

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Melton in Leicestershire

Report to the Electoral Commission

June 2002

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

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Melton in Leicestershire.

SUMMARY

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

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

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

- **In 12 of the 17 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent.**
- **By 2006 this situation is expected to worsen slightly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 12 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 132–133) are that:

- **Melton Borough Council should have 28 councillors, two more than at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, instead of 17 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 11 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and six wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In two of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in two wards, Long Clawson & Stathern and Gaddesby, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **an amended boundary between the parish wards of Saltby and Sproxton of Sproxton parish.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Electoral Commission, to arrive by 18 July 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Asfordby	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> the parish of Asfordby	Map 2 and Map A1
2	Bottesford	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> the parish of Bottesford	Map 2 and Map A1
3	Croxton Kerrial	1	The parishes of Belvoir, Croxton Kerrial and Eaton; the Saltby and Stonesby parish wards of Sproxton parish	Map 2, Map A1 and Map A2
4	Frisby-on-the-Wreake	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the parishes of Frisby & Kirby, Grimston and Hoby with Rotherby	Map 2 and Map A1
5	Gaddesby	1	The parishes of Burton & Dalby and Gaddesby	Map 2 and Map A1
6	Long Clawson & Stathern	2	The parishes of Clawson, Hose & Harby, Stathern and Redmile	Map 2 and Map A1
7	Melton Craven	2	Craven ward; part of Newport ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
8	Melton Dorian	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Mowbray ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
9	Melton Egerton	2	Egerton ward; part of Sysonby ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
10	Melton Newport	3	Part of Newport ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
11	Melton Sysonby	3	Part of Sysonby ward; part of Newport ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
12	Melton Warwick	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Warwick ward	Map 2, Map A1 and the large map
13	Old Dalby	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the parishes of Ab Kettleby and Broughton & Old Dalby	Map 2 and Map A1
14	Somerby	1	The parishes of Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby and Twyford & Thorpe	Map 2 and Map A1
15	Waltham-on-the-Wolds	1	The parishes of Scalford and Waltham	Map 2 and Map A1
16	Wymondham	1	The parishes of Buckminster, Freeby, Garthorpe and Wymondham; the Sproxton parish ward of Sproxton parish	Map 2, Map A1 and Map A2

Notes: 1 Melton Mowbray town is unparished and comprises the six wards indicated above.

2 Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Melton

	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	Asfordby	2	2,491	1,246	-7	2,578	1,289	-8
2	Bottesford	2	2,835	1,418	5	2,876	1,438	2
3	Croxtan Kerrial	1	1,370	1,370	2	1,425	1,425	1
4	Frisby-on-the-Wreake	1	1,406	1,406	4	1,423	1,423	1
5	Gaddesby	1	1,360	1,360	1	1,556	1,556	11
6	Long Clawson & Stathern	2	3,042	1,521	13	3,156	1,578	12
7	Melton Craven	2	2,936	1,468	9	2,929	1,465	4
8	Melton Dorian	3	3,726	1,242	-8	4,292	1,431	2
9	Melton Egerton	2	2,786	1,393	3	2,813	1,407	0
10	Melton Newport	3	3,985	1,328	-1	3,959	1,320	-6
11	Melton Sysonby	3	3,742	1,247	-7	4,077	1,359	-3
12	Melton Warwick	2	2,645	1,323	-2	2,766	1,383	-2
13	Old Dalby	1	1,505	1,505	12	1,542	1,542	10
14	Somerby	1	1,390	1,390	3	1,429	1,429	2
15	Waltham-on-the-Wolds	1	1,253	1,253	-7	1,284	1,284	-9
16	Wymondham	1	1,214	1,214	-10	1,278	1,278	-9
	Totals	28	37,686	-	-	39,383	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,346	-	-	1,407	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Melton in Leicestershire. The seven two-tier districts in Leicestershire and the unitary authority of Leicester City Council have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Melton's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1977 (Report No. 177). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report No. 441). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

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

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

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

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 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Melton is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and stressed that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Melton Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils, parish and

town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 September 2001. At Stage Two the LGCE considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 Melton borough is situated in north-east Leicestershire and is one of seven district and borough councils in Leicestershire. The borough covers an area of 48,134 hectares and comprises a large rural area surrounding the town of Melton Mowbray, which contains one of the largest cattle markets in the country. The main industries in the area are agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, joinery and metal engineering. The district contains 25 civil parishes, but Melton Mowbray town itself is unparished, comprising approximately 52 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

11 The electorate of the borough is 37,686 (February 2001). The Council presently has 26 members who are elected from 17 wards, six of which are urban in Melton Mowbray, with the remainder being mainly rural. One of the wards is represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and nine are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

12 At present each councillor represents an average of 1,449 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,515 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 17 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in five wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Long Clawson ward, where the councillor represents 29 per cent more electors than the borough average.

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

Map 1: Existing Wards in Melton

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 Asfordby	2	2,491	1,246	-14	2,578	1,289	-15
2 Bottesford	2	2,835	1,418	-2	2,876	1,438	-5
3 Craven	2	2,563	1,282	-12	2,556	1,278	-16
4 Croxton Kerrial	1	1,115	1,115	-23	1,156	1,156	-24
5 Egerton	2	2,313	1,157	-20	2,357	1,179	-22
6 Frisby-on-the-Wreake	1	1,406	1,406	-3	1,423	1,423	-6
7 Gaddesby	1	1,109	1,109	-23	1,131	1,131	-25
8 Long Clawson	1	1,868	1,868	29	1,937	1,937	28
9 Mowbray	2	3,726	1,863	29	4,292	2,146	42
10 Newport	3	5,321	1,774	22	5,295	1,765	17
11 Old Dalby	1	1,505	1,505	4	1,542	1,542	2
12 Somerby	1	1,641	1,641	13	1,854	1,854	22
13 Stathern	1	1,174	1,174	-19	1,222	1,222	-19
14 Sysonby	2	3,252	1,626	12	3,570	1,785	18
15 Waltham-on-the-Wolds	1	1,475	1,475	2	1,510	1,510	0
16 Warwick	2	2,645	1,323	-9	2,766	1,383	-9
17 Wymondham	1	1,247	1,247	-14	1,318	1,318	-13
Totals	26	37,686	-	-	39,383	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,449	-	-	1,515	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Gaddesby ward were relatively over-represented by 23 per cent, while electors in Mowbray ward were significantly under-represented by 29 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received eight representations, including two borough-wide schemes from Melton Borough Council and Melton District Labour Party, and representations from the East Midlands Regional Labour Party, Mel Read, an MEP for the East Midlands, two parish councils, one borough councillor and one local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Melton in Leicestershire*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on an amended version of Melton District Labour Party's proposals in the urban area and an amended version of Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council's proposals in the rural area. This provided a significant improvement in electoral equality and provided a mixture of two- and three-member wards in the town of Melton Mowbray and a mixture of single- and two-member wards in the rural area. It proposed that:

- Melton Borough Council should be served by 28 councillors, compared with the current 26, representing 14 wards, three less than at present;
- the boundaries of 11 of the existing wards should be modified, while six wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be an amended boundary between the parish wards of Saltby and Sproxton of Sproxton parish.

