

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
South Bucks in Buckinghamshire

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the parishes of Denham and Gerrards Cross is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for South Bucks on 5 September 2000.

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

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

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

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 70–71) are that:

- **South Bucks District Council should have 40 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, instead of 19 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In all of the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue with the number of electors per councillor in 17 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross and Iver.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 8 May 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 2 July 2001:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Beaconsfield North	3	Beaconsfield North ward (the Beaconsfield North parish ward of Beaconsfield parish); Beaconsfield West (part – the Beaconsfield West parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part))	Map 2 and Map A2
2	Beaconsfield South	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the Beaconsfield parish ward of Beaconsfield parish)	Map 2 and Map A2
3	Beaconsfield West	2	Beaconsfield West ward (part – the Beaconsfield West parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part))	Map 2 and Map A2
4	Burnham Beeches	1	Burnham Beeches ward (part – the Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
5	Burnham Church	3	Burnham Beeches ward (part – the Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Church ward (part – the Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Lent Rise (part – the Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
6	Burnham Lent Rise	3	Burnham Church ward (part – the Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – the Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part))	Map 2 and Map A4
7	Denham North	2	Denham North ward (part – the Denham North parish ward of Denham parish (part))	Map 2 and large map
8	Denham South	2	Denham North ward (part – the Denham North parish ward of Denham parish (part)); Denham South ward (part – the Denham South parish ward of Denham parish (part))	Map 2 and large map
9	Dorney & Burnham South	1	Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – the Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Dorney ward (the parish of Dorney)	Map 2 and Map A4
10	Farnham Royal	3	Farnham Royal ward (part – the proposed Farnham Royal North parish ward of Farnham Royal parish)	Map 2 and Map A5
11	Gerrards Cross North	2	Gerrards Cross North ward (part – the Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part))	Map 2 and large map
12	Gerrards Cross South	3	Denham South ward (part – the proposed Denham South West parish ward of Denham parish); Gerrards Cross North ward (part – the Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part)); Gerrards Cross South ward (Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish)	Map 2 and large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
13	Hedgerley & Fulmer	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer)	Map 2
14	Iver Heath	3	Iver Heath ward (part – the Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish (part)); Iver Village ward (part – the Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish (part))	Map 2, Maps A6 Map A7
15	Iver Village & Richings Park	3	Iver Richings Park ward (the Iver Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish); Iver Village ward (part – the proposed Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish)	Map 2, Maps A6 Map A7
16	Stoke Poges	3	Farnham Royal ward (part – the proposed Farnham Royal South parish ward of Farnham Royal parish); Stoke Poges ward (the parish of Stoke Poges)	Map 2 and Map A5
17	Taplow	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Taplow)	Map 2
18	Wexham & Iver West	2	Iver Heath ward (part – the Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish (part)); Iver Village ward (part – the Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish (part)); Wexham ward (the parish of Wexham)	Map 2 and Map A6

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

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 Draft Recommendations for South Bucks

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Beaconsfield North	3	3,540	1,180	-3	3,609	1,203	-2
2 Beaconsfield South	2	2,404	1,202	-1	2,505	1,253	2
3 Beaconsfield West	2	2,316	1,158	-4	2,378	1,189	-3
4 Burnham Beeches	1	1,218	1,218	1	1,228	1,228	0
5 Burnham Church	3	3,524	1,175	-3	3,554	1,185	-3
6 Burnham Lent Rise	3	3,484	1,161	-4	3,648	1,216	-1
7 Denham North	2	2,407	1,204	-1	2,411	1,206	-2
8 Denham South	2	2,658	1,329	10	2,647	1,324	9
9 Dorney & Burnham South	1	1,173	1,173	-3	1,167	1,167	-5
10 Farnham Royal	3	4,005	1,335	10	4,019	1,340	9
11 Gerrards Cross North	2	2,400	1,200	-1	2,416	1,208	-1
12 Gerrards Cross South	3	3,551	1,184	-2	3,601	1,200	-2
13 Hedgerley & Fulmer	1	1,092	1,092	-10	1,087	1,087	-11
14 Iver Heath	3	3,467	1,156	-5	3,501	1,167	-5
15 Iver Village & Richings Park	3	3,762	1,254	3	3,756	1,252	2
16 Stoke Poges	3	3,876	1,292	7	3,866	1,289	5
17 Taplow	1	1,273	1,273	5	1,269	1,269	4
18 Wexham & Iver West	2	2,314	1,157	-5	2,319	1,160	-5
Totals	40	48,464	-	-	48,981	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,212	-	-	1,225	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on South Bucks District Council's submission.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of South Bucks in Buckinghamshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the four districts in Buckinghamshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of South Bucks. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1979 (Report No. 366). The electoral arrangements of Buckinghamshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1982 (Report No. 438). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

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

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

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one, half of the district 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 wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 5 September 2000, when we wrote to South Bucks District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, the local authority associations, Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review

further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 November 2000.

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

13 Stage Three began on 8 May 2001 and will end on 2 July 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 South Bucks district is bounded by Chiltern, Three Rivers and Wycombe districts to its north, by Slough to its south, by Windsor & Maidenhead to its west and by the Greater London boroughs to its east. The district is an area of the Thames Valley just to the south of the Chiltern Hills and boasts fine woodland, open countryside and attractive villages and settlements. The largest settlements are the town of Beaconsfield in the north-west of the district and Burnham parish in the south-west of the district. The district is entirely parished and contains 12 parishes.

