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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 have conducted an electoral review of Telford & Wrekin 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. We commenced the review in October 2012.

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 October 2012	Consultation on council size
29 January 2013	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

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 54 members, comprising a pattern of 10 single-member wards, 13 two-member wards and six three-member wards. The recommendations were broadly based on the Council's proposals, amended to reflect our statutory criteria. Our draft recommendations sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk

Submissions received

During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 31 submissions, including comments covering the whole of the borough from Telford & Wrekin Council and the Chairman of the Telford & Wrekin Branch of UKIP. We also received submissions from Mark Pritchard MP, the Conservative Group on the Council, five borough councillors, five town and parish councillors, eight town and parish councils, the Chairman of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish meeting and eight members of the public. In addition, we received a petition signed by 101 residents of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish.

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

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Telford & Wrekin Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of 3.6% over the six-year period from 2012–18. The increase in the electorate is forecast to be concentrated in areas of substantial housing developments expected to occur in Lawley, Hadley, Lightmoor and Newport.

We are content that the forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used these figures as the basis of our final recommendations.

General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. In making our final recommendations we have taken account of submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have proposed boundary amendments to the draft recommendations for the Dothill, Edgmond & Ercall Magna, Hadley & Leegomery, Haygate, Park, Priorslee, Shawbirch and St Georges wards.

Our final recommendations for Telford & Wrekin are that the Council should have 54 members, with 12 single-member wards, 12 two-member wards and six three-member wards. No ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of greater than 10% by 2018.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Telford & Wrekin Council, in 2015.

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

You can also view our final recommendations for Telford & Wrekin 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 was 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 The submission received from Telford & Wrekin Council during the initial stage of consultation of this review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council*, which were published on 18 June 2013. We then undertook a further period of consultation which ended on 9 September.

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. A description of 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?

5 Based on the December 2011 electorate data, 39% of the borough's wards currently have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough. Of these, Horsehay & Lightmoor ward has an electoral variance of 28%.

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. In addition, your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

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

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
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 Telford & Wrekin Council.

9 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

10 Legislation also requires that our recommendations are not based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but reflect estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the end of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward.

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

12 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.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Telford & Wrekin Council or the external boundaries or names of parish or town councils, 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

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Telford & Wrekin Council ('the Council') and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

15 We received six submissions during the consultation on warding patterns including a borough-wide scheme from the Council. All of the submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

16 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2018, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2013. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3.6% to 2018. The forecasts provided by the Council took into account planned developments across the borough, as well as population forecasts made by the Office for National Statistics.

Council size

17 Telford & Wrekin Council currently has 54 councillors elected from 16 single-member, 13 two-member and four three-member wards. During the preliminary stage of the review, we met with Group Leaders and Full Council. The Council subsequently made a proposal for the retention of the current council size of 54. In support of its proposal, the Council emphasised its Co-operative Council ethos and members' representational role.

18 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.

19 We decided to consult publicly on council sizes of both 44 and 54, considering that we had insufficient evidence to recommend either number. This consultation ended on 3 December 2012.

20 During the consultation on council size, we received 108 submissions. A majority of respondents supported retention of the current council size. We received individual submissions from 31 borough councillors, of whom only one supported a reduction in council size, although Conservative Group members had made a collective response in favour of a reduction. The majority of town and parish councils were in favour of retaining the current council size. Of 64 local residents who made representations, 40 supported a reduction in council size.

21 We carefully considered the information provided during the consultation period. Those supporting the retention of the current council size of 54 cited an increase in member workload as the principal reason for that view. They described the effects of a growing population, evidence of deprivation and health and welfare reforms as contributory to this workload increase. However, a number of councillors, residents and

parish councils said that the 'Co-operative Council' approach to community engagement and leadership necessitated the retention of current council size because of the implications of this approach for representational activities. In opposing a reduction in council size, fears were expressed about the impact of workload on ability of the Council to attract a broad spectrum of candidates for election and the ability of councillors to exercise effective scrutiny of council decision-making.

22 These views were not shared by all, however. The Council's Conservative Group put forward the view that the Co-operative Council approach was not leading to an increase in workload and that a reduction to 44 members would be consistent with the Council's decision-making and scrutiny structures whilst providing for cost-savings. This was a view shared by some residents making representations and by two parish councils. Whilst most of those in favour of a reduction in council size felt that 44 would be the appropriate number, a small number of residents proposed smaller council sizes, ranging from 27 to 40.

