 there has been a 5% decrease in the electorate of Coventry City. At Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2% from 224,325 to 228,975 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Radford ward, although a significant amount is also expected in the Westwood and Wyken wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to Unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

### Council size

28 Coventry City Council presently has 54 members. In the draft recommendations report we adopted the Council’s proposal for a council of 54 members as we considered that having looked at the size and the distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members.

29 During Stage Three we received no submissions in relation to council size. We are content to put forward a council size of 54 members as part of our final recommendations as we remain of the opinion that Coventry City Council would best function under a council size of 54 members.

## Electoral arrangements

30 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we based our draft recommendations on the City Council's scheme. The Council made its scheme available for viewing at its Council Offices and libraries in the city. It also publicised its availability for inspection in the Council's own newspaper, which is distributed to every home in the city. The Council's scheme was based on current polling districts in the city but moved away from utilising whole polling districts in a number of areas in order to satisfy the statutory criteria.

31 At Stage Three the City Council offered its support for our draft recommendations at a meeting of the City Council held in December. The decision was supported by the Labour and Conservative Groups and the single Liberal Democrat member. The Socialist Alliance Group comprising three members abstained.

32 In the light of evidence received at Stage Three and support for the draft recommendations we propose to substantially endorse the draft recommendations subject to three boundary amendments.

33 We propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Foleshill and Longford wards in order to group similar communities in single wards and follow stronger boundaries. As a result of making this initial amendment it has been necessary to address the poor level of electoral equality in the adjoining ward due to the transference of a large number of electors, therefore we propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Henley and Longford wards. We consider that this amendment further improves community cohesion within the proposed wards as it groups similar communities in single wards and unites that area east of the river in a single ward.

34 We also propose a minor boundary amendment between Cheylesmore and Earlsdon wards in order to include those properties on Daventry Road in a single ward.

35 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- i. Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards;
- ii. Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards;
- iii. Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards;
- iv. Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley wards;
- v. Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards;
- vi. Bablake and Holbrook wards.

36 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

## Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards

37 These three wards cover the north east of the city and currently Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards have 7% fewer, 4% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% fewer, 3% fewer and 4% more than the city average in 2006).

38 At Stage One, the City Council proposed that the area to the north of the Coventry to Nuneaton railway line and south of the Coventry canal should be transferred to its proposed Longford ward, from the current Foleshill ward, and that area located in polling district Hh lying south of the canal be transferred from Longford ward to the proposed Foleshill ward. The City Council proposed that polling districts Tj and Tk be transferred from the current Wyken ward to Henley ward. It was also proposed that the following areas be transferred from the current Henley ward to the proposed Longford ward: part of Woodway Lane, part of Lentons Lane and part of Shilton Lane (the area north of the Oxford canal) and the area in the north-west of Henley ward to the east of Alderman's Green Road. It argued that its proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards achieved a good level of electoral equality and were readily identifiable by reference to roads and property boundaries.

39 The City Council also recommended that polling district Gk in the far north of the current Holbrook ward be transferred to neighbouring Longford ward and the Sewall Highway be transferred from the current Longford ward to the Upper Stoke ward.

40 We were broadly satisfied with the City Council's proposals and proposed adopting them, subject to a minor modification to one of the boundaries in Henley ward. Our proposed boundary would follow the polling district boundary Ff so that the area to the east of and including Lentons Lane Farm and the cemetery would remain in the proposed Henley ward rather than being transferred to neighbouring Longford ward. In our opinion these properties share better community ties and links with the proposed Henley ward than with the proposed Longford ward.

41 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards would initially have 2% more, 1% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (2% more, 2% more and 4% more in 2006).

42 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area. We received a petition from residents currently residing in Longford ward objecting to their transference to the proposed Foleshill ward. The residents cited community reasons for remaining in Longford ward and the fact that they are cut off from Foleshill by the North-South Road and the Coventry Canal.

43 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations subject to two boundary amendments.

44 We propose to amend the boundary between Foleshill and Longford wards in order to group similar communities in single wards. The proposed Longford ward south-western boundary would now follow the rear of properties on Bell Green Road, the North-South Road and the Coventry Canal. We concur with the local residents that under the draft recommendations they would be cut off from Foleshill and do not consider this to provide effective and convenient local government. Having visited the area we consider the argument to be valid in that they form part of the Longford ward community as opposed to that of Foleshill. This new ward we also consider to follow stronger boundaries.