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

17 The electorate of the district is 48,464 (February 2000). The Council presently has 40 members who are elected from 19 wards. Seven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and five are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

18 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in South Bucks district, with around 6 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,212 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,225 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 19 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, four wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Dorney ward where the councillor represents 51 per cent fewer electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in South Bucks

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Beaconsfield North	3	3,395	1,132	-7	3,465	1,155	-6
2 Beaconsfield South	2	2,404	1,202	-1	2,505	1,253	2
3 Beaconsfield West	2	2,461	1,231	2	2,522	1,261	3
4 Burnham Beeches	2	2,320	1,160	-4	2,318	1,159	-5
5 Burnham Church	2	2,433	1,217	0	2,479	1,240	1
6 Burnham Lent Rise	3	4,049	1,350	11	4,211	1,404	15
7 Denham North	3	2,842	947	-22	2,846	949	-23
8 Denham South	2	2,600	1,300	7	2,589	1,295	6
9 Dorney	1	597	597	-51	594	594	-51
10 Farnham Royal	3	4,288	1,429	18	4,302	1,434	17
11 Gerrards Cross North	2	2,400	1,200	-1	2,416	1,208	-1
12 Gerrards Cross South	3	3,174	1,058	-13	3,220	1,073	-12
13 Hedgerley & Fulmer	1	1,092	1,092	-10	1,087	1,087	-11
14 Iver Heath	3	3,589	1,196	-1	3,623	1,208	-1
15 Iver Richings Park	1	1,471	1,471	21	1,464	1,464	20
16 Iver Village	2	2,704	1,352	12	2,701	1,351	10
17 Stoke Poges	3	3,593	1,198	-1	3,583	1,194	-2
18 Taplow	1	1,273	1,273	5	1,269	1,269	4
19 Wexham	1	1,779	1,779	47	1,787	1,787	46
Totals	40	48,464	-	-	48,981	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,212	-	-	1,225	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Bucks District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Dorney ward were relatively over-represented by 51 per cent, while electors in Wexham ward were relatively under-represented by 47 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received ten representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council and Councillors Rigby and Cooper, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

South Bucks District Council

22 The District Council proposed a council of 36 members, 4 fewer than at present, serving 15 wards, compared to the existing 19. It proposed a mix of single and multi-member wards throughout the district, with Beaconsfield represented by two three-member wards.

23 The Council argued that its scheme respected community identity and that “where proposed district wards cross parish boundaries they do so in a manner which seeks, wherever possible, to put together communities of similar character”. The District Council’s proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality with no ward varying by more than 7 per cent initially and by no more than 9 per cent in 2005. The Council’s proposal is summarised in Appendix B.

Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper

24 Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed a council size of 40, the same as at present, serving 19 wards, also the same as at present. Their proposals were supported by a further seven district councillors. They proposed a combination of single and multi-member wards and that the urban area of Beaconsfield be split between one three-member and two two-member wards. Under their scheme only one ward, Hedgerley & Fulmer, would vary by more than 10 per cent from the district average by 2005. Councillors Rigby and Cooper’s proposals would result in Farnham parish being warded and divided between two district wards. Councillors Rigby and Cooper’s proposal is summarised in Appendix B.

Parish and Town Councils

25 We received representations from five parish and town councils. Beaconsfield Town Council and Denham, Hedgerley and Taplow parish councils all objected to the District Council’s proposals to reduce the number of district councillors, while Dorney and Taplow parish councils argued that the existing wards for these two parishes should be retained, with Dorney Parish Council contending that it should be viewed as a special case.

Other Representations

26 We received a further three representations from a local political party and two district councillors. Councillors Henry and Temple both supported the scheme put forward by Councillors Rigby and Cooper. Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association supported the District Council's proposals and objected to those of Councillors Rigby and Cooper.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

27 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for South Bucks 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”.

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

29 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

31 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 1.5 per cent from 48,464 to 49,226 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. However, on reconsideration the District Council revisited their forecast electorate. As a result the District Council resubmitted their forecast electorate based on a 0.5% reduction from its original projection across the district, based on the Buckinghamshire Local Population Survey. Its revised forecast projected an increase of some 1 per cent from 48,464 to 48,981 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

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

Council Size

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

34 South Bucks District Council presently has 40 members. The District Council proposed a council of 36 members, a reduction of four. It argued that its preferred political management arrangements option was for a Leader/Cabinet model and that under a 40-member council “it would be difficult to find a full and meaningful role for every Councillor”, while a council size as low as 33 would over-burden the councillors. It argued that a 10 per cent cut was reasonable and would allow “some leeway above the minimum necessary to operate whilst not building in spare capacity”. It argued further that a scheme based on 36 members would “provide as close to electoral equality as can be reasonably achieved”, that the district’s councillor:elector ratio would be brought more into line with other Buckinghamshire districts and that a 36-member scheme “provides the best way of addressing electoral imbalances, [takes into account] identities and interests of local communities and secures effective and convenient local government”.

35 Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper proposed a council size of 40 members, the same as at present. They argued that there was no substantive case for altering the present council size. They argued further that the Leader/Cabinet model of political management had only been agreed informally and such matters as number and size of committees had not been agreed, stating further that there is “no suggestion that there will be less for members to do”.

36 Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association supported the District Council’s proposals for a 36-member council, arguing that the scheme preserved community interests better than alternative 40-member proposals.

37 Beaconsfield Town Council objected to the District Council’s proposals and supported a 40-member scheme that would retain the status quo of three district wards, seven district councillors and 16 town councillors. Denham Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposals for a 36-member council, arguing that a case had not been made for a reduction in council size. Hedgerley Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposals, arguing that consensus had not been reached on a 36-member council. Councillor Temple also objected to the District Council’s proposals for a reduced council size.

38 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. Although we noted the Council’s proposal for a decrease in council size from 40 to 36, we did not consider that there was sufficient evidence to justify such a decrease. We were not convinced by the Council’s argumentation in relation to the new management structure as there appears to be no official adoption of a Leader/Cabinet style arrangement by the council. We did not consider that there was sufficient analysis of how the council would function under this structure. We have also noted that there appears to be wider support for the alternative proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper to maintain the current council size and a fair degree of opposition to the District Council’s proposal to reduce the council size to 36 members. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together

with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by the existing council size of 40 members.