Draft Recommendation

Melton Borough Council should comprise 28 councillors, serving 14 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 14 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with only one ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received 20 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Melton Borough Council.

Melton Borough Council

18 Melton Borough Council proposed a revised scheme for the urban area consisting of six two-member wards and one three-member ward. It proposed a new scheme for the rural area consisting of three two-member wards and seven single-member wards, maintaining the existing single-member wards wherever possible, including the existing single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby in opposition to the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward. The Council also submitted an alternative proposal for the rural area if its new scheme was not adopted. This revised scheme was partly based on its Stage One proposals and again consisted of three two-member wards and seven single-member wards. It also proposed prefacing the ward names in the town of Melton Mowbray with Melton, following the pattern set by the other Leicestershire authorities.

Leicestershire County Council

19 Leicestershire County Council considered that there could be difficulties in using the wards proposed in the draft recommendations as building blocks for county electoral divisions. It also suggested that the name of the town be included in ward names as this is done at county level.

Melton District Labour Party

20 Melton District Labour Party resubmitted its original proposals for the town of Melton which included a four-member ward. It also resubmitted its original proposals for the rural area but put forward an alternative scheme if the original was still not acceptable. It questioned the LGCE's figures for the proposed wards of Craven and Newport.

Melton Borough Labour Group

21 Melton Borough Labour Group generally supported the draft recommendations for Melton Mowbray but supported the District Labour Party's submission for both urban and rural areas.

Rutland and Melton Conservative Association

22 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association stated that it would prefer a council of 27 members but it could understand the reasons behind a council of 28 members. It supported the Council's scheme in both the urban and rural areas.

Parish Councils

23 Ab Kettleby Parish Council objected to the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and preferred retaining the status quo. Asfordby Parish Council fully supported the draft recommendations. Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile Parish Council preferred to retain a single-member ward containing its parish and considered that the best solution would be to add Belvoir parish to the existing Stathern ward.

24 Buckminster Parish Council considered that councillors for rural wards should be responsible for a smaller electorate as they have to cover larger geographical areas. It also considered that the same number of councillors should represent the rural and urban

areas. Burton & Dalby Parish Council objected to the proposal to combine Gaddesby and Somerby in a two-member ward and would prefer to retain the two existing single-member wards.

25 Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. Gaddesby Parish Council wrote on behalf of the parish councils of Burton & Dalby, Gaddesby, Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby, Twyford and Thorpe Satchville to oppose the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward. It stated that it would prefer to retain the existing single-member wards.

26 Nether Broughton & Old Dalby Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to create a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and stated that it would prefer to retain the existing single-member Old Dalby ward. Scalford Parish Council also opposed the creation of a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and would prefer two single-member wards.

27 Sproxton Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations and stated that it would prefer Freeby parish to remain with Waltham parish and Sproxton parish to remain with Wymondham parish. Wymondham Parish Council supported the draft recommendations.

Other Representations

28 A further four representations were received in response to the LGCE's draft recommendations from councillors and residents.

29 Councillor Hunt proposed prefacing all urban wards with Melton to follow the pattern adopted by other Leicestershire authorities.

30 Councillors O'Callaghan and Worthington wrote a joint submission opposing the Council's proposal to split Newport ward. They stated that they would prefer a four-member ward but that if this was unacceptable then they would accept the draft recommendation for a three-member Newport ward.

31 A resident objected to the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and stated that she would prefer to retain the status quo. Another resident supported the proposals put forward by the Rutland and Melton Conservative Association.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Melton 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 (as amended), which stipulates 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”.

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

34 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.

35 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an 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

36 Since 1977 there has been a 26 per cent increase in the electorate of Melton borough. At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4.5 per cent from 37,686 to 39,383 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the town of Melton Mowbray. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science, and having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

37 At Stage Three Melton District Labour Party questioned the LGCE’s figures for the proposed wards of Craven and Newport in the draft recommendations. No further comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts were received during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

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

39 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted Melton District Labour Party's proposal for a council of 28 members, an increase of two, as it considered that this would provide the best allocation of councillors between the urban and rural areas by 2006. The Borough Council proposed a council of 27 members, an increase of one, but did not provide any argumentation or evidence for this increase. A 27-member council would provide a good allocation of councillors between the rural and urban areas in 2001, but this allocation would deteriorate by 2006. The LGCE was keen to put in place arrangements that would improve electoral equality over time, and was of the opinion that a 28-member council was the best option to enable it to achieve this aim.

40 During Stage Three the Council stated that it "accepts the Commission's reason for recommending two additional members for the town". Melton District Labour Party stated that it was "pleased that the Commission has recognised the force of the argument for a 28-member Council, with 15 councillors representing the urban area and 13 the rural parishes", while the Rutland and Melton Conservative Association stated that it understood why the Commission had adopted a 28-member council but was disappointed that this led to the rejection of the Council's proposals.

41 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three regarding council size, and in light of the support for the proposed council of 28 members, we are content to endorse the LGCE's draft recommendation for an increased council of 28 members.

Electoral Arrangements

42 At Stage One the LGCE carefully considered all the representations received. It received two borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Melton District Labour Party. The Council proposed a council size of 27 members (14 urban and 13 rural), representing 25 mainly single-member wards, while Melton District Labour Party proposed a council size of 28 members (15 urban and 13 rural) representing 17 mixed-member wards. Burton & Dalby Parish Council considered that an equal number of councillors should represent the rural and urban areas. Both the Council's and Melton District Labour Party's schemes would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, with just two wards in each scheme having electoral variances of over 10 per cent from the borough average by 2006.

43 Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council proposed a scheme for the rural area consisting of seven single-member wards and three two-member wards. Councillor Anne Dames put forward a very similar rural scheme, with the only difference being her proposal to retain the village of Holwell in Old Dalby ward rather than transferring it to Waltham ward, as advocated by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council. Under both of these schemes, two of the proposed wards would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the borough average by 2006.

44 As the LGCE did not adopt the Council's proposed council size, it was not able to adopt any of the wards proposed by the Council in the urban area as 14 members is not the correct allocation of councillors for Melton Mowbray under a 28-member council. Under a 28-member council the correct allocation of councillors is 15 for the urban area and 13 for the rural area. The Council proposed a scheme of 14 single-member wards for Melton Mowbray and the LGCE considered that the Council's proposed wards did not provide strong, easily identifiable boundaries and split communities unnecessarily. Melton District Labour Party proposed a scheme of six mixed-member wards for Melton Mowbray, largely based on the existing ward structure, and the LGCE considered that, in general, its scheme provided a good level of electoral equality while utilising easily identifiable boundaries and recognising community identities. However, in two areas the LGCE moved away from Melton District Labour Party's proposals to provide a better balance between the statutory criteria.

45 The LGCE carefully considered the four schemes that it received for the rural area of Melton, all of which proposed 13 councillors representing a mixture of single- and two-member wards. With two amendments, it proposed to adopt the scheme put forward by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council as it considered that this scheme provided the best balance between electoral equality, strong boundaries and community identities.

