

# Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council

Electoral review

January 2012

### **Translations and other formats**

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# Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Buckinghamshire County Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

In addition, following a request from Buckinghamshire County Council, the Commission has undertaken this review with the presumption of single-member electoral divisions being recommended.

This review was conducted as follows:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
Council Size	12 October 2010	Submission of proposals for council size to the LGBCE
One	11 January 2011	Submission of proposals of warding arrangements to the LGBCE
Two	4 April 2011	LGBCE's analysis and deliberation
Three	19 July 2011	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	11 October 2011	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Draft recommendations

The Commission proposed a council size of 49, comprising entirely of single-member divisions. Our proposals were broadly based on Buckinghamshire County Council's authority-wide scheme with some modifications. The draft recommendations would provide good levels of electoral equality.

## Submissions received

During Stage Three, we received 35 representations. Several of these concerned our proposed division patterns in Chesham town, and the rest were localised comments. Elsewhere in the county, the draft recommendations were broadly well-received. All submissions can be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Analysis and final recommendations

### Electorate figures

Buckinghamshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2017, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2012. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of just over 4% over this period. We are content that the forecasts are the most accurate

available at this time and have used these as the basis of our final recommendations.

## General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we confirm the draft recommendations as final with the exception of boundary changes to some of our proposed divisions in Aylesbury Vale District and Wycombe District.

Our final recommendations for Buckinghamshire are for 49 single-member divisions. Only two divisions will have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2017.

We consider our proposals will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government, having taken into account evidence we have received during Stages One and Three.

## What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council. The changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Buckinghamshire County Council, in 2013.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

# 1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Buckinghamshire County Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority. In addition, during the early stages of this review Buckinghamshire County Council requested the Commission undertake this review with the presumption of single-member electoral divisions being recommended.

2 We wrote to Buckinghamshire County Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals first on the council size and then on division arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during Stage One of this review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council*, which were published on 19 July 2011. We have now reconsidered the draft recommendations in light of the further evidence received and decided whether or not to make modifications to them.

## What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents, reflecting community identity and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk).

## Why are we conducting a review in Buckinghamshire?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2009 electorate figures, 30% of divisions in the county have electoral variances of over 10% from the average. Most notably, the existing Aylesbury West division has 21% more electors than the county average.

6 On 22 December 2010, Buckinghamshire County Council formally requested, under section 57 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, that the Commission carry out a single-member division review. The Commission agreed to this request.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which division you vote in, which other communities are in that division and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your division name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

8 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill  
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

## 2 Analysis and final recommendations

9 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council.

10 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,<sup>2</sup> with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- have regard to the boundaries of district and borough wards in drawing boundaries for county divisions
- ensure that proposed county divisions do not cross external district and borough boundaries
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

11 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of the implementation of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the divisions we put forward at the end of the review.

12 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

13 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Buckinghamshire County Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Submissions received

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Buckinghamshire County Council and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 20 submissions during Stage One and 35 during Stage Three, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) .

15 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions received were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations. Officers from the Commission have also been assisted by Council officers at Buckinghamshire County Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

## Electorate figures

16 As part of this review, Buckinghamshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2017, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 4% over the period from 2010 to 2017.

17 In developing its electorate forecasts the County Council had taken into account committed development in the county and Office of National Statistics (ONS) projected population growth. On balance, we are satisfied that the Council's estimated increase in electorate by 2017 represents the best possible estimate available at this time. We are therefore content to accept the Council's electorate figures for Buckinghamshire as the basis of our final recommendations.

## Council size

18 Buckinghamshire County Council currently has 57 councillors elected from 47 county divisions. At the beginning of the electoral review, we consulted locally on the most appropriate number of councillors (council size) for the authority and received 22 submissions, which proposed council sizes ranging from 10 to 57.

19 The Conservative Group on Buckinghamshire County Council proposed a council size of 49 and agreed the principle that they all be elected from single-member divisions. This proposal was adopted by the County Council. We noted it did not receive cross-party support as the Liberal Democrat Group on the County Council opposed the proposal. The Liberal Democrat Group did not submit a proposal to us on council size.