Electoral Arrangements

39 We have given careful consideration to the views which we received at Stage One, and in particular the two district-wide schemes received from the District Council and Councillors Rigby and Cooper. We have noted the general lack of consensus between the two schemes across the district and also that despite good levels of electoral equality under a 36-member council, under a 40-member council the majority of the District Council’s proposals would achieve relatively high levels of electoral inequality, which we were not persuaded to adopt in the light of alternative options available. Therefore, we have based our draft proposals on the scheme submitted by Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper where we consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further, have a greater regard to local community identities and interests and utilise better boundaries, we have decided to move away from Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper’s proposals in three areas: Denham, Farnham and Gerrards Cross. Where possible we have respected and used parish boundaries. However, we have found that we are unable to allocate whole numbers of councillors to each separate area without a high degree of under or over-representation. Therefore, in the interests of electoral equality we have had to propose some warding arrangements which while not ideal, we consider to be the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards;
- (b) Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards;
- (c) Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards;
- (d) Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards.

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

Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards

41 These three wards are situated in the north-west of the district and make up the parish of Beaconsfield. Beaconsfield North ward is currently represented by three councillors while Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards are each represented by two councillors. Under the current arrangements Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards have, respectively, 7 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 3 per cent more in 2005).

42 The District Council proposed that the current Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards be combined to form a three-member Beaconsfield South ward. It also proposed a three-member Beaconsfield North ward based largely on its existing boundary. However, it proposed that a small area of the current Beaconsfield South ward, to the north of and including Candlemas Lane, be transferred to its proposed Beaconsfield North ward. It also proposed that the area to the north of Burgess Wood Road and to the east of Hamden Hill in the current Beaconsfield West ward also be transferred to its proposed Beaconsfield North ward. It argued that the “existing boundaries can be changed without any adverse affect on community identity”. Under a 36-member council its proposed Beaconsfield North and Beaconsfield South wards would have 2 per cent more and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more and 6 per cent more in 2005).

43 Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that under their 40-member scheme the current warding arrangements be maintained subject to a boundary amendment between the current Beaconsfield North and Beaconsfield West wards. It proposed that all the properties on Stratton Road and Gregories Road in the current Beaconsfield West ward, be transferred to its proposed Beaconsfield North ward. It argued that it was “logical that the whole of Gregories Road, should be united in the same ward”. Under a 40-member council its proposed Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards would have 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer in 2005).

44 Beaconsfield Town Council objected to the District Council’s proposals for the area, proposing that the current arrangements be maintained and supporting the alternative proposal for a 40-member council. Councillor Henry supported the proposals of Councillors Rigby and Cooper but stated that, should we accept the District Council’s proposals for a 36-member council, Beaconsfield should be split between three wards. He argued that Beaconsfield is “essentially, three villages in one town” and that these areas have “different characteristics, economic structures and types of resident”.

45 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. Given the support received for the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper at Stage One and also given that we are proposing a council size of 40 members, we are content to adopt Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper’s proposals for Beaconsfield in their entirety. We consider that their proposals provide for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we have been persuaded that they reflect the local communities within the area. We also consider that their boundary amendment between the current Beaconsfield North and Beaconsfield West wards, uniting the properties on Gregories Road within a single ward, would provide for a more identifiable boundary.

46 Under our proposal for a council of 40 members, our proposed Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West wards would have 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards

47 These five wards are situated in the south-west of the district. Burnham Lent Rise ward is represented by three councillors, and Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards are each represented by two councillors (the three wards comprise the parish of Burnham). Dorney ward (comprising the parish of the same name) and Taplow ward (comprising the parish of the same name) are each represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements, Burnham Beeches, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney and Taplow wards have 4 per cent fewer, equal to, 11 per cent more, 51 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 15 per cent more, 51 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more in 2005).

48 At Stage One the District Council proposed warding Taplow parish, and combining the current Burnham Beeches ward with the northern area of Taplow parish to form a two-member Burnham Beeches & Taplow North ward. It argued that both areas are predominantly rural but that “each [has] one main built-up part”. It proposed slightly modifying the boundary between the existing Burnham Church and Burnham Lent Rise wards in order to improve electoral equality in the area and it proposed that Dorney ward be combined with the southern part of the current Taplow ward to form a single-member Dorney & Taplow South ward. Under a 36-member council the District Council’s proposed Burnham Beeches & Taplow North, Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise and Dorney & Taplow South wards would have 3 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent more, equal to, equal to and 6 per cent fewer in 2005).

49 Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that the rural area of the current Burnham Beeches ward be combined with that part of the current Farnham Royal ward to the south of Kingsway and Victoria Road to form a two-member Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward. They also proposed that the southern part of the current Burnham Beeches ward be combined with the current Burnham Church ward to form a new three-member Burnham Church ward. They proposed that the boundary between the two wards run along the path to the south of Hitcham House Farm and then north along Lent Rise Road and Wymers Wood Road, to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Poyle Lane, Bowmans Close, Cheveley Gardens and Hazlehurst Lane and then south along Grove Road and east along Britwell Road as far as the district boundary. They proposed a modified three-member Burnham Lent Rise ward, with the northern boundary running to the south of Hitcham House Farm, to the north of Alice Lane, to the south of St Peters Close, along the centre of Lincolns Hatch Lane, south along Hogfair Lane and to the rear of the properties on Shenstone Drive. They proposed that the southern boundary run eastwards to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Bath Road as far as Lent Rise Road, to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Briar Close and along the centre of Conway Road as far as the district boundary. They also proposed that the area of Burnham parish to the south of its proposed Burnham Lent Rise ward be combined with Dorney parish to form a single-member Dorney & Burnham South ward and proposed that the current single-member Taplow ward be maintained on its current boundaries. They argued that combining the parishes of Dorney and Taplow in a district ward would result in Taplow parish being divided. They justified placing Dorney in a ward with the southern part of Burnham by stating that “Burnham South is mostly

rural, but with an urban area in its north. However, it cannot be said to dominate the ward, since it and Dorney would have roughly the same number of electors”.