23 We concluded that, taken together, the submissions of those in favour of the retention of a council size of 54 had provided evidence to support the argument that the current council size should be retained in order to operate under current governance model. Whilst we did consider the submissions of those in favour of a reduction in council size, we felt that they did not provide us with a comparable volume or weight of evidence. We were therefore unable to assure ourselves that the Council's governance structure could operate effectively should council size be reduced.

24 We were therefore minded to adopt a council size of 54 elected members as the basis of this electoral review. A consultation on warding arrangements began on 29 January 2013 and ended on 8 April 2013

25 During the consultation on warding arrangements we received only one representation relating to council size. The Council presented a warding pattern based on a council size of 55. It argued that this would provide for a better warding pattern than would its initial proposal for 54 members, but provided limited evidence to justify our moving away from the council size of 54 which we had adopted following consultation. We therefore did not move away from a council size of 54 when agreeing our draft recommendations.

26 We received a few very general comments on council size and the role of councillors in response to the draft recommendations and none of these submissions provided any additional evidence that would persuade us to move away from a council size of 54. We have therefore decided to base our final recommendations on this number of elected members.

Electoral fairness

27 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.

28 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we calculate the average number of electors per councillor. This 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 final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 2,292 in 2012 and 2,375 in 2018.

29 Under our final recommendations, none of our proposed 30 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

30 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received 31 submissions, including those from the Council, and the Chairman of the Telford & Wrekin Branch of UKIP who commented on all of the wards outlined in the draft recommendations, supporting some individual recommendations and opposing others.

31 Two respondents advocated that we should seek, to create single-member wards on principle. We have no policy, unless specifically requested by a principal council to conduct a single-member warding review, either to favour or disfavour single-member or multi-member wards. Instead, we seek, in making recommendations, only to balance the statutory criteria of electoral equality, reflecting community identity and providing for effective and convenient local government. Accordingly, we have recommended a combination of single- and multi-member wards.

32 Most responses to the draft recommendations addressed proposed warding of particular parts of the borough. Of the 29 wards proposed in the draft recommendations, seven attracted expressions of support and no opposition.

33 We have considered these responses, together with those made at earlier stages of the review, and have concluded that we should move away from our draft recommendations in respect of the following wards: Dothill; Edgmond & Ercall Magna; Hadley & Leegomery; Haygate; Park; Priorslee; Shawbirch; and St Georges.

34 Our final recommendations would result in 12 single-member, 12 two-member and six three-member wards. We consider our proposals provide for good levels of electoral equality while reflecting our understanding of community identities and interests in Telford & Wrekin.

Electoral arrangements

35 This section of the report describes the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Telford & Wrekin. The following areas, defined only for the purposes of guiding readers of these recommendations, are considered in turn:

- Rural North and West (pages 9–11)
- Wellington (page 11)

- North Telford (pages 12–13)
- Central Telford (pages 13–15)
- South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge (pages 16-17)

36 Details of the proposed electoral arrangements are set out in Table A1 at pages 25-27 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Rural North and West

Newport

37 The town of Newport lies in the north-eastern part of the borough. It is currently divided into four single-member wards. Significant housing development is expected to take place across the town.

38 In our draft recommendations, we proposed that the existing Newport East and South wards, together with the development at Station Road, be combined to form a two-member ward. We also proposed a two-member Newport North & West ward combining the existing Newport West and Newport North single-member wards. The Council supported these recommendations.

39 The representations which expressed general preference for single-member wards opposed our recommendations for Newport but presented no persuasive argument in favour of their preference for single-member wards. Two-member wards for Newport offer better electoral equality in the immediate term and by 2018 than do the present single-member wards. We therefore confirm the draft recommendations for Newport as final.

40 While we are content to include the Station Road development as part of the projected 2018 electorate figures, we understand that no electors are expected to be living in the area until 2015–16 onwards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendation that altered parish warding arrangements for the Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish should not come into effect until 2019.

41 Our final recommendations for Newport are, therefore, for a two-member Newport North & West ward having a similar number of electors to the average number of electors for the borough by 2018 and a two-member Newport South & East ward having 4% more than the average for the borough by 2018.

