

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lichfield District Council

Electoral review

November 2014

Translations and other formats

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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Lichfield District Council ('the 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 September 2013.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
3 September 2013	Consultation on council size
26 November 2013	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
4 March 2014	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
13 May 2014	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
29 July 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 47 members, comprising a pattern of five single-member wards, nine two-member wards and eight three-member wards. The recommendations were broadly based on a combination of the Council's and Labour Group's warding proposals. However, we made some minor modifications in the Lichfield city area, and more substantial modifications in Burntwood and several of the proposed rural wards to ensure improved electoral equality and to provide for wards with clear and identifiable boundaries. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Submissions received

During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 29 submissions, including alternative schemes in the south of the area from the Council, the Labour Group and a joint submission from two local residents. We received three submissions from local councillors, 10 from parish and town councils, four from political organisations and one from a local organisation. We also received a submission from Christopher Pincher MP (Tamworth) and a further six from local residents, including a petition of 28 names. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Lichfield 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 were broken down to polling district level and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 8.9% to 2019. The forecasts provided by the Council took into account planned developments across the borough, as well as population forecasts made by the Office for National Statistics.

The Council's draft electorate figures were queried by Beacon Street Area Residents' Association (BSARA) in a number of areas. Subsequently, the Council produced a set of electorate figures in January 2014 and BSARA confirmed that it broadly agreed with these figures.

During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received notification from the Council of a development in Wigginton & Hopwas parish that was not included in the forecast the Council had submitted. This increases the electorate in Lichfield to 88,783 by 2019.

We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and we are content that the revised forecast provided by the Council taking into account the development in Wigginton and Hopwas parish are the most accurate available at this time. We have therefore used these figures as the basis of our final recommendations.

General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. Having considered the submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness. Our final recommendations take account of submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have proposed amendments to ward boundaries for Mease Valley, Whittington & Streethay and Bourne Vale wards.

Our final recommendations for Lichfield are that the Council should have 47 members, with five single-member wards, nine two-member wards and eight three-member wards. One of the wards (Mease Valley) would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2019.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Lichfield 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 Lichfield 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 Lichfield 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 is being conducted following our decision to review the Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 The submissions received from the Council during the initial stage of consultation of this review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Lichfield District Council* which were published on 13 May 2014. We then undertook a further period of consultation which ended on 28 July 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 Lichfield?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on December 2012 electorate data, 35% of the district's wards currently have a variance of more than 10%, with Leomansley ward having a variance of 27%.

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 wards 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 Lichfield District Council.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Lichfield 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 2009² 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 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. In all our reviews 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. 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 Lichfield District Council or the external boundaries or names of parish or 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.

Submissions received

13 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Lichfield District Council (‘the Council’) and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 18 submissions during the consultation on warding patterns, including District-wide schemes from the Council, the Labour Group and the Beacon Street

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

Area Residents' Association (BSARA). During our consultation on draft recommendations we received 29 submissions, including alternative warding patterns from the Council, the Labour Group, Lichfield City Council and a joint submission from two local residents. We also received submissions from Christopher Pincher MP (Tamworth); Tamworth Conservative Association; Lichfield, Tamworth and Burton Liberal Democrats; Lichfield Constituency Labour Party, BSARA, 10 parish and town councils, five local residents, and three local councillors. All of the submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

14 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 8.9% to 2019. The forecasts provided by the Council took into account planned developments across the borough, as well as population forecasts made by the Office for National Statistics.

15 The Council's electorate figures were queried by BSARA in a number of areas. Subsequently, the Council produced a set of electorate figures in January 2014 and BSARA confirmed that it broadly agreed with these figures. The exception was the forecast electorate for St John's ward and BSARA subsequently submitted a warding proposal based on its own figures of 960 more electors than the Council's forecast.