20 The submission from the Conservative Group and adopted by the County Council outlined the financial savings from reducing the number of members. The proposal also indicated that the level of representation in terms of electors per councillor in their proposed 49-member scheme would be below the national average figure for English counties.

21 We received further representations supporting a reduction in council size. One local resident proposed a reduction to between 40 and 45 members, based on the 19 Local Area Forums in the county.

22 Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council and a local resident expressed the view that each electoral division should, as far as possible, represent the same number of electors. A local resident proposed a reduction of council size down to 10 members.

23 Three parish councils, Iver, Nash and Westcott, favoured the retention of the existing council size – a 57-member council. A further eight submissions expressed no particular view on council size, and some advocated a move to a structure of unitary local government in the county.

24 On balance, we considered that there was sufficient rationale to justify reducing the council size by eight members. Furthermore, evidence received suggested that doing so would not adversely impact on the capacity of the authority to perform its statutory functions and would provide suitable representation. Accordingly, during Stage One we invited proposals for division patterns based on a council size of 49.

25 During Stage One, the Conservative Group made proposals for division arrangements for the county based on a council size of 49. We received some submissions which welcomed the proposed reduction in council size, from Nash and Stokenchurch parish councils. In light of the evidence received we were not minded to change our original conclusions on council size and based our draft recommendations on a council size of 49.

26 We did not receive any further evidence about council size at Stage Three and therefore confirm the council size of 49 members as final.

## Electoral fairness

27 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations should provide for electoral fairness whilst ensuring that we reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The county average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county (381,570 in 2010 and 397,546 by 2017) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 49 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 7,787 in 2010 and 8,113 by 2017.

29 Under the final recommendations, two of our proposed 49 divisions will have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the county by 2017. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Buckinghamshire.

## General analysis

30 Our draft recommendations were largely based on the county-wide scheme proposed by the County Council, with some modifications in particular areas to better reflect the statutory criteria.

31 Our draft recommendations were based on a council size of 49 members and proposed a pattern of 49 single-member divisions. The allocation of councillors across the districts were as follows:

- Aylesbury Vale – 17 councillors
- Chiltern – nine councillors
- South Bucks – seven councillors
- Wycombe – 16 councillors

32 During Stage Three we received 35 representations on our draft recommendations. We received a brief submission from the County Council, which focused on a small number of our proposed divisions. We also received a submission from the Liberal Democrat Group on the County Council.

33 In addition to these representations, we received submissions from three district councils, one county councillor, the Liberal Democrat organisations in Aylesbury and Chiltern, two political constituency associations, The Marlow Society, 21 parish and town councils and three local residents.

34 The majority of these submissions focused on specific areas, in particular Chesham town in Chiltern District and on the northern part of Aylesbury Vale District. We also received a smaller numbers of submissions covering other specific parts of the county.

35 Our final recommendations for Buckinghamshire are for 49 single-member divisions. Only two divisions would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2017. We consider our proposals will ensure good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during Stages One and Three.

36 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table C1 (on pages 28–32) and Map 1.

## Electoral arrangements

37 This section of the report details the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Buckinghamshire. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Aylesbury Vale District (pages 9–11)
- Chiltern District (pages 11–12)
- South Bucks District (pages 12–13)
- Wycombe District (pages 14–15)

38 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 28-32 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Aylesbury Vale District

39 Aylesbury Vale is a largely rural district, and its main towns are Aylesbury and Buckingham. It currently has 19 county councillors across 16 divisions. Three divisions are two-member divisions and the remaining 13 are single-member divisions. The district is also fully parished.

40 In our draft recommendations, we proposed a pattern of 17 single-member divisions covering the district. Our proposals for Aylesbury town were largely based on the proposals of the County Council. For the rest of the district our proposals were based on submissions from parish councils and on our assessment of the pattern of divisions which would provide the best balance of the statutory criteria.

