

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.566

Review of Non-Metropolitan Counties

COUNTY OF BEDFORDSHIRE
AND ITS BOUNDARIES
WITH:
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 566

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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REVIEW OF NON METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

THE COUNTY OF BEDFORDSHIRE AND ITS BOUNDARIES WITH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND CAMBRIDGE-
SHIRE

COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT AND PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

1. On 26 July 1985 we wrote to Bedfordshire County Council announcing our intention to undertake a review of the County under section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Copies of the letter were sent to the principal local authorities, and parishes, in Bedfordshire and in the surrounding counties of Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire; to the National and County Associations of Local Councils; to the Members of Parliament with constituency interests and to the headquarters of the main political parties. In addition, copies were sent to those government departments, regional health authorities, water authorities, and electricity and gas boards which might have an interest, as well as to British Telecom, the English Tourist Board, the local government press and to local television and radio stations serving the area.

2. The County Councils were requested, in co-operation as necessary with the other local authorities, to assist us in publicising the start of the review by inserting a notice for two successive weeks in local newspapers so as to give a wide coverage in the areas concerned. The County Councils were also asked to ensure that the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of those services, such as the police and the administration of justice, in respect of which they have a statutory function.

3. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the surrounding counties, and any person or body interested in the review, to send us their views in detail on whether changes to the county boundary were desirable and, if so, what those changes should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government, the criterion laid down by the Act.

4. In response to our letter we received proposals from Buckinghamshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Milton Keynes Borough Council and South Bedfordshire District Council. Comments on those proposals were received from Bedfordshire County Council, all the county and district councils involved and a number of parish councils, Members of Parliament, local organisations and residents

of the areas which would be affected.

5. Proposals for changes to the boundary between Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire have been dealt with in our review of the latter county (Report No 555). No proposals were received for changes to the boundary between Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. This report deals only with the proposals for changes in the boundaries between Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire.

**BEDFORDSHIRE/BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
DISTRICT OF MID BEDFORDSHIRE/BOROUGH OF MILTON KEYNES
PARISHES OF ASPLEY GUISE/ASPLEY HEATH/WOBURN SANDS**

The initial submissions

6. Milton Keynes Borough Council proposed that part of the parish of Aspley Guise and almost all the parish of Aspley Heath in the district of Mid Bedfordshire should be transferred to the Borough. It argued that the area in question was linked to Woburn Sands in Milton Keynes by continuous development so that there was no recognisable division; that Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath looked to the new town for employment, amenities and major shopping facilities; that most health services were provided at Woburn Sands and Milton Keynes and that local shopping facilities were concentrated in Woburn Sands. The Borough Council also claimed that the existing boundary caused confusion in the administration of local government services and this could best be resolved by extending the existing Buckinghamshire services. Similar arguments were put forward by Woburn Sands Town Council although their suggested boundary would have involved the transfer of a rather smaller area. One member of the public wrote to support the proposals.

7. Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils opposed the change citing in particular the considerable difficulties they foresaw for the administration of education. They pointed out that the area proposed for transfer included a junior and middle school which were part of the Bedfordshire Education Service and that the school systems differed considerably between the two counties. Mid Bedfordshire District Council opposed the proposal claiming that it would disrupt the existing communities with no commensurate gain for effective and convenient local government and that there would be problems relating to council (particularly sheltered) housing. The Parish Councils of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath denied that residents were dependent on Milton Keynes, felt that education and public housing would be disrupted unnecessarily and saw a threat to the rural nature of the two parishes.

8. Twelve local organisations and over 250 private individuals wrote to express opposition; in addition two petitions, with 218 and 28 signatures, opposing the

scheme were received. The principal grounds of opposition were that existing educational arrangements would be destroyed and that the rural character of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath would be threatened by incorporation into the Borough of Milton Keynes which had a more urban outlook than the District of Mid Bedfordshire. Some of the correspondents did state, however, that the three parishes were, to some extent, a single community and tentatively suggested that one solution might be to transfer all or some of the parish of Woburn Sands into Bedfordshire.

Our draft proposals

9. It appeared to us that the present boundary did not represent any actual division between communities. The correspondence we had received suggested that, for some purposes, residents regarded the three settlements as a single entity and we considered the possibility of suggesting that all three should be united in a single district and that the county boundary should be changed to achieve this. Bedfordshire County Council had mentioned the possibility of Woburn Sands being transferred but it had not made out a detailed case and we saw their suggestion as essentially a defensive move to counter Milton Keynes Borough Council's proposal. None of the other respondents had made detailed proposals and we deduced that there would be little support for such a major change. Moreover it seemed to us that Aspley Guise, Aspley Heath and Woburn Sands had distinct centres and separate histories; it could be said in consequence, that each had a separate identity, with longstanding associations in each case with its existing county. We decided, therefore, not to propose unification but, instead, to seek a boundary line which would, more accurately, reflect actual divisions.

10. To that end, our draft proposal was that the parts of the parish of Aspley Guise which contained Burrows Close, Swallowfield Junior and Fulbrook Middle Schools and a section of Weathercock Lane, should be transferred to the parish of Woburn Sands and thus into the Borough of Milton Keynes and the County of Buckinghamshire. These areas appeared to be contiguous with the settlement of Woburn Sands and separated from the centre of Aspley Guise by the golf course and an area of relatively sparse building. So far as the parish of Aspley Heath was concerned, we felt that the areas sought by Milton Keynes Borough Council did not, in fact, form an integral part of Woburn Sands and we excluded them from our draft proposals. We confined our proposal in this area to a technical adjustment to clarify the boundary where it had become defaced.

11. We announced our draft proposals, together with others relating to different parts of the county boundary to which we refer later in this report, in a letter to the Chief Executive of Bedfordshire dated 29 October 1986. Copies were sent

to the local authorities concerned and to those who had made representations to us. The County Councils were asked to publish a notice giving details of our decisions and to post copies of it at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for eight weeks. Comments were invited by 24 December 1986 but this period was subsequently extended to 31 January 1987 at the request of the Chairman of Aspley Guise Parish Council.

The response to our draft proposals

12. Our proposals were supported by Buckinghamshire County Council, which indicated that it would provide a lengthy transitional period for the absorption of the two schools into the Buckinghamshire system. Milton Keynes Borough Council now stated that the most important consideration was that the three parishes formed on community and they should be united in one county. Woburn Sands Town Council supported the principle of our proposals but suggested that a rather smaller area should be transferred. One member of the public welcomed our draft proposals. The overwhelming response was, however, strong opposition to our proposals. Bedfordshire County Council, Mid Bedfordshire District Council and Aspley Guise Parish Council produced detailed papers seeking to refute our arguments and urging us to withdraw. Opposition also came from three other parish councils, the local Member of Parliament, the Labour Party candidate for the constituency, two political parties, two district councillors, six representatives of local schools, six local organisations, the Bishop of Maidstone (a former vicar of Aspley Guise) and 179 local residents. In addition 26 residents of Hulton Court, a sheltered housing complex, signed a petition opposing our draft proposals.

13. The most widely stated ground of opposition related to education. It was felt that our proposals would disrupt the present satisfactory arrangements. It was made clear that all children resident in Woburn Sands attended Swallowfield Junior School in the first instance and then moved to Fulbrook Middle School at the age of 13. The two schools, which were comparatively new, had been provided by Bedfordshire Education Service on that understanding. The parents writing to us much preferred the Bedfordshire system and said they would be extremely unhappy if their children were forced to conform to the Buckinghamshire system, which, among other alleged disadvantages, had a different age split. We were told that the unpopularity of Buckinghamshire schools was such that parents would transfer their children to other schools and the viability of the two schools would be in doubt and, indeed, it was claimed that our draft proposals had already started to have that effect.

14. A further ground for complaint was that our proposals would lead to an unacceptable loss of council housing to Mid Bedfordshire and, in particular, the district would be left with a serious shortage of sheltered accommodation. It was also claimed that our proposed changes would divide rather than unite communities, that the community ties of the residents were with Bedfordshire, that transferring the area would lead to a serious loss of rate income for Aspley Guise and that Aspley Heath would be virtually cut off from Bedfordshire. In general we were accused of seeking to substitute one arbitrary boundary for another without demonstrating that there would be any substantive advantages.

