

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Charnwood in Leicestershire

January 2002

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Loughborough is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE 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 on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

With effect from 1 April 2002, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Charnwood's electoral arrangements on 12 June 2001.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Charnwood:

- **In 19 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and 11 wards vary by more than 20 per cent.**
- **by 2006 this situation is not expected to improve dramatically, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 15 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 11 wards.**

Our main proposals for Charnwood's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 74–75) are that:

- **Charnwood Borough Council should have 52 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards instead of 29 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 22 of the proposed 28 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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 Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Rothley, Mountsorrel, Syston and Sileby.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 15 January 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, subject to Parliamentary approval, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 11 March 2002:

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Charnwood Review
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Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

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E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Anstey	2	The parish of Anstey
2	Ashby	2	Part of Ashby ward; part of Garendon ward
3	Barrow & Sileby West	2	The parish of Barrow-upon-Soar; part of Sileby parish (the proposed Sileby West parish ward)
4	Birstall Wanlip	2	Birstall Goscote ward; Birstall Greengate ward; the parish of Wanlip
5	Birstall Watermead	2	Birstall Netherall ward; Birstall Riverside parish ward; Birstall Stonehill ward
6	East Goscote	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of East Goscote
7	Forest Bradgate	1	The parishes of Newtown Linford, Ulverscroft and Woodhouse
8	Forest Latimer	2	The parishes of Swithland and Thurcaston & Cropston; part of Rothley parish (the proposed Rothley South parish ward)
9	Garendon	2	Part of Ashby ward; part of Garendon ward
10	Hastings	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – Hastings ward
11	Hathern & Dishley	2	The parish of Hathern and an unparished part of Loughborough
12	Lemyngton	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – Lemyngton ward
13	Mountsorrel	2	Part of Mountsorrel parish (the proposed Mountsorrel parish ward)
14	Nanpantan	2	Part of Nanpantan ward; part of Ashby ward
15	Outwoods	2	Part of Outwoods ward; part of Southfields ward; part of Woodthorpe ward
16	Queniborough	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Barkby, Barkby Thorpe, Beeby, Queniborough and South Croxton
17	Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle	2	The parish of Quorn; part of Mountsorrel parish (the proposed Mountsorrel Castle parish ward)
18	Shelthorpe	2	Part of Outwoods ward; part of Woodthorpe ward
19	Shepshed East	2	Part of Shepshed parish (the proposed Shepshed East parish ward)
20	Shepshed West	2	Part of Shepshed parish (the proposed Shepshed West parish ward)
21	Sileby	2	Part of Sileby parish (the proposed Sileby East parish ward)
22	Southfields	2	Part of Southfields ward; part of Storer ward; part of Woodthorpe ward
23	Storer	2	Part of Hathern ward; part of Storer ward
24	Syston East	2	Part of Syston parish (the proposed Merton and St Peter's East parish wards)
25	Syston West	2	Part of Syston parish (the proposed New Barkby and St Peter's West parish wards)
26	The Wolds	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Burton on the Wolds, Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Walton on the Wolds and Wymeswold.
27	Thurmaston	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Thurmaston

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
28	Wreake Villages	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Cossington, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Rearsby, Seagrave and Thrussington

Notes: 1 Loughborough is the only unparished part of the district and comprises the 10 wards of Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern & Dishley, Lemington, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Shelthorpe, Southfields and Storer.

2 The boundaries of the wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A1, A2, A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Charnwood