16 During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received notification from the Council of a development in Wigginton & Hopwas parish that was not included in the forecast the Council had submitted. This development when completed would increase the electorate of Wigginton & Hopwas parish by 413 electors by 2019. Outline planning permission for this site was granted in March 2014, and the Council has informed us that development will start no later than March 2015. The Commission is content to include it in the forecasts it has used for its final recommendations. This increases the electorate in Lichfield to 88,783 by 2019.

17 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and we are content that the revised forecast provided by the Council taking into account the development in Wigginton & Hopwas parish is the most accurate available at this time. We have therefore used these figures as the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

18 The Council currently has 56 councillors elected from 26 district wards. During the preliminary stage of the review, we met with Group Leaders and

Full Council. The Council subsequently made a proposal to retain the current council size of 56 members. In support of its proposal, the Council argued that it had a high level of committee membership and that councillors had high workloads.

19 We decided to consult on a council size of 56 in the absence of evidence at that time to support an alternative number. This consultation ended on 14 October 2013.

20 We received 41 submissions during the consultation on council size. Submissions were received from a parish council, a residents association, political groups and local residents. The Council did not provide a further submission.

21 We received a submission from Lichfield Constituency Labour Party supporting the retention of the existing council size. The party considered that the workloads of members were increasing particularly as a result of the time spent by members in committee meetings, on outside bodies and the representational role of members. It also cited an increase in workload resulting from budget reductions.

22 The Commission also received a submission from Lichfield and Tamworth Liberal Democrats. They proposed that the council size should be reduced to 38. They disagreed with many of the points raised by the Council in its submission. In particular, they considered that 50 councillors were too many to scrutinise a cabinet of six. They were of the opinion that a scrutiny committee should have no more than 10 members and ideally seven to eight members. With their suggested council size of 38, this would result, in their view, in four scrutiny committees of eight councillors.

23 The Commission received one submission from Wall Parish Council, which stated that 'the members wish to remain with the current arrangements and would not like to see any changes made to the council size'.

24 Thirty-five submissions were received from local residents, of which two supported a council size of 56 while 33 supported a council size of less than 56. Two supported a reduction to 26 and two supported a reduction to 20. One supported a reduction to between 28–32 councillors, one supported a reduction to 40, and one supported a reduction to 30. Twenty-eight residents favoured a reduction, but did not specify a number.

25 Local residents who favoured a reduction stated that it would not have a negative impact on services or representation and that a reduction may save money. There was also a focus on making councillors work harder. Many comparisons were made locally with other local councils who were seen to operate effectively with significantly fewer members.

26 BSARA favoured a reduction from 56 to 40 elected members which it believed would enable the council to 'operate more effectively and cope with the population increase suggested by the Local Plan'. The association also

stated that 'the District would be better served by fewer councillors who receive substantially more training'.

27 We carefully considered the evidence received during consultation, as well as the Council's original submission on council size. We noted in particular the persuasive arguments put forward by respondents that fewer councillors were necessarily required to carry out effective scrutiny. In particular, respondents pointed out that scrutiny committees comprised a large number of elected members which did not necessarily lead to better scrutiny of the executive or effective and convenient local government. In addition, we were not persuaded that a reduction in members would adversely affect the Council's overall ability to take decisions on behalf of local residents.

28 Furthermore, we considered that local people could be equally well represented by fewer councillors and that links and partnerships with local organisations could be maintained effectively under a smaller council size. We noted that appointments to outside bodies have reduced since 2010. The evidence suggests that the localism agenda is likely to lead to workloads being spread across local organisations, such as parish councils and other local bodies, rather than simply being taken on by district councillors.

29 Whilst several responses to the consultation put forward a proposed reduction in council size to 40 or below, we were not persuaded that such a substantial reduction at this time would best deliver effective and convenient local government. We therefore proposed that the council size be reduced and noted that the average size of authorities with similar characteristics to Lichfield was in a range of between 44 and 47 elected members. In addition, we considered how many councillors would provide a good allocation of councillors between the primary areas of the district. We considered that 47 councillors would provide for a potential pattern of wards that could deliver fair representation for electors in the urban and rural parts of the district.