46 In response to the LGCE's draft recommendations report, the Council accepted the "Commission's rejection of single-member wards" but did not "favour the Commission's draft recommendations for the town". It proposed a revised scheme for the urban area consisting of six two-member wards and one three-member ward. It proposed a revised scheme for the rural area consisting of three two-member wards and seven single-member wards, maintaining the existing single-member wards wherever possible, including the existing single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby in opposition to the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward. The Council also submitted an alternative proposal for the rural area, partly based on its Stage One proposals, and again consisting of three two-member wards and seven single-member wards. Melton District Labour Party resubmitted its original proposals for both the urban and rural areas, along with an alternative rural scheme if its original scheme was still not considered acceptable. It also stated that "overall, the Council's alternative proposals provide a significantly worse fit in terms of electorate numbers than either Melton District Labour Party's proposals or the Commission's proposals, for both the 2001 and 2006 electorates".

47 Buckminster Parish Council considered that the same number of councillors should represent the rural and urban areas.

48 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. We are proposing to confirm the majority of them as final. However, in the urban area, while we are confirming the ward boundaries proposed in the draft recommendations, we are proposing new names for all wards, as put forward by the Borough Council, the County Council and Councillor Hunt.

49 In the rural area, in light of the lack of support for the LGCE's proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward and the argumentation received at Stage Three for single-member wards in this area, we propose moving away from the draft recommendations to create two single-member wards as proposed by the Council, Melton District Labour Party and Gaddesby Parish Council. Again, due to the lack of support for the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and the evidence put forward by Melton District Labour Party and local parish councils, we propose moving away from the draft recommendations to retain the existing single-member Old Dalby ward and create an amended single-member Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward. We are also proposing a slight amendment to the proposed boundary between Wymondham ward and Croxton Kerrial ward which does not affect any electors. We are confirming the draft recommendations in all areas apart from those mentioned. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Egerton, Newport and Sysonby wards;
- (b) Craven, Mowbray and Warwick wards;
- (c) Bottesford, Long Clawson, Old Dalby and Stathern wards;
- (d) Croxton Kerrial, Waltham-on-the-Wolds and Wymondham wards;
- (e) Asfordby, Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Gaddesby and Somerby wards.

50 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 map inserted at the back of this report.

Egerton, Newport and Sysonby wards

51 These three wards comprise the northern half of the town of Melton Mowbray. The number of electors per councillor in Newport and Sysonby wards is 22 per cent and 12 per cent above

the borough average respectively (17 per cent and 18 per cent by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Egerton ward is 20 per cent below the borough average (22 per cent by 2006).

52 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed replacing these three wards with seven single-member wards.

53 Melton District Labour Party proposed an amended two-member Egerton ward including all the electors in the area bordered by Nottingham Road, Scalford Road and the estate to the north of The Crescent (formerly in Sysonby ward). It proposed maintaining the existing boundaries of Newport ward but proposed increasing the number of councillors representing the ward from three to four to improve electoral equality. Finally, it proposed amending the boundaries of the existing Sysonby ward to move all the electors to the south of Drummond Walk and to the east of Nottingham Road from Sysonby ward into Egerton ward.

54 The LGCE carefully considered both representations received regarding these three wards. However, as the LGCE adopted a different council size to that proposed by the Borough Council, it was unable to adopt any of its proposed wards in the urban area in their entirety. Under a 28-member council the urban area is entitled to 15 councillors, and the adoption of a 14-member scheme would lead to high levels of electoral variance. In addition, the LGCE considered that the proposed arrangement of single-member wards did not offer the best reflection of community identities in this area, since it split estates such as that to the west of Nottingham Road in the existing Egerton ward.

55 The LGCE considered that, in general, Melton District Labour Party's scheme in this area provided good electoral equality while utilising easily identifiable boundaries and recognising community identities. However, in two areas it proposed moving away from the scheme. Melton District Labour Party proposed a four-member Newport ward, and the LGCE did not consider that the circumstances in this area were so exceptional as to warrant a four-member ward. As stated in the *Guidance*, it considered that the number of councillors representing a ward should not normally exceed three, as any number greater than this may lead to a dilution of accountability to the electorate. Therefore it proposed moving all the electors on the estate centred on Clark Drive and Wymondham Way from Newport ward into Sysonby ward to create the two three-member wards of Newport and Sysonby. It also proposed moving all the electors in the town centre area bordered by Norman Way to the north, Nottingham Street to the west and Sherrard Street to the south from the proposed Newport ward into the proposed Craven ward to improve electoral equality. It considered that this central area was self-contained, and that combining it with the area to the south-east would not adversely affect community ties. It considered that these proposals offered the best balance between electoral equality, the provision of strong, easily identifiable boundaries and the recognition of community identities.

56 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Egerton, Newport and Sysonby wards would be 3 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 7 per cent below the borough average respectively (equal to the borough average, 5 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2006).

57 At Stage Three the Council accepted the LGCE's rejection of the single-member ward scheme that it proposed at Stage One but did not support the draft recommendations for the town. It proposed "a new solution with 15 members, giving six two-member wards and one three-member ward". It also proposed to follow "a pattern adopted by other Leicestershire authorities to prefix town ward names with 'Melton' " and considered that this "would have the benefit of making the wards easily identifiable between authorities at a time when partnership working is on the increase".

58 Leicestershire County Council stated that it foresaw "considerable difficulties in a number of districts in using the wards contained in the draft recommendations as building blocks for future

County electoral divisions". It also stated that "in some areas of the County it has been suggested that the name of the County town, e.g Loughborough, Oadby, Wigston, etc., should be included as a prefix in ward names". It considered that "if this were adopted it would follow the precedent set by the use of 'Loughborough', 'Melton Mowbray', etc., in the titles of existing County electoral divisions."

59 Melton District Labour Party stated that it was "pleased that the Commission has retained multi-member wards within Melton Mowbray, with little change to existing ward boundaries". However, Melton District Labour Party opposed the two amendments to its original scheme and put forward arguments for a return to its original proposals. With regard to the area around Wymondham Way that would be transferred from Newport ward into Sysonby ward, it stated that the draft recommendations would place Melton Country Park Visitor Centre in a different ward to Melton Country Park itself. It also stated that the LGCE's "proposed division between Newport and Sysonby wards is artificial" and that in reality "there is no obvious dividing line". It also stated that Scalford Road is the boundary of primary school catchment areas. With regard to the Town Centre area that, under the draft recommendations, would move from Newport ward into Craven ward, Melton District Labour Party stated that the area to be transferred "has nothing in common with the older, privately-owned terrace housing to the south of Sherrard Street". It also stated that Beck Mill Court to the north of Norman Way "would be isolated in Newport ward if the Town Centre were transferred to Craven ward" and that the "only road connection between the eastern and western parts of the ward [Newport] would be Norman Way, which would form its boundary". Melton District Labour Party opposed the Council's Stage Three submission for Melton Mowbray and considered that the "proposed division of Newport ward ... would be just as damaging to integrity of the local community as would have been the ward boundaries incorporated in the Council's original single-member ward suggestions". It also stated that "the long crescent shape of its [the Council's] Newport South ward ... looks (and is) contrived". It questioned the LGCE's figures for the proposed wards of Craven and Newport regarding the number of electors contained in the town centre area.