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Anstey	2	4,664	2,332	0	4,621	2,311	-5
2	Ashby	2	4,824	2,412	3	4,821	2,411	-1
3	Barrow & Sileby West	2	4,532	2,266	-3	4,543	2,272	-6
4	Birstall Wanlip	2	4,122	2,061	-12	4,937	2,469	2
5	Birstall Watermead	2	5,192	2,596	11	5,171	2,586	7
6	East Goscote	1	2,176	2,176	-7	2,289	2,289	-6
7	Forest Bradgate	1	2,570	2,570	10	2,586	2,586	7
8	Forest Latimer	2	4,509	2,255	-4	4,717	2,359	-3
9	Garendon	2	4,967	2,484	6	4,922	2,461	2
10	Hastings	2	4,039	2,020	-14	4,438	2,219	-8
11	Hathern & Dishley	2	4,500	2,250	-4	4,658	2,329	-4
12	Lemyngton	2	4,091	2,046	-13	4,428	2,214	-9
13	Mountsorrel	2	5,327	2,664	14	5,313	2,657	10
14	Nanpantan	2	4,703	2,352	0	4,673	2,337	-4
15	Outwoods	2	4,594	2,297	-2	4,785	2,393	-1
16	Queniborough	1	2,417	2,417	3	2,438	2,438	1
17	Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle	2	4,907	2,454	5	5,043	2,522	4
18	Shelthorpe	2	4,304	2,152	-8	4,848	2,424	0
19	Shepshed East	2	5,172	2,586	10	5,226	2,613	8
20	Shepshed West	2	5,192	2,596	11	5,263	2,632	9
21	Sileby	2	4,874	2,437	4	5,265	2,633	9
22	Southfields	2	4,568	2,284	-2	5,062	2,531	4
23	Storer	2	4,730	2,365	1	4,710	2,355	-3
24	Syston East	2	4,587	2,294	-2	4,989	2,495	3
25	Syston West	2	4,643	2,322	-1	4,733	2,367	-2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 The Wolds	1	2,243	2,243	-4	2,246	2,246	-7
27 Thurmaston	3	7,116	2,372	1	7,053	2,351	-3
28 Wreake Villages	1	2,240	2,240	-4	2,218	2,218	-8
Totals	52	121,803	-	-	125,996	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,342	-	-	2,423	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Charnwood in Leicestershire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven two-tier districts in Leicestershire and the unitary authority of Leicester City 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 expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Charnwood. Charnwood's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1980 (Report no. 372). The electoral arrangements of Leicestershire County Council were last reviewed in March 1983 (Report no. 441). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements later this year.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

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

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

6 In our *Guidance* we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been created locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local people are normally in the best position to judge what council size and ward configurations are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half of 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 were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states 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 current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 12 June 2001, when we wrote to Charnwood Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Leicestershire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Charnwood Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 3 September 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 15 January 2002 and will end on 11 March 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 The borough of Charnwood is in North Leicestershire and comprises rural and urban areas. Road and rail links that run north-west to south-west through Charnwood provide connections to Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. The borough has a population of 155,140 and covers an area of 27,930 hectares. The university town of Loughborough is the most populous area within the north of the borough, while in the south the urban areas of Birstall and Thurmaston border Leicester. The district contains 33 civil parishes, but Loughborough town itself is unparished. Loughborough town comprises 36 per cent of the district's total electorate.

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

17 The electorate of the district is 121,803 (February 2001). The Council presently has 52 members who are elected from 29 wards. Five of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 13 are each represented by two councillors and 11 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,342 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,423 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, in 11 wards by more than 20 per cent and in three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Birstall Netherall ward, where the councillor represents 34 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Charnwood