50 Under a 40-member council, Councillors Rigby and Cooper’s proposed Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise, Dorney & Burnham South, Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches and Taplow wards would have 4 per cent more, 1 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 4 per cent more and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (4 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 3 per cent more and 4 per cent more in 2005).

51 Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association objected to Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper’s proposals combining Dorney parish with part of the current Burnham Lent Rise ward, arguing that it “buries a rural village in with an urban community” and proposed that Dorney parish be combined with Taplow parish, as they have similar characteristics. It also objected to Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper’s proposed Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward, arguing that it was an “unusual mixture of urban and rural”. Dorney Parish Council proposed that its parish and that of Taplow should “retain their own exclusive District Councillors”, arguing that both areas are entirely separate communities and that “democracy [would not be] better served by the imposition of a single councillor to cover these disparate areas”. It argued further that Dorney parish should be considered a “special case” and be retained on its existing boundaries. Taplow Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposal to divide it, and proposed that the current Taplow ward be maintained and that Dorney Parish be combined with part of Burnham parish. Councillor Temple argued that the parish of Taplow would be compromised by the District Council’s proposals while a local resident also objected to the District Council’s proposals for the parish of Taplow, arguing that the parish has “operated effectively as a single entity” and proposing that Dorney be combined with part of Burnham parish.

52 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that under a 40-member council the District Council’s proposals would result in an unacceptable level of electoral inequality. We are proposing to maintain Taplow ward on its current boundaries, in the light of the objections to splitting the parish of Taplow between two district wards. Under a 40-member scheme this ward already secures a good level of electoral equality. Given that the parish centres around the main street which runs through the centre of the parish, we consider that the statutory criteria would be better reflected by retaining the parish within a single ward, rather than by splitting the parish and combining the southern part of Taplow parish with Dorney parish. We note Dorney Parish Council’s proposal that it be considered a “special case” but note that Dorney ward has over 50 per cent fewer electors than the district average currently and do not consider that this level is justified in the light of the alternative proposals available that provide for improved levels of electoral equality. We are therefore proposing a single-member Dorney & Burnham South ward based on the proposals put forward by Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper. However, we propose amending their proposed boundary in order to better reflect community identity in the area by uniting Conway Road and Briar Close (which has access onto Lent Rise Road) within Burnham Lent Rise ward. Therefore, we propose that the boundary run eastwards behind the properties on Bath Road and to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Fern Drive, Rambler Close, Minton Rise, Hurstfield Drive and Huntercombe Close as far as the district boundary. We accept that our proposals link both rural and urban areas in the same

ward but consider that it would provide for an acceptable level of electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria. However, we would welcome alternative warding arrangements at Stage Three that provide equivalent levels of electoral equality.

53 In the north of Burnham parish we are basing our draft recommendations on our own proposals. We carefully considered Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward but do not consider that it best reflects community identity in the area as we consider that Farnham Royal parish is orientated north to south along Beaconsfield Road and is a self-contained community. Therefore, we propose a modified single-member Burnham Beeches ward comprising the majority of the current Burnham Beeches ward and part of the current Burnham Church ward. We propose that the boundary between our proposed Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards runs to the rear of the properties on Shenstone Drive and north along Hogfair Lane, to the rear of no.1 Green Lane, Green Lane Court and The Grange, to the north and to the rear of the properties on the western side of Green Lane, The Fairway and Hazlehurst Road, then west to the north of Cheveley Gardens, as we consider that the area to the east of this boundary is well connected to the rest of our proposed Burnham Beeches ward and already forms part of the existing ward. We then propose that the boundary runs to the north of the properties on the northern side of Poyle Lane and Bowmans Close as far as the district boundary, as we consider that these properties look towards our proposed Burnham Church ward. We also propose a modified three-member Burnham Church ward and a modified three-member Burnham Lent Rise ward. We propose that the boundary between the two wards runs east along the path to the south of Hitcham House Farm, south along Lent Rise Road and along the centre of Alice Lane, south along Opendale Road and then east along Stomp Road as far as the district boundary, as this would improve electoral equality, provide for an identifiable boundary and reflect the statutory criteria.

54 Under our draft proposals for a council of 40 members, our proposed Burnham Beeches ward (comprising the proposed Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish), Burnham Church ward (comprising the proposed Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish), Burnham Lent Rise ward (comprising the proposed Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish), Dorney & Burnham South ward (comprising Dorney parish and the proposed Burnham South parish ward of Burnham parish) and Taplow ward (comprising Taplow parish) would have 1 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (equal to, 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 4 per cent in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards

55 These five wards are situated in the north-east of the district. Denham North ward (comprising Denham North parish ward of Denham parish) and Gerrards Cross South ward (comprising Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish) are each represented by three councillors. Denham South ward (comprising Denham South parish ward of Denham parish) and Gerrards Cross North ward (comprising Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish) are each represented by two councillors. Hedgerley & Fulmer ward (comprising the

parishes of the same name) is represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements Denham North, Denham South, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South and Hedgerley & Fulmer wards have 22 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 13 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (23 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 12 per cent fewer and 11 per cent fewer respectively in 2005).

56 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward be combined with that part of the current Gerrards Cross South ward to the west of Fulmer Road to form a three-member Fulmer, Gerrards Cross South & Hedgerley ward, arguing that the areas were “mainly of a similar nature”. It also proposed that the current Gerrards Cross North ward be combined with that part of the current Gerrards Cross South ward to the east of Fulmer road to form a two-member Gerrards Cross North ward. It proposed that the current Denham North and Denham South wards be maintained on their existing boundaries, arguing that they provided a good level of electoral equality “whilst maintaining community identity better than other schemes”. Under a 36-member council the District Council’s proposed Fulmer, Gerrards Cross South & Hedgerley, Gerrards Cross North, Denham North and Denham South wards would have 1 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (equal to, 3 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2005).

