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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 Telford & Wrekin Borough 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 2012.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 October 2012	Consultation on council size
29 January 2012	Submission of proposals of ward patterns to the LGBCE
9 April 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
18 June 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
10 September 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

As part of this review, Telford & Wrekin Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of 3.6% over the six-year period from 2012–18.

We are content that the forecast data supplied by the Council is the most accurate available at this time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Telford & Wrekin Borough Council currently has 54 councillors. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed a council size of 54, no change from the existing membership. The Conservative Group proposed a council size of 44, 10 fewer than the existing membership.

We considered that neither submission provided conclusive evidence for a particular council size and therefore carried out a structured public consultation on council sizes of both 54 and 44.

During the consultation, we received 108 submissions. A majority of respondents supported retention of the current council size. We received submissions from 32

borough councillors, of whom only one supported a reduction in council size. The majority of town and parish councils were in favour of retaining the current council size. Of 58 residents who made representations, 40 supported a reduction in council size.

Following the consultation we considered that sufficient evidence had been received to support the Council's proposal that a council size of 54 was most appropriate for the Council. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 54.

General analysis

During our consultation on warding arrangements, we received six submissions, including one from the Council. The Council's submission was based on a council size of 55, one more than the Commission's 'minded-to' decision, but provided limited evidence to justify the increase in council size.

Consequently, we have used the Council's scheme as a starting point in developing our own proposals for the borough, based on a council size of 54 and having regard to our statutory criteria, as well as evidence received during our consultation. Our draft recommendations are for a pattern of 10 single-member, 13 two-member and six three-member wards.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which time we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will consider all submissions received by **9 September 2013**. Any received **after** this date may not be considered.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

Review Officer
Telford & Wrekin Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M
5LG reviews@lgbce.org.uk
[g.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

You can also view our draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.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 Telford & Wrekin'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 the Council as well as other interested parties inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during this stage of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin in winter 2013.

What is an electoral review?

4 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.

5 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 Telford & Wrekin?

6 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2011 electorate figures, 13 of 33 wards (39%) have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for the borough. This level of electoral inequality is not forecast to improve by 2018.

How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. In addition, your ward name may change.

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we therefore stress the importance of

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

providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will accept comments and views until 9 September 2013. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in the winter of 2013. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 20 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk You can also view our draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 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 draft recommendations

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin 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 2009,² 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

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

13 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.

14 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Telford & Wrekin 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.

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

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

Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Telford and Wrekin Borough Council ('the Council') and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 108 submissions during the council size consultation stage and six submissions during our consultation on warding arrangements. All submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

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

Electorate figures

18 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of 3.6% over the period from 2012–18.

19 The growth in the electorate is forecast to occur relatively evenly throughout the urban area of Telford, with the exception of extensive infill development in Lawley. Growth is also forecast in Newport, particularly to the south.

20 During the consultation stage on warding arrangements, the Council requested that developments in the Newport area be taken into account in the electorate forecast. We understand from the Council that delays to the Station Road development in Newport have been caused by a public inquiry regarding the location of a supermarket which forms part of the site. Having confirmed the status of planning applications, and spoken extensively to the Council regarding each stage of these developments, we are content to include the developments as part of the projected electorate figures for 2018.

21 Elsewhere, we sought to clarify inconsistencies in the figures provided as part of the Council's scheme. A set of figures was agreed with the Council on 22 April 2013. We are content to use these figures in formulating our draft recommendations.

Council size

22 The Council currently has 54 councillors elected from 16 single-member, 13 two-member and four three-member wards. During preliminary discussions, the Council proposed retention of the current council size of 54.

23 In support of retaining the current council size, the Council's initial submission emphasised its Co-operative Council ethos and members' representational role. The Conservative Group on the Council made an initial submission in favour of a council size of 44, proposing a return to the committee system and de-emphasising members' representational role. We decided to consult on council sizes of both 44 and 54, considering that insufficient evidence had been provided in support of either number.

24 During the consultation on council size, we received 108 submissions. Submissions were received from the Council, the Conservative Group, parish and town councils, parish councillors, borough councillors, the GMB Union and residents.

25 A majority of respondents supported retention of the current council size. We received submissions from 32 borough councillors, of whom only one supported a reduction in council size. The majority of town and parish councils were in favour of retaining the current council size. Of 58 local residents who made representations, 40 supported a reduction in council size.

