

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Cambridge City

*November 2001*

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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	
A Code of Practice on Written Consultation	<i>25</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Cambridge City 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.



## SUMMARY

We began a review of Cambridge City's electoral arrangements on 17 April 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 Cambridge City:

- **in eight of the 14 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and four wards vary 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 nine wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main proposals for Cambridge City's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 84 – 85) are that:

- **Cambridge City Council should have 42 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 14 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing 14 wards should be modified;**
- **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 two of the proposed 14 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 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 wards expected to vary by no more than 5 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 nine weeks from 27 November 2001. 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, subject to Parliamentary approval, 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 28 January 2002:

**Review Manager  
Cambridge City Review  
LGCE  
Dolphyn Court  
10/11 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142  
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Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

*Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Abbey	3	Abbey ward; part of Petersfield ward.	Large map
2	Arbury	3	part of Arbury ward; part of Castle ward.	Large map
3	Castle	3	part of Castle ward; part of Newnham ward.	Large map
4	Cherry Hinton	3	part of Cherry Hinton ward; part of Coleridge ward; part of Queen Edith's ward.	Large map
5	Coleridge	3	part of Cherry Hinton ward; part of Coleridge ward; part of Queen Edith's ward; part of Trumpington ward.	Large map
6	East Chesterton	3	part of East Chesterton ward.	Large map
7	King's Hedges	3	part of Arbury ward; part of East Chesterton ward; King's Hedges ward.	Large map
8	Market	3	part of Castle ward; part of Market ward.	Large map
9	Newnham	3	part of Newnham ward.	Large map
10	Petersfield	3	part of Petersfield ward.	Large map
11	Queen Edith's	3	part of Queen Edith's ward; part of Trumpington ward.	Large map
12	Romsey	3	part of Coleridge ward; Romsey ward.	Large map
13	Trumpington	3	part of Market ward; part of Petersfield ward; part of Trumpington ward.	Large map
14	West Chesterton	3	part of Arbury ward; part of Castle ward; part of East Chesterton ward; West Chesterton ward.	Large map

*Notes: 1 The whole city is unparished.*

*2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.*

*3 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 Cambridge City

	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	Abbey	3	6,334	2,111	2	6,607	2,202	0
2	Arbury	3	6,934	2,311	12	6,949	2,316	5
3	Castle	3	6,532	2,177	5	6,734	2,245	2
4	Cherry Hinton	3	6,305	2,102	2	6,332	2,111	-4
5	Coleridge	3	5,793	1,931	-7	6,857	2,286	4
6	East Chesterton	3	5,622	1,874	-9	6,593	2,198	0
7	King's Hedges	3	6,141	2,047	-1	6,411	2,137	-3
8	Market	3	6,692	2,231	8	6,807	2,269	3
9	Newnham	3	6,324	2,108	2	6,910	2,303	5
10	Petersfield	3	5,740	1,913	-8	6,404	2,135	-3
11	Queen Edith's	3	6,363	2,121	2	6,587	2,196	0
12	Romsey	3	6,387	2,129	3	6,425	2,142	-3
13	Trumpington	3	5,466	1,822	-12	6,521	2,174	-1
14	West Chesterton	3	6,288	2,096	1	6,331	2,110	-4
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>86,921</b>	–	–	<b>92,468</b>	–	–
	<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>2,070</b>	–	–	<b>2,202</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cambridge 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 Cambridge in Cambridgeshire, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five districts in Cambridgeshire 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 Cambridge City. Cambridge City's last review was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report no. 64). The electoral arrangements of Cambridgeshire County Council were last reviewed in December 1983 (Report no. 460). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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 to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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 district 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*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
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 district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district 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 17 April 2001, when we wrote to Cambridge City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the local authority associations, the County of Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils, 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 Cambridge City Council to publicise the review further. The Commission's Stage One consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 until 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; the closing date for receipt of submissions at the end of Stage One was 13 August 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 27 November 2001 and will end on 28 January 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. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will decide when any changes come into effect.

