

Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	5
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	7
General analysis	7
Electoral arrangements	8
East rural Stafford	8
West rural Stafford	9
North rural Stafford and Stone	10
Stafford town – south	11
Stafford town – north and central	12
Conclusions	14
Parish electoral arrangements	14
3 What happens next?	17
4 Mapping	19
Appendices	
A Table A1: Final recommendations for Stafford Borough Council	20
B Glossary and abbreviations	23

Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We have conducted an electoral review of Stafford Borough Council ('the Council') to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

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

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 July 2013	Consultation on council size begins
22 October 2013	Submission of proposals for ward patterns to the LGBCE
8 January 2014	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
15 April 2014	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
25 June 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

During the consultation period on a warding pattern for Stafford we received 15 submissions including three borough-wide submissions: one from the Council, one from the Labour Group on the Council ('the Labour Group') and a joint submission from Councillor Thomas and Councillor Stephens. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

We proposed a council size of 40 members comprising seven single-member, 15 two-member and one three-member wards.

Our draft recommendations for Stafford sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government.

Submissions received

During the consultation on the draft recommendations for Stafford, we received 47 submissions. These included submissions from the Council, the Labour Group, Stafford & Stone Green Party, a local community group, six town and parish councils, and 37 members of the public.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a date 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 projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3.4% over this period.

Following publication of our draft recommendations, we did not receive any comments on the electorate figures. Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of the final recommendations.

General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have made a minor amendment to the boundary between our Common and Holmcroft wards. We have also amended our proposed parish warding arrangements for Stone Town Council. Elsewhere, we have confirmed our draft recommendations as final.

Our final recommendations for Stafford are that the Council should have 40 members representing seven single-member, 15 two-member and one three-member wards. None of the wards will have a variance of more than 10% from the average number of electors per councillor for the district by 2019. Having taken into account the evidence we have received during consultation, we believe that our final recommendations will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Stafford Borough 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 Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Stafford Borough 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

Our final recommendations can also be viewed at
<http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review was conducted following our decision to review Stafford Borough Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to Stafford Borough Council as well as other interested parties inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during the consultation on warding patterns informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Stafford Borough Council*, which were published on 15 April 2014. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 24 June 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 Stafford?

5 We decided to conduct this review following the Council's request for the Commission to conduct an electoral review. In making its request, the Council invited us to consider a reduction in the number of councillors to be elected.

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 or town council ward you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change 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
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Stafford Borough Council.

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

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations.

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

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

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

Submissions received

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Stafford Borough Council (‘the Council’) and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 47 submissions during the consultation on our draft recommendations. All submissions may be inspected by

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

appointment at our offices and can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

15 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations.

Electorate figures

16 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. This is prescribed in the 2009 Act. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3.4%. 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.

17 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content that the Council's projected figures are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

18 The Council currently has 59 councillors elected from 26 borough wards, comprising three single-member, 13 two-member and 10 three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed a reduced council size of 40 members and the Labour Group proposed a council size of 45 members. Both the Council and the Labour Group put forward evidence relating to the Council's governance and management structure, scrutiny of the council, work on outside bodies and the members' representational role. We considered that the Council more clearly demonstrated how a council of 40 members would continue to ensure effective governance and decision-making arrangements in Stafford.

19 During the consultation on council size we received 27 submissions. There was mixed reaction to proposals for a reduction in council size. However, no substantive evidence was presented to contradict the rationale presented by the Council, nor was any other council size adequately evidenced. During consultation on warding arrangements we received a borough-wide submission made by Councillors Thomas and Stephens based on a council size of 44. Having considered the evidence presented in this submission and after carrying out an allocation exercise to explore the implications of this number for warding patterns, we consider that 40 members would provide the best allocation of members to different areas of the borough and result in wards across the borough which would result in good levels of electoral equality. Therefore, we decided to base our draft recommendations on a council size of 40.

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations we did not receive any further comments relating to council size. We therefore confirm a council size of 40 members for Stafford as part of our final recommendations.