30 During consultation on warding arrangements, we received district-wide schemes based on council sizes of between 46 and 48 elected members. Having considered the evidence received during consultation, we remain of the view that a council size of 47 elected members would allow the Council to deliver its governance and decision-making responsibilities. It would also provide adequate scrutiny arrangements and the capacity to represent local people in an effective way. Therefore, our final recommendations are based on 47 councillors.

Electoral fairness

31 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.

32 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 (81,168 in 2013 and 88,783 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 47 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,727 in 2013 and 1,889 by 2019.

33 Under our final recommendations, one of our proposed wards (Mease Valley) will have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the district by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral equality for Lichfield.

General analysis

34 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 29 submissions, including submissions from the Council, the Labour Group, Lichfield City Council and two local residents with alternative schemes in particular areas. We also received a submission from Christopher Pincher MP (Tamworth); Tamworth Conservative Association; Lichfield, Tamworth and Burton Liberal Democrats; Lichfield Constituency Labour Party; and BSARA. We also received comments from 10 parish and town councils, six local residents and three local councillors containing localised comments. The Labour Group submission was supported by Councillors Mynott (Fazeley ward), Norman (Summerfield ward) and Woodward (County Councillor for Burntwood North), and two local residents. The submission from the Council also contained comments from its electoral services department.

35 The Council's submission was originally submitted to the Commission in the form of substantive comments and a table of proposed wards. After discussions with the Council, it also submitted some clarification to resolve some inconsistencies we had identified in its submission. The Council requested that we consider including a revised electorate forecast for Wigginton & Hopwas parish to take account of a development that had arisen since the Council submitted their forecast electorates. We consider this to be appropriate and therefore accept a revised electorate of 1,283 for the Wigginton & Hopwas parish.

36 The Council put forward two options based on a council of 48 members as opposed to the 47 members on which we based our draft recommendations. We will consider modifying our proposed council size where either we have received sufficient evidence to do so or it provides a better allocation of councillors across the district. However, we are not persuaded to modify our proposed council size of 47. Firstly, we have not received evidence to justify a revised council size based on the function of the Council and the representative role of members. Furthermore, given that the scheme proposed by the Council would result in a number of wards with electoral variances significantly above 10% this proposed council size does not provide an effective allocation of members across the district. Further to this, the Council's proposed schemes appear not take account of the

increased electorate in Wigginton & Hopwas parish that it requested we take account of in our electorate forecasts for 2019. We are therefore not persuaded to adopt the Council's proposed warding scheme as part of our final recommendations.

37 The Labour Group supported our proposals for the rural north, Lichfield City and Burntwood but did not support our proposals in the south of the district, particularly around the town of Fazeley and the villages of Shenstone, Little Aston and Hammerwich. It proposed an alternative warding pattern for the area. We also received opposition to our proposals for Shenstone, Little Aston and Hammerwich from Shenstone Parish Council, Wall Parish Council, Hammerwich Parish Council, Christopher Pincher MP, Tamworth Conservative Association, and several local residents.

38 The submission from BSARA supported our proposals across the whole of the district. We received one submission supporting our council size of 47.

39 We also received submissions regarding the parish warding arrangements in Lichfield City and Burntwood Town from Lichfield City Council and Lichfield, Tamworth & Burton Liberal Democrats.

40 We have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final with some modifications that take into account submissions received during the consultation on the draft recommendations. In particular, we propose changes to our recommendations for the Bourne Vale, Mease Valley and Whittington & Streethay wards and minor modification in the Blake Street area of Shenstone Parish. In accepting the revised electorate forecasts in the Mease Valley ward, this will affect the average number of electors per councillor and may have a minor effect on the electoral variances of other wards even where we have not changed the boundaries of that ward. Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 24–26.

