LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS AND BOUNDARIES FOR THE WREKIN IN SHROPSHIRE

Report to the Secretary of State for the Environment

December 1996

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements and boundaries for The Wrekin in Shropshire.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

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Professor Michael Clarke

Robin Gray

Bob Scruton

David Thomas

Adrian Stungo (Chief Executive)

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Local Government Commission for England

6 December 1996

Dear Secretary of State

On 2 April 1996 you directed the Commission to undertake a review of the district of The Wrekin under the Local Government Act 1992, having regard to the *Policy and Procedure Guidance* that you issued in March 1996.

The Commission has now completed that review, and this report sets out its final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements and boundaries in the area. The Commission has consulted widely in the review area, and considered all the evidence and opinion submitted to it. It published its draft recommendations in September, and consulted further on them.

The Commission has now formulated its final recommendations in the light of the responses received to its draft recommendations. It has, for the most part, confirmed its draft recommendations, although it has modified some of its initial warding proposals in the light of further evidence.

The Commission is therefore recommending to you that The Wrekin should be served by 54 councillors representing 34 wards, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. It is recommended that the whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of The Wrekin on 11 April 1996. It published its draft recommendations on electoral arrangements and boundaries on 3 September 1996, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- This report summarises the submissions received by the Commission following the publication of its draft recommendations, and contains its final recommendations to the Secretary of State.

The Commission found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in The Wrekin because:

- in 21 of the 33 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district;
- in two of these wards the number of electors per councillor varies by 40 per cent or more from the average;
- in five years time, the number of electors per councillor is likely to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 24 of the wards.

The Commission's final recommendations for electoral arrangements are that:

- The Wrekin should have 54 councillors: rather than 46 as at present;
- there should be 34 wards, rather than 33 as at present;
- the ward boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be amended;
- elections should continue to take place every four years.

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

- They would provide only eight wards with the number of electors per councillor varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average;
- They are projected to provide six wards with the number of electors per councillor varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in five years time;
- They provide for changes to the warding arrangements of Wellington Town Council, Newport Town Council, Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council, Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council and Hadley Parish Council;
- They provide for changes to the boundaries of the parishes of Hollinswood & Randlay, Stirchley & Brookside, Wellington, Ketley, Oakengates, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, The Gorge, Madeley, Hadley, St George's & Priorslee and Lilleshall & Donnington.

All further representations on these recommendations should be made to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who will not place an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 16 January 1997.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements and boundaries for the district of The Wrekin in Shropshire.

2 In 1995, the Commission undertook reviews of local government structure, boundaries and electoral arrangements in 21 individual districts. Subsequently, the Secretary of State, in exercise of his powers under the Local Government Act 1992, directed the Commission to undertake further reviews in the eight areas where he had accepted that unitary authorities be established. One of these areas was The Wrekin.

3 In undertaking the directed reviews, the Commission was required:

- to have regard to the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992:
  - (a) to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) to secure effective and convenient local government.
- subject to that, to apply the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, so far as was practicable; and
- to have regard to the Secretary of State's *Policy and Procedure Guidance* (March 1996).

4 The Commission has also published *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (March 1996), which sets out the approach it is taking to electoral reviews. Copies of this *Guidance* (and supplement issued in September 1996) as well as the Secretary of State's *Guidance* are available from the Commission. Extracts from the relevant statutes were included within the Commission's draft recommendation reports.

5 Under the terms of the Secretary of State's Direction and the Local Government Act 1992, it was open to the Commission to make recommendations in relation to structural and boundary issues, as well as electoral arrangements. However, the Commission was limited in the action it could take on structural matters, since an Order[1] was made in July this year confirming the establishment of the new unitary authority, and the 1992 Act precludes a return to a two-tier structure.

6 As required by the 1992 Act, the Commission took into account all representations it received in relation to administrative boundaries (that is, those between local authorities or parishes). However, it also had regard to the Secretary of State's *Guidance* that "if the Commission becomes aware of an issue relating to an authority's boundaries or parishing which merits consideration, it may prefer to recommend that there should be a review of boundaries at a later date". The Commission took the view that, given the tight timetable on which the review had to be conducted, it should focus only on boundary changes which warranted urgent revision. It was not persuaded that any proposals put to us were of this nature in relation to the district boundary, but was persuaded there were a number of parish boundaries that required consideration. The review has therefore focused on the electoral arrangements within the The Wrekin area.

7 This review has not fulfilled the Commission's obligation under section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 to undertake a periodic electoral review of The Wrekin at some future date as, independent of any review the Secretary of State may direct, it is required to undertake such reviews of each principal local authority area in England every ten to fifteen years. The Commission will be able to address electoral issues in the course of that review.

8 The review was in four stages (Figure 1).

1 *Shropshire (District of The Wrekin) (Structural Change) Order 1996, SI 1996 No.1866*

Figure 1:
Stages of the Review

Stage	Description of stage
Stage One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Stage Two	The Commission's analysis and deliberation
Stage Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation
Stage Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State for the Environment

9 Stage One commenced on 11 April 1996. The Commission wrote to The Wrekin District Council inviting it to make proposals for change. Copies of that letter were sent to Shropshire County Council, other district councils in Shropshire, West Mercia Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Shropshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, the Wrekin Area Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the area, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in Shropshire and the headquarters of the main political parties. The Commission also published a public notice in local newspapers, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further.

10 At Stage Two the Commission considered all the representations received during Stage One and formulated its draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 3 September 1996 with the publication of the Commission's report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements and Boundaries for The Wrekin in Shropshire*. Copies were sent to all those to whom the Commission wrote at the start of the review and those who wrote to the Commission during the initial consultation stage (Stage One), inviting comments on the Commission's preliminary conclusions. The Commission placed a public notice in local newspapers, issued a press release and invited the District Council to advertise the report more widely.

12 Finally, during Stage Four the Commission reconsidered these draft recommendations in the light of the views expressed during Stage Three.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

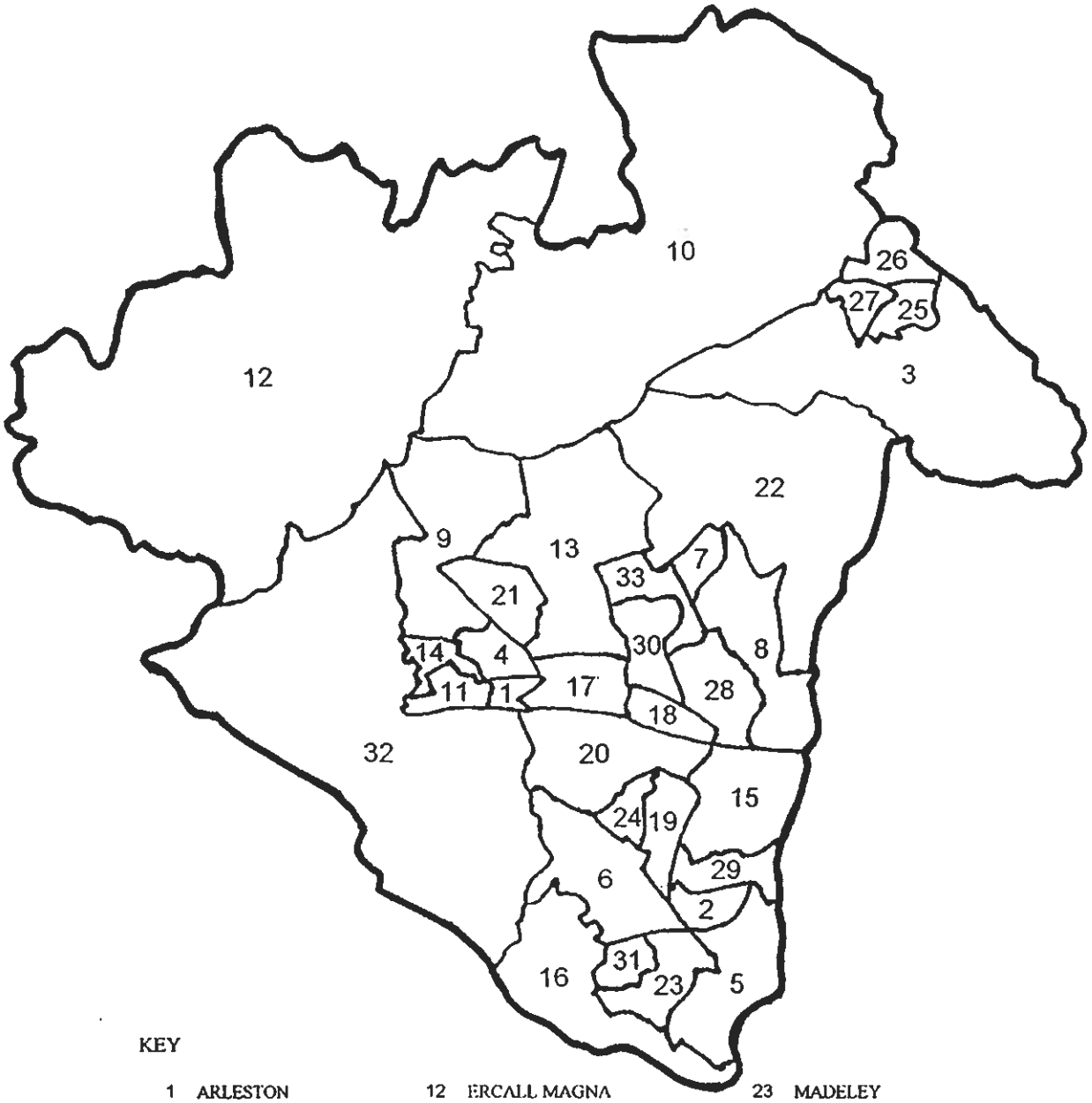
13 The Wrekin district comprises an area of 26,000 hectares, and encompasses the area of Telford New Town in addition to significant areas that are rural in nature. The district acts as a focus for development within both the county of Shropshire and the West Midlands region and has experienced a 63 per cent increase in electorate since 1974, principally focused on the new town area in the south and central parts of the district. The district is fully parished with a total of 28 parishes.

14 The District Council has 46 councillors elected from 33 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2). Twenty wards are represented by a single councillor, while 13 are represented by two councillors. The whole council is elected every four years, with the next elections taking place in May 1997. The current electorate of the district is 109,992 (February 1996), and each councillor represents an average of 2,391 electors. The District Council forecasts that the electorate will increase to 114,347 by the year 2001, which would change the average number of electors per councillor to 2,486 (Figure 2). The 1996 Order made no change to the electoral arrangements in the district.

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

16 Since the last electoral review was completed by the Local Government Boundary Commission in 1978, changes in population and electorate have not been evenly spread across the district and, as a result, the number of electors per councillor varies significantly from the average in a number of district wards. In particular, there are currently 21 wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average, and 12 wards where it varies by more than 20 per cent from the average. Currently, Leegomery ward has 77 per cent more electors per councillor than the average; in other words, the councillor for this ward represents 4,243 electors compared to the average of 2,391.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in The Wrekin



KEY

1	ARLESTON	12	ERCALL MAGNA	23	MADELEY
2	BROOKSIDE	13	HADLEY	24	MALINSLEE
3	CHURCH ASTON	14	HAYGATE	25	NEWPORT EAST
4	COLLEGE	15	HOLLINSWOOD/RANDLAY	26	NEWPORT NORTH
5	CUCKOO OAK	16	IRONBRIDGE (THE GORGE)	27	NEWPORT WEST
6	DAWLEY MAGNA	17	KETLEY	28	PRIORSLEE
7	DONNINGTON	18	KETLEY BANK	29	STIRCHLEY
8	DONNINGTON WOOD	19	LANGLEY	30	WOMBRIDGE
9	DOTHILL AND PARK	20	LAWLEY	31	WOODSIDE
10	EDGMOND	21	LEEGOMERY	32	WROCKWARDINE
11	ERCALL	22	LILLESHALL	33	WROCKWARDINE WOOD

Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

			1996 (Current)			2001 (Projected)		
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arleston	1	1,868	1,868	-22	1,807	1,807	-27
2	Brookside	2	4,233	2,117	-12	4,048	2,024	-19
3	Church Aston	1	1,433	1,433	-40	1,401	1,401	-44
4	College	1	2,174	2,174	-9	2,160	2,160	-13
5	Cuckoo Oak	2	4,095	2,048	-14	3,934	1,967	-21
6	Dawley Magna	2	6,336	3,168	33	6,724	3,362	35
7	Donnington	2	3,367	1,684	-30	3,265	1,633	-34
8	Donnington Wood	1	2,743	2,743	15	4,041	4,041	63
9	Dothill & Park	2	6,330	3,165	32	6,505	3,253	31
10	Edgmond	1	2,302	2,302	-4	2,249	2,249	-10
11	Ercall	1	1,980	1,980	-17	1,932	1,932	-22
12	Ercall Magna	1	2,675	2,675	12	2,630	2,630	6
13	Hadley	2	3,794	1,897	-21	4,079	2,040	-18
14	Haygate	1	2,188	2,188	-9	2,137	2,137	-14
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	2	4,656	2,328	-3	4,653	2,327	-6
16	Ironbridge (The Gorge)	1	2,321	2,321	-3	2,575	2,575	4
17	Ketley	1	2,365	2,365	-1	2,568	2,568	3
18	Ketley Bank	1	2,088	2,088	-13	2,073	2,073	-17
19	Langley	1	2,514	2,514	5	2,671	2,671	7
20	Lawley	1	3,259	3,259	36	4,875	4,875	96
21	Leegomery	1	4,243	4,243	77	4,597	4,597	85
22	Lilleshall	1	2,842	2,842	19	3,079	3,079	24
23	Madeley	2	4,370	2,185	-9	4,275	2,138	-14
24	Malinslee	2	3,452	1,726	-28	3,361	1,681	-32
25	Newport East	1	2,296	2,296	-4	2,236	2,236	-10
26	Newport North	1	3,120	3,120	31	3,184	3,184	28
27	Newport West	1	2,725	2,725	14	2,637	2,637	6
28	Priorslee	2	5,530	2,765	16	5,890	2,945	19
29	Stirchley	1	3,167	3,167	32	3,330	3,330	34
30	Wombridge	2	4,542	2,271	-5	4,536	2,268	-9
31	Woodside	2	4,626	2,313	-3	4,433	2,217	-11
32	Wrockwardine	1	2,598	2,598	9	2,775	2,775	12
33	Wrockwardine Wood	2	3,760	1,880	-21	3,686	1,843	-26
	Totals	**46**	**109,992**	-	-	**114,347**	-	-
	Averages	-	-	**2,391**	-	-	**2,486**	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on The Wrekin District Council's submission.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Church Aston ward are relatively over-represented by 40 per cent, while Leegomery ward is relatively under-represented by 77 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 Since the publication of the Commission's draft recommendations, amendments to ward forecasts have been made in certain cases - see Chapter 4.

