

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for East Staffordshire

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

October 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of East Staffordshire.

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Burton upon Trent and adjoining areas is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

10 October 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 28 September 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of East Staffordshire under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although one modification has been made (see paragraph 149) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in East Staffordshire.

We recommend that East Staffordshire Borough Council should be served by 39 councillors representing 21 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that Council elections should continue to be take place every four years.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of East Staffordshire on 28 September 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **In 19 of the 25 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average and six wards vary by more than 30 per cent.**
- **By 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 19 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 10 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 149-150) are that:

- **East Staffordshire Borough Council should have 39 councillors, seven fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 25 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 15 of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 20 per cent in all but two wards.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 wards expected to vary by no**

more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004, and the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 20 per cent in all but two wards.

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Uttoxeter Town Council;**
- **new warding arrangements for the parishes of Outwoods and Stretton.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 21 November 2000:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Abbey	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Croxden, Leigh and Uttoxeter Rural)	Map 2
2	Anglesey (in Burton upon Trent)	2	Broadway ward (part); Uxbridge ward (part)	Large map
3	Bagots	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Abbots Bromley, Blithfield and Kingstone)	Map 2
4	Branston	3	Branston ward (part – Branston parish); Outwoods ward (part – Outwoods South ward of Outwoods parish as proposed)	Large map
5	Brizlincote (in Burton upon Trent)	2	Stapenhill ward (part)	Large map
6	Burton (in Burton upon Trent)	1	Burton ward; Broadway ward (part); Uxbridge ward (part)	Large map
7	Churnet	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Denstone and Rocester)	Map 2
8	Crown	1	Crown ward (part – the parishes of Draycott in the Clay and Marchington); Tutbury & Hanbury ward (part – Hanbury parish)	Map 2
9	Eton Park (in Burton upon Trent)	2	Eton ward; Stretton ward (part – Stretton South East parish ward of Stretton parish as proposed); Victoria ward (part)	Large map
10	Heath (in Uttoxeter)	2	Heath ward (Heath ward of Uttoxeter town); Town ward (part – Town ward of Uttoxeter town (part))	Maps 2 and A2
11	Horninglow (in Burton upon Trent)	3	Horninglow ward (part); Shobnall ward (part); Stretton ward (part – Stretton South Central parish ward of Stretton parish as proposed)	Large map
12	Needwood	2	Needwood ward; Branston ward (part – Tatenhill parish)	Map 2
13	Rolleston on Dove	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Rolleston on Dove parish)	Map 2
14	Shobnall (in Burton upon Trent)	2	Shobnall ward (part); Victoria ward (part)	Large map
15	Stapenhill (in Burton upon Trent)	3	Edgehill ward; Waterside ward; Stapenhill ward (part)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
16	Stretton	3	Stretton ward (Stretton parish ward of Stretton parish as proposed); Horninglow ward (part)	Large map
17	Town (in Uttoxeter)	2	Town ward (part – Town ward of Uttoxeter town (part))	Maps 2 and A2
18	Tutbury & Outwoods	2	Outwoods ward (part – Anslow parish and Outwoods North ward of Outwoods parish as proposed); Tutbury & Hanbury ward (part – Tutbury parish)	Large map
19	Weaver	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Ellastone, Mayfield, Okeover, Ramshorn, Stanton and Wootton)	Map 2
20	Winshill (in Burton upon Trent)	3	Winshill ward; Stapenhill ward (part)	Large map
21	Yoxall	1	Yoxall ward; Crown ward (part – Newborough parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 Burton upon Trent is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the eight 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.

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for East Staffordshire

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey	1	2,150	2,150	7	2,110	2,110	3
2	Anglesey (in Burton upon Trent)	2	4,274	2,137	6	4,093	2,047	0
3	Bagots	1	2,013	2,013	0	2,019	2,019	-1
4	Branston	3	4,710	1,570	-22	5,871	1,957	-4
5	Brizlincote (in Burton upon Trent)	2	3,798	1,899	-6	3,972	1,986	-3
6	Burton (in Burton upon Trent)	1	1,641	1,641	-18	1,974	1,974	-3
7	Churnet	1	1,965	1,965	-2	2,051	2,051	0
8	Crown	1	2,061	2,061	2	2,001	2,001	-2
9	Eton Park (in Burton upon Trent)	2	3,779	1,890	-6	3,956	1,978	-3
10	Heath (in Uttoxeter)	2	4,600	2,300	14	4,468	2,234	9
11	Horninglow (in Burton upon Trent)	3	5,973	1,991	-1	5,669	1,890	-8
12	Needwood	2	4,411	2,206	10	4,403	2,202	8
13	Rolleston on Dove	1	2,505	2,505	24	2,551	2,551	25
14	Shobnall (in Burton upon Trent)	2	4,481	2,241	11	4,289	2,145	5
15	Stapenhill (in Burton upon Trent)	3	6,093	2,031	1	5,895	1,965	-4
16	Stretton	3	5,818	1,939	-4	5,967	1,989	-3
17	Town (in Uttoxeter)	2	4,175	2,088	4	4,501	2,251	10

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
18	Tutbury & Outwoods	2	4,245	2,123	5	4,288	2,144	5
19	Weaver	1	1,656	1,656	-18	1,592	1,592	-22
20	Winshill (in Burton upon Trent)	3	6,155	2,052	2	6,072	2,024	-1
21	Yoxall	1	1,982	1,982	-2	1,985	1,985	-3
	Totals	39	78,485	-	-	79,727	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,012	-	-	2,044	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Staffordshire 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 East Staffordshire. We have now reviewed eight districts in Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of East Staffordshire. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1977 (Report No. 189). The electoral arrangements of Staffordshire County Council were last reviewed in July 1980 (Report No. 386). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the borough council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Staffordshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole council elections in two-tier district areas, and our present *Guidance*.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 28 September 1999, when we wrote to East Staffordshire Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the borough, the Member of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 10 January 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 9 May 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for East Staffordshire*, and ended on 3 July 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The borough of East Staffordshire borders Lichfield district to the south, Stafford borough to the west, Staffordshire Moorlands district to the north and Derbyshire Dales district to the west. Over half of the electors in the borough live in the town of Burton upon Trent, which contains several major breweries. There are also a number of other industries in the town – such as rubber manufacturing, food processing and engineering – which have all experienced growth in the town over recent years.

14 The market town of Uttoxeter is the only other sizeable settlement in the borough, and is the home to the nationally renowned Uttoxeter National Hunt racecourse. The plant machinery manufacturer JC Bamford (JCB) is also based near Uttoxeter. The remainder of the borough is predominantly rural and is topographically diverse. It contains 31 parishes, and Burton upon Trent town is the only part of the borough not parished.