15 With effect from 1 April 2002, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take 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 for England. The Boundary Committee for England will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. The Boundary Committee for England's 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 for England'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, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The city of Cambridge is situated in the south of Cambridgeshire and is surrounded by the district of South Cambridgeshire. It is roughly bisected by the River Cam, which flows south-west to north-east through the area. The city centre, which lies at the heart of the district, is dominated by the historic colleges of the University of Cambridge. Covering some 4,056 hectares, and with a population of some 110,400, Cambridge has a population density of around 27 persons per hectare. The city is unparished.

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 The electorate of the city is 86,921 (February 2001). The City Council presently has 42 members who are elected from 14 wards, most of which are relatively urban. Each of the wards is represented by three councillors. The City Council is elected by thirds.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,070 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,202 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 eight of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average and four wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalances are in Newnham and Petersfield wards where each of the councillors in each of the wards represents 25 per cent more electors than the city average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Cambridge City*

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	Abbey	3	4,767	1,589	-23	4,770	1,590	-28
2	Arbury	3	5,095	1,698	-18	5,090	1,697	-23
3	Castle	3	7,127	2,376	15	7,350	2,450	11
4	Cherry Hinton	3	5,449	1,816	-12	5,479	1,826	-17
5	Coleridge	3	5,990	1,997	-4	6,511	2,170	-1
6	East Chesterton	3	7,033	2,344	13	8,249	2,750	25
7	King's Hedges	3	4,763	1,588	-23	4,790	1,597	-27
8	Market	3	6,854	2,285	10	6,970	2,323	6
9	Newnham	3	7,775	2,592	25	8,360	2,787	27
10	Petersfield	3	7,744	2,581	25	8,860	2,953	34
11	Queen Edith's	3	6,160	2,053	-1	6,210	2,070	-6
12	Romsey	3	6,081	2,027	-2	6,120	2,040	-7
13	Trumpington	3	6,035	2,012	-3	7,620	2,540	15
14	West Chesterton	3	6,048	2,016	-3	6,090	2,030	-8
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>86,921</b>	–	–	<b>92,469</b>	–	–
	<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>2,070</b>	–	–	<b>2,202</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cambridge 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 Abbey and King's Hedges wards are relatively over-represented by 23 per cent, while electors in Newnham and Petersfield wards are relatively under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

20 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 Cambridge City Council.

21 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 five submissions during Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council and the Southern Cambridgeshire Conservative Federation and the Conservative Group on Cambridge City Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council.

#### **Cambridge City Council**

22 The City Council, having consulted locally on two schemes based on council sizes of 42 and 36 members, proposed retaining a council size of 42 members, serving 14 three-member wards, as at present. It also proposed retaining the current electoral cycle of elections by thirds. The City Council proposed changes to all 14 existing wards, while retaining all existing ward names. The City Council's scheme provided for improved electoral equality, with no ward estimated to vary by more than 5 per cent by 2006.

#### **The Southern Cambridgeshire Conservative Federation and the Conservative Group on Cambridge City Council**

23 The Southern Cambridgeshire Conservative Federation put forward the Conservative Group's submission, which proposed the 36 member scheme which went out to consultation, albeit with some modifications. The Conservative Group supported a 12-ward scheme predominantly because of their desire to see coterminous district wards and county divisions in the future. The Conservative Group's scheme provided for improved electoral equality, with no ward estimated to vary by more than 4 per cent by 2006. These figures were estimates, as advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of the modifications to ward boundaries mentioned above was not obtained.

#### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

24 Cambridgeshire County Council, while not commenting on a specific council size, stressed the importance it attaches to coterminosity between district wards and county electoral divisions, and hoped that the Commission would be able to take this into account during this review.

#### **Cambridge Labour Party**

25 Cambridge Labour Party ('The Labour Party') did not submit a scheme of its own, but offered a critique of alternative options for the city's electoral arrangements. However, while stating that it did not indicate a preference for any particular scheme, it appeared to object to the retention of a 42-member scheme, appearing to favour a 36-member council size. Its

reason for favouring a 36-member scheme was that it believed it would lead to coterminosity with county divisions when the County review is carried out.