3. THE COMMISSION'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One, the Commission received a submission from The Wrekin District Council on electoral arrangements in the district. It also received 16 submissions from parish and town councils, local organisations and residents. In the light of these representations, the Commission formulated its preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements and Boundaries for The Wrekin in Shropshire,* published on 3 September 1996. The Commission proposed that The Wrekin should be served by 54 councillors, serving 33 wards. The Commission also proposed changes to some ward and parish boundaries:

(i) in the town of Newport, the Commission proposed the creation of a new ward of Newport South, in addition to revising the boundaries of the three existing wards of Newport East, Newport North and Newport West;

(ii) the pattern of parishes constituting the wards of Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine should be reconfigured;

(iii) the ward of Church Aston should be altered to include the village of Lilleshall immediately to the south;

(iv) the ward of Dawley Magna should have an extra councillor, so that it would be represented by three councillors;

(v) the wards of Malinslee and Langley should be combined to create a new ward of Malinslee & Langley represented by three councillors;

(vi) there should be modifications to the boundaries of Hollinswood & Randlay, Stirchley and Brookside wards;

(vii) there should be a modification to the boundary between Arleston ward and Ketley ward;

(viii) there should be an additional councillor for Leegomery ward on its existing boundaries;

(ix) the majority of the existing ward of Dothill & Park should be divided into three new wards to be called Dothill, Park and Shawbirch;

(x) the area to the south of the A442 in Wombridge ward should be combined with Ketley Bank ward to form a new ward of Oakengates & Ketley Bank, while the remainder of Wombridge ward should be combined with Wrockwardine Wood ward to create a new ward of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench;

(xi) the existing ward of Priorslee should be combined with that part of Donnington Wood ward that lies south of the A5 to create a new three-member ward to be called St George's & Priorslee;

(xii) there should be modifications to the boundaries of Donnington and Donnington Wood wards, and the latter should be known as Donnington & Muxton ward;

(xiii) there should be no change to the existing arrangements for the wards of Cuckoo Oak, Madeley, Woodside, Lawley, College, Haygate, Ercall, Hadley and Ironbridge (The Gorge), other than a change of name to Ironbridge Gorge for the latter;

(xiv) there should be modifications to the boundaries of the parishes of Wellington, Ketley, Stirchley & Brookside, St George's & Priorslee, Lilleshall & Donnington and Hollinswood & Randlay to make them coterminous with the revised district ward boundaries; and the warding arrangements of the parishes of Wellington, Oakengates, Stirchley & Brookside, Lilleshall & Donnington and Newport should be altered to reflect changes in district warding arrangements.

Draft Recommendation

The Wrekin District Council should comprise 54 councillors, serving 33 wards. The whole council should be elected together every four years, as at present.

18 The Commission's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all but nine wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the average. In five years time, the number of electors per councillor was projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all but seven wards.

19 The Commission's draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 Copies of the Commission's consultation report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements and Boundaries for The Wrekin in Shropshire*, were sent to those who had been notified about the launch of the review, together with all those who made representations during the first stage of the review. In addition, public notices were placed in local newspapers announcing the publication of the report and outlining the draft recommendations. An eight-week consultation period ended on 29 October 1996. During this period the Commission received 27 submissions. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission's offices.

The Wrekin District Council

21 In its response to the Commission's consultation report, The Wrekin District Council largely welcomed the draft recommendations. In particular, the Council concurred with the Commission's recommendations regarding an increase in council size to 54 and that the whole council should continue to be elected every four years. However, there were certain areas where it felt amendments could be made, either to better reflect community identities or in order to create more clearly defined boundaries for wards.

22 The Council argued that the area known as Rough Park should be transferred from Ironbridge ward to Woodside ward, which in turn would necessitate a boundary alteration between the parishes of The Gorge and Madeley. It contended that the character and community identity in this area was sufficiently different from the remainder of Ironbridge ward to warrant its transferral to Woodside ward, with which the area would have more in common. The Council also proposed an amendment to the boundary between Leegomery and Hadley wards in an attempt to define the areas more clearly, and that the proposed ward of Donnington & Muxton should be renamed Donnington Wood & Muxton.

23 The Council proposed different arrangements to those recommended by the Commission in its consultation report for two other areas. In the Oakengates Town Council area, the Council proposed to retain the existing wards of Ketley Bank, Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood, subject to some revisions to the boundaries of Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood, in order to preserve the community identity and affinities of the respective areas. In addition, whereas the Commission recommended a three-member ward for St George's & Priorslee, the Council proposed two separate wards: St George's and Priorslee. Although this proposal would result in Priorslee ward containing 37 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2001, the Council contended that the distinct communities within each of these proposed wards justify separate representation for the two areas.

The Wrekin District Council, Conservative and Independent Group

24 The Conservative and Independent Group supported the District Council's response to the draft recommendations, with the exceptions of the Commission's proposed wards of Wrockwardine, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench and Oakengates & Ketley Bank, where it supported the Commission's draft recommendations.

Telford Conservative Association

25 The Telford Conservative Association opposed the Commission's recommendation for a new ward of St George's & Priorslee, stating a preference for the District Council's proposal for two separate wards. The Association also proposed that the existing two-member ward of Hollinswood & Randlay should be divided into two wards, each represented by a single councillor.

The Wrekin and Telford Liberal Democrats

26 The Wrekin and Telford Liberal Democrats ("the Liberal Democrats") made several points regarding the Commission's draft recommendations. The group made clear its support for an increase in council size for The Wrekin, and welcomed the Commission's recommendations for an amendment to the boundary between Arleston and Ketley wards. However, it opposed the creation of three-member wards and proposed a new set of arrangements for

the wards of Dawley Magna, Malinslee and Langley. In addition, it supported the proposal for separate wards for St George's and Priorslee, and the District Council's initial proposal for two new wards of Wrockwardine Wood and Trench East.

Parish and Town Councils

27 Representations were received from 15 parish councils during Stage Three. Of these, eight parish councils (Wrockwardine, Great Dawley, Dawley Hamlets, The Gorge, Hadley, Little Wenlock, St George's & Priorslee and Stirchley & Brookside) supported the Commission's recommendations in relation to district wards for their own areas. Hadley Parish Council requested an increase in the number of parish councillors to 20, in addition to an amendment to the boundary between the district and parish wards of Leegomery and Hadley to make it more clearly defined.

28 The Gorge Parish Council supported the Commission's recommendation to leave the boundary of the parish unchanged. It opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer the Rough Park area of the parish to Madeley parish, arguing it had a greater affinity with the Ironbridge area. However, Madeley Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal that the Rough Park area should be included in the Woodside ward.

29 Both Oakengates Town Council and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council supported the District Council's revised proposal to retain the three existing wards in the area (Ketley Bank, Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood) on revised boundaries. Oakengates Town Council argued that the proposed changes would be far less confusing, would result in minimal change and represent the best compromise available.

30 Rodington, Waters Upton and Kynnersley Parish Councils expressed their opposition to the Commission's draft recommendations for the Ercall Magna ward, stating a preference to retain the current arrangements. Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council expressed concern over the Commission's recommendation that the Lilleshall ward of the parish be combined with Church Aston and Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parishes to form a new district ward of Church Aston & Lilleshall. The Parish Council argued that Church Aston has more affinity with the town of Newport than the rural area between Newport and Telford, and proposed that Lilleshall comprise a district ward in its own right. The Parish Council accepted the Commission's recommendation that part of the parish that lies south of the A5 should become part of St George's & Priorslee parish and district ward, but requested that the proposed ward of Donnington & Muxton be known as Donnington Wood & Muxton.

Other Representations

31 The Commission received a further nine submissions in relation to this review. The respective district councillors for Edgmond and Ercall Magna wards wrote to express their support for the retention of existing arrangements in these areas. The Priorslee Community Association, together with three local residents, wrote in support of the District Council's proposal for two separate wards for the St George's and Priorslee areas. A Lilleshall & Donnington parish councillor suggested amendments to the Commission's proposed wards of Donnington & Muxton and Church Aston & Lilleshall, while a local resident proposed splitting the existing ward of Hollinswood & Randlay into two wards each represented by a single councillor.

5. THE COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for The Wrekin was to secure electoral equality, having regard to its statutory criteria and to Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

33 However, the Commission's function is not merely arithmetical, for three reasons. First, its recommendations are not to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. Second, regard is to be had to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to local ties which might be broken. Third, the Commission must have regard to the need for effective and convenient local government, and the interests and identities of local communities.

34 It is therefore impracticable to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. In conducting its electoral reviews, the Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), considered that variations from the average number of electors per councillor for an authority as a whole should be kept to the absolute minimum. It might consider a variation of up to plus or minus 10 per cent in a particular ward as being "acceptable", although variations in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent were generally accepted only in very exceptional circumstances.

35 The Commission's view is that the LGBC's approach to this issue had considerable merit insofar as it combined a clearly defined tolerance threshold with the degree of flexibility necessary to achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality across a local authority's area. Accordingly, the Commission decided to adopt this approach for the purposes of its electoral review work.

36 In its March 1996 *Guidance*, the Commission expressed the view that "proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should therefore be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances...and will have to be justified in full."

Electorate Projections

37 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2001, projecting an increase in the electorate of just under 4 per cent over the five-year period from 109,992 to 114,347. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period. Reasonable estimates have been made of the changes in electorate that will arise. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of ward boundary changes has been obtained. The Commission accepts that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to projected electorates, is content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. Since the publication of the Commission's draft recommendations, and in the light of further information received from the District Council, the Commission has clarified the methodology used to arrive at these figures, and in certain cases amendments to ward forecasts have been introduced.

Council Size

38 The Commission indicated in its March 1996 *Guidance* that it would normally expect the number of councillors serving a unitary authority to be in the range of 40 to 80.

39 The Wrekin District Council is at present served by 46 councillors. The Council proposed an increase in council size to 53 during Stage One of the review. The Commission concluded in its draft recommendations report that, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, its statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 54. During Stage Three, the Commission has received support for its view from the District Council and The Wrekin and Telford Liberal Democrats. Therefore, the Commission has reaffirmed its recommendation on council size.

Boundary Issues

40 The Commission did not receive any representations in respect of the district boundary of The Wrekin, although the following paragraphs include some discussion as to the appropriate boundaries for several of the parishes in the district.

Electoral Arrangements

41 Having considered all representations received during both Stage One and Stage Three of the review, the Commission has given further consideration to its draft recommendations. Details of the Commission's final recommendations are shown in Figures 4 and 5 and are illustrated in Map 2, while detailed mapping can be found at Appendix A. The following areas are considered in turn:

(i) Newport East, Newport North and Newport West wards;

(ii) Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards;

(iii) Church Aston and Lilleshall wards;

(iv) Cuckoo Oak and Madeley wards;

(v) Woodside and Ironbridge wards;

(vi) Dawley Magna, Malinslee and Langley wards;

(vii) Lawley ward;

(viii) Hollinswood & Randlay, Stirchley and Brookside wards;

(ix) Arleston, Ketley, College, Dothill & Park, Ercall and Haygate wards;

(x) Leegomery and Hadley wards;

(xi) Wrockwardine Wood, Wombridge and Ketley Bank wards;

(xii) Priorslee ward;

(xiii) Donnington and Donnington Wood wards.

Newport

42 In its consultation report, the Commission recommended the District Council's proposals for the town of Newport, which modified the boundaries of the existing wards of Newport East, Newport North and Newport West, and created a new ward of Newport South. These recommendations achieve a good level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in each of the wards of East, North, South and West varying from the district average by 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively in 1996, and 6 per cent, 2 per cent, 9 per cent and 8 per cent by 2001.

43 During Stage Three, the Commission received a submission from the District Council in support of its draft recommendations for this area. However, the Commission considers that the proposed ward boundary between Newport South and Newport West in the vicinity of Audley Avenue appears somewhat arbitary, and that this area's isolation from the rest of Newport West ward may lead to less convenient and effective local government. For these reasons, and given that the number of electors involved would be minimal, the Commission has decided against recommending this boundary change, and has decided instead to retain the existing boundary so that it follows Audley Avenue and Audley Road. This would mean that the number of electors per councillor in Newport South and Newport West would currently be approximately equal to and 3 per cent below the district average respectively, and marginally worse at 6 per cent and 10 per cent below average by 2001. Subject to the amendment described above, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations.

Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine

44 In its consultation report, the Commission recommended that the wards of Edgmond, Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine should be altered as

follows: Edgmond ward should consist of the parishes of Edgmond, Chetwynd and Tibberton & Cherrington; Ercall Magna ward should consist of the parishes of Ercall Magna, Waters Upton, Eyton upon the Weald Moors and Kynnersley; and Wrockwardine ward should consist of the parishes of Little Wenlock, Rodington and Wrockwardine.

45 Although the level of electoral equality that exists in the current wards does not cause the Commission concern, the proposed increase in council size has led the average number of electors per councillor to fall, and as a consequence, led to a poorer level of electoral equality. For example, whereas the number of electors in the existing ward of Ercall Magna is currently 12 per cent above the district average, under the proposed council size of 54 councillors, the number of electors per councillor would be 31 per cent above the district average, a figure great enough as to cause the Commission significant concern. During the course of the review, the Commission has also received several representations requesting it to reflect the differences in communities between the rural and urban areas. These factors combined led the Commission to recommend a reconfiguration of the parishes that constitute the wards in the rural area.

46 During Stage Three of the review, the Commission received nine submissions commenting on these areas. The District Council reaffirmed its view that Wrockwardine ward should be split into two, using the M54 as the boundary. However, this would cause disruption to parishing arrangements and have the effect of creating two wards with significant electoral imbalances, rather than the one under the Commission's recommendations. Wrockwardine and Little Wenlock Parish Councils and the Conservative & Independent Group on the District Council supported the Commission's proposals, while Rodington Parish Council opposed its inclusion in Wrockwardine ward.

47 Both Kynnersley and Waters Upton Parish Councils, in addition to the district councillors for Ercall Magna and Edgmond wards opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for their areas, citing the community ties that had been built up since the last electoral review of the district.

48 The Commission recognises the objections to these draft recommendations that several parish councils and other respondents have raised during Stage Three of the review, and has carefully considered all views expressed. However, the Commission considers that the retention of existing arrangements is not possible for this area because of the high level electoral inequality that would result, and has therefore concluded that its draft recommendations still provide the arrangements that best meet its statutory criteria. The Commission considers that these recommendations contain limited change, leading to only three parishes being transferred, while each of these wards would maintain their rural identity. The Commission is therefore content to confirm its draft recommendations.

