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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 have conducted an electoral review of Ashfield District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in April 2013.

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 April 2013	Consultation on council size
23 July 2013	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
2 October 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
14 January 2014	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
9 April 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of further draft recommendations
1 July 2014	Publication of further draft recommendations and consultation on them
27 August 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

Following consideration of the evidence received on council size we invited proposals for warding arrangements based on an increase in council size from 33 to 35 members. In response to this consultation we received 25 submissions including two district-wide schemes. We proposed a pattern of 22 single-member, five two-member and one three-member wards. Our proposals provided good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and transport links in the district. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Submissions received

During the consultation on the draft recommendations for Ashfield, 209 submissions were received. These provided a mixture of support and objections to the draft recommendations. The Council objected to the draft recommendations and proposed a reallocation of councillors between Sutton in Ashfield and Hucknall towns (14 members and nine members, respectively, under the draft recommendations and 13 and 10 under the Council's response). One hundred and thirty-one submissions put forward comments on the Hucknall area, with 123 expressing support for the Council's reallocation of 10 councillors to Hucknall. We also received comments on

Kirkby in Ashfield and Sutton in Ashfield. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Further draft recommendations

We noted that there were significant objections to the draft recommendations, particularly in the Hucknall area and that there was new evidence for an alternative warding pattern with a revised allocation of councillors between Hucknall and Sutton in Ashfield. Although we also received support for the draft recommendations, on balance we considered there to be sufficient new evidence to persuade us to reconsider the draft recommendations and draw up a substantially different warding pattern. In light of the degree of change, in the Hucknall and Sutton in Ashfield areas, but also the Kirkby in Ashfield area, we undertook an additional period of limited consultation on the further draft recommendations.

In response to this consultation we received a further 36 submissions. Seventeen submissions put forward objections to the further draft recommendations particularly in the Hucknall area, while 11 submissions expressed support for the further draft recommendations. Four submissions put forward comments on Sutton in Ashfield and one on Kirkby in Ashfield. The other submissions put forward general comments.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Ashfield District Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3% over this period. However, we had concerns that while overall the growth was broadly in line with Office for National Statistics forecasts, in 40% of polling districts it forecast a reduction, which is generally higher than we would expect. We therefore asked the Council to revisit its forecast methodology. The Council submitted revised figures and provided forecasts of approximately 5%. We are content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of the recommendations.

In response to the draft recommendations and further draft recommendations we received limited comments about areas of future planning development. However, we have no evidence that these will actually be built and occupied within the forecast period. Therefore, we remain satisfied that the Council's forecast figures are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our final recommendations.

General analysis

In response to the further draft recommendations we note the mixture of objections and support, particularly for our proposals in Hucknall. Most of the objections related to our decision to move away from a pattern of mainly single-member wards in Hucknall to a mixed pattern of multi-member wards. The evidence provided relates more to the principle of single-member wards and perceived issues over representation and accountability, rather than objections to the specific formation of

the multi-member wards in the further draft recommendations. Much of the support also provided only general comments. On balance, we do not consider there to be persuasive evidence in the Hucknall area and are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations as final.

In the remainder of the district, we also consider the further submissions offer only limited additional evidence and are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations in these areas as final.

Our final recommendations for Ashfield are that the Council should have 35 members, with 13 single-member, eight two-member and two three-member wards. No ward would have an electoral variance greater than 8% by 2019.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Ashfield District Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Ashfield District Council, in 2015.

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

You can also view our final recommendations for Ashfield District Council on our interactive maps at <https://consultation.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 was conducted following our decision to review Ashfield District Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 The submission received from Ashfield District Council during the initial stage of consultation of this review informed the *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Ashfield District Council*, which were published on 14 January 2014. The draft recommendations were consulted on until the 8 April 2014. We then undertook a period of consultation on further draft recommendations as a result of the strong community identity evidence that was received in opposition to the draft recommendations in parts of the district. This ended on 26 August 2014.

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 legislation¹ 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

Why are we conducting a review in Ashfield?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2011 electorate figures, 40% of the existing wards have 10% more or fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

¹ Schedule 2 to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 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
Alison Lowton
Sir Tony Redmond
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Chief Executive designate: Jolyon Jackson CBE

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations for the electoral arrangements for Ashfield District Council.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Ashfield District Council 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 (‘the 2009 Act’)² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- 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

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

11 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.

12 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Ashfield District Council or the external boundaries or names of parish and town councils, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our 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.

13 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out 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.

14 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority ward arrangements. However, principal councils have powers under the Local Government and Public

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Involvement in Health Act 2007, to conduct Community Governance Reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

Submissions received

15 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Ashfield District Council ('the Council') and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. During the preliminary period the Council put forward proposals for a council size of 35 members, an increase of two from the existing 33 members. We received a further 13 submissions during our consultation on council size. During consultation on warding patterns, we received 25 submissions, including two district-wide schemes. In response to the draft recommendations we received 209 submissions. Finally, in response to the further draft recommendations we received 36 submissions. All submissions may be inspected at our offices. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

16 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019. The Council forecast an increase of 3%, slightly lower than the Office for National Statistics (ONS) forecasts for population.

17 However, we had some concern that while overall the Council projected growth across the district broadly in line with ONS forecasts, it forecast a reduction in electorate in 40% of its polling districts, which is generally higher than we would expect. We therefore asked the Council to revisit its forecast methodology. As a result, the Council submitted revised figures which forecast approximately 5% growth. We were satisfied that these figures were the best available at the present time and these figures formed the basis of the draft recommendations.

18 In response to the draft recommendations and further draft recommendations we received a few comments about the prospect of development on certain sites. However, we do not consider there to be evidence to suggest these will be built and occupied with the forecast period. We therefore remain satisfied that the figures provided by the Council are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

19 The Council currently has 33 councillors elected from 15 district wards, comprising two single-member, eight two-member and five three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed a council size of 35 members. The Council put forward evidence of the political management structure and the representational role of councillors. It also argued that there would be an increased workload in the representational role of members as a result of the Localism Act and welfare reform. The Council highlighted that further potential shared service agreements were also anticipated to increase member workload for the respective portfolio holders. It therefore argued that there should be a modest increase in council size.