45 As a result of making the initial boundary amendment and having to transfer a large number of electors from Longford ward it has been necessary to address the resultant poor electoral variance in this ward. Therefore we propose to amend the boundary between the proposed Henley and Longford wards. The proposed Henley ward south-western boundary would now follow the River Sowe. This amendment provides for a good level of electoral equality and we also consider the ward to group similar communities in a single ward as it unites the area east of the river. We consider this new arrangement to provide a better balance between the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations for this entire area.

46 Under our final recommendations the proposed Foleshill, Henley and Longford wards would initially have 7% less, 8% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% less, 9% more and 6% more in 2006).

## Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards

47 These four wards are situated in the east (Upper Stoke and Wyken) and south-east of the city. Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards currently vary by 11% more, 6% fewer, 2% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (11% more, 7% fewer, 1% more and 7% more than the city average in 2006).

48 At Stage One, Coventry City Council proposed that the boundary of the current Binley & Willenhall ward be readjusted by the transfer of polling district Bi in the north-east of the ward to neighbouring Wyken ward, arguing that the new housing estate in this area was geographically separated from the rest of the current ward. In addition, it proposed that the length of the boundary which follows the River Sowe also be realigned to follow Binley Road, Allard Way and London Road. The Council also proposed that polling district Ta, presently in Wyken ward, should be transferred to its proposed Lower Stoke ward.

49 The Council proposed that the area in the south west of Longford ward, comprising part of Bell Green Road, Navigation Way and Stuart Court, be transferred to Upper Stoke ward, as well as the area comprising the Sewall Highway. It also proposed that Gosford Green should be transferred from Upper Stoke ward to the proposed St Michael's ward. In addition to the changes mentioned above, the Council proposed transferring polling districts Tj and Tk, currently situated in the north of Wyken ward, to neighbouring Henley ward. It argued that its proposed Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable to local features.

50 We proposed adopting the City Council's scheme in this area with a couple of slight modifications to the proposed Wyken ward in order to better reflect community identity. We proposed modifying the boundary so that the part of Binley Road currently within Wyken ward would form part of Binley & Willenhall ward. We also proposed moving the boundary of polling district Th behind the houses on Armscott Road, so that the area to the north would be transferred to Upper Stoke ward. We considered that the revised wards would better reflect local communities.

51 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Binley & Willenhall, Lower Stoke, Upper Stoke and Wyken wards would initially have 2% more, 1% more, 4% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (equal to, 1% fewer, 3% more and 2% more in 2006).

52 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

53 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three we propose to fully endorse the draft recommendations for this area. We noted the support from the City Council for the draft recommendations in this area and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

54 Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

## Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards

55 The three wards of Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's are located in the centre and south of the city and currently have 12% fewer, 5% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (10% fewer, 4% more and 11% fewer than the city average in 2006).

56 At Stage One, the City Council proposed that the area in the north-western tip of Cheylesmore ward, currently polling district Ck, be transferred to St Michael's ward. It also proposed that polling districts Dh and Df, currently in Earlsdon ward, plus the area consisting of part of Daventry Road and part of Dillot Avenue, and the area comprising Bigbury Close, Modbury Close and Postbridge Road, should be transferred to neighbouring Cheylesmore ward. It also proposed that the polling district Dj currently situated in the north of Earlsdon ward be transferred to St Michael's ward.

57 It also proposed that the area presently in the south west of Whoberley ward, consisting of Broad Lane and Broadlands Close, as well as polling district Rg excluding Guphill Avenue be transferred from Whoberley ward to Earlsdon ward, and that the area presently situated in the north of Wainbody ward (north of Kenpass Highway up to the Coat of Arms Bridge Road) also be transferred to the proposed Earlsdon ward. It further proposed that the Gosford Green area, which currently has no electors, should be transferred from Upper Stoke ward to St Michael's ward. The City Council stated that its proposed Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable.

58 We proposed adopting the Council's scheme in this area without modification. We considered that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality in the area.

59 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Cheylesmore, Earlsdon and St Michael's would initially vary by 2% fewer, 2% fewer and 3% fewer than the city average (3% fewer, 3% fewer and 2% more in 2006).

60 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area and proposed one minor boundary amendment to include number 2 Daventry Road in the proposed Cheylesmore ward.

61 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three we propose to endorse the draft recommendations for this area subject to one minor boundary amendment as proposed by the City Council. The proposed amendment would transfer number 2 Daventry Road from the proposed Earlsdon ward to Cheylesmore Road in order to group those properties on Daventry Road in a single ward. We noted the support from the City Council for the remainder of the draft recommendations in this area and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

62 Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

## Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley wards

63 The three wards of Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley are situated in the centre of the city and currently have 1% more, 1% more and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% more, 1% fewer and equal to the city average in 2006).

