

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council

Electoral review

January 2012

Translations and other formats

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Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	6
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	7
General analysis	7
Electoral arrangements	9
Cherwell District	9
Oxford City	11
South Oxfordshire District	14
Vale of White Horse District	17
West Oxfordshire District	20
Conclusions	22
Parish electoral arrangements	22
3 What happens next?	27
4 Mapping	29
Appendices	
A Glossary and abbreviations	31
B Code of practice on written consultation	35
C Table C1: Final recommendations for Oxfordshire County Council	37

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 are conducting an electoral review of Oxfordshire County 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 October 2010.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
Council Size	12 October 2010	Submission of proposals for council size to the LGBCE
One	11 January 2011	Submission of proposals of warding arrangements to the LGBCE
Two	4 April 2011	LGBCE's analysis and deliberation
Three	19 July 2011	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	10 October 2011	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 63, comprising 59 single-member divisions and two two-member divisions. Our proposals were broadly based on the County Council's county-wide scheme and representations received from other respondents. We also had regard to evidence submitted by political groups, a local MP, county and district councillors and parish councils. We sought to reflect communication links, geographic factors and evidence of community identity.

Submissions received

During Stage Three, we received 120 submissions. Many of these focused on changes to the Cumnor and North Hinksey area in the Vale of White Horse District, and the Banbury and Bloxham area in Cherwell District. The County Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, proposing changes to some division names.

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

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Oxfordshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2016. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in electorate of 6% over this period. The Commission is content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time, and we have used these as the basis of the final recommendations.

General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, we confirm the draft recommendations as final, with the exception of small changes in Cutteslowe in Oxford City, Wallingford and Cholsey in South Oxfordshire, St Helen Without in Vale of White Horse, and Carterton in West Oxfordshire.

We confirm our recommendation for a council size of 63, comprising 59 single-member divisions and two two-member divisions. Only two electoral divisions will have a variance of more than 10% by 2016.

Having taken into account evidence we have received during Stages One and Three, we believe that our proposals 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 Oxfordshire County Council. The changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Oxfordshire County Council, in 2013.

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

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Oxfordshire County 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 Oxfordshire County Council as well as other interested parties inviting proposals first on the council size and, subsequently, on division arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council*, which were published on 19 July 2011. We reconsidered the draft recommendations in light of the further evidence received and decided whether or not to make any modifications.

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 Oxfordshire?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2009 electorate figures, Witney East electoral division contains 35% more electors than the average for the county.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

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
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 Oxfordshire County Council.

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

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

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 the end of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the divisions we put forward at the end of the review.

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

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

Submissions received

13 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Oxfordshire County Council and met with members and officers. We received 31 submissions at council size stage, 49 submissions during Stage One, and 120 submissions during Stage Three, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

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

Electorate figures

15 As part of this review, Oxfordshire County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2016, projecting an increase in electorate of over 6% over the period from 2011 to 2016. The total electorate of the county is 493,161 in 2011 and is forecast to be 524,740 by December 2016.

16 Cherwell District was forecast to have significant electorate growth, owing to the projected completion of new dwellings in the Banbury and Bicester areas. We sought confirmation of planning permission for development in these and other areas of the county and visited some areas where building works were evident. The County Council provided us with details of the location and level of future development, as well as estimates of other forms of electorate growth.

17 Development is also planned for the Didcot area. During the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Didcot Branch Labour Party and Didcot Town Council raised concerns regarding the forecast of the electorate for that area. A large development is currently taking place to the north of Didcot, which will eventually result in new housing in the Ladygrove part of the town and in the parish of Long Wittenham. The Didcot Branch Labour Party and Didcot Town Council specifically queried the five-year forecast which showed a large increase in electorate in Didcot but not in Long Wittenham. Having contacted the County Council, we are satisfied that while a long-term increase in electors is expected in Long Wittenham, housing will not be completed before 2016. The increase in electorate is therefore expected after the end of the five-year forecast, so for the purposes of this review, we cannot take it into consideration.

18 We are satisfied that the methodology used was suitable and are content to accept these forecast electorate figures as the basis for our final recommendations.

Council size

19 Oxfordshire County Council currently has 74 councillors elected from 58 county divisions. At the beginning of the electoral review, we consulted locally on the most

appropriate number of councillors (council size) for the authority and received 31 submissions. Council size proposals ranged from 50 to 74 members, with 11 submissions supporting the current council size of 74 and nine submissions suggesting that ‘fewer’ councillors would be appropriate for Oxfordshire.

20 The County Council proposed reducing the council size to either 63 or 64, depending on the best allocation of councillors across the county. Having considered the electorate figures, we decided that a council size of 64 would provide for a better allocation of councillors. Accordingly, during Stage One we invited proposals for division patterns based on a council size of 64.

21 During Stage One, the County Council submitted slightly revised figures for the projected electorate. These amendments were based on small changes to the planned developments in the county. Based on the new evidence received, we decided to adopt a council size of 63 members as the basis of our draft recommendations.

22 At Stage Three Henley-on-Thames Town Council objected to any reduction in council size but did not provide any further evidence. Consequently, we are basing our final recommendations on a council size of 63 members.

Electoral fairness

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

24 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we calculate the average number of electors per councillor. The county average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county (493,161 in 2011 and 524,740 by December 2016) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council – 63 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 7,828 in 2011 and 8,329 by 2016.

25 Under the final recommendations, two of our proposed 63 divisions will have electoral variances of more than 10% from the average for the county by 2016. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Oxfordshire.

General analysis

26 Our draft recommendations were broadly based on a combination of the County Council’s proposals, the Labour Group’s proposals, and locally suggested patterns of divisions. Our draft recommendations adopted the County Council’s proposals with minor modifications in South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and Oxford. We also adopted a combination of the County Council’s proposals, the Labour Party’s proposals, and locally generated proposals in Cherwell and Vale of White Horse.