26 The submissions received from borough councillors provided good evidence of community initiatives undertaken and of councillor participation in regular ward surgeries and other activities. A number of councillors also argued that a reduction in council size would prevent those in employment from standing for election, and some councillors argued that deprivation within Telford generated a greater amount of ward work for councillors.

27 The majority of residents in favour of reducing council size argued that savings would be generated by cutting the number of councillors. Those residents in favour of the current council size largely echoed the arguments of councillors and provided some evidence of councillors' representational work.

28 On balance, we considered that the Council had demonstrated that it had successfully promoted a focus on representative work within its own councillors, and therefore decided to adopt a council size of 54 as the basis for our draft recommendations.

Electoral fairness

29 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.

30 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we calculate the average number of electors per councillor. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (123,790 in 2012 and 128,249 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council – 54 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,292 in 2012 and 2,375 in 2018.

31 Under our draft recommendations, none of our proposed 29 wards will have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for the borough by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral equality for Telford & Wrekin.

General analysis

32 We received one borough-wide proposal from the Council, which was based on a council size of 55. The Council argued that a council size of 55 provided for a better warding pattern. However, the Council provided limited evidence to justify moving away from the council size of 54 which we had adopted following consultation. Having discussed the Council's submission with officers at the Council, we understand that a number of the ward totals in the Council's submission were inaccurate. We are

therefore not in a position to adopt a council size of 55. Having explored a number of options across the borough, we have concluded that a council size of 54 would provide for a warding pattern with good electoral equality and strong boundaries.

33 However, we do consider that many of the Council's proposed wards provide for clear boundaries whilst reflecting apparent communities. Many of the Council's proposed wards also provide for good electoral equality under a council size of 54.

34 We received five further submissions during this consultation on warding patterns. David Wright MP supported the Council's proposal. Gorge Parish Council made a suggestion for the far south of the borough. Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council proposed a pattern of wards for the Hadley, Leegomery and Apley Castle areas. A local resident also commented on the Apley Castle area, and a second local resident commented on multi-member wards.

35 In the absence of sufficient evidence of community identity in the borough-wide proposal and in light of the small number of submissions received, we have sought to propose a warding pattern across the borough which provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. We have broadly adopted the Council's proposals, subject to modifications. Our proposed modifications provide for good levels of electoral equality, good internal ward access and reflect community identities as we understand them.

36 Our proposals would result in 10 single-member, 13 two-member and six three-member wards. A summary of the proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table 1 and detailed in Appendix A.

37 Our proposals would result in five wards with an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the borough average based on the 2012 electorate figures. However, all of our proposed wards are forecast to have electoral variances within 10% of the borough average by 2018.

Electoral arrangements

38 This section of the report details the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Telford and Wrekin. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Rural North and West (pages 8–11)
- Wellington (page 11)
- North Telford (pages 11–12)
- Central Telford (pages 12–15)
- South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge (page 15)

Rural North and West

39 The rural north and west of the borough stretches around Telford and Wellington down towards Ironbridge Gorge, encompassing the town of Newport and the villages of Lilleshall, Church Aston, Edgmond, Tibberton, High Ercall and Wrockwardine. The Wrekin lies in the south-west of the borough.

40 We received no other submissions for this area other than the borough-wide scheme provided by the Council discussed in paragraphs 32 and 33. The Council proposed two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna and Wrockwardine wards and a single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall ward in this area. Under a council size of 54, these wards would contain 8% fewer, 13% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively. The Council did not submit a warding pattern for the town of Newport, but did indicate that the boundary of the southern ward in the town should be extended south to include the proposed developments either side of Station Road.

41 As discussed in paragraph 35, in the absence of evidence of community identity in the borough-wide proposal received, we have sought to propose a warding pattern across the borough which provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. We have therefore used the Council's proposals within the rural north and west as the basis of our draft recommendations, subject to a number of modifications.

Newport, Church Aston and Lilleshall

42 The Council proposed a single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall ward identical to the existing ward of that name. Subsequently, having requested that we take account of developments in Newport, the Council requested that the present boundary between Newport and Church Aston & Lilleshall be moved south to take account of the proposed development either side of Station Road. Under the Council's proposed scheme, Church Aston & Lilleshall would have 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average under a council size of 54 by 2018.