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ashby	2	6,064	3,032	29	6,064	3,032	25
2	Barrow & Quorndon	3	8,114	2,705	15	8,188	2,729	13
3	Birstall Goscote	1	1,863	1,863	-20	1,847	1,847	-24
4	Birstall Greengate	1	2,139	2,139	-9	2,121	2,121	-12
5	Birstall Netherall	1	1,557	1,557	-34	1,542	1,542	-36
6	Birstall Riverside	1	1,655	1,655	-29	2,517	2,517	4
7	Birstall Stonehill	1	2,100	2,100	-10	2,081	2,081	-14
8	Bradgate	3	5,580	1,860	-21	5,528	1,843	-24
9	East Goscote	1	2,176	2,176	-7	2,289	2,289	-6
10	Garendon	2	5,199	2,600	11	5,151	2,576	6
11	Hastings	2	4,039	2,020	-14	4,438	2,219	-8
12	Hathern	2	5,714	2,857	22	5,855	2,928	21
13	Lemyngton	2	4,091	2,046	-13	4,428	2,214	-9
14	Mountsorrel & Rothley	3	8,801	2,934	25	9,111	3,037	25
15	Nanpantan	2	3,231	1,616	-31	3,201	1,601	-34
16	Outwoods	2	4,417	2,209	-6	4,387	2,194	-9
17	Queniborough	1	2,417	2,417	3	2,438	2,438	1
18	Shepshed East	2	5,303	2,652	13	5,355	2,678	10
19	Shepshed West	2	5,061	2,531	8	5,134	2,567	6
20	Sileby	2	5,298	2,649	13	5,682	2,841	17
21	Six Hills	1	2,240	2,240	-4	2,218	2,218	-8
22	Southfields	2	3,664	1,832	-22	3,814	1,907	-21
23	Storer	2	4,888	2,444	4	5,225	2,613	8
24	Syston	3	9,230	3,077	31	9,722	3,241	34
25	The Wolds	1	2,243	2,243	-4	2,246	2,246	-7
26	Thurcaston	1	1,742	1,742	-26	1,725	1,725	-29
27	Thurmaston	3	7,116	2,372	1	7,053	2,351	-3
28	Woodhouse & Swithland	1	1,848	1,848	-21	1,872	1,872	-23

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29 Woodthorpe	2	4,013	2,007	-14	4,782	2,391	-1
Totals	52	121,803	-	-	126,014	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,342	-	-	2,423	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Birstall Netherall ward were relatively over-represented by 34 per cent, while electors in Ashby ward were relatively under-represented by 29 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

20 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received six submissions during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

Charnwood Borough Council

21 The Borough Council proposed a council of 52 members, the same as at present, serving 28 wards, compared to the existing 29 wards. The Council proposed a pattern of two-member urban and one-member rural wards apart from in Thurmaston where a three-member ward was proposed.

The Conservative Group

22 The Conservative Group on the Borough Council proposed an increase in council size to 53 members serving 27 wards. It proposed a pattern of eight one-member wards, 14 two-member wards, three three-member wards and two four-member wards. However, these proposals did not clearly indicate the constituent parts of the proposed wards, and provided no evidence or argumentation to support them.

Parish Councils

23 We received responses from three parish councils. Cossington Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposals for Cossington parish. It particularly objected to the proposal to transfer Seagrave and Cossington into a three-member ward with Sileby. Mountsorrel Parish Council objected to the Borough Council's proposal to ward the parish. It also proposed the transfer of the Rolls Royce and Fairclough Homes estates from Rothley parish to the current Mountsorrel ward. Sileby Parish Council also objected to the Borough Council's proposals. It proposed the transfer of 1,000 electors from Syston ward to Six Hills ward to allow Seagrave and Cossington villages to be joined with Sileby for reasons of community links and identity.

Other Submissions

24 We received a further submission from the Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association. It supported the Conservative Group's scheme, but alternatively proposed that the Six Hills and Sileby wards be combined into one three-member ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

25 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Charnwood and welcome comments from all those interested 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.

26 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Charnwood is 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 of 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”.

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

30 Since 1975 there has been a 21 per cent increase in the electorate of Charnwood borough from 95,871 to 121,803. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 3 per cent from 121,803 to 126,014 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Birstall Riverside ward, although a significant amount is also expected in the wards of Hastings, Lemington, Sileby, Syston and Woodthorpe. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the Borough Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

32 As explained earlier, we start by assuming 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.

33 Charnwood Borough Council presently has 52 members serving 29 wards. The Borough Council proposed retaining a council size of 52 members serving 28 wards. The Conservative Group on the Borough Council alternatively proposed a council size of 53 members serving 27 wards. We will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but we are prepared to consider the case for change where proposals have been supported by persuasive evidence. The Conservative Group proposed an increase of one member on the grounds that this would “maintain the sense of village community within the scattered hamlets and villages of the Borough”. It accepted the Borough Council’s proposals in East Goscote, Thurmaston, Queniborough, Syston and The Wolds wards. Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group’s proposals; alternatively it proposed the combination of Six Hills and Sileby in a three-member ward.