27 Our draft recommendations were based on a council size of 63 members and we proposed a pattern of 59 single-member divisions and two two-member divisions. The allocation of councillors across the districts is as follows:

- Cherwell District – 14 members
- Oxford City – 14 members
- South Oxfordshire District – 13 members
- Vale of White Horse District – 12 members
- West Oxfordshire District – 10 members

28 During Stage Three, the County Council responded to the draft recommendations, proposing name changes to divisions in the Banbury and Kidlington areas (Cherwell District) and the Cumnor area (Vale of White Horse District). It also proposed minor parish warding changes to Risinghurst & Sandhills (Oxford City) and Cumnor (Vale of White Horse District), both of which are parishes for which our draft recommendations proposed consequential parish electoral changes.

29 In addition to the County Council, submissions were received from Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council, each focusing on its respective district. We also received submissions from Oxfordshire Constituency Labour Party, Didcot Branch Labour Party, Wantage Constituency Labour Party, Wantage and Grove Branch Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrat Group at Oxford City Council. A total of eight county and district councillors made submissions, as did 37 parish and town councils, the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, and 64 local residents. A petition, containing approximately 600 signatures, was received from the Cumnor area in Vale of White Horse.

30 We also received localised submissions in every district. Many of these submissions focused on a particular parish or small group of parishes, or on a particular part of a town. The majority of these representations were from parish councils, with local residents also submitting their views.

31 All the submissions that we received can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

32 Following this stage of consultation, our final recommendations are for 63 councillors representing 59 single-member divisions and two two-member divisions. In these final recommendations we confirm as final 53 of the 61 divisions outlined in our draft recommendations. In eight divisions we have made changes based on submissions received during this stage of consultation. Where we have proposed further modifications, these are in order to reflect evidence of community identity within divisions. We consider our proposals will ensure good electoral equality while providing an accurate reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during Stages One and Three.

33 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table C1 (on pages 37–43) and Map 1.

Electoral arrangements

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

- Cherwell District (page 9)
- Oxford City (page 11)
- South Oxfordshire District (page 14)
- Vale of White Horse District (page 17)
- West Oxfordshire District (page 20)

35 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 37–43 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Cherwell District

36 Cherwell District lies to the north of the county. It comprises the towns of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and some neighbouring smaller towns and villages. It currently has 16 councillors representing 13 electoral divisions. Under our final recommendations Cherwell District would have 14 divisions.

37 The draft recommendations for Cherwell District were based on a combination of proposals from the Labour Party, Kidlington Parish Council and Bodicote Parish Council.

38 During Stage Three, we received localised submissions in relation to the Banbury, Kidlington, and Bicester areas. The County Council suggested a change of name in the Banbury area and supported the draft recommendations in all other areas. Cherwell District Council supported the draft recommendations in all areas apart from Kidlington, where it supported the alternative proposal from Kidlington Parish Council, and Banbury, where it suggested a change of division name.

39 In the north of Cherwell, our draft recommendations provided for single-member divisions of Banbury Calthorpe, Bloxham & Easington, Banbury Grimsbury & Castle, Banbury Hardwick, Banbury Ruscote, and Wroxton & Hook Norton. These would result in electoral variances of 3% fewer, 6% fewer, 9% fewer, 6% more, 5% more and 2% more electors than the county average by 2016, respectively.

40 At Stage Three, 15 submissions were received regarding the Banbury area. Banbury Town Council supported the draft recommendations, whilst Bloxham Parish Council, Milcombe Parish Council and 11 local residents opposed them, arguing that Bloxham and Milcombe are distinct from Banbury and do not share a common identity.

41 Bloxham Parish Council and the local residents argued that the northern boundary of the division, which runs along Queensway in Banbury, was arbitrarily drawn, and that the draft recommendations could affect council tax. Bloxham Parish Council also raised concerns about additional housing in the local development

framework.

42 Noting the opposition to the draft recommendations in this area, we considered each point in turn. Queensway is a major thoroughfare forming an easily identifiable and clear boundary. Furthermore, our recommendations do not affect council tax, as this is a matter for the local authority. With regard to the local development framework mentioned by Bloxham Parish Council, we carefully revisited the five-year forecast in this area, and are satisfied that all housing developments which are expected to be completed within the next five years have been taken into account.

43 We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to alter our draft recommendations in this area. The size and position of Banbury places considerable constraints on potential division patterns in this area. As stated in the draft recommendations, to improve the electoral variance in this area, either Bloxham and Milcombe parishes or Bodicote parish must necessarily be combined with part of Banbury. Any other boundary changes in this area would result in knock-on effects throughout the district, including Bicester and Kidlington. We therefore consider that our draft recommendations provided the best pattern in this area.

44 No submissions were received from the parishes in the proposed Wroxton & Hook Norton division. In the north of Cherwell we confirm our draft recommendations as final without modification.

45 The County Council, Cherwell District Council and Banbury Town Council proposed that Bloxham & Easington division be renamed Banbury Easington & Bloxham, as this would be consistent with the other Banbury divisions. However, we consider that this name would create the impression that Bloxham is amalgamated with Banbury, rather than being a separate village, so we recommend that the name remains Bloxham & Easington.

46 In Bicester, our draft recommendations provided for single-member divisions of Bicester North, Bicester Town, Otmoor, and Bicester West. These would result in electoral variances of 8% fewer, 6% fewer, 3% fewer and 2% more electors than the county average by 2016, respectively. To the north of Bicester, we recommended a single-member Ploughley division with a variance of 7% fewer electors, and a single-member Deddington division with a variance of 3% fewer electors than the county average in 2016.

47 During Stage Three, we did not receive any submissions specifically relating to the Ploughley or Deddington divisions. Bicester Town Council stated that it did not support the consequential parish warding changes and that it preferred the County Council's original submission for Bicester. However, the County Council's original proposal contained divisions with no road links and one division which was shaped in a figure of eight, preventing communication links between the northern and southern sections of the proposed division. This would not lend itself to effective and convenient local government.