41 In its Stage Three submission, Buckinghamshire County Council proposed amending our draft recommendations in the north and centre of the district. In the north of the district, the County Council suggested that Thornborough parish should be included in our proposed Buckingham North division instead of our proposed Winslow division. The County Council stated that Thornborough 'naturally links' with the communities in our Buckingham North division. This view was also put forward by Thornborough Parish Council, which provided some evidence of links the parish has with Buckingham town. Winslow Town Council stated that it would be 'illogical' for Thornborough to be in our proposed Winslow division.

42 This proposal would result in our Buckingham North and Winslow divisions having equal to, and 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2017, respectively. In light of the evidence received we have decided that under our final recommendations the parish of Thornborough should be included in our Buckingham North division. In light of this modification we have decided to re-name our Buckingham North and Buckingham South-West divisions. We are proposing that Buckingham North is instead named Buckingham East, and that Buckingham South-West instead be named Buckingham West. We consider that these division names better reflect the geographic nature of the divisions in relation to Buckingham town and surrounding areas.

43 The County Council suggested further modifications to our Winslow division. It proposed that the parishes of Swanbourne, Mursley, Dunton and Hoggston be included in our Winslow division. We received no other evidence in support of this proposal, and we do not consider that this amendment would provide a better balance of the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations.

44 The County Council also proposed including Granborough parish in our Great Brickhill division rather than in our Winslow division as we had proposed in our draft recommendations. The County Council argued that Granborough has no link to Winslow town. Aylesbury Liberal Democrats noted that Winslow town is only a few miles from Granborough parish, and that the County Council's submission quotes only one of the two county councillors from this division in support of this proposed amendment. Winslow Town Council stated that they 'welcomed' Granborough parish being in our Winslow division. We did not receive any representations in support of

the County Council's proposed modification. Therefore, we are not adopting either of the modifications proposed by the County Council in this part of the district.

45 In the south of the district, Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell Parish Council drew to our attention that our proposed Stone & Waddesdon division had no direct road access from the south of the division to the northern part of the division across the River Thame. The parish council noted in its representation that the road crossing over the river in the parish is a private road. The parish council noted that to access Waddesdon and the northern part of our proposed division by public roads, it would be necessary to leave the division and drive via Aylesbury town.

46 The parish council considered that it should not be included in a division with parishes north of the River Thame and suggested that the parish should be in a division with parishes to its west, particularly Haddenham. Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell Parish Council highlighted the links it has with Haddenham parish and to the villages to its west, including shared police services and library services, medical provision and schools. We noted that including Stone with Bishopstone & Hartwell Parish in a division with Haddenham would also require the inclusion of the parish of Dinton with Ford & Upton as it is adjacent, so any division containing Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell parish and Haddenham parish would necessarily have to contain Dinton with Ford & Upton parish in order for there to be road access across the division. Including both parishes in our proposed Bernwood division would result in this division having 30% more electors than the county average by 2017. We also considered whether proposing the existing Haddenham division as part of our final recommendations would provide a balance between our statutory criteria. This proposal would have 15% fewer electors than the county average by 2017. We consider both proposals provide for unreasonable levels of electoral equality and have decided not to include either as part of our final recommendations.

47 Instead, we have decided to modify our proposed Stone & Waddesdon division in order to solve the internal access issue. As part of our final recommendations, we are including the parishes of Ashendon, Cuddington and Nether Winchendon in our Stone & Waddesdon division. This modification would mean there is public road access between the northern and southern parts of our Stone & Waddesdon division. This proposal results in our Bernwood and Stone & Waddesdon divisions having 3% fewer and 5% more electors than the county average by 2017 respectively.

48 In Aylesbury town we received proposals to modify our divisions from Aylesbury Liberal Democrats. They suggested that the parishes of Bierton with Broughton and Hulcott would be better placed in our Wing division, or our Aylesbury East division. They considered that the parishes had more links with those two proposed divisions than with the rest of our proposed Aston Clinton & Bierton division. Removing these two parishes from our Aston Clinton & Bierton division would result in the division having 21% fewer electors than the county average by 2017. Given the resulting electoral inequality we are not adopting this modification as part of our final recommendations.