41 Our final recommendations would result in five single-member wards, nine two-member wards and eight three-member wards. We consider our proposals provide for good levels of electoral equality while reflecting our understanding of community identities and interests in Lichfield.

Electoral arrangements

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

- Lichfield City (page 13)
- Burntwood (page 13–14)
- Rural north (pages 14–15)
- Rural south (pages 16–18)

43 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 24–26 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Lichfield City

44 Lichfield is a city located in the centre of the area covered by Lichfield District Council. It is the largest conurbation in the district and makes up a single parish. It is well-connected to the rest of the district by a number of A roads and the M6 Toll motorway. Under a council size of 47, Lichfield city is allocated 15 councillors. We received submissions covering this area from the Council, the Labour Group, Lichfield City Council BSARA and Lichfield, Tamworth & Burton Liberal Democrats.

45 The Council and the Labour Group both supported our proposed wards in Lichfield city.

46 Lichfield City Council and Lichfield, Tamworth & Burton Liberal Democrats objected to our proposal to create nine city council wards in Lichfield, an increase of three from the existing arrangements. The City Council wished to retain the current number of six city wards. The City Council also challenged the Commission's view that we could not change the overall number of city councillors for Lichfield.

47 Under legislation, we can only make changes to parish electoral arrangements as a direct consequence of our recommendations for district wards. The number of city councillors is not affected by our warding proposals and we cannot therefore change them. Furthermore, we are required to ensure that city wards are wholly coterminous with both our recommended wards and the existing electoral divisions for Staffordshire. Therefore, it is necessary to create nine city council wards for Lichfield.

48 As part of the Council's submission, its Electoral Services department requested that Lichfield precedes the name of all the wards (e.g. Lichfield Curborough). We are not persuaded we have received sufficient evidence to change the city ward names and therefore have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final in this respect.

49 Overall, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final for the Lichfield city area. Our final recommendations in this area are for the two-member wards of Boley Park, Chadsmead and Curborough and the three-member wards of Leomansley, St John's and Stowe. These wards are forecast to have 3% fewer, 3% fewer, 6% fewer, 2% fewer, 1% more and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Burntwood

50 Burntwood is to the west of Lichfield, on the western edge of the district. It is a former mining town and is the second largest town in the district and makes up a single parish.

51 We received submissions covering Burntwood from the Council, the Labour Group, and Burntwood Town Council. The Labour Group's comments were supported by Councillor Woodward, a district and county councillor.

52 The Council and the Labour Group both supported the proposed wards in Burntwood. Burntwood Town Council also supported the proposed wards in its submission.

53 The Council suggested a number of very small amendments to the boundaries of a number of wards in Burntwood. These amendments, however, were mostly concerning the external boundary of the parish where it has become defaced over time. We are unable to proceed with most of these amendments as they would necessitate the creation of unviable parish wards with few electors. In our view, this would not provide for effective and convenient local government for electors in Burntwood.

54 As part of the Council's submission, its Electoral Services department also requested that Burntwood precede the name of all the wards (e.g. Burntwood Boney Hay & Central). This suggestion was also made by Councillor Woodward (County Councillor for Burntwood North) and supported by Councillor Norman (Summerfield). We are not persuaded that we have received sufficient evidence to change the town council ward names.

55 Overall, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final for the Burntwood area. Our final recommendations for the area are for the two-member wards of Chase Terrace, Chasetown and Highfield and the three-member wards of Boney Hay & Central and Summerfield & All Saints. These wards are forecast to have 3% more, 1% fewer, 3% more, 5% fewer and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Rural north

56 The rural north covers the wards to the north of Lichfield city and Burntwood and includes the large villages of Armitage, Handsacre and Alrewas. We received submissions that covered the rural north from the Council, the Labour Group, Christopher Pincher MP (Tamworth), Tamworth Conservative Association, four parish councils and a local resident.