48 We therefore confirm our draft recommendations in the centre of Cherwell and the Bicester area as final, without modification.

49 We partly based our draft recommendations in the Kidlington area on Kidlington Parish Council's proposal. Under our draft recommendations, Kidlington division had a variance of 8% fewer electors and Kirtlington division a variance of 4% more electors than the average by 2016.

50 During Stage Three, Kidlington Parish Council proposed a new pattern for the two divisions in this area. This scheme was supported by Cherwell District Council and by the Oxfordshire Labour Party. Kidlington Parish Council argued that the town centre should be contained within the three parish wards of Exeter, Orchard and St Mary's, and that the draft recommendations divided these parish wards and the town centre. Kidlington Parish Council proposed a Roundham, Yarnton & Kirtlington division with an electoral variance of 6% fewer and a Kidlington division with a variance of 1% more electors than the county average by 2016. The Roundham, Yarnton & Kirtlington division combined parishes to the south of Kidlington with parishes to the north.

51 We carefully considered the options for this area, and agree that Kidlington Parish Council presented a strong case for the town centre to be contained within one division. However, Kidlington Parish Council's proposed Roundham, Yarnton & Kirtlington division combined parishes to the south of Kidlington with parishes to the north, which because of the poor road connections, meant that there would be only one road circulating west round the town. We do not consider that this division would provide effective and convenient local government for the parishes in this area. Having considered all alternatives, we have decided to retain the draft recommendations in this area.

52 Cherwell District Council proposed that Kirtlington division be renamed Kirtlington & Kidlington North division, and Kidlington division be renamed Kidlington South division. Having looked at this area, we consider that the District Council's proposed names better reflect the communities in these divisions and have decided to adopt its proposals.

53 In the Kidlington area of Cherwell we confirm our draft recommendations as final subject to adopting the division names proposed by the District Council.

54 Overall, we confirm as final our draft recommendations for Cherwell. None of these divisions are more than 10% from the average for the county in 2016, although due to ongoing development, three of these divisions currently provide for poor electoral equality.

55 Table C1 (on pages 37–43) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across Cherwell District.

Oxford City

56 Oxford City lies in the centre of the county, and contains four parishes. It is currently divided into eight electoral divisions returning 16 councillors. Under our final recommendations Oxford City would have 14 councillors.

57 The draft recommendations for Oxford City were based on identical schemes

from the County Council, Oxford City Council, and the Labour Party. A different division pattern was put forward at Stage One by the Liberal Democrat Group on Oxford City Council.

58 During Stage Three, we received submissions from Oxford City Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on Oxford City Council, one councillor and 11 local residents.

59 During Stage Three, Oxford City Council provided detailed mapping which had not been provided earlier in the review. This highlighted five small inconsistencies in the mapping of our draft recommendations where they were not coterminous with the polling districts, which had formed the basis of the submissions at Stage One. These polling district boundaries were used by all the groups making identical proposals in this area, and to take account of the boundaries intended at Stage One, we have modified our draft recommendations accordingly. Two of the changes are in the east and north of Oxford City, one in the east of Oxford City, and two in the south. This does not affect the electoral variances. The recommended boundaries are shown on Maps 5 and 6.

60 The Liberal Democrat Group re-submitted its Stage One proposal for Oxford City but without providing any new evidence. Nine identical letters from local residents argued that this proposal better met our statutory criteria but did not provide any rationale. We do not consider that the Liberal Democrat's scheme improves on the draft recommendations, which provided for very good electoral equality across Oxford City and used strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

61 In the north and west of Oxford City the draft recommendations provided for a single-member Wolvercote & Summertown division with a variance of 1% more electors; a single-member Jericho & Osney division with a variance of 1% more electors; a single-member St Margaret's division with a variance of 1% more electors; and a single-member University Parks division with a variance of 4% more electors than the county average by 2016.

62 At Stage Three Councillor Fooks (Summertown & Wolvercote ED) argued that a minor change should be made in the north of Oxford, between St Margaret's division and Wolvercote & Summertown division, in order to keep the Cutteslowe estate in one division. A local resident strongly supported this suggestion, arguing that the estate is a community and should not be divided. Under the draft recommendations, both divisions have a variance of 1% more electors than the average. We consider that the evidence provided on community interests justifies a change in this area and have modified our draft recommendations accordingly. Altering the boundaries as suggested by Councillor Fooks would result in St Margaret's division having a variance of 3% fewer and Wolvercote & Summertown division having a variance of 4% more electors in 2016.

63 One local resident supported the draft recommendations in the Osney area and Botley Road. The Liberal Democrat Group's submission focused on this area, pointing out that the area of Botley Road has little in common with the colleges to the north west of the station and is separated from them by the river and the railway. However, we note that this same river and railway separates Botley Road from the

rest of Oxford City, and that the Liberal Democrat Group's submission combines Botley Road with areas further south with which it has no road links at all. In our draft recommendation there is access provided between the two sections by Botley Road crossing the river, and the station and its access roads provides good access across the railway line. We consider that there is insufficient evidence for a change to the draft recommendations. Furthermore, the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals worsen electoral equality overall and would result in weaker boundaries.

64 Two inconsistencies were highlighted by Oxford City Council as a result of more detailed mapping being provided in this area. One inconsistency related to Jericho & Osney division and University Parks division, where the boundary was intended to run slightly to the east, behind St John's College. The second was between St Margaret's division and University Parks division, where the boundary was intended to run slightly the south, behind the houses on St Bernard's Road. We have modified our draft recommendations accordingly.

65 In the north and west of Oxford City we are therefore proposing minor alterations to our draft recommendations in order to accurately represent the boundaries proposed at Stage One and retain the Cutteslowe estate in one division.

66 In the east of Oxford City, the draft recommendations provided for a single-member Barton, Sandhills & Risinghurst division with a variance of less than 1% more electors; a single-member Headington & Quarry division with a variance of 1% more electors; a single-member Marston & Northway division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; and a single-member Churchill & Lye Valley division with a variance of 3% more electors than the county average by 2016.