49 Aylesbury Liberal Democrats also suggested moving the Oldhams Meadow parish ward of Bierton with Broughton parish from our proposed Aylesbury North division to our Aston Clinton & Bierton division, on the grounds that it is better for the whole parish to be in the same division. However, we received no other evidence in

support of this change and we consider that this parish ward appears to be part of the Aylesbury community and note that it is included in a district ward with part of Aylesbury town. We are not proposing to amend our draft recommendations in this area.

50 We received support for our draft recommendations for Aylesbury Vale District from Buckingham Town Council, Nash Parish Council, Stoke Mandeville Parish Council, and Westcott Parish Council.

51 We did not receive any other representations in relation to any of our other proposed divisions in the district. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the remaining divisions in Aylesbury Vale District as final.

## Chiltern District

52 Chiltern District is a mix of rural parishes and small urban settlements, with the towns of Chesham and Amersham being the main areas of population. The district currently has 11 county councillors across nine divisions. Two divisions are two-member divisions; the remainder are single-member divisions.

53 In our draft recommendations we proposed nine single-member divisions covering the district. Our proposals were partly based on those of the County Council, but with some modifications based on submissions received from local interests, our assessments based on a visit to the area and consideration of the statutory criteria.

54 In its Stage Three submission, the County Council made no comment on any of our proposed divisions in Chiltern district. We received support for our recommendations from Chesham and Amersham Conservative Association.

55 We received objections to our proposals in Chesham town from Chiltern Liberal Democrats, the Liberal Democrat group on Buckinghamshire County Council, and Chesham Town Council. Chiltern District Council also opposed our proposals for Chesham town and stated in its submission that an unnamed councillor thought that Chesham had been 'casually divided in to three' in our draft recommendations and that the villages around Chesham are certainly 'not Chesham'.

56 Under our draft recommendations, three of the nine divisions in the district contained some part of Chesham town. Chiltern Liberal Democrats and Chesham Town Council both considered that our proposed divisions did not reflect the reality of the community differences between the urban and rural areas around Chesham town. However, the town council did not suggest any alternative division arrangements for Chesham. Chiltern Liberal Democrats proposed a different pattern of divisions which sought to reflect communities of interest in the urban Chesham area and the rural parishes outside it.

57 Chiltern Liberal Democrats argued that residents of Chesham town have a 'strong sense of urban identity', and proposed a different mixture of town and rural parishes around Chesham. We considered their proposed split of Chartridge parish was somewhat arbitrary, while there was also an error in their calculations which would lead to one of their proposed divisions having 11% fewer electors than the

county average by 2017. We considered that the proposal from Chiltern Liberal Democrats did not result in a pattern of divisions which would provide a better balance of the statutory criteria when compared to our draft recommendations.

58 To the south of Chesham Town we received a submission from Little Chalfont Parish Council which objected to being divided between our Little Chalfont & Amersham Common and Chess Valley divisions. The parish argued that the split was at odds with 'the objective of reflecting communities'. We noted that including the whole of the parish in our proposed Little Chalfont & Amersham Common division would leave our proposed Chess Valley division with 17% fewer electors than the county average by 2017. We investigated whether this could be improved by transferring electors from other divisions, but noted that any change would have a knock-on effect resulting in high electoral variances in other divisions in the district.

59 While recognising its concerns, we consider that the proposals from Little Chalfont Parish Council do not provide a better balance between the statutory criteria. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for the divisions of Little Chalfont & Amersham Common and Chess Valley as final.