20 We received 13 submissions during our consultation on council size. While we noted that none of the respondents to the consultation supported a council size of 35, we did not consider there to be any new or compelling evidence to depart from a council size of 35 members for Ashfield. We considered that the Council's original submission for 35 members continued to provide the strongest evidence for an appropriate council size for Ashfield. We therefore adopted this as the basis for consultation on warding arrangements.

21 During consultation on the draft recommendations and further draft recommendations we received no significant submissions relating to council size. We have therefore based our final recommendations on a council size of 35.

Electoral fairness

22 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 will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

23 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (92,224 in 2012 and 97,123 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 35 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 2,635 in 2012 and 2,775 by 2019.

24 Under our final recommendations, all of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of 10% or less from the average for the district by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Ashfield.

General analysis

25 During consultation on warding arrangements we received 25 submissions, including separate district-wide schemes from the Council and Councillor Zadrozny (Liberal Democrat Group Leader on the Council). A large number of the remaining submissions expressed support for single-member wards, with some specifically referring to the proposals submitted to the Council by its District Boundary Review Working Group. Over half the respondents objected to any proposal to join the Teversal area with Huthwaite.

26 The Council put forward proposals for a mixed scheme of two single-member, nine two-member and five three-member wards. Under its proposals, two wards would have had variances over 10% by 2019. The Council put forward very limited community identity evidence to support its proposals.

27 Councillor Zadrozny put forward proposals for a mixed scheme of 27 single-member and four two-member wards. His proposals were based on the proposals submitted to the Council by its District Boundary Review Working Group, but subject to minor modifications to reflect the revised electorate forecasts. Under his proposals,

two wards would have had variances of over 10% by 2019. Councillor Zadrozny's proposals were supported by evidence relating to community identities.

28 Under his proposal, Councillor Zadrozny allocated the Hucknall, Kirkby, Sutton and rural areas, nine, eight, 14 and four councillors, respectively. The Council allocated the Hucknall, Kirkby, Sutton and rural areas 10, eight, 13 and four councillors, respectively.

29 We considered that Councillor Zadrozny put forward more persuasive evidence of communities than the Council to support his proposed warding pattern and therefore based the draft recommendations on these proposals, subject to a number of amendments to improve a number of poor variances or provide stronger boundaries.

30 We received 209 submissions in response to the draft recommendations. The Council proposed a reallocation of councillors between Sutton in Ashfield and Hucknall towns (14 members and nine members, respectively, under the draft recommendations and 13 and 10 under the Council's response). In its submission, the Council included evidence arguing why it did not consider the draft recommendations reflected the statutory criteria. The Council's submission was supported by Gloria De Piero MP (Ashfield), and Councillors Aspinall, Baron, Brown and Wilmott. Ashfield District Council Labour Group also put forward the same response as the Council. The Kirkby Central Branch of Ashfield Labour Party, Sutton Central Branch of Ashfield Labour Party and Sutton West Branch of Ashfield Labour Party also expressed support for the Council's response to the draft recommendations. A local resident expressed support for the Council's response.

31 Councillor Zadrozny expressed support for the draft recommendations and also expressed concerns about the Council's response to the draft recommendations. Councillor Madden expressed general support for the draft recommendations. Friends of Kingsway Park and 12 local residents also expressed general support for the draft recommendations.

32 We received 131 submissions commenting on the Hucknall area. One hundred and twenty-three of these submissions expressed concerns about the draft recommendations. A large number of these, including a number of proforma responses, expressed support for the Council's reallocation of 10 councillors to Hucknall under a pattern of one three-member, three two-member and one single-member wards. Keep Hucknall Hucknall (<http://keephucknallhucknall.co.uk/>) submitted: 343 electronic petition responses objecting to the draft recommendations; a petition with 576 signatures objecting to the draft recommendations; 136 proforma letters objecting to the draft recommendations and two supporting them; and 46 proforma letters supporting the Council's response to the draft recommendations and six rejecting them. Eight respondents, including Mark Spencer MP (Sherwood), expressed support for the draft recommendations for Hucknall.

33 In Kirkby in Ashfield, Councillor Butler expressed support for the Council's alternative response for Kirkby in Ashfield. Councillor Smith expressed support for the draft recommendations but suggested ward name changes. Caring About South Kirkby, Friends of Portland Park and eight residents expressed support for the draft recommendation for Kirkby in Ashfield.

34 In Sutton in Ashfield we received a mixture of support and objections to the draft recommendations. A number of respondents requested that Huthwaite & St Mary's ward be renamed Huthwaite & Briereley ward. While there was some general support for a three-member ward covering this area there were objections to the inclusion of St Mary's church and the Lammas Community Centre in the ward. Councillor Kirkham expressed support for the Council's response to the draft recommendations, while Councillor Carroll suggested a three-member ward covering Leamington, Kings Mill and Sutton. Three residents objected to the draft recommendations for Sutton in Ashfield, while 10 supported them, a number expressing specific support for Stanton Hill & Teversal ward. Councillor Hollis and the SAT Community Association also supported the draft recommendations in Sutton in Ashfield.

35 Finally, in the rural area we received general support for the draft recommendations, with suggestions for a few minor amendments and ward name changes.

36 We noted that the Council and Labour Group referred to possible future development in the Hucknall area beyond the five-year forecast period and considered this as some justification for their response across the district. However, we are unable to consider any development beyond the forecast period therefore discounted this evidence, instead focusing on specific community identity arguments.

37 In addition, a large number of respondents expressed a preference for multi-member wards, particularly in the Hucknall area. The Council recommended significant amendments to the draft recommendations in Hucknall, moving away from a pattern of mainly single-member wards. Councillor Zadrozny argued that the Council and Labour Group were recommending different warding patterns for Hucknall (multi-member wards) to the rest of the district where there were a large number of single-member wards. He argued that this might create confusion for electors.