64 At Stage One, the City Council proposed that the ward boundary of the current Radford ward be adjusted to effect the transfer of polling district Kg from Radford ward to Sherbourne ward. It proposed that the area in the south of the ward around Spon End and Broomfield Place currently

in the Whoberley ward be transferred to its proposed Sherbourne ward. It also proposed that part of polling district Mb, namely Prince of Wales Road, Merrivale Road and part of Allesley Old Road, which is presently in Sherbourne ward, be transferred to Whoberley ward.

65 The City Council also proposed that polling district Rg, with the exception of Guphill Avenue in the north east of Whoberley ward, as well as the area directly to the north of that, consisting of Broad Lane and Broadlands Close, be transferred to Earlsdon ward. It contended that its proposed Radford and Sherbourne wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable locally. It argued that its proposed Whoberley ward achieved a good level of electoral equality and was readily identifiable locally and stated that it had considered an objection to its proposals but that it was 'impossible to meet the objectors' wishes without having consequential effects on electoral equality across much of the remainder of the City'.

66 We proposed adopting the City Council's scheme in this area without modification. We considered that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality.

67 Under the draft recommendations the proposed wards of Radford, Sherbourne and Whoberley would initially have 2% fewer, equal to and 1% more electors per councillor than the city average (2% more, 2% fewer and 1% fewer in 2006).

68 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

69 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three we propose to fully endorse the draft recommendations for this area. We noted the support from the City Council for the draft recommendations in this area and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

70 Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

## Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards

71 The three wards of Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands, situated in the south and south west of the city, currently have 5% more, 13% fewer and 14% more electors per councillor than the city average (3% more, 11% fewer and 13% more than the city average in 2006).

72 At Stage One, the City Council proposed that the area currently in the south east of Westwood ward, polling district Qi, be transferred to Wainbody ward and the area presently situated in the north of Wainbody ward (north of Kenpass Highway up to the Coat of Arms Bridge Road) be transferred to Earlsdon ward. The City Council proposed that the area around Bluebell Walk, Tile Hill Lane and Limbrick Avenue, as well as polling district Sa, currently in Woodlands ward, be transferred to its proposed Westwood ward. It argued that its proposed Wainbody, Westwood and Woodlands wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable locally.

73 We proposed adopting the City Council's scheme in this area without modification. We considered that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality.

74 Under the draft recommendations the proposed wards of Wainbody, Westwood and Westlands would initially have 1% more, 4% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average (equal to, 1% fewer and equal to in 2006).

75 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area. Having considered the representations received at Stage Three we propose to fully endorse the draft

recommendations for this area. We noted the support from the City Council for the draft recommendations in this area and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

76 Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

## Bablake and Holbrook wards

77 The two wards of Bablake and Holbrook are situated in the north of the city and currently have 5% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the city average (7% fewer and 7% more in 2006).

78 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Keresley Parish, currently in the Holbrook ward, be transferred to its proposed Bablake ward. Similarly, it proposed that the area consisting of Bennetts Road South in the south west of Holbrook ward should be transferred to Bablake ward. It was also proposed that the area in the north west of polling district Ai, comprising Taunton Way, Cottage Farm Road, Lowe Road and Wingfield Way, be transferred from Bablake ward to Holbrook ward. The City Council also recommended that the area consisting of polling district Gk in the far north of Holbrook ward be transferred to neighbouring Longford ward. The City Council contended that its proposed Bablake and Holbrook wards achieved good levels of electoral equality and were readily identifiable locally. It also stated that its proposed Bablake ward had been modified in the light of submissions received as part of its consultation process.

79 We proposed adopting the Council's scheme in this area without modification. We considered that the revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality.

80 Under the draft recommendations the proposed wards of Bablake and Holbrook would initially have 2% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (both would have 3% fewer in 2006).

81 At Stage Three the City Council supported the draft recommendations for this area.

82 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three we propose to fully endorse the draft recommendations for this area. We noted the support from the City Council for the draft recommendations in this area and are content to put them forward as part of the final recommendations.

83 Under our final recommendations the electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

## Electoral cycle

84 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan borough/cities have a system of elections by thirds.

## Conclusions

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

- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Foleshill and Longford wards.

- We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Henley and Longford wards.
- We propose a minor boundary amendment between the proposed Cheylesmore and Earlsdon wards.

86 We conclude that, in Coventry:

- A council of 54 members should be retained;
- there should be 18 wards;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

*Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements*

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	54	54	54	54
Number of wards	18	18	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	4,154	4,154	4,240	4,240
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0	0	0

88 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 5 to none, with no wards varying by more than 20% from the city average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2006, with no ward varying by more than 9% from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

*Final recommendation*

Coventry City Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

*Map 2: Final recommendations for Coventry*



## 6 What happens next?

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

90 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 24 June 2003, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date. They particularly welcome any comments on the first draft of the Order, which will implement the new arrangements.