Church Aston and Lilleshall

49 In its consultation report, the Commission put forward the District Council's proposal for a new ward of Church Aston & Lilleshall, and during Stage Three the Council reiterated its support for this proposal. The Commission received two other submissions on this subject during Stage Three of the review, from Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council and from a Lilleshall & Donnington parish councillor. The Parish Council expressed the view that Church Aston is essentially an extension of the town of Newport and has little affinity with Lilleshall. Its preference was for the village of Lilleshall to form a district ward in its own right, sentiments which were echoed by the parish councillor. However, the proposal to create a separate ward for Lilleshall is not acceptable to the Commission, as the area would contain too few electors to warrant its own councillor

50 The Commission has noted the concerns expressed to it but still considers the proposals for this area detailed in its draft recommendations to be the most appropriate solution. The parishes of Church Aston, Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote and Lilleshall are situated in the rural area that lies between Newport and the Telford new town area, and although Church Aston undoubtedly has some community ties with the town of Newport, it also shares aspects of its character with these other two parishes. This recommendation provides a good level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor being 5 per cent above the district average by 2001. Consequently, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendation.

Cuckoo Oak and Madeley

51 In its draft recommendations, the Commission adopted the District Council's proposal for no change to the wards of Cuckoo Oak and Madeley, largely as a result of the relatively low level of electoral inequality in these wards. During Stage Three of the review, the Commission received no further comments on these recommendations, other than the District Council's acceptance of the Commission's recommendations. Given this factor, allied to the level of electoral equality in these wards, the Commission is content to confirm them as its final recommendations for this area.

Woodside and Ironbridge

52 At Stage One, the Commission received a proposal from the District Council to alter the boundaries of Ironbridge ward, with the Rough Park area being transferred to Woodside ward and Madeley parish, and to realign the boundary of Ironbridge ward with the A4169. However, the Commission decided not to alter the existing arrangements in this area.

53 In its Stage Three submission, the District Council reiterated its proposals for the Rough Park area to be transferred from Ironbridge ward to Woodside ward, but made no proposals in relation to the transfer of other areas. In support of the proposal to transfer the Rough Park area, the District Council stated that such a move would ensure that the housing development in the area would be closer to the nearest polling station, so increasing participation in local elections. Additionally, the Council restated its belief that the housing development in this area is closer in character to Woodside ward, rather than the longer-established type of community present in Ironbridge ward, and pointed to the superior access links to the Rough Park development through Woodside ward.

54 The Commission heard from both of the parish councils covering this area during the consultation period, The Gorge and Madeley parishes. The Gorge Parish Council opposed the proposal to move Rough Park into Woodside ward, stating that the parish council had received no complaints about the location of the polling station in the ward, and that it believed that the Rough Park area had a closer affinity with the rest of Ironbridge ward than with Woodside ward. Madeley Parish Council supported the proposal, arguing that the residents and the area have more in common with the neighbouring Woodside ward, and that an increase in participation in the democratic process would result if Rough Park became part of the Woodside ward as a result of easier access to the polling station.

55 The Commission considers that the evidence concerning its statutory criteria, that is effective and convenient local government and community identity and interests, points to the need for a change to the ward boundary in this area. The Commission acknowledges that this proposal will have implications for the parish boundaries in the area, but has noted that one parish council opposes the move, while the other supports it. In its draft recommendations report, the Commission indicated its concern as to the implications of any change in this area on electoral equality. However, it notes that while this boundary modification would lead to Woodside ward containing 20 per cent more electors than the district average currently, it is projected to decline to some 13 per cent by 2001. In comparison, the retention of existing arrangements, which was the Commission's draft recommendation, would have led Ironbridge ward to contain 14 per cent more electors than the average currently, but 22 per cent above average by 2001.

56 Thus, while the transfer of the Rough Park area provides a less than satisfactory electoral ratio currently, it is projected to improve over time. In contrast, under the existing arrangements the situation would continue to deteriorate. Therefore, the Commission has been persuaded on the basis of the evidence received that the electors of the Rough Park area would best be served by their inclusion in the neighbouring Woodside ward, with which the Commission considers there is a greater degree of community identity and cohesion. The Commission has also decided to recommend a subsequent change in parish boundaries to reflect the new district warding arrangements in the area, in addition to adopting the District Council's proposal for a change of name from Ironbridge (The Gorge) to Ironbridge Gorge ward. Map A2 in Appendix A illustrates the Commission's final recommendations.

Dawley Magna, Malinslee and Langley

57 In its consultation report, the Commission recommended an additional councillor for Dawley Magna ward, and the merger of Malinslee ward and Langley ward to create a new ward represented by three councillors. At Stage Three, The Wrekin District Council accepted the Commission's draft recommendations. The parishes of Dawley Hamlets and Great Dawley also made submissions in support of the Commission's draft recommendations for this area. The Wrekin & Telford Liberal Democrats stated in their submission that the two wards should be restructured to form three new wards, with one based on the area of Dawley Hamlets parish, and the other two on the Great Dawley parish area.

58 Although the submission from the Liberal Democrats suggested a different arrangement for these wards than that put forward in the consultation report, the Commission feels that there is a good degree of local support for its draft recommendations which provide for a high level of electoral equality. The Commission is therefore satisfied that these proposals are the most appropriate solution for the area at this time and is content to confirm them as its final recommendations.

59 During the course of this review, it has been brought to the Commission's attention that an anomaly exists regarding the district ward boundary between the existing wards of Wrockwardine and Dawley Magna in the Horsehay area, immediately to the west and south of the roundabout linking the Horsehay Bypass and Wellington Road. This area was transferred from Little Wenlock parish to Dawley Hamlets parish as part of the parishing review of the district undertaken in 1988, but the corresponding district ward boundary was not altered. Accordingly, the Commission is recommending that this boundary be altered to make it coterminous with the parish boundaries. Map A11 at Appendix A illustrates this recommendation.

Lawley

60 The Commission received no comments during Stage Three on its recommendation for an additional councillor for the ward of Lawley, other than the District Council's acceptance of this proposal. Although Lawley ward would have 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district currently, it is projected that by 2001 there would be 15 per cent more electors per councillor than average because of the large-scale development planned for the area in the next five years. As indicated in its consultation report, the Commission recognises that the level of electoral inequality is outside the range at which it aims both now and in 2001, but it considers that the significant localised nature of the development and the recommendations for the surrounding area make a better solution extremely difficult. The Commission therefore confirms its draft recommendation for an additional councillor for Lawley ward on its existing boundaries.

Hollinswood & Randlay, Stirchley and Brookside

61 The Commission received four submissions in respect of its recommendations to alter the boundaries of Hollinswood & Randlay, Stirchley and Brookside wards and to increase the number of councillors representing Stirchley ward from one to two. Two of these submissions, from the Telford Conservative Association and a local resident, supported dividing the current Hollinswood & Randlay ward into two new wards, each represented by a single councillor. Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council accepted the Commission's recommendations for Stirchley and Brookside wards, while the District Council accepted the draft recommendations for all three wards.

62 The Commission has carefully considered the proposal to divide the existing two-member ward of Hollinswood & Randlay into two new single-member wards. The Commission recognises that this ward essentially comprises the two communities of Hollinswood and Randlay, and that there may be some merit in affording them separate representation. However, the District Council supported the Commission's proposals for this area, and there has been no substantial evidence to persuade the Commission that there is a significant local desire for a change to the existing arrangements. In relation to Stirchley and Brookside wards, the Commission notes that its proposals have gained the support of the Parish

Council and the District Council. On balance, therefore, the Commission has decided to confirm its draft recommendations for all three wards.

Arleston, Ketley, College, Dothill & Park, Ercall and Haygate

63 The Commission's consultation report proposed retaining the existing arrangements for the wards of College, Haygate and Ercall. It proposed that the ward of Dothill & Park (less the parish of Eyton upon the Weald Moors which would become part of Ercall Magna ward) should be split into three wards: Dothill, Park and Shawbirch. In addition, it recommended a minor boundary modification between Arleston and Ketley wards, and an increase in the number of councillors on Wellington Town Council from 18 to 21. This latter boundary change would also alter the boundaries of Wellington Town Council and Ketley Parish Council.

64 There are relatively low levels of electoral inequality in all of these eight wards, with the exception of Park ward, where the number of electors per councillor would be 19 per cent above the district average. However, this is projected to fall to 11 per cent above the average by 2001. The Commission has also noted the difficulties of making minor adjustments to ward boundaries in this area. Given these factors, the Commission is minded to confirm its draft recommendation for Park ward.

65 The Commission received no further submissions regarding these proposals, other than the District Council's acceptance of all the recommendations relating to this area. Consequently, the Commission is content to recommend the proposals for change as set out in its draft recommendations report.

Leegomery and Hadley

66 In its consultation report, the Commission recommended the retention of the existing Hadley ward, along with an extra councillor for Leegomery ward on its existing boundaries. In its Stage Three submission, the District Council, while accepting the draft recommendations, proposed an amendment to the boundary between the two wards. The Council believed that the amendment, which used clearly identifiable boundaries such as Hurley Brook, would better reflect the community identity of those areas affected by the alteration to the boundary. It received support for its proposal from Hadley Parish Council.

67 The Commission considers that the amendment to the joint boundary of Leegomery and Hadley wards proposed by the District Council, while relatively minor, ensures there would be a more clearly identifiable boundary on the ground which would be better understood by local electors. The Commission notes that this proposal also has the support of Hadley Parish Council and would have a negligible effect on the level of electoral equality in the two wards. For these reasons, the Commission is content to put forward this proposal as its final recommendation. The Commission also recommends that the warding arrangements of Hadley Parish Council be altered to ensure they are coterminous with the district wards in the area.

68 In its submission, Hadley Parish Council also proposed an increase in the number of parish councillors representing Leegomery ward from five to ten. However, this would increase the parish council size to 20, which the Commission considers would exceed its needs. As the two wards of the parish have a comparable number of electors within them, the Commission has decided to recommend an increase of one in the total council size to 16, distributed equally between the two existing wards of the parish.

Wrockwardine Wood, Wombridge and Ketley Bank

69 During Stage One of the review, the District Council proposed radical change to the warding arrangements in this area. Largely as a result of the potential impact these proposals would have had for parish boundaries, the Commission decided to amend them in an attempt to minimise this disruption, although the Commission's proposals still contained a significant degree of change. At Stage Three the District Council, Oakengates Town Council, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council and The Wrekin & Telford Liberal Democrats, opposed the Commission's recommendations for this area, while the Conservative & Independent Group on the District Council supported it.

70 The District Council proposed minor alterations to the boundaries of Wrockwardine Wood and Wombridge wards and no change to Ketley Bank ward, rather than the large scale change as proposed in Stage One. The proposals involved minor alterations to the northern and north-eastern boundaries of the existing Wombridge ward (and Oakengates and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parishes), while the south-eastern boundary of Wrockwardine Wood ward would be realigned using arterial roads as the boundary, to include parts of the proposed Donnington & Muxton and St George's & Priorslee wards. These proposals were supported by both Oakengates Town Council and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council, and The Wrekin & Telford Liberal Democrats.

71 The Commission considers that the District Council's Stage Three proposals provide clear advantages: limited change to district ward boundaries; the retention of community ties that have been established over time, ensuring that the community identity of the differing areas is recognised and preserved; and minimal impact on parish boundaries. Additionally, the proposal would provide a good level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Ketley Bank, Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood at 3 per cent above, 6 per cent above and approximately equal to the district average respectively. Given these factors, the Commission has decided to adopt as its final recommendations for this area the proposals put to it by the District Council.

72 Map A7 in Appendix A illustrates the alterations to the boundaries of the wards of Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood. Maps A8, A9 and A10 also refer. These alterations would transfer 231 electors from Wombridge ward to Wrockwardine Wood ward and would mean that the following roads would in future be contained wholly within the revised Wrockwardine Wood ward: Pool Close, Springfield Road, Teagues Crescent, Church Road, Pickering Road, Malcolm Davies Drive and New Road. In addition, the whole of Richmond Avenue would be in Wrockwardine Wood ward, with the exception of the section between Kingston Road and Church Road, where the boundary would remain unaltered.

73 There would also be alterations to the boundary between Wrockwardine Wood and the existing wards of Donnington Wood and Priorslee. In the south-eastern corner of the current Wrockwardine Wood ward, the boundary should be extended and follow Wrockwardine Wood Way, Redhill Way and Rookery Road. Consequently, the Commission is also recommending changes to the parish boundaries of Oakengates and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, and to the joint boundaries of the parishes of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, Lilleshall & Donnington and St George's & Priorslee. The Commission has also decided to recommend the warding of Oakengates Town Council, in order to be coterminous with the district ward boundaries of Wombridge and Ketley Bank.

Priorslee and Donnington Wood (part)

74 The Commission received several comments on its draft recommendation to combine that part of the current Donnington Wood ward south of the A5 with the current Priorslee ward, to create a new ward of St George's & Priorslee. The Priorslee Community Association, the Telford Conservative Association, The Wrekin & Telford Liberal Democrats and three local residents opposed the Commission's recommendation, and supported two separate wards for Priorslee and St George's (with one and two councillors respectively) as proposed by the District Council at both Stages One and Three. However, both St George's & Priorslee Parish Council and Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council expressed support for the Commission's draft recommendations.

75 The Commission has carefully considered the evidence submitted to it during Stage Three of the review. It recognises that community ties and shared community identity between the areas of St George's and Priorslee are limited at the current time. New housing development within Priorslee, both that already completed and the large-scale projects planned for the next five years, mean that it has a somewhat different community character to the well established, former mining area of St George's, although the latter area has also been subject to development in recent years. Furthermore, it recognises that the A5 trunk road would provide a clear boundary between the two wards.

76 While the evidence on community identities and boundaries would appear to point towards establishing two wards of St George's and

Priorslee, the level of electoral inequality is such that the Commission considers that it cannot agree to such an arrangement. Although there may be advantages to be gained from recognising the differences between these two communities at district ward level, they are, in the Commission's judgement, outweighed by the disadvantages that would arise for the councillor for Priorslee ward representing 37 per cent more electors than the district average by 2001, and more specifically, 43 per cent more electors than the councillors representing St George's ward. The Commission has also noted that St George's & Priorslee Parish Council currently covers both areas.