38 We noted the varying concerns and conflicting evidence, but under the terms of this review the Commission has no obligation to consider proposals on the basis of a preference for a warding pattern based on wards with a specific number of councillors per ward.

39 We gave consideration to the evidence received, noting that there was significant evidence for substantially different proposals throughout much of the district. The draft recommendations were based on the evidence received during the first stage of consultation. The evidence received during consultation on the draft recommendations challenged the basis of the draft recommendations. Ultimately, we seek to produce the best electoral arrangements that secure good electoral equality, while also reflecting local communities and securing effective and convenient local government.

40 We also noted that the Council and Labour Group were proposing a different allocation to that put forward in the draft recommendations. Under the draft recommendations Hucknall and Sutton in Ashfield were allocated nine and 14 members, respectively, while in response to the draft recommendations the Council and Labour Group recommended that they are allocated 10 and 13, respectively.

41 We considered the issue of allocation during deliberations on the draft recommendations and noted that under a 35–member council, Hucknall and Sutton in Ashfield are entitled to 9.6 and 13.3 members, respectively. However, we considered at that time that the evidence relating to community identities provided by Councillor Zadrozny outweighed the slight variance from the better allocation.

42 In response to the draft recommendations we received persuasive evidence in support of proposals that provided the better allocation, while also providing stronger boundaries and community identity evidence that secured good levels of electoral equality. We therefore proposed a revised pattern for most of the district which reflected the evidence received during the review and provided a better balance between the statutory criteria.

43 These proposals resulted in significant change to the boundaries of 22 of the 28 wards proposed in the draft recommendations. Owing to the scale of the change proposed we considered it appropriate to conduct a further limited-period consultation on further draft recommendations, in the areas of Hucknall, Sutton in Ashfield and Kirkby in Ashfield, prior to the publication of the final recommendations.

44 In response to this consultation we received a further 36 submissions. Seventeen submissions put forward objections to the further draft recommendations. These particularly commented on the Hucknall area and expressed support for a pattern of single-member wards. Mark Spencer MP objected to the further draft recommendations and provided 1,108 responses to a survey, of which 814 supported single-member wards. A large number of the 36 submissions expressed concern about the move away from a pattern of single-member wards, arguing that single-member wards improve representation and accountability. Respondents also objected to the loss of wards with local names, objecting to the use of names with geographic references like ‘Hucknall North’.

45 Eleven submission expressed support for the further draft recommendations, with a number expressing specific support for our proposals in Hucknall. Four submissions put forward comments on Sutton in Ashfield, one on Kirkby in Ashfield and two commented on the external boundary with Gedling borough.

46 We note the concerns about the boundary between the Hucknall area and Gedling borough, but we are unable to consider the external district boundary under the terms of this review. Therefore, we are unable to consider these comments further.

47 We note that there was a mix of objections and support for the further draft recommendations, particularly in the Hucknall area. However, most of the objections related to our decision to move away from a pattern of mainly single-member wards in Hucknall to a mixed pattern of multi-member wards. The evidence provided relates more to the principle of single-member wards and perceived issues over representation and accountability, rather than objections to the specific formation of the multi-member wards in the further draft recommendations. As stated in paragraph 38, under the terms of this review we have no obligation to consider proposals on the basis of a preference for a warding pattern, based on wards with a specific number of councillors per ward. Therefore, on balance, although we note the objections to a move away from single-member wards, we consider that the evidence received in

response to the draft recommendations is more persuasive and we are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations for Hucknall as final.

48 In the remainder of the district we note the mixture of support and objections, but do not consider there to be compelling new evidence to persuade us to move away from the further draft recommendations. We are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations for the remainder of the district as final.

49 Our final recommendations are for 13 single-member, eight two-member and two three-member wards. Under our final recommendations no ward would have an electoral variance greater than 8% from the district average by 2019. A summary of the proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table 1 (on page 25) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Electoral arrangements

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

- Hucknall (pages 13–17)
- Rural area (page 17)
- Kirkby in Ashfield pages 17–21)
- Sutton in Ashfield (pages 21–24)

51 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table A1 pages 30–1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Hucknall

52 The existing wards of Hucknall Central, Hucknall East, Hucknall North and Hucknall West lie to the south of the district. Our draft recommendations were for single-member Beauvale, Broomhill, Butler’s Hill, Carsic, Hazelgrove, Westville, Whyburn and Wigwam wards and a two-member Wighay & Leen Mills ward.

53 In response to the draft recommendations we received 131 submissions commenting specifically on the Hucknall area. One hundred and twenty–three of these submissions expressed concerns about the draft recommendations. A large number, including a number of proforma responses, also expressed support for the Council’s reallocation of 10 councillors to Hucknall under one three-member, three two-member and one single-member wards. A large number of responses also objected to the omission of ‘Hucknall’ from the ward names. Keep Hucknall Hucknall submitted: 343 electronic petition responses objecting the draft recommendations; a petition with 576 signatures objecting to the draft recommendations; 136 proforma letters objecting to the draft recommendations and two supporting them; and 46 proforma letters supporting the Council’s alternative recommendations and six rejecting them. Eight respondents, including Mark Spencer MP (Sherwood), expressed support for the draft recommendations for Hucknall.