15. The replies from Bedfordshire County Council and a number of other writers contained suggestions that, if we remained unconvinced that the present boundary was satisfactory, a better answer would be to transfer the parish of Woburn Sands into Bedfordshire. It was pointed out that this would leave the education system undisturbed and would better reflect the real links of the communities. It was clear, however, that none of the respondents regarded this as their first choice and, not suprisingly, none of them had made out a detailed case to show how this move would benefit effective and convenient local government. The general consensus was that no change was needed and a number of correspondents suggested that, if we did not agree, a local meeting should be held before final proposals were formulated.

Our further consideration

16. We were impressed by the strength of the opposition to our draft proposals. We accepted that they would cause considerable disruption to education locally. We recognised the force of the charge that our proposals would replace one anomalous situation with another. We decided, therefore, to withdraw our draft proposals.

17. Nonetheless, we were still convinced that the present boundary was unsatisfactory since it cut through continuous development. Moreover it appeared that many residents accepted that the three parishes were interlocking and could not be easily separated. There was a clear indication that Woburn Sands looked to Bedfordshire for some of its services, notably, education, and on reflection we felt that we should now seriously consider the option of a transfer from Buckinghamshire to Bedfordshire. We decided that the best way to proceed would be to hold a local meeting which could explore all possibilities including that of placing some or all of the parish of Woburn Sands in Bedfordshire.

18. We announced this decision in a letter dated 27 May 1987, to the Chief

Executive of Bedfordshire County Council, copied to all other interested parties. At our request, you appointed Mr W U Jackson CBE, as an Assistant Commissioner and a local meeting was arranged for 14 September 1987 in the village hall, Aspley Guise. The meetings were announced in a further letter to the Chief Executive of Bedfordshire dated 14 July 1987 and again copied to all interested parties. The meeting was duly held and a copy of Mr Jackson's report is attached to this report as Annex A.

Our interim decision

19. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner's report of the local meeting supported our belief that the current boundary was unsatisfactory but it appeared unlikely that any minor change would lead to a significant improvement. The evidence indicated that the three parishes "make up a single community" and that the delivery of some local government services was complicated by the boundary. We agreed with Mr Jackson that if they were to be united, then in order to preserve the education arrangements, the combined area should be placed in the district of Mid Bedfordshire and the county of Bedfordshire. We felt obliged, however, to take account of the response to the questionnaire issued by Woburn Sands Town Council (referred to on page 28 of Mr Jackson's report, evidence of Dr A Bassindale, Chairman of the Council) which showed that although there was some local support for such a transfer, a majority of residents were against it. We recognised, moreover, that to issue a further draft proposal would lead to yet another period of uncertainty in the area, albeit for a different group of people. The Assistant Commissioner had indicated that in his opinion any difficulties arising from the boundary were adequately dealt with under the arrangements for co-operation made by the local authorities concerned. After a careful assessment of the evidence presented to him the Assistant Commissioner had recommended that there should be no change and, given the overwhelming support for the retention of the present boundary, we concluded that there would be insufficient gain to effective and convenient local government to justify our making any further proposals. We reached an interim decision, therefore, that we would not recommend any alteration in this area.

20. Our interim decision was announced in letters to the chief executives of the two counties dated 9 May 1988 and once more copied to all interested parties. The county councils were asked to publicise our interim decision in the same way as they had our earlier draft proposals and to place copies on deposit for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 4 July 1988.

Our final decision

21. We received a total of 67 replies from both county councils, both district councils, the parish council of Aspley Guise, the town council of Woburn Sands, Mr David Madel MP, representatives of two local schools and four local organisations and fifty-four residents. All welcomed our interim decision to propose no change. In all the circumstances, therefore, including the need to bring an end to uncertainty in the area, we now confirm our recommendation that the present boundary between the counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire in the area of Aspley Guise/Aspley Heath/Woburn Sands should remain unaltered apart from the small technical adjustment at Aspley Heath referred to in paragraph 10.

PARISHES OF CRANFIELD/NORTH CRAWLEY

The initial submissions and our draft proposal

22. Buckinghamshire County Council proposed that an area of the parish of North Crawley in the borough of Milton Keynes known as the Astwood Salient should be transferred to the parish of Cranfield in the district of Mid Bedfordshire. The change would have the effect of removing a kink in the boundary and would involve no electors. It was supported by Milton Keynes Borough Council and both parish councils. The proposal was opposed by Bedfordshire County Council which stated that the boundary had existed in its present form since 1127 and it could see no reason why the historic interest should be destroyed on purely technical grounds. Mid Bedfordshire District Council could also see no grounds for change.

23. We felt that the clarity of the proposed boundary outweighed the historical arguments advanced by Bedfordshire County Council and we decided to issue a draft proposal based on the Buckinghamshire County Council suggestion. This was announced in our letter of 29 October 1986 referred to in paragraph 11.

The response to our draft proposal and our final proposal

24. Bedfordshire County Council and Mid Bedfordshire District Council withdrew their opposition and no additional objections were received. We therefore confirm our draft proposal as final.

PARISHES OF HULCOTE AND SALFORD/WAVENDON

The initial submission and our draft proposal

25. Buckinghamshire County Council proposed that the county boundary should be tied to the M1 motorway in this area, which would involve the exchange of two pieces of uninhabited land between the parish of Hulcote and Salford in the district of Mid

Bedfordshire and the parish of Wavendon in the borough of Milton Keynes. The county council pointed out that the motorway was a barrier between the two parishes and would form a clear, well defined boundary. The proposal was supported by Bedfordshire County Council and both district councils.

26. We noted that this proposal had the support of all the principal authorities and appeared to be a logical improvement. We therefore issued a draft proposal based on Buckinghamshire County Council's suggestion, modified slightly to take account of a technical point made by the Ordnance Survey. This was also announced in our letter of 29 October 1986.

Our final proposal

27. There was no adverse comment on our draft proposal and we now confirm it as final.

BOROUGH OF NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE/BOROUGH OF MILTON KEYNES

PARISHES OF TURVEY/LAVENDON/COLD BRAYFIELD

The initial submissions and our draft proposal

28. Buckinghamshire County Council proposed that the county boundary should be realigned to follow the centre line of the Great Ouse. This would have the effect of transferring some small, uninhabited parts of the parish of Turvey in the borough of North Bedfordshire to the parishes of Lavendon and Cold Brayfield in the borough of Milton Keynes. The change was supported by Bedfordshire County Council and North Bedfordshire Borough Council. Milton Keynes Borough Council agreed, in principle, but suggested that the boundary should follow the western bank of the river.

29. It appeared to us that the change would be logical in that it would provide a much clearer boundary. Ordnance Survey stated that the centre line of the river would be better for technical reasons and we decided to issue a draft proposal on that basis. This, too, was announced in our letter of 29 October 1986.

The response to our draft proposal and our final proposal

30. There were no objections to our draft proposal and we confirm it as final.

DISTRICTS OF SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE/AYLESBURY VALE

PARISHES OF EATON BRAY/EDLESBOROUGH

Initial submission

31. The parish council of Eaton Bray in the district of South Bedfordshire

proposed that the whole of the parish of Edlesborough, in the district of Aylesbury Vale, which includes Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall, should be transferred into Bedfordshire. The parish council claimed that the residents of the three villages looked to Bedfordshire for shopping, business, employment and recreational facilities; that they attended the church in Eaton Bray; that the major public transport links were with Luton and Dunstable rather than with Aylesbury; and that the area would be better served if it were to come under the control of a single planning authority. It was also pointed out that the villages of Eaton Bray and Edlesborough formed an area of continuous development. The proposal was supported by South Bedfordshire District Council but not by Bedfordshire County Council whose view was that the problems caused by the existing boundary were not sufficient to justify so large a change.