60 Melton Borough Labour Group generally supported the draft recommendations for the town of Melton Mowbray subject to the exceptions outlined in the District Labour Party's submission. It stated that in "the rural wards the Group would have preferred to retain the existing single-member ward pattern for the countryside, with the larger villages of Bottesford and Asfordby remaining as two-councillor wards". It opposed the Council's Stage Three proposed warding arrangement for the town of Melton Mowbray and supported Melton District Labour Party's proposals for both the urban and the rural area.

61 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association strongly supported the Council's Stage Three proposal for the town of Melton Mowbray and considered that "given that our desired single-member structure appears not to be achievable, then their proposal, which restricts to one the use of three-member wards, is far and away the most democratic and serviceable option".

62 Councillors Worthington and O'Callaghan, both representing Newport ward, opposed the Council's proposal to split the ward into two. They argued that the Council's proposals would introduce a new community into Newport, would create a "large crescent shaped ward covering almost half the town area", would "split an existing closely knit community into two along Laycock Avenue" and would "divide responsibility for the Country Park between different councillors". They contended that they would "prefer to retain the current ward as it is – even if this means four councillors", but stated that "if this is not acceptable then we would support the LGC's recommendations for a three-member ward".

63 County Councillor Hunt proposed prefacing all of the ward names in the town of Melton Mowbray with Melton to make the ward names more recognisable to the public.

64 A resident supported the proposals put forward by Councillor Brown and the Rutland and Melton Conservative Association.

65 Having carefully considered the representations received, subject to amending the names of the proposed wards, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Egerton, Newport and Sysonby wards as they would give a good level of electoral equality and would provide strong and easily identifiable boundaries. We did not consider that the Council's Stage Three proposals offered an improvement on the draft recommendations and, in particular, were not persuaded that its proposed Melton Elgin ward offered a good reflection of community identity. The Council's proposals would lead to a deterioration in electoral equality, and we also considered that community interests would be better represented under the draft recommendations than under this scheme. No evidence was provided to justify the worse levels of electoral equality or to support the strangely shaped Melton Elgin ward put forward by the Council. Melton District Labour Party resubmitted its original proposals which contained a four-member Newport ward but, as at Stage One, we do not consider that a four-member ward provides effective and convenient local government. As stated in the *Guidance*, it is considered that the number of councillors representing a ward should not normally exceed three, as any number greater than this may lead to a dilution of accountability to the electorate. We were not persuaded that either of these proposals concerning the warding arrangements of Melton Mowbray put forward at Stage Three offered an improvement on the draft recommendations and have decided to confirm the draft recommendations as final. However, as proposed by the Borough Council, the County Council and Councillor Hunt, we propose changing the ward names in the town to put Melton in front of the existing ward names as this would bring Melton into line with other Leicestershire authorities and would make the wards more recognisable to electors. In addition, we have amended the figures for the proposed Craven and Newport wards following a discrepancy in the LGCE's figures highlighted by Melton District Labour Party, but this amendment does not seriously alter the levels of electoral equality.

66 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Melton Newport and Melton Sysonby wards would be 1 per cent and 7 per cent below the borough average (6 per cent and 3 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed ward of Melton Egerton would be 3 per cent above the borough average (equal to the borough average by 2006). Our proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2, Map A1 and the large map at the back of the report.

Craven, Mowbray and Warwick wards

67 These three wards comprise the southern half of the town of Melton Mowbray. The number of electors per councillor in Craven and Warwick wards is 12 per cent and 9 per cent below the borough average respectively (16 per cent and 9 per cent by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Mowbray ward is 29 per cent above the borough average (42 per cent by 2006).

68 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed replacing these three wards with seven single-member wards.

69 Melton District Labour Party proposed maintaining the existing boundaries of Craven, Mowbray and Warwick wards but proposed increasing the number of councillors representing Mowbray ward from two to three.

70 The LGCE carefully considered both of the representations received regarding these three wards. Again, since it adopted a different council size to that put forward by the Borough Council it was difficult to adopt any of the Council's proposed wards. Under a 28-member council the urban area is entitled to 15 councillors and the adoption of a 14-member scheme would lead to high levels of electoral variance. The LGCE also considered that the Council's proposals did not offer the best balance between electoral equality and the recognition of community identities. In particular, it considered that the Council's proposals would split natural communities such as the estate to the south of the railway line in Craven ward.

71 It considered that Melton District Labour Party's proposals offered a good balance between electoral equality, the provision of easily identifiable boundaries and the recognition of community identities. Accordingly, with one amendment, it adopted Melton District Labour Party's proposals in this area. The LGCE proposed an amendment to improve electoral equality, moving all the electors in the area bordered by Norman Way, Nottingham Street and Sherrard Street from Newport ward into Craven ward.

72 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Craven, Mowbray and Warwick wards would be 7 per cent above, 8 per cent below and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 2 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

73 At Stage Three the Council accepted the LGCE's rejection of the single-member ward scheme that it proposed at Stage One but did not support the draft recommendations for the town. As previously indicated, it proposed a pattern of six two-member wards and one three-member ward for the area. It also proposed to follow "a pattern adopted by other Leicestershire authorities to prefix town ward names with 'Melton' " and considered that this "would have the benefit of making the wards easily identifiable between authorities at a time when partnership working is on the increase". The only problem was with the existing Mowbray ward as the Council considered that "a ward called 'Melton Mowbray' may cause some confusion between the ward and the town". As a consequence the Council put forward two options, that of naming the ward Melton Dorian or Melton Kettleby, with Melton Dorian being the preferred option.

74 Leicestershire County Council stated that it foresaw "considerable difficulties in a number of districts in using the wards contained in the draft recommendations as building blocks for future County electoral divisions". It also stated that "in some areas of the County it has been suggested that the name of the County town, e.g Loughborough, Oadby, Wigston, etc., should be included as a prefix in ward names". It considered that "if this were adopted it would follow the precedent set by the use of 'Loughborough', 'Melton Mowbray', etc., in the titles of existing County electoral divisions".

75 Melton District Labour Party stated that it was "pleased that the Commission has retained multi-member wards within Melton Mowbray, with little change to existing ward boundaries". However, it proposed two amendments to the draft recommendations detailed in the previous section. It also opposed the Council's Stage Three submission for Melton Mowbray.

76 Melton Borough Labour Group generally supported the draft recommendations for the town of Melton Mowbray subject to the exceptions outlined in the District Labour Party's submission.

77 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association strongly supported the Council's Stage Three proposal for the town of Melton Mowbray and considered that "given that our desired single-member structure appears not to be achievable, then their proposal, which restricts to one the use of three-member wards, is far and away the most democratic and serviceable option".

78 County Councillor Hunt proposed prefacing all of the ward names in the town of Melton Mowbray with Melton to make the ward names more recognisable to the public. He stated that "the Mowbray ward alone is awkward" and that the Council were considering alternative names for this ward but "in the absence of a better suggestion I propose Melton South West".

79 A resident supported the proposals put forward by Councillor Brown and the Rutland and Melton Conservative Association.