57 Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward be maintained on its current boundaries. It argued that Hedgerley and Fulmer “have a great deal in common” and that they have “identities peculiar to them and distinct from their large neighbours”. They stated that, as both Denham and Gerrards Cross parishes merited four and a half councillors each, it seemed “sensible to arrange matters so that between them they elect nine councillors”. They proposed a revised two-member Gerrards Cross North ward to the north of Gallows Wood, to the east of Oxford Road and to the west of the A413. They also proposed a revised two-member Gerrards Cross South ward, proposing that its eastern boundary runs north along Fulmer Road, to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Fulmer Drive, to the rear of the properties on the eastern side of The Uplands, Cheyne Close, western side of Dukes Wood Avenue and to the northern side of Duke Lane. They proposed that the remainder of Gerrards Cross parish be combined with that part of the current Denham South ward to the south of the M40 and to the west of Southlands Road and Denham Avenue to form a two-member Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward arguing that the areas have a “good deal in common, as regards the types and density of housing”. They proposed that the remainder of the current Denham South ward be combined with the current Denham North ward to form a three-member Denham North ward. Under a 40-member council Councillors Rigby and Cooper’s proposed Hedgerley & Fulmer, Gerrards Cross North, Gerrards Cross South, Denham South & Gerrards Cross East and Denham North wards would have 10 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer, equal to and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (11 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005).

58 Beaconsfield Constituency Conservative Association argued that Councillor Rigby and Cooper’s proposed Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward combined areas that are “quite different and in fact quite separate”. Denham Parish Council stated that it would have “concerns about any alternative warding arrangement that had effects on the unity of the parish” and stated

that the current Hedgerley & Fulmer ward works well. Hedgerley Parish Council supported the proposals of Councillors Rigby and Cooper and objected to the District Council's proposals in the area, arguing that there are no direct links between the parish of Hedgerley and Gerrards Cross and that the voting electorate of the parish would be "swamped by the voting electorate of Gerrards Cross South". Councillor Temple also supported the proposals put forward by Councillors Rigby and Cooper.

59 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. We note the argumentation in support of maintaining Hedgerley & Fulmer ward on its current boundaries but also that it would have 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor by 2005. We have been convinced that combining the area with Gerrards Cross South ward would not best reflect community identity in the area, as these parishes are largely rural while Gerrards Cross South is much more urban and we are therefore content to endorse a single-member Hedgerley & Fulmer ward as part of our draft recommendations. We note that the District Council's proposals secure good levels of electoral equality, would maintain Denham North and Denham South wards on their current boundaries and provide identifiable boundaries in the rest of the area, but we also note that under a 40-member council size its proposals would lead to an unacceptable level of electoral equality in the area. We have also considered the proposals put forward by Councillors Rigby and Cooper for this area and although their proposals secure a good level of electoral equality we have not been persuaded that they best reflect community identity in the area. Therefore, we are putting forward our own proposals for the remainder of this north-eastern area.

60 Given that under a 40-member scheme Gerrards Cross and Denham would, between them, be entitled to 4.5 councillors each, we agree with Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper that these two areas should be allocated a total of nine councillors. However, given that each area warrants a half councillor, this means that part of Gerrards Cross would have to be placed in a ward with part of Denham. However, we have not been persuaded that the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper best reflect the statutory criteria and note that the south-east corner of their proposed Denham South & Gerrards Cross East ward is isolated from the rest of the ward. We propose modifying the current Denham North and Gerrards Cross North wards, creating a new two-member Denham South ward and combining the current Gerrards Cross South ward with the eastern part of the current Denham South ward in a new two-member ward. Our proposed two-member Gerrards Cross North ward would comprise the area to the east of Oxford Road, to the south of and including the properties on Morelands Drive and Beech Waye, to the west of the A413 and to the north of the railway line. We note that the current three-member Denham North ward has 22 per cent fewer electors than the district average and therefore we propose that it be represented by two councillors and that it be modified in order to secure a more acceptable level of electoral variance and to better reflect community identity in the area. We propose that its southern boundary runs east along the railway as far as Tilehouse Lane; we then propose that the boundary runs south, including all of the properties on Tilehouse Lane within our proposed Denham North ward. We also propose that the boundary runs north along North Orbital Road and then east along the railway line as far as the district boundary. We consider that this utilises easily identifiable boundaries, while linking areas that are well connected and share community interests. We propose that the area to the south of the railway line in the current Denham North ward, except for the properties on Tilehouse Lane, be transferred to our proposed two-member Denham South ward.

61 We propose splitting the current Denham South ward between our proposed Denham South and Gerrards Cross South wards in order to secure a good level of electoral equality in the area while having regard to the statutory criteria. We propose that the boundary between the two wards runs east along the M40 before heading north to the east of Field Road, north along Blacksmith's Lane and west along Oxford Road. We then propose that the boundary runs to the rear of the properties on Bakers Wood and to the north of the properties on Broken Gate Lane and then west as far as the parish boundary. We recognise that our proposed three-member Gerrards Cross South ward is not ideal and generally try to avoid combining rural and urban areas within the same ward wherever possible. However, we consider that the two rural areas to the east and west of Gerrards Cross share similar interests and should therefore be combined in a ward with the southern part of Gerrards Cross, in order to offer a reasonable level of electoral equality. We also considered adopting Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed two-member Gerrards Cross South ward while creating a single-member ward combining that part of Gerrards Cross parish to the south of our proposed Gerrards Cross North ward, with that part of Denham parish we propose combining in our Gerrards Cross South ward. However, we were not convinced that this best reflected the statutory criteria but would welcome further views at Stage Three.