77 These factors, allied to the support of St George's & Priorslee Parish Council for the Commission's draft recommendations, has led the Commission to decide to confirm its draft recommendation for a three-member ward to be called St George's & Priorslee, subject to two amendments. As discussed above, part of the current ward of Priorslee would be transferred to the ward of Wrockwardine Wood. Additionally, the joint boundary of the existing wards of Priorslee and Donnington Wood should move eastwards, to follow the route of Redhill Way, as proposed by the District Council. These recommendations would mean that there would be consequential changes to the boundaries of the parishes of St George's & Priorslee and Lilleshall & Donnington, and the proposed boundaries of the district ward and parish are illustrated in Maps A7, A8 and A10 at Appendix A.

Donnington and Donnington Wood

78 Both the District Council and Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council supported the Commission's recommendation for a modified Donnington ward. Given this support, and the relatively low level of electoral inequality within the ward (the number of electors per councillor is 9 per cent below the district average), the Commission is content to recommend the proposals for change that were set out in its consultation report.

79 Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council also indicated that it accepted the Commission's recommendations for the proposed ward of Donnington & Muxton. However, the parish council indicated, as did the District Council, that it would like to see the name Donnington Wood preserved. The Commission is content to amend its proposal to reflect this wish. As discussed above, the Commission has also decided to recommend modifications to the joint boundary of the proposed wards of Donnington Wood & Muxton and St George's & Priorslee, so that it follows the route of Redhill Way, as illustrated in Maps A7, A8 and A10 in Appendix A.

Electoral Cycle

80 At Stage One, the Commission recommended that the present system of whole council elections be retained. At Stage Three, the District Council reiterated its support for this proposal. No other representations were received on this issue, and the Commission therefore confirms its draft recommendation.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements and Parish Boundaries

81 As a consequence of the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements of the district, a number of alterations to parish boundaries are required. Thus the Commission recommends that the boundaries of the parishes of Wellington, Ketley, Stirchley & Brookside, St George's & Priorslee, Lilleshall & Donnington, Hollinswood & Randlay, Oakengates, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, The Gorge and Madeley should be amended to become coterminous with the revised district ward boundaries. Additionally, the Commission recommends that the warding arrangements of Wellington Town Council, Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council, Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council, Newport Town Council, Oakengates Town Council and Hadley Parish Council be altered to reflect the new district warding arrangements in those areas, and that Wellington Town Council and Hadley Parish Council should have an increase in council size.

Conclusions

82 Having considered all the evidence and representations it has received on its draft recommendations, the Commission has concluded that The Wrekin District should be served by a council size of 54, an increase of eight, and that the council should comprise 34 wards rather than 33 as

at present; that elections should remain on a whole council basis; that there should be no change to the boundaries of eight of the existing wards.

83 Figure 3 shows the impact of the Commission's final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on current electorate figures and projected electorates in the year 2001.

84 As Figure 3 shows, the Commission's recommendations would result in a reduction from 21 to eight in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor exceeds 10 per cent from the average, with a further reduction to six by 2001. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would fall from 2,391 to 2,037. Having regard to the statutory criteria, the Commission has concluded that its recommendations achieve the best balance between the need for electoral equality and properly reflecting community identities.

Final Recommendation

The new unitary authority for The Wrekin should comprise 54 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 4 and 5, Map 2 and Appendix A. The whole council should be elected every four years, as at present.

85 As indicated above, a number of changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements will be required as a consequence of the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements of the district.

86 In the Wellington Town Council area, the Commission is confirming its draft recommendations.

Final Recommendation

Wellington Town Council should comprise 21 councillors. The warding arrangements should be altered to provide seven wards to make them coterminous with the district wards, with each ward represented by three councillors. The boundary of the Town Council should be altered to reflect the amendment to the district ward of Arleston. These changes are set out in Map A5 in Appendix A. The whole Town Council should be elected together every four years, as at present.

87 As a consequence of the modification to the boundary of Arleston ward, the boundary of the adjacent Ketley ward is also to be altered. This in turn means that the boundary of the parish of Ketley should be revised to reflect this change.

Figure 3:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Arrangements

	1996 electorate		2001 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	46	54	46	54
Number of wards	33	34	33	34
Average number of electors per councillor	2,391	2,037	2,486	2,118
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	21	8	24	6
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	12	1	15	1

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Ketley Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendment to the boundary of the district ward of Ketley, as set out in Map A4 in Appendix A.

88 The Commission is also recommending alterations to the boundaries of the wards of Stirchley and Brookside. The parish of Stirchley & Brookside should be warded to reflect the alterations to district wards within the parish.

Final Recommendation

Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council should be divided into two wards, to be known as Stirchley and Brookside, to be represented by six and seven councillors respectively. The northern boundary of the parish should be altered to reflect the amendment to the boundary of the district ward of Stirchley. These changes are set out in Map A3 in Appendix A.

89 The adjacent ward of Hollinswood & Randlay is also subject to a boundary change in this area, once again requiring a consequential change to the corresponding parish boundary.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendment to the boundary of the district ward of Hollinswood & Randlay, as set out in Map A3 in Appendix A.

90 The Commission has recommended the inclusion of part of the existing Donnington Wood ward in the proposed St George's & Priorslee ward. The boundaries of the parishes of Lilleshall & Donnington and St George's & Priorslee should be revised to reflect this change. The warding of Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council should also be altered to reflect the changes at district ward level in the area.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of St George's & Priorslee Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendments to the boundary of the proposed St George's & Priorslee district ward, as set out in Map A8 in Appendix A.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council should be altered to reflect the boundary of the new district ward of Donnington Wood & Muxton. Additionally, the warding arrangements for the Parish Council should be altered to be coterminous with the new district wards of Donnington, Donnington Wood & Muxton and Church Aston & Lilleshall. These changes are set out in Maps A9 and A10 in Appendix A.

91 In the light of representations received, the Commission has decided to modify its draft recommendations for the Oakengates Town Council area. The Commission's final recommendations are that the ward of Ketley Bank should remain unaltered, while there should be modifications to the boundaries of the district wards of Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood. As a consequence of this, the boundaries of the parishes of Oakengates and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench should be revised to reflect this change, and the parish of Oakengates should be warded.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Oakengates Town Council should be altered to reflect the amendments to the boundary of the district ward of Wombridge, while the Town Council should be divided into two wards, to be known as Wombridge and Ketley Bank, to be represented by nine and four councillors respectively. These changes are set out in Map A7 in Appendix A.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendments to the boundary of Wrockwardine Wood district ward, as set out in Map A7 in Appendix A.

92 In the Newport Town Council area, the Commission is confirming its draft recommendations for the wards of Newport East and Newport North, while modifying its draft recommendations for the wards of Newport South and Newport West. Consequentially, the warding arrangements of the Town Council should be altered to reflect these changes.

Final Recommendation

Newport Town Council should comprise 12 councillors as at present. The warding arrangements should be altered to provide four wards to reflect changes at district ward level, each represented by three councillors, as set out in Maps A12 and A13 in Appendix A.

93 The Commission has recommended that the Rough Park area of the existing Ironbridge (The Gorge) ward be included in the district ward of Woodside. This in turn will require alterations to the boundaries of the parishes of Madeley and The Gorge.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of The Gorge Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendment to the boundary of the district ward of Ironbridge (The Gorge), as set out in Map A2 in Appendix A. The existing district ward of Ironbridge (The Gorge) should be known as Ironbridge Gorge.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of Madeley Parish Council should be altered to reflect the amendment to the boundary of the district ward of Woodside, as set out in Map A2 in Appendix A.

94 The Commission has decided to recommend a modification to the joint boundary between the district wards of Leegomery and Hadley. This recommendation will necessitate a subsequent alteration to the joint boundary of the parish wards of Leegomery and Hadley in Hadley parish.

Final Recommendation

The warding arrangements of Hadley Parish Council should be altered to be coterminous with the modified district wards of Leegomery and Hadley, as set out in Map A6 in Appendix A, and that there should be an increase in the council size to 16, with each of the two existing parish wards represented by eight councillors.

95 As described above, the Commission is recommending an alteration to the boundary of the district ward of Dawley Magna in the area around Moreton Coppice, to correct an anomaly that has arisen as a result of the parishing review of the district in 1988.

Final Recommendation

The boundary of the district ward of Dawley Magna, in that area where it does not currently follow the parish boundary of Dawley Hamlets, should be altered to be coterminous with the parish boundary, as set out in Map A11 in Appendix A.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for The Wrekin

Key To Wards

1 Arleston
2 Brookside
3 Church Aston and Lilleshall
4 College
5 Cuckoo Oak
6 Dawley Magna
7 Donnington
8 Donnington Wood and Muxton
9 Dothill
10 Edgmond
11 Ercall
12 Ercall Magna
13 Hadley
14 Haygate
15 Hollinswood/Randlay
16 Ironbridge Gorge
17 Ketley
18 Ketley Bank
19 Lawley
20 Leegomery
21 Madeley
22 Malinslee and Langley
23 Newport East
24 Newport North
25 Newport South
26 Newport West
27 Park
28 Shawbirch
29 St Georges and Priorslee
30 Stirchley
31 Wombridge
32 Woodside
33 Wrockwardine
34 Wrockwardine Wood

Figure 4:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Arleston	Arleston ward of Wellington Town Council (as amended)	Map A4
2	Brookside	Brookside ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish (as amended)	Map A3
3	Church Aston & Lilleshall	Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish, Church Aston parish and Lilleshall ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)	Map 2
4	College	College ward of Wellington Town Council	Map 2
5	Cuckoo Oak	Cuckoo Oak ward of Madeley parish	Map 2
6	Dawley Magna	Dawley Hamlets parish and Dawley Central ward of Great Dawley parish	Map 2 and Map A11
7	Donnington	Donnington ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)	Map A9
8	Donnington Wood & Muxton	Donnington Wood ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)	Map A10
9	Dothill	Dothill ward of Wellington Town Council (as proposed)	Map A5
10	Edgmond	Edgmond parish, Chetwynd parish and Tibberton & Cherrington parish	Map 2
11	Ercall	Ercall ward of Wellington Town Council	Map 2
12	Ercall Magna	Ercall Magna parish, Waters Upton parish, Eyton upon the Weald Moors parish and Kynnersley parish	Map 2
13	Hadley	Hadley ward of Hadley parish (as amended) and Preston upon the Weald Moors parish	Map A6
14	Haygate	Haygate ward of Wellington Town Council	Map 2
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	Hollinswood & Randlay parish (as amended)	Map A3
16	Ironbridge Gorge	The Gorge parish (as amended)	Map A2
17	Ketley	Ketley parish (as amended)	Map A4
18	Ketley Bank	Ketley Bank ward	Map 2
19	Lawley	Lawley & Overdale parish	Map 2
20	Leegomery	Leegomery ward of Hadley parish (as amended)	Map A6

Continued overleaf

Figure 4 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Constituent areas	Map reference
21	Madeley	Madeley ward of Madeley parish	Map 2
22	Malinslee & Langley	Malinslee and Langley wards of Great Dawley parish	Map 2
23	Newport East	Newport East ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)	Map A12
24	Newport North	Newport North ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)	Map A12
25	Newport South	Newport South ward of Newport Town Council (as proposed)	Map A12
26	Newport West	Newport West ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)	Map A12
27	Park	Park ward of Wellington Town Council (as proposed)	Map A5
28	Shawbirch	Shawbirch ward of Wellington Town Council (as proposed)	Map A5
29	St George's & Priorslee	St George's & Priorslee parish (as amended)	Map A8
30	Stirchley	Stirchley ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish (as amended)	Map A3
31	Wombridge	Wombridge ward of Oakengates Town Council (as proposed)	Map A7
32	Woodside	Woodside ward of Madeley parish (as amended)	Map A2
33	Wrockwardine	Wrockwardine parish, Rodington parish and Little Wenlock parish	Map 2 and Map A11
34	Wrockwardine Wood	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish (as amended)	Map A7

Figure 5:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for The Wrekin

			1996 (Current)			2001 (Projected)		
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arleston	1	2,094	2,094	3	2,072	2,072	-2
2	Brookside	2	4,007	2,004	-2	3,832	1,916	-10
3	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2,269	2,269	11	2,213	2,213	5
4	College	1	2,174	2,174	7	2,160	2,160	2
5	Cuckoo Oak	2	4,095	2,048	1	3,934	1,967	-7
6	Dawley Magna	3	6,336	2,112	4	6,724	2,241	6
7	Donnington	2	3,711	1,856	-9	3,594	1,797	-15
8	Donnington Wood & Muxton	2	3,847	1,924	-6	4,678	2,339	10
9	Dothill	1	2,059	2,059	1	2,247	2,247	6
10	Edgmond	1	2,151	2,151	6	2,103	2,103	-1
11	Ercall	1	1,980	1,980	-3	1,932	1,932	-9
12	Ercall Magna	1	2,291	2,291	12	2,270	2,270	7
13	Hadley	2	3,820	1,910	-6	4,130	2,065	-2
14	Haygate	1	2,188	2,188	7	2,137	2,137	1
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	2	4,416	2,208	8	4,311	2,156	2
16	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2,078	2,078	2	2,223	2,223	5
17	Ketley	1	2,139	2,139	5	2,303	2,303	9
18	Ketley Bank	1	2,088	2,088	3	2,073	2,073	-2
19	Lawley	2	3,259	1,630	-20	4,875	2,438	15
20	Leegomery	2	4,217	2,109	4	4,546	2,273	7
21	Madeley	2	4,370	2,185	7	4,275	2,138	1
22	Malinslee & Langley	3	5,966	1,989	-2	6,031	2,010	-5

Continued overleaf

Figure 5 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for The Wrekin

			1996 (Current)			2001 (Projected)		
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23	Newport East	1	2,051	2,051	1	1,999	1,999	-6
24	Newport North	1	2,080	2,080	2	2,167	2,167	2
25	Newport South	1	2,044	2,044	0	1,982	1,982	-6
26	Newport West	1	1,966	1,966	-3	1,909	1,909	-10
27	Park	1	2,421	2,421	19	2,349	2,349	11
28	Shawbirch	1	1,778	1,778	-13	1,824	1,824	-14
29	St George's & Priorslee	3	5,986	1,995	-2	6,967	2,322	10
30	Stirchley	2	3,633	1,817	-11	3,892	1,946	-8
31	Wombridge	2	4,311	2,156	6	4,312	2,156	2
32	Woodside	2	4,869	2,435	20	4,785	2,393	13
33	Wrockwardine	2	3,205	1,603	-21	3,356	1,678	-21
34	Wrockwardine Wood	2	4,093	2,047	0	4,141	2,071	-2
	Totals	**54**	**109,992**	-	-	**114,347**	-	-
	Averages	-	-	**2,037**	-	-	**2,118**	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on The Wrekin District Council's submission.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 Since the publication of the Commission's draft recommendations, amendments to ward forecasts have been made in certain cases - see Chapter 4.