Electoral fairness

21 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.

22 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (98,544 in 2013 and 101,879 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 40 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 2,464 in 2013 and 2,547 by 2019.

23 Under our final recommendations, none of our proposed wards will have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for the borough by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Stafford.

General analysis

24 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations we received 15 submissions, including borough-wide schemes from the Council and the Labour Group based on a council size of 40. Councillor Thomas and Councillor Stephens also made a joint borough-wide submission based on a council size of 44. We received additional representations from Stafford Council Independent Group, Stone Constituency Labour Party, Stone Constituency Conservative Association, seven parish and town councils and two members of the public.

25 During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received 47 submissions. These included submissions from the Council, the Labour Group on the Council ('the Labour Group'), Stafford & Stone Green Party, six parish and town councils, and 37 members of the public.

26 The Council was broadly in support of the draft recommendations although it made some alternative proposals for parts of Stafford town in the Highfields and Western Downs area as well as across the north-east of the town.

27 The Labour Group and Stafford & Stone Green Party made submissions in support of our draft recommendations in their entirety.

28 Of the other 44 submissions received, 30 were in regard to our proposed Haywood & Hixon ward. During the consultation on warding arrangements, Hixon Parish Council proposed a ward containing the parishes of Hixon, Stowe-by-Chartley and Gayton, which would have 24% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2019. During the consultation on our draft recommendations the Parish Council produced a postcard that gave local residents the option to 'vote' either in favour of the draft recommendations or in favour of the Parish Council's proposed alternative ward. Hixon Parish Council made a submission that included 393 of these postcards, 390 of which favoured the Parish Council's proposal with three supporting the draft recommendations. We received a further 31 individual

submissions in this postcard format under separate covers. Two of these expressed support for the draft recommendations.

29 A submission from Stone Town Council commented on the parish warding arrangements for that area. Its submission was supported by the Borough Council. Other submissions commented on our proposals for the entire borough or other localised areas.

30 We have considered all submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. In our final recommendations for Stafford, we have sought to address evidence received during consultation and to achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

31 Our final recommendations are for seven single-member, 15 two-member and one three-member wards. No ward would have a variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2019. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table 1 (on page 14).

Electoral arrangements

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

- East rural Stafford (pages 8–9)
- West rural Stafford (pages 9–10)
- North rural Stafford and Stone (pages 10–11)
- Stafford town – south (pages 11–12)
- Stafford town – north and central (pages 12–13)

33 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 pages 20–1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

East rural Stafford

Haywood & Hixon

34 In the south-east of the borough our draft recommendations were for a two-member Haywood & Hixon ward comprising the parishes of Colwich and Hixon.

35 Hixon Parish Council produced a postcard that was made available to local residents. This postcard offered local residents a chance to ‘vote’ either in support of our draft recommendations or in support of the Parish Council’s alternative proposal for a Stafford Chartley ward comprising the parishes of Hixon, Gayton and Stowe-by-Chartley. We received 31 of these postcards directly from local residents. The Parish Council also made a submission that included a further 393 of these postcards. In total, therefore, we received 424 postcards. Of these, 419 expressed their support for the proposal of the Parish Council whilst five expressed support for our draft recommendations.

36 Whilst the Parish Council’s proposed ward was supported by evidence of community identity, its proposed ward would have 24% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the borough by 2019. We consider this to be an unacceptable

level of electoral inequality. Furthermore, the Parish Council's proposed ward did not take into account the surrounding area and made no comment on how its proposed ward would fit into an overall pattern of wards.

37 Whilst we note that there is considerable local feeling regarding our draft recommendations for Haywood & Hixon, we consider that our ward provides the best balance between our statutory criteria and we therefore have confirmed it as part of our final recommendations.