32. The suggestion was strongly opposed by Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Edlesborough Parish Council. These authorities denied that the residents of Edlesborough had substantial community ties with Bedfordshire and claimed that they preferred the services provided and the planning policies followed by Buckinghamshire County Council. In particular it was said that parents preferred the Buckinghamshire education system. We were told that parishioners would attend the church in Edlesborough if it were open more often and fears were expressed that excessive development would follow if the proposed change were ever to take place.

33. Edlesborough Parish Council put forward a counter proposal to tie the county boundary to the River Ouzel which would involve the transfer of a relatively small part of Eaton Bray into Buckinghamshire. It was argued that this would deal with the problem of split development and would provide a clear, recognisable boundary, with the minimum disruption. Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council, while making it clear that their preference was for no change, considered that the River Ouzel line would be preferable to any change in the opposite direction. Eaton Bray Parish Council opposed this proposal on the grounds that it would split the community and that a number of old age pensioners would lose their subsidised bus travel.

34. Sixty private individuals, as well as the Member of Parliament for Edlesborough wrote to oppose the transfer of the parish into Bedfordshire. Their arguments reflected those put forward by the Buckinghamshire local authorities. In addition 720 pro-forma letters of opposition were received. One resident wrote to say that the opposition was greatly exaggerated and that, in fact, Edlesborough's ties were with Dunstable. He argued that the parish could well be transferred into

Bedfordshire but, if so, it should retain its separate parish status. Five residents wrote to oppose the counter-proposal of the River Ouzel line.

Our draft proposal

35. We recognised that the present boundary is unsatisfactory in that it runs through a built-up area in an arbitrary fashion tied to no clear features. Moreover, at several points it cuts through residential and industrial premises. We were by no means persuaded, however, that the three settlements of Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall formed a single community with the village of Eaton Bray or that their ties with Bedfordshire were sufficient to justify the transfer of the entire parish. The River Ouzel, although scarcely a major barrier, marks, we felt, the most perceptible break between the settlements of Eaton Bray and Edlesborough and a boundary tied to it would at least remove the anomalies. We judged that the change could be accomplished without any serious effects on the provision of services.

36. We decided, therefore, to issue a draft proposal based on the suggestion by Edlesborough Parish Council. Our proposal was published in our letter of 29 October 1986 and, as previously stated, comments were requested by 24 December 1986.

The response to our draft proposal

37. Our draft proposal was supported by Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Edlesborough Parish Council and one member of the public. Bedfordshire County Council was strongly opposed, however, claiming that the new boundary would only create fresh anomalies by dividing an area in industrial use which was under one ownership. It added that a new primary school was under construction in Eaton Bray and, if this lost some of its potential pupils as a result of a boundary change, there would be an inefficient use of limited resources. The council claimed that the present boundary was well understood by local inhabitants and those authorities responsible for the provision of services in the area; it could therefore see no need for change. South Bedfordshire District Council stated that, in view of the strong objections which had been lodged to the original proposal that Edlesborough should be transferred into Bedfordshire, it withdrew its support for that suggestion. It added that it now believed that no acceptable alternative boundary could be found and that there should therefore be no change in this area.

38. Eaton Bray Parish Council opposed the proposal. It pointed out that 95 residential properties would be involved as well as two large industrial units

amounting to about 12% of the parish's housing, almost all its industry and 17% of its rateable value. It repeated its earlier statement that many old age pensioners would lose their bus permits for travel to Luton and Dunstable and it supported the county council's claim that the proposed boundary would create fresh anomalies. A resident wrote to say that the River Ouzel would not make a good boundary as its precise course was uncertain and subject to change; that the residents' links were with Luton and Dunstable; that Buckinghamshire's selective education system was unpopular and that South Bedfordshire District Council's planning control was stricter than Aylesbury Vale District Council's. He requested that, if the proposal was not withdrawn, a public enquiry should be held. Three other residents wrote to oppose the proposal and a petition signed by 366 residents of Eaton Bray was received also expressing opposition.

39. During our further consideration, it was brought to our attention that planning permission had been granted for 50 houses on the present industrial site which would be divided by our proposal. These houses, even under our proposals, would still be entirely in Bedfordshire but their access would be through the area transferred to Buckinghamshire. We wrote to the two county councils to seek their further comments on the best location for the boundary in the light of this new factor. They both replied that there should be no major change in the area but merely a tidying up to remove anomalies. Bedfordshire County Council suggested an irregular line following the edges of properties to do this. Buckinghamshire County Council reported that Aylesbury Vale District Council still considered that the River Ouzel would make the best boundary despite the newly approved development.

Our final proposal

40. We have carefully reviewed the boundary again in the light of the response to our draft proposal but we remain of the opinion that a boundary which cuts through so many properties is unsatisfactory. We have concluded that the line proposed by Bedfordshire County Council would not be satisfactory in that it is tied to property lines which could, in the course of time, change and it would not be easy to follow on the ground. As it appears that any change would have little effect on service provision, we believe that the most important requirement is for a recognisable line and that the River Ouzel is the only feature which can provide this. Set against the need for clarity, we do not think that the fact that the access to the new development will be through a different county is in this instance of overriding significance.

41. We have considered the possibility of a local meeting but we have concluded

that the issues have been well aired and that such a meeting would be unlikely to bring out significant new considerations. Our final proposal is therefore that the boundary between the counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire in the area of Eaton Bray and Edlesborough should be tied to the centre line of the River Ouzel (mill stream).

PARISHES OF WHIPSNAD/EDLESBOROUGH

The initial submissions

42. South Bedfordshire District Council suggested that a small part of Whipsnade Zoo, currently in the parish of Edlesborough, should be transferred to the parish of Whipsnade so that the whole zoo park would be in a single local authority area. The proposal was supported by Whipsnade Parish Council but Bedfordshire County Council could see no ground for change. Buckinghamshire County Council made no comment but Aylesbury Vale District Council was opposed. Edlesborough Parish Council stated that the land in question was no longer used for exhibiting animals and there was therefore no need to change the boundary. A resident made an alternative suggestion which would leave his property in Buckinghamshire while transferring the remaining area to Bedfordshire.

Our recommendation

43. In view of the fact that the area was no longer used for display purposes, we could see no gain to effective and convenient local government in making a change and we issued an interim decision to make no proposals. In response, South Bedfordshire District Council repeated its claim that the boundary it had proposed would be more appropriate than the present one and Edlesborough Parish Council maintained its opposition to any change. No fresh arguments were advanced and we now confirm our recommendation that the boundary should remain unaltered at this point.

BEDFORDSHIRE/CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BOROUGH OF NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE/DISTRICT OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE

PARISHES OF ROXTON/LITTLE BARFORD/STAPLOE/ST NEOTS/EYNESBURY HARDWICK

The initial submissions

44. Huntingdonshire District Council proposed the transfer of parts of the parishes of Roxton and Little Barford in the borough of North Bedfordshire into the parish of St Neots. It claimed that the area was essential to the industrial development taking place to the south of St Neots and that most people working in the area lived in the town. The A45 by-pass, then under construction, would, it was suggested, make a good boundary. Cambridgeshire County Council supported the

proposal and said that the change would make the provision of emergency and public services easier. Huntingdon Health Authority said that road accidents in the Little Barford area could be better dealt with by the Cambridgeshire Ambulance Service than by Bedfordshire.

45. St Neots Town Council proposed that the by-pass should be used as the county boundary from its junction with the A1 in the west to the main railway line in the east. This proposal would mean not only the incorporation into Cambridgeshire of the areas referred to in the previous paragraph but also the transfer from Cambridgeshire to Bedfordshire of that part of the site of the disused power station at Little Barford currently in the parish of Eynesbury Hardwick. The Town Council argued that the new road would form a definite barrier and hence make a clear boundary between the two counties.

46. Bedfordshire County Council was opposed to any change. It stated that the land was of high agricultural value but it also had mineral working potential; no case for change had been made out in the interests of effective and convenient local government. North Bedfordshire Borough Council opposed Huntingdonshire District Council's suggestion but argued that the whole power station site should be included in the borough to help create employment in eastern Bedfordshire. Roxton Parish Council was also opposed to any change and claimed that other areas should be developed first.