34 In comparing the various proposals we noted that neither Conservative schemes provided adequate evidence of any public consultation in support of their proposals. The two Conservative alternatives also failed to clearly indicate the constituent parts of the wards they proposed and contained no supporting evidence or argumentation to justify these proposals. This made assessment of the relative strengths of these schemes particularly difficult. The Borough Council’s scheme presented clear argumentation and evidence for its proposals. It also provided clear illustrations of the constituent parts of the wards that it proposed.

35 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council size of 52 members, as proposed by the Borough Council.

Electoral Arrangements

36 We have considered all the district-wide schemes presented to us and taken into account all the submissions received. As mentioned above, the Conservative Group proposed a council size of 53 members. It cited the need for the increase “to maintain the sense of village community. The villages and hamlets of Charnwood are often small scattered and this sense of community is important”.

37 In comparing the levels of electoral equality, those provided under the warding pattern proposed by the Borough Council were better than both those proposed under the two Conservative alternatives. Under the Council’s proposals no ward would exceed 10 per cent by 2006. Both Conservative alternatives supported the Borough Council’s proposals for Shepshed and Syston towns. However, under a 53-member scheme Shepshed West ward would have an electoral variance of 11 per cent by 2006. Within the predominantly urban wards of Birstall the Conservative schemes proposed a single-member ward pattern as opposed to the Council’s two-member ward pattern. These alternatives also proposed a Birstall North East ward with an electoral variance of 16 per cent by 2006. However, both the Conservative Group’s and Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association’s proposals

failed to provide any argumentation or evidence in support of the ward patterns they favoured.

38 In view of the support given to large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve the balance between electoral equality and local community identities and interests, we are moving away from the Borough Council's proposals in Outwoods and Shelthorpe wards. We are also putting forward parish warding modifications to Rothley parish and adjustments to the Borough Council's boundary between Ashby and Nanpantan wards. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemyngton wards;
- (b) Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon, East Goscote, Sileby, Six Hills and The Wolds wards;
- (c) Bradgate, Mountsorrel & Rothley, Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards;
- (d) Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate, Birstall Netherhall, Birstall Riverside, Birstall Stonehill, Syston, Thurmaston and Queniborough wards.

39 Details of our draft recommendations, including changes to district ward boundaries as a consequence of amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in The Charnwood (Parishes) Order 2002, are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemyngton wards.

40 Located in the north-east of the borough, the wards of Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Woodthorpe, Southfields and Lemyngton are each represented by two councillors and together comprise the unparished town of Loughborough. The number of electors per councillor is 29 per cent above the borough average in Ashby ward (25 per cent above the average in 2006), 11 per cent above the borough average in Garendon ward (6 per cent above the average in 2006), 14 per cent below the borough average in Hastings ward (8 per cent below the average in 2006), 31 per cent below the borough average in Nanpantan ward (34 per cent below the average in 2006), 6 per cent below the borough average in Outwoods ward (9 per cent below the average in 2006), 4 per cent above the borough average in Storer ward (8 per cent above the average in 2006), 14 per cent below the borough average in Woodthorpe ward (1 per cent below the average in 2006), 22 per cent below the borough average in Southfields ward (21 per cent below the average in 2006) and 13 per cent below the borough average in Lemyngton ward (9 per cent below the average in 2006).

41 Hathern ward is located to the north-west of Loughborough and comprises the parish of Hathern and the unparished area of Loughborough known as Dishley. The number of electors per councillor is 22 per cent above the borough average in Hathern ward (21 per cent above the average in 2006).

42 Shepshed East and Shepshed West wards together comprise the parish of Shepshed. The number of electors per councillor is 13 per cent above the borough average in Shepshed East ward (10 per cent above the average in 2006) and 8 per cent above the borough average in Shepshed West ward (6 per cent above the average in 2006).