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

16 The electorate of the borough is 78,485 (February 1999). The Council presently has 46 members who are elected from 25 wards. Three of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 15 are each represented by two councillors and seven are single-member wards. The whole Council is elected every four years.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in East Staffordshire borough, with around 10 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing development. The most notable increases have been in Stapenhill and Stretton wards, which have around 2,000 and 3,000 more electors respectively than 20 years ago.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,706 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,733 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 25 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, of which nine wards vary by more than 20 per cent and six wards vary by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Stretton ward where each councillor represents 77 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in East Staffordshire

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	1	2,150	2,150	26	2,110	2,110	22
2 Bagots	1	2,013	2,013	18	2,019	2,019	16
3 Branston	2	4,865	2,433	43	6,147	3,074	77
4 Broadway (in Burton upon Trent)	2	2,852	1,426	-16	2,814	1,407	-19
5 Burton (in Burton upon Trent)	1	1,143	1,143	-33	1,409	1,409	-19
6 Churnet	1	1,965	1,965	15	2,051	2,051	18
7 Crown	1	1,954	1,954	15	1,884	1,884	9
8 Edgehill (in Burton upon Trent)	2	2,809	1,405	-18	2,682	1,341	-23
9 Eton (in Burton upon Trent)	2	2,738	1,369	-20	2,748	1,374	-21
10 Heath (in Uttoxeter)	3	4,457	1,486	-13	4,325	1,442	-17
11 Horninglow (in Burton upon Trent)	3	4,661	1,554	-9	4,475	1,492	-14
12 Needwood	2	3,901	1,951	14	3,799	1,900	10
13 Outwoods	2	2,052	1,026	-40	2,083	1,042	-40
14 Rolleston on Dove	2	2,505	1,253	-27	2,551	1,276	-26
15 Shobnall (in Burton upon Trent)	2	3,302	1,651	-3	3,242	1,621	-6
16 Stapenhill (in Burton upon Trent)	2	5,405	2,703	58	5,515	2,758	59
17 Stretton	2	6,023	3,012	77	6,339	3,170	83
18 Town (in Uttoxeter)	2	4,318	2,159	27	4,644	2,322	34

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Tutbury & Hanbury	2	2,997	1,499	-12	2,991	1,496	-14
20 Uxbridge (in Burton upon Trent)	2	1,920	960	-44	1,844	922	-47
21 Victoria (in Burton upon Trent)	2	3,327	1,664	-3	3,077	1,539	-11
22 Waterside (in Burton upon Trent)	2	2,988	1,494	-12	2,917	1,459	-16
23 Weaver	1	1,656	1,656	-3	1,592	1,592	-8
24 Winshill (in Burton upon Trent)	3	4,844	1,615	-5	4,825	1,608	-7
25 Yoxall	1	1,640	1,640	-4	1,644	1,644	-5
Totals	46	78,485	-	-	79,727	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,706	-	-	1,733	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Staffordshire 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 1999, electors in Uxbridge ward were relatively over-represented by 44 per cent, while electors in Crown ward were relatively under-represented by 15 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 60 representations, including a borough-wide scheme from East Staffordshire Borough Council, and a joint proposal from the East Staffordshire Borough Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups. In addition, we received 50 representations regarding electoral arrangements for Rolleston on Dove parish. In the light of all of the representations received and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for East Staffordshire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were substantially based on the Borough Council's proposals, which would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in four areas, putting forward our own modifications and using proposals put forward by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. We proposed that:

- East Staffordshire Borough Council should be served by 39 councillors, compared with the current 46, representing 20 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Outwoods and Stretton, and Uttoxeter town.

Draft Recommendation

East Staffordshire Borough Council should comprise 39 councillors, serving 20 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected every four years.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 14 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average (with two wards varying by more than 20 per cent). This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only two wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004, while Rolleston on Dove ward would vary by more than 20 per cent.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 49 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of East Staffordshire Borough Council and the Commission.

East Staffordshire Borough Council

23 The Borough Council resolved unanimously to support our draft recommendations, subject to two modifications. The Council reiterated its Stage One proposal to retain the existing Churnet and Weaver wards, and proposed a minor modification to the boundary between the proposed Anglesey and Burton wards.

Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association

24 Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association supported our draft recommendation for Rolleston on Dove ward.

Parish Councils

25 Anslow Parish Council supported our proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward, but argued that Anslow parish should form part of the new ward's title. Denstone, Mayfield and Stanton parish councils objected to our proposal to combine the existing Churnet and Weaver wards to form a two-member Weaver & Churnet ward. Outwoods Parish Council objected to our proposal to divide the parish between Branston and Tutbury & Outwoods wards.

26 Rolleston on Dove Parish Council supported our proposed Rolleston on Dove ward, and were "pleased that the Commission has concluded that Rolleston on Dove is a distinct and separate community". In addition, Stretton Parish Council supported our proposal to include part of Stretton ward in Horninglow ward, but objected to our draft recommendation to include part of Stretton ward in the proposed Eton Park ward

Other Representations

27 A further 40 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, councillors and residents. Councillor Trelinski, Anslow Lane Residents' Association, Rolleston Civic Trust and 35 local residents supported our draft recommendation for Rolleston on Dove ward. Two local residents objected to our draft recommendation to combine the existing Churnet and Weaver wards to form a two-member ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

32 At Stage One, different views were put forward on likely five-year electorate forecasts for East Staffordshire. The Borough Council submitted an electorate forecast, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 2 per cent from 78,485 to 79,727 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It stated that the methodology it had used to develop its electoral projections was consistent with Staffordshire County Council’s data, which was also used by other borough councils in Staffordshire. The Borough Council expected most of the growth to be in Branston ward, which it projected would have an additional 1,200 electors by 2004. In addition, it projected that the number of electors in Uttoxeter town would increase by 200.

33 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats submitted alternative electoral projections for the next five years, forecasting an increase in the electorate of around 3 per cent. They argued that the Borough Council had under-estimated likely housing development and probable occupancy rates in Branston ward and Uttoxeter town. They projected that the number of electors in their proposed Branston ward would increase by around 1,700 over the next five years, while the

number of electors in Uttoxeter town would increase by some 800. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' projections for their proposed Brizlincote ward also differed by 55 electors from the Borough Council's projections for the area. Their projections for the remaining wards in the borough were identical to the Borough Council's.

34 In our draft recommendations report we carefully considered the alternative electorate projections, together with the supporting argumentation put forward, and sought further clarification from both the Borough Council, and the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. We considered that the Borough Council's projections for Branston and Uttoxeter took account of all residential development that could be reasonably expected to be occupied by electors over the next five years. Furthermore, we noted that the Borough Council's methodology was consistent with the methodology used by other boroughs in Staffordshire, and that it took account of the trend for a decline in the average household size.

35 We were not persuaded that there was sufficient evidence that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' projected housing development would be completed by 2004, or that their suggested electorate:population ratio was likely to be achieved. We accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to both sets of electoral forecasts, were content that the Borough Council's figures represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at this time. However, we stated that we would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

36 At Stage Three, Outwoods Parish Council argued that the electorate forecasts for Outwoods "seriously underestimated the growth of the population in future years". In the light of these concerns, we sought yet further clarification from the Borough Council regarding their electoral forecasts. Following this further advice, we remain satisfied that the Borough Council's electorate forecasts represent the best estimates that can currently be made of electorate change over the next five years.