Our draft proposal

47. We concluded that the area north of the A45 had an affinity with the settlement of Eaton Socon, in the parish of St Neots, with which it formed a continuous development. The arguments of the Bedfordshire authorities appeared to be concerned largely with planning matters on which it would be inappropriate for us to comment in detail although we did not believe that changing the boundary should affect employment prospects. Similarly it appeared to us that the area south of the road containing the site of the former power station should be united in the parish of Little Barford where the greater part already lay. We decided therefore to issue a draft proposal to tie the boundary to the A45, as suggested by St Neots Town Council. This was published in our letter of 29 October 1986 with our other draft proposals.

The response to our draft proposal

48. Bedfordshire County Council maintained their opposition to any change and again mentioned the mineral potential, by way of sand and gravel extraction. The Council believed that the existing boundaries were satisfactory but argued that, if

the Commission believed that highways made good boundaries, the A1 to the west of St Neots should be so used; this would mean transferring a small area west of the road into the parish of Staploe in Bedfordshire. North Bedfordshire District Council and St Neots Town Council supported our proposal.

49. Huntingdon District Council opposed the proposal and argued that its original suggestion should be adopted without alteration. The council did not agree that major roads made good boundaries and, in particular, argued that Bedfordshire County Council had not even tried to justify its bid for the area west of the A1 by reference to effective and convenient local government. The proposal was also opposed by Roxton Parish Council and by a business concern with premises in the area proposed for transfer to Bedfordshire, which argued that it could lose its Cambridgeshire franchise if it were outside the county.

Our final proposal

50. We could not accept the relevance of Bedfordshire County Council's reference to possible mineral extraction and we considered that the other opponents of our proposal had not effectively countered our contention that the two areas in question had strong ties with the parishes of St Neots and Little Barford respectively. We concluded, however, that the County Council's argument about the A1 had some force. The road does indeed appear to form a barrier at least as formidable as the A45 to the south of St Neots and would, we now accepted, make a good clear boundary. As the number of residents was very small and all local authorities had been consulted we did not consider that a further draft proposal was required. Our final proposal is, therefore, that the county boundary should follow the A45 from close to the village of Hail Weston to the northern A45/A1 interchange; thence south along the A1 to the southern A45/A1 interchange, thence east along the A45 to the main railway; finally along the railway until it meets the line of the present boundary.

ELECTORAL CONSEQUENCES

51. The only area with a significant number of electors is that part of the parish of Eaton Bray which we have recommended for transfer to Buckinghamshire with a total of about 200. Our recommendations for the electoral consequences of our proposals are set out in full in Annex B attached to this report.

PUBLICATION

52. A separate letter is being sent to the county councils of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire asking them to deposit copies of this report at

their main offices for inspection for six months. They are also asked to put notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. The text of the notice will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in this matter and that it now falls to you to make an Order implementing the proposals, if you think fit, though not earlier than six weeks from the date they are submitted to you. Copies of this report, to which are attached maps illustrating the proposed changes, are also being sent to all those who received our draft proposals and interim decisions letters, and to those who made written representations.