43 During Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Loughborough town be represented by 10 two-member wards, retaining the general ward pattern of the area. Under the Borough Council's proposals Hastings and Storer wards would each continue to be represented by two members, as would Lemyngton ward which would have a minor boundary modification. The Council further proposed the transfer of the student halls of residence from Ashby ward to Nanpantan ward, from Forest Road up to University Road. It proposed the electors from the section of Alan Moss Road up to Knighthorpe Road be transferred from Garendon ward to the proposed Ashby ward. In Shepshed town the Council proposed retaining two two-member wards. However, it proposed a minor modification to both the borough and parish ward boundaries in Shepshed, involving the transfer of a small central area of the town from Shepshed East to Shepshed West. The new boundary would run along Church Street and Queen Street.

44 The Conservative schemes both proposed a two-member ward pattern for the wards within Loughborough and Shepshed. As mentioned previously, the 53-member scheme would result in an electoral variance of 11 per cent in Shepshed West ward.

45 Under the Council's proposals Hathern & Dishley ward would comprise Hathern parish and the unparished area known as Dishley. It proposed that the area up to Warwick Way should be transferred to the proposed Storer ward. It further proposed that the area in Storer ward south of Ashby Road should be transferred into Southfields ward. Southfields ward would then also incorporate the part of the proposed Shelthorpe ward that lies north of Epinal Way and up to Herrick Road.

46 We have considered the Council's proposals for this area, and propose using them as the basis of our draft recommendations for the area. However, to provide a clearer boundary between Ashby and Nanpantan wards we propose modifying the Borough Council's proposals so that the boundary would follow University Road from Holywell Way along to Epinal Way. This change would not affect any of the electoral variances for these wards.

47 In the light of the need to secure the best possible electoral equality by 2006 we are also proposing a further adjustment to the boundary between Outwoods and Shelthorpe wards. We propose transferring the 251 electors projected for 2006 in the proposed housing development behind Beacon Road and Cross Hill Lane from the proposed Shelthorpe ward to Outwoods ward.

48 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Ashby, Garendon, Hastings, Hathern & Dishley, Nanpantan, Outwoods, Storer, Shelthorpe, Shepshed East, Shepshed West, Southfields and Lemyngton wards would be 3 per cent above, 6 per

cent above, 14 per cent below, 4 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 8 per cent below, 10 per cent above, 11 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 13 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent below, 2 per cent above, 8 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below, equal to the borough average, 8 per cent above, 9 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 9 per cent below in 2006).

49 Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon, East Goscote, Sileby, Six Hills and The Wolds wards

50 Located in the north-west of the borough, these five wards are currently represented by eight borough councillors. Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon ward is represented by three councillors and comprises of the parishes of Barrow upon Soar and Quorndon. East Goscote, Six Hills and The Wolds wards are each represented by a single councillor. East Goscote ward is coterminous with East Goscote parish. Six Hills ward comprises the parishes of Cossington, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Rearsby, Thrussington and Seagrave. The Wolds ward comprises the parishes of Burton on the Wolds, Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Walton on the Wolds and Wymesfold. Sileby ward is represented by two councillors and is coterminous with Sileby parish. The number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the borough average in Barrow upon Soar & Quorndon ward (13 per cent above in 2006), 7 per cent below the borough average in East Goscote ward (6 per cent below in 2006), 13 per cent above the borough average in Sileby ward (17 per cent above in 2006), 4 per cent below the borough average in Six Hills ward (8 per cent below in 2006) and 4 per cent below the borough average in The Wolds ward (7 per cent below in 2006).

51 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that these wards be represented by a pattern of three single-member wards, and two two-member wards, a total of seven councillors. It proposed that the current ward boundaries of East Goscote, Six Hills and The Wolds wards should remain unchanged, but that Six Hills ward should be renamed Wreake Villages to better reflect community identity.

52 The Council further proposed warding Sileby parish. It proposed a new Barrow & Sileby West borough ward comprising Barrow-upon-Soar parish and a new parish ward of Sileby West. It proposed that the ward boundary be drawn from Barrow-upon-Soar southwards along the railway line and then west along the centre of King Street, Mountsorrel Lane and Mill Lane up to the River Soar. The Council proposed that Sileby ward consist of the remainder of Sileby parish less the proposed Sileby West parish ward.

53 The Conservative Group proposed single-member East Goscote, Six Hills and The Wolds wards and two-member Barrow & Seagrave, Sileby and Quorn, Woodhouse & Swithland wards. It also proposed a three-member Mountsorrel & Rothley North ward. The Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association alternatively proposed a three-member ward comprising the present Six Hills and Sileby wards.