80 Having carefully considered all the evidence and representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Craven, Mowbray and Warwick wards as they would give a good level of electoral equality and would provide strong and easily identifiable boundaries, subject to amending the names of the proposed wards. The Council's

Stage Three proposals for this area supported the draft recommendations for Craven and Warwick wards but put forward an amended Mowbray ward to be named either Melton Dorian or Melton Kettleby. We did not consider that the Council's proposal for an amended Mowbray ward provided a better balance between the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations as we considered that the best reflection of community identity would be provided by keeping the properties to the north of Leicester Road with the properties to the south, as in the draft recommendations. The Council's proposed amendment in this area would also lead to a worsening of electoral equality, and no evidence was provided to justify this. Therefore, in light of the support from the Melton District Labour Party and the Melton Borough Labour Group for the draft recommendations, we are content to endorse the boundaries put forward in the draft recommendations as final. However, as proposed by the Borough Council, the County Council and Councillor Hunt, we are proposing to change the ward names to put Melton in front of the existing ward names, as this will bring Melton into line with other Leicestershire authorities and will make the wards more recognisable to electors. We are proposing to rename the existing Mowbray ward, Melton Dorian, as we consider that a ward named Melton Mowbray could cause confusion amongst voters and Melton Dorian was the preferred option put forward by the Council at Stage Three.

81 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed wards of Melton Dorian and Melton Warwick would be 8 per cent below and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent above and 2 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed ward of Melton Craven would be 9 per cent above the borough average (4 per cent above by 2006). Our proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2, Map A1 and the large map at the back of the report.

Bottesford, Long Clawson, Old Dalby and Stathern wards

82 These four wards are situated in the north-west of the borough. Long Clawson ward (comprising the parish of Clawson, Hose & Harby), Old Dalby ward (comprising the parishes of Ab Kettleby and Broughton & Old Dalby) and Stathern ward (comprising the parishes of Redmile and Stathern) are each represented by one councillor, while Bottesford ward (comprising the parish of Bottesford) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Bottesford and Stathern wards is 2 per cent and 19 per cent below the borough average respectively (5 per cent and 19 per cent by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Long Clawson and Old Dalby wards is 29 per cent and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (28 per cent and 2 per cent by 2006).

83 The Borough Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Bottesford ward. It proposed an amended Stathern ward to be called Redmile & Stathern ward, which would contain Belvoir parish in addition to the existing Stathern ward. It proposed an amended Clawson ward to comprise Long Clawson parish ward of Clawson, Hose & Harby parish and Salford parish. It proposed a new Harby ward comprising the parish wards of Hose and Harby from Clawson, Hose & Harby parish and Eastwell parish ward from Eaton parish. Finally, the Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Old Dalby ward.

84 With one amendment, Melton District Labour Party put forward the same arrangements for these wards as those proposed by the Council. To provide a better level of electoral equality in the Council's proposed Old Dalby ward, Melton District Labour Party proposed transferring the village of Holwell from Old Dalby ward to Clawson ward.

85 Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council proposed a two-member Long Clawson & Stathern ward combining the existing wards of Long Clawson and Stathern, stating that this option would preserve the "integrity of the Vale". It stated that the Vale of Belvoir had a number of "community relationships and links" formed over a number of years. In addition to the geographical links, the Parish Council also pointed to factors such as the existence of bus services such as the "Vale Runner", the Vale of Belvoir Ministry Team which links schools as

well as churches, and the fact that Long Clawson Medical Practice serves all of the villages in the vale. None of these factors linked the village of Long Clawson and the village of Scalford. Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council also proposed retaining the existing two-member Bottesford ward. It proposed an amendment to the existing Old Dalby ward to move the village of Holwell from Old Dalby ward into its proposed Waltham ward.

86 Councillor Anne Dames supported the proposals put forward by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council but proposed retaining the existing Old Dalby ward.

87 The LGCE carefully considered all the representations received regarding this area. It considered that the Council's proposed Clawson ward offered little access from the northern part of the ward to the southern part. The proposed ward was almost a detached ward and, the LGCE considered, would not provide for convenient and effective local government or recognise community identities. Although Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council's proposed Long Clawson & Stathern ward would have an electoral variance of 12 per cent above the borough average by 2006, it considered that this option was the best available, and was persuaded by the argumentation and evidence put forward by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council. The proposed Long Clawson & Stathern ward would preserve the strong community links in this area, and would allow the adoption of a scheme for the rest of the rural area which provided a generally good level of electoral equality while causing minimal disruption to community identities. The LGCE proposed retaining the existing two-member Bottesford ward, as this ward would continue to provide a good level of electoral equality. In the Old Dalby area it proposed a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward comprising the existing Old Dalby ward and the parishes of Scalford and Waltham. It considered the option proposed by the Council and by Councillor Dames of retaining the current Old Dalby ward, but took the view that the high level of electoral inequality that this would provide (10 per cent above the borough average by 2006) was not supported by strong enough argumentation to justify this inequality.

88 The LGCE also carefully considered the proposal put forward by Melton District Labour Party and Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council to ward Ab Kettleby parish and remove the village of Holwell from Old Dalby ward. Under Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council's scheme, Holwell would become part of an amended Waltham ward and, while this would provide a good level of electoral equality (2 per cent above the borough average in Old Dalby ward by 2006 and 2 per cent below the borough average in Waltham ward by 2006), the LGCE did not consider that there was sufficient evidence of local support for the proposal to ward this parish. It therefore considered that its proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the recognition of community identities in this area.

89 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bottesford ward (comprising the parish of Bottesford), Long Clawson & Stathern ward (comprising the parishes of Clawson, Hose & Harby, Redmile and Stathern) and Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward (comprising the parishes of Ab Kettleby, Broughton & Old Dalby, Scalford and Waltham) would be 5 per cent above, 13 per cent above and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent above, 12 per cent above and equal to the borough average by 2006).

90 At Stage Three the Council opposed the draft recommendations for two-member wards in rural areas and recommended "that the principle of single-member wards be reinstated based broadly on existing wards for all parts of rural areas, with the exception of Asfordby and Bottesford". It also stated that this could "be achieved without splitting parish councils" and that "Sproxtton Parish Council keeps its existing ward boundaries with two parish councillors representing each ward". However, it also stated that "should the Commission not favour the above approach, the Council recommends as a fall back, that its original proposals submitted in September 2001 for the existing wards of Somerby and Gaddesby" be adopted. It proposed to retain the existing single-member Old Dalby ward and the existing two-member Bottesford ward

but proposed an amended two-member Long Clawson ward comprising the parishes of Clawson, Hose & Harby, Eaton and Stathern and an amended single-member Croxton Kerrial ward containing the parishes of Belvoir, Croxton Kerrial and Redmile. These proposals would provide a good level of electoral equality.