Council Size

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

38 East Staffordshire Borough Council is currently served by 46 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a significant reduction in council size to 39, which it argued would reflect ongoing changes to the Council's internal political management structure. It stated that, subject to a local consultation exercise, it intended to establish an executive committee of nine members, together with five scrutiny panels that would each comprise six members.

39 In their Stage One submission the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats also proposed a reduction in council size, but they argued that a council of 41 members would secure a better level of representation for communities within the borough. They argued that the Borough Council's proposed internal management structure was likely to be "transitional". In addition, we received a representation from East Staffordshire Labour Party supporting the Borough Council's

proposed council size, while Burton Conservative Association supported the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposed council size. Marchington Parish Council and a local resident opposed a significant reduction in council size.

40 In our draft recommendations report we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 39 members. We noted that both borough-wide proposals would provide much improved levels of electoral equality and would each result in a reduction in council size. We considered that the Borough Council has considered alternative internal political management structures, and has developed a structure that it considered would best provide effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, we did not consider that this new internal management structure would necessarily erode the accountability and accessibility of councillors, and we were content to endorse a council of 39 councillors.

41 During Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposed council size. No other representations were received. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for a council size of 39 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

42 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, and the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

43 First, as already indicated, there was consensus between all groups on the Borough Council that there should be a reduction in council size. Second, both schemes proposed retaining the boundaries of four rural wards, and the boundaries of several of the other wards put forward in the borough-wide submissions were also broadly similar. Third, we noted the arguments put to us regarding the interests and identities of communities in the borough. We sought to reflect such considerations in our draft recommendations where it would be consistent with our objective of achieving reasonable levels of electoral equality.

44 We note that there was a consensus between all groups on the Borough Council regarding the Council's response to our draft recommendations at Stage Three. Furthermore, we note that our proposals for Rolleston on Dove ward have achieved a high degree of local support, while our proposed Weaver & Churnet ward has been opposed by a number of parish councils and residents.

45 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Burton upon Trent
 - Edgehill, Stapenhill, Waterside and Winshill wards;
 - Broadway, Burton and Uxbridge wards;

- Eton, Horninglow, Shobnall and Victoria wards;
- (b) Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards;
- (c) Branston, Needwood and Outwoods wards;
- (d) Crown, Tutbury & Hanbury and Yoxall wards;
- (e) Heath and Town wards (in Uttoxeter);
- (f) Abbey, Bagots, Churnet and Weaver wards.

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

Burton upon Trent (11 wards)

59 Burton upon Trent comprises just over half of the borough's total electorate and is intersected by the River Trent, the Birmingham to Derby railway line and the A38 trunk road. At present, the town contains no parishes, and is represented by 11 borough wards, seven of which have an electoral imbalance of more than 10 per cent from the borough average.

60 The Borough Council has recently undertaken a review of the town, under the Local Government & Rating Act 1997, with a view to creating parish councils. It stated that it intends to "recommence" the parishing of Burton upon Trent, following the completion of the periodic electoral review, so that the boundaries of the new parishes in Burton upon Trent will reflect the revised borough wards. The Borough Council also propose to "reconcile any boundary discrepancies with adjoining parish areas" following the completion of the periodic electoral review.

Edgehill, Stapenhill, Waterside and Winshill wards

61 Edgehill, Stapenhill, Waterside and Winshill wards are situated in the east of Burton upon Trent, and are bounded to the west by the River Trent and to the east by the county boundary with Derbyshire. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Edgehill, Waterside and Winshill wards varies by 18 per cent, 12 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Stapenhill ward varies by 58 per cent more than the average. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to marginally deteriorate over the next five years. Edgehill, Stapenhill and Waterside wards are each represented by two councillors, while Winshill ward is represented by three councillors, under a 46-member council.

62 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Edgehill and Waterside wards should be combined with the part of Stapenhill ward to the south-west of Spring Terrace Road, to form a revised Stapenhill ward. It also proposed a new Brizlincote ward comprising the rest of the existing Stapenhill ward, less the area north of Stapenhill Cemetery and Tower Woods, which it proposed should be included in an expanded Winshill ward. Stapenhill and Winshill wards would each be represented by three councillors, while Brizlincote would be represented by two councillors.

63 Under the Borough Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Brizlincote, Stapenhill and Winshill wards would vary by 6 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 4 per cent and 1 per cent by 2004).

64 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed that the parts of Edgehill and Waterside wards to the south of Heath Road and Saxon Street should be combined to form a new Waterside & Edgehill ward. They suggested that the northern parts of these wards should be combined with the part of Stapenhill ward to the south of Scalpcliff Hill, and to the west of Derwent Road and Redwood Drive, to form a revised Stapenhill ward. They proposed that the rest of the existing Stapenhill ward should be combined with the part of Winshill ward that includes Bearwood Hill Road and Eldon Street, while Winshill's ward boundaries should be substantially retained. All four wards would each be represented by two councillors.

65 Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal, the number of electors per councillors in Brizlincote ward would vary by 1 per cent fewer than the borough average, while the number of electors per councillors in Stapenhill, Waterside & Edgehill and Winshill would vary by 9 per cent, 7 per cent and 3 per cent more than the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve further over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in all four wards projected to vary by no more than 4 per cent from the average by 2004, under a council size of 41.

66 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that both proposals would retain the River Trent as a ward boundary. We agreed that the river in this area provides a clear boundary and should be utilised as a ward boundary. However, while both proposals would provide much improved levels of electoral equality, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and would utilise stronger and more easily identifiable boundaries. We therefore endorsed the Borough Council's proposals as our draft recommendations, without modification.

67 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for this area and we received no further representations. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Brizlincote, Stapenhill and Winshill wards would vary by 6 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more and 2 per cent more than the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 4 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively by 2004). Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Broadway, Burton and Uxbridge wards

68 Broadway, Burton and Uxbridge wards are situated in the centre of Burton upon Trent, and are bounded to the east by the River Trent and to the west by the Birmingham to Derby railway line. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Broadway, Burton and Uxbridge wards varies by 16 per cent, 33 per cent and 44 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively. Broadway and Uxbridge wards are each represented by two councillors, while Burton ward is represented by one councillor.

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that all three wards should be combined to form a new three-member Burton ward. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor in Burton ward would vary by 2 per cent from the average. This level of electoral equality is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

70 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed that a revised Burton ward should include parts of Broadway and Uxbridge wards, together with the whole of the existing Burton ward. They proposed that a new Anglesey ward should comprise the rest of Broadway and Uxbridge wards, with Evershed Way, Wood Street and Watson Street forming the boundary between the two new wards. Burton ward would be represented by one councillor, while Anglesey ward would be represented by two councillors.