54 Cossington Parish Council objected to a number of proposals contained within the Borough Council's initial draft scheme. It objected to the Borough Council's initial proposal to transfer a village from Six Hills ward, to separate part of Sileby village and to transfer

Seagrave village into Barrow-upon-Soar ward. The Parish Council proposed that Barrow Road and Mountsorrel Lane be placed in Barrow-upon-Soar ward, preferring that the northern part of Sileby village be placed in a ward with Barrow village. Mountsorrel Parish Council objected to the Council proposals to split the parish between two two-member borough wards. The Parish Council also proposed that the houses on the Rolls Royce and Fairclough Homes estates should be transferred from Rothley parish to form part of Mountsorrel ward. Sileby Parish Council also objected to the Borough Council's proposals. It proposed that 1,000 electors should be transferred from Syston ward to Six Hills ward. It further proposed that Cossington and Seagrave villages should be transferred to Sileby ward and that for reasons of community identity the areas of Cossington, Seagrave and Sileby should be represented by three councillors.

55 We have considered the various options put forward for this area by the Borough Council and parish councils. Having visited the area we consider that the Borough Council's proposals provide the best balance between electoral equality and community identity. However, we do accept some of the arguments put forward by Mountsorrel Parish Council and the Conservative Group with regard to the Rolls Royce and Fairclough Homes estates. We propose that the northern part of Rothley parish, adjoining the present Mountsorrel ward, should form a new parish ward and be transferred into Mountsorrel ward as we consider that this would achieve the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. This transfer of 251 electors by 2006 would not have an adverse effect on electoral equality.

56 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Barrow & Sileby West, East Goscote, Mountsorrel, Sileby, Wreake Villages and The Wolds wards would be 3 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 14 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 4 per cent below the borough average respectively (6 per cent below, 6 per cent below, 10 per cent above, 9 per cent above, 8 per cent below and 7 per cent below in 2006).

57 Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2, Map A2 and Map A3 at the back of the report.

Bradgate, Mountsorrel & Rothley, Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards

58 These four wards are located in the south-east of the borough. Bradgate and Mountsorrel & Rothley wards are each represented by three councillors. Thurcaston and Woodhouse & Swithland wards are both represented by a single councillor. Bradgate ward comprises the parishes of Anstey, Newtown Linford and Ulverscroft. Mountsorrel & Rothley ward comprises the parishes of Mountsorrel and Rothley. Thurcaston ward is coterminous with the parish of Thurcaston & Cropston. Woodhouse & Swithland ward comprises the parishes of Woodhouse and Swithland. The number of electors per councillor is 21 per cent below the borough average in Bradgate ward (24 per cent below in 2006), 25 per cent above in Mountsorrel & Rothley ward (25 per cent above in 2006), 26 per cent below in Thurcaston ward (29 per cent below in 2006) and 21 per cent below in Woodhouse & Swithland ward (23 per cent below in 2006).

59 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by a pattern of one single-member ward, three two-member wards and one three-member ward. It proposed that Bradgate ward be composed of the parishes of Newton Linford, Ulverscroft,

and Woodhouse and be renamed Forest Bradgate. The Council further proposed that a new ward of Forest Latimer should be created, consisting of the parishes of Thurstaston & Cropston, Swithland and Rothley. The Council also proposed that Anstey parish should constitute a two-member ward on its own, as it is of sufficient size.

60 In order to achieve a good balance between the levels of electoral equality and the statutory criteria within the whole borough, the Council proposed parish warding one of the central area parishes. It identified the three parishes of Mountsorrel, Quorn and Rothley as three possible options for warding. One option considered was that Sileby be combined with neighbouring parishes in a three-member urban and rural area; however, the Borough Council rejected this option in favour of warding Sileby at parish level, as detailed above. It proposed that Mountsorrel parish be warded and that Mountsorrel parish ward should form a new Mountsorrel borough ward. The proposed new parish ward to the north would be named Mountsorrel Castle and be combined with Quorn parish to form the proposed Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle ward.