67 During Stage Three, we did not receive any submissions which specifically referred to the east of Oxford City. The Liberal Democrat Group re-submitted its Stage One proposals for the whole of Oxford City, but did not provide any additional information or evidence addressing our draft recommendations in this area. An inconsistency in the boundary between Headington & Quarry division and Marston & Northway division was highlighted by Oxford City Council, and we have modified the boundary to run slightly to the east, around the end of John Garne Way.

68 In the east of Oxford City we are therefore proposing a minor alteration to our draft recommendations in order to accurately represent the boundaries proposed at Stage One.

69 In the south of Oxford City, our draft recommendations were based on the proposals from the Labour Party and Oxford City Council. We recommended a single-member Isis division with a variance of 1% more electors; a single-member St Clement's & Cowley Marsh division with a variance of 4% fewer electors; a single-member Iffley Fields & St Mary's division with a variance of 3% fewer electors; a single-member Rose Hill & Littlemore division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; a single-member Cowley division with a variance of 1% fewer electors; a single-member Leys division with a variance of 2% more electors than the county average by 2016.

70 During Stage Three, we did not receive any submissions specifically relating to

the south of Oxford City. In this area, as in the rest of Oxford City, the Liberal Democrat Group re-submitted its Stage One proposals. In particular, it mentioned poor internal links in Isis division, particularly in Iffley Fields where the division crosses the River Thames. While we recognise that this division crosses the river in two different places, amendments in this area would have substantial knock-on effects, and we do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to warrant changing our draft recommendations.

71 Two inconsistencies were highlighted by Oxford City Council as a result of more detailed mapping being provided in this area. One inconsistency was between Churchill & Lye Valley division and Cowley division, where Oxford City Council informed us that the boundary was intended to run north to the end of Wilkins Road. The second was between Cowley division and Rose Hill & Littlemore division, where the boundary was intended to run along Rose Hill. We have modified our draft recommendations accordingly.

72 In the south of Oxford City we are therefore making minor alterations to our draft recommendations in order to accurately represent the boundaries proposed at Stage One.

73 Overall, we recommend a small amendment to St Margaret's and Wolvercote & Summertown divisions, and confirm our draft recommendations as final in all other divisions, with the exception of minor amendments to the mapping. We consider that these proposals offer the best available balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria. None of these divisions are more than 10% from the average for the county in 2016.

74 Table C1 (on pages 37–43) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across Oxford City.

South Oxfordshire District

75 South Oxfordshire District lies in the south east of the county and contains the towns of Thame, Wallingford, Didcot and Henley-on-Thames. It is currently divided into 14 electoral divisions and returns 16 councillors. Under our final recommendations South Oxfordshire District would have 12 divisions.

76 The draft recommendations for South Oxfordshire were based on the County Council's scheme and included a two-member division comprising Thame and the surrounding villages.

77 At Stage Three, submissions were received regarding the areas of Benson, Didcot, Wallingford and Thame, as well as a small number from other areas. Submissions were received from the Didcot Labour Party, 15 parish and town councils and two local residents.

78 In the centre and north of the district, our draft recommendations provided for a single-member Chalgrove & Watlington division with a variance of 7% more; a single-member Berinsfield & Garsington division with a variance of 1% more; a single-member Wheatley division with a variance of 5% fewer; and a two-member Thame &

Chinnor division, coterminous with the district wards, with a variance of 1% fewer electors than the average for the county by 2016.

79 At Stage Three Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council and Baldons Parish Council both supported our draft recommendations, citing close community links between themselves and other parishes. Garsington Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations, arguing that it severed links it had with other parishes, but did not elaborate further. Great Haseley Parish Council stated that the Chalgrove division was too large, while Chalgrove Parish Council and a local resident opposed the electoral review as being unnecessary, stating that the villages would be getting bigger. Kidmore End Parish Council and Mapledurham Parish Council both supported the draft recommendations. Henley-on-Thames Town Council stated that it did not agree with the change in council size. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations in these areas.

80 Thame Town Council supported the draft recommendation for a two-member division covering Thame and the surrounding villages. The Labour Party proposed two single-member divisions, placing an estate in the western part of Thame with the parishes to the east of the town. This pattern provided an electoral variance of 1% more electors for the town of Thame and 4% fewer electors for the rural parishes. However, we do not consider that the Labour Party's proposal provides for good community connections due to the poor road links between the rural parishes and the western edge of Thame. We also note that Thame Town Council supported our draft recommendations.

81 In the centre and north of South Oxfordshire we confirm our draft recommendations as final without modification.

82 In the south and east of the district, our draft recommendations were for a single-member Wallingford division with a variance of 4% fewer electors; a single-member Benson division with a variance of 2% more; a single-member Henley-on-Thames division with a variance of 8% more electors; a single-member Goring division with a variance of 3% more electors; and a single-member Sonning Common division with a variance of 7% fewer electors than the county average by 2016.

83 At Stage Three Benson Parish Council and Cholsey Parish Council argued that the Benson division should not traverse the river, and that the two communities have little in common. A local resident argued that the parish boundaries should be reconsidered, while another local resident argued that RAF Benson should not be divided between two divisions. Cholsey Parish Council also argued that since Cholsey is similar in size to Benson the division should be called Benson & Cholsey.

84 While we accept that Benson and Cholsey are distinct communities, there is a good road connection between them. We also note that the geography of the area and the location of the town of Wallingford provide limited options when considering division patterns, as any changes would have considerable knock-on effects on the neighbouring divisions. None of the submissions received during Stage Three proposed alternatives to placing Benson and Cholsey together, and no other patterns were received at Stage One. We have looked at different division patterns in this area but do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to warrant changes that

would impact across such a large area of the district. We therefore propose that Benson division is renamed Benson & Cholsey to reflect both communities.