43 While we are content to include the Station Road development as part of the projected 2018 electorate figures, we initially queried whether the area would contain sufficient electors to form a viable parish ward by the time of elections in 2015. Following discussions with the Council, we understand that electors are expected to be living in the area from 2015–16 onwards, and we are content that the development will be completed by the end of this review, in 2018. As this development will look to Newport, not Church Aston, we have decided to follow the Council's suggested boundary along the A518. We also recommend that the parish warding arrangements for the Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish do not come into effect until 2019.

44 In addition, we propose that the parish of Preston upon the Weald Moors is included in a Hadley & Leegomery ward, rather than in a Church Aston & Lilleshall ward. This would reflect the proximity to, and road links with, the village of Horton within Hadley and Leegomery whilst improving electoral equality in Church Aston & Lilleshall. Our proposed single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall ward will contain 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018.

45 The Council did not submit a warding pattern for the town of Newport. In the absence of a proposal from the Council, we have sought to propose a warding pattern for Newport that provides a good balance of the statutory criteria.

46 We recommend two two-member wards for the town of Newport. We propose a two-member Newport South & East ward combining the existing Newport East and Newport South single-member wards, containing 4% more electors than the borough average by 2018. We also propose a two-member Newport North & West ward combining the existing Newport West and Newport North single-member wards,

containing a number of electors equal to the borough average by 2018. We consider that the boundary between our proposed Newport South & East and Newport North & West wards is easily identifiable as it follows main roads to the south and the clear and easily identifiable barrier of the Shropshire Union Canal to the north.

Edgmond and Ercall Magna

47 In the north of the borough, the Council proposed a two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna ward, containing 8% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018. The Council's proposed ward represented a combination of the existing Edgmond and Ercall Magna single-member wards, with the exception of that part of the parish of Eyton upon the Weald Moors south of Hurley Brook.

48 During our tour, we noted the shared rural character of the area of the Council's proposed ward. We also noted that Shrewsbury Road provided very good access from east to west. We therefore adopt the Council's proposed two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna ward subject to one modification, outlined below.

49 The Council's suggested division of the parish of Eyton upon the Weald Moors would result in an unviable parish ward north of Hurley Brook containing only four electors. We note that access into the village of Eyton upon the Weald Moors is very poor, but that there is a small road connecting it to Shawbirch to the south-west. We therefore propose that the parish of Eyton upon the Weald Moors forms part of a ward with Shawbirch, discussed below in paragraph 53. Our proposed two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna ward would contain 8% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

Wrockwardine

50 In the west of the borough, the Council proposed a two-member Wrockwardine ward containing 13% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

51 As mentioned above, the Council proposed adding part of the parish Eyton upon the Weald Moors to its proposed Wrockwardine ward, resulting in an unviable parish ward north of Hurley Brook. The Council also proposed adding West parish ward from Lawley and Overdale Parish Council, currently in Wrockwardine, to its proposed Lawley ward.

52 As discussed above and in paragraphs 75-8, we are not in a position to adopt the Council's proposal for an extra councillor in the Lawley area and increase council size by one to 55. We examined the possibility of adding the part of Lawley & Overdale parish currently within Wrockwardine ward to a neighbouring ward in the Horsehay and Lightmoor area. However, this would have adverse knock-on effects and would require a significantly different warding pattern across a large portion of the borough.

53 We also examined the possibility of a warding pattern which separated the Shawbirch area (part of Wrockwardine parish) and the rural area. We considered that a two-member Shawbirch ward incorporating Eyton upon the Weald Moors and the Shawbirch, Admaston and Bratton area would represent a cohesive urban ward and would avoid placing part of Wellington with the western rural area. We therefore propose a two-member Shawbirch ward containing 3% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

54 We propose a single-member Wrockwardine ward, comprising the parishes of Little Wenlock and Rodington, as well as West Parish Ward from Lawley & Overdale Parish Council and part of the parish of Wrockwardine, containing 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

55 Across the rural north and west of Telford & Wrekin, our draft recommendations are therefore for two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna, Newport North & West and Newport South & East wards and single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall and Wrockwardine wards with 8% fewer, equal to, 4% more, 1% fewer and 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Wellington

56 Wellington lies to the west of Telford and is bounded to its south by the M54. In addition to Wellington, the area contains Admaston, Bratton and part of Shawbirch.