62 Under our draft proposals for a council of 40 members, our proposed Denham North ward (comprising the proposed Denham North parish ward of Denham parish), Denham South ward (comprising the proposed Denham South parish ward of Denham parish), Gerrards Cross North ward (comprising the proposed Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish), Gerrards Cross South ward (comprising the proposed Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish and the proposed Denham South West ward of Denham parish) and Hedgerley & Fulmer ward (comprising the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer) would have 1 per cent fewer, 10 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (2 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 11 per cent fewer in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated in Map 2 and on the large map at the back of this report.

Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards

63 These six wards are situated in the south and south-east of the district. Farnham Royal ward (comprising the parish of the same name), Stoke Poges ward (comprising the parish of the same name) and Iver Heath ward (comprising Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish) are each represented by three councillors. Iver Village ward (comprising Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish) is represented by two councillors. Iver Richings Park ward (comprising Iver Richings Park parish ward) and Wexham ward (comprising the parish of the same name) are each represented by a single councillor. Under the current arrangements Farnham Royal, Iver Heath, Iver Richings Park, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Wexham wards have 18 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 21 per cent more, 12 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 47 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (17 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 20 per cent more, 10 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 46 per cent more in 2005).

64 At Stage One the District Council proposed that the current three-member Farnham Royal ward be maintained on its current boundaries, arguing that it provided for a good level of electoral

equality under a 36-member council whilst maintaining community identity. It proposed that the current Stoke Poges ward be combined with Wexham Street parish ward in a three-member Stoke Poges & Wexham Street ward, arguing that this would maintain community identity whilst providing for a good level of electoral equality. It proposed a new single-member Wexham ward comprising the existing Wexham George Green and Wexham Middle Green parish wards. It also proposed that Iver parish be split between two three-member wards, Iver Heath and Iver South wards. Under a 36-member council the District Council's proposed Farnham Royal, Stoke Poges & Wexham Street, Wexham, Iver Heath and Iver South wards would have 6 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently (5 per cent more, 1 per cent more, 9 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer in 2005).

65 Councillors Rigby and Cooper proposed that Farnham Royal parish be warded, with the boundary running east-west across the parish. They proposed that the area to the north of Kingsway and Victoria Road in Farnham Royal parish form a two-member Farnham Royal North ward and that the southern area of the parish be combined with the northern part of Burnham Beeches ward to form a two-member Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches ward (as described earlier). They argued that Farnham Royal parish is "commonly thought of as two communities" and that it merits more than its current allocation of three councillors. They proposed that Stoke Poges ward be maintained on its current boundaries, as it provides a reasonable level of electoral equality. They also proposed that the current Wexham ward be combined with the area to the south of and including Uxbridge Road, west of and including Wood Lane from the current Iver Heath ward and the area to the west of Wood Lane in the current Iver Village ward to form a two-member Wexham & Iver West ward. They argued that these proposals would not introduce a "different type of residential area" into its proposed ward. They proposed that the remaining area of Iver parish be split into three new wards, a three-member Iver Heath ward, a two-member Iver Village ward and a single-member Iver Richings Park ward. They proposed that the boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village wards runs along the path to the north of Brynaweton farm, along Love Green Lane, to the north of Coppins Lane and then along a track and path as far as the M25, along Palmer's Moor Lane and east as far as the district boundary. They proposed that the boundary between Iver Village and Iver Richings Park wards run largely along the railway line, and then south along the M25 as far as the district boundary. Under a 40-member council, Councillors Rigby and Cooper's proposed Farnham Royal North, Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches, Stoke Poges, Wexham & Iver West, Iver Heath, Iver Village and Iver Richings Park wards would have 1 per cent more, 4 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (1 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more and 5 per cent more in 2005).

66 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. We considered the proposals of Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper for warding Farnham Royal parish, and although they secure a good level of electoral equality we do not consider that they best reflect community identity in the area. We note that Farnham Royal parish is a compact community that focuses on Beaconsfield Road which runs north/south through the parish. We do not therefore, consider that those electors in the south of the parish would share community identity with electors in Burnham Beeches. However, we note that under a 40-member council Farnham Royal

parish would merit 3.5 councillors. We propose that an area to the south of and including the properties on Park Road and including Bishops Orchard be transferred to a three-member Stoke Poges ward from the current Farnham Royal ward. We consider that this area has links to Stoke Poges and it would avoid the necessity of combining a larger area of the parish with the current Burnham Beeches ward. We propose a new three-member Farnham Royal ward comprising the area to the north of Park Road and Bishops Orchard which would secure an acceptable level of electoral equality and keep the greater part of Farnham Royal parish within a single ward. We also propose endorsing Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed two-member Wexham & Iver West ward as it would secure a good level of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. In the remainder of Iver parish we propose adopting Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed three-member Iver Heath ward. However, we propose combining their proposed Iver Village and Iver Richings Park ward to form a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park ward as we consider that this would secure an improved level of electoral equality and would be less disruptive to the electorate.

67 Under our proposals for a council of 40 members, our proposed Farnham Royal ward (comprising the proposed Farnham Royal North parish ward of Farnham parish), Stoke Poges ward (comprising Stoke Poges parish and the proposed Farnham Royal South parish ward of Farnham Royal parish), Wexham & Iver West ward (comprising Wexham parish and the proposed Iver West parish ward of Iver parish), Iver Heath (comprising the proposed Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish) and Iver Village & Richings Parks ward (comprising the proposed Iver Village & Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish) would have 10 per cent more, 7 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average currently (9 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2005). Our proposals are illustrated on Map A2 and on maps A5, A6 and A7 in Appendix A.

Electoral Cycle

68 The District Council stated that there was little evidence that the current cycle of whole-council elections needed to be changed. We received no other comments regarding the electoral cycle. Therefore, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

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

- a council of 40 members should be retained;
- there should be 18 wards;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council every four years.