85 At Stage Three Wallingford Town Council requested that Winterbrook – a small area to the south of Wallingford but which is contained within Cholsey parish – be included in the Wallingford division as it is an integral and continuous part of Wallingford with open land between Winterbrook and the rest of Cholsey parish. This would require the parish of Cholsey to be warded. Cholsey Parish Council did not make any comments regarding Winterbrook. Wallingford Town Council had made a similar submission at Stage One and, in our draft recommendations, we stated that we would need additional information to be persuaded that Winterbrook should be included with Wallingford.

86 Having received further evidence and rationale from Wallingford, we consider that the area of Winterbrook does appear to be part of Wallingford and contains better links to Wallingford town centre than to the village of Cholsey. There are 166 electors in the area, which would alter Wallingford division to 2% fewer from 4% fewer electors, and Benson division to 0% from 2% more electors than the county average by 2016. We are therefore making this amendment to the draft recommendations.

87 In the south and east of South Oxfordshire we confirm our draft recommendations as final with a modification to the Benson & Cholsey division and the Wallingford division in order to include Winterbrook with Wallingford.

88 In the east of the district, the draft recommendations were for a single-member Didcot East & Hagbourne division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; a single-member Didcot Ladygrove division with a variance of 12% fewer electors; and a single-member Didcot West division with a variance of 5% more electors than the county average by 2016.

89 The Didcot Branch Labour Party, Wantage Labour Party and Didcot Town Council all raised concerns regarding the electoral forecast in Didcot. They queried the proposed increase in electors all being allocated to Didcot parish instead of Long Wittenham parish. As mentioned in paragraph 17, we contacted the County Council, and received confirmation that the parts of the development in Long Wittenham are not expected to be completed by 2016. The County Council clarified current and forecast electoral figures throughout Didcot and the surrounding parishes.

90 Overall, we recommend a small amendment to Wallingford and Benson divisions, renaming Benson division as Benson & Cholsey, and have decided to confirm the draft recommendations as final in all other divisions. We consider that these proposals offer the best available balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria. Although one division, Didcot Ladygrove, is more than 10% from the average for the county in 2016, we consider that this facilitates a good pattern in the rest of the district and uses strong boundaries.

91 Table C1 (on pages 37–43) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across South Oxfordshire District.

Vale of White Horse District

92 Vale of White Horse District lies in the south west of the county. The largest town is Abingdon, and the district also contains the large villages of Radley, Wantage, Sutton Courtenay and North Hinksey. It is currently divided into 12 electoral divisions, returning 14 councillors. Under our final recommendations Vale of White Horse District would have 11 divisions.

93 The draft recommendations for Vale of White Horse included a two-member division covering Wantage and Grove and were based on a combination of the County Council's proposals and suggestions from parish councils.

94 During Stage Three, submissions were received regarding the areas of Cumnor, Wantage and the Sutton Courtenay, Hendreds and Harwell area to the south of Abingdon. Submissions were received from Wantage Constituency Labour Party, Wantage and Grove Branch Labour Party, 10 parish and town councils, three councillors and 40 local residents.

95 In the north of the district, our draft recommendations were for a single-member Kennington & Radley division with a variance of 6% more electors; a single-member Kingston & Cumnor division with a variance of 8% more electors; and a single-member North Hinksey division with a variance of 5% more electors than the county average by 2016.

96 The submissions received during this stage of consultation primarily focused on the village of Cumnor. Our draft recommendations included Cumnor village in a Kingston & Cumnor division with other rural villages, while Dean Court and Cumnor Hill were included in a North Hinksey division with other urban areas.

97 Cumnor Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations and argued for a two-member division on the grounds that it would avoid the parish being divided. This proposal was supported by 35 local residents. However, it is unclear to us whether a number of the residents primarily objected to Cumnor being divided between two electoral divisions or the consequential change to the current parish wards.

98 North Hinksey Parish Council and Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council supported the draft recommendations, stating that a two-member division would combine areas with no community identity. Appleton with Eaton Parish Council expressed views both in favour of and against Cumnor's proposal. It sympathised with Cumnor Parish Council, but ultimately supported the draft recommendations. Councillor Godden (North Hinksey & Wytham ED) and District Councillor Hoddinott (Appleton & Cumnor ward) supported the draft recommendations, arguing that a two-member division would be too large. Councillor Godden suggested that any consequential warding arrangements for parishes should create a new parish ward for Cumnor Hill, rather than including the area with the existing parish ward of Dean Court.

99 We considered this area carefully at both draft and final recommendations. We note that Cumnor parish is divided under the existing divisions, with Cumnor Hill part of a division with Cumnor village, and Dean Court part of a North Hinksey division.

Using this existing boundary would result in a variance of 21% more electors than the county average by 2016 in Kingston & Cumnor division. We do not consider that such a high variance is justified.

100 We do not consider that the arguments have been made for a two-member division in this area, especially as this division would include a number of very different communities with diverse needs and poor links covering a large area. However, we recognise that many of the submissions opposed the recommended alterations to parish warding arrangements in Cumnor. These changes were as a direct consequence of our draft recommendation for Cumnor parish to be divided between two divisions. Having considered parish warding in Cumnor, we have decided that the draft recommendations should be modified in order to create a Cumnor Hill parish ward. This will not affect our recommendations for electoral divisions in this area. Parish arrangements are outlined further in paragraphs 131–144.

101 No submissions were received regarding the division of Kennington & Radley. Accordingly, in the north of Vale of White Horse we confirm our draft recommendations for as final.

102 In the south and west of the district, the draft recommendations were for a single-member Faringdon division with a variance of 5% fewer electors; a single-member Shrivenham division with a variance of 9% fewer electors; and a two-member Grove & Wantage division with a variance of 5% more electors than the county average by 2016.

103 At Stage Three, Councillor Hannaby (Wantage & Grove ED) supported the draft recommendation for a two-member division covering both villages. Grove Parish Council requested that it retain its single-member division initially until the predicted development of Grove was completed and then change to a two-member division. The Wantage Constituency Labour Party and the Wantage and Grove Branch Labour Party suggested two-single-member divisions, arguing that the two villages, while geographically close, are distinct communities with different identities. This pattern would require part of Wantage to be placed in the Grove division, and would provide for variances of 6% more in Wantage and 5% more electors in Grove. Without part of Wantage included in Grove, the Wantage division would have a variance of 24% more electors than the average by 2016.