91 Melton District Labour Party was “pleased that the Commission has agreed with the retention of double-member wards for the large villages of Bottesford and Asfordby” but stated that it was “extremely disappointed that the Commission has ignored the strong argument for single-member wards in the truly rural areas”. It considered that “the facilitation of an ongoing, two-way interchange between councillors and the people they represent” became “increasingly difficult as the geographical area represented by a councillor increases”. It also considered that, from the constituents’ point of view, there was a danger of a “lack of ‘ownership’ of a district councillor hailing from many miles away” and was “strongly of the view that in the truly rural parts of Melton Borough single-member wards are the best form of local democratic representation”. It opposed the draft recommendation for the creation for a two-member Long Clawson & Stathern ward, questioning the community relationship and links between the villages of Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile parish and the villages of the lower Vale of Belvoir. It strongly opposed the draft recommendation for a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward, arguing that the proposed ward would be too large, that the villages to be linked had nothing in common and that there was little road connection between either end of the ward. Melton District Labour Party resubmitted its original proposals for the rural area and considered that, while this would involve the warding of three parishes, this was a “price worth paying in order to retain single-member wards in the truly rural areas”. However, if its original proposals remained unacceptable, Melton District Labour Party put forward an alternative proposal for the rural area to the north of Melton Mowbray, based on Option 4 of the Council’s PER Task Force. This alternative proposal would contain the existing two-member Bottesford ward, a single-member Stathern ward comprising the parishes of Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile, Stathern and Belvoir, a two-member Clawson & Dalby ward comprising the parishes of Broughton & Old Dalby and Clawson, Hose & Harby and a single-member Saltway ward comprising the parishes of Ab Kettleby, Eaton and Scalford. Melton District Labour Party stated that it recognised that “Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council will oppose linkage between that parish and Broughton & Old Dalby” but considered that this alternative scheme would provide improved electoral equality and would recognise the links between Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile and Belvoir parishes while also responding to criticism of its original proposal that linked valley bottom villages with villages above the escarpment. Finally Melton District Labour Party opposed the Council’s Stage Three proposals for both the urban and rural areas on the grounds that they would provide worse electoral equality than either its own proposals or the LGCE’s proposals.

92 Melton Borough Labour Group stated that its “arguments against the Council’s proposals for the rural wards will be the same as those of the Melton District Labour Party, as will be our favoured option for the rural wards”.

93 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association proposed the same alternative scheme for the rural area as the Council at Stage Three. It argued that its alternative scheme minimised the “introduction of two-member wards and preserves all existing parishes”.

94 Ab Kettleby Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to create a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and considered that “historically Ab Kettleby and Holwell have been close neighbours and relate to Broughton and Dalby rather than Scalford and Waltham”. It would prefer to maintain the existing arrangements.

95 Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile Parish Council supported the original proposal of Melton Borough Council to add Belvoir parish to Stathern ward. It stated that it “would prefer to retain the single councillor ward and believe that the addition of Belvoir parish to the existing Stathern ward would offer the best solution for our residents” as a “single councillor can be better

focussed on the needs of their ward". It disagreed with Clawson, Hose & Harby's argument that the villages in the Vale of Belvoir were linked and considered that "linking Stathern ward, including Barketstone, Plungar & Redmile to Clawson, Hose & Harby would lead to a constant conflict of allegiance with the large parish, Clawson, Hose & Harby, preferring links to Melton to the detriment of our parish which sees Bottesford, Bingham and Grantham as our service providers".

96 Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council supported the draft recommendations for Long Clawson ward and welcomed "the Commission's attention to the argumentation and evidence put forward by this Parish Council".

97 Nether Broughton & Old Dalby Parish Council opposed the draft recommendation to create a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and wished to retain the existing single-member ward. It argued that there was little access and no community links between Old Dalby and Waltham and stated that the proposed two-member ward "would polarize round Old Dalby and Waltham because of the nature of the roads and the distances involved".

98 Scalford Parish Council objected to the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward. It considered that "the geographical area stretches too far across the borough, and would prefer to see two separate wards – each with an elected councillor from its own local area – rather than, as could happen, a combined ward with two councillors from one area".

99 A resident of Wartnaby objected to the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and urged "a retention of the status quo". The resident stated that the proposed ward "would be long, thin and oddly shaped, polarising the two largest villages".

100 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and, with one amendment to the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward, we are confirming the draft recommendations as final. No support was expressed for the LGCE's proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward, and we were persuaded by the evidence and argumentation received at Stage Three to move away from the draft recommendations in this area. Therefore, as proposed by the Council and the Rutland and Melton Conservative Association, we have decided to retain the existing single-member Old Dalby ward and an amended Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward comprising the parishes of Scalford and Waltham. Although this would lead to a slight deterioration of electoral equality from the draft recommendations, we consider that this is acceptable given the lack of support for and argumentation against the draft recommendations in this area received at Stage Three. In the remainder of this area we are content to confirm the draft recommendations as final as we have not been convinced by any of the alternative proposals received at Stage Three. We did not consider that enough evidence was provided for the Council's proposal to create a two-member ward consisting of the parishes of Clawson, Hose & Harby, Eaton and Stathern, and in particular we were not persuaded that this proposal provided the best reflection of community identities. We were also not persuaded by the Labour Party's alternative proposal to create a two-member ward containing the parishes of Broughton & Old Dalby and Clawson, Hose & Harby as we did not consider that this proposal provided the best balance between the statutory criteria. Adopting any of the schemes received at Stage Three would mean the adoption of a considerably different warding pattern to that put forward in the draft recommendations and we do not consider that the circumstances are exceptional enough to warrant this.

101 Under our final recommendations the number of electors in our proposed wards of Bottesford, Long Clawson & Stathern and Old Dalby would be 5 per cent, 13 per cent and 12 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent, 12 per cent and 10 per cent above by 2006). Our proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A1.

Croxton Kerrial, Waltham-on-the-Wolds and Wymondham wards

102 These three wards are situated in the east of the borough. Croxton Kerrial ward (comprising the parishes of Belvoir, Croxton Kerrial and Eaton), Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward (comprising the parishes of Freeby, Scalford and Waltham) and Wymondham ward (comprising the parishes of Buckminster, Garthorpe, Sproxtan and Wymondham) are each represented by one councillor. The number of electors per councillor in Croxton Kerrial and Wymondham wards is currently 23 per cent and 14 per cent below the borough average respectively (24 per cent and 13 per cent below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward is 2 per cent above the borough average at present (equal to the borough average by 2006).

103 The Borough Council proposed a new single-member Croxton & Waltham ward comprising the parishes of Croxton Kerrial and Waltham and the village of Eaton from Eaton parish. It also proposed an amended single-member Wymondham ward comprising the existing Wymondham ward and the parish of Freeby.

104 Melton District Labour Party proposed the same warding arrangements in this area as those put forward by the Council.

105 Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council proposed an amended Croxton Kerrial ward, comprising the existing Croxton Kerrial ward and the villages of Saltby and Stonesby from the existing Sproxtan parish. It also proposed an amended Waltham ward, comprising the parishes of Scalford and Waltham and the village of Holwell from Ab Kettleby parish. Finally it proposed an amended Wymondham ward, comprising the parishes of Buckminster, Freeby, Garthorpe and Wymondham, as well as the village of Sproxtan from the existing Sproxtan parish. Councillor Dames supported the proposals from Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council.

106 The LGCE carefully considered all the representations received regarding this area but, given the rural nature of the area and the fact that it adopted the proposals put forward by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council in the Clawson area, it was restricted in the warding arrangements available for the existing wards of Croxton Kerrial, Waltham-on-the-Wolds and Wymondham. The rural nature of the area means that any warding arrangement in one area has a knock-on effect in other parts of the borough and, since the LGCE adopted Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council's proposed Long Clawson & Stathern ward, it was difficult for it to consider the proposals put forward by the Borough Council and Melton District Labour Party in this area as they formed part of a scheme based on a different warding arrangement to that which the LGCE adopted in other areas. It considered that the wards proposed by Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council provided the best balance between electoral equality and the recognition of community identities and so, with one amendment, proposed adopting Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council's scheme for this area. The LGCE proposed a two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward, as discussed in the previous section.