38 Under our final recommendations Haywood & Hixon ward is forecast to have 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

Milford and Milwich

39 To the north and east of Stafford town our draft recommendations were for a single-member Milford ward and a two-member Milwich ward. We received one submission regarding this area from Hilderstone Parish Council, which expressed its support for our proposed Milford ward and the name of that ward. Accordingly, we confirm our draft recommendations for Milford and Milwich as final.

40 Under our final recommendations, our single-member Milford ward and two-member Milwich ward are forecast to have 2% fewer and equal to the number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

West rural Stafford

Seighford & Church Eaton

41 To the west of Stafford town our draft recommendations were for a two-member Seighford & Church Eaton ward. We received five submissions regarding this ward from Bradley Parish Council, Church Eaton Parish Council, Haughton Parish Council and two members of the public.

42 All five submissions opposed our draft recommendations and suggested that the ward was too large geographically and did not reflect community identity. The submissions also stated a preference for single-member wards. The submissions from both Church Eaton Parish Council and Haughton Parish Council each made an identical alternative proposal for a single-member Church Eaton ward comprising the parishes of Bradley, Church Eaton, Haughton, Hyde Lea and Ranton. Whilst this proposal would secure reasonable electoral equality, the northern boundary would cut through the main road (B5405) in neighbouring Ellenhall parish and we consider that the effect on Ellenhall would not be conducive to effective and convenient local government. We consider that our draft recommendations for this area, which were supported by the Council, the Labour Group and the Stafford & Stone Green Party, provide the best balance between our statutory criteria.

43 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Seighford & Church Eaton as final. Under our final recommendations our two-member Seighford & Church Eaton ward is forecast to have equal to the average number of electors per councillor by 2019.

Eccleshall and Gnosall & Woodseaves

44 In the west of the borough our draft recommendations were for two two-member wards of Eccleshall and Gnosall & Woodseaves. During the consultation on

our draft recommendations we did not receive any submissions in regard to this area.

45 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations our two-member Eccleshall and Gnosall & Woodseaves wards are forecast to have 6% more and 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

North rural Stafford and Stone

Barlaston and Fulford

46 In the north of the borough our draft recommendations were for a single-member Barlaston ward coterminous with the Barlaston parish boundary and a two-member Fulford ward that is coterminous with the Fulford parish boundary. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we did not receive any submissions in regard to this area.

47 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations our single-member Barlaston ward and two-member Fulford ward are forecast to have 6% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

Swynnerton & Oulton

48 To the north-west of Stone town our draft recommendations were for a two-member Swynnerton & Oulton ward. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we did not receive any submissions in regard to this ward.

49 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations our two-member Swynnerton & Oulton ward is forecast to have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

Stone

50 In Stone our draft recommendations were for a two-member Walton ward and a three-member St Michael's & Stonefield ward. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received one submission regarding Stone from Stone Town Council, which was supported by Stafford Borough Council.

51 The submission from Stone Town Council did not comment on the borough wards proposed for Stone but raised issue with the parish wards that we proposed as a consequence of our draft recommendations. In particular, the Town Council considered that the proposed St Michael's & Stonefield parish ward should be divided into two parish wards as does the current parish warding arrangement. The submission states that 'At a local level they are separate communities with different issues that would be best served by separate representation'. The Town Council also argued that there would be practical difficulties with an 11 member parish ward.

52 Having considered the evidence provided by Stone Town Council we are persuaded to divide our proposed Stonefield & Christchurch parish ward into two separate parish wards, which would reflect the current parish warding arrangements in Stone. In creating parish wards we must take account of both the borough ward and county electoral division boundaries. We have also considered the parish wards provided for Stone in our Staffordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2012. As a result, we have decided to propose four parish wards covering Stone as part of our draft

recommendations. The details of our parish warding arrangements for Stone Town Council are outlined in paragraph 80 of this report.