104 We have considered the suggestion for two single-member divisions, noting in particular that part of the rationale rests on the two villages having distinct communities. However, in order to obtain good electoral equality, a section of Wantage would have to be placed in a division with Grove. We do not consider that the Labour Party has provided sufficient evidence for two single-member divisions in this area.

105 No submissions were received regarding the divisions of Faringdon and Shrivenham. In the south and west of Vale of White Horse we confirm our draft recommendations as final without modification.

106 In Abingdon and the south east of the district the draft recommendations

provided for a single-member Abingdon East division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; a single-member Abingdon North division with a variance of 7% more electors; a single-member Abingdon South division a variance of 6% more, a single-member Hendreds & Harwell division with a variance of 1% more electors; and a single-member Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division with a variance of 8% fewer electors than the county average by 2016.

107 Blewbury Parish Council and East Hendred Parish Council supported the draft recommendations for a Hendreds & Harwell division with 1% more electors and a Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division with 8% fewer electors than the county average. Blewbury Parish Council requested that the division should be renamed Blewbury & Harwell. Marcham Parish Council stated that it did not wish to comment on the draft recommendations for this area.

108 Drayton Parish Council requested that Steventon be included in the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division instead of Marcham, and cited links between Sutton Courtenay, Milton, Appleford and Steventon. We have looked at a number of options in this area but have concluded that the location of Wantage to the west and the district boundary to the south means that without the inclusion of Steventon, the Harwells & Hendreds division would have a variance of 15% fewer electors than the county average by 2016. Steventon Parish Council did not make a submission on the draft recommendations. In the circumstances, we do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations in these areas.

109 During the consultation period, the County Council alerted us to an inconsistency between the divisions of Kennington & Radley, Kingston & Cumnor, and Sutton Courtenay & Marcham, which relates to a parish ward of St Helen Without parish. In our draft recommendations, we adopted the proposals of the County Council in this area. However, our draft recommendations included St Helen Without in the Kennington & Radley division. During Stage Three the County Council clarified that this was not part of its original proposals.

110 At Stage Three St Helen Without Parish Council requested that the parish be contained in one division. Having looked at the area in detail, we have concluded that the whole parish should be included in the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division. This would improve the electoral equality of Kingston & Cumnor from 8% more electors to 2% more electors, and of Sutton Courtenay & Marcham from 8% fewer electors to 3% fewer electors. If this part of St Helen Without parish remains in Kennington & Radley division, it would result in 12% more electors by 2016. We therefore recommend this amendment to retain St Helen Without in one division.

111 No submissions were received regarding the Abingdon area. Accordingly, in the south east of the Vale of White Horse, subject to an amendment to the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division, we confirm our draft recommendations as final.

112 Overall, we confirm as final our draft recommendations for Vale of White Horse District, with an amendment to Kingston & Cumnor division and Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division with regard to St Helen Without parish, and confirm as final our draft recommendations in all other divisions. We consider that these proposals offer the best available balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria.

None of these divisions are more than 10% from the average for the county in 2016.

113 Table C1 (on pages 37–43) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across Vale of White Horse District.

West Oxfordshire District

114 West Oxfordshire lies in the west of the county. It comprises the towns of Carterton and Witney, as well as large villages and smaller hamlets. It is currently divided into 11 electoral divisions returning 12 councillors. Under our final recommendations West Oxfordshire District would have 10 divisions.

115 The draft recommendations in West Oxfordshire were broadly based on the pattern proposed by the County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, with amendments in Carterton and Witney.

116 During Stage Three, submissions were received from West Oxfordshire District Council and two parish and town councils regarding the areas of Carterton, Witney, and Woodstock.

117 In the northern part of the district, our draft recommendations were for a single-member Charlbury & Wychwood division with a variance of 2% more electors; a single-member Chipping Norton division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; a single-member Hanborough & Minster Lovell division with a variance of 2% fewer electors; and a single-member Woodstock division with a variance of 1% fewer electors than the county average by 2016.

118 Little Tew Parish Meeting, in the north of the district, argued that it would be better served by being included in a division with the rural parishes surrounding Woodstock, citing links with Middle Barton school and Over and Nether Worton churches. However, the Wortons are located in a different district ward to the east, and to combine them with Little Tew would require considerable alterations to the draft recommendations. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to warrant moving away from our draft recommendations in this area.

119 No other submissions were received for the north of West Oxfordshire, and so we confirm as final our draft recommendations.

120 In Witney and the southern section of West Oxfordshire, the draft recommendations were for a single-member Witney North & East division with a variance of 13% more electors; a single-member Witney South & Central division with a variance of 9% more electors; a single-member Witney West & Bampton division with a variance of 8% more electors; and a single-member Eynsham division with a variance of 2% fewer electors than the county average by 2016.

121 In Witney, West Oxfordshire District Council opposed the creation of a new parish ward, arguing for the electoral divisions to be completely coterminous with district wards. Witney Town Council supported our proposed new parish ward, but opposed joining part of the urban area of Witney with rural parishes. Witney Town Council did not elaborate on its opposition to the proposed division, nor did it suggest

an alternative. Witney is too large to be contained within a two-member division and too small to be contained within a three-member division. This means that, under any scenario, part of the town must be linked in a division with more rural parishes. In the circumstances, we do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to recommend alterations in this area.

122 No other submissions were received for the south of West Oxfordshire. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

123 In the west of the district and the Carterton area, our draft recommendations were for a single-member Carterton South & East division with a variance of 8% fewer electors and a single-member Burford & Carterton division with a variance of 1% more electors than the county average by 2016.