LS

G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

G E CHERRY

K F J ENNALS

G R PRENTICE

HELEN SARKANY

BRIAN SCHOLES

S T GARRISH
Secretary

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

COUNTY BOUNDARY REVIEW

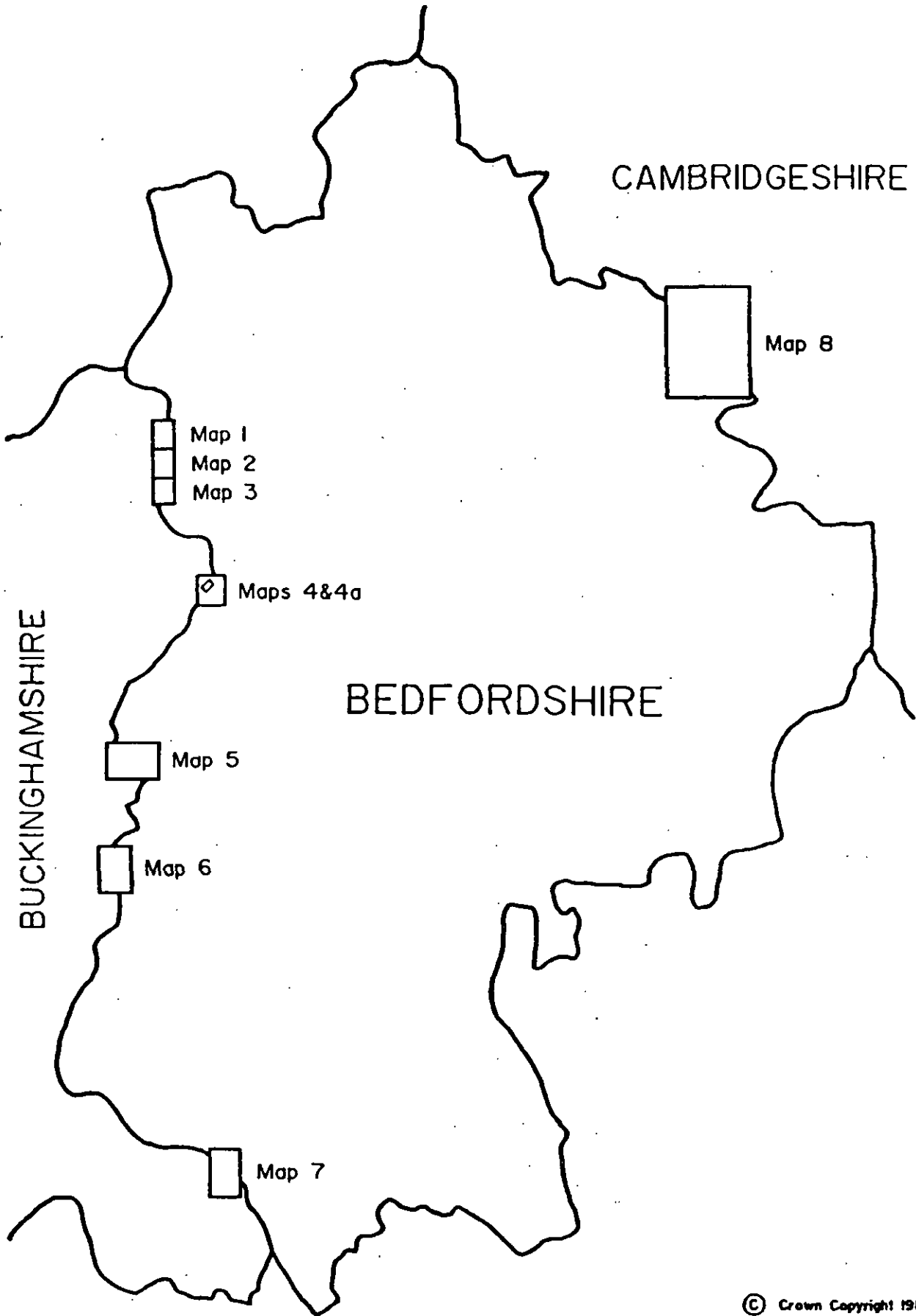
BEDFORDSHIRE

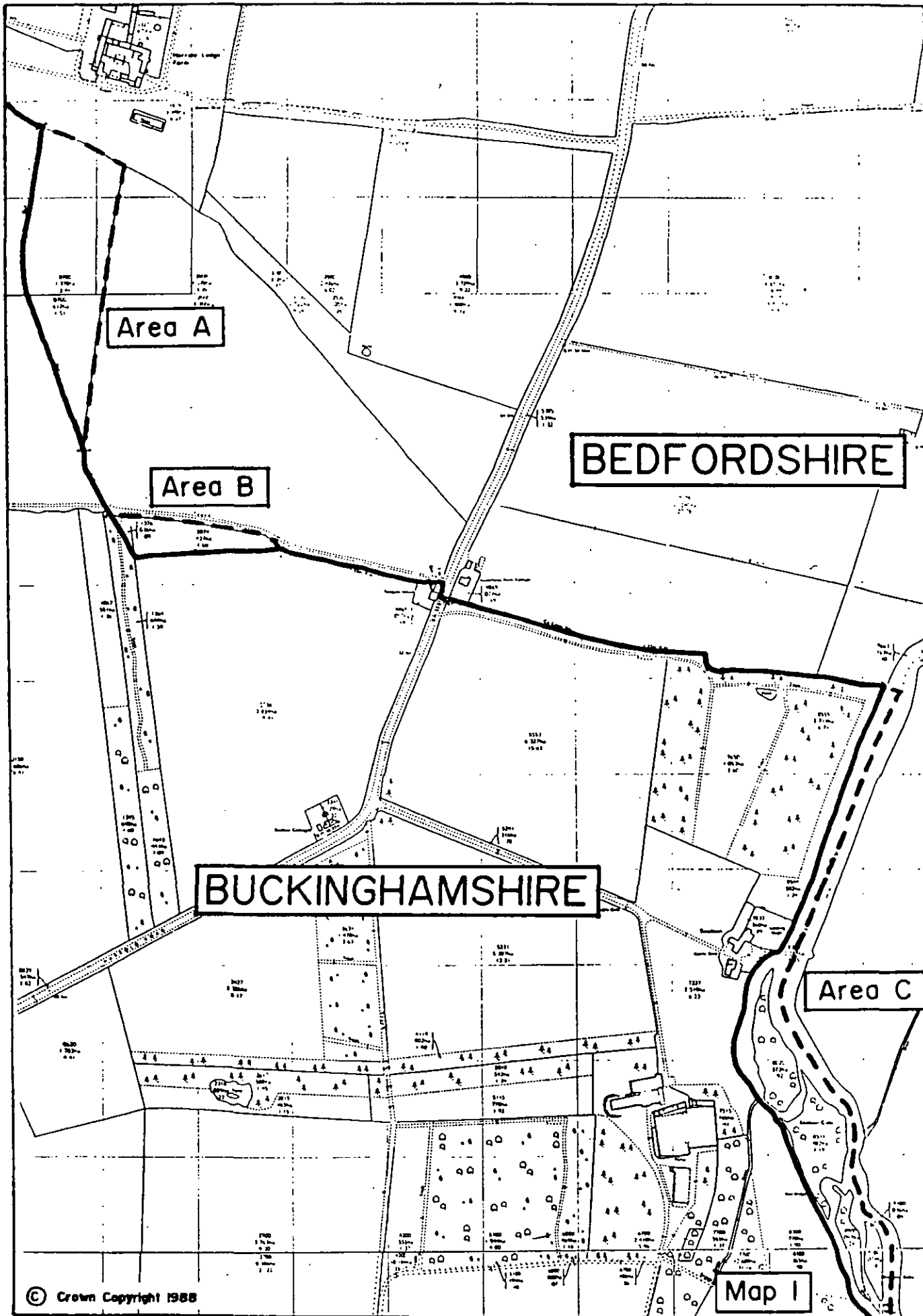
AFFECTING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE

FINAL PROPOSALS

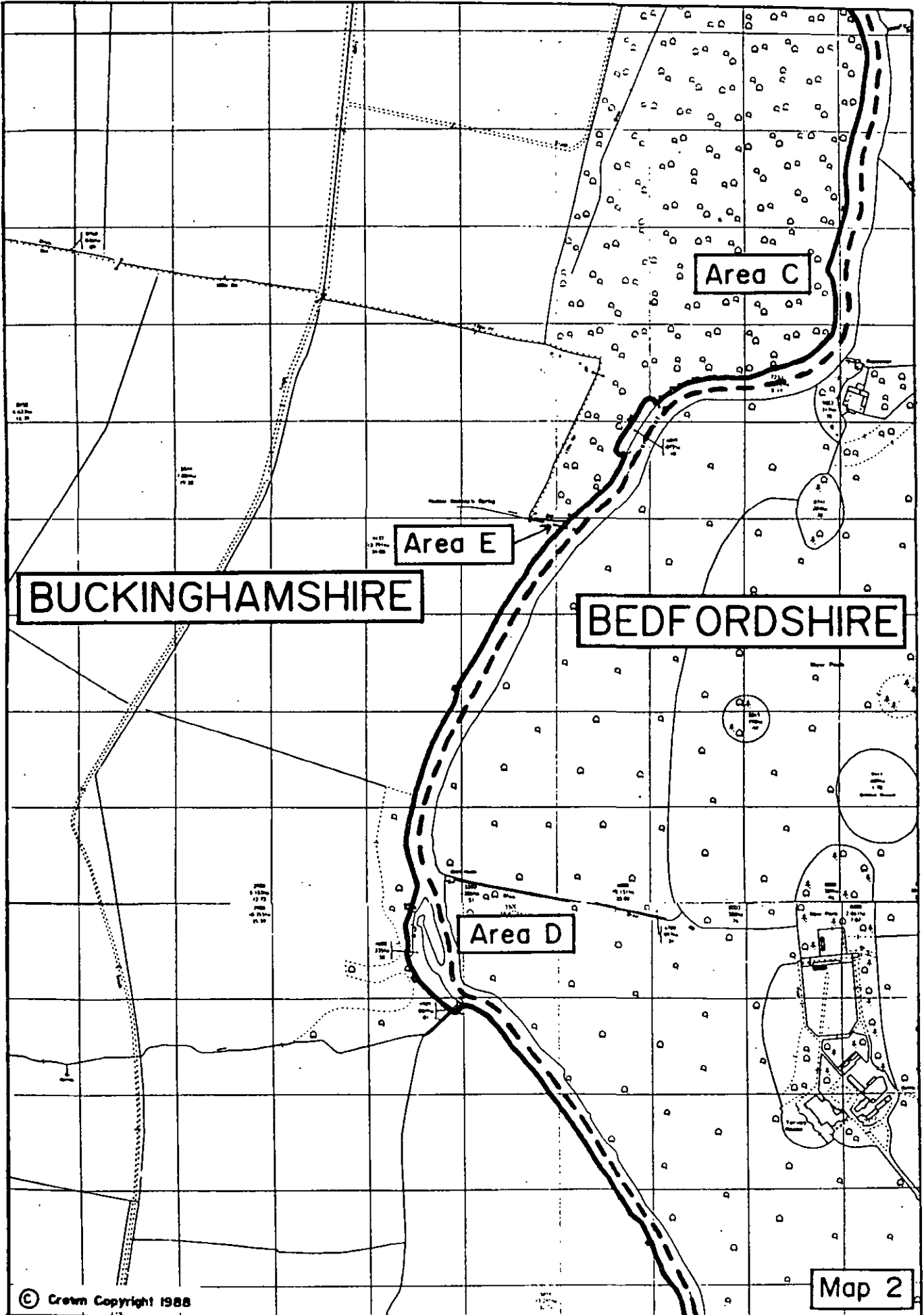
Existing County Boundary	—————
Proposed County Boundary	- - - - -
Proposed CP Boundary	- - - - -
Existing CP Boundary