### **Cambridge Liberal Democrats**

26 Cambridge Liberal Democrats ('The Liberal Democrats') endorsed the Council's 14 three-member ward scheme. However, it submitted a number of comments relating to specific boundaries, suggesting three possible amendments which would not affect any electors.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

**27 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Cambridge City 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.**

28 As described earlier, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Cambridge City 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 borough”.

29 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.

30 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.

31 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**

32 Since 1975 there has been a 13 per cent increase in the electorate of Cambridge City. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6 per cent from 86,921 to 92,469 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Trumpington ward, although a significant amount is also expected in East Chesterton and Petersfield wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the City 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.

33 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

34 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 arguments why this might not be the case.

35 Cambridge City Council presently has 42 members. Having consulted locally on a scheme of 42 members and a scheme of 36 members, the City Council proposed retaining the current council size. It stated that “The decision to support the retention of 42 councillors was based on concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council if the size were reduced to 36.” In addition, given that new political structures are due to be implemented in May 2002, it stated that “any reduction in councillor numbers would result in an unacceptable increase in the workload of councillors sitting on the scrutiny committees”. It also contended that “Having only 36 Councillors would limit the democratic choices available to future councils, especially if adopting an all-party executive was desired.” Following the local consultation on the two schemes, the City Council noted that “only a minority of respondents were in favour of a twelve ward scheme, with its concomitant reduction in council size, and...surprisingly few specifically commented on the desirability of a reduction.” Eighty-eight of the 100 responses were in favour of the 14 ward scheme. However, there was a particular issue linked to the majority of the responses supporting the 14 ward scheme (that the alternative would split the current Romsey ward, a large number of responses being a result of local activity in this particular ward), but even when the City Council excluded these 71 responses, there was a majority of more than three to one in favour of the 14 ward scheme.

36 The Liberal Democrats also supported retaining a council size of 42, stating that “A smaller council membership would, in our judgement, impose serious constraints on the options for the Council”.

37 The Conservative Group proposed a council size of 36 members, a reduction of six. It stated that it “favours the 12-ward model because it believes that this is much more likely to achieve coterminous County and City electoral divisions.” It also gave further reasons for favouring a reduction in council size, stating that it thought it “unnecessary for a district council with relatively limited powers to have as many as 42 members. Many councils with larger powers and budgets operate effectively with far fewer numbers”, that “more effective methods of communication make it easier for councillors to represent a larger area” and that it was becoming difficult to find “well-qualified” candidates to stand for election. The Conservative Group disputed the City Council’s claim that it would be difficult for the Council to operate with only 36 members and provided an example of how it thought this could be achieved.

38 The Labour Party stated that “For the better information of the Commission in its deliberations we will therefore outline the benefits and disadvantages of three different electoral scenarios against a range of relevant principles, without indicating an absolute preference among the three”. However, in spite of this, the Labour Party, like the Conservative Group, favoured coterminosity with County Council Electoral Divisions, and consequently appeared to favour a reduction in council size to 36 members, either as 12 three-member wards or 36 single-member wards. It also stated that it believed there would be more transparency with a council of 36 single-member wards, although it did not provide a scheme for this option. It too gave an example of how it thought a council size of 36 could operate

effectively and justified “the potential benefits of this arrangement over a 42-member council”. However, it also stated that “With a great deal of uncertainty still surrounding the impact of transition to executive decision-making arrangements in Cambridge, it is arguable what the future holds in terms of elected members’ workload”, further stating that “This is not to say that a similar structure would be impossible to manage with 42 members”.

39 Notwithstanding those comments, the Labour Party was also critical of the view that the current council size provides effective and convenient local government; “This indicates a level of complacency which we would not consider acceptable in the context of any other aspect of the council’s functions.” It acknowledged that there was additional uncertainty about the impact of an executive style of government, stating that the Labour Party favoured holding a referendum on the option of a directly elected mayor. Additionally, it thought that the costs which could be saved by a reduced council size could be reinvested for members. No alternative scheme to that which was proposed by the City Council was put forward.