124 In Carterton and the surrounding area, our draft recommendations provided for a division containing the north west area of Carterton district ward and a division containing the remainder of Carterton. At Stage One, different patterns had been provided by the County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, with neither submission providing supporting evidence. Our draft recommendations were therefore based on the slightly stronger road links to the rural parishes from the north west section of Carterton than from any other part of the urban area. The draft recommendations provided for good electoral equality, with the Carterton South & East division having a variance of 8% fewer and the Burford & Carterton division a variance of 1% more electors than the county average by 2016.

125 At Stage Three, West Oxfordshire District Council reiterated its Stage One submission for the south and north west sections of Carterton to be included with rural parishes to the south west, and the north east part of Carterton to be combined with Burford and other rural parishes to the north. This pattern would provide for slightly better electoral equality, with a Burford & Carterton North division of 2% fewer electors and a Carterton South & West division of 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2016. The District Council based their proposal on the fact that the Burford & Carterton North division is the existing division and that this division pattern would therefore retain community identity. The District Council also pointed out that its proposal provided good road links from the northern rural parishes into the north east of Carterton, and better transport links from the rural parishes to the south into the west of Carterton.

126 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposal, especially in light of the low level of community identity evidence received in relation to this area during both stages of consultation. The District Council's proposal would provide for slightly better electoral equality, and would retain an existing division with existing community links. We have therefore decided to adopt the District Council's proposals for a Burford & Carterton North division of 2% fewer and a Carterton South & West division of 5% fewer electors than the county average by 2016.

127 Overall, we recommend an amendment to the Carterton area, adopting the District Council's proposals for Carterton, and confirm our draft recommendations as final in all other divisions. We consider that these proposals offer the best available balance between electoral equality and the other statutory criteria. Although one

division, Witney North & East, is more than 10% from the average for the county in 2016, we consider that this facilitates a good pattern in the rest of the district and uses strong boundaries.

128 Table C1 (on pages 37–43) provides details of the electoral variances for our proposed divisions across West Oxfordshire District.

Conclusions

129 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 37–43, and illustrated on the large maps we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our final recommendations for the whole authority. It also shows a number of boxes for which we have produced more detailed maps. These maps are also available to be viewed on our website.

130 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2011 and 2016 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2011	2016
Number of councillors	63	63
Number of electoral divisions	61	61
Average number of electors per councillor	7,828	8,329
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	17	2
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	3	0

Final recommendation

Oxfordshire County Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 61 divisions, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

132 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority division arrangements. However, Oxfordshire County 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.

133 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Bodicote, Chesterton, Cholsey, Cumnor, Didcot, Kidlington, Risinghurst & Sandhurst and Witney.

134 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Abingdon parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Abingdon Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing eight wards: Abbey & Barton (returning three members), Caldecott (returning three members), Dunmore (returning three members), Fitzharris (returning two members), Northcourt (returning three members), Ock Meadow (returning three members), Peachcroft (returning three members) and Wildmoor (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 7a.

135 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Banbury parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Banbury Town Council should comprise 22 councillors, as at present, representing 11 wards: Banbury Calthorpe (two parish councillors), Banbury Court (one parish councillor), Banbury Cross (one parish councillor), Banbury Easington North (two parish councillors), Banbury Easington South (two parish councillors), Banbury Grimsbury & Castle (three parish councillors), Banbury Hardwick (four parish councillors), Banbury Neithrop North (two parish councillors), Banbury Neithrop South (one parish councillor), Banbury Ruscote (three parish councillors) and Banbury St John (one parish councillor). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2.

136 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Bicester parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Bicester Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Bicester East (three parish councillors), Bicester Central (one parish councillor), Bicester North (three parish councillors), Bicester South East (three

parish councillors), Bicester South West (one parish councillor), Bicester Town (two parish councillors) and Bicester West (two parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3a.

137 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Bodicote parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Bodicote Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors representing two wards: Bodicote Village (returning eight members) and Bodicote Bankside (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2.

138 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Chesterton parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Chesterton Parish Council should comprise six councillors representing two wards: Chesterton Village (returning four members) and Chesterton North (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3a.

139 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Cholsey parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Cholsey Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors representing two wards: Cholsey (returning 11 members) and Winterbrook (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3c.

140 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Cumnor parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Cumnor Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors representing four wards: Cumnor Hill (four parish councillors), Dean Court (four parish councillors), Farmoor (three parish councillors) and Cumnor Village (four parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 4b.

141 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised

electoral arrangements for Didcot parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Didcot Town Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: All Saints (five parish councillors), Ladygrove (six parish councillors), Northbourne (four parish councillors), Park (four parish councillors) and Willowcroft (two parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 7b.

142 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Kidlington parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Kidlington Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Kidlington Dogwood (three parish councillors), Kidlington Exeter (three parish councillors), Kidlington Orchard (three parish councillors), Kidlington Roundham (three parish councillors) and Kidlington St Mary's (three parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 3b.

143 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Risinghurst & Sandhills parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Risinghurst North (10 parish councillors), Risinghurst South (two parish councillors), Sandhills (five parish councillors) and Wood Farm (three parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 6.

144 As a result of our proposed electoral division boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised electoral arrangements for Witney parish to reflect our proposed division arrangements in this area.

Final recommendation

Witney Town Council should comprise 17 councillors representing six wards: Witney Burwell (one parish councillor), Witney Central (three parish councillors), Witney East (four parish councillors), Witney North (three parish councillors), Witney South (three parish councillors) and Witney West (three parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 4a.

3 What happens next?

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

Equalities

146 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 Oxfordshire

147 The following maps illustrate our proposed division boundaries for Oxfordshire County Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed division boundaries for Oxfordshire.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed divisions in Banbury.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Bicester.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Kidlington.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3c** illustrates the proposed divisions in Cholsey.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Witney.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Cumnor and North Hinksey.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed divisions in the west of Oxford.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed divisions in the east of Oxford.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7a** illustrates the proposed divisions in Abingdon.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7b** illustrates the proposed divisions in Didcot.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

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

	Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at 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

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

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

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

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

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.