6. NEXT STEPS

95 Having completed its review of The Wrekin and submitted its final recommendations to the Secretary of State on the future electoral arrangements for The Wrekin, the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role under the Local Government Act 1992.

96 It now falls to the Secretary of State, if he thinks fit, to give effect to the Commission's recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made earlier than a period of six weeks from the date that the Commission's recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

97 All further representations and correspondence concerning the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State, who will take them into account before reaching a conclusion on the Commission's recommendations. Representations should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State for the Environment
Local Government 1 Division
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 3EB

APPENDIX A

The Commission's Final Recommendations for The Wrekin: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 acts as a locational reference for the proposed ward boundary changes set out elsewhere in this appendix.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary change between the wards of Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between the existing wards of Stirchley, Brookside and Hollinswood & Randlay.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between the existing Arleston and Ketley wards.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed boundaries of the new district wards and Wellington Town Council wards of Dothill, Park and Shawbirch.

Map A6 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between the existing Leegomery and Hadley wards.

Map A7 illustrates the proposed boundary alterations to the existing wards of Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood.

Map A8 illustrates the proposed boundaries of the new district ward of St George's & Priorslee.

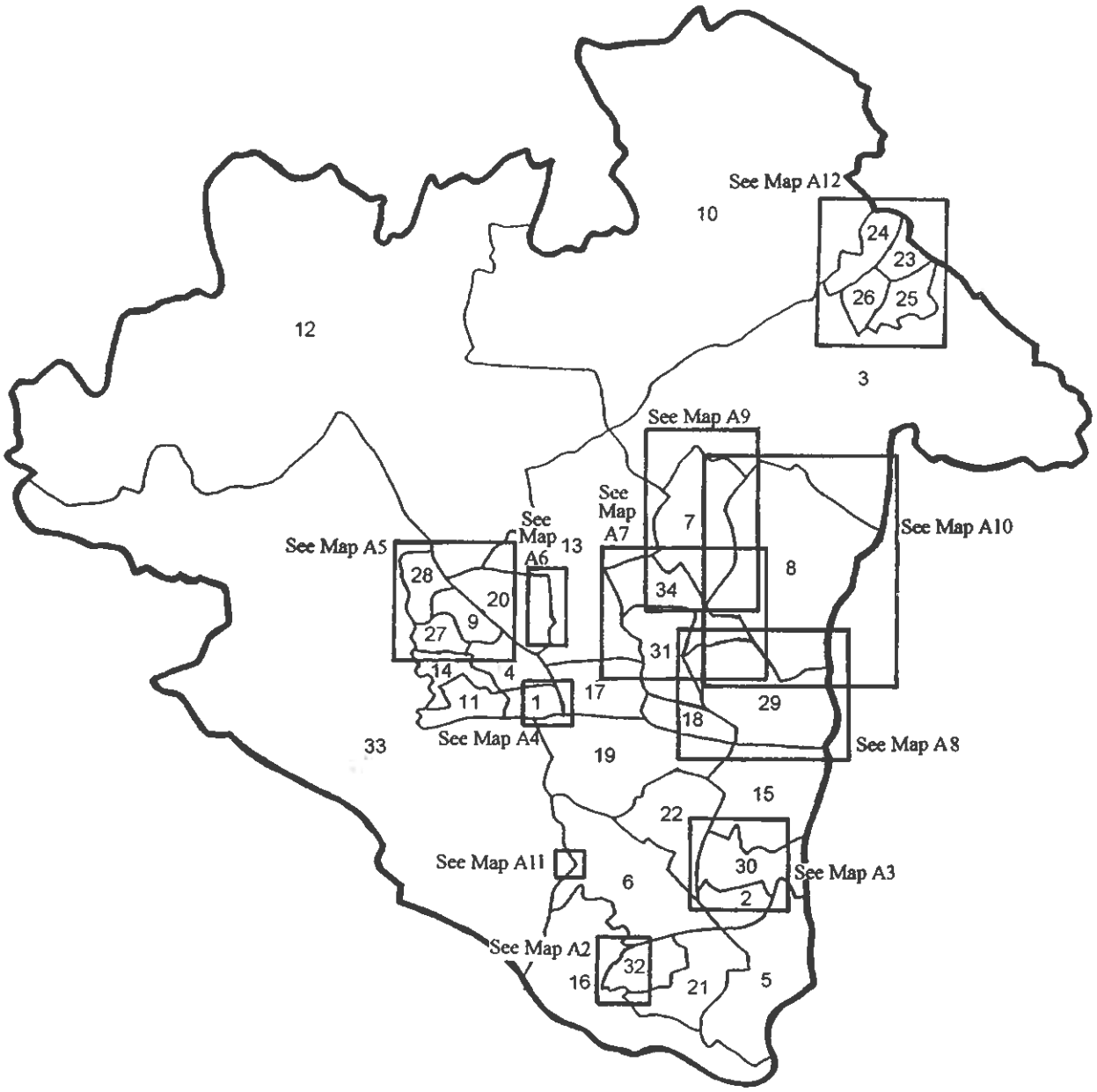
Map A9 illustrates the proposed boundaries of the revised district ward of Donnington.

Map A10 illustrates the proposed boundaries of the new district ward of Donnington Wood & Muxton.

Map A11 illustrates the amendment to the boundary of the existing wards of Wrockwardine and Dawley Magna.

Maps A12 and A13 illustrate the Commission's proposals for the new district and Town Council wards in the town of Newport.

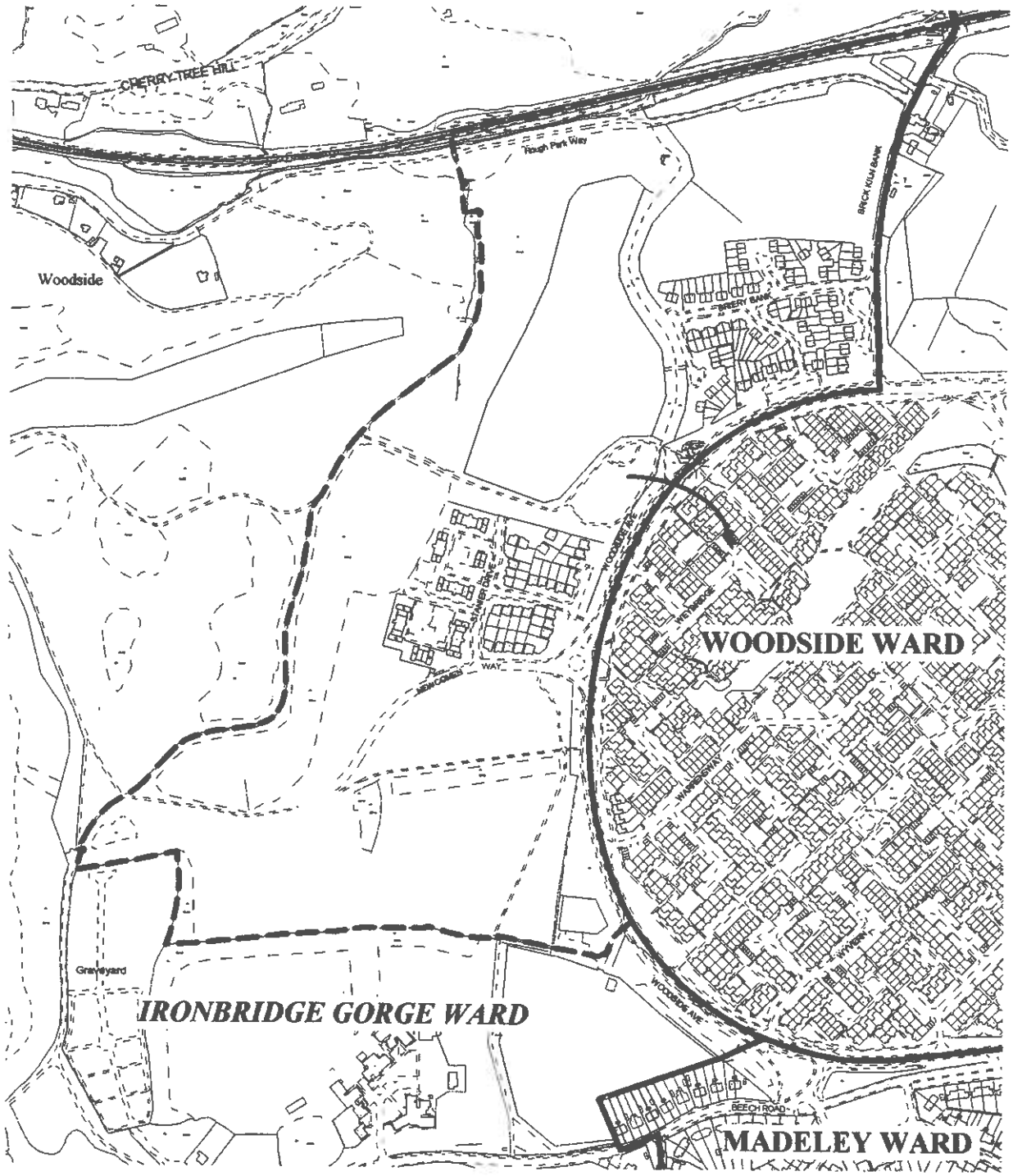
Map A1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for The Wrekin: Key Map



Key To Wards

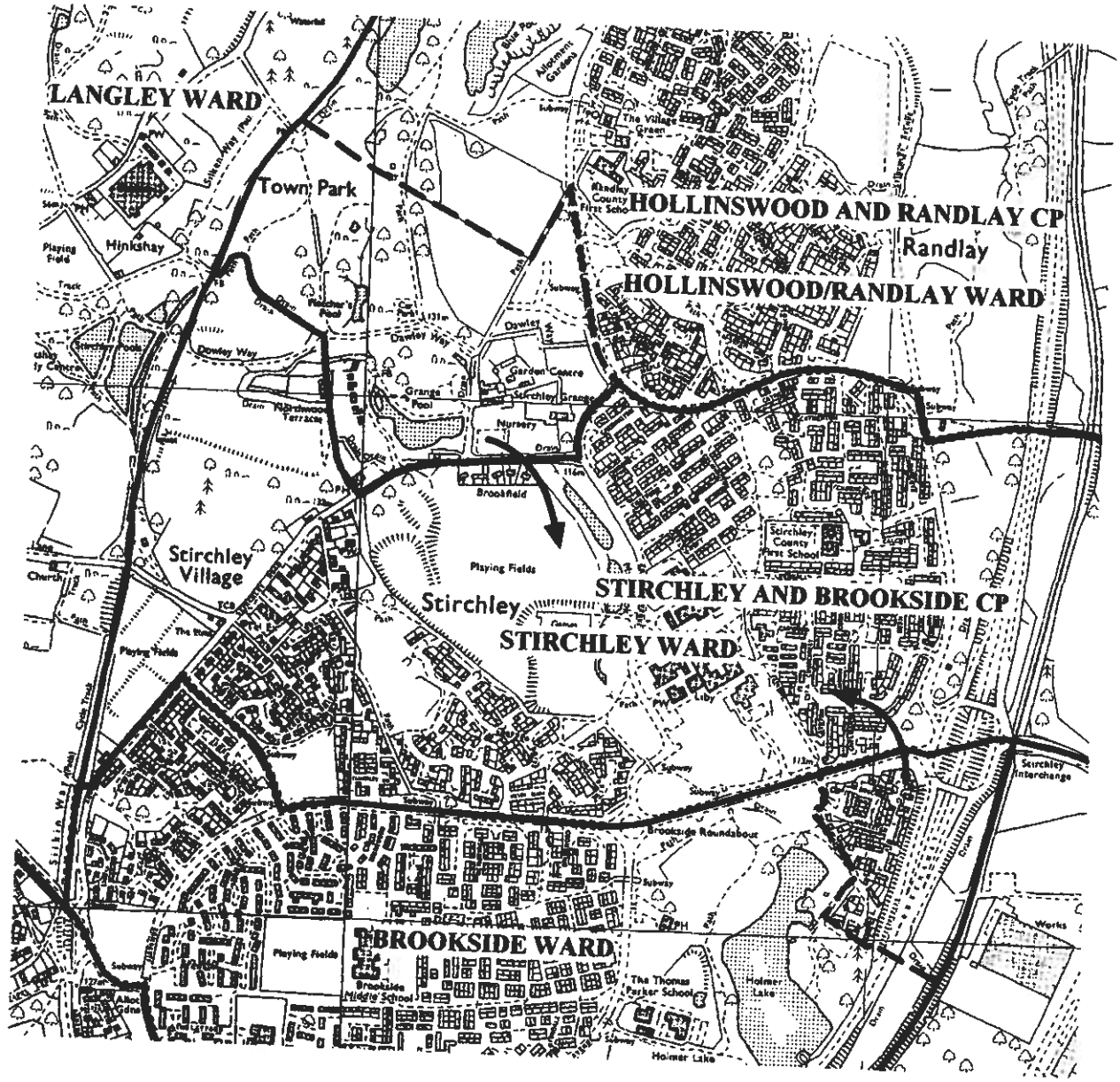
1	Arleston	12	Ercall Magna	23	Newport East
2	Brookside	13	Hadley	24	Newport North
3	Church Aston and Lilleshall	14	Haygate	25	Newport South
4	College	15	Hollinswood/Randlay	26	Newport West
5	Cuckoo Oak	16	Ironbridge Gorge	27	Park
6	Dawley Magna	17	Ketley	28	Shawbirch
7	Donnington	18	Ketley Bank	29	St Georges and Priorslee
8	Donnington Wood and Muxton	19	Lawley	30	Stirchley
9	Dothill	20	Leegomery	31	Wombridge
10	Edgmond	21	Madeley	32	Woodside
11	Ercall	22	Malinslee and Langley	33	Wrockwardine
				34	Wrockwardine Wood

Map A2:
Proposed Boundary Change between Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside Wards