57 We did not receive any submissions other than the borough-wide scheme proposed by the Council and discussed in paragraphs 32 and 33. The Council proposed a pattern of single-member wards in Wellington, based on existing wards, with a number of small modifications. Under a council size of 54, the Council's proposed Arleston, College, Ercall, Dothill, Haygate, Shawbirch and Park wards would contain 3% more, 1% more, 1% more, 3% fewer, 5% more, 3% fewer and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

58 Given the good levels of electoral equality achieved, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposals, with the exception of the Shawbirch area discussed in paragraph 53 above and a minor modification in Ercall, which would better reflect access for the remainder of properties on Priory Close onto the Rosthwaite area.

59 Our proposed single-member Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate and Park wards would contain 2% more, 1% more, 3% fewer, equal to, 3% more and equal to the average number of electors for the borough by 2018, respectively.

North Telford

60 Telford is the main town within the borough and encompasses a number of different communities. It is bisected by the M54. The north of Telford is covered by the parishes of Hadley & Leegomery, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench and the communities of Donnington and Muxton within the parish of Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton.

61 In addition to the borough-wide scheme discussed in paragraphs 32 and 33, we received submissions in relation to this area from David Wright MP, Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council and a local resident. The Council proposed a three-member Hadley & Leegomery ward; two-member Donnington, Muxton and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards; and a single-member Apley Castle ward. Under a council size of 54, these wards would contain 1% fewer, 4% more, 4% more, 1% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

62 Mr Wright supported the Council's proposal, making particular reference to the Council's minor changes to the current boundaries of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench.

63 The local resident argued that Apley was closer to Wellington than to Hadley and argued that the two areas should not be combined. This was reflected in the Council's proposals.

64 Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council argued that its parish wards should be used to form the basis of a two-member Hadley ward and single-member Apley Castle and Leegomery wards. The Parish Council also proposed a modification to the current Apley Castle ward boundary, which was identical to the Council's proposal for a single-member Apley Castle ward containing 2% more electors than the borough average by 2018. The Parish Council's proposed two-member Hadley and single-member Leegomery wards would contain 5% fewer and 13% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively. These proposed Hadley and Leegomery wards would have an adverse knock-on effect on electoral equality in the Ketley & Overdale ward, and therefore we are not adopting them as part of our draft recommendations.

65 We consider that the Council's proposed wards in this area would provide for good levels of electoral equality, use main roads where possible and reflect community connections. We therefore propose adopting these wards, subject to two modifications.

66 Firstly, as mentioned in paragraph 44, we propose adding the parish of Preston upon the Weald Moors to the Council's proposed Hadley & Leegomery ward in order to reflect the proximity to, and road links with, the village of Horton within Hadley and Leegomery whilst improving electoral equality in a Church Aston & Lilleshall ward.

67 Secondly, we propose a minor modification to include Dukes View with the rest of the properties in the area of Station Road. Although we initially had concerns regarding whether the Station Road area should be included in a Muxton ward, during our tour we visited the area and noted that the fenced military depots to the south formed a very strong boundary and that the properties looked east to Donnington Roundabout.

68 We are adopting the Council's proposed three-member Hadley & Leegomery ward, three two-member Donnington, Muxton and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards and single-member Apley Castle ward, subject to the modifications mentioned above. These wards will contain 6% more, 4% more, 4% more, 2% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Central Telford

69 Central Telford is covered by the parishes of Ketley; Lawley & Overdale; Oakengates; and St. Georges & Priorslee.

70 In addition to the borough-wide scheme discussed in paragraphs 32 and 33, we received two submissions in relation to this area, from David Wright MP and Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council. The Council proposed three-member Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards, two-member St Georges and Priorslee wards and a single-member Lawley ward. These wards would contain 1% more, 10% fewer, 2% fewer, 6% fewer and 21% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

71 Commenting on the Lawley area, Mr Wright argued that it should have its own ward, incorporating 'old Lawley village, the new square and the new housing

developments'. This was reflected in the Council's proposals. Mr Wright also argued that 'the old community of Overdale and the commuter community of the Rock' were separate and should be included in a Ketley & Overdale ward. This suggestion was also reflected in the Council's proposals.

72 In relation to the present Ketley & Oakengates ward, Mr Wright argued that the community of Ketley should no longer be included, as it was closer to Overdale than to Oakengates. Mr Wright argued that the communities of Ketley Bank and Oakengates had 'always been close' and should be kept together, whilst being added to the 'growing developments of Trench Lock and the areas around the current Wrockwardine Wood School which look more towards Oakengates'.