61 The Conservative Group proposed three-member representation for a Mountsorrel & Rothley North ward and a Woodhouse Eaves, Ulverscroft, Newtown Linford & Anstey ward. For Quorn, Woodhouse & Swithland ward it proposed a two-member pattern. The Loughborough Constituency Conservative Association proposed the same ward pattern for this area, although its 2006 projections for the three-member Mountsorrel & Rothley North ward differed from the Conservative Group's estimate by 167 electors.

62 We have carefully considered all the proposals for this area received at Stage One. Having visited the area, and in the light of the need for arrangements that facilitate good electoral equality across the whole borough, we have been persuaded to adopt the Borough Council's proposals as the best available option for a warding pattern in this area, with just one amendment.

63 We noted the urban overspill of Mountsorrel ward into Rothley parish. To provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria we propose that Rothley parish be warded. Rothley North parish ward would consist of the urban area, highlighted by Mountsorrel Parish Council and the Conservative Group, that is contiguous with Mountsorrel ward. We recommend that this area, presently consisting of 250 electors, be transferred to Mountsorrel ward. The rural Rothley South parish ward would then form part of Forest Latimer ward.

64 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Anstey, Forest Bradgate, Forest Latimer and Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle wards would be equal to the borough average, 10 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 5 per cent above respectively, (5 per cent below, 7 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 4 per cent above in 2006).

65 Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 at the back of the report.

Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate, Birstall Netherhall, Birstall Riverside, Birstall Stonehill, Syston, Thurmaston and Queniborough wards

66 These eight wards are located in the south-east of the borough. The Birstall wards are each represented by a single councillor. Syston and Thurmaston wards are both represented by three councillors, whilst Queniborough ward is represented by a single councillor. Birstall Goscote, Birstall Greengate and Birstall Netherall wards are coterminous with parish wards of the same names. Birstall Riverside ward consists of Wanlip parish and Birstall Riverside parish ward. The number of electors per councillor is 20 per cent below the borough average in Birstall Goscote ward (24 per cent below the average in 2006), 9 per cent below in Birstall Greengate ward (12 per cent below in 2006), 34 per cent below in Birstall Netherall ward (36 per cent below in 2006), 29 per cent below in Birstall Riverside ward (4 per cent above in 2006), 10 per cent below in Birstall Stonehill ward (14 per cent below in 2006), 31 per cent above in Syston ward (34 per cent above in 2006), 1 per cent above in Thurmaston ward (3 per cent below in 2006) and 3 per cent above in Queniborough ward (1 per cent above in 2006).

67 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be represented by one single-member ward, four two-member wards and one three-member ward. In Birstall town it proposed that there should be two wards. It proposed that Birstall Wanlip ward should consist of Wanlip parish and the current parish wards of Birstall Goscote and Birstall Greengate of Birstall parish. It also proposed that the current parish wards of Birstall Netherall, Birstall Riverside and Birstall Stonehill of Birstall parish would be combined to constitute the proposed Birstall Watermead ward.

68 The Borough Council further proposed new parish warding arrangements for Syston parish. As opposed to the present three-member ward it proposed that Syston parish be divided between a two-member Syston East ward and a two-member Syston West ward. Within the new Syston East ward it proposed combining the new parish wards of St Peter's East and Merton. It proposed that Syston West ward should then be coterminous with the proposed New Barkby and St Peter's West parish wards. The Council further proposed that the wards of Thurmaston and Queniborough should remain unchanged.

69 The Conservative schemes both proposed four single-member wards for the Birstall and Wanlip areas but did not provide any argumentation or evidence to support their proposals. However, they both supported the Borough Council's proposals for Syston, Thurmaston and Queniborough wards.

70 Having considered the different proposals submitted at Stage One, we consider that the Borough Council's proposals for this area provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we are therefore content to adopt them without amendment.

71 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Birstall Wanlip, Birstall Watermead, Syston East, Syston West, Thurmaston and Queniborough wards would be 12 per cent below, 11 per cent above, 10 per cent below, 11 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 3 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent above, 7 per cent above, 8 per cent above, 9 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 1 per cent above in 2006).