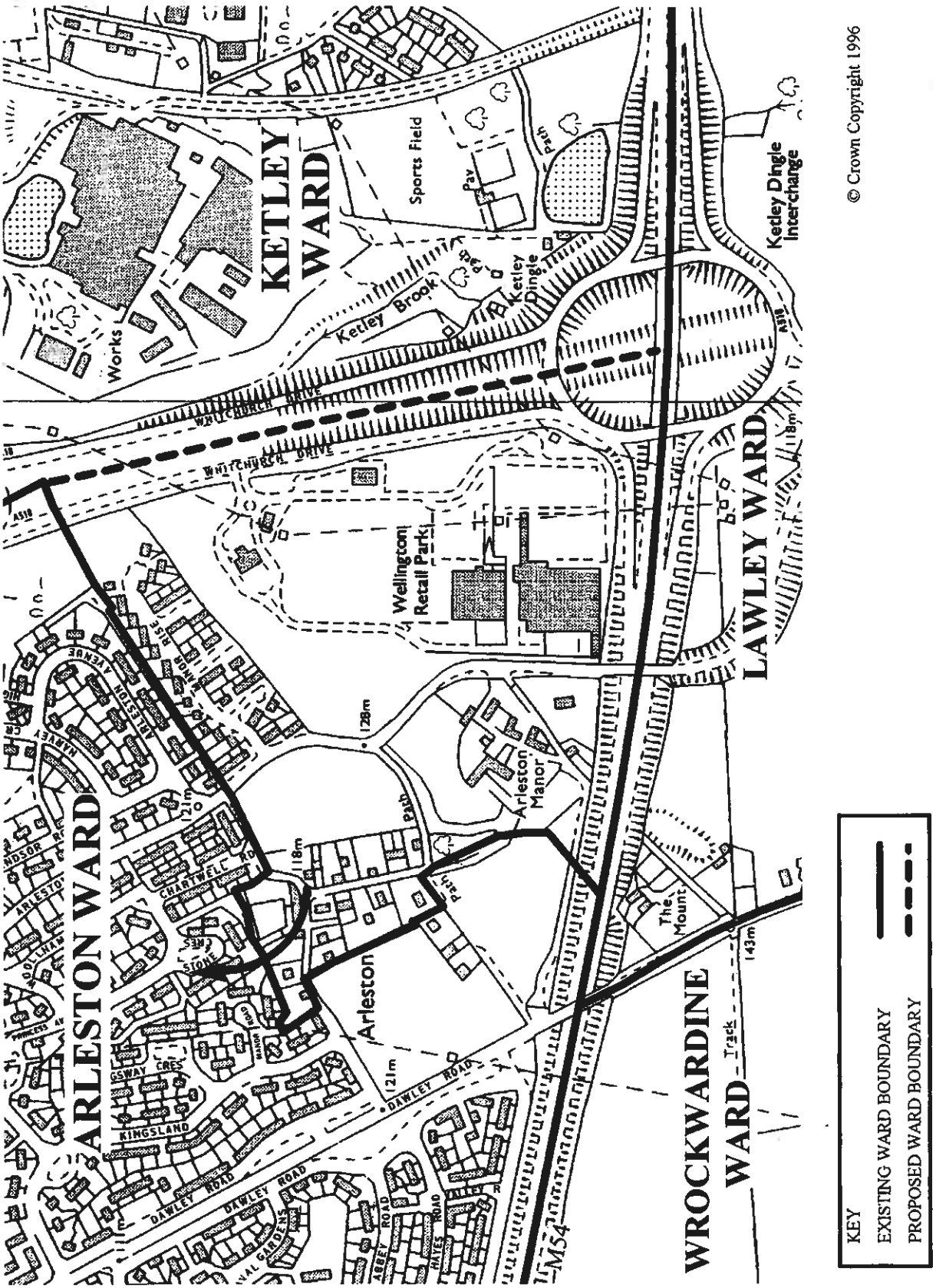


KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	———
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	– – – –
PROPOSED WARD NAME	*ITALIC*

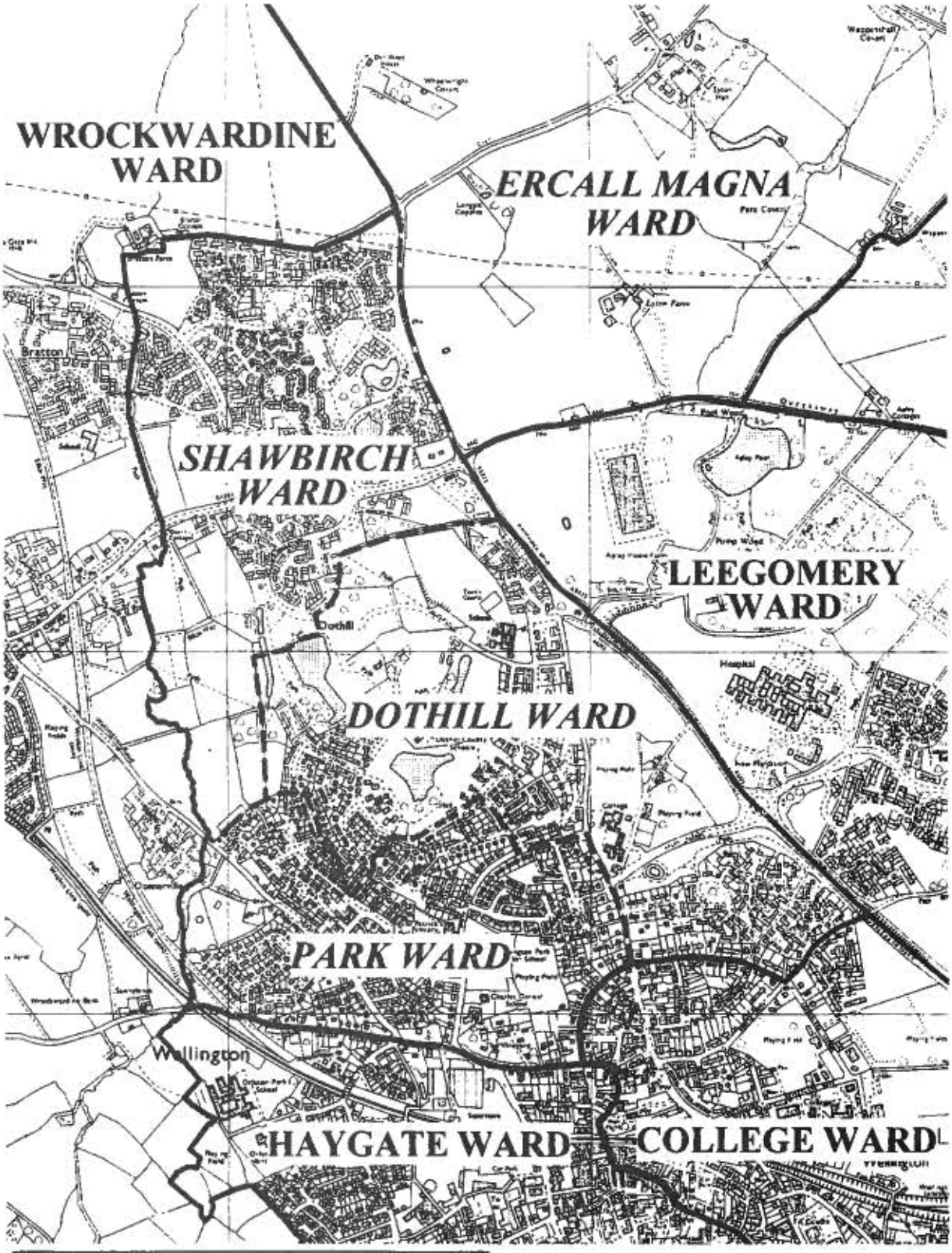
Map A3:
Proposed Boundary Changes between Stirchley, Brookside and Hollinswood & Randlay Wards



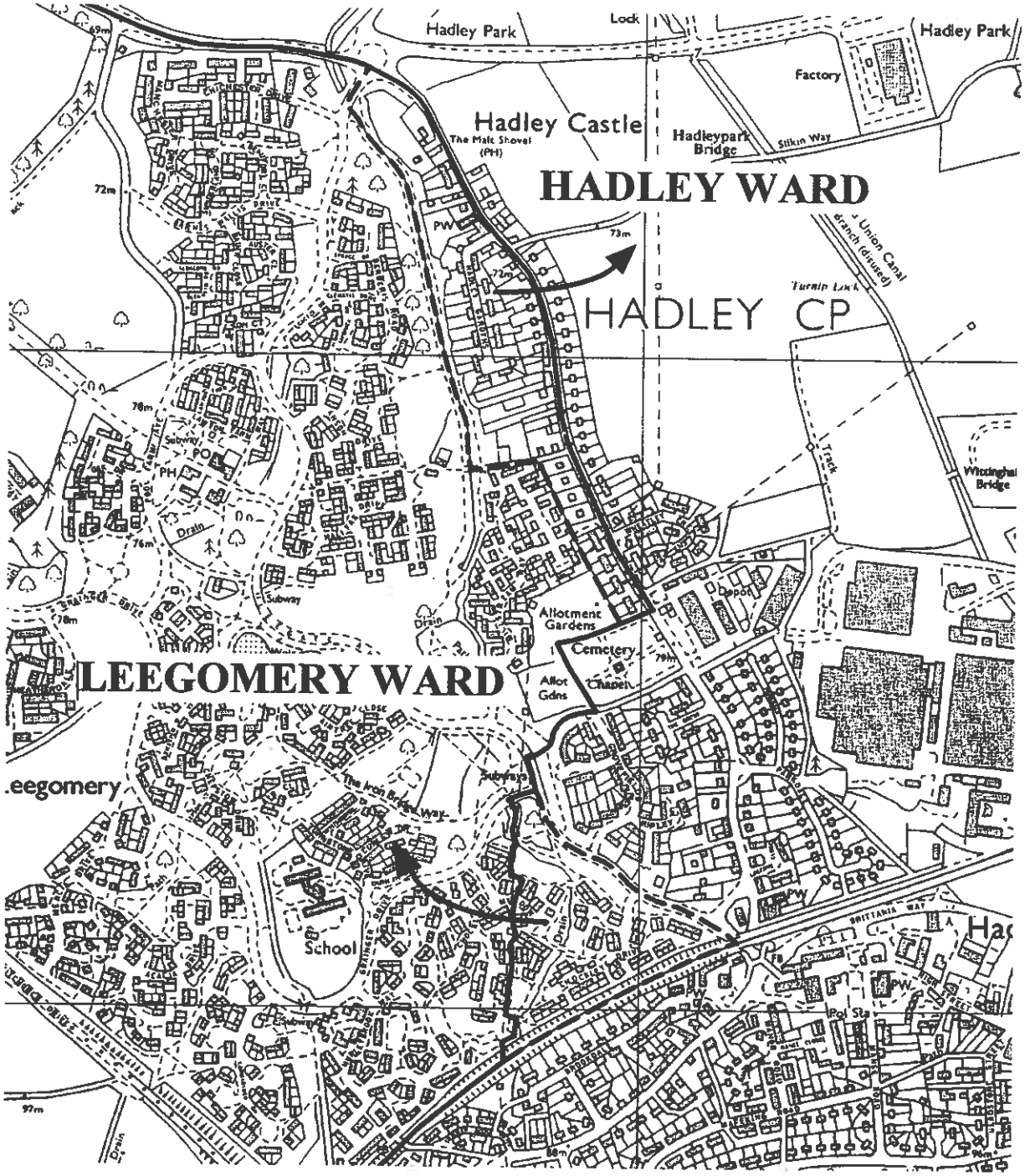
Map A4:
Proposed Boundary Change between Arleston and Ketley Wards



Map A5:
Proposed Boundaries of the New District Wards and Wellington Town Council Wards of Dothill, Park and Shawbirch