40 The County Council, while not providing a scheme or proposing a specific council size for Cambridge City Council, stressed “the importance it attaches to co-terminosity between District Wards and County Electoral Divisions”.

41 Having carefully considered all the representations received we are aware that significant work has been put into the argumentation and supporting evidence put forward regarding each of the two proposed council sizes by the City Council, the Conservative Group and the Labour Party and for this we are grateful. We note that the City Council has expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of the operation of the council with only 36 members. Furthermore, we also note that the City Council took account of the outcome of the public consultation on the two schemes which, notwithstanding those responses regarding the particular issue in Romsey, showed a general preference for the 42-member scheme.

42 We consider that the main focus of the argument from the Conservative Group and the Labour Party is that having 12 three-member wards will allow county divisions and district wards to be coterminous if the number of county divisions is reduced to 12 when the review of the county council’s electoral arrangements is carried out in the future. However, it has also been acknowledged that at the present time, it is not possible to accurately predict how many county councillors Cambridge City will merit when the county review is carried out, as stated by the Labour Party that “The County Council has given an indication that they wish in their own review of electoral arrangements to retain the existing number of councillors for the whole county...This would mean that a reduction to 12 or 13 in the number of County Councillors representing the City would be required in order to allow for increased representation in other areas of the county”.

43 We have noted the comments from the Conservative Group, the Labour Party and the County Council regarding the desire for coterminosity between county divisions and district wards. This is an issue which has arisen in a number of review areas. It is indicative of the tensions which can arise between the achievement of electoral equality within the individual districts of a county, each of whose electoral arrangements can vary significantly in terms of councillor:elector ratios and ward sizes, and across county council electoral divisions, while also seeking some measure of coterminosity between the two. These tensions are not readily reconciled.

44 In certain cases, it has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe ward patterns and sizes that would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be a viable approach. As a Commission, we rely heavily on local authorities and other interested parties to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved. We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria, and achieve a high level of electoral equality.

45 The purpose of this review is to secure the best electoral arrangements for Cambridge City at the current time and by 2006, rather than in anticipation of what will be the best electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council in the future. Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and district wards is capable of being conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of County Council electoral arrangements.

46 In light of the concerns about the operation of the council on a reduced size and the good electoral equality which has been achieved based on 14 three-member wards, we propose retaining the current council size of 42, as proposed by the City Council. We have not been persuaded by the evidence provided by the Conservative Group and the Labour Party in support of a reduction in council size to 36. We do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided by the Conservative Group and the Labour Party to adopt this significant reduction in council size given the uncertainty surrounding the future executive structure of the council. We therefore conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by retaining a council of 42 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

47 Having adopted a 42-member council size, our capacity to endorse the Conservative Group's proposals is very limited. We recognise that the Conservative Group's scheme did achieve reasonable electoral equality (as far as can be confirmed by their unofficial figures) but we have not been persuaded that the reasoning given for proposing a 36-member council size was acceptable. Furthermore, we consider that the Conservative Group's proposals did not utilise as strong boundaries as the City Council's scheme.

48 Having considered the consultation exercise which the City Council undertook with interested parties and in order to secure the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the City Council's 42-member scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and bearing in mind local community identities and interests, we are proposing minor modifications to the City Council's proposals in five areas to provide more identifiable boundaries. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Arbury, East Chesterton, King's Hedges and West Chesterton wards
- (b) Castle, Market and Newnham wards
- (c) Abbey and Petersfield wards
- (d) Cherry Hinton, Coleridge and Romsey wards
- (e) Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards

49 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.

### **Arbury, East Chesterton, King's Hedges and West Chesterton wards**

50 These four three-member wards are located in the north of the city, to the north of the River Cam. The number of electors per councillor is 18 per cent below the city average in Arbury ward (23 per cent below by 2006), 13 per cent above in East Chesterton ward (25 per cent above by 2006), 23 per cent below in King's Hedges ward (27 per cent below by 2006) and 3 per cent below in West Chesterton ward (8 per cent below by 2006).