54 The Council and the Labour Group on the Council put forward identical responses to consultation that made significant amendments to the draft

recommendations for this area. The Council and Labour Group argued that our Whyburn ward sought to combine two 'distinct' communities of Beauvale and the Garden Road estate, adding that the areas are divided by the Hucknall bypass and that the Garden Road area looks towards the town centre. They also stated that our Beauvale ward divided the Beauvale estate. They proposed the creation of a three-member Hucknall West ward combining our Beauvale and Westville wards and the area of the Whyburn ward to the west of the Hucknall bypass. Their Hucknall West ward would have 11% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

55 The Council and Labour Group objected to the draft recommendation for a Wighay & Leen Mills ward, highlighting that the ward excluded Leen Mills Primary School and Leen Mills Lane. They also argued that the ward divided the town centre and would become further divided when the Hucknall inner relief road was completed in 2016. In addition, they argued that our Wigwam ward separated the Vaughn Avenue area from the Barbara Square estate, stating that they had an 'affinity'. They therefore proposed a two-member Hucknall North ward that would have 9% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

56 The Council and Labour Group argued that the Longhill Rise area should not be in a ward with Hazelgrove, stating that it has more 'affinity' with the town centre. They also stated that our Butler's Hill and Broomhill wards have a common identity. They also argued that our Butler's Hill ward included the Tesco superstore and Ashgate Road which is 'more aligned to the town centre'. They therefore proposed a two-member Hucknall Central ward and a two-member Hucknall South ward that would have 9% more and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

57 Finally, they proposed a single-member Hucknall East ward that would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. They argued that the east of Hucknall is a recognised community.

58 Four local residents expressed general support for the draft recommendations for the Hucknall area. We also received other general support for the draft recommendations for this area, including from Councillor Zadrozny. Councillor Zadrozny also stated that the Wighay & Leen Mills ward 'protected' a local community identity.

59 We gave careful consideration to the evidence received. The Council and Labour Group argued against specific aspects of the draft recommendations with a number of concerns about the division of communities between wards. We noted that their response to consultation proposed significantly different recommendations to the draft recommendations and that a number of their proposed wards have relatively poor levels of electoral equality. We also noted that there was some argument that the Council and Labour Group's proposed Hucknall West ward would allow any future growth beyond the forecast period to be incorporated without significantly worsening electoral equality. However, as discussed in paragraph 36 we are unable to consider development beyond the forecast period and instead have focused on specific community identity evidence.

60 While we noted that there were road links between the Beauvale and Garden Road estate areas of our Whyburn ward, we acknowledged that the Hucknall bypass

is a strong boundary between them. We also acknowledged that the Beauvale ward boundary divides the Beauvale area between wards.

61 On balance, we considered that the Council and Labour Group provided sufficiently strong evidence to persuade us to move away from the draft recommendations to an alternative warding pattern in this area, including the creation of a three-member Hucknall West ward. However, we did not consider there to be sufficient evidence for a ward with 11% fewer electors than the district average. Therefore, as part of our further draft recommendations we proposed a three-member ward which reflected the community identity evidence received whilst still securing a reasonable level of electoral equality. Included in our Hucknall West ward was an area to the east of Hucknall bypass, around Annie Holgate Junior & Infant School (including the school and its grounds). It was our understanding that children from the Beauvale area attend this school, that there are reasonable road links across the Hucknall bypass via Watnall Road and that there is pedestrian access across the bypass directly into the school. This would result in a Hucknall West ward that has 8% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

62 We acknowledged the Council's and Labour Group's response to consultation to retain the town centre in single ward, particularly that the Hucknall inner relief road will form a barrier, while further strengthening the town centre. To the south we acknowledged their suggestion that Butler's Hill and Broomhill should be in the same ward. To that end, we considered that persuasive evidence had been received to support their Hucknall North, Hucknall Central and Hucknall South wards.

63 We did, however, have concerns about their Hucknall East ward. Although they stated that the east of Hucknall is a recognised community, we did not consider that they provided much evidence to support this. The area to the south is effectively part of Bestwood village (which is in Gedling borough), and while it has road links north into Ashfield district to the Papplewick Lane area, we considered that the Papplewick Lane area would be better served in the Hucknall North ward. We therefore proposed, as part of our further draft recommendations, a three-member Hucknall North ward that included the area to the north of Leen Valley Country Park and the disused railway line. The area forming part of Bestwood village was included in the Hucknall South ward. We acknowledged that this has no direct road links within the district, but considered this reflected the village's close proximity to the south of Hucknall.

64 As a result of our proposal to divide the Council's and Labour Group's Hucknall East between the Hucknall North and Hucknall South wards we proposed a number of amendments to the Hucknall Central, Hucknall North and Hucknall South wards. Our proposed wards for this area reflected the evidence received regarding community identity whilst also providing for electoral equality.

65 With the addition of the Papplewick Lane area and a third councillor to our Hucknall North ward, we also proposed the inclusion of the area around Addison Drive and Coniston Road in Hucknall North ward. We also proposed including the area around Beardall Street in our Hucknall Central ward.

66 Our further draft proposals resulted in the three-member Hucknall North and Hucknall West wards having 7% fewer and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. The two-member Hucknall Central and

Hucknall South wards would have 3% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

67 We recognised that this alternative warding pattern was very different to that consulted on as part of the draft recommendations. We therefore agreed a period of further limited consultation on the alternative warding pattern in this part of the district.

68 In response to the further consultation we received 17 objections to the further draft recommendations. Mark Spencer MP objected to the further draft recommendation proposal to move away from a predominantly single-member ward pattern in Hucknall. He argued that single-member wards provide clearer representation with a single point of contact and reduce the 'occurrence of councillors who "coast" in multiple member wards, relying on the work of their colleagues to cover up for their absence'. He also argued for the use of local names for wards. His submission was supported by 1,108 responses to a survey, of which 814 supported single-member wards. Emma McClarkin MEP also objected to the further draft recommendations, expressing a preference for single-member wards. A large number of the other objections put forward the same objections to the further draft recommendations. A local resident provided 36 copies of a proforma letter signed by local residents objecting to the further draft recommendations. These letters included identical argument to the large number of other objections.

69 The Council expressed general support for the further draft recommendations. The proposals were also supported by Councillors Aspinall, Baron, Butler and Wilmott. Five local residents expressed support for the further draft recommendations for Hucknall. Another resident also expressed support, but recommended an amendment to move the boundary of Hucknall West to the bypass.

70 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received in response to the further draft recommendations. We have considered this evidence alongside that received in response to our initial request for warding arrangements and also in response to the draft recommendations. While we acknowledge that there are objections to the further draft recommendations, particularly to the move away from single-member wards to multi-member wards, we do not consider that the evidence received was compelling. As stated in paragraph 38, we note the varying concerns and conflicting evidence, but under the terms of this review the Commission has no obligation to consider proposals on the basis of a preference for a warding pattern based on wards with a specific number of councillors per ward.