Church Aston & Lilleshall, Edgmond and Ercall Magna

42 These wards comprise predominantly rural parishes. In our draft recommendations, we proposed that the parish of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors be excluded from the Church Aston & Lilleshall ward, linking it instead with parts of Hadley & Leegomery parish. We also proposed to combine the current wards of Edgmond and Ercall Magna into a two-member ward, with the exception of Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish, which we proposed be included with more built-up parts of Wellington and Wrockwardine parishes.

43 Our proposed Church Aston & Lilleshall ward was opposed by the Council and by Mark Pritchard MP. The Chairman of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors Parish Meeting also opposed the draft recommendation, enclosing with his own submission a petition signed by 101 residents of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors. Objectors cited the lack of

common community identity and character of the parish with the major part of our proposed Hadley & Leegomery ward, rather than providing evidence of community interaction between Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish and the remainder of the Church Aston and Lilleshall area.

44 We were persuaded by the arguments that the parish should not be included with the more urban area of Hadley & Leegomery but were not persuaded that the only ward it could be included in is Church Aston & Lilleshall. Accordingly, we have decided not to amend our Church Aston & Lilleshall ward but do propose transferring Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish into the proposed Edgmond & Ercall ward. We consider that this is a better alternative as the road links are more direct through the parish of Kynnersley and it would provide for a better level of electoral equality.

45 Similarly, the Council and the Telford & Wrekin Branch of UKIP considered that Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish has little in common with Shawbirch and objected to the inclusion of the rural parish with the built-up areas of Wellington, Admaston and Bratton.

46 We note that there are only 66 electors in the parish of Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors and transferring them into the proposed Edgmond & Ercall ward would have a minimal impact on electoral equality, improving the electoral variance in the ward from 4% to 2%. We were persuaded by the argument that this parish should be included with other more rural parishes. Accordingly, our final recommendation is to include the parishes of Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors and Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors in a two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna ward.

47 Our final recommendations are therefore for a two-member Edgmond & Ercall Magna ward and a single-member Church Aston & Lilleshall ward having 2% fewer and 1% fewer electors than the average for the borough by 2018, respectively.

Wrockwardine and Shawbirch

48 The current two-member Wrockwardine ward occupies a large rural area forming the western part of the borough, as well as some more urban built-up areas in Admaston, Bratton and Lawley.

49 We developed our own proposals for the Admaston and Bratton areas of Wrockwardine parish and the adjacent Shawbirch area of Wellington parish. A two-member ward which combined Admaston, Bratton and Shawbirch with Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish would have 3% fewer electors than the average by 2018, whilst the remainder of the current Wrockwardine ward would form a single-member ward with 1% fewer electors than the borough average in 2018.

50 We received a number of expressions of opposition to our draft recommendations, commenting that Admaston and Bratton form a community which is distinct from that of Shawbirch, citing the Beanhill Brook as a distinct and natural boundary between communities, with Admaston and Bratton looking towards the rural areas to the west. They add that combining the two areas in a single ward would weaken community ties between Shawbirch and the rest of Wellington.

51 Having considered the representations together with those regarding Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors, we are persuaded by these expressions of community identity, and recommend a single-member Admaston & Bratton ward comprising areas of the same

name. This will have 4% fewer electors than the borough average in 2018. We have made another amendment to the southern boundary of the proposed Shawbirch ward, which is detailed in paragraph 56, below.

52 Our final recommendations are therefore for single-member Admaston & Bratton, Shawbirch and Wrockwardine wards with 4% fewer, 5% more and 1% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Wellington

53 The historic market town of Wellington lies on the western side of Telford's built-up area and is bounded to its south by the M54. We based our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme.

54 Wellington Town Council objected to our draft recommendations for the Park and Haygate wards, arguing that the boundary between the Haygate and Park wards should be moved to follow the railway line. In making its representation, the Town Council believed that the nature of the railway line as a barrier should override considerations of electoral equality. We accept, in part, the comment that the railway line would form a clear and distinct boundary between the Haygate and Park wards and recommend that it does so between the town's western boundary and Orleton Lane. The impact on electoral equality in the Haygate ward is marginal, improving the variance from the average for the borough from 2% to 1%. However, we also believe that in order to reflect the mixed commercial and residential land uses north of the railway and to maintain electoral equality, that the current ward boundary between Orleton Lane and Church Street be retained.

55 We also received opposition to our proposal to include the area around McCormick Drive in our modified Dothill ward. Objectors commented that residents of this area find their local shopping and community facilities in Shawbirch, whilst McCormick Drive is separated from Dothill by a large copse and open ground, crossed by a rough, unsurfaced footpath. Vehicular access to the local minor road network in Dothill from McCormick Drive would be via the two roundabouts on Whitchurch Drive at the northern and southern extremity of the ward.