60 In the south of the district, we received a submission from Chalfont St. Giles Parish Council which opposed our Chalfont St Giles division. The Parish Council considered that Coleshill Parish ought to be included in our Penn Wood & Old Amersham division rather than our Chalfont St Giles division. The parish considered that the area of Coleshill would 'sit more comfortably with Penn and Old Amersham, both geographically and in character'. Including Coleshill Parish in our Penn Wood & Old Amersham division would result in the division having 11% more electors than the county average by 2017. In the circumstances, we have decided to not adopt this modification as part of our final recommendations. We consider our proposal provides for a better balance of the statutory criteria. We therefore confirm as final our recommendation for the division of Chalfont St Giles.

61 We also received a submission which proposed renaming our Penn Wood & Old Amersham division. A local resident proposed that the division keep the name Penn, Coleshill and Holmer Green. However, we consider that our proposed division name, Penn Wood & Old Amersham, reflects the make-up of the division, and confirm our draft recommendation for a Penn Wood & Old Amersham division as final.

62 We did not receive any other representations in relation to any of our other proposed divisions in the district. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the remaining divisions in Chiltern District as final.

## South Bucks District

63 South Bucks District consists of the urban areas of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross, as well as some rural parishes, and some suburbs of Slough and Maidenhead, both of which are outside the county. The district currently has eight county councillors.

64 In our draft recommendations, we proposed a pattern of seven single-member divisions covering the district. Our draft recommendations for South Bucks were

predominantly based on the submission from the County Council but included some modifications, in particular to the Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross divisions.

65 In its Stage Three submission, the County Council made no comment on any of our proposed divisions in South Bucks District. However, we received submissions from five parish councils which comment on individual divisions across the district. Farnham Royal Parish Council sent in several submissions objecting to our proposed division arrangements. The Parish Council wanted the entirety of the parish to be contained within one electoral division and, if this was not possible, for the northern part of the parish to be in a division with Stoke Poges, to its east.

66 We considered various configurations for the divisions in question: Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches; Stoke Poges & Wexham; Iver and Denham. The parish also sent us some alternative division arrangements for this area. We noted that including the whole of Farnham Royal parish in a division with Stoke Poges would result in there being a division containing Burnham Beeches which would have 22% fewer electors than the county average by 2017. Including only the northern part of Farnham Royal parish in a Stoke Poges division (to reflect the existing arrangements) would result in the Stoke Poges division having 17% fewer electors than the county average by 2017.

67 We also received a submission from Iver Parish Council which proposed modifications to our proposed Stoke Poges & Wexham division. The Parish Council stated that it would prefer the parish to be included in the proposed Iver division rather than split between the Stoke Poges & Wexham and Iver divisions. We noted that including the entirety of Iver parish in the Iver division would leave our proposed Stoke Poges & Wexham division with 12% fewer electors than the county average by 2017.

68 While acknowledging the concerns expressed over our proposed Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches and Stoke Poges & Wexham divisions, in developing our recommendations we have sought, as is required by our statutory criteria, to provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality. In the case of these two divisions this has meant combining areas that may have different interests and challenges. We have sought alternatives and considered all of the proposals put to us. However, none of these, in our view, better meet our statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

69 In the west of the district, we received a submission from Taplow Parish Council, which expressed concern with our proposed Cliveden division. The parish was concerned that Burnham, in its view, will be the dominant settlement in the division and would take up the majority of a county councillor's time. The parish proposed removing part of Burnham from the division for this reason. We do not consider this proposal would provide a better balance of our statutory criteria. We have therefore decided to confirm our proposed Cliveden division as final.

70 We did not receive any other representations in relation to any of our other proposed divisions in the district. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the remaining divisions in South Bucks District as final.

## Wycombe District

71 Wycombe District is a mixture of rural parishes with small villages. Its main areas of population are in the towns of High Wycombe and Marlow. Much of High Wycombe itself is unparished. The district currently has 19 county councillors across 14 divisions. Five divisions are two-member divisions and the remaining nine are single-member divisions.

72 In our draft recommendations we proposed 16 single-member divisions covering the district. Our draft recommendations for the district were generally based on the County Council's proposals, but included a number of modifications to divisions in High Wycombe town. These changes were to provide divisions which better reflected our statutory criteria.