73 Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council commented on the Beveley area, arguing that it should form part of a ward with the Ketley and Oakengates area rather than the Hadley and Leegomery area, as the railway formed a 'strong physical boundary' between it and the Hadley community.

74 As discussed in paragraph 35, we have sought to propose a warding pattern across the borough which provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. We consider that the Council's proposed warding pattern in Central Telford provides this, with exception of the Lawley area. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we have therefore adopted their proposals with modifications as part of our draft recommendations.

Lawley

75 The Council proposed a single-member Lawley ward, centred on the current Lawley community and covering most of the area of current and future infill developments, taking in parts of the parishes of Lawley & Overdale and Dawley Hamlets. Under a council size of 54, this ward would contain 21% more electors than the average for the borough by 2018. Having examined the Council's submission, we discovered that it had misallocated a number of electors and had not intended to suggest a variance of 21%. In developing our draft recommendations we have examined the electoral register and confirmed the location of future developments with the Council, and have toured the area in order to view developments on the ground.

76 We explored the possibility of improving this level of electoral inequality by combining the Lawley area with other neighbouring wards. Under a 54-member warding pattern, this would have significant adverse knock-on effects across the borough. We also considered increasing the council size by one, as proposed by the Council. Due to the mistakes made by the Council in counting electors in the Lawley area, the Council's warding pattern would provide for very poor electoral equality in Lawley, Horsehay & Lightmoor, and Ketley & Overdale wards under a council size of 55.

77 It would be possible to avoid dividing Lawley under a different 55-member warding pattern. This warding pattern would provide for a three-member Horsehay, Lightmoor & Lawley ward containing 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018. This proposal would have minor knock-on effects on Wrockwardine, Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards, resulting in variances of 7% fewer, 10% fewer and 8% fewer electors than the borough average in those respective wards by 2018. A further knock-on effect would be that the two-member Edgmond & Ercall

Magna ward and the single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall wards would become a single-member Ercall Magna ward with a variance of 8% fewer electors and a two-member Church Aston & Edgmond ward with a variance of 4% fewer electors than the average for the borough by 2018.

78 Due to the wide ranging nature of these knock-on effects, and the lack of evidence of community identities, we are not in a position to adopt an increased council size of 55 in order to accommodate a separate ward for Lawley. During our tour, we noted that the present ward boundaries divided the parts of the Lawley development along clearly identifiable lines such as the A5223, without splitting discrete communities. Therefore, we propose following the present ward boundaries in the Lawley area, with parts of the wider Lawley area being included in Wrockwardine, Ketley & Overdale and Horsehay & Lightmoor wards.

Ketley, Overdale, Oakengates and Ketley Bank

79 The Council proposed new three-member Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards covering this part of central Telford. These wards would contain 1% fewer and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

80 As discussed at paragraph 78, we are not adopting the Council's proposed Lawley ward, which borders its proposed Ketley & Overdale ward. However, we consider that the Council's proposed three-member wards in this area follow clearly identifiable boundaries where possible, reflecting apparent communities as well as proposals made by Mr Wright. In the absence of further evidence of community identities, we therefore adopt the Council's three-member Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards with one modification.

81 The Council's proposed Ketley & Overdale ward places the Beveley area south of the railway in its Ketley & Overdale ward. We consider that the Beveley area equally looks east to the Oakengates area and the remainder of Beveley Road, via the subway. We therefore propose that it be included in the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward proposed by the Council. This would provide for good electoral equality, with our proposed Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward containing 6% fewer electors and our proposed Ketley & Overdale ward containing 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018.

St Georges and Priorslee

82 The Council proposed two-member St Georges and Priorslee wards, containing 2% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018 under a council size of 54, respectively.

83 We are adopting the Council's proposed St Georges and Priorslee wards with two modifications. Firstly, the south of the Council's proposed St Georges ward follows the existing ward boundary along Church Road and Snedshill Way. We propose moving this boundary south to include the whole of Priorslee Road in St Georges ward. Secondly, we propose to include Park Close in Priorslee ward in order to secure a clear and easily identifiable divide of the area north of St George's Bypass.

84 Our proposed two-member St Georges and Priorslee wards will contain 3% fewer and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge

85 South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge are covered by the parishes of The Gorge; Madeley; Sturchley & Brookside; Hollinswood & Randlay; Great Dawley; and the remainder of Dawley Hamlets.