LOCATION DIAGRAM





Continued on Map 2



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

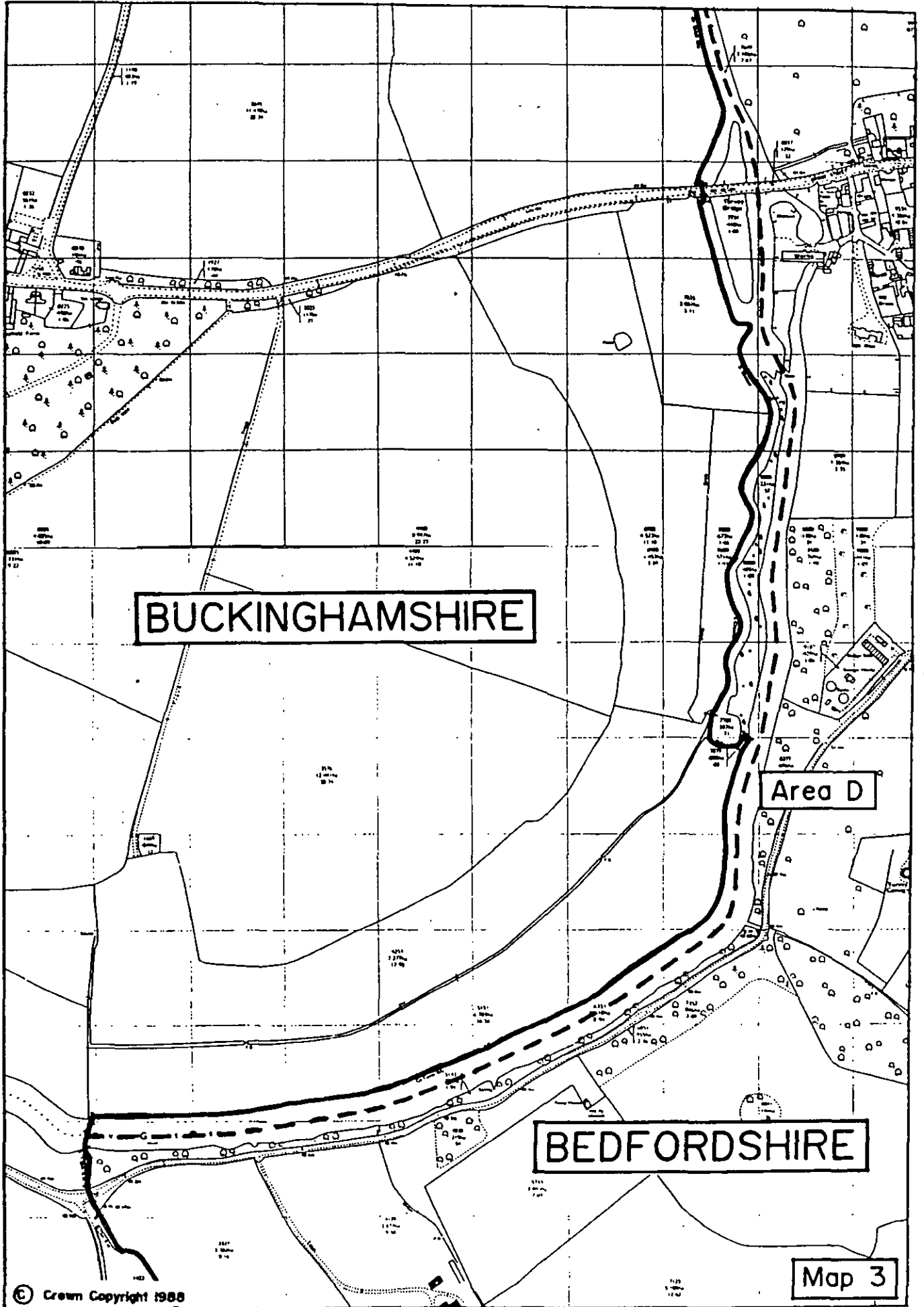
BEDFORDSHIRE

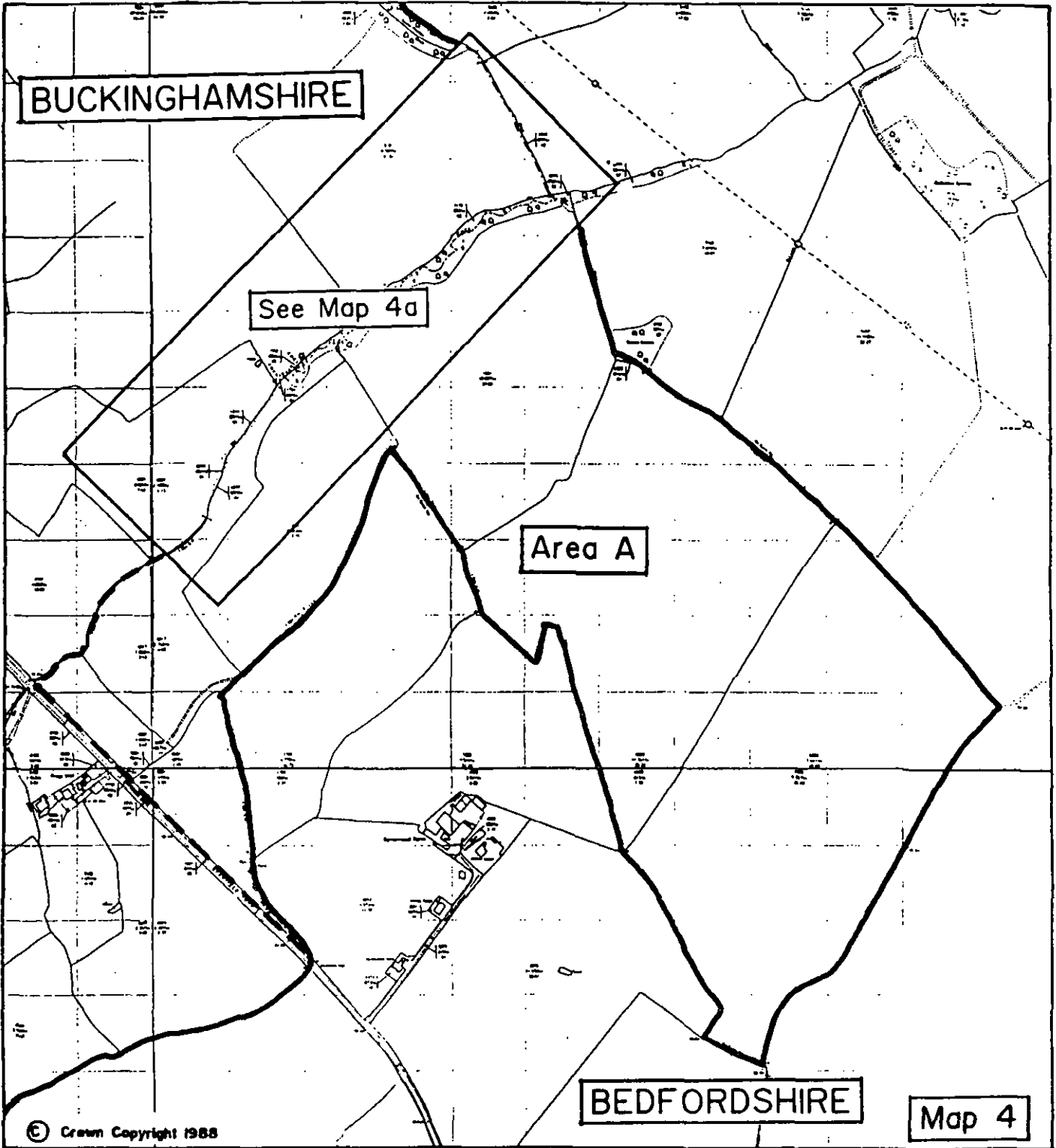
Area C

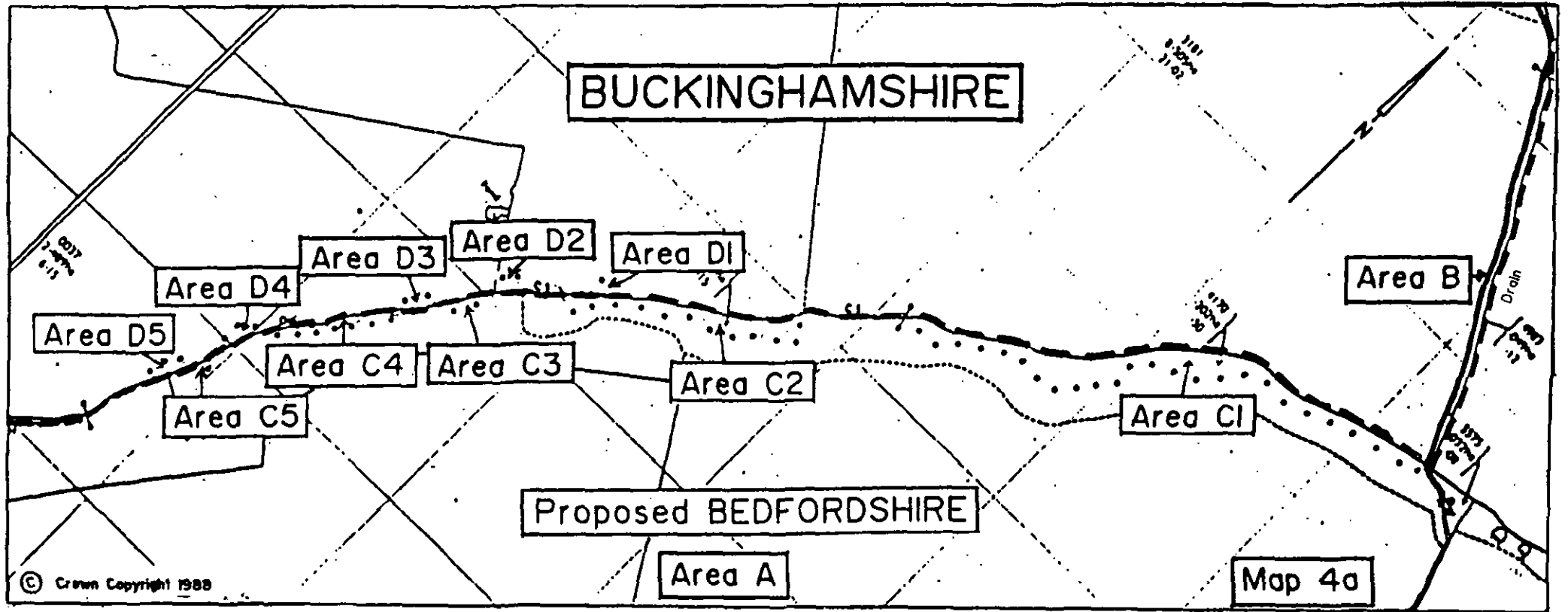