56 We have considered the representations made and accept the evidence of community identity presented in relation to McCormick Drive. We therefore propose transferring approximately 120 electors from our proposed Dothill ward into our proposed Shawbirch ward. This ward would have 5% more electors than the average for the borough in 2018.

57 Having received support for our recommendations for our Arleston, College and Ercall wards and no opposition, we confirm as final our draft recommendations.

58 Our final recommendations for Wellington, with the exception of Shawbirch, are therefore single-member Arleston, College, Dothill, Ercall, Haygate and Park wards which would contain 2% more, 1% more, 6% fewer, 1% more, 1% fewer and 3% more than the average number of electors for the borough by 2018, respectively.

North Telford

59 Telford New Town encompasses a number of communities and stands astride 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.

60 We proposed in our draft recommendations to accept the Council's proposal for a single-member Apley Castle ward, which forms part of Hadley & Leegomery parish, and two-member wards for Donnington and Muxton. Having received no objection to these proposals, we confirm as final our draft recommendations for these areas.

61 We received a submission from Oakengates Town Council with alternative proposals for the majority of this area. The Town Council provided an analysis of the historical development of communities in the area and detailed proposals for alterations to the draft recommendations, both within and around the periphery of the parish. Whilst we appreciate the extent to which the Town Council sought to reflect our statutory criteria in its suggestions, the proposals which they made did not, in our view, provide sufficient justification for the poor electoral equality that would result.

62 In our draft recommendations, we proposed that a three-member Hadley & Leegomery ward be formed by combining the majority of the parish of that name with Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish. As described in paragraph 43 above, the Chairman of Preston-upon-the-Weald-Moors parish meeting and others opposed this draft recommendation and we have made a final recommendation which addresses that opposition.

63 Oakengates Town Council further advocated that the Hadley & Leegomery ward should include the south-east part of the Hadley & Leegomery parish which our draft recommendations proposed be included in the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward. Were we to accept the proposal made by Oakengates Town Council, electoral inequality in Hadley & Leegomery would have 13% more electors per councillor than the average by 2018.

64 We are unwilling to recommend such a degree of electoral inequality in this area in light of alternatives that we consider satisfactorily reflect the statutory criteria. Our final recommendation is therefore a three-member Hadley & Leegomery ward, consisting of those parts of the parish of that name which do not form the Apley Castle ward or part of the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward.

65 In our draft recommendations, we accepted the Council's proposal for a two-member Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward consisting of the northern part of the parish of that name and the northern part of Oakengates parish. The Borough Council and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council agree with our draft recommendations.

66 Oakengates Town Council objected to the proposal on two counts. Our draft recommendation proposed the inclusion of the whole of that part of the parish which lies to the north of Wrockwardine Wood Way in the proposed Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward. The Town Council would prefer instead to include a southern portion of that area in the Oakengates and Ketley Bank ward. We believe, however, that

Wrockwardine Wood Way forms an appropriate boundary and we are not persuaded that the area which the Town Council would include in the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward is more strongly connected to those parts of the parish which lie to the south of Wrockwardine Wood Way than it is to those parts lying adjacently to the north.

67 Oakengates Town Council also proposed that part of the Trench Lock area be included in the proposed Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward. We believe that in this instance, Queensway forms an appropriate boundary between wards and are not persuaded that the part of Trench Lock referred to by the Town Council shares a stronger community with the area to the east of Queensway than it does with areas of similar housing accessed from Sommerfeld Road. The Town Council also advocated that parts of Trench Lock lying to the west of Sommerfeld Road should be included in the Hadley & Leegomery ward. Such a proposal would, however, lead to an electoral variance of 13% in Hadley and Leegomery and consequentially result in 23% fewer electors per councillor in Oakengates & Ketley Bank than the average. Accordingly, we confirm as final our draft recommendation for Wrockwardine Wood & Trench ward.

68 We received suggestions from Oakengates Town Council, one borough councillor and one local resident that the ward for this area be simply called Trench. Three reasons for this were given: the local area of Wrockwardine Wood is perceived by some to lie to the south of our proposed ward's southern boundary; the Wrockwardine Wood area constitutes parts of four wards proposed in the draft recommendations; and confusion between the names Wrockwardine Wood and Wrockwardine ward results in practical errors and misunderstandings in the Council's dealings. However, we note that the majority of Wrockwardine Wood & Trench parish lies within our proposed ward, and the presence of community and social facilities bearing the name Wrockwardine Wood in the ward.