71 Under their proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey and Burton wards would vary by 12 per cent and 14 per cent from the borough average respectively, under a council size of 41. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to improve significantly over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in both wards projected to vary by no more than 5 per cent from the average.

72 In our draft recommendations report we noted that both proposals would result in good levels of electoral equality, under a council size of 39, and had merit. However, we considered that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, as it would provide separate representation for electors to the south of the town centre. We considered that the Borough Council's proposed Burton ward would contain a number of diverse communities, and would not reflect community ties as well as the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal. We therefore adopted the latter proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

73 Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey and Burton wards would vary by 6 per cent more and 18 per cent fewer than the average respectively. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to improve over the next five years as a result of residential development. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey ward would be equal to the average, while the number of electors per councillor in Burton ward would vary by 3 per cent fewer than the average for the borough.

74 At Stage Three the Borough Council broadly supported our proposed Anglesey and Burton wards, but suggested that the boundary between these two wards should follow the A5189 St Peter's Bridge and Orchard Street. Under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey and Burton wards would vary by 10 per cent more than the average and 25 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey and Burton wards is projected to vary by 4 per cent more and 10 per cent fewer than the average respectively.

75 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that while the Borough Council's suggested modification to our proposed Anglesey and Burton wards would utilise a strong and easily identifiable boundary, it would result in a relatively high degree of electoral imbalance in both wards. We have not been persuaded that this degree of electoral imbalance

would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We consider that our proposal to utilise Evershed Way, Wood Street and Watson Street would provide an easily identifiable ward boundary between Anglesey and Burton wards, while achieving better electoral equality. We therefore propose endorsing our draft recommendations for this area as final.

76 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey and Burton wards would vary by 6 per cent more than the borough average, and 18 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Anglesey ward would be equal to the average, while the number of electors per councillor in Burton ward would vary by 3 per cent from the average for the borough. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Eton, Horninglow, Shobnall and Victoria wards

77 Eton, Horninglow, Shobnall and Victoria wards are located in the west of Burton upon Trent and contain a combination of residential and employment areas. Under current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Eton, Horninglow, Shobnall and Victoria wards varies by 20 per cent, 9 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively (21 per cent, 14 per cent, 6 per cent and 11 per cent fewer than the average by 2004).

78 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that Victoria ward should be divided between adjoining wards. It proposed that Shobnall ward's northern boundary should follow Victoria Road, Dallow Street, the A38 and the southern edge of Outwoods Park, with Shobnall ward's remaining boundaries being retained. It proposed that a new Eton Park ward should utilise the Birmingham to Derby railway line and the A38 as ward boundaries, and include the part of Stretton parish to the south of James Brindley Way, and the part of Victoria ward to the north of Dallow Street.

79 It proposed that a revised Horninglow ward should include the majority of the existing ward together with all of Harper Avenue, part of which is situated in Stretton parish, the part of Victoria ward to the west of the A38, and the part of Shobnall ward centred on Queen's Hospital. It also suggested combining part of Horninglow ward with Stretton ward. Eton Park and Shobnall wards would each be represented by two councillors, while Horninglow ward would be represented by three councillors. The resulting Eton Park, Horninglow and Shobnall wards would have variances of no more than 11 per cent from the average now, and 8 per cent by 2004.

80 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats also suggested that parts of Victoria ward should be included in adjacent wards. Their proposed St Paul's ward was broadly similar to the Borough Council's proposed Shobnall ward, but utilised the A38 for the length of its western boundary, and also included the area bounded by Dallow Street and the A511 Horninglow Street. Their proposed Eton Park ward would include the existing Eton ward, together with part of Victoria ward and the area of Stretton parish bounded by the A38, the River Dove and the Birmingham to Derby railway line. They proposed that the section of Beech Lane to the east of the A38 should continue to be included in Stretton ward.

81 They also proposed that the existing Horninglow ward should be broadly retained. However, they suggested that Charnwood Road and contiguous roads should be included in a new Belvedere & Henhurst ward, which would also include the parts of Shobnall and Victoria wards to the west of the A38, together with Outwoods parish. All three wards would be represented by two councillors.

82 Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park ward would vary by 7 per cent fewer than the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Horninglow and St Paul's wards would vary by 8 per cent and 14 per cent more than the average respectively. By 2004, all three wards would have an electoral imbalance of no more than 8 per cent from the average.

83 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that both proposals would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. In addition, both schemes would divide Victoria ward, which we considered contains a number of separate communities, whose interests and identities would be better reflected under alternative electoral arrangements. We also noted that there was agreement that the Birmingham to Derby railway line and the A38 form strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

84 We decided to adopt the Borough Council's proposals in this area as part of our draft recommendations. We were persuaded that its proposals would provide better electoral arrangements in this area. We considered that the Borough Council's proposed Eton Park ward would achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality while including similar communities, whereas the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal would include a significant part of Stretton parish in Eton Park ward. We were not persuaded that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal would satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of electors in either Stretton parish or in their proposed Eton Park ward.

85 In addition, we considered that the Borough Council's proposed Horninglow ward would achieve the optimum balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered that its proposal to make minor modifications to the ward boundary between Horninglow and Stretton wards has merit, as the affected areas have no direct communication links with the existing wards in which they are currently included. Furthermore, while the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal would reflect Stretton's existing parish boundary in this area, we understood that, following our review, the Borough Council intends to review the boundaries of parishes adjoining Burton upon Trent to correct minor anomalies such as this, in the near future.

86 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillors in Eton Park and Horninglow wards would vary by 6 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the borough average respectively, while the number of electors per councillors in Shobnall ward would vary by 11 per cent more than the average. By 2004, all three wards are each projected to have an electoral variance of no more than than 8 per cent from the average.

87 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our proposed Eton Park, Horninglow and Shobnall wards. Stretton Parish Council supported our proposal to include part of Stretton ward in Horninglow ward, but objected to our proposal to include the part of Stretton ward to the south

of James Brindley Way in our proposed Eton Park ward, arguing that the area formed part of “Stretton’s undeveloped heritage”. Under Stretton Parish Council’s proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park and Stretton wards would vary by 16 per cent fewer than the average and 3 per cent more than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park ward is projected to vary by 17 per cent fewer than the average, while Stretton ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average.

88 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We have considered Stretton Parish Council’s proposal, but have not been persuaded that the resulting high level of electoral inequality is justified in this area. The part of Stretton parish to the south of James Brindley Way has strong communication links with the rest of the proposed Eton Park ward, and has a broadly similar character to the new development in the north of Burton upon Trent. We recognise that this area has historical links with Stretton parish and we do not consider that our proposed borough warding arrangements would diminish those links. While we are aware that the Borough Council intends to examine external parish boundaries, its proposals would be subject to consultation with local residents. We further note that there is no need to modify Stretton parish’s boundary with the Eton area of Burton upon Trent, as this area would be large enough to merit one parish councillor.