86 In addition to the borough-wide scheme discussed in paragraphs 32 and 33, we received two submissions in relation to this area, from David Wright MP and The Gorge Parish Council. The Council proposed three-member Dawley & Aqueduct and The Nedge wards; two-member Brookside; Horsehay & Lightmoor, Madeley, Malinslee & Dawley Bank and Woodside wards; and single-member Ironbridge Gorge and Cuckoo Oak wards. These wards would contain 1% more, equal to, 1% fewer, 38% fewer, 10% more, 3% fewer, 9% fewer, 3% fewer and 14% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

87 Mr Wright commented on the Cuckoo Oak, Dawley Magna, Madeley, Ironbridge Gorge, Malinslee, The Nedge and Woodside areas. His comments were entirely reflected in the Council's proposals for this area.

88 The Gorge Parish Council's submission argued that the communities of Coalbrookdale, Coalport, Ironbridge and Jackfield were linked by the landscape and by being part of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. The Parish Council also argued that if any additional electors were needed to provide for good electoral equality, they should be taken from Lightmoor Village.

89 Having considered the evidence received, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposals subject to two modifications in order to improve electoral equality as part of our draft recommendations.

90 Firstly, we propose to combine the Council's recommended Madeley and Cuckoo Oak wards to form a three-member Madeley ward containing 9% more electors than the borough average by 2018. We consider that this ward would have good internal access and reflect the community links with the Hills Lane area described by Mr Wright.

91 Secondly, we propose to modify the boundary of the Council's proposed Ironbridge Gorge ward to include the whole of Wrekin View along with the rest of the Hill Top area in order to improve electoral equality. Having toured this area, we consider that the top of the hill, where Wrekin View becomes Hermitage Way, provides an identifiable boundary.

92 Our proposed three-member Dawley & Aqueduct, Madeley and The Nedge wards, two-member Brookside, Horsehay & Lightmoor, Malinslee & Dawley Bank and Woodside wards and single-member Ironbridge Gorge ward will contain 1% more, 9% more, equal to, 1% more, 4% more, 2% fewer, 9% fewer and 4% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Conclusions

93 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Appendix A on pages 23-5, and illustrated on the large map we have produced. This map is also available to be viewed on our website.

94 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of wards	29	29
Average number of electors per councillor	2,292	2,375
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendation

Telford & Wrekin Borough Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 29 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

96 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, Telford & Wrekin 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.

97 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote, The Gorge, Hadley & Leegomery, Ketley, Lawley & Overdale, Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton, Madeley, Oakengates, St Georges & Priorslee, Stirchley & Brookside, Wellington, Wrockwardine and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench.

98 As a result of our proposed district 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 Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish.

Draft recommendations

Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote Parish Council should return seven parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Chetwynd Aston (returning four members) and Station Road (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

99 As a result of our proposed district 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 The Gorge parish.

Draft recommendations

The Gorge Parish Council should return eight parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Coalport & Jackfield (returning two members), Ironbridge Gorge (returning three members) and Lightmoor (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

100 As a result of our proposed district 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 Hadley & Leegomery parish.

Draft recommendations

Hadley & Leegomery Parish Council should return 16 parish councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Apley Castle (returning four members), Hadley Castle (returning three members), Hadley Manor (returning three members), Leegomery (returning four members) and Trench Lock (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

101 As a result of our proposed district 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 Ketley parish.

Draft recommendations

Ketley Parish Council should return 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Beveley (returning two members) and Ketley (returning nine members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

102 As a result of our proposed district 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 Lawley & Overdale parish.

Draft recommendations

Lawley & Overdale Parish Council should return eight parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Central (returning four members), Dawley Bank (returning one

member), Lawley (returning two members) and West (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

103 As a result of our proposed district 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 Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton parish.

Draft recommendations

Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton Parish Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Donnington East (returning one member), Donnington West (returning five members), Lilleshall (returning two members), Muxton (returning five members) and The Humbers (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

104 As a result of our proposed district 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 Madeley parish.

Draft recommendations

Madeley Parish Council should return 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Cuckoo Oak (returning five members), Hill Top (returning one member), Madeley (returning five members) and Woodside (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

105 As a result of our proposed district 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 Oakengates parish.

Draft recommendations

Oakengates Parish Council should return 13 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Hollyhurst (returning one member), North (returning three members) and Oakengates (returning nine members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

106 As a result of our proposed district 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 St Georges & Priorslee parish.