72 Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4 at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

73 At Stage One we did not receive any comments relating to the electoral cycle of the district. We therefore make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

74 Having considered all the evidence and the submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- The current council size of 52 should be retained;
- there should be 28 wards;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

75 Our draft recommendations would involve modifying all but seven of the existing wards in Charnwood borough. As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- We propose that an area of urban overspill in Rothley parish be placed within our proposed Mountsorrel ward;
- the boundary between the wards of Ashby and Nanpantan should be modified to provide a clearer boundary;
- the boundary between the wards of Outwoods and Shelthorpe should be modified to improve electoral equality.

76 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	52	52	52	52
Number of wards	29	28	29	28
Average number of electors per councillor	2,342	2,342	2,423	2,423
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	19	6	15	0
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	11	0	11	0

77 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Charnwood Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 19 to six. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Charnwood Borough Council should comprise 52 borough councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

78 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states 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 Rothley, Mountsorrel, Syston, Sileby and Shepshed Town Council to reflect the proposed district wards.

79 The parish of Rothley is currently served by 10 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One the Conservative Group and Mountsorrel Parish Council proposed that the northern part of Rothley parish containing urban overspill from Mountsorrel should be warded for Borough Council warding purposes. As detailed earlier, we agree that this area should be warded with Mounsorrel.

80 In order to reflect our draft recommendations we are proposing that Rothley should comprise two parish wards: Rothley North, represented by one councillor, and Rothley South, represented by nine councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Rothley Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two parish wards: Rothley North parish ward (returning one councillor) and Rothley South parish ward (returning nine councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

81 Mountsorrel parish is currently served by 13 councillors and is not warded. In order to achieve balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria the Borough Council proposed that the town be warded. The northern area would be called Mountsorrel Castle parish ward and would be combined with Quorn parish to form Quorn & Mountsorrel Castle ward. The southern area would be called Mountsorrel parish ward and would be combined with Rothley North parish ward of Rothley parish to form Mountsorrel borough ward.

Draft Recommendation

Mountsorrel Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two parish wards: Mountsorrel Castle parish ward (returning six councillors) and Mountsorrel parish ward (returning seven councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

82 Syston parish currently returns 20 councillors and is not warded. The Borough Council proposed that the parish be divided between four new parish wards. It proposed that New Barkby and St Peter’s West parish wards be coterminous with its proposed Syston West borough ward and that its proposed Merton and St Peter’s East parish wards be coterminous with its proposed Syston East borough ward. It proposed that each parish ward should be served by five councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Syston Parish Council should comprise 20 parish councillors, as at present, representing four parish wards: New Barkby, St Peter’s East, St Peter’s West and Merton, each returning five councillors. The boundaries between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

83 Sileby parish currently returns 15 councillors and is unwarded. In order to achieve a balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria the Borough Council proposed that the parish be warded. The proposed new parish ward of Sileby West would be combined with Barrow upon Soar to form Barrow & Sileby West borough ward. The remainder of Sileby parish, Sileby parish ward, would constitute the proposed Sileby borough ward.

Draft Recommendation

Sileby Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Sileby parish ward (returning 12 councillors) and Sileby West parish ward (returning three councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

84 Shepshed Town Council is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Shepshed East parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Shepshed West parish ward (returning eight councillors). The Borough Council proposed a minor amendment to the borough ward boundaries in the town. We propose that in the light of our proposed borough warding arrangements Shepshed Town Council should continue to comprise two parish wards. We propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the borough wards within the parish.

Draft Recommendation

Shepshed Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Shepshed East parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Shepshed West parish ward (returning eight councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Charnwood

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

86 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Charnwood contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 11 March 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

87 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Charnwood 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

88 In the light of responses 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Charnwood: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Mountsorrel parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Sileby parish.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Syston parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Loughborough.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Charnwood: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Mountsorrel Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Sileby Parish

Map A4: Proposed Warding of Syston Parish

Appendix B

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 for England, 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 B1: LGCE 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.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We consult 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..	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.