69 In North Telford, our final recommendations are therefore a three-member Hadley & Leegomery ward, three two-member Donnington, Muxton and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench wards and a single-member Apley Castle ward. These wards will contain 1% fewer, 4% more, 4% more, 1% fewer and 2% more electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Central Telford

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

Lawley, Ketley, Overdale, Oakengates and Ketley Bank

71 Lawley is an area of substantial residential and associated development on the western side of Telford's built-up area. Recent, current and planned developments are expected to amount to a total of 3,500 homes. The Council proposed a single-member Lawley ward, centred on the current Lawley community and covering most of the area of current and future developments, taking in parts of the parishes of Lawley & Overdale and Dawley Hamlets. David Wright MP also advocated a separate ward for this area.

72 It was evident to us that a single-member ward for the area covered by the envisaged Lawley village development would be very significantly under-represented.

However, alternative approaches to create a multi-member ward for Lawley would result in electoral inequalities in the surrounding areas.

73 We proposed in our draft recommendations to follow the present ward boundaries in the Lawley area, with parts of the Lawley development area being included in Wrockwardine, Ketley & Overdale and Horsehay & Lightmoor wards.

74 Some respondents to the consultation on the draft recommendations were opposed to the continued inclusion of the Lawley and Overdale West parish ward in the Wrockwardine ward. Having considered these objections and others relating to Lawley, we believe that the exclusion of Lawley and Overdale West parish ward would result in unacceptable levels of electoral inequality with 24% fewer electors in the Wrockwardine ward than the average for the borough.

75 The Council maintained its fundamental disagreement with the draft recommendations' omission of a single-member ward for Lawley village, but acknowledged that our draft recommendations provided good levels of electoral equality in the locality. Two local residents also expressed their opposition to our draft recommendations but provided no further evidence which would persuade us to alter our recommendations.

76 The Council proposed three-member Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards covering this part of central Telford which we adopted in our draft recommendations with one modification. This was opposed by the Lawley & Overdale Parish Council.

77 One local resident suggested that our proposed Ketley & Overdale ward should exclude Lawley Bank, Old Park and the town centre area, which should instead be added to the Malinslee & Dawley Bank ward proposed in our draft recommendations. However, this would result in 14% and 18% variances from the average electoral ratio for the borough in Ketley & Overdale and in Malinslee & Dawley Bank, respectively.

78 Lawley & Overdale Parish Council commented that the cumulative effect of our draft recommendations would be to increase the number of borough councillors representing their parish from four to eight, and that this would be detrimental. In fact, the increase would be from six to eight. In any case, we are not persuaded that an increase in borough councillors would hinder community identity or provide for poorer effective and convenient local government, or provide for poorer levels of electoral equality. We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation for our Ketley & Overdale ward.

79 Oakengates Town Council's substantial response to our draft recommendations provided alternative proposals and an assessment of their impact on electoral equality in the Oakengates & Ketley Bank, and surrounding wards. We have checked the Town Council's numerical analysis and find that it does not accord with the current and forecast electorate agreed with Telford & Wrekin Council. We have therefore considered the Town Council's proposals in terms of the numbers which we have agreed with Telford & Wrekin Council. Our consideration of the Town Council's proposals which relate to the Hadley & Leegomery and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench areas is described in paragraphs 63 and 67 above, respectively. Whilst the Town Council agrees with our proposal to include part of the Wrockwardine Wood area in the Oakengates & Ketley Bank ward, it proposed including the eastern part of St Georges

& Priorslee parish in the vicinity of Station Hill. We are not persuaded, however, that the Station Hill area shares no communality with the remainder of the parish in which it lies. We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation for Oakengates & Ketley Bank.

80 In Lawley, Ketley, Overdale, Oakengates and Ketley Bank our final recommendations are therefore three-member Ketley & Overdale and Oakengates & Ketley Bank wards having 1% fewer and 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

St Georges and Priorslee

81 Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's initial proposal, but with some modifications. Firstly, the south of the Council's proposed St Georges ward follows the existing ward boundary along Church Road and Snedshill Way. We proposed to include the whole of Priorslee Road in St Georges ward. Secondly, we proposed to include Park Close in Priorslee ward in order to secure a clear and easily identifiable divide of the area north of St Georges Bypass.

