

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Norwich

February 2002

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CONTENTS

	page
WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	<i>23</i>
APPENDIX	
Code of Practice on Written Consultation	<i>25</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Norwich is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission has assumed the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and taken over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. Its final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Norwich's electoral arrangements on 31 July 2001.

- **This report summarises the submissions we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Norwich:

- **in two of the 16 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in six wards and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main proposals for Norwich's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 67–68) are that:

- **Norwich City Council should have 39 councillors, nine fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 13 wards, instead of 16 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each city councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In all of the proposed 13 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 8 per cent from the city average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all 13 wards expected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the average for the city in 2006.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 February 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the**

Electoral Commission which, with effect from 1 April 2002, will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.

- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 22 April 2002:

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Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Bowthorpe	3	part of Bowthorpe ward
2	Catton Grove	3	Catton Grove ward; part of Coslany ward; part of Mile Cross ward; part of Mousehold ward
3	Central	3	part of Heigham ward; part of Lakenham ward; part of Mancroft ward
4	Crome	3	Crome ward; part of Thorpe Hamlet ward
5	Eaton	3	Eaton ward; part of St Stephen ward
6	Lakenham	3	part of Lakenham ward; part of Town Close ward
7	Mile Cross	3	part of Coslany ward; part of Mile Cross ward
8	Nelson	3	part of Henderson ward; Nelson ward
9	Sewell	3	part of Coslany ward; part of Mousehold ward
10	Thorpe Hamlet	3	part of Lakenham ward; part of Mancroft ward; part of Mousehold ward; part of Thorpe Hamlet ward
11	Town Close	3	part of Lakenham ward; part of St Stephen ward; part of Town Close ward
12	University	3	part of Bowthorpe ward; University ward
13	Wensum	3	part of Heigham ward; part of Henderson ward

Notes: 1 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

2 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft Recommendations for Norwich

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bowthorpe	3	6,949	2,316	-5	7,696	2,565	4
2	Catton Grove	3	7,230	2,410	-1	7,473	2,491	1
3	Central	3	7,113	2,371	-3	7,538	2,513	2
4	Crome	3	7,366	2,455	0	7,228	2,409	-2
5	Eaton	3	7,319	2,440	0	6,999	2,333	-5
6	Lakenham	3	7,916	2,639	8	7,676	2,559	4
7	Mile Cross	3	7,235	2,412	-1	7,195	2,398	-3
8	Nelson	3	7,518	2,506	3	7,282	2,427	-1
9	Sewell	3	7,218	2,406	-2	6,991	2,330	-5
10	Thorpe Hamlet	3	6,929	2,310	-5	7,133	2,378	-3
11	Town Close	3	7,675	2,558	5	7,852	2,617	6
12	University	3	7,139	2,380	-3	7,409	2,470	0
13	Wensum	3	7,680	2,560	5	7,544	2,515	2
	Totals	39	95,287	-	-	96,016	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,443	-	-	2,462	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Norwich City Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the city of Norwich, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven districts in Norfolk as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Norwich. Norwich's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in April 1977 (Report no. 204). Electoral arrangements of Norfolk County Council were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 472). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been created locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local people are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configurations are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the city as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not

accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the city and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the city council would be elected, in year two, half of the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when we wrote to Norwich City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the city, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Norwich City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 22 October 2001.

12 At Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 26 February 2002 and will end on 22 April 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will then decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 The city of Norwich lies at the heart of rural East Anglia, of which it is the regional capital. It has a population of 124,000 and covers an area of 3,907 hectares. It has a high population density of 3,205 persons per square kilometre, compared with 146 persons per square kilometre in Norfolk as a whole. Norwich has a thriving tourist industry with many historic buildings and landmarks, including Norwich castle and cathedral. The city has no parishes.