53 This amendment does not have any impact on our draft recommendations at borough ward level, which we confirm as final. Under our final recommendations our two-member Walton ward and three-member Stonefield & St Michael's ward are forecast to have 8% fewer and 8% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

Stafford town – south

Baswich, Penkside and Weeping Cross & Wildwood

54 In the south-east of Stafford town our draft recommendations were for a single-member Penkside ward and two two-member wards of Baswich and Weeping Cross & Wildwood. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received one submission regarding this area from Penkside Community Champions.

55 The submission from Penkside Community Champions argued that the boundary between our proposed Penkside and Weeping Cross & Wildwood wards should run along Rickerscote Drain towards Radford Bank (A34) rather than along Silkmore Lane. The submission did not contain any substantive evidence in support of the proposal. We consider that our draft recommendations provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria. Accordingly, we confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final.

56 Under our final recommendations our single-member Penkside ward and two-member Baswich and Weeping Cross & Wildwood wards are forecast to have 3% fewer, 3% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

Highfields & Western Downs, Manor and Rowley

57 To the west of Stafford town centre our draft recommendations were for a single-member Rowley ward and two two-member wards of Highfields & Western Downs and Manor.

58 We received four submissions regarding this area, all of which were in regard to our proposed Highfields & Western Downs ward. A submission from the Council argued that the ward should be split into two single-member wards, as it had proposed during the previous consultation on warding arrangements. The Council argued that two single-member wards would be preferable in terms of community identity. This view was shared by two local residents who also made submissions suggesting that two-single member wards would be preferable.

59 We received a submission from the Labour Group that stated that people from across the proposed ward use the same shops and the same schools and that our draft recommendations did therefore reflect community identity.

60 Having considered all the evidence provided, we consider that the draft recommendations for a two-member Highfields & Western Downs ward provide the best balance between our statutory criteria and we therefore confirm this ward as part of our final recommendations.

61 We did not receive any submissions regarding our proposed Manor and Rowley

wards and we therefore also confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final. Under our final recommendations our single-member Rowley and two-member Highfields & Western Downs and Manor wards are forecast to have 3% fewer, 4% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019, respectively.

Stafford town – north and central

Doxey & Castletown

62 Our draft recommendations for this area were for a single-member ward comprising the parish of Doxey and the Castletown area of Stafford. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we did not receive any submissions in regard to this ward.

63 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations our single-member Doxey & Castletown ward is forecast to have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2019.

Common and Holmcroft

64 Our draft recommendations for this area were for a single-member Common ward and a two-member Holmcroft ward. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received submissions that commented on this area from the Council and the Labour Group.

65 The Council put forward an alternative proposal for the area and argued that its proposal provided better electoral equality 'while still respecting community identity, as far as possible, and providing for effective local government.' The submission from the Labour Group countered the Council's proposal and argued that the draft recommendations provide a better reflection of community identity in this area. Having considered the evidence received in regard to Common and Holmcroft and the observations we made during our tour of the area, in which we covered this area extensively, we have decided that our draft recommendations provide the best balance between the statutory criteria.

66 Both the Council and the Labour Group indicated that the boundary between our proposed Common and Holmcroft wards included Parkside Primary School in Common ward. We understand from evidence received that this school serves the Parkside community to the north of it, which was placed in Holmcroft ward. Both the Labour Group and the Council therefore proposed that we amend our boundary so that it runs to the south of the school, placing it in Holmcroft ward along with the community it serves. We have decided to amend our draft recommendations to this effect and modify this boundary as part of our final recommendations.

67 Aside from this minor amendment we confirm our draft recommendations for Common and Holmcroft wards as final. Under our final recommendations our single-member Common and two-member Holmcroft wards are forecast to have 4% more and 8% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

Forebridge

68 Our draft recommendations for Stafford town centre were for a single-member Forebridge ward. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we did not receive any submission that commented on our proposals for Forebridge.

69 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations our single-member Forebridge ward is forecast to have 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2019.

Coton and Littleworth

70 Our draft recommendations for this area were for two two-member wards of Coton and Littleworth. During the consultation on our draft recommendations we received submissions that commented on this area from the Council, the Labour Group and one local resident.