57 The Council's submission in this area reported that a development had emerged since the Council had submitted its original electorate forecasts at the start of the review. This development is on the border of Lichfield and Tamworth districts and falls within Wigginton & Hopwas parish. The Council stated that it had now given approval to a planning application for 165 homes, with a consequential increase of 413 electors. Having considered this information, we are content to incorporate this extra development as part of our electorate forecasts. We were also notified of this proposed development in the submissions of Christopher Pincher MP, Tamworth Conservative Association and Clifton Campville with Thorpe Constantine Parish Council.

58 This increase in electorate means that our proposed Mease Valley ward would have a variance of 27% by 2019 which we consider to be unacceptably high. The Council did not propose alternative warding arrangements in this area to resolve the issue.

59 We therefore propose to resolve this by including the Wigginton half of Wigginton & Hopwas parish in our proposed Whittington & Streethay ward instead of in our Mease Valley ward. This means the Wigginton & Hopwas parish is no longer split between Mease Valley and Whittington & Streethay wards. We also propose to include the parish of Swinfen & Packington in our proposed Bourne Vale ward as a result of submissions from the Labour Group, Tamworth Conservative Association and Christopher Pincher MP.

60 This would leave Mease Valley ward with an electoral variance of -12%, which we consider to be acceptable and would still ensure that the proposed ward reflects community ties. To try and reduce this variance to within 10% would mean a complete redrawing of the wards across all of the rural area of Lichfield District and we do not consider we have received sufficient information and evidence to justify this. Furthermore, we consider this to be less desirable than proposing a ward with a variance of -12%.

61 We also received a submission from Elford Parish Council which objected to Elford being included in our proposed Whittington & Streethay ward. The Parish Council stated that its parish has close links with the other parishes in the Mease Valley ward. However, we are not persuaded to include Elford in Mease Valley ward as this would result in a ward with 15% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, and we do not consider we have received sufficient evidence to justify this high electoral variance.

62 Armitage with Handsacre Parish Council and the clerk to both Kings Bromley Parish Council and Curborough with Elmhurst Parish Council both objected to the inclusion of Kings Bromley in a ward with the Armitage area. As we stated in our draft recommendations, Kings Bromley parish is too small to form a single-member ward and cannot be placed into the Alrewas & Fradley, Colton & the Ridwares, or Longdon wards as this would result in an unacceptably high electoral variances. Our proposal was also objected to by a local resident but no further evidence was provided in respect of a viable alternative. We have therefore decided to confirm our decision to include the area in a three-member Armitage with Handsacre ward as part of our final recommendations.

63 Our final recommendations for the area are for the single-member wards of Colton & the Ridwares, Longdon and Mease Valley and the three-member wards of Alrewas & Fradley, Armitage with Handsacre and Whittington & Streethay. These wards are forecast to have 2% fewer, 4% fewer, 12% fewer, equal to, 10% more and 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Rural south

64 The rural south covers all the wards to the south of Lichfield city and Burntwood, and includes the town of Fazeley and the villages of Shenstone and Little Aston.

65 The majority of submissions received during consultation covered the rural south. We received submissions from the Council, the Labour Group and two local residents providing alternative warding arrangements. The Council's submission was supported by detailed submissions from Shenstone Parish Council and Wall Parish Council.

66 The Council opposed our proposed Bourne Vale, Hammerwich with Wall, Little Aston & Stonnall and Shenstone wards. They also opposed the inclusion of Shenstone Woodend and Little Hay in Bourne Vale ward. The Labour Group proposed the transfer of Shenstone Woodend from Bourne Vale to Little Aston & Stonnall ward and the Little Hay area from Bourne Vale to Shenstone ward. The Labour Group's proposed Bourne Vale ward would have a variance of 8% when taking into consideration both the increased electorate of the district, and its proposal in the Fazeley area mentioned in paragraph 76. As mentioned in paragraph 59, we propose to include Swinfen & Packington in our proposed Bourne Vale ward in our final recommendations.