16 The electorate of the city is 95,287 (February 2001). The Council presently has 48 members who are elected from 16 three-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

17 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated, in percentage terms, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the city average. In the text which follows, this figure may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,985 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,000 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in two of the 16 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average and one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Bowthorpe ward where each councillor represents 44 per cent more electors than the city average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Norwich

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bowthorpe	3	8,573	2,858	44	9,320	3,107	55
2 Catton Grove	3	5,472	1,824	-8	5,792	1,931	-3
3 Coslany	3	5,942	1,981	0	5,757	1,919	-4
4 Crome	3	5,332	1,777	-10	5,128	1,709	-15
5 Eaton	3	6,404	2,135	8	6,084	2,028	1
6 Heigham	3	5,616	1,872	-6	5,369	1,790	-11
7 Henderson	3	5,630	1,877	-5	5,666	1,889	-6
8 Lakenham	3	5,583	1,861	-6	5,465	1,822	-9
9 Mancroft	3	6,930	2,310	16	7,561	2,520	26
10 Mile Cross	3	5,423	1,808	-9	5,444	1,815	-9
11 Mousehold	3	6,086	2,029	2	5,861	1,954	-2
12 Nelson	3	5,605	1,868	-6	5,369	1,790	-11
13 St Stephen	3	5,610	1,870	-6	5,937	1,979	-1
14 Thorpe Hamlet	3	6,122	2,041	3	6,306	2,102	5
15 Town Close	3	5,444	1,815	-9	5,172	1,724	-14
16 University	3	5,515	1,838	-7	5,785	1,928	-4
Totals	48	95,287	-	-	96,016	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,985	-	-	2,000	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Norwich City Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Crome ward were relatively over-represented by 10 per cent, while electors in Bowthorpe ward were relatively under-represented by 44 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

19 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Norwich City Council.

20 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received four submissions during Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on Norwich City Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council.

Norwich City Council

21 The City Council proposed a council of 39 members, nine fewer than at present, serving 13 wards, compared with the existing 16. The City Council proposed modifying the boundaries of all the existing wards, though it sought to preserve the Community Power Forum boundaries where possible. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more 10 per cent in all wards, both initially and by 2006.

The Liberal Democrat Group on Norwich City Council

22 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council (the 'Liberal Democrats') proposed a council of 45 members, three fewer than at present, serving 15 three-member wards. The Liberal Democrats considered that the Council's proposed reduction in the number of councillors from 48 to 39 would leave the Council with too few members to function effectively. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent in all wards, both initially and by 2006.

Norwich North Liberal Democrats – North City Branch

23 The Norwich North Liberal Democrats - North City Branch (the 'Norwich North Liberal Democrats'), representing Liberal Democrats in the five wards of Catton Grove, Coslany, Crome, Mile Cross and Mousehold, gave qualified support to the City Council's proposals. They supported the City Council's proposed reduction in council size and the majority of its proposed ward boundaries, but expressed opposition to the proposed expansion of the existing Catton Grove ward.

Other Submissions

24 We received one further submission. The Eaton Rise Residents' Association expressed the view that to have a similar number of electors in all wards was "an impractical ideal". It expressed support for the retention of the existing arrangements for Eaton ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

25 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Norwich and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

26 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Norwich is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or city”.

27 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and maintaining local ties.

28 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

30 Since 1975 there has been a 3.7 per cent increase in the electorate of Norwich. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 0.7 per cent from 95,287 to 96,016 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Bowthorpe, although a significant amount is also expected on brownfield sites in the city. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the City Council’s figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

32 Norwich City Council presently has 48 members. In its submission the City Council proposed a reduction in size, to 39 members. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a reduction in council size, to 45 members. Both of these proposed reductions would provide better levels of electoral representation across the city than the current arrangements. As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at evidence and persuasive arguments as to why this might not be the case. In this instance, before reaching conclusions on what might be the most appropriate council size, we were of the opinion that we required further information and evidence. The Liberal Democrats, responding to the City Council's proposals, provided a detailed justification for their small decrease rather than the larger one proposed by the City Council. We therefore invited the Council to provide further evidence in support of its proposed reduction in council size, and invited comments from the Conservative member and the Labour Group on the council.