89 We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park, Horninglow and Shobnall wards would vary by 6 per cent, 1 per cent and 11 per cent respectively from the borough average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillors in Eton Park, Horninglow and Shobnall wards would vary by 3 per cent, 8 per cent and 5 per cent from the average. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards

90 Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards are both situated to the north of Burton upon Trent. They contain the parishes of Rolleston on Dove and Stretton respectively. Under current arrangements both wards have high levels of electoral inequality, with the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards varying by 27 per cent and 77 per cent from the borough average respectively, under a council of 46 members. Both wards are each represented by two councillors.

91 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed minor modifications to Stretton’s ward boundaries with wards in Burton upon Trent, as detailed previously. It proposed that the rest of Stretton parish should form a revised Stretton ward, to be represented by three councillors, one more than at present. It proposed that the part of Rolleston on Dove ward to the west of Rolleston on Dove village, including Anslow Lane and the east side of Knowles Hill and the adjacent rural area, should be included in a revised Outwoods ward to improve electoral equality in both wards. Rolleston on Dove ward would be represented by one councillor (one fewer than at present).

92 Under the Borough Council’s proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston on Dove ward would vary by 16 per cent more than the borough average, while the number of

electors per councillor in Stretton ward would vary by 4 per cent fewer than the average. Over the next five years, this level of electoral imbalance is projected to be largely unchanged.

93 In their Stage One scheme, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Stretton ward which would include the majority of Stretton parish, less the area bounded by the A38 and the River Dove which they proposed should form part of a new Eton Park ward. They also argued that the “new development” bounded by Beacon Road and Bitham Lane, together with an area including the east side of Tutbury Road and part of Britannia Drive, should be transferred from Stretton ward to a new Rolleston ward, which would also include Rolleston on Dove parish. Both wards would each be represented by two councillors, under a 41-member council.

94 Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats’ proposal the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston and Stretton wards would each vary by 6 per cent more than the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston and Stretton wards is projected to vary by 5 per cent and 4 per cent from the average respectively.

95 We received a further 50 representations in relation to this area. Rolleston on Dove Parish Council, a borough councillor, Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association, Anslow Lane Residents’ Association, Rolleston Civic Trust, Rolleston on Dove Allotment Society and 44 local residents objected to the Borough Council’s proposal to divide Rolleston on Dove parish between two borough wards. Rolleston on Dove Parish Council and a borough councillor argued that the current ward should be retained, and could be represented by one councillor (instead of two as at present).

96 In our draft recommendations report we considered the Borough Council’s proposed Stretton ward would achieve an optimum balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we noted that its proposed Stretton ward would include Knightsbridge Way and adjoining roads, which can only be accessed from Stretton ward, while it would unite Harper Avenue in Horninglow ward. We were also aware that the Borough Council intends to review the boundaries of parishes adjoining Burton upon Trent to correct minor anomalies such as this.

97 We considered the alternative proposals for Rolleston on Dove ward, and noted that neither of the borough-wide proposals achieved a high degree of local support in this area. We therefore considered alternative warding arrangements. We noted that there is broad agreement among the majority of respondents that Rolleston on Dove parish should be wholly contained in a single borough ward, and we concurred with this view. We considered that Rolleston on Dove is a distinct and separate community on the edge of the borough, and that it appeared to have little in common with surrounding areas. Under a council size of 39, Rolleston on Dove parish would merit 1.2 councillors in both 1999 and 2004.

98 In the light of the evidence put forward at Stage One, and after visiting the area, we came to the view that Rolleston on Dove parish should continue to be coterminous with the boundary of Rolleston on Dove ward, and that this ward should be represented by one councillor, one less than at present. While this proposal would result in a high degree of electoral imbalance, with the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston on Dove ward varying by 24 per cent more than

the average, we noted that maintaining the current ward, albeit with a degree of under-representation, had a measure of local support. We considered that it would achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the alternative proposals, and therefore adopted it as part of our draft recommendation. However, given the resulting high level of electoral imbalance, we invited alternative proposals at Stage Three from local people that would secure equality of representation, while also reflecting the interests and identities of communities.

99 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards would vary by 24 per cent more than the average and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillors in Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards would vary by 25 per cent more than the average and 3 per cent fewer than the average respectively.

100 At Stage Three the Borough Council, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Rolleston on Dove Parish Council, Councillor Trelinski, Anslow Lane Residents' Association, Rolleston Civic Trust and 35 local residents all supported our proposal to retain Rolleston on Dove as a separate borough ward. A number of residents noted that our draft recommendations would result in a relatively high degree of electoral imbalance for Rolleston on Dove, but indicated that this was preferable to the alternative proposal to divide Rolleston on Dove between two wards. In addition, a number of residents stated that they had considered alternative warding arrangements that would provide lower levels of electoral imbalances, but were unable to improve upon our proposals.

101 As detailed previously, Stretton Parish Council supported our proposal to include part of Stretton ward in Horninglow ward. However, they opposed our draft recommendation to include the part of Stretton ward to the south of James Brindley Way in the proposed Eton Park ward. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park and Stretton wards would vary by 16 per cent fewer than the average and 3 per cent more than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Eton Park ward is projected to vary by 17 per cent fewer than the average, while Stretton ward would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average.

102 We have carefully considered the representations received, and we note that our draft recommendation for Rolleston on Dove ward has achieved a high degree of local support. In the light of this support, and in view of the evidence put forward during the consultation periods, we are satisfied that our proposed Rolleston on Dove ward would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or alternative proposals. We therefore confirm Rolleston on Dove ward as part of our final recommendations.

103 We have also considered Stretton Parish Council's concerns regarding the inclusion of part of Stretton ward in the proposed Eton Park ward. However, as detailed previously, we have not been persuaded that the high degree of electoral imbalance under Stretton Parish Council's proposal is merited in this area. The part of Stretton parish to the south of James Brindley Way is linked to the rest of the proposed Eton Park ward by the A38 Derby Road, and contains similar

residential and commercial properties to those in the northern part of the proposed Eton Park ward. We are therefore content to confirm our proposed Stretton ward as final.

104 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards would vary by 24 per cent more than the average and 4 per cent fewer than the average respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillors in Rolleston on Dove and Stretton wards would vary by 25 per cent more than the average and 3 per cent fewer than the average respectively. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Branston, Needwood and Outwoods wards

105 Branston, Needwood and Outwoods wards are all adjacent to Burton upon Trent. Branston ward comprises the parishes of Branston and Tatenhill; Needwood ward contains the parishes of Barton-under-Needwood, Dunstall and Wychnor; while Outwoods ward contains the parishes of Anslow and Outwoods.

106 Under current arrangements for a 46-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Branston, Needwood and Outwoods wards varies by 43 per cent, 14 per cent and 40 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral inequality is projected to remain largely unchanged in Needwood and Outwoods wards over the next five years, but is expected to significantly deteriorate in Branston ward as a result of housing development. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Branston ward is projected to vary by 77 per cent more than the average.