51 At Stage One, the City Council proposed that the existing Arbury ward be extended to include two areas from the existing Castle ward and that its north-eastern boundary be modified so that the boundary would run along the rear of properties on Arbury Road, transferring properties on the western side of the road and those in the Mansel Way area into its proposed King's Hedges ward. The north-western area of the ward would gain the Brownlow Road estate, and the ward would be extended to include properties on the western side of Histon Road, and further south, taking in the triangle of land and properties south of Histon Road Cemetery and bounded by Histon Road and Victoria Road, and the Carlyle Road/Magrath Avenue area between Victoria Road and Chesterton Road/Lane.

52 The City Council's proposed King's Hedges ward would therefore gain those properties on Arbury Road and the Mansel Way area from the existing Arbury ward. The ward would be extended further south-eastwards to include a significant area of the existing East Chesterton ward. Its south-eastern boundary would run along the rear of properties on the south side of Milton Road until number 282, before meeting the existing boundary. Its revised East Chesterton ward would comprise the remainder of the ward, less the remainder of properties on the south side of Milton Road which would be transferred to a revised West Chesterton ward, which would also reflect those changes described above. These four wards would retain their existing ward names.

53 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the city average in Arbury ward (1 per cent above by 2006), 9 per cent below in East Chesterton ward (equal to the average by 2006), 1 per cent above in King's Hedges ward (1 per cent below by 2006) and 3 per cent above in West Chesterton ward (2 per cent below by 2006).

54 The Liberal Democrats made a proposal regarding a boundary in this area which would not affect any electors. They proposed that the boundary of the revised East Chesterton ward to the rear of properties on the south side of Milton Road should be located "about half way down the rear of gardens of the Milton Road properties. That would make it more proof against future backland development beyond what has already been agreed." However, it

would not be possible to adopt this proposal as the boundary would not be tied to any ground detail, which the Liberal Democrats acknowledged.

55 We have carefully considered the representations received regarding these four wards and, given the good electoral equality and reflection of local communities, propose basing our draft recommendations on the City Council's proposals. However, we consider that the boundaries of the City Council's proposed Arbury ward can be improved by making minor amendments while still achieving good levels of electoral equality in Arbury and the surrounding wards. Firstly, we propose utilising the centre of Castle Street as Arbury ward's south-western boundary, while also retaining the existing boundary along Holland Street in the south-east. As a consequence we also propose that the Bateson Road/Garden Walk area be transferred into our proposed West Chesterton ward to improve electoral equality. Finally, we propose that the north-eastern boundary of Arbury ward follows the centre of Arbury Road until Mansel Way instead of along the rear of properties on the western side of the road, in order to provide a more identifiable boundary. Our proposed King's Hedges and West Chesterton wards would consequently reflect these minor amendments.

56 We do have some reservations about the boundary between the proposed King's Hedges and West Chesterton wards as it would follow a line between semi-detached residential properties on the south-eastern side of Milton Road. An alternative proposal which we did consider would have placed the boundary along the centre of Arbury Road and Milton Road, which in our view would secure more identifiable boundaries. However, this would result in an electoral imbalance of more than 10 per cent from the city average, both initially and by 2006 and therefore we do not propose putting this forward. However, we would welcome views on this suggestion at Stage Three.

57 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent above the city average in Arbury ward (5 per cent above by 2006), 9 per cent below in East Chesterton ward (equal to the average by 2006), 1 per cent below in King's Hedges ward (3 per cent below by 2006) and 1 per cent above in West Chesterton ward (4 per cent below by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Castle, Market and Newnham wards**

58 Castle and Newnham wards are located in the west of the city, whilst Market ward is located in the centre of the city. Each ward is represented by three councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the city average in Castle ward (11 per cent above by 2006), 10 per cent above in Market ward (6 per cent by 2006) and 25 per cent above in Newnham ward (27 per cent above by 2006).