33 In its original submission the City Council stated that its proposed number of council members reflected the changed emphasis on the role and responsibilities of councillors following the adoption of a leader and cabinet style of government, with a ten-member executive. In response to our request for further evidence, the City Council stated that its proposals were an attempt to establish a ratio of 1:3 between the executive and non-executive members on the council. In its opinion, the number of non-executive committee places would be just over 100. This number included the 76 committee places under the current arrangements, some of which would meet no more than four times a year, and further panels linked to scrutiny and overview functions. The City Council did not include working parties in this calculation because they would be of limited duration. A 39-member council would mean that, on average, each member would sit on three committees. The Council pointed out that this would be less than under the previous committee structure and in proportion to the workload of the executive members. The Council was of the opinion that the increased councillor:elector ratio, which would result from their proposals, would not be problematic due to the "tight urban nature" of the city and its two-tier local government structure.

34 In their original submission the Liberal Democrats stated that, although at present a 39-member council would seem to be workable, the new arrangements are not working well, with the scrutiny function being poor and the overview function "non-existent". They claimed that the large reduction in council size proposed by the City Council would reduce the opportunities for new people to serve on the council. The Liberal Democrats calculated that the number of non-executive places on the council would comprise 52 primary places, 27 secondary places, 30 working party places and another 30 secondary places for policy/overview panels. Allowing for one place per primary committee and 0.5 per secondary committee, this would mean approximately 100 committee places, which they considered would place too great a burden on councillors under the Council's scheme. The Liberal Democrats considered that a reasonable workload would be 2-2.5 places per councillor. They were also of the opinion that the "constituency caseload workload" would require more than 39 councillors. Their preferred option, allowing for some flexibility, was for a range of 45-48 members. The Liberal Democrats stated that they had looked at 13-, 14-, 15- and 16-ward models, but came to the conclusion that a 15-ward, 45-member model would be best in terms of boundaries and in reflecting community identity.

35 In response to our invitation to comment on council size, the Labour Group on the Council stated that it was in favour of a 39-member council because, in its opinion, it would provide good local government, was straightforward to understand and administer and provided for good community identity and electoral equality. It contended that a 39-member council size was “more than adequate” for scrutiny and monitoring functions.

36 The Norwich North Liberal Democrats supported the City Council’s proposed reduction in council size. They stated that, given the changes to the internal political management in local government and the creation of cabinet government, the proposed reduction made sense. They were “wholly unconvinced” that a larger number of councillors would be needed for the sake of proper democratic representation, and stated that “what matters to the general public is the quality not the quantity of representation”.

37 Having considered the evidence put forward in support of the respective council sizes, we note that the main differences between the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group concern whether or not the workload on the councillors would be too great under a 39-member scheme. The City Council does not think so, whereas the Liberal Democrats do. However, we note that both the Labour Group on the City Council and the Norwich North Liberal Democrats supported the City Council’s proposals with regard to council size. We further note that the Council received a reasonable level of support when it consulted on its proposals. In the light of this, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 39 members.

Electoral Arrangements

38 We have carefully considered the two city-wide schemes which were received from the City Council and the Liberal Democrats. We note that both would achieve an improved level of electoral equality, while proposing a reduction in the number of councillors. However, it is our opinion that the City Council’s proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats. In the light of the argumentation provided for the proposed reductions in council size, as described above, we are persuaded that a 39-member council could work efficiently and in the interests of the electorate. As a consequence, we are not able to give further consideration to the proposals from the Liberal Democrats as these were based on a different council size. However, we would welcome comments from them and other interested parties on our draft recommendations at Stage Three.

39 Accordingly, in view of the support given to large elements of the City Council’s proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have based our recommendations on the City Council’s scheme. However, bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are proposing minor modifications to two of the Council’s proposed wards, in addition to a number of modifications where the proposed boundaries have been modified to adhere to ground detail. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Catton Grove, Coslany and Mousehold wards;
- (b) Crome, Mancroft and Thorpe Hamlet wards;
- (c) Heigham, Henderson, Mile Cross and Nelson wards;

- (d) Lakenham, St Stephen and Town Close wards;
- (e) Bowthorpe, Eaton and University wards.

40 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Catton Grove, Coslany and Mousehold wards

41 These three wards are situated in the north-east of the city. The number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent below the city average in Catton Grove ward (3 per cent below in 2006), equal to the average in Coslany ward (4 per cent below in 2006) and 2 per cent above in Mousehold ward (2 per cent below in 2006).