Appendix C

Table C1: Final recommendations for Oxfordshire County Council

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Divisions in Cherwell District								
1	Banbury Calthorpe	1	5,617	5,617	-28%	8,058	8,058	-3%
2	Banbury Grimsbury & Castle	1	7,420	7,420	-5%	7,563	7,563	-9%
3	Banbury Hardwick	1	8,594	8,594	10%	8,824	8,824	6%
4	Banbury Ruscote	1	7,779	7,779	-1%	8,716	8,716	5%
5	Bicester North	1	7,025	7,025	-10%	7,674	7,674	-8%
6	Bicester Town	1	6,916	6,916	-12%	7,851	7,851	-6%
7	Bicester West	1	5,709	5,709	-27%	8,508	8,508	2%
8	Bloxham & Easington	1	7,444	7,444	-5%	7,805	7,805	-6%
9	Deddington	1	8,642	8,642	10%	8,104	8,104	-3%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10	Kidlington South	1	7,536	7,536	-4%	7,634	7,634	-8%
11	Kirtlington & Kidlington North	1	9,013	9,013	15%	8,636	8,636	4%
12	Otmoor	1	7,950	7,950	2%	8,102	8,102	-3%
13	Ploughley	1	6,327	6,327	-19%	7,715	7,715	-7%
14	Wroxton & Hook Norton	1	8,619	8,619	10%	8,491	8,491	2%
Divisions in Oxford City								
15	Barton, Sandhills & Risinghurst	1	6,918	6,918	-12%	8,356	8,356	0%
16	Churchill & Lye Valley	1	8,800	8,800	12%	8,570	8,570	3%
17	Cowley	1	8,426	8,426	8%	8,218	8,218	-1%
18	Headington & Quarry	1	8,163	8,163	4%	8,371	8,371	1%
19	Iffley Fields & St Mary's	1	7,852	7,852	0%	8,069	8,069	-3%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20	Isis	1	8,163	8,163	4%	8,396	8,396	1%
21	Jericho & Osney	1	7,905	7,905	1%	8,449	8,449	1%
22	Leys	1	8,524	8,524	9%	8,493	8,493	2%
23	Marston & Northway	1	8,379	8,379	7%	8,197	8,197	-2%
24	Rose Hill & Littlemore	1	7,436	7,436	-5%	8,144	8,144	-2%
25	St Clement's & Cowley Marsh	1	7,684	7,684	-2%	8,007	8,007	-4%
26	St Margaret's	1	7,768	7,768	-1%	8,098	8,098	-3%
27	University Parks	1	7,660	7,660	-2%	8,632	8,632	4%
28	Wolvercote & Summertown	1	7,883	7,883	1%	8,652	8,652	4%
Divisions in South Oxfordshire District								
29	Benson & Cholsey	1	8,080	8,080	3%	8,358	8,358	0%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
30	Berinsfield & Garsington	1	8,282	8,282	6%	8,394	8,394	1%
31	Chalgrove & Watlington	1	9,142	9,142	17%	8,916	8,916	7%
32	Didcot East & Hagbourne	1	8,119	8,119	4%	8,678	8,678	4%
33	Didcot Ladygrove	1	5,727	5,727	-27%	7,321	7,321	-12%
34	Didcot West	1	6,442	6,442	-18%	8,770	8,770	5%
35	Goring	1	8,838	8,838	13%	8,567	8,567	3%
36	Henley-on-Thames	1	8,972	8,972	15%	8,972	8,972	8%
37	Sonning Common	1	7,926	7,926	1%	7,713	7,713	-7%
38	Thame & Chinnor	2	15,540	7,770	-1%	16,411	8,206	-1%
39	Wallingford	1	7,929	7,929	1%	8,176	8,176	-2%
40	Wheatley	1	7,607	7,607	-3%	7,926	7,926	-5%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Divisions in Vale of White Horse District								
41	Abingdon East	1	7,931	7,931	1%	8,174	8,174	-2%
42	Abingdon North	1	9,238	9,238	18%	8,892	8,892	7%
43	Abingdon South	1	8,595	8,595	10%	8,849	8,849	6%
44	Faringdon	1	6,515	6,515	-17%	7,888	7,888	-5%
45	Grove & Wantage	2	14,352	7,176	-8%	17,533	8,767	5%
46	Hendreds & Harwell	1	7,151	7,151	-9%	8,373	8,373	1%
47	Kennington & Radley	1	8,707	8,707	11%	8,840	8,840	6%
48	Kingston & Cumnor	1	8,318	8,318	6%	8,525	8,525	2%
49	North Hinksey	1	7,732	7,732	-1%	8,749	8,749	5%
50	Shrivenham	1	7,429	7,429	-5%	7,567	7,567	-9%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
51	Sutton Courtenay & Marcham	1	7,821	7,821	0%	8,073	8,073	-3%
Divisions in West Oxfordshire District								
52	Burford & Carterton North	1	6,974	6,974	-11%	8,134	8,134	-2%
53	Carterton South & West	1	7,829	7,829	0%	7,950	7,950	-5%
54	Charlbury & Wychwood	1	7,926	7,926	1%	8,458	8,458	2%
55	Chipping Norton	1	8,267	8,267	6%	8,185	8,185	-2%
56	Eynsham	1	7,979	7,979	2%	8,183	8,183	-2%
57	Hanborough & Minster Lovell	1	8,204	8,204	5%	8,186	8,186	-2%
58	Witney North & East	1	9,006	9,006	15%	9,392	9,392	13%

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

	Division name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2016)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
59	Witney South & Central	1	8,189	8,189	5%	9,055	9,055	9%
60	Witney West & Bampton	1	8,236	8,236	5%	8,991	8,991	8%
61	Woodstock	1	8,006	8,006	2%	8,208	8,208	-1%
	Totals	63	493,161	–	–	524,740	–	–
	Averages	–	–	7,828	–	–	8,329	–

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

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