82 We received a number of objections to each of these. The first was supported by the Council and by one councillor who asserted that residents of Church Road and Priorslee Road identify their local community as that of St Georges. The Parish Council, two councillors and residents argued that the current boundary in this part of the ward should be retained in order that St Peter's church remain in the Priorslee ward. We believe, however, that St Georges By-Pass forms a distinct boundary between residential areas but we are not convinced that its identification as a borough ward boundary creates a barrier to the service which the church gives to its parishioners either in Priorslee or St Georges. We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation in this part of the ward.

83 Whilst one councillor agreed with our proposal to include Park Close and the St Georges Sports Ground in the Priorslee ward, the borough Council, Parish Council and three councillors disagreed, citing the role of the sports club in the community life of the St Georges area and the Park Close residents' identification with the St Georges community. Whilst this improves electoral equality in St Georges ward to parity with the average for the borough, it increases the variance from 5% in Priorslee to 9% fewer electors than the borough average. However, we are prepared to accept these representations about community identity and amend our draft recommendations accordingly.

84 Oakengates Town Council proposed that our draft recommendation for the boundary between those parts of St Georges and Priorslee wards which lie in Wrockwardine & Trench parish be amended in order that all properties on Coppice Drive, St Georges Road and Moss Road be included in St Georges ward. Such a change, which is not proposed in any other representation, would have significant impact on electoral equality, particularly in the Priorslee ward and we do not therefore propose to move away from our draft recommendation for this area.

85 Our final recommendations are therefore, for two-member St Georges and Priorslee wards. These wards will a similar number to, and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge

86 South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge are covered by the parishes of The Gorge, Madeley, Stirchley & Brookside, Hollinswood & Randlay, Great Dawley and the remainder of Dawley Hamlets.

87 In our draft recommendations, we proposed three-member Dawley & Aqueduct, Madeley and The Nedge wards, two-member Brookside, Horsehay & Lightmoor, Malinslee & Dawley Bank and Woodside wards and a single-member Ironbridge Gorge ward.

88 We received support and no objection to our proposed Brookside, Dawley & Aqueduct, Ironbridge Gorge and Woodside wards, and therefore confirm them as our final recommendations for those areas.

89 The Council and Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council supported our proposal for a three-member ward for The Nedge. One Borough Councillor proposed that we should subdivide this area to create a single-member ward for Stirchley and a two-member ward for Hollinswood & Randlay. However, we did not receive clear evidence of community identity or proposals for clear and strong ward boundaries which would address all of our statutory criteria. We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation for The Nedge.

90 We received a proposal for parish warding in Brookside from a member of that parish council. However, his proposal involved parish boundary and warding changes which are outside of the scope of this electoral review and we were therefore unable to recommend the changes he sought.

91 The Council expressed opposition to our proposal for a three-member Madeley ward, preferring instead, a single-member Cuckoo Oak ward and two-member Madeley ward. However, the Council's proposal would lead to unsatisfactorily levels of electoral equality of 17% and 13% respectively. We see no justification for this level of electoral inequality. The Council did suggest that should we be minded to adhere to our proposal for a three-member ward, then we should recommend that the ward be named Madeley & Sutton Hill in order to reflect the communities in the south eastern part of the borough. We accept this proposal and propose as our final recommendation a three-member Madeley & Sutton Hill Ward, having the boundaries shown in the draft recommendations.

92 The Council supported our proposal for a two-member Malinslee & Dawley Bank ward. Councillor Blackburn and Lawley & Overdale Parish Council were opposed to our proposal's inclusion of part of Dawley Bank in the Malinslee & Dawley Bank ward. However, the draft recommendation provides good electoral equality, accessibility and reflects communities whilst the alternative approach would result in the electoral variances of 14% in Ketley & Overdale and 18% in Malinslee & Dawley Bank described in paragraph 77, above.