42 At Stage One the City Council proposed extending Catton Grove ward by transferring to it parts of the existing Coslany and Mousehold wards which adjoin the city boundary. The relevant part of Coslany ward would be that north of Wall Road, and the relevant part of Mousehold ward would be that to the north of Gilman Road, including the western part of Mousehold Heath. The eastern boundary of the ward would be Gurney Road. The Council also proposed creating a new Sewell ward, which would comprise the eastern part of the existing Coslany ward and the central part of the existing Mousehold ward. The northern boundary would be the southern boundary of Catton Grove ward, while the western boundary would run along the rear of properties on the western side of Angel Road to Waterloo Road and Magpie Road in the south. The southern boundary would follow Magpie Road and Bull Close Road, while the eastern boundary would follow Silver Road to Mousehold Avenue before cutting through allotments to join Gurney Road on Mousehold Heath. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Catton Grove ward (1 per cent above in 2006) and 2 per cent below in Sewell ward (5 per cent below in 2006).

43 The Norwich North Liberal Democrats supported the retention of the division of Mousehold Heath into two wards, but were opposed to the eastward extension of Catton Grove ward. They stated that the area around Mousehold Heath "shares much more in terms of community links with the rest of the proposed Sewell ward to the south than with the bulk of the Catton Grove ward well to the west". They proposed that the north-western part of Coslany ward should become part of Catton Grove ward, with the north-eastern part of Coslany ward and northern part of Mousehold ward being part of the proposed Sewell ward.

44 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We have looked at the possibility of transferring the north-western part of the existing Coslany ward to Catton Grove ward, and transferring the northern part of Mousehold ward to the proposed Sewell ward. However, we concluded that to do so, and achieve an acceptable level of electoral equality, would not be in the best interests of community identity. Therefore we propose adopting the City Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, we have modified the south-eastern boundary of Sewell ward where it crosses the allotments and the south-western boundary of Catton Grove ward where it crosses Pointers Field in order to tie them to firm ground detail.

45 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Catton Grove ward (1 per cent above in 2006) and 2 per cent

below in Sewell ward (5 per cent below in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Crome, Mancroft and Thorpe Hamlet wards

46 Crome and Thorpe Hamlet wards are situated in the east of the city, whereas the relatively under-represented Mancroft ward includes the city centre. The number of electors per councillor is 10 per cent below the city average in Crome ward (15 per cent below in 2006), 16 per cent above in Mancroft ward (26 per cent above in 2006) and 3 per cent above in Thorpe Hamlet ward (5 per cent above in 2006).

47 At Stage One the City Council proposed extending the existing Crome ward by transferring to it the northern part of the existing Thorpe Hamlet ward. The northern and eastern boundaries would be the city boundary. The southern boundary would cut through the centre of Lion Wood and other open space before following Belsize Road and Britannia Road to join Gurney Road, which would comprise the western boundary. The Council also proposed extending the remainder of the existing Thorpe Hamlet ward to include the southern part of Mousehold ward, the eastern part of Mancroft ward and the northern part of the existing Lakenham ward. The eastern boundary would be the city boundary. The northern boundary would be the same as the southern boundary of the proposed Crome ward as far as Gurney Road, and then cut through allotments to Silver Road. The western boundary would follow Silver Road and then utilise the river before taking a line east of Norwich Castle and along Rouen Road, King Street, Bracondale and Martineau Lane to join the city boundary at Trowse Millgate.

48 The City Council further proposed a new Central ward comprising the eastern part of Heigham ward and the western part of Mancroft ward. The northern boundary would follow the river and then run along Bakers Road, Magpie Road and Bull Close Road. The eastern boundary would be the same as the western boundary of Thorpe Hamlet ward as far as Carrow Hill. The southern and western boundaries would follow the Inner Ring Road as far as Earham Road, and then run along Heigham Road, Dereham Road, Nelson Street and Northumberland Street to the river. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the city average in Central ward (2 per cent above in 2006), equal to the average in Crome ward (2 per cent below in 2006) and 5 per cent below in Thorpe Hamlet ward (3 per cent below in 2006).