Area E

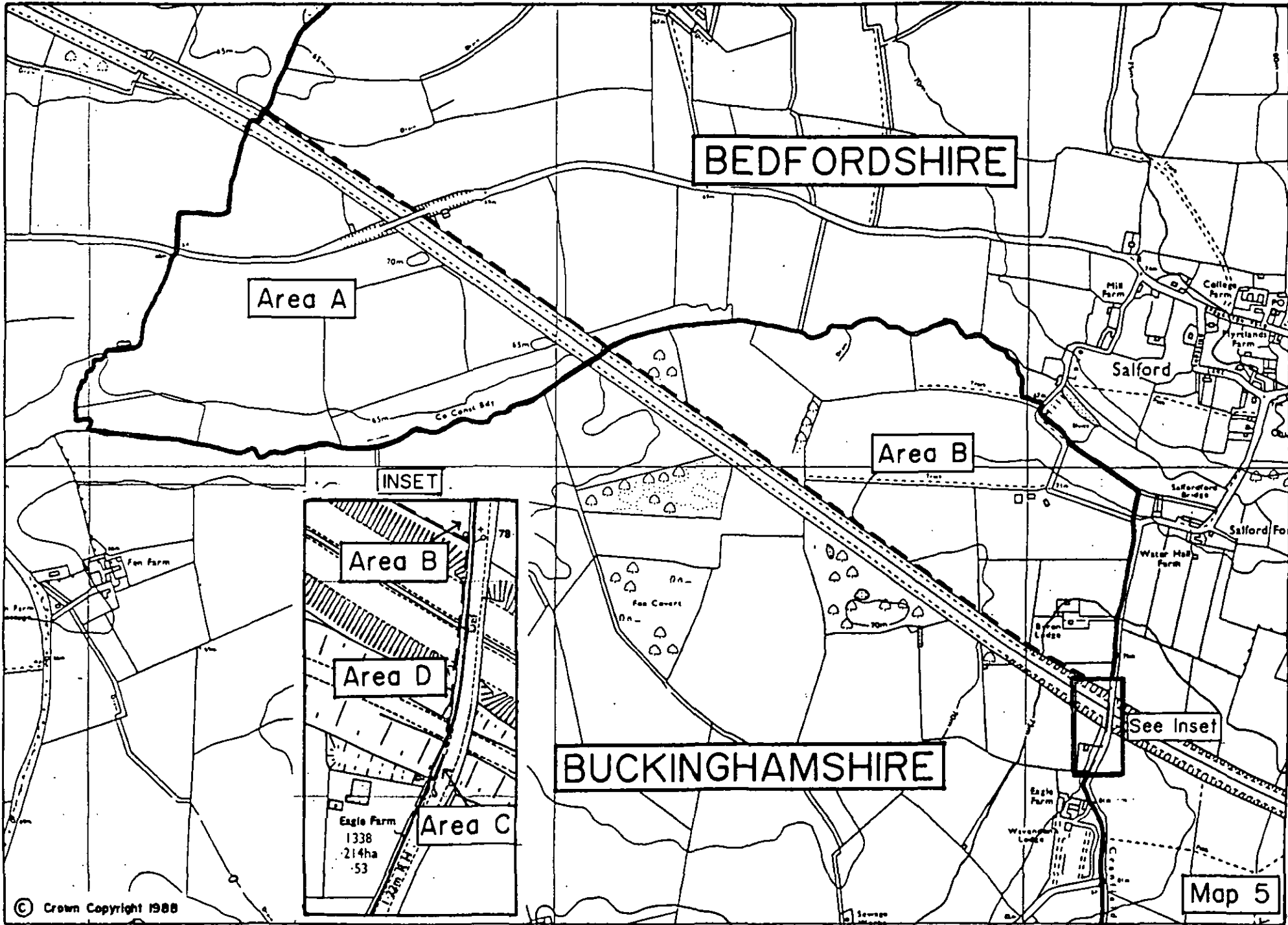
Area D

Map 2









BEDFORDSHIRE

Area A

Area B

INSET

Area B

Area D

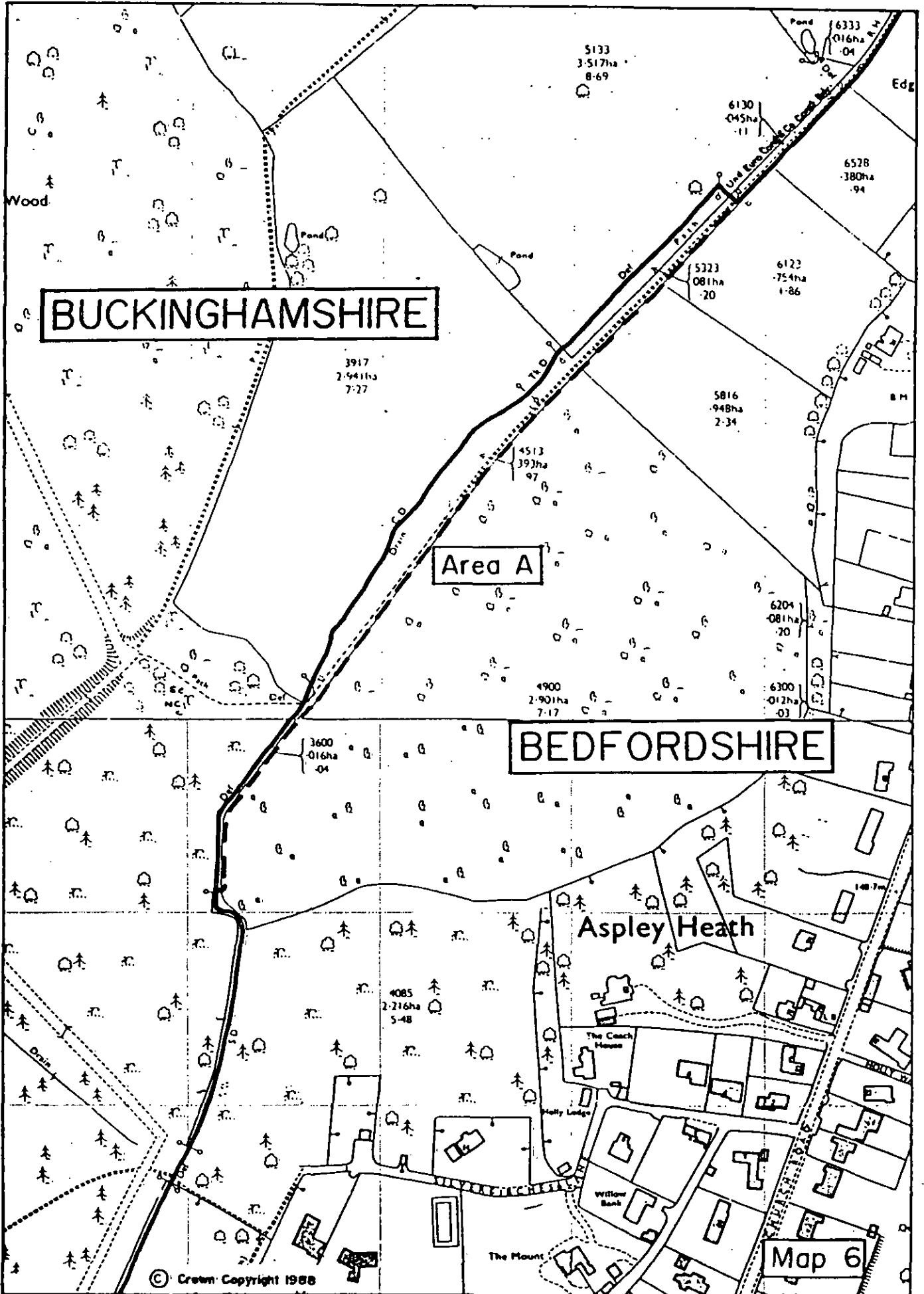
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