71 The Council put forward an alternative proposal for the area and argued that its proposal provided better electoral equality whilst still reflecting our statutory criteria. The submission from the Labour Group countered the Council's proposal and argued that the draft recommendations provided a better reflection of community identity in this area.

72 The submission from a local resident argued that our proposed Littleworth should be divided into two single-member wards as there are two 'very distinct and separate communities' in the area. This suggestion was not supported by any evidence of community identity or how two wards would provide for more effective and convenient local government.

73 Having considered the evidence received in regard to Coton and Littleworth and the observations we made during our tour of the area, in which we covered this area extensively, we have decided that our draft recommendations provide the best balance between the statutory criteria.

74 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Coton and Littleworth wards as final. Under our final recommendations our two-member Coton and Littleworth wards are forecast to have 1% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, by 2019.

Conclusions

75 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	40	40
Number of electoral wards	23	23
Average number of electors per councillor	2,464	2,547
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Stafford Borough Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 23 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

76 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to 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.

77 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, Stafford Borough 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.

78 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Stone and Stone Rural.

79 Stone Town Council is currently represented by 18 parish councillors representing three parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Stone parish.

Final recommendations

Stone Town Council should return 18 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: St Michael's (returning five members), Stonefield & Christchurch (returning five members), Walton North (returning three members) and Walton South (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

80 Stone Rural Parish Council is currently represented by 10 parish councillors representing four parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Stone Rural parish.

Final recommendations

Stone Rural Parish Council should return 10 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Aston (returning two members) and Oulton (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

81 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Stafford Borough 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 Stafford Borough Council in 2015.

Equalities

82 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 Stafford

83 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Stafford Borough Council:

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

You can also view our final recommendations for Stafford Borough Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Stafford Borough 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	Barlaston	1	2,239	2,239	-9%	2,402	2,402	-6%
2	Baswich	2	5,192	2,596	5%	5,264	2,632	3%
3	Common	1	2,701	2,701	10%	2,660	2,660	4%
4	Coton	2	4,334	2,167	-12%	5,060	2,530	-1%
5	Doxey & Castletown	1	2,299	2,299	-7%	2,426	2,426	-5%
6	Eccleshall	2	5,279	2,640	7%	5,382	2,691	6%
7	Forebridge	1	2,175	2,175	-12%	2,470	2,470	-3%
8	Fulford	2	4,824	2,412	-2%	4,943	2,472	-3%
9	Gnosall & Woodseaves	2	5,212	2,606	6%	5,217	2,609	2%
10	Haywood & Hixon	2	5,118	2,559	4%	5,174	2,587	2%
11	Highfields & Western Downs	2	4,978	2,489	1%	4,904	2,452	-4%
12	Holmcroft	2	5,513	2,757	12%	5,509	2,755	8%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Stafford Borough 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 %
13 Littleworth	2	4,594	2,297	-7%	4,722	2,361	-7%
14 Manor	2	5,285	2,643	7%	5,218	2,609	2%
15 Milford	1	2,470	2,470	0%	2,505	2,505	-2%
16 Milwich	2	4,793	2,397	-3%	5,078	2,539	0%
17 Penkside	1	2,494	2,494	1%	2,477	2,477	-3%
18 Rowley	1	2,460	2,460	0%	2,470	2,470	-3%
19 Seighford & Church Eaton	2	4,583	2,292	-7%	5,114	2,557	0%
20 St Michael's & Stonefield	3	7,860	2,620	6%	8,243	2,748	8%
21 Swynnerton & Oulton	2	4,669	2,335	-5%	4,997	2,499	-2%
22 Walton	2	4,673	2,337	-5%	4,699	2,350	-8%
23 Weeping Cross & Wildwood	2	4,799	2,400	-3%	4,945	2,473	-3%
Totals	40	98,544	-	-	101,879	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,464	-	-	2,547	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral division varies from the average for the 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, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary 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 district, 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 borough or district council