107 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Croxton Kerrial ward (comprising the parishes of Belvoir, Croxton Kerrial and Eaton as well as the parish ward of Saltby & Stonesby from Sproxtan parish), Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward (comprising the parishes of Ab Kettleby, Broughton & Old Dalby, Scalford and Waltham) and Wymondham ward (comprising the parishes of Buckminster, Freeby, Garthorpe and Wymondham as well as the parish ward of Sproxtan from Sproxtan parish) would be 2 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 10 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 9 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

108 At Stage Three the Council proposed an amended single-member Croxton Kerrial ward comprising the parishes of Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile, Belvoir and Croxton Kerrial. It proposed retaining the existing single-member Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward and the existing

single-member Wymondham ward. It also recommended that “Sproxtton Parish Council keeps its existing ward boundaries with two parish councillors representing each ward”.

109 Melton District Labour Party opposed the draft recommendations in this area and reinstated its original proposals. However, it also put forward an alternative warding arrangement if its original proposals were not adopted. In this area its alternative scheme would include a single-member Croxton & Waltham ward comprising the parishes of Croxton Kerrial and Waltham-on-the-Wolds and the parish ward of Stonesby & Bescaby from Sproxtton parish and a single-member Wymondham ward comprising the parishes of Buckminster, Freeby, Garthorpe and Wymondham and the parish wards of Saltby and Sproxtton from Sproxtton parish. It stated that this proposal would “recognise the links between Croxton Kerrial and Waltham-on-the-Wolds” and “the links that Bescaby & Stonesby have with Waltham”. It also criticised the Council’s Stage Three proposals, stating that they did not provide good reflections of community identities.

110 Melton Borough Labour Group supported Melton District Labour Party’s proposals for the rural area.

111 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association proposed the same alternative scheme for the rural area as the Council at Stage Three. It argued that its alternative scheme minimised the “introduction of two-member wards and preserves all existing parishes”.

112 Buckminster Parish Council considered that “because borough councillors for rural wards have larger geographical areas to cover, with generally lower levels of public services, they should be responsible for a smaller electorate”. It also stated that “the present equality in numbers between councillors representing rural and urban wards should be maintained, contrary to the proposals outlined in the Draft Recommendations”.

113 Sproxtton Parish Council objected to the draft recommendation to include the parish wards of Saltby and Stonesby in Croxton Kerrial ward and considered that Sproxtton was “a close knit community”. It proposed retaining the existing single-member Wymondham ward and stated that it wished to retain the existing allocation of parish councillors between the parish wards of Sproxtton parish, with two parish councillors representing each parish ward. It also wished to retain the existing boundaries of the parish wards and stated that “it must be a retrograde step to divide us for no significant gain”.

114 Wymondham Parish Council stated that it was “happy with the recommendations made for Wymondham ward”.

115 Having carefully considered all the representations and evidence received at Stage Three, we have decided, with one minor boundary amendment, to endorse the draft recommendations for this area as final. At Stage One the LGCE was unaware that Sproxtton parish was already warded, and therefore created two parish wards returning three parish councillors each. However, having learnt of the existing arrangements whereby three parish wards return two parish councillors each, we are proposing to retain the existing parish wards with the only amendment being to tie the boundary between Saltby and Sproxtton parish wards to ground detail. In the remainder of this area we are content to endorse the draft recommendations as final as we have not been convinced by any of the alternative proposals received at Stage Three. Stage Three is for comments on the draft recommendations rather than for the consideration of entirely new schemes, and adopting a new scheme at Stage Three leaves no time for parishes and interested parties to comment on these proposals. Therefore, although we have not received overwhelming support for the draft recommendations in this area, we do not consider that the support and evidence for any alternative warding pattern is strong enough to justify overturning the draft recommendations.

116 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Croxton Kerrial ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average (1 per cent above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed wards of Waltham-on-the-Wolds and Wymondham would be 7 per cent and 10 per cent below the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 9 per cent below by 2006). Our proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2, Map A1 and Map A2.

Asfordby, Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Gaddesby and Somerby wards

117 These four wards are situated in the south of the borough. Frisby-on-the-Wreake ward (comprising the parishes of Frisby & Kirby, Grimston and Hoby with Rotherby), Gaddesby ward (comprising the parishes of Gaddesby and Twyford & Thorpe) and Somerby ward (comprising the parishes of Burton & Dalby, Knossington & Cold Overton and Somerby) are each represented by one councillor, while Asfordby ward (comprising the parish of Asfordby) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Asfordby, Frisby-on-the-Wreake and Gaddesby wards is 14 per cent, 3 per cent and 23 per cent below the borough average respectively (15 per cent, 6 per cent and 25 per cent by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Somerby ward is 13 per cent above the borough average (22 per cent by 2006).

118 The Borough Council, Melton District Labour Party, Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council and Councillor Dames all proposed retaining the existing two-member ward of Asfordby and the existing single-member ward of Frisby-on-the-Wreake. The Council stated that the proposal to retain the current two-member Asfordby ward was based on “the strong community identity of Asfordby”. The Borough Council, Melton District Labour Party, Clawson, Hose & Harby Parish Council and Councillor Dames also proposed an amended single-member Gaddesby & Burton ward comprising the parishes of Burton & Dalby and Gaddesby with an electoral variance of 11 per cent above the borough average by 2006. They also proposed an amended single-member Somerby ward, comprising the parishes of Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby and Twyford & Thorpe, with an electoral variance of 2 per cent above the borough average by 2006.

119 Burton & Dalby Parish Council stated that it supported the Council’s proposals subject to the Council reviewing its 2006 projected electorate for Burton & Dalby parish, and the proposed new village of Kettleby Magna having its own parish council. The Borough Council reviewed its projected electorate in the light of this representation and stated that it “is satisfied that it used the best projections available”.

120 The LGCE carefully considered the representations received at Stage One regarding the warding arrangements in this area. In the light of the cross-party support for and reasonable levels of electoral equality provided by the proposal to retain the existing wards of Asfordby and Frisby-on-the-Wreake, it proposed retaining these two existing wards. However, it considered that the proposed single-member Gaddesby & Burton ward not only had an unduly high level of electoral inequality (11 per cent above the borough average by 2006) but also failed to provide for effective and convenient local government. The proposed ward is almost a detached ward with little access from the northern part of the proposed ward to the southern part. Therefore electors in the north of the ward may have to leave the ward in order to access the southern part of the ward. In the light of this, it proposed its own two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward comprising the existing wards of Gaddesby and Somerby. The LGCE’s proposed ward would have an electoral variance of 6 per cent above the borough average by 2006 and would, it considered, provide for both more effective and more convenient local government.

121 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Asfordby ward (comprising the parish of Asfordby), Frisby-on-the-Wreake ward (comprising the parishes of Frisby & Kirby, Grimston and Hoby with Rotherby) and Gaddesby & Somerby ward (comprising the parishes of Burton & Dalby, Gaddesby, Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby

and Twyford & Thorpe) would be 7 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (8 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 6 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

122 At Stage Three the Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Asfordby ward and the existing single-member wards of Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Gaddesby and Somerby. However, it stated that “should the Commission not favour the above approach, the Council recommends as a fall back, its original proposals submitted in September 2001 for the existing wards of Somerby and Gaddesby”.