71 We do not consider that any respondent has put forward strong evidence to persuade us that the further draft recommendations do not reflect community identities. We note the request to revert to the bypass for Hucknall West ward, but as stated above, we do not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify a ward with 11% fewer electors per councillor than the district average, particularly given the alternative proposal that we have identified.

72 We also note the objections to our proposed ward names and while we acknowledge these concerns, in light of a lack of locally generated alternatives for these specific wards we propose retaining the ward names in the further draft recommendations. We are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations for these wards as final.

73 Our final recommendations are for three-member Hucknall North and Hucknall West wards with 7% fewer and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively, and two-member Hucknall Central and Hucknall South wards with 3% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average, respectively. Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 30–1) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Rural area

74 The existing wards of Jacksdale, Selston and Underwood lie to the west of the district, north of Hucknall, but south of Kirkby in Ashfield. The draft recommendations were for single-member Jacksdale and Underwood wards and a two-member Selston ward which would have 2% fewer, 3% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

75 In response to the draft recommendations the Council and Labour Group expressed support for the draft recommendations. Selston Parish Council expressed general support for the draft recommendations, but objected to the proposal to amend the boundary between Jacksdale and Selston wards. A local resident argued that Jacksdale ward should be renamed Jacksdale & Westwood ward.

76 We considered the representations received and noted the general support for the draft recommendations in this area. We also noted Selston Parish Council's suggestion that the existing boundary between Jacksdale and Selston wards should be retained. However, this modification would have worsened electoral equality in these wards from 2% fewer and 6% fewer, respectively, to 7% fewer and 4% fewer and we did not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify this. In addition, we also noted the requests for ward name changes, but did not consider there to be persuasive evidence to support these and do not propose to adopt them.

77 On balance, in light of the evidence received we did not recommend further draft recommendations for this area. As we received no further comments on these wards we are confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final. Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 30–1) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Kirkby in Ashfield

78 The existing wards of Kirkby in Ashfield Central, Kirkby in Ashfield East, Kirkby in Ashfield West and Woodhouse lie in the centre of the district, to the south of Sutton in Ashfield. The draft recommendations were for single-member Greenwood, Old Kirkby, Kingsway, Hollinwell, Lower Coxmoor and Kirkby Central wards and a two-member Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse ward which would have 4% more, 4% more, 4% fewer, 2% fewer, 4% more, 4% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

79 In response to the draft recommendations for this area we received a mixture of support and objections. The Council and Labour Group proposed a significantly amended warding pattern for this area. They objected to the Greenwood, Kirkby Central and Old Kirkby wards. They argued that our proposal split the 1920/30s housing on Rowan Drive and Willow Avenue from the roads off Greenwood Drive

which they considered a single community. They also said that this area was further split from the other 1920/30s housing in our Kirkby Central ward.

80 They proposed a single-member The Park ward, covering all the 1920/30s housing in this area. To the north they proposed a single-member Larwood ward, comprising the more modern estate off Wentworth and Lindrick roads and the area to the west of Sutton Road. They proposed amendments to our Old Kirkby ward, taking in an area of Kingsway ward around Lindley's Lane and renaming it Kirkby Cross & Portland, reflecting a local monument and park within the proposed ward. Their single-member Larwood, Kirkby Cross & Portland and The Park wards would have 2% fewer, 10% fewer and 9% more electors per councillor than the district average, respectively.

81 The Council and Labour Group also objected to our Hollinwell, Kingsway and Lower Coxmoor wards. They argued that our Lower Coxmoor ward split the more modern housing of the Coxmoor estate, placing part of it with the older Coal Board housing and the remainder in the Hollinwell ward which crosses Diamond Avenue, mixing part of the Coxmoor estate with the Edwardian villa-type housing to the south. They argued that Diamond Avenue is a major arterial route and, as such, a 'key dividing line'. Finally, they argued that our Kingsway ward divided a community of Edwardian villa-type housing, splitting it between Kingsway and Hollinwell wards, while including an area of more modern housing estates in the Kingsway ward.

82 As a result of these concerns the Council and Labour Group proposed a new warding pattern. They proposed a ward called Summit comprising the town centre and old Coal Board housing. They argued that the boundary would separate this from the more modern Coxmoor estate, while the name reflected the old 'Summit' colliery. They also proposed an Abbey Hill ward covering the Lower Coxmoor estate, bounded to the south by Diamond Avenue. The name Abbey Hill would reflect the name of the local school and was known locally. Finally, they proposed a Kingsway ward comprising the Edwardian villa housing in the Kingsway estate. Their single-member Abbey Hill, Kingsway and Summit wards would have 6% fewer, 9% more and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

83 Finally, the Council and Labour Group supported our Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse ward, but stated that it should be called Annesley & Nuncargate, with 'Nuncargate' well-known and reflecting the strong cricketing heritage associated with Harold Larwood, the England and Nottinghamshire cricketer who was born in the area.

84 Councillor Zadrozny expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area and objected to the Council's and Labour Group's response to the draft recommendations. He argued that the Council's and Labour Group's Kirkby Cross & Portland ward created a ward combining areas that are isolated from one another. He also questioned why they proposed a ward called Larwood, arguing that Harold Larwood was born in Nuncargate. Additionally he questioned why they proposed the inclusion of Nuncargate in the Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse ward name.

85 We received a further 13 submissions commenting specifically on Kirkby in Ashfield. Ten of these submissions expressed support for the draft recommendations. Councillor Smith supported the draft recommendations in this area, although requested that we reconsider the ward names of Lower Coxmoor and

Kirkby Central. Councillor Davis generally supported the draft recommendations for this area, but stated that Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse ward should be renamed Annesley & Nuncargate ward. Councillor Butler expressed support for the Council's response to the draft recommendations for Kirkby in Ashfield.