107 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Forest Road and Henhurst Hill in Outwoods parish should be included in a revised Branston ward, with the rest of Outwoods parish being combined with Anslow parish, the rural part of Tutbury parish less the area to the west of Redhill Lane, and the western part of Rolleston on Dove ward, to form a revised Outwoods ward. It also suggested that Branston ward should comprise Branston parish together with part of Outwoods parish as detailed above, while Tatenhill parish should be combined with the parishes of Barton-under-Needwood, Dunstall and Wychnor to form a revised Needwood ward. Under the Borough Council's proposals Branston ward would be represented by three councillors, Needwood ward represented by two councillors and Outwoods by one councillor.

108 Under the Borough Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Branston and Outwoods wards would vary by 22 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Needwood ward would vary by 10 per cent more than the average. The level of electoral equality in Outwoods and Needwood wards is projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years. However, the level of electoral imbalance is expected to significantly improve in Branston ward, due to housing development, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by 4 per cent from the average by 2004.

109 In their Stage One submission, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed that part of Outwoods parish should be included in a new Belvedere & Henhurst ward as detailed previously, while Anslow parish and the rest of Outwoods parish would be combined with

Tutbury & Hanbury ward to form a new Tutbury Rural ward. They proposed that a revised Branston ward should be represented by three councillors and comprise Branston parish together with Tatenhill parish, less Rangemore village and the Henhurst Hill polling district. They also proposed that the existing Needwood ward should be retained, and represented by two councillors as at present.

110 Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Branston ward would vary by 30 per cent fewer than the average, while Needwood ward would vary by 2 per cent more than the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Branston and Needwood wards is projected to vary by 10 per cent and 2 per cent fewer than the average respectively.

111 Branston Parish Council argued that the existing Branston ward should be retained, while Tatenhill Parish Council proposed that the parish should form part of a rural ward and should not continue to form part of Branston ward. Outwoods Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposal to include Forest Road in a revised Branston ward.

112 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was no consensus over the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area. We noted that both borough-wide proposals would result in improved levels of electoral equality, particularly over the next five years. In our judgement, the Borough Council's proposed Branston ward would achieve the best possible electoral arrangements in this area. We noted that the proposed Branston ward would include the whole of the parish of Branston, while Tatenhill would be wholly represented in Needwood ward, and we considered that this proposal achieved a reasonable level of electoral equality while better reflecting the interests and identities of communities in this area. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal would result in a higher level of electoral inequality, while the parishes of Branston and Tatenhill would each be divided between two borough wards. We therefore endorsed the Borough Council's proposed Branston ward as our draft recommendation.

113 We also adopted the Borough Council's proposed Needwood ward, on the grounds that it appeared to achieve a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the existing electoral arrangements or the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal. However, we did not consider that the Borough Council's proposed Outwoods ward would achieve the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, as it would combine communities which have few links. Neither were we persuaded that the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal to combine parts of Outwoods parish with a ward in Burton upon Trent would provide better electoral arrangements, as indicated previously.

114 We therefore proposed alternative arrangements for this area. We proposed a new Tutbury & Outwoods ward comprising the parishes of Anslow and Tutbury, together with the part of Outwoods parish less Forest Road. We considered that this proposed ward would contain communities which share good communication links and common identities and interests. However, we stated that we would welcome further evidence from local people and groups during Stage Three.

115 Under our draft recommendations for a 39-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Branston, Needwood and Tutbury & Outwoods wards would vary by 22 per cent, 10 per cent and 3 per cent respectively from the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Branston, Needwood and Tutbury & Outwoods ward is projected to vary by 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 5 per cent from the average respectively.

116 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations in this area, while Anslow Parish Council supported our proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward, but suggested that the ward should include Anslow in its title. Outwoods Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to divide Outwoods between our proposed Branston and Tutbury & Outwoods wards, arguing that the Forest Road area has strong links with the rest of Outwoods parish, and that they do not share similar community ties with Branston parish. Under Outwoods Parish Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Branston and Tutbury & Outwoods wards would vary by 28 per cent fewer than the borough average and 13 per cent more than the average respectively. By 2004, the proposed Branston and Tutbury & Outwoods would be projected to have 10 per cent fewer and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the average respectively.

117 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our proposals in this area received a degree of local support. We have considered Outwoods Parish Council's proposal, but we have not been persuaded that such a high level of electoral inequality is justified in this area. Similarly, we are not persuaded by the evidence put forward in response to our draft recommendations that the inclusion of Forest Road in Branston ward would adversely affect the identities and interests of communities to a significant degree.

118 We have also considered Anslow Parish Council's proposal to include Anslow in the name of Tutbury & Outwoods ward. However, while we consider that there may be merit in this, in the absence of any further views, we have not been persuaded there is sufficient evidence to warrant renaming the proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward. We are therefore content to endorse our draft recommendations in this area as final without modification.

119 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Branston, Needwood and Tutbury & Outwoods wards would vary by 22 per cent, 10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively from the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Branston, Needwood and Tutbury & Outwoods wards is projected to vary by 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 5 per cent from the average respectively.

Crown, Tutbury & Hanbury and Yoxall wards

120 Crown ward comprises the parishes of Draycott in the Clay, Marchington and Newborough; Hanbury & Tutbury ward contains the parishes of Hanbury and Tutbury, and Yoxall ward comprises Hoar Cross and Yoxall parishes. Crown and Yoxall wards are each represented by one councillor, while Tutbury & Hanbury ward is represented by two councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Crown, Tutbury & Hanbury and Yoxall

wards varies by 15 per cent, 12 per cent and 4 per cent from the average respectively, under a council size of 46.

121 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that a revised Crown ward should include the parishes of Draycott in the Clay, Hanbury and Marchington, together with the part of Tutbury parish to the west of Redhill Lane. It proposed that Newborough parish should be transferred to a revised Yoxall ward. It also proposed that a new Tutbury ward should include the village of Tutbury itself, while the rural part of Tutbury parish less the area to the west of Redhill Lane would be included in a revised Outwoods ward.

122 Under the Borough Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Crown, Tutbury and Yoxall wards would vary by 5 per cent, 19 per cent and 2 per cent from the average respectively. Under its alternative proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Tutbury ward would vary by 11 per cent from the average. All three wards would each be represented by one councillor. The level of electoral equality under both proposals is expected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

123 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed that the current Crown ward should remain unchanged, and that Tutbury & Hanbury ward should be combined with Anslow parish and part of Outwood parish in a new Tutbury Rural ward. It also proposed that part of Tatenhill parish should be transferred to Yoxall ward. Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Crown, Tutbury Rural and Yoxall wards would vary by 2 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent from the average respectively.

124 Marchington Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposed Crown ward, while Outwoods Parish Council argued that Outwoods should continue to form part of a two-member ward. Tatenhill Parish Council suggested that Tatenhill should form part of a rural ward, while Tutbury Parish Council opposed the Borough Council's proposal to divide the parish between separate borough wards.