Map A6:
Proposed Boundary Change between Leegomery and Hadley Wards

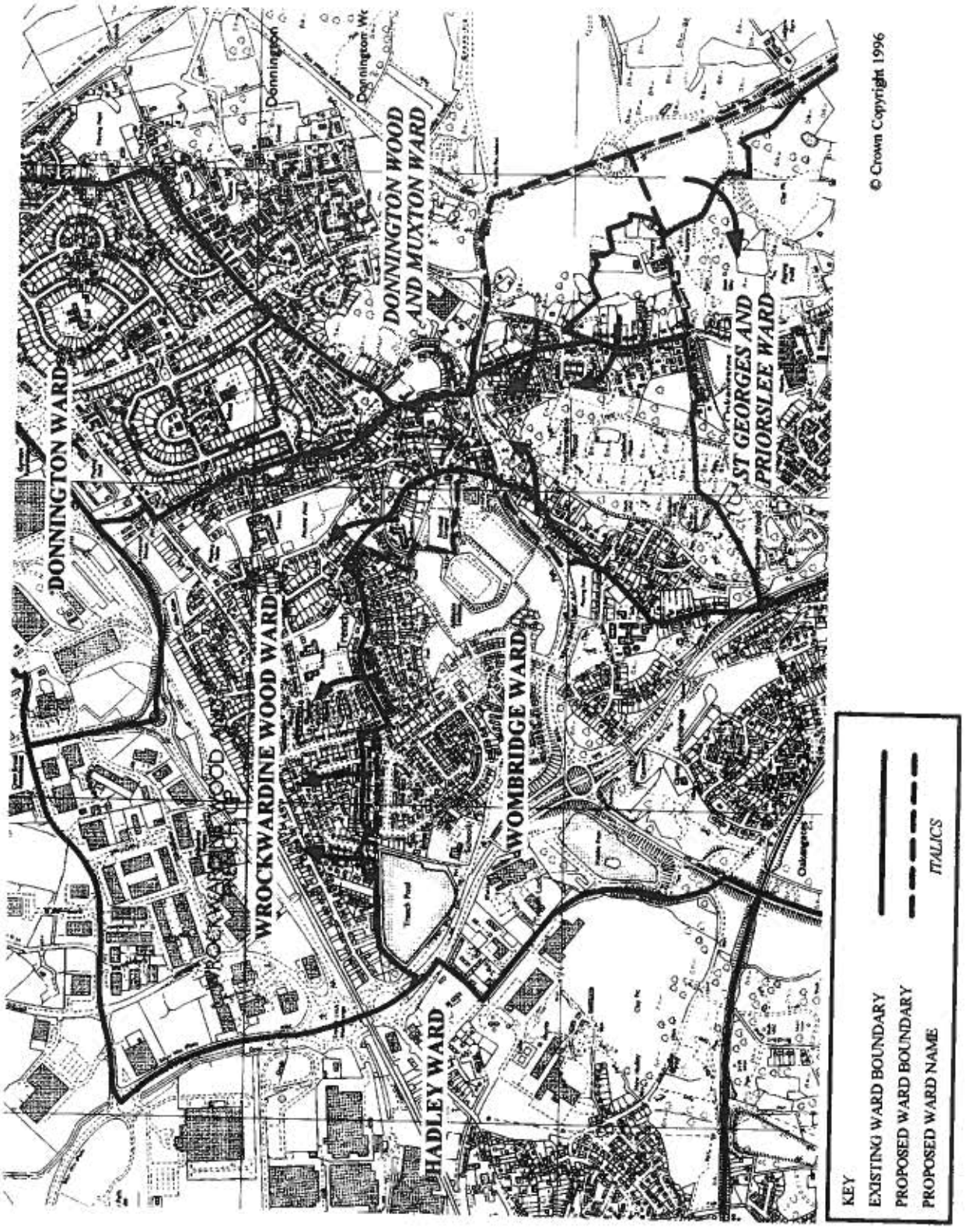


KEY

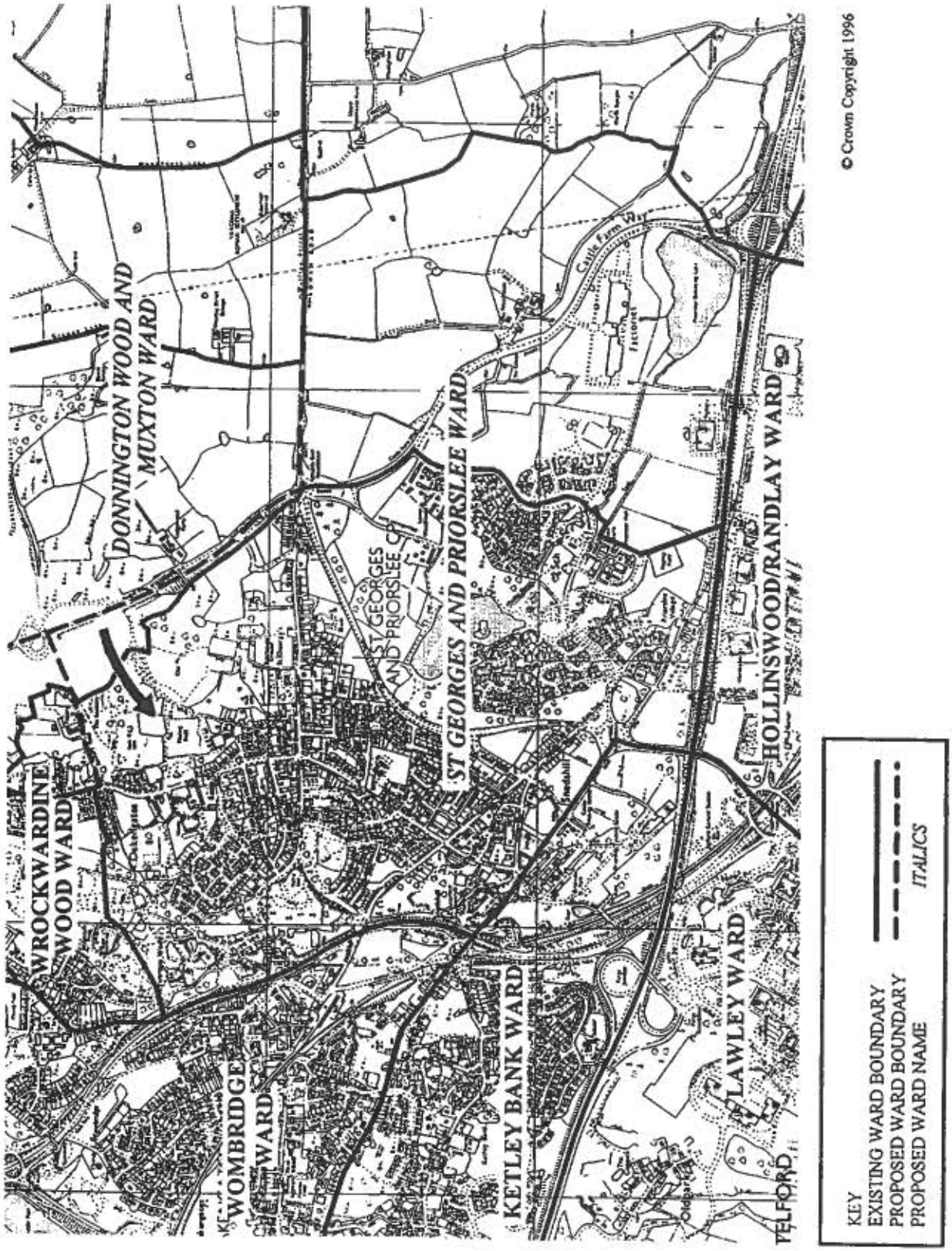
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY ——————

PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY – – – – –

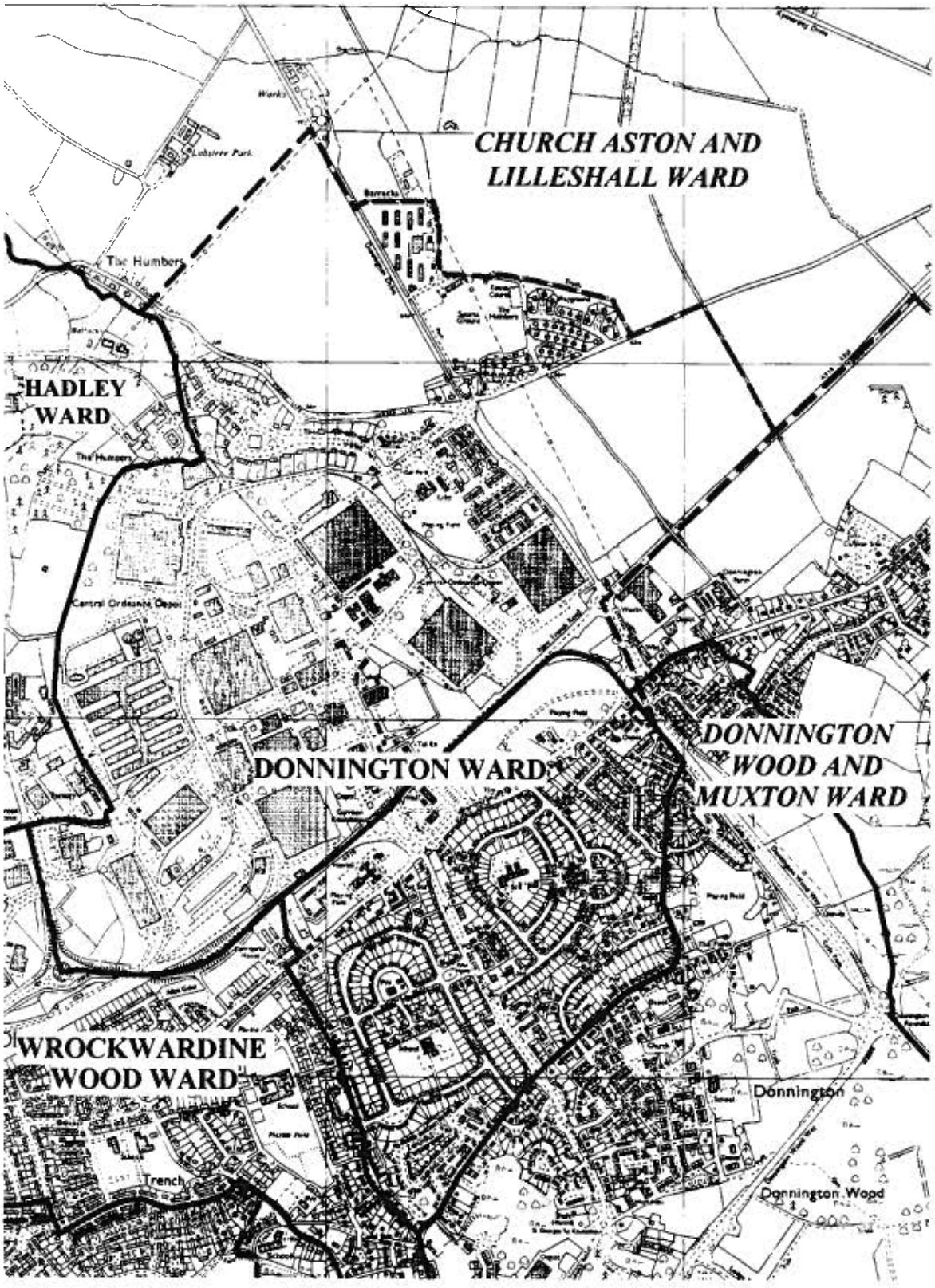
Map A7:
Proposed Boundary Changes between Wombridge and Wrockwardine Wood Wards



Map A8:
Proposed Boundaries of the New District Ward of St George's & Priorslee

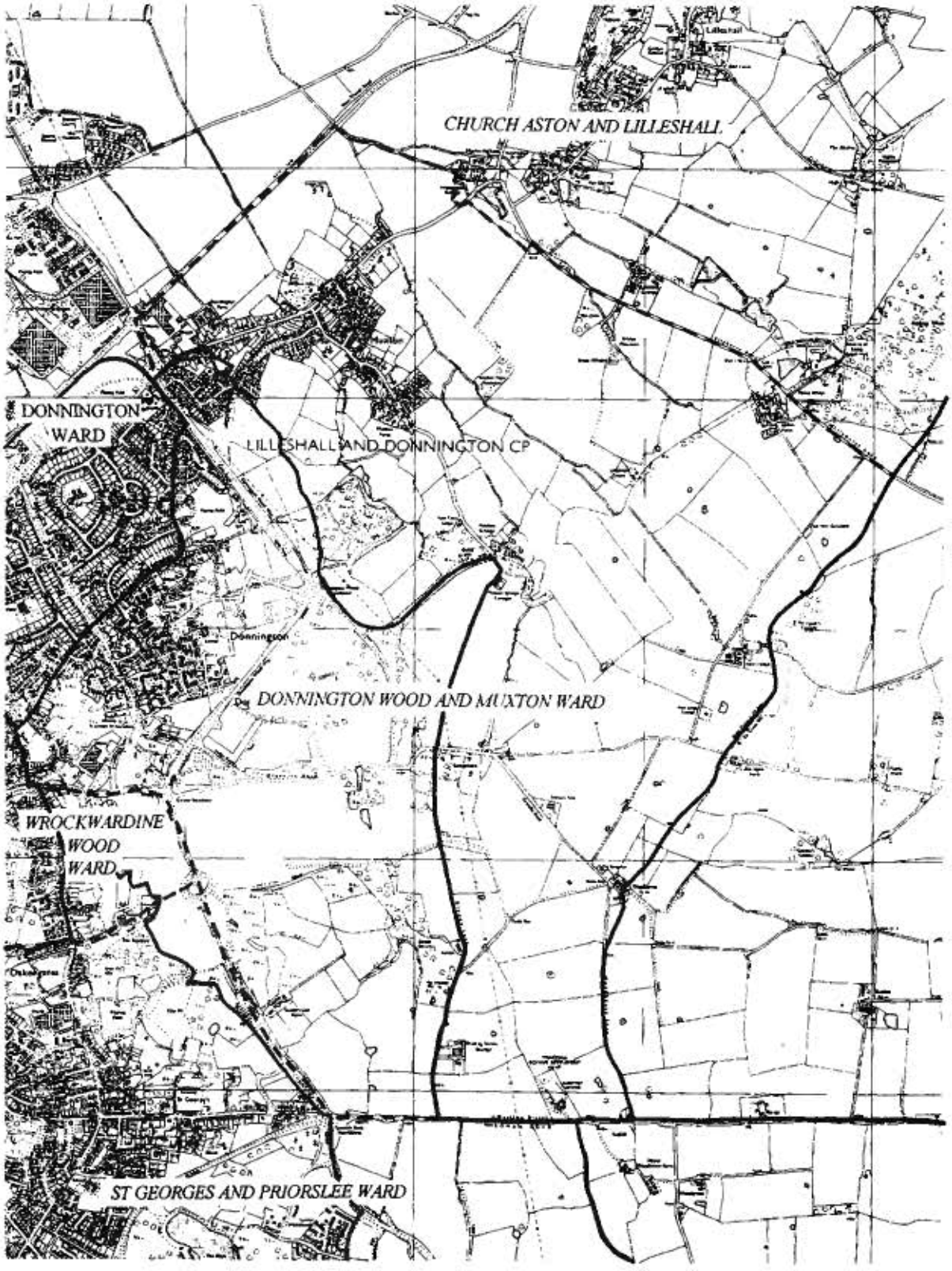


Map A9:
Proposed Boundaries of the Revised District Ward of Donnington



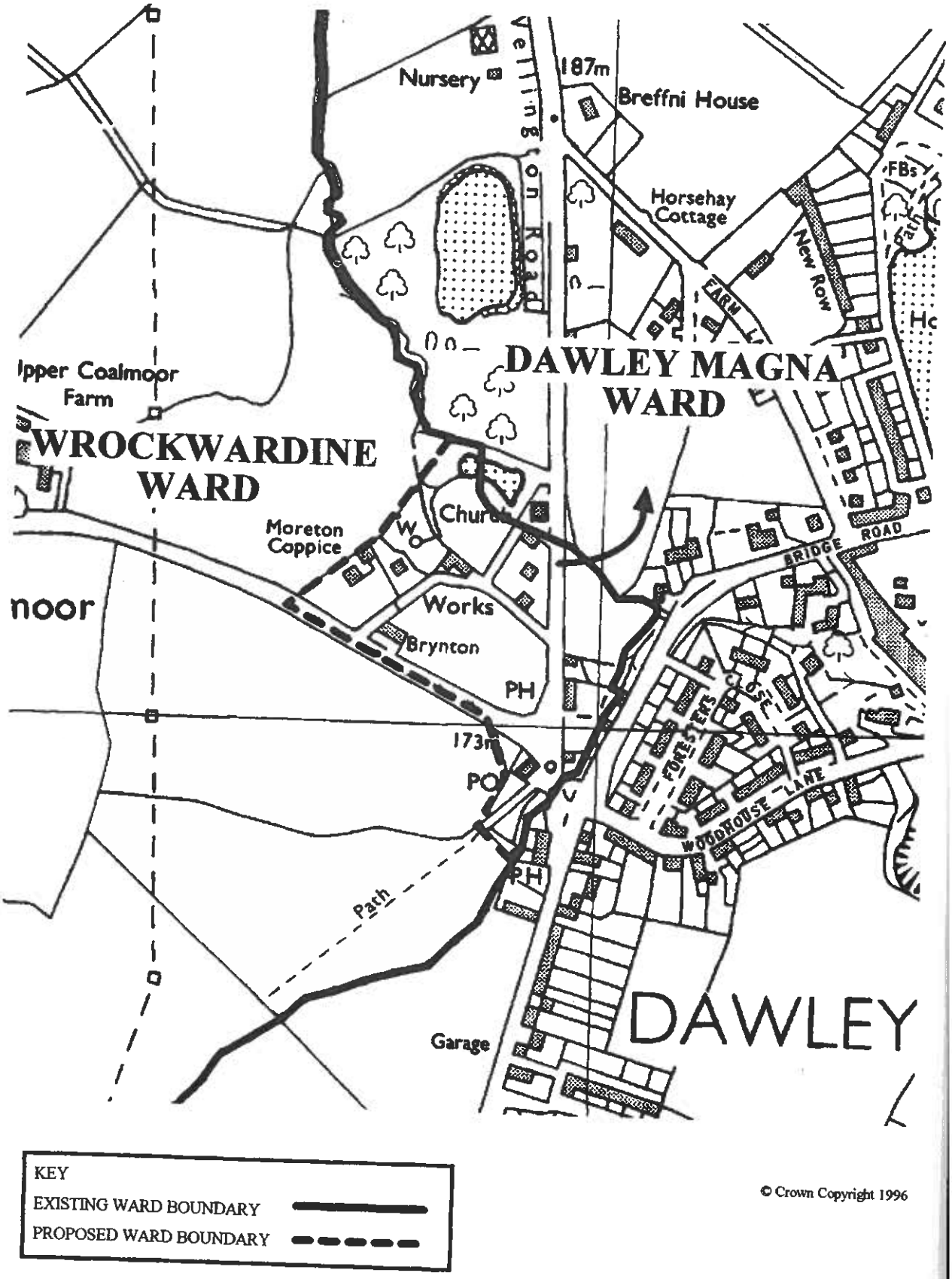
KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	———
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	– – – –
PROPOSED WARD NAME	*ITALICS*