86 We gave careful consideration to the evidence received. We noted the Council and Labour Group recommended substantially different warding arrangements to the draft recommendations. They provided persuasive evidence for their proposed wards, but noted that a number of their wards secured relatively poor electoral equality.

87 We noted the general support for the draft recommendations and Councillor Zadrozny's concerns about the Council's and Labour Group's response to the draft recommendations.

88 We concurred with the Council's and Labour Group's argument that our originally proposed Greenwood, Old Kirkby and Kirkby Central wards split the area of 1920/30s housing between wards. Our tour of the area suggested this would be better served in a single ward. We also noted that the Council's and Labour Group's evidence regarding the Lower Coxmoor and Kingsway areas was somewhat contradictory to that of Councillor Zadrozny. On balance, following our tour of the area, our observations were that Diamond Avenue is a barrier between Lower Coxmoor and Kingsway and provides for an easily identifiable boundary. In addition, we considered that the Council's and Labour Group's response to the draft recommendations to place the old Coal Board housing in a different ward from the more modern housing of the Coxmoor estate better reflected local communities. We did have some concerns about the Council and Labour Group's response to include the housing of Lindley's Lane in its Kirkby Cross & Portland ward, although our tour of the area indicated that there are relatively good road links via B6020.

89 On balance, we considered that the Council's and Labour Group's response to the draft recommendations would reflect community identities and therefore persuaded us to move away from the draft recommendations to an alternative warding pattern. However, as stated above, there were a number of wards with relatively poor levels of electoral equality. We therefore developed a pattern of wards for Kirkby in Ashfield which reflected the evidence received relating to community identity, reflected our observations from the tour of the area and provided for reasonable levels of electoral equality.

90 The Council's and Labour Group's The Park and Summit wards would have 9% more and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. While we considered that they provided reasonable evidence to support these wards and that they use sensible boundaries, we did not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify the poor levels of electoral equality. We looked at options to amend the boundary between the wards but concluded this would result in an arbitrary boundary. We considered that the best option would be to combine them to create a two-member Summit ward which would have equal to the number of electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

91 We also proposed amendments to the Council's and Labour Group's Kingsway, Kirkby Cross & Portland and Larwood wards. Our proposed Larwood ward also

included the area around Franderground Drive. Our visit to the area confirmed that this area has reasonable access into the Larwood ward via Sutton Road.

92 We did not consider there to be sufficient evidence to justify the poor level of electoral equality for the proposed Kingsway ward, which would have 9% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. In developing a pattern of wards, we looked at options to address this and noted that they were limited. As stated above, we did not consider that a boundary crossing Diamond Avenue would reflect communities, which meant the only option was to transfer an area to the west of the ward to Kirkby Cross & Portland, which limits the options available. We proposed including the Hodgkinson Road area in the Kirkby Cross & Portland ward. We acknowledged that this area has access into Kingsway Park, but our tour of the area indicated that the area has reasonable access into the Kirkby Cross & Portland ward via the B6020.

93 We also noted the objections to a number of ward names. We noted particularly Councillor Zadrozny's concern about the Council's and Labour Group's proposed Larwood name. Given the contradictory evidence, we requested local views on the name of this ward.

94 We recognised that this alternative warding pattern was very different to that consulted on as part of the draft recommendations. We therefore agreed a period of further limited consultation on our revised pattern of single-member Abbey Hill, Kingsway, Kirkby Cross & Portland and Larwood wards with 6% fewer, 4% more, 6% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively, and two-member Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse and Summit wards with 6% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor, respectively.

95 In response to the further draft recommendations we received limited support for the further proposals. Councillor Madden objected to the further proposals, expressing a preference for the draft recommendations. She objected to our Kirkby Cross & Portland ward arguing that this comprised two 'very different' areas, historic Old Kirkby and Portland, which comprises new homes 'inhabited by many incomers to the area'. She also stated that Larwood ward should be called Greenwood ward, stating that Harold Larwood's association was with the Annesley Woodhouse area. Finally, she questioned the levels of electoral equality under the further draft recommendations, suggesting that it be worse under them.

96 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the general support for our further recommendations, but also the objections put forward by Councillor Madden. We note her concerns about our Kirkby Cross & Portland ward, which we identified in drawing up the further draft recommendations. However, it is not possible to remove the Hodgkinson Road area without producing unacceptably poor levels of electoral equality. We also note her concerns about the worsening level of electoral equality between the draft and further draft recommendations. While we acknowledge that the further draft recommendations produced slightly worse electoral equality than the draft recommendations, this was in order to reflect the further evidence of community identity. Our recommendations seek to balance electoral equality with the other statutory criteria and we considered that our further draft recommendations still secured good levels of electoral equality. Finally, we note Councillor Madden's concerns about the Larwood ward name.

However, we identified that Greenwood Drive does not actually fall within the ward and would therefore be inappropriate. In light of the limited alternatives we are retaining the name Larwood.

97 We are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations for this area as final. Our final recommendations are for single-member Abbey Hill, Kingsway, Kirkby Cross & Portland and Larwood wards with 6% fewer, 4% more, 6% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively, and two-member Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse and Summit wards with 6% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor, respectively. Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 30–1) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Sutton in Ashfield

98 The existing wards of Sutton in Ashfield Central, Sutton in Ashfield East, Sutton in Ashfield North and Sutton in Ashfield West lie in the north of the district. The draft recommendations were for single-member Ashfields, Carsic, Leamington, Quarrydale, Stanton Hill & Teversal, Sutton Junction & Harlow Wood and Sutton Central wards which would have 2% more, 3% fewer, 3% fewer, 3% fewer, 6% fewer, 5% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. We also proposed two-member King's Mill & Sutton Lawns and Skegby and three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's wards which would have 7% fewer, 8% fewer and 7% fewer electors than the district average by 2019, respectively.