125 In our draft recommendations report we recognised that both borough-wide proposals for this area would provide an improved level of electoral equality. However, as indicated previously, we were not persuaded that either of the borough-wide proposals put forward for Tutbury parish would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

126 We therefore examined alternative electoral arrangements in this area. We proposed that a new Tutbury & Outwoods ward should comprise the parishes of Anslow and Tutbury, together with Outwoods parish, less Forest Road (which would be included in Branston ward as detailed previously). We considered that this proposal would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, as it would provide a significantly improved level of electoral equality while appearing to combine communities with similar identities and interests. We also proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposed Crown and Yoxall wards as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a minor modification to the boundary between Crown ward and Tutbury parish to utilise existing parish boundaries.

127 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Crown, Tutbury & Outwoods and Yoxall wards would vary by 2 per cent, 5 per cent and 2 per cent from the

borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years. Crown and Yoxall wards would each be represented by one councillor, while Tutbury & Outwoods ward would be represented by two councillors.

128 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for Crown, Tutbury & Outwoods and Yoxall wards. However, as detailed previously, Anslow Parish Council suggested that Anslow should be reflected in the name of our proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward, arguing that Anslow is a “distinctive community” with which residents identify. Outwoods Parish Council objected to our proposal to transfer Forest Road from the existing Outwoods ward to a revised Branston ward. Under Outwoods Parish Council’s proposal, Branston and Tutbury & Outwoods wards would each vary by more than 10 per cent both now and in 2004.

129 We have carefully considered the representations received, and note that our proposals for Crown and Yoxall wards have achieved a degree of local support, while we have received further comments in relation to our proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward. We have reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the views put forward at Stage Three, but have not been persuaded that Outwoods Parish Council’s proposal would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations, as indicated previously. We do not consider that such a high degree of electoral equality is merited in this area as Forest Road has good communication links with Branston parish and we continue to consider that our proposals would not adversely affect the representation of communities in this area. In addition, while we consider there is some merit in Anslow Parish Council’s proposal to include Anslow in the Tutbury & Outwoods ward name, in the light of only a limited response on this issue we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations. We have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final without modification.

130 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Crown, Tutbury & Outwoods and Yoxall wards would vary by 2 per cent, 5 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

Heath and Town wards (in Uttoxeter)

131 Heath and Town wards cover Uttoxeter town, and are represented by three and two councillors respectively. Under current arrangements, Heath and Town wards have 13 per cent fewer and 27 per cent more electors per councillor than the average. This is projected to deteriorate further by 2004 to 17 per cent fewer and 34 per cent more than the average respectively.

132 At Stage One the Borough Council argued that Uttoxeter town should be represented by two two-member wards. It proposed that the boundaries of Heath and Town wards should be largely retained, but that Harvey Place, Johnson Road and adjoining roads should be transferred from Town ward to Heath ward. Under the Borough Council’s proposal for a 39-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Heath and Town wards would vary by 14 per cent and 4 per cent more than the borough average respectively (and by 9 per cent and 10 per cent by 2004).

133 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats argued that Uttoxeter town should continue to be represented by five councillors. They proposed a revised two-member Heath ward including the part of Uttoxeter town to the north of Hawthornden Avenue, Holly Road and Johnson Road. Under their proposals a new single-member Highwood ward would include the part of town to the south of Wood Lane and the Birmingham to Derby railway line, less the Westlands Road area. They proposed that a revised two-member Town ward should include the rest of Uttoxeter town. Under the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats' proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Heath, Highwood and Town wards would vary by 4 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer and 20 per cent fewer than the average respectively (1 per cent fewer, equal to the average and 18 per cent fewer by 2004).

134 Uttoxeter Town Council also proposed that the town should continue to be represented by five councillors.

135 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there is little agreement regarding the level of growth in Uttoxeter, and therefore on the number of councillors and wards that should represent the town. As outlined above, we were content to adopt the Borough Council's projections and, on this basis and under a council size of 39, Uttoxeter town would merit 4.3 councillors in 1999 and 4.4 councillors in 2004. We therefore endorsed the Borough Council's proposal that Uttoxeter town should be represented by four councillors.

136 We considered that the Borough Council's proposal to substantially retain the boundary between Heath and Town wards had merit, as it is strong and clearly identifiable, utilising the Birmingham to Derby railway line and Holly Road. We considered that the transfer of the Johnson Road area from Town ward to Heath ward would improve electoral equality in both wards, while not having an adverse effect on the representation of the interests and identities of local communities. We therefore proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposed Heath and Town wards without modification.

137 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposed Heath and Town wards. We did not receive any further representations relating to Uttoxeter. Therefore, given the Borough Council's continued support and the lack of any alternative views, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations in Uttoxeter as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Heath and Town wards would vary 14 per cent and 4 per cent more than the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in Heath and Town wards expected to vary by 9 per cent and 10 per cent from the average respectively in 2004. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Abbey, Bagots, Churnet and Weaver wards

138 Abbey, Bagots, Churnet and Weaver wards are situated in the west of the borough and are predominantly rural. Abbey ward comprises the parishes of Croxden, Leigh and Uttoxeter Rural; while Bagots ward includes the parishes of Abbots Bromley, Blithfield and Kingstone; and Churnet ward contains Denstone and Rocester parishes. Weaver ward comprises the parishes of Ellastone, Mayfield, Okeover, Ramshorn, Stanton and Wootton. Under current arrangements for

a 46-member Council, the number of electors per councillor in Abbey, Bagots and Churnet wards varies by 26 per cent, 18 per cent and 15 per cent more than the average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Weaver ward varies by 3 per cent fewer than the average.

139 At Stage One the Borough Council and the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing Abbey, Bagots, Churnet and Weaver wards, arguing that this would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality in Abbey, Bagots and Churnet wards, while continuing to reflect their identities and interests. They argued that while Weaver ward would have a high degree of electoral imbalance, this was unavoidable as the ward is geographically isolated from the rest of the borough. They opposed enlarging Weaver ward by including an additional parish, arguing that the resulting ward would be too large for a single councillor to represent effectively, and that this would have a consequential impact on the levels of electoral equality in wards to its south. Under our proposed council size of 39, these proposals would result in Abbey ward having 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, Bagots ward having equal to the average number of electors per councillor, and Churnet and Weaver wards having 2 per cent and 18 per cent fewer than the average respectively. Each of the four wards would be represented by a single councillor.

140 In our draft recommendations report we noted that both borough-wide submissions agreed that the existing arrangements should continue in this area, and that the proposed Abbey, Bagots and Churnet wards would provide reasonable levels of electoral equality. We were content to endorse the proposals for Abbey and Bagots wards without modification.

141 However, we were concerned that under our proposed council size, Weaver ward would have a high degree of electoral imbalance and we therefore considered alternative electoral arrangements. We proposed combining the existing Churnet and Weaver wards to form a new Weaver & Churnet ward, to be represented by two councillors. We recognised that the proposed ward would cover a relatively large area, but noted that it would result in a much lower degree of electoral imbalance than the alternative proposal in this area. However, we stated that we would welcome further evidence from local residents and interested parties at Stage Three.