49 The Norwich North Liberal Democrats supported the City Council's proposals to transfer the Pilling Park area from Thorpe Hamlet ward to Crome ward as "the two areas have a similar social demographic make-up, sharing the same local shopping centre in the Plumstead Road". They also supported the inclusion in Thorpe Hamlet ward of the eastern half of the city centre and the Heathgate area.

50 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the City Council's proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. We have therefore decided to adopt the City Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, we have modified the proposed boundary between Crome and Thorpe Hamlet wards, where it crosses Lion Wood, in order to tie it to firm ground detail. We have also modified the proposed southern boundary of Thorpe Hamlet ward to continue

further south along Martineau Lane and then follow Trowse Bypass to the city boundary in order to provide a stronger, more recognisable boundary.

51 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the city average in Central ward (2 per cent above in 2006), equal to the average in Crome ward (2 per cent below in 2006) and 5 per cent below in Thorpe Hamlet ward (3 per cent below in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Heigham, Henderson, Mile Cross and Nelson wards

52 These four over-represented wards are situated in the north and west of the city. The number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below the average in Heigham ward (11 per cent below in 2006), 5 per cent below in Henderson ward (6 per cent below in 2006), 9 per cent below in Mile Cross ward (unchanged in 2006) and 6 per cent below in Nelson ward (11 per cent below in 2006).

53 At Stage One the City Council proposed extending the existing Mile Cross ward by transferring to it the western part of Coslany ward. The south-eastern boundary of the proposed ward would run from Aylsham Road across Pointers Field, along Boston Street, southwards along the rear of properties to the west of Angel Road, along Waterloo Road and westwards along Bakers Road to the river. The other boundaries would be those of the existing Mile Cross ward. The Council also proposed extending the existing Nelson ward by including in it that part of Henderson ward east of Norwich cemetery. Its northern boundary would be Earlham Road, Heigham Road, Dereham Road and a diagonal line across the cemetery from Dereham Road to the cemetery entrance in Earlham Road. The other boundaries would be those for the existing Nelson ward. The Council also proposed a new Wensum ward comprising the western parts of Heigham and Henderson wards. The northern boundary would be the city boundary, while the western boundary would follow Dereham Road, Larkham Lane and Earlham Green Lane. The southern boundary would follow Earlham Road as far as the cemetery entrance, where it would cut across diagonally to Dereham Road and then run along Nelson Street and Northumberland Street to the river. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Mile Cross ward (3 per cent below in 2006), 2 per cent above in Nelson ward (2 per cent below in 2006) and 5 per cent above in Wensum ward (3 per cent above in 2006).

54 Norwich North Liberal Democrats supported the Council's proposed Mile Cross ward, regarding it as "the most logical choice".

55 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the City Council's proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. We have therefore decided to adopt the City Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, we propose modifying the proposed boundary between Nelson and Wensum wards to follow the cemetery boundary on its east and south sides as the Council's proposed boundary cannot be tied to ground detail. The modified boundary would join Earlham Road between properties to the west of the cemetery entrance. We also propose modifying the proposed boundary between Mile Cross ward and Catton Grove ward to follow the southern and eastern sides of Pointers Field in order to tie it to ground detail. Under our

draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Mile Cross ward (3 per cent below in 2006), 3 per cent above in Nelson ward (1 per cent below in 2006) and 5 per cent above in Wensum ward (2 per cent above in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Lakenham, St Stephen and Town Close wards

56 These wards are situated in the south of Norwich, with St Stephen ward being in the south-west, and Lakenham and Town Close wards in the south-east. The number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below in Lakenham ward (9 per cent below in 2006), 6 per cent below in St Stephen ward (1 per cent below in 2006) and 9 per cent below in Town Close ward (14 per cent below in 2006).

57 At Stage One the City Council proposed modifying the boundaries of Lakenham ward by transferring the northern part of the existing ward to its proposed Thorpe Hamlet ward, and a north-western section to its proposed Town Close ward. It also proposed transferring to Lakenham ward the southern part of the existing Town Close ward. The southern and eastern boundaries would be the same as the city boundaries, which follow the River Yare. Its northern boundary would be the same as the southern boundary of the proposed Thorpe Hamlet ward as far as King Street, where it would follow Carrow Hill and Bracondale to Hall Road. The western boundary would run along Hall Road, around the edge of Lakenham Playing Fields and southwards along Ipswich Road to the river.