Map A10:
Proposed Boundaries of the New District Ward of Donnington Wood & Muxton

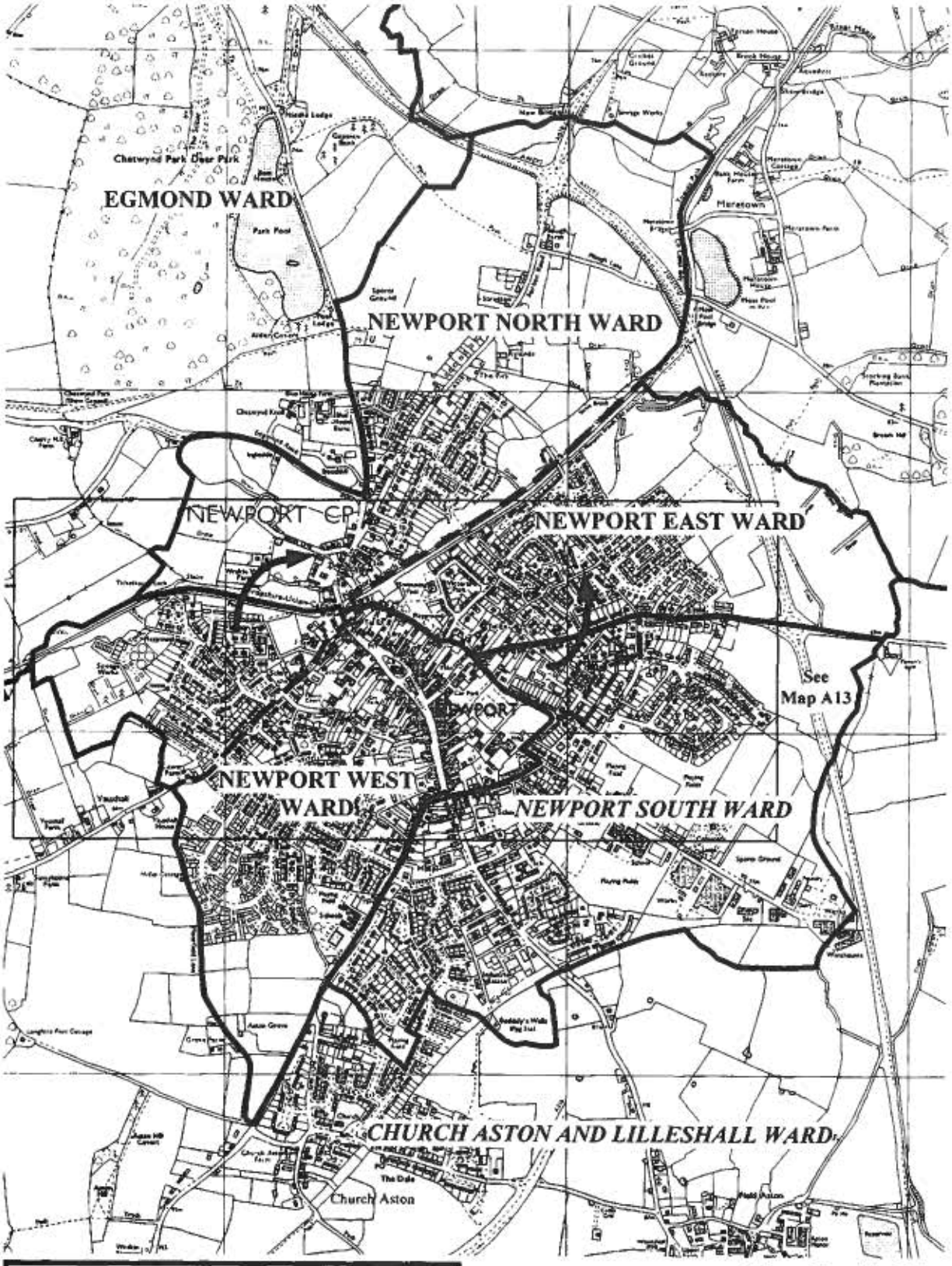


KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	———
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	- - - - -
PROPOSED WARD NAME	*ITALICS*

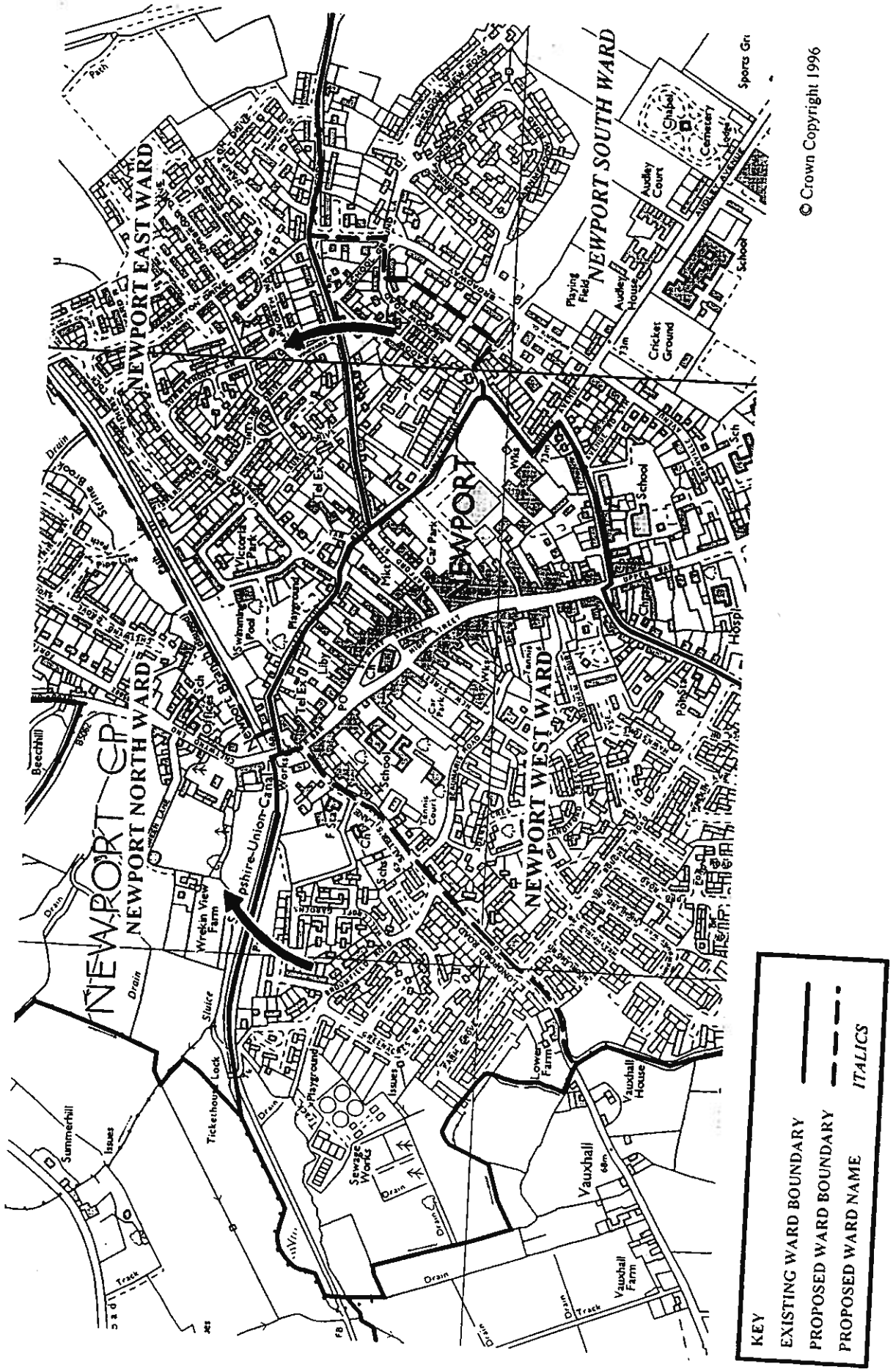
Map A11:
Proposed Boundary Change between Wrockwardine and Dawley Magna Wards



Map A12:
Proposed Ward Boundaries for the Town of Newport



Map A13:
Proposed Ward Boundaries for the Town of Newport



APPENDIX B

The Commission's Draft Recommendations for The Wrekin

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

	Ward name	Constituent Areas
1	Arleston	Arleston ward of Wellington Town Council (as amended)
2	Brookside	Stirchley ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish (as amended)
3	Church Aston & Lilleshall	Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish, Church Aston parish, Lilleshall ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)
4	College	College ward of Wellington Town Council
5	Cuckoo Oak	Cuckoo Oak ward of Madeley parish
6	Dawley Magna	Dawley Hamlets parish and Dawley Central ward of Great Dawley parish
7	Donnington	Donnington ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)
8	Donnington & Muxton	Donnington Wood ward of Lilleshall & Donnington parish (as amended)
9	Dothill	Dothill ward of Wellington Town Council (as proposed)
10	Edgmond	Edgmond parish, Chetwynd parish and Tibberton & Cherrington parish
11	Ercall	Ercall ward of Wellington Town Council
12	Ercall Magna	Ercall Magna parish, Waters Upton parish, Eyton upon the Weald Moors parish and Kynnersley parish
13	Hadley	Hadley parish, Preston upon the Weald Moors parish
14	Haygate	Haygate ward of Wellington Town Council
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	Hollinswood & Randlay parish (as amended)
16	Ironbridge Gorge	The Gorge parish
17	Ketley	Ketley parish (as amended)

Continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Constituent Areas
18	Lawley	Lawley & Overdale parish
19	Leegomery	Leegomery ward of Hadley parish
20	Madeley	Madeley ward of Madeley parish
21	Malinslee & Langley	Malinslee and Langley wards of Great Dawley parish
22	Newport East	Newport East ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)
23	Newport North	Newport North ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)
24	Newport South	Newport South ward of Newport Town Council (as proposed)
25	Newport West	Newport West ward of Newport Town Council (as amended)
26	Oakengates & Ketley Bank	Wombridge & Ketley Bank ward of Oakengates Town Council (as proposed)
27	Park	Park ward of Wellington Town Council (as amended)
28	Shawbirch	Shawbirch ward of Wellington Town Council (as proposed)
29	St George's & Priorslee	St George's & Priorslee parish (as amended)
30	Stirchley	Stirchley ward of Stirchley & Brookside parish (as amended)
31	Woodside	Woodside ward of Madeley parish
32	Wrockwardine	Wrockwardine parish, Rodington parish and Little Wenlock parish
33	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish (as amended) and Trench ward of Oakengates Town Council (as proposed)

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for The Wrekin

			1996 (Current)			2001 (Projected)		
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arleston	1	2,094	2,094	3	2,072	2,072	-2
2	Brookside	2	4,007	2,004	-2	3,832	1,916	-10
3	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2,269	2,269	11	2,213	2,213	5
4	College	1	2,174	2,174	7	2,160	2,160	2
5	Cuckoo Oak	2	4,095	2,048	1	3,934	1,967	-7
6	Dawley Magna	3	6,336	2,112	4	6,724	2,241	6
7	Donnington	2	3,711	1,856	-9	3,594	1,797	-15
8	Donnington & Muxton	2	3,899	1,950	-4	4,887	2,444	15
9	Dothill	1	2,059	2,059	1	2,247	2,247	6
10	Edgmond	1	2,151	2,151	6	2,103	2,103	-1
11	Ercall	1	1,980	1,980	-3	1,932	1,932	-9
12	Ercall Magna	1	2,291	2,291	13	2,270	2,270	7
13	Hadley	2	3,794	1,897	-7	4,079	2,040	-4
14	Haygate	1	2,188	2,188	7	2,137	2,137	1
15	Hollinswood & Randlay	2	4,416	2,208	8	4,311	2,156	2
16	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2,321	2,321	14	2,575	2,575	22
17	Ketley	1	2,139	2,139	5	2,303	2,303	9
18	Lawley	2	3,259	1,630	-20	4,875	2,438	15
19	Leegomery	2	4,243	2,122	4	4,597	2,299	9
20	Madeley	2	4,370	2,185	7	4,275	2,138	1
21	Malinslee & Langley	3	5,966	1,989	-2	6,031	2,010	-5
22	Newport East	1	2,051	2,051	1	1,999	1,999	-6
23	Newport North	1	2,080	2,080	2	2,167	2,167	2

Continued overleaf

Figure B2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for The Wrekin

	Ward name	1996 (Current) Number of councillors	Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	2001 (Projected) Electorate	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24	Newport South	1	1,999	1,999	-2	1,937	1,937	-9
25	Newport West	1	2,011	2,011	-1	1,954	1,954	-8
26	Oakengates & Ketley Bank	2	4,220	2,110	4	4,265	2,133	1
27	Park	1	2,421	2,421	19	2,349	2,349	11
28	Shawbirch	1	1,778	1,778	-13	1,824	1,824	-14
29	St George's & Priorslee	3	6,036	2,012	-1	6,996	2,332	10
30	Stirchley	2	3,633	1,817	-11	3,892	1,946	-8
31	Woodside	2	4,626	2,313	14	4,433	2,217	5
32	Wrockwardine	2	3,205	1,603	-21	3,356	1,678	-21
33	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	3	6,170	2,057	1	6,026	2,009	-5
	Totals	**54**	**109,992**	-	-	**114,347**	-	-
	Averages	-	-	**2,037**	-	-	**2,118**	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on The Wrekin District Council's submission

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the councillor:elector ratio 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.

2 Since the publication of the Commission's draft recommendations, amendments to ward forecasts have been made in certain cases - see Chapter 4.