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

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

**Fax: 020 7271 0667  
Email: [implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**



# Appendix A

## **Final recommendations for Coventry: Detailed mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Coventry area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the city and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for Coventry.

*Map A1: Final recommendations for Coventry: Key map*

# Appendix B

## Guide to interpreting the draft of the Statutory Instrument

### Preamble

This describes the process by which the Statutory Instrument will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

### Citation and commencement

This defines the name of the Statutory Instrument and sets the dates on which it will come into force.

### Interpretation

This defines terms that are used in the Statutory Instrument.

### Wards of the City of Coventry

This abolishes the existing wards, and defines the names and areas of the new wards, in conjunction with the map and the Schedule.

### Elections of the council of the City of Coventry

This sets the date on which a whole council election will be held to implement the new wards, and the dates on which councillors will retire.

### Maps

This requires Coventry City Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

### Electoral Registers

This requires Coventry City Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

### Revocation

This revokes the Statutory Instrument that defines the existing wards, with the exception of any articles that established the system of election by thirds.

### Explanatory Note

This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.



# Appendix C

## First draft of the electoral change Order for Coventry

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### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**2003 No.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND**

### The City of Coventry (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

*Made* - - - - - 2003

*Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)*

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(a), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(b), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(c) recommendations dated May 2003 on its review of the city(d) of Coventry:

And whereas the Electoral Commission have decided to give effect [with modifications] to those recommendations:

And whereas a period of not less than six weeks has expired since the receipt of those recommendations:

Now, therefore, the Electoral Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 17(e) and 26(f) of the Local Government Act 1992, and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Order:

#### **Citation and commencement**

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the City of Coventry (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
- (2) This Order shall come into force –
  - (a) For the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on 6th May 2004, on 15th October 2003;

- 
- (a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.
- (b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.
- (c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992, to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).
- (d) The metropolitan district of Coventry has the status of a city.
- (e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.
- (f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

- (b) for all other purposes, on 6th May 2004.

### **Interpretation**

**2. In this Order –**

“city” means the city of Coventry;

“existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made; and

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the City of Coventry (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –

- (a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
- (b) the offices of Coventry City Council.

### **Wards of the city of Coventry**

**3.—(1) The existing wards of the city(a) shall be abolished.**

- (2) The city shall be divided into eighteen wards which shall bear the names set out in the Schedule.
- (3) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.
- (4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

### **Elections of the council of the city of Coventry**

**4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the city shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).**

- (2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the city immediately before 10th May 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.
- (3) Of the councillors elected in 2004, one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.
- (4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –
  - (a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and
  - (b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.
- (5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.
- (6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.
- (7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.

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(a) See the City of Coventry (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/1322).

(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by articles 8 and 9(7) of S.I. 1979/1322.

(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).

## Maps

5. Coventry City Council shall make a print of the map marked “Map referred to in the City of Coventry (Electoral Changes) Order 2003” available for inspection at its offices by any member of the public at any reasonable time.

## Electoral registers

6. The Electoral Registration Officer(a) for the city shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

## Revocation

7. The City of Coventry (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979(b) is revoked, save for articles 8 and 9(7).

Signed by the members of the Electoral Commission

Date *Pamela Gordon*  
Commissioner

Date *Glyn Mathias*  
Commissioner

Date *Neil McIntosh*  
Commissioner

Date *Karamjit Singh*  
Commissioner

Date *Sam Younger*  
Commissioner

Date *Graham Zellick*  
Commissioner

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(a) As to electoral registration officers and the register of local government electors, *see* sections 8 to 13 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2).  
(b) S.I. 1979/1322.

## SCHEDULE

article 3

### NAMES OF WARDS

<i>Name of Ward</i>
Bablake
Binley and Willenhall
Cheylesmore
Earlsdon
Foleshill
Henley
Holbrook
Longford
Lower Stoke
Radford
St Michael's
Sherbourne
Upper Stoke
Wainbody
Westwood
Whoberley
Woodlands
Wyken

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

This Order gives effect, [with modifications], to recommendations by the Boundary Committee for England, a committee of the Electoral Commission, for electoral changes in the city of Coventry.

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after 6th May 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the city and provides for the creation of 18 new wards. That article and the Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.

Article 6 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 7 revokes the City of Coventry (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979, with the exception of articles 8 and 9(7).

The areas of the new city wards are demarcated on the map described in article 2. Prints of the map may be inspected at all reasonable times at the offices of Coventry City Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.