Draft recommendations

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council should return 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Snedshill (returning one member), St Georges East (returning one member), St Georges West (returning four members) and Priorslee (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

107 As a result of our proposed district 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 Stirchley & Brookside parish.

Draft recommendations

Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council should return 13 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Brookside (returning seven members), Holmer Lake (returning one member) and Stirchley (returning five members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

108 As a result of our proposed district 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 Wellington town.

Draft recommendations

Wellington Town Council should return 21 parish councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Arleston (returning three members), College (returning three members), Dothill (returning three members), Ercall (returning three members), Haygate (returning three members), Park (returning three members) and Shawbirch (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

109 As a result of our proposed district ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose parish electoral arrangements for Wrockwardine parish.

Draft recommendations

Wrockwardine Parish Council should return 10 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Admaston & Shawbirch (returning seven members) and Wrockwardine (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

110 As a result of our proposed district ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose parish electoral arrangements for Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish.

Draft recommendations

Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council should return 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: East (returning one member), Trench (returning eight members), Wrockwardine Wood East (returning one member) and Wrockwardine Wood West (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

111 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council contained in this report. We will fully consider all submissions received by 9 September 2013. Any submissions received after this date may not be considered.

112 We have not finalised our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during our consultation on these draft recommendations. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

113 Express your views by writing directly to:

Review Officer
Telford & Wrekin
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

114 Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, consultation.lgbce.org.uk or by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk

115 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations made during consultation will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Telford & Wrekin Borough Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

116 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, irrespective of whom they are from.

117 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

118 After the publication of our final recommendations, the review will be implemented by order subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament.

When made, the draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council in 2015.

119 These draft recommendations have 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

Draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin

120 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed ward boundaries for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Apley Castle	1	2,417	2,417	5%	2,427	2,427	2%
2	Arleston	1	2,308	2,308	2%	2,425	2,425	2%
3	Brookside	2	4,361	2,181	1%	4,701	2,351	-1%
4	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2,391	2,391	4%	2,355	2,355	-1%
5	College	1	2,393	2,393	4%	2,407	2,407	1%
6	Dawley & Aqueduct	3	7,266	2,422	6%	7,196	2,399	1%
7	Donnington	2	4,931	2,466	8%	4,928	2,464	4%
8	Dothill	1	2,383	2,383	4%	2,359	2,359	-3%
9	Edgmond & Ercall Magna	2	4,404	2,202	-4%	4,375	2,188	-8%
10	Ercall	1	2,372	2,372	3%	2,385	2,385	0%
11	Hadley & Leegomery	3	7,166	2,389	4%	7,272	2,511	6%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Haygate	1	2,248	2,248	-2%	2,438	2,438	3%
13	Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	3,337	1,669	-27%	4,931	2,466	4%
14	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2,538	2,538	11%	2,468	2,468	4%
15	Ketley & Overdale	3	6,367	2,122	-7%	7,049	2,350	-1%
16	Madeley	3	7,899	2,633	15%	7,767	2,589	9%
17	Malinslee & Dawley Bank	2	4,521	2,261	-1%	4,640	2,320	-2%
18	Muxton	2	4,828	2,414	5%	4,944	2,472	4%
19	Newport South & East	2	4,024	2,012	-12%	4,961	2,481	4%
20	Newport North & West	2	4,457	2,229	-3%	4,744	2,372	0%
21	Oakengates & Ketley Bank	3	6,081	2,027	-12%	6,667	2,222	-6%
22	Park	1	2,345	2,345	2%	2,375	2,375	0%
23	Priorslee	2	4,575	2,288	0%	4,512	2,256	-5%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24	Shawbirch	2	4,555	2,278	0%	4,602	2,301	-3%
25	St Georges	2	4,660	2,330	2%	4,611	2,306	-3%
26	The Nedge	3	7,119	2,373	4%	7,110	2,370	0%
27	Woodside	2	4,474	2,237	-2%	4,322	2,161	-9%
28	Wrockwardine	1	2,309	2,309	1%	2,363	2,363	-1%
29	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	2	4,791	2,396	4%	4,653	2,327	-2%
	Totals	54	123,790	-	-	128,249	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,292	-	-	2,375	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the Telford & Wrekin Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the borough. 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.
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council
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