67 The Council disagreed with our proposed Hammerwich with Wall ward on the basis that it crossed parliamentary constituency boundaries and that Hammerwich and Wall do not share 'commonalities or community infrastructure'. This view was shared by Christopher Pincher MP. It should be noted that the Commission is not obliged nor does it take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries when making recommendations for district wards. As noted in our draft recommendations, Hammerwich parish is too large to be considered a single-member ward and too small to be a two-member ward. We do not wish to recommend a ward that would cross the strong boundary Hammerwich has with Lichfield and Burntwood parishes so we decided to pair Hammerwich with Wall. We note that Hammerwich has several strong transport links to Wall, namely the A6 and M6 toll. These roads actually separate the settlement of Wall from the rest of the parish and from the Stonnall area. We are of the view that we have not received sufficient evidence to support changing our proposed Hammerwich and Wall ward.

68 Our proposed Little Aston & Stonnall ward was opposed by the Council on the basis of the strong individualities of the two areas and Stonnall's links to Wall. Our proposals were also opposed by two local residents.

69 The Council, supported by Shenstone Parish Council and Wall Parish Council, suggested that we include the areas of Shenstone Woodend and Little Hay in a two-member Little Aston ward. This suggestion was based on Stonnall being combined in a ward with the Wall area which, as stated above, we are not persuaded to adopt as part of our final recommendations.

70 The Council also opposed the division of the Blake Street community between wards. The Commission originally placed this area in Bourne Vale ward as it considered the railway line running south from Shenstone provided a stronger boundary than the A5127 Birmingham Road. Having received evidence that this community looks towards Little Aston we have decided to propose a small change in this area and include the community to the north of Blake Street and around Smarts Avenue in our proposed Little Aston & Stonnall ward.

71 Our proposed Shenstone ward was objected to by the Council, the Labour Group, Shenstone Parish Council, Wall Parish Council, and Tamworth Conservative Association. All respondents agreed that Shenstone should be a single-member ward but differed on the exact boundaries. The Labour Group proposed transferring the settlement of Little Hay back into Shenstone ward from Bourne Vale ward and they proposed transferring the 'scattered rural part lying to the west of the railway line' to Hammerwich and Wall ward. The Council proposed a boundary along Raikes Lane to the west of Shenstone to ensure the residents on Lynn Lane are placed in a ward the Council considers they share the strongest community ties with.

72 Tamworth Conservative Association mentioned the removal of Shenstone Woodend, Blake Street and Little Hay from Bourne Vale ward but did not put forward an alternative proposal for this specific area.

73 Wall Parish Council and Shenstone Parish Council both made submissions containing an alternative warding arrangement identical to that proposed by the Council although only Shenstone Parish Council explicitly stated its support for the Council's proposed amendments.

74 We also received a submission from two local residents who included a map of their proposals for Shenstone and the surrounding area. When this map was compared with the electoral registers for the area it was found that the proposed wards had variances that were too great to consider the proposal further. In particular, the proposed Bourne Vale ward would have an electoral variance of -27% and Little Aston & Stonnall ward a variance of -19%. A further submission was received from a local resident in Stonnall and contained a 28-name petition objecting to a Little Aston & Stonnall ward. This submission did not make any alternative suggestion or provide evidence in support.

75 We do not consider we have received adequate evidence to justify the proposed changes in the Shenstone area with the exception of the small area of Blake Street being included in a Little Aston & Stonnall ward. We are content that our draft recommendations for this area provide the best balance between our statutory criteria and reflect the transport and communication links in the area.

76 The town of Fazeley is covered entirely by a two-member ward. The Labour Group proposed to remove 295 electors from the Mile Oak area of

Fazeley and include them in the Bourne Vale ward. It provided limited evidence in support of this other than its view that these electors do not have anything in common with the rest of Fazeley ward. We do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to justify the proposed change. In particular, this area appears to be a coherent community focused on Sutton Road and the proposed change would combine the Mile Oak area with distant communities with which it would share few clear links.