70 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- in Denham, Farnham and Gerrards Cross we propose basing our draft recommendations on our own proposals.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	40	40	40	40
Number of wards	19	18	19	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1,212	1,212	1,225	1,225
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	0	8	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	0	3	0

72 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for South Bucks District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from eight to none. By 2005 only one ward is forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation

South Bucks District Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 18 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

73 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Beaconsfield, Burnham, Denham, Farnham Royal, Gerrards Cross and Iver to reflect the proposed district wards.

74 Beaconsfield Town Council is currently served by 16 councillors representing three wards: Beaconsfield North, returning six councillors, and Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West, each returning five councillors. At Stage One Beaconsfield Town Council proposed that the current number of councillors be maintained.

75 We propose that in light of our proposed district warding arrangements Beaconsfield Town Council should continue to comprise three parish wards. However, we propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the proposed district wards of Beaconsfield North, Beaconsfield South and Beaconsfield West within the parish.

Draft Recommendation

Beaconsfield Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Beaconsfield North (returning six councillors), Beaconsfield South (returning five councillors) and Beaconsfield West (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

76 The parish of Burnham is currently served by 19 councillors representing three wards: Burnham Beeches, returning five councillors, Burnham Church, returning six councillors, and Burnham Lent Rise, returning eight councillors.

77 At Stage One we received no comments relating directly to the parish council arrangements of Burnham parish. We therefore propose that in the light of our proposed district warding arrangements Burnham parish should comprise four parish wards. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries of the remaining parish wards in order to correspond with those of the

district wards within the parish. We propose creating an additional Burnham South parish ward which would be included in the proposed Dorney & Burnham South district ward.

Draft Recommendation
Burnham Parish Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Burnham Beeches (returning three councillors), Burnham Church (returning seven councillors), Burnham Lent Rise (returning eight councillors) and Burnham South (returning a single councillor). The boundary between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

78 The parish of Denham is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Denham North, returning eight councillors, and Denham South, returning seven councillors.

79 At Stage One we received no proposals for change to the existing parish arrangements for Denham. However, at a district level, we propose combining part of Denham parish with our proposed Gerrards Cross South ward. We propose creating a new Denham South West parish ward which would incorporate that part of the existing Denham South parish ward that we propose including in the Gerrards Cross South district ward. We therefore recommend that Denham parish should be divided into three parish wards: Denham North (represented by seven parish councillors), Denham South (represented by seven parish councillors) and Denham South West (represented by a single councillor).

Draft Recommendation
Denham Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Denham North (returning seven councillors), Denham South (returning seven councillors) and Denham South West (returning a single councillor). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

80 The parish of Farnham Royal is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One we received no comments regarding the parish council arrangements for Farnham Royal parish. However, at a district level, we propose combining part of Farnham Royal parish with Stoke Poges parish to create an enlarged Stoke Poges district ward. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose that Farnham Royal parish should be divided into two parish wards: Farnham Royal North (represented by 10 parish councillors) and Farnham Royal South (represented by a single councillor).

Draft Recommendation

Farnham Royal Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Farnham Royal North (returning 10 councillors) and Farnham Royal South (returning one councillor). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A5 in Appendix A.

81 The parish of Gerrards Cross is currently served by 12 councillors representing two parish wards: Gerrards Cross North, returning five councillors, and Gerrards Cross South, returning seven councillors.

82 At Stage One we received no comments relating to the parish arrangements for Gerrards Cross parish. We propose that in light of our proposed district warding arrangements Gerrards Cross parish should continue to comprise two parish wards. However, we propose that the parish ward boundaries be modified to correspond with those of the district wards within the parish.

Draft Recommendation

Gerrards Cross Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Gerrards Cross North (returning five councillors) and Gerrards Cross South (returning seven councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

83 The parish of Iver is currently served by 14 councillors representing three parish wards: Iver Heath (returning six councillors), Iver Richings Park (returning three councillors) and Iver Village (returning five councillors).

84 At Stage One we received no comments relating to the parishing arrangements for Iver parish. As part of our district level proposals, we propose including part of Iver parish in our proposed Wexham & Iver West ward and propose creating a new Iver West parish ward for this area. We also propose combining Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's proposed Iver Richings Park and Iver Village wards in a three-member Iver Village & Richings Park district ward. Therefore, in order to reflect our draft recommendations, we propose that Iver parish should be divided into three parish wards: Iver Heath parish ward (represented by six parish councillors, Iver Village & Richings Park ward (represented by seven councillors) and Iver West parish ward (represented by a single councillor). We would welcome views on our proposals for the warding of Iver parish at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Iver Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Iver Heath (returning six councillors), Iver Village & Richings Park (returning seven councillors) and Iver West (returning one councillor). The boundary between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on maps A6 and A7 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

Parish and town council elections should continue to take place every four years and should be held at the same time as elections for the district ward of which they are part.

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

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for South Bucks

5 NEXT STEPS

87 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 2 July 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

88 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for South Bucks: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2–A7 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundaries for wards in Beaconsfield.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundaries between Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise and Dorney & Burnham South wards.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed parish warding arrangements for Farnham Royal parish.

Map A6 illustrates the revised parish warding arrangements for Iver parish.

Map A7 illustrates the proposed boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards.