93 Objections to our proposed Horsehay & Lightmoor ward all centered on the way in which the major and expanding Lawley development would be treated in our draft recommendations. These, and our response to them have been described in paragraphs 71-75 above. The Council did suggest that the name of the Horsehay and

Lightmoor ward include “Lawley”. Some respondents felt that our exclusion of Lawley from ward naming had the effect of making Lawley “disappear from the map”. However, we feel that the community continues to be identified in the parish name. Furthermore, the extent of recent and anticipated development is such that no single ward could embrace the whole of the area which is being developed as Lawley Village. We therefore confirm as final, our draft recommendation for Horsehay & Lightmoor

94 In South Telford and Ironbridge Gorge our final recommendations are, therefore, three-member Dawley & Aqueduct, Madeley & Sutton Hill and The Nedge wards, two-member Brookside, Horsehay & Lightmoor, Malinslee & Dawley Bank and Woodside wards and a single-member Ironbridge Gorge ward. These will contain 1% more, 9% more, a number similar to, 1% fewer, 4% more, 3% fewer, 9% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2018, respectively.

Conclusions

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

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2012	2018
Number of councillors	54	54
Number of wards	30	30
Average number of electors per councillor	2,292	2,375
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	4	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Final recommendation

Telford & Wrekin Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 30 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

96 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.

97 Under the 2009 Act, and notwithstanding representations made to us which would suggest that we do otherwise, 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 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.

98 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.

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 Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote parish.

Final 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. They should, however, not come into effect until the ordinary election day in 2019.

100 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for The Gorge parish.

Final 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.

101 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Hadley & Leegomery parish.

Final 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.

102 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Ketley parish.

Final 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.

103 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Lawley & Overdale parish.

Final 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.

104 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton parish.

Final 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.

105 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Madeley parish.

Final 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.

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 Oakengates Town.

Final recommendations

Oakengates Town 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.

107 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for St Georges & Priorslee parish.

Final 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.

108 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Stirchley & Brookside parish.

Final 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.

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 revised parish electoral arrangements for Wellington town.

Final 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.

110 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for Wrockwardine parish.

Final recommendations

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

111 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.

Final 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?

112 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Telford & Wrekin 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 Telford & Wrekin Council in 2015.

Equalities

113 The matters presented in report have been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the public sector equalities duty 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 Telford & Wrekin

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

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

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Telford and Wrekin

	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	Admaston & Bratton	1	2284	2284	0%	2270	2270	-4%
2	Apley Castle	1	2417	2417	5%	2427	2427	2%
3	Arleston	1	2308	2308	1%	2425	2425	2%
4	Brookside	2	4628	2314	1%	4698	2349	-1%
5	Church Aston & Lilleshall	1	2391	2391	4%	2355	2355	-1%
6	College	1	2393	2393	4%	2407	2407	1%
7	Dawley & Aqueduct	3	7266	2422	6%	7196	2399	1%
8	Donnington	2	4931	2466	8%	4928	2464	4%
9	Dothill	1	2262	2262	-1%	2236	2236	-6%
10	Edgmond & Ercall Magna	2	4657	2329	2%	4635	2318	-2%
11	Ercall	1	2395	2395	4%	2408	2408	1%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Telford and Wrekin

	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	Hadley & Leegomery	3	6717	2239	-2%	7081	2360	-1%
13	Haygate	1	2170	2170	-5%	2347	2347	-1%
14	Horsehay & Lightmoor	2	3337	1669	-27%	4931	2466	4%
15	Ironbridge Gorge	1	2556	2556	11%	2486	2486	5%
16	Ketley & Overdale	3	6401	2134	-7%	7083	2361	-1%
17	Madeley & Sutton Hill	3	7881	2627	15%	7767	2589	9%
18	Malinslee & Dawley Bank	2	4487	2244	-2%	4606	2303	-3%
19	Muxton	2	4828	2414	5%	4944	2472	4%
20	Newport North & West	2	4457	2229	-3%	4744	2372	0%
21	Newport South & East	2	4024	2012	-12%	4961	2481	4%
22	Oakengates & Ketley Bank	3	6243	2081	-9%	6828	2276	-4%
23	Park	1	2398	2398	5%	2441	2441	3%

Table A1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Telford and Wrekin

	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	Priorslee	2	4369	2185	-5%	4306	2153	-9%
25	Shawbirch	1	2425	2425	6%	2485	2485	5%
26	St Georges	2	4811	2406	5%	4763	2382	0%
27	The Nedge	3	7122	2374	4%	7113	2371	0%
28	Woodside	2	4474	2237	-2%	4322	2161	-9%
29	Wrockwardine	1	2309	2309	1%	2363	2363	-1%
30	Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	2	4849	2425	6%	4711	2356	-1%
	Totals	54	123,790	–	–	128,249	–	–
	Averages	–	–	2,292	–	–	2,375	–

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