77 In conclusion, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final subject to the amendment to the Bourne Vale and Little Aston & Stonnall wards. Our final recommendations for this area are for the single-member wards of Bourne Vale and Shenstone and the two-member wards of Fazeley, Hammerwich with Wall and Little Aston & Stonnall. These wards are forecast to have 2% fewer, 6% more, 9% more, 4% fewer and 10% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively. Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Conclusions

78 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2013 and 2019 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2013	2019
Number of councillors	47	47
Number of electoral wards/divisions	22	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,727	1,889
Number of wards/divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	6	1
Number of wards/divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendation

Lichfield District Council should comprise 47 councillors serving 22 wards as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

80 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, the Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

81 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Burntwood.

Final recommendation

Burntwood Town Council should return 22 town councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Boney Hay & Central (returning five members), Chase Terrace (returning four members), Chasetown (returning three members), Gorstey Ley (returning two members), Highfield (returning one member), Hunslet (returning two members) and Summerfield & All Saints (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

82 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Lichfield.

Final recommendation

Lichfield City Council should return 28 city councillors, as at present, representing nine wards: Boley Park (returning three members), Burton Old Road (returning one member), Chadsmead (returning four members), Curborough (returning three members), Garrick Road (returning one member), Leomansley (returning five members), Pentire Road (returning one member), St John's (returning six members) and Stowe (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

83 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Shenstone.

Final recommendation

Shenstone Parish Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Little Aston & Stonnall (returning eight members), Shenstone (returning six members) and Shenstone Woodend (returning one

member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

84 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Lichfield 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 Lichfield District Council in 2015.

Equalities

85 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 Lichfield District Council

86 The following map illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Lichfield District Council:

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

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Lichfield District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Alrewas & Fradley	3	4,667	1,556	-10%	5,653	1,884	0%
2	Armitage with Handsacre	3	5,533	1,844	7%	6,220	2,073	10%
3	Boley Park	2	3,681	1,841	7%	3,681	1,841	-3%
4	Boney Hay & Central	3	5,292	1,764	2%	5,365	1,788	-5%
5	Bourne Vale	1	1,817	1,817	5%	1,860	1,860	-2%
6	Chadsmead	2	3,643	1,822	5%	3,655	1,828	-3%
7	Chase Terrace	2	3,879	1,940	12%	3,894	1,947	3%
8	Chasetown	2	2,618	1,309	-24%	3,722	1,861	-1%
9	Colton & the Ridwares	1	1,804	1,804	4%	1,849	1,849	-2%
10	Curborough	2	3,538	1,769	2%	3,568	1,784	-6%

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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Fazeley	2	3,626	1,813	5%	4,113	2,057	9%
12	Hammerwich with Wall	2	3,604	1,802	4%	3,626	1,813	-4%
13	Highfield	2	3,881	1,941	12%	3,901	1,951	3%
14	Leomansley	3	5,251	1,750	1%	5,548	1,849	-2%
15	Little Aston & Stonnall	2	4,095	2,048	19%	4,144	2,072	10%
16	Longdon	1	1,787	1,787	3%	1,813	1,813	-4%
17	Mease Valley	1	1,608	1,608	-7%	1,655	1,655	-12%
18	Shenstone	1	1,954	1,954	13%	1,999	1,999	6%
19	St John's	3	4,647	1,549	-10%	5,739	1,913	1%
20	Stowe	3	5,060	1,687	-2%	5,364	1,788	-5%
21	Summerfield & All Saints	3	5,028	1,676	-3%	5,428	1,809	-4%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2013)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22	Whittington & Streethay	3	4,155	1,385	-20%	5,986	1,995	6%
	Totals	47	81,168	-	-	88,783	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,727	-	-	1,889	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the Lichfield 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