123 Melton District Labour Party resubmitted its original proposals which would involve retaining the existing two-member Asfordby ward and the existing single-member Frisby-on-the-Wreake ward and creating amended single-member wards of Gaddesby (comprising the parishes of Burton & Dalby and Gaddesby) and Somerby (comprising the parishes of Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby and Twyford & Thorpe).

124 Melton Borough Labour Group stated that its “arguments against the Council’s proposals for the rural wards will be the same as those of the Melton District Labour Party, as will be our favoured option for the rural wards”.

125 Rutland and Melton Conservative Association proposed the same alternative scheme for the rural area as the Council at Stage Three. It argued that its alternative scheme minimised the “introduction of two-member wards and preserves all existing parishes”.

126 Asfordby Parish Council stated that it “fully supported all of the recommendations made in the consultation report” and “would not wish to see any modifications made to the recommendations in the final draft”.

127 Burton & Dalby Parish Council opposed the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward and stated that it would prefer a single-member ward as this would “allow more accountability and it would become much clearer, when a problem arises, who to contact”.

128 Gaddesby Parish Council submitted a representation on behalf of the parish councils of Burton & Dalby, Gaddesby, Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby and Twyford & Thorpe Satchville. It opposed the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward and stated that “the proposed two-member ward, which would encompass a huge geographic area, is long, narrow and disparate with few traditional, historical, geographical or communal/social links”. It argued that “in terms of reflecting the identities and interests of local communities the established wards do not look towards each other, they have been historically separate”. It stated that community links in the existing Gaddesby ward included the use of the village halls of Ashby Folville, Gaddesby and Twyford for community activities, the fact that churches in the ward all belong to the same benefice and the existence of various communal millennial projects such as the Thorpe Satchville Stone. Community links in the existing Somerby ward include the fact that Somerby village surgery covers the whole of Somerby ward, the existence of organisations such as the Somerby & District Leisure Club and the fact that the only village store and post office is in Somerby which acts as a “busy meeting place and focus for people throughout this ward”. Gaddesby Parish Council considered that “the Melton Borough Council proposal to move the parish wards around is not an ideal solution to the problem, but it is a serious attempt to avoid the undesirable two-member option and remains a better solution than that”. However, it stated that “both proposals are a diminution of the present arrangement and as such we are unable to support them” and proposed retaining the existing two single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby.

129 Having carefully considered all the representations and evidence received at Stage Three, we have decided to move away from the draft recommendation for a two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward to create two amended single-member wards of Gaddesby and

Somerby, as proposed by the Council at Stage One and supported by Melton District Labour Party. We received no support for the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward at Stage Three and, in light of this and the argumentation received against the creation of a two-member ward, we are moving away from the draft recommendation. We looked at retaining the existing single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby as proposed by the Council and Gaddesby Parish Council at Stage Three but considered that this would result in unacceptably high levels of electoral inequality (20 per cent below and 32 per cent above the borough average by 2006) and that the circumstances were not exceptional enough to warrant these level of inequality. Therefore we propose adopting the proposal put forward by the Council and Melton District Labour Party at Stage One for two amended single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby. The proposed Gaddesby ward would comprise the parishes of Burton & Dalby and Gaddesby while the proposed Somerby ward would comprise the parishes of Knossington & Cold Overton, Somerby and Twyford & Thorpe. We recognise the odd shape of the proposed Gaddesby ward but have been persuaded that access between the two parishes is provided by the Ashby Folville to Great Dalby road. We consider that the proposed ward allows for convenient and effective local government while providing the best balance between electoral equality and community identities and are therefore content to adopt the proposed single-member wards of Gaddesby and Somerby. In the rest of this area, in light of the consensus and support for the draft recommendations, we are content to endorse the draft recommendations as final.

130 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Gaddesby and Somerby would be 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent, 11 per cent and 2 per cent above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Asfordby ward would be 7 per cent below the borough average (8 per cent below by 2006). Our proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A1.

Electoral Cycle

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

Conclusions

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

- In the town of Melton Mowbray we propose retaining the boundaries put forward in the draft recommendations but are changing the proposed ward names to include the prefix Melton with the exception of the existing Mowbray ward which we are renaming Melton Dorian ward.
- We are replacing the proposed two-member Old Dalby & Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward with the existing single-member Old Dalby ward and an amended single-member Waltham-on-the-Wolds ward.
- We are replacing the proposed two-member Gaddesby & Somerby ward with an amended single-member Gaddesby ward and an amended single-member Somerby ward.
- Subject to an amendment to tie the boundary to ground detail, we are returning to the original parish ward boundaries in Sproxton parish.

133 We conclude that, in Melton:

- there should be a increase in council size from 26 to 28;
- there should be 16 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 11 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	26	28	26	28
Number of wards	17	16	17	16
Average number of electors per councillor	1,449	1,346	1,515	1,407
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	12	2	12	2
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	6	0

135 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 12 to two, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would remain in 2006, with only two wards, Gaddesby and Long Clawson & Stathern, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 11 and 12 per cent respectively. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Melton Borough Council should comprise 28 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

136 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. In its draft recommendations report the LGCE proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Sproxtton parish to reflect the proposed borough wards.

137 When formulating the draft recommendations the LGCE was unaware that Sproxtton parish was already warded and, as a result of the scheme adopted for borough warding in the area, proposed creating the parish wards of Saltby & Stonesby (represented by three

councillors) and Sproxtton (represented by three councillors). However, during Stage Three it was brought to our attention that Sproxtton parish was in fact already warded and comprised the three parish wards of Saltby, Sproxtton and Stonesby (all represented by two councillors).

138 In response to the LGCE's consultation report, Sproxtton Parish Council accepted the draft recommendation that it should have six parish councillors but objected to the draft recommendation to split the parish into two parish wards. It wished to retain the three existing parish wards of Saltby, Sproxtton and Stonesby (each represented by two councillors) and the existing boundaries.

139 The Council also recommended that "Sproxtton Parish Council keeps its existing ward boundaries with two parish councillors representing each ward". Melton District Labour Party also recommended that the existing Sproxtton parish wards should be retained and that each parish ward should be represented by two councillors.

140 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the fact that the existing Sproxtton parish is already warded, we propose moving away from the draft recommendations and returning to the existing warding arrangements for Sproxtton parish, subject to a small amendment which does not affect any electors. This amendment is to tie the boundary between Saltby and Sproxtton parish wards to ground detail.

Final Recommendation

Sproxtton Parish Council should comprise six parish councillors, as at present, representing three parish wards: Saltby, Sproxtton and Stonesby (each returning two councillors). The parish ward boundary between Saltby and Sproxtton parish wards should reflect the borough ward boundary in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A1 and A2 in Appendix A. The other parish ward boundaries in the area should remain as at present.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Melton

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

141 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in Melton 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).

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

143 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission at the address below, to arrive no later than 18 July 2002:

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Melton: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Sproxton parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Melton Mowbray town.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Melton: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Sproxton parish.