142 Under our draft recommendations, Abbey ward would have 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while our proposed Weaver & Churnet ward would have 10 per cent fewer than average. Bagots ward would have equal to the average number of electors per councillor. This level of electoral equality is projected to be largely unchanged over the next five years.

143 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposed Abbey and Bagots ward. However, the Borough Council, the parish councils of Denstone and Mayfield and two local resident reiterated the Borough Council's Stage One proposal to retain the existing Churnet and Weaver wards. One local resident argued that Churnet and Weaver wards are "quite different in character" and that our proposals would not provide effective and convenient local government for electors in this area. Under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Abbey, Churnet and Weaver wards would vary by 7 per cent, 2 per cent and 18 per cent from the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Bagots ward would be equal to the average. By 2004 Abbey, Bagots and Churnet wards would each be projected to vary by no more

than 3 per cent from the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Weaver ward would vary by 22 per cent fewer than the average.

144 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that, while our proposals for Abbey and Bagots ward has achieved a measure of local support, our proposed Weaver & Churnet ward has been opposed by several respondents. We consider that there is some merit in the proposal to retain the existing Churnet and Weaver wards but note that, under that a council size of 39, Weaver ward would have a high degree of electoral inequality. However, in the light of the evidence put forward during the consultation periods, we have been persuaded that this proposal would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations.

145 We are persuaded that Churnet and Weaver wards contain diverse communities. In particular, we note that Churnet ward is centred on an industrial area in the lowlands adjoining the rivers Dove and Churnet, and has strong links with Uttoxeter, while Weaver ward contains six relatively rural upland parishes. Furthermore, we note that the main centre of population in Weaver ward is Mayfield, which appears to have strong community ties with Ashbourne in Derbyshire. In addition, we note that the communication links between Churnet and Weaver wards are relatively poor. On balance, therefore, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to retaining the existing Churnet and Weaver wards.

146 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Abbey ward would vary by 7 per cent more than the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Churnet and Weaver wards would vary by 2 per cent and 18 per cent fewer than the average, and the number of electors per councillor in Bagots ward would be equal to the average. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Abbey, Bagots, and Weaver wards is projected to vary by 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 22 per cent from the borough average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Churnet ward would be equal to the average.

Electoral Cycle

147 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

148 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to electoral cycle. No other representations were received on this issue. We are therefore proposing to confirm our draft recommendation to retain the present electoral cycle of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- The existing Churnet and Weaver wards should be retained.

150 We conclude that, in East Staffordshire:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 46 to 39;
- there should be 21 wards, four fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, while five should retain their existing boundaries;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

151 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	46	39	46	39
Number of wards	25	21	25	21
Average number of electors per councillor	1,706	2,012	1,733	2,044
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	19	6	19	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	2	10	2

152 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 19 to six with the number of wards varying by more than 20 per cent from nine to two. By 2004 only two wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, with Rolleston on Dove and

Weaver wards both varying by more than 20 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

East Staffordshire Borough Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

153 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we put forward consequential warding arrangements for Uttoxeter town and the parishes of Outwoods and Stretton to reflect the proposed borough wards.

154 In our draft recommendations report we proposed modifying the boundary between Heath and Town wards in Uttoxeter town to reflect our proposed borough wards in the town. We also proposed that Town ward should be represented by eight councillors, one more than at present, as proposed by Uttoxeter Town Council.

155 In response to our consultation report, the Borough Council supported our proposal. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in this area, we confirm our draft recommendations for Uttoxeter town’s electoral arrangements as final.

Final Recommendation

Uttoxeter Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards. Heath ward would return eight town councillors, the same as at present, and Town ward would return eight councillors, one more than at present. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

156 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that Outwoods parish should be divided between two wards: Outwoods North and Outwoods South, to reflect our proposed borough warding in this area. Outwoods North parish ward would form part of our proposed Tutbury & Outwoods ward, while Outwoods South parish ward would form part of a revised Branston ward.

157 We received two submissions in response to our draft recommendations. The Borough Council supported our proposals, while Outwoods Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations to ward the parish. It argued that our proposal to include the proposed Outwoods South parish ward in a revised Branston borough ward would not reflect the interests and identities of communities.

158 Having considered the representations received, we note Outwoods Parish Council’s objections to our proposed borough warding arrangements in this area. However, as detailed previously, we have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations in this area, and therefore confirm our proposed parish warding arrangements without modification.

Final Recommendation
Outwoods Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards. Outwoods North ward would return eight parish councillors and Outwoods South ward would return three councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

159 Stretton parish is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded at present. In our draft recommendations, we proposed uniting Harper Avenue (together with contiguous roads) in the proposed Horninglow ward, as these roads cannot be accessed from Stretton parish. We proposed that this area should form a new Stretton South Central ward. In addition, we proposed including the area to the south of James Brindley Way in the proposed Eton Park ward, to provide an improved level of electoral equality. We proposed that this area should form a new Stretton South East ward. We suggested that the remainder of the parish should form a new Stretton ward of Stretton parish. In our draft recommendations report, we also noted that we understood that East Staffordshire Borough Council intends to undertake a parish review for Burton upon Trent and adjoining parishes, in order to “reconcile any boundary discrepancies”.

160 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations. Stretton Parish Council supported our proposed Stretton South Central parish ward, but objected to our proposed Stretton South East parish ward, arguing that the area was an integral part of Stretton parish.

161 In the light of Stretton Parish Council’s concerns we have given further consideration to our draft recommendations for this area. As indicated previously, the Borough Council intends to undertake a review of parish electoral arrangements in and around Burton upon Trent to establish parish councils in Burton upon Trent and to correct minor boundary anomalies between Burton upon Trent and adjoining parishes. However, any changes to parish boundaries would be subject to local consultation, and we do not consider that this review would necessarily affect the parish boundary in the area to the south of James Brindley Way. We also note our proposed Stretton South East parish ward is large enough to merit one parish councillor under the current parish council size. In view of our final recommendations to confirm our proposed borough wards in this area, we are confirming our proposed parish warding arrangements without modification.

Final Recommendation

Stretton Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards. Stretton ward would return nine parish councillors while Stretton South Central and Stretton South East wards would each return one parish councillor. The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

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

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for East Staffordshire

6 NEXT STEPS

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

164 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 21 November 2000.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for East Staffordshire: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Uttoxeter town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Burton upon Trent and adjoining areas.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for East Staffordshire: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Uttoxeter town

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for East Staffordshire

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of one ward where our draft proposal is set out below.

Figure B1: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Weaver & Churnet	Churnet ward (the parishes of Denstone and Rocester); Weaver ward (the parishes of Ellastone, Mayfield, Okeover, Ramshorn, Stanton and Wootton)

Figure B2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Weaver & Churnet	2	3,621	1,811	-10%	3,643	1,822	-11%

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Staffordshire 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.