58 In addition to transferring to Town Close ward a north-western section of Lakenham ward, the Council also proposed that Town Close ward should take in the northern part of St Stephen ward. As has been described, the southern part of the existing Town Close ward would be transferred to Lakenham ward. The northern boundary would be the Inner Ring Road from Unthank Road to Hall Road, which would form its eastern boundary. The southern boundary would follow the edge of Lakenham Playing Fields, the Outer Ring Road and Christ Church Road, while the western boundary would run along Unthank Road. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the city average in Lakenham ward (4 per cent above in 2006) and 5 per cent above in Town Close ward (6 per cent above in 2006).

59 We have given careful consideration to the City Council's proposals for these wards. We note that the Council's proposals would provide significant improvements in electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. However, we propose modifying the south-eastern boundary of the Council's proposed Town Close ward to follow the rear of properties bordering the west of Lakenham Playing Fields in order to tie it to ground detail. We have also modified the northern boundary of Lakenham ward to continue further south along Martineau Lane before following Trowse Bypass to the city boundary in order to provide a stronger, more recognisable boundary. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the city average in Lakenham ward (4 per cent above in 2006) and 5 per cent above in Town Close ward (6 per cent above in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Bowthorpe, Eaton and University wards

60 These three wards are situated in the west of the city, with Bowthorpe ward being significantly under-represented. The number of electors per councillor is 44 per cent above the average in Bowthorpe ward (55 per cent above in 2006), 8 per cent above the average in Eaton ward (1 per cent above in 2006) and 7 per cent below in University ward (4 per cent below in 2006).

61 At Stage One the City Council proposed modifying the boundary between Bowthorpe and University wards in order to improve electoral equality in Bowthorpe ward, where the greatest growth in Norwich is forecast. It proposed transferring from Bowthorpe ward to University ward the area north of Earlham Road bounded by the city boundary, Bridge Farm Lane, Rockingham Road, Hutchinson Road and Earlham Green Lane. The Council also proposed modifying the boundary of Eaton ward by transferring to it the southern part of St Stephen ward. The northern boundary of the proposed Eaton ward would follow the Outer Ring Road and Christ Church Road to its junction with Unthank Road. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the city average in Bowthorpe ward (4 per cent above in 2006), equal to the average in Eaton ward (5 per cent below in 2006) and 3 per cent below in University ward (equal to the average in 2006).

62 Eaton Rise Residents' Association requested that Eaton Rise should remain in Eaton ward.

63 We have given careful consideration to the representations received for this area. We note that the City Council's proposals would provide significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory reflection of local community identities. We note also that, under the Council's proposals, Eaton Rise would be retained in Eaton ward.

64 We have decided to adopt the City Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the city average in Bowthorpe ward (4 per cent above in 2006), equal to the average in Eaton ward (5 per cent below in 2006) and 3 per cent below in University ward (equal to the average in 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

65 At Stage One we received two responses regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council itself proposed that elections should continue to be held by thirds. It stated that the system has worked well in Norwich "as each of the 16 wards is represented by three councillors and therefore elections are held in all wards in three out of every four years". The Liberal Democrats supported elections by thirds as "we feel that annual elections are both more democratic and convenient than other systems".

66 In the light of the views expressed that the present electoral cycle should be retained, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

67 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose that:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 48 to 39;
- there should be 13 wards;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of three;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

68 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the City Council's proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- we propose modifying the boundary between Nelson ward and Wensum ward to follow the cemetery boundary and run behind properties to the west of the entrance;
- we propose modifying the boundary between Lakenham ward and Thorpe Hamlet ward to run further south along Martineau Lane and then follow Trowse Bypass to the city boundary.

69 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	48	39	48	39
Number of wards	16	13	16	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,985	2,443	2,000	2,462
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	2	0	6	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	2	0

70 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Norwich City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from two to none. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Norwich City Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Norwich

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

71 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Norwich contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

72 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Norwich Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

www.lgce.gov.uk

73 In the light of responses received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table A1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

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