73 In its Stage Three submission, the County Council only commented on our proposed Marlow division, adding its support to a modification proposed by Marlow Town Council. The Town Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between our proposed Marlow division and our proposed Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East division. The Town Council suggested moving the boundary to take in both sides of Glade Road between Little Marlow Road and Claremont Road, and include them in our Marlow division. The boundary change would mean that a health centre and its grounds would be included in our Marlow division. This proposal would affect 76 electors and would result in the divisions of Marlow and Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East having 6% more and 7% more electors than the county average by 2017, respectively.

74 We received a different proposal for Marlow from a local resident, which was supported by a submission from The Marlow Society. It argued in favour of keeping Marlow together in one division. It considered this would be a better reflection of the Marlow community. However, given the number of electors in Marlow parish, it would be impossible for this proposal to achieve good levels of electoral equality. We have therefore decided not to propose this amendment in our final recommendations.

75 We also received a different proposal for our proposed Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East division from Chepping Wycombe Parish Council. The parish considered that its parishioners in Flackwell Heath would be 'hived off' with electors in Marlow under our proposed Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East division. The parish expressed a preference for Flackwell Heath to be linked with Wooburn & Bourne End, to its south east. However, any attempt to link Flackwell Heath with an area outside the proposed Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow and Marlow South-East division would lead to a large electoral imbalance in the division.

76 In light of the evidence received we have decided to modify our proposed Marlow and Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East divisions. We have decided to adopt the modification suggested by Marlow Town Council as part of our final recommendations. We consider this proposal achieves good electoral equality and reflects community identity.

77 In the west of the district, our draft recommendations proposed that the parish of Stokenchurch be divided between the divisions of Ridgeway West and West

Wycombe. At Stage Three, we received a submission from Wycombe District Council which considered that our draft recommendation was 'pointless'. The District Council considered that the parish may find it difficult to find candidates for election. We also received a submission from Stokenchurch Parish Council stating they were 'entirely in favour' of the proposed new arrangements. We have decided to confirm our draft recommendations in this part of the district as final.

78 In High Wycombe a local resident commented on our proposed divisions of Totteridge & Bowerdean and Ryemead & Micklefield. He wrote that Ryemead has no affinity with Micklefield, and that Micklefield is more closely linked with Totteridge. We received no other submissions regarding the proposed divisions in High Wycombe, and we consider that our proposed divisions will adequately meet the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming them as final.

79 The local resident referred to above also expressed concern that single-member divisions might damage 'community cohesion' in some communities and highlighted the under-representation of councillors from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. He considered that removing all of the two-member divisions may make this worse as 'there is a danger that political parties will find it harder to select candidates from the BAME community for single member divisions'. We consider that the selection of candidates, and how electors vote, is a matter for political parties and not the Commission.

80 We received support for our recommendations from Princes Risborough Town Council and Stokenchurch Parish Council. We therefore confirm the remainder of the draft recommendations in Wycombe as final.

81 Table C1 (on pages 28–32) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across the entire county. The final recommendations are shown on Maps 1–8 accompanying this report.

## Conclusions

82 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 28–32, and illustrated on a number of large maps we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our final recommendations for the whole authority. It also shows a number of boxes for which we have produced more detailed maps. These maps are also available to be viewed on our website.

83 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2010 and 2017 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Final recommendations	
	2010	2017
Number of councillors	49	49
Number of electoral divisions	49	49
Average number of electors per councillor	7,787	8,113
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	2
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

**Final recommendation**

Buckinghamshire County Council should comprise 49 councillors serving 49 divisions, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

84 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

85 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority division arrangements. However, the district councils within Buckinghamshire County Council have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

86 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Amersham, Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Burnham, Farnham Royal, Little Chalfont, Little Missenden, Marlow and Stokenchurch.

87 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Amersham parish.

**Final recommendation**

Amersham Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Amersham Common (returning three members), Amersham Common West (returning three members), Amersham-on-the-Hill (returning five members), Amersham Town (returning two members) and Weedon Hill (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Maps 5 and 6.