99 In response to the draft recommendations for this area we received a mixture of support and objections. The Council and Labour Group proposed amendments to the draft recommendations, although they expressed support for Stanton Hill & Teversal and Sutton Junction & Harlow Wood wards. They proposed only minor amendments to the Carsic and Quarrydale wards, transferring Carsic Lane and Ashgate into Carsic ward and the properties on Stoneyford Road into their The Dales ward. They also proposed transferring Slater Street and John Street and all of Redcliffe Street to their Central & New Cross ward. Their single-member Carsic and The Dales wards would have 5% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

100 The Council and Labour Group also proposed relatively minor modifications to the Ashfields and Leamington wards, arguing that these wards had excluded key areas of these communities. They proposed moving the boundary between these wards to Kirkby Road, arguing that the roads to the west of this area are not 'recognised as belonging to the Leamington community area'. They also argued against the exclusion of the area around Coronation Street from Leamington under the draft recommendations. Their Ashfields and Leamington wards would both have 9% more electors per councillor than the district average, by 2019.

101 In the remainder of the Sutton in Ashfield area the Council and Labour Group proposed more substantial amendments to the draft recommendations, particularly around our King's Mill & Sutton Lawns ward. They argued that that the boundary of the King's Mill & Sutton Lawns ward that runs along Outram Street, Forest Street and High Pavement effectively divided communities and split the centre of Sutton in Ashfield's shopping area. In addition, they argued that the Dalestorth Street area should be included in a ward with the town centre rather than the Skegby ward,

whereas the Dalestorth Road area is more associated with the Hill Crescent area which they proposed transferring to Skegby ward. As a result, they proposed significantly modified proposals for this area comprising two-member Central & New Cross and Skegby wards with 1% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

102 To the west of the town centre, the Council and Labour Group expressed support for a ward reflecting the Huthwaite community, but argued that the proposed three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's ward extended beyond Huthwaite to include an area associated with the town centre. They also argued that while the ward name included 'St Mary's', the ward did not include many of the roads associated with the church. They therefore proposed a two-member Huthwaite & Brierley ward and single-member St Mary's ward which would have equal to the average and 10% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

103 Councillor Zadrozny expressed general support for the draft recommendations in Sutton in Ashfield. He argued that the draft recommendations retained boundaries between communities that already worked and modified them to work, where they previously did not. However, he did object to the proposal to divide Redcliffe Street between our Quarrydale and Skegby wards, and argued that the amendment to the boundary between Carsic and Quarrydale meant this was no longer necessary. Finally, he stated that the Council and Labour Group made 'errors or suggest[ed] alterations' that worsen the links under the draft recommendations.

104 Councillor Aspinall put forward very similar comments to those from the Council and Labour Group. Councillor Kirkham expressed support for the Council's response to the draft recommendations. Councillor Carroll expressed support for the majority of the Council's response in the Sutton in Ashfield area, although expressed concern that its Leamington ward still excluded key parts of that community. Councillor Hollis expressed support for the draft recommendations to create a three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's ward.

105 We received three responses from residents arguing that the draft recommendations omitted key parts of the Leamington community. There was some support for the creation of a three-member ward combining the Leamington community with King's Mill & Sutton Lawns. Six respondents requested that the Huthwaite & St Mary's ward be renamed Huthwaite & Brierley, while also arguing that St Mary's church and the Lamma Community Centre should be omitted from the ward.

106 Ten residents and a community group expressed general support for the draft recommendations for this area.

107 We gave careful consideration to the evidence received in response to our draft recommendations. We noted that there was some support for our draft recommendations, but also submissions putting forward significantly different warding arrangements. However, we also noted that there was general support for the Stanton & Teversal and Sutton Junction & Harlow Wood wards and were therefore minded to confirm these wards as final. While there was some general support for the draft recommendations, the evidence received supported amendments to the boundaries in Sutton in Ashfield. We considered that the

amendments to the boundary between the Carsic and Quarrydale wards proposed during consultation would better reflect communities.

108 To the south of this area we noted the evidence received supporting amendments to the Ashfield and Leamington wards would better reflect the local community, but would also worsen electoral equality. Therefore, while reflecting the evidence received, we proposed in our further draft recommendations a pattern of wards which provided for reasonable levels of electoral equality. Our further draft proposals did not include Charnwood Street in Ashfields ward and Coburn Street in Leamington ward. We acknowledged that while transferring these streets, particularly Coburn Street, might reflect local communities less well, it resulted in a pattern of wards which have good levels of electoral equality. Our Ashfields and Leamington wards had 4% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

109 The Council and Labour Group proposed significant amendments to Sutton Central and King's Mill & Sutton Lawns wards and proposed amendments to the boundary between Skegby and the King's Mill & Sutton Lawns wards. On balance we considered that the Council and Labour Group put forward compelling evidence to suggest that our proposals divided the town centre along Outram Street, Forest Street and High Pavement and we considered that their response to the draft recommendations provided better boundaries in this area and created a more compact ward, with a smaller east/west extent. We had some concerns about their suggestion to transfer the Hill Crescent area to Skegby ward, but observed from our tour of the area that Mansfield Road is quite a strong barrier between this and the rest of the proposed King's Mill & Sutton Lawns ward. In addition, we observed that this area has road links into Skegby via Mansfield Road and Kings Mill Road East. Finally, we considered that the Dalestorth Street area has good links into the town centre area.

110 We therefore adopted the Council's Skegby ward without amendment as part of our further draft proposals. We proposed a minor amendment to their Central & New Cross wards, transferring Coburn Street into the ward from their Leamington ward to improve electoral equality in Leamington ward. In addition, we considered that the boundary between the St Mary's and Central & New Cross wards was somewhat ill-defined and therefore proposed a minor amendment to use a more easily identifiable boundary.