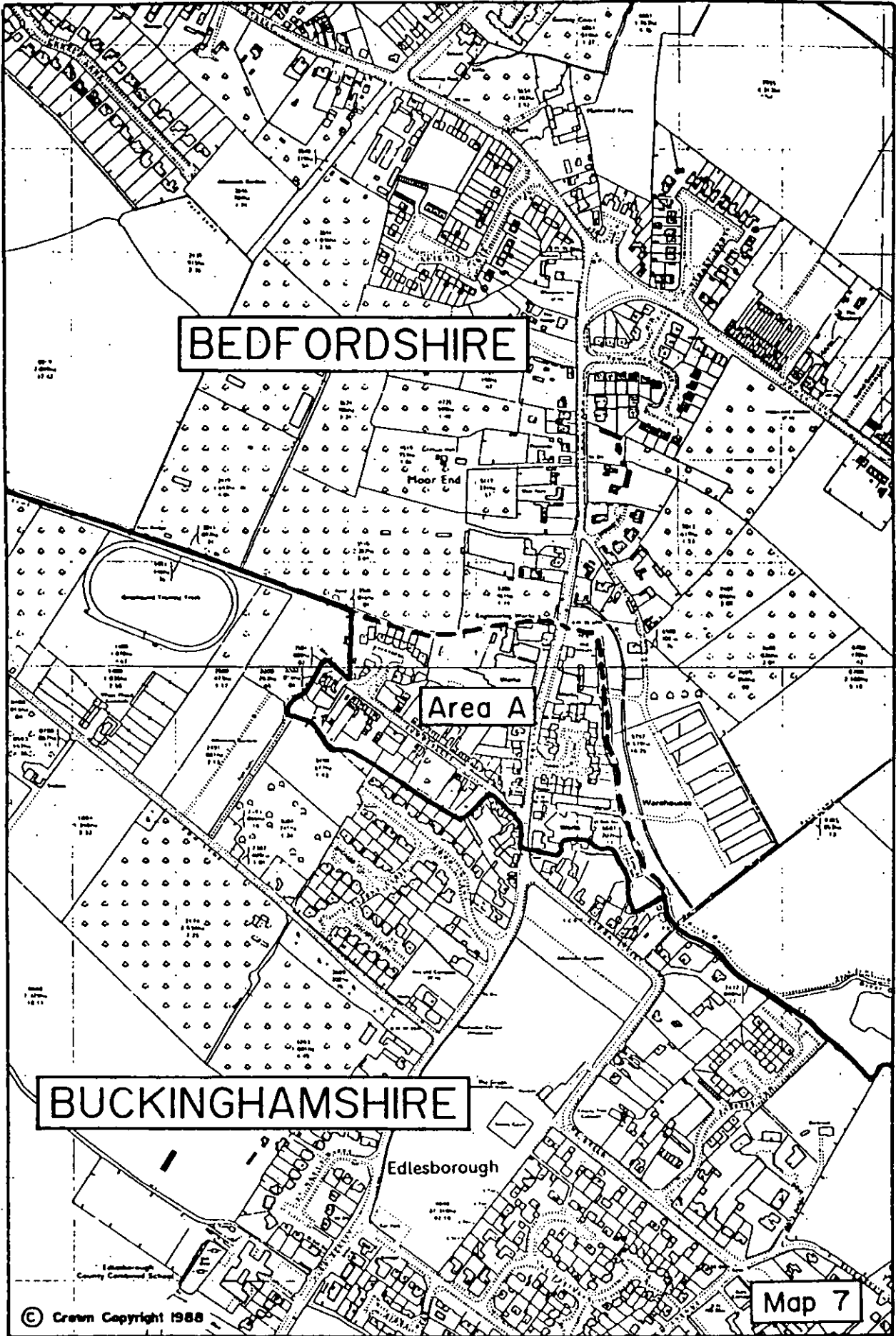
Area C

See Inset

Eagle Farm
1338
214ha
53

Map 5





BEDFORDSHIRE

Area A

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Edlesborough

Map 7



Area C

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Area A

Area B

BEDFORDSHIRE

Map 8

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CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO	MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO
1	A B	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Harrold CP Harrold Ward Harrold ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Lavendon CP Lavendon Ward Petsoe Manor ED	4a	C1 to C5	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Astwood CP Sherington Ward Petsoe Manor ED	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Cranfield CP Cranfield Ward Cranfield and Marston ED
1 2	C	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Turvey CP Kempston Rural Ward Wootton ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Lavendon CP Lavendon Ward Petsoe Manor ED		DI to D5	North Crawley CP	Astwood CP
2 3	D	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Turvey CP Kempston Rural Ward Wootton ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Cold Brayfield CP Lavendon Ward Petsoe Manor ED	5	A	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Hulcote and Salford CP Cranfield Ward Cranfield and Marston ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Wavendon CP Danesborough Ward Milton Keynes East ED
2	E	Cold Brayfield CP	Lavendon CP		B	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Wavendon CP Danesborough Ward Milton Keynes East ED	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Hulcote and Salford CP Cranfield Ward Cranfield and Marston ED
4	A	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes North Crawley CP Sherington Ward Petsoe Manor ED	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Cranfield CP Cranfield Ward Cranfield and Marston ED		C	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Aspley Guise CP Aspley Ward Aspley Guise ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Wavendon CP Danesborough Ward Milton Keynes East ED
4a	A	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes North Crawley CP Sherington Ward Petsoe Manor ED	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Cranfield CP Cranfield Ward Cranfield and Marston ED		D	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Wavendon CP Danesborough Ward Milton Keynes East ED	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Aspley Guise CP Aspley Ward Aspley Guise ED
	B	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Stagsden CP Kempston Rural Ward Wootton ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Astwood CP Sherington Ward Petsoe Manor ED				

CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES

MAP NO.	AREA REF.	FROM	TO
6	A	Bedfordshire Mid Bedfordshire District Aspley Heath CP Aspley Ward Aspley Guise ED	Buckinghamshire Borough of Milton Keynes Wavendon CP Danesborough Ward Milton Keynes East ED
7	A	Bedfordshire South Bedfordshire District Eaton Bray CP Eaton Bray Ward Eaton Bray ED	Buckinghamshire Aylesbury Vale District Edlesborough CP Edlesborough Ward Ivinghoe ED
8	A	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Roxton CP Roxton Ward North East Bedfordshire ED	Cambridgeshire Huntingdonshire District St Neots CP Eaton Socon Ward Eaton ED
	B	Cambridgeshire Huntingdonshire District Eynesbury Hardwicke CP Gransden Ward Buckden ED	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Little Barford CP Roxton Ward North East Bedfordshire ED
	C	Cambridgeshire Huntingdonshire District St Neots CP Eaton Socon Ward Eaton ED	Bedfordshire Borough of North Bedfordshire Staploe CP Roxton Ward North East Bedfordshire ED