The large map inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the parishes of Denham and Gerrards Cross.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for South Bucks: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed boundaries for wards in Beaconsfield

Map A3: Proposed boundary between Burnham Beeches and Burnham Church wards

Map A4: Proposed boundaries between Burnham Church, Burnham Lent Rise and Dorney & Burnham South wards

Map A5: Proposed parish warding arrangements for Farnham Royal parish

Map A6: Revised parish warding arrangements for Iver parish

Map A7: Proposed boundary between Iver Heath and Iver Village & Richings Park wards

APPENDIX B

South Bucks District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B1: South Bucks District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Beaconsfield North	Beaconsfield North ward (Beaconsfield North parish ward of Beaconsfield parish); Beaconsfield South ward (part – Beaconsfield South parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part)); Beaconsfield West ward (part – Beaconsfield West parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part))
Beaconsfield South	Beaconsfield South ward (part – Beaconsfield South parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part)); Beaconsfield West ward (part – Beaconsfield West parish ward of Beaconsfield parish (part))
Burnham Beeches & Taplow North	Burnham Beeches ward (part – Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Taplow ward (part – the parish of Taplow (part))
Burnham Church	Burnham Beeches ward (part – Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Church ward (part – Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part))
Burnham Lent Rise	Burnham Church ward (part – Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part))
Denham North	<i>Unchanged</i> (Denham North parish ward of Denham parish)
Denham South	<i>Unchanged</i> (Denham South parish ward of Denham parish)
Dorney & Taplow South	Dorney ward (the parish of Dorney); Taplow ward (part – the parish of Taplow (part))
Farnham Royal	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Farnham Royal)
Fulmer, Gerrards Cross South & Hedgerley	Gerrards Cross South ward (part – Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part)); Hedgerley & Fulmer ward (the parishes of Hedgerley and Fulmer)
Gerrards Cross North	Gerrards Cross North ward (Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish); Gerrards Cross South ward (part – Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part))
Iver Heath	Iver Heath ward (Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish); Iver Village ward (part – Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish (part))
Iver South	Iver Richings Park (Iver Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish); Iver Village ward (part – Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish (part))

Ward name	Constituent areas
Stoke Poges & Wexham Street	Stoke Poges ward (the parish of Stoke Poges); Wexham ward (part – Wexham Street parish ward of Wexham parish)
Wexham	Wexham ward (part – Wexham George Green and Wexham Middle Green parish wards of Wexham parish)

Figure B2: South Bucks District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Beaconsfield North	3	4,116	1,372	2	4,182	1,394	2
Beaconsfield South	3	4,144	1,381	3	4310	1,437	6
Burnham Beeches & Taplow North	2	2,766	1,383	3	2771	1,386	2
Burnham Lent Rise	3	3,942	1,314	-2	4,099	1,366	0
Burnham Church	2	2,667	1,334	-1	2,719	1,360	0
Denham North	2	2,842	1,421	6	2,846	1,423	5
Denham South	2	2,600	1,300	-3	2,589	1,295	-5
Dorney & Taplow South	1	1,297	1,297	-4	1,281	1,281	-6
Farnham Royal	3	4,288	1,429	6	4,302	1,434	5
Fulmer, Gerrards Cross South & Hedgerley	3	4,075	1,358	1	4,074	1,358	0
Gerrards Cross North	2	2,591	1,296	-4	2,649	1,325	-3
Iver Heath	3	3,874	1,291	-4	3,890	1,297	-5
Iver South	3	3,890	1,297	-4	3,898	1,299	-4
Stoke Poges & Wexham Street	3	4,122	1,374	2	4,126	1,375	1
Wexham	1	1,250	1,250	-7	1,244	1,244	-9

Source: Electorate figures are based on South Bucks District Council's submission.

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

Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B3: Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Burnham Church	Burnham Beeches ward (part – Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Church ward (part – Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part))
Burnham Lent Rise	Burnham Church ward (part – Burnham Church parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part))
Denham North	Denham North ward (Denham North parish ward of Denham parish); Denham South (part – Denham South parish ward of Denham parish (part))
Denham South & Gerrards Cross East	Denham South ward (part – Denham South parish ward of Denham parish (part)); Gerrards Cross North ward (part – Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part)); Gerrards Cross South ward (part – Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part))
Dorney & Burnham South	Burnham Lent Rise ward (part – Burnham Lent Rise parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Dorney ward (the parish of Dorney)
Farnham Royal North	Farnham Royal ward (the parish of Farnham (part))
Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches	Burnham Beeches ward (part – Burnham Beeches parish ward of Burnham parish (part)); Farnham Royal ward (the parish of Farnham (part))
Gerrards Cross North	Gerrards Cross North ward (part – Gerrards Cross North parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part))
Gerrards Cross South	Gerrards Cross South ward (part – Gerrards Cross South parish ward of Gerrards Cross parish (part))
Iver Heath	Iver Heath ward (part – Iver Heath parish ward of Iver parish (part)); Iver Village ward (part – Iver Village parish ward of Iver ward (part))
Iver Richings Park	Iver Richings Park ward (part – Iver Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish (part))
Iver Village	Iver Richings Park ward (part – Iver Richings Park parish ward of Iver parish (part)); Iver Village ward (part – Iver Village parish ward of Iver parish (part))
Stoke Poges	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Stoke Poges)

Figure B4: Councillor Rigby and Councillor Cooper's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Burnham Church	3	3,794	1,265	4	3,833	1,278	4
Burnham Lent Rise	3	3,658	1,219	1	3,822	1,274	4
Denham North	3	3,873	1,291	7	3,872	1,291	5
Denham South & Gerrards Cross East	2	2,414	1,207	0	2,404	1,202	-2
Dorney & Burnham South	1	1,273	1,273	5	1,267	1,267	3
Farnham Royal North	2	2,445	1,223	1	2,469	1,235	1
Farnham Royal South & Burnham Beeches	2	2,517	1,259	4	2,514	1,257	3
Gerrards Cross North	2	2,345	1,173	-3	2,361	1,181	-4
Gerrards Cross South	2	2,384	1,192	-2	2,434	1,217	-1
Iver Heath	3	3,467	1,156	-5	3,501	1,167	-5
Iver Richings Park	1	1,283	1,283	6	1,281	1,281	5
Iver Village	2	2,479	1,240	2	2,475	1,238	1
Stoke Poges	3	3,593	1,198	-1	3,583	1,194	-2

Source: Electorate figures are based on South Bucks District Council's submission.

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

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

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

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

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

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

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

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

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

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

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

APPENDIX D

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 Code of Practice on Written Consultation, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code. The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table D1: Commission compliance with Code criteria

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