111 Finally in this area, although there was some support for a three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's ward, we noted the Council's and Labour Group's concern that the our proposed ward extended to take in what they considered to be part of the town centre. Indeed, we noted that their revised St Mary's ward extends further into the town centre. We therefore recommended moving away from the draft recommendations for a three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's ward and proposed a two-member Huthwaite & Brierley ward and single-member St Mary's ward as part of our further draft proposals. Taken together with the amendments to the Ashfields and Central & New Cross wards, discussed above, this would have resulted in a St Mary's ward with a variance of 19% by 2019. We therefore transferred an area of the Council's and Labour Group's St Mary's ward around Columbia Avenue and Huthwaite Road to the Huthwaite & Brierley ward. This area has good links in to Huthwaite and resulted in the St Mary's ward having 5% more electors per councillor

than the district average by 2019, while the Huthwaite & Brierley ward would have 7% more.

112 We recognised that this alternative warding pattern was significantly different to that consulted on as part of the draft recommendations. We therefore agreed a period of further limited consultation on our revised pattern of single-member Ashfields, Carsic, Leamington, St Mary's, Stanton Hill & Teversal, Sutton Junction & Harlow Wood and The Dales wards with 4% more, 5% more, 7% more, 5% more, 6% fewer, 5% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, and two-member Central & New Cross, Huthwaite & Brierley and Skegby wards, with equal to the average, 7% more and 4% more electors per councillor.

113 In response to the further draft recommendations we received limited comments on our proposals in this area. There was general support from the Council. A local resident supported our proposal to move away from a three-member Huthwaite & St Mary's ward. Councillor Madden objected to the proposal to rename Quarrydale ward as The Dales ward, arguing that a lot of streets are named after Quarrydale and therefore the name should revert to Quarrydale.

114 A local resident raised concerns about the impact of future development around Ashland Road, North Street and Blackwell Road, while acknowledging that at this stage the developments are a matter of some 'conjecture'. Another local resident suggested reducing the number of councillors in this area to nine.

115 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received and note that there was some support for the further draft recommendations. We also note the concerns of a resident about development around Ashland Road, North Street and Blackwell Road. However, we do not consider that these developments will be built and occupied within the forecast period and therefore are not considering them as part of the final recommendations. We also note the suggestion that the Sutton in Ashfield area should be represented by nine councillors, but do not support this as the further draft recommendations gave this area the correct allocation of 13 members. Finally, we note Councillor Madden's comments about The Dales ward. While we acknowledge that Quarrydale is a prominent name in the area, including the school, we also note that there are a number of other road names in the area with 'dales' in them and therefore remain satisfied that The Dales is an appropriate ward name.

116 We are therefore confirming the further draft recommendations as final. Our final recommendations for this area can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 30–1) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

117 Table 1 shows the impact of the final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2019 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2012	2019
Number of councillors	35	35
Number of electoral wards	23	23
Average number of electors per councillor	2,635	2,775
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	1	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Ashfield District Council should comprise 35 councillors serving 23 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish council electoral arrangements

118 As a result of the proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Annesley & Felley Grouped Parish Council and Selston parish.

119 Annesley & Felley Grouped Parish Council is current represented by 13 parish councillors. As a result of the final recommendation and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Annesley & Felley Grouped Parish Council. As Annesley and Felley parishes are grouped a common parish council affected by the proposals for warding arrangements, this includes making provision for the latter to be separately represented on the parish council.

Final recommendations

Annesley & Felley Grouped Parish Council should return 13 parish councillors, as at present: Annesley parish ward of Annesley parish (returning 10 members); Toll Bar ward of Annesley parish ward of Annesley parish (returning two members); and Felley parish (returning one councillor). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

120 Selston Parish Council is currently represented by 21 parish councillors representing three parish wards. As a result of the proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements.

Final recommendations

Selston Parish Council should return 21 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Jacksdale (returning six members); Selston (returning 10 members); and Underwood (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

121 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Ashfield District 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 Ashfield District Council in 2015.

Equalities

122 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 Ashfield District Council

123 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Ashfield District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Ashfield District Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Ashfield District Council on our interactive maps at <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Ashfield District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey Hill	1	2,436	2,436	-8%	2,601	2,601	-6%
2	Annesley & Kirkby Woodhouse	2	5,590	2,795	6%	5,903	2,952	6%
3	Ashfields	1	2,614	2,614	-1%	2,893	2,893	4%
4	Carsic	1	2,896	2,896	10%	2,922	2,922	5%
5	Central & New Cross	2	5,514	2,757	5%	5,573	2,787	0%
6	Hucknall Central	2	5,402	2,701	3%	5,705	2,853	3%
7	Hucknall North	3	7,050	2,350	-11%	7,773	2,591	-7%
8	Hucknall South	2	5,308	2,654	1%	5,472	2,736	-1%
9	Hucknall West	3	7,135	2,378	-10%	7,638	2,546	-8%
10	Huthwaite & Brierley	2	5,658	2,829	7%	5,938	2,969	7%
11	Jacksdale	1	2,662	2,662	1%	2,725	2,725	-2%
12	Kingsway	1	2,492	2,492	-5%	2,886	2,886	4%
13	Kirkby Cross & Portland	1	2,844	2,844	8%	2,931	2,931	6%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Ashfield District Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14 Larwood	1	2,685	2,685	2%	2,958	2,958	7%
15 Leamington	1	2,830	2,830	7%	2,962	2,962	7%
16 Selston	2	5,133	2,567	-3%	5,220	2,610	-6%
17 Skegby	2	5,329	2,665	1%	5,772	2,886	4%
18 St Mary's	1	2,844	2,844	8%	2,923	2,923	5%
19 Stanton Hill & Teversal	1	2,496	2,496	-5%	2,599	2,599	-6%
20 Summit	2	5,421	2,711	3%	5,525	2,763	0%
21 Sutton Junction & Harlow Wood	1	2,692	2,692	2%	2,921	2,921	5%
22 The Dales	1	2,567	2,567	-3%	2,595	2,595	-6%
23 Underwood	1	2,626	2,626	0%	2,688	2,688	-3%
Totals	35	92,224	-	-	97,123	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,635	-	-	2,775	-

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

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

Appendix B

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 or division, expressed in parishes or existing wards or divisions, 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 Committee 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 www.nationalparks.gov.uk
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 www.nalc.gov.uk
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 borough, 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 borough council
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