88 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Aylesbury parish.

**Final recommendation**

Aylesbury Town Council should comprise 25 councillors, as at present, representing 13 wards: Central (two members), Bedgrove South (two members), Elmhurst (two members), Gatehouse (three members), Mandeville (three members), Oakfield North (one member), Oakfield South (two members), Oxford Road (two members), Quarrendon (two members), Southcourt (three members), Walton (one member), Walton Court & Hawkslade North (one member) and Walton Court & Hawkslade South (one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2a.

89 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Beaconsfield parish.

**Final recommendation**

Beaconsfield Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Beaconsfield North (returning six members), Beaconsfield South (returning two members), Beaconsfield Central (returning three members) and Beaconsfield West (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 7.

90 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Burnham parish.

**Final recommendation**

Burnham Parish Council should comprise 19 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Burnham Beeches (returning three members), Burnham Church (returning five members), Burnham Church South (returning two members), Burnham Lent Rise (returning eight members) and Burnham South (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Maps 7 and 8a.

91 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Farnham Royal parish.

**Final recommendation**

Farnham Royal Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Farnham Royal Central (returning three members), Farnham Royal North (returning seven members), and Farnham Royal South (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Maps 7 and 8a.

92 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Little Chalfont parish.

**Final recommendation**

Little Chalfont Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, an increase of one from the present arrangements, representing three wards: Little Chalfont (five members), Little Chalfont North-East (two members), and Little Chalfont South (two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 6.

93 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Little Missenden parish.

**Final recommendation**

Little Missenden Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, representing three wards: Holmer Green (returning seven members), Hyde Heath (returning two members), and Little Kingshill & Little Missenden (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Maps 4, 5 and 6.

94 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Marlow parish.

**Final recommendation**

Marlow Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: North and West (returning seven members), South (returning two members) and South-East (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 8b.

95 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Stokenchurch parish.

**Final recommendation**

Stokenchurch Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, representing two wards: Stokenchurch (returning 10 members) and Beacon's Bottom (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2b.

### 3 What happens next?

96 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Buckinghamshire County Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Buckinghamshire County Council in 2013.

#### Equalities

97 This report has been screened for impact on equalities; with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.



## 4 Mapping

### Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire

98 The following maps illustrate our proposed division boundaries for Buckinghamshire County Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed division boundaries for Buckinghamshire.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Aylesbury.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Stokenchurch parish.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3a** illustrates the proposed divisions around the town of High Wycombe.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3b** illustrates the proposed divisions around the town of High Wycombe.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed divisions in Little Missenden parish.
- **Sheet 5 Map 5** illustrates the proposed divisions around Chesham parish.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed divisions around Amersham town.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7** illustrates the proposed divisions around Beaconsfield town and Farnham Royal parish.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Burnham and Farnham Royal parishes.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Marlow town.



# Appendix A

## Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the County Council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council, the number, names and boundaries of parish wards and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible

	electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories, a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or county council

## Appendix B

### Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Consultation* (2008) (<http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf>) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 November 2008, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

**Table B1: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's compliance with Code criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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 at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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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.

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## Appendix C

**Table C1: Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire County Council**

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2010)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	
<b>Divisions in Aylesbury Vale District</b>								
1	Aston Clinton & Bierton	1	7,641	7,641	-2%	7,884	7,884	-3%
2	Aylesbury East	1	8,108	8,108	4%	8,029	8,029	-1%
3	Aylesbury North	1	8,541	8,541	10%	8,599	8,599	6%
4	Aylesbury North-West	1	8,344	8,344	7%	8,923	8,923	10%
5	Aylesbury South-East	1	8,346	8,346	7%	8,684	8,684	7%
6	Aylesbury South-West	1	7,725	7,725	-1%	7,954	7,954	-2%
7	Aylesbury West	1	8,181	8,181	5%	7,929	7,929	-2%
8	Bernwood	1	7,706	7,706	-1%	7,840	7,840	-3%
9	Buckingham East	1	7,550	7,550	-3%	8,097	8,097	0%
10	Buckingham West	1	7,227	7,227	-7%	8,676	8,676	7%

**Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire County Council**

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2010)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11 Great Brickhill	1	8,555	8,555	10%	8,638	8,638	6%
12 Grendon Underwood	1	8,297	8,297	7%	8,341	8,341	3%
13 Ivinghoe	1	7,802	7,802	0%	8,193	8,193	1%
14 Stone & Waddesdon	1	5,650	5,650	-27%	8,527	8,527	5%
15 Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	1	7,774	7,774	0%	7,922	7,922	-2%
16 Wing	1	7,828	7,828	1%	8,731	8,731	8%
17 Winslow	1	7,290	7,290	-6%	7,735	7,735	-5%
<b>Divisions in Chiltern District</b>							
18 Amersham & Chesham Bois	1	7,569	7,569	-3%	7,744	7,744	-5%
19 Chalfont St Giles	1	8,457	8,457	9%	8,563	8,563	6%
20 Chalfont St Peter	1	8,173	8,173	5%	8,768	8,768	8%
21 Chesham	1	7,611	7,611	-2%	7,639	7,639	-6%

**Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire County Council**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2010)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2017)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
22	Chess Valley	1	7,533	7,533	-3%	7,782	7,782	-4%
23	Chiltern Ridges	1	8,120	8,120	4%	8,227	8,227	1%
24	Great Missenden	1	8,332	8,332	7%	8,245	8,245	2%
25	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common	1	7,403	7,403	-5%	7,807	7,807	-4%
26	Penn Wood & Old Amersham	1	8,456	8,456	9%	8,543	8,543	5%
<b>Divisions in South Bucks District</b>								
27	Beaconsfield	1	7,858	7,858	1%	8,397	8,397	3%
28	Cliveden	1	7,265	7,265	-7%	7,657	7,657	-6%
29	Denham	1	6,915	6,915	-11%	7,646	7,646	-6%
30	Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches	1	6,940	6,940	-11%	7,196	7,196	-11%
31	Gerrards Cross	1	6,824	6,824	-12%	7,367	7,367	-9%

**Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire County Council**

	<b>Division name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2010)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2017)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
32	Iver	1	7,807	7,807	0%	7,788	7,788	-4%
33	Stoke Poges & Wexham	1	7,664	7,664	-2%	7,849	7,849	-3%
<b>Divisions in Wycombe District</b>								
34	Abbey	1	7,457	7,457	-4%	8,407	8,407	4%
35	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	1	8,218	8,218	6%	8,170	8,170	1%
36	Chiltern Villages	1	8,625	8,625	11%	8,607	8,607	6%
37	Downley	1	7,845	7,845	1%	8,251	8,251	2%
38	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South-East	1	8,475	8,475	9%	8,700	8,700	7%
39	Hazlemere	1	7,573	7,573	-3%	7,581	7,581	-7%
40	Marlow	1	8,464	8,464	9%	8,609	8,609	6%
41	Ridgeway East	1	8,371	8,371	7%	8,355	8,355	3%

**Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Buckinghamshire County Council**

Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2010)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
42 Ridgeway West	1	7,806	7,806	0%	7,868	7,868	-3%
43 Ryemead & Micklefield	1	7,257	7,257	-7%	7,735	7,735	-5%
44 Terriers & Amersham Hill	1	7,344	7,344	-6%	7,849	7,849	-3%
45 The Risboroughs	1	7,538	7,538	-3%	8,202	8,202	1%
46 The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	1	8,333	8,333	7%	8,329	8,329	3%
47 Totteridge & Bowerdean	1	7,666	7,666	-2%	7,584	7,584	-7%
48 Tylers Green & Loudwater	1	8,012	8,012	3%	8,120	8,120	0%
49 West Wycombe	1	7,094	7,094	-9%	7,259	7,259	-11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>381,570</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>397,546</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,787</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,113</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Buckinghamshire County Council.

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