59 At Stage One, the City Council proposed transferring two areas from the existing Castle ward to its proposed Arbury ward, as described above. It also proposed extending the existing Castle ward southwards to include properties to the east of Grange Road and to the north of Burrells Walk and Garret Hostel Lane, from the existing Newnham ward. Its revised Newnham ward would comprise the remainder of the ward. Finally, its proposed Market ward would comprise the majority of the existing ward, with the addition of a small area to the south of Chesterton Lane, currently in Castle ward. The properties on the north side of

Lensfield Road, in the south of the ward, would be transferred to its revised Trumpington ward, to be discussed later. The existing ward names in this area would be retained.

60 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors would be 5 per cent above the city average in Castle ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 8 per cent above in Market ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 2 per cent above in Newnham ward (5 per cent above by 2006).

61 The Liberal Democrats proposed an alternative boundary between the revised Castle and Newnham wards which would not affect any electors. They proposed that the boundary between the revised Castle and Newnham wards "follow the centre of the river from Clare Bridge Southwards rather than following one bank". However, we do not propose adopting this amendment as we do not consider it to be as strong a boundary as that utilised by the City Council in this area.

62 We have carefully considered the City Council's proposals for these three wards. As discussed earlier, we propose amending the City Council's revised Castle ward to reflect our proposed boundary amendments in relation to Arbury ward. In the remainder of this area, we propose adopting the City Council's proposed Market and Newnham wards in full. We note that these wards retain most of their existing boundaries, which we consider to be identifiable, while achieving good levels of electoral equality and reflecting local communities.

63 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the city average in Castle ward (2 per cent above by 2006), 8 per cent above in Market ward (3 per cent above by 2006) and 2 per cent above in Newnham ward (5 per cent above by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Abbey and Petersfield wards**

64 The three-member Abbey ward is located to the east of the city, whilst Petersfield, also represented by three councillors, is located towards the centre of the city to the west of the railway. The number of electors per councillor is 23 per cent below the city average in Abbey ward (28 per cent below by 2006) and 25 per cent above in Petersfield ward (34 per cent above by 2006).

65 At Stage One, the City Council proposed extending the existing Abbey ward westwards to include the north-eastern part of the current Petersfield ward. The south-western boundary of its revised Abbey ward would run along the rear of properties on New Street and Silverwood Close and the centre of Coldham Lane. This would form the northern boundary of its revised Petersfield ward, with the ward's existing eastern and western boundaries being retained. However, in the south of the ward, the area around the YMCA and properties on Harvey Road, St Paul's Road and the majority of Gresham Road would be transferred to its proposed Trumpington ward, as would the triangle of land between Hills Road, Station Road and the railway line. The existing ward names in this area would be retained.

66 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Abbey ward (equal to the average by 2006) and 8 per cent below in Petersfield ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

67 We have carefully considered the City Council's proposals for these two wards. We consider that the proposals for Abbey ward address the issue of high electoral inequality in the ward while reflecting the statutory criteria. Having visited the area, we also consider that the consequent modifications to the existing Petersfield ward reflect communities within the area and facilitate a good electoral scheme in the eastern part of the city. We therefore propose adopting these two wards without modification.

68 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Abbey and Petersfield wards would be the same as under the City Council's proposals. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Cherry Hinton, Coleridge and Romsey wards**

69 These three-member wards are situated in the eastern part of Cambridge City. The number of electors per councillor is 12 per cent below the city average in Cherry Hinton ward (17 per cent below by 2006), 4 per cent below in Coleridge ward (1 per cent below by 2006) and 2 per cent below in Romsey ward (7 per cent below by 2006).

70 At Stage One, the City Council proposed extending the existing Cherry Hinton ward westwards, to include parts of Coleridge and Queen Edith's wards, so that the boundary followed the rear of properties on the western side of Walpole Road, then along the centre of Cherry Hinton Road westwards as far as Wulfstain Way, and then along the rear of properties on the north side of Gunhild Way, before rejoining the existing boundary. The southern boundary of its revised Coleridge ward would be modified to run along the rear of properties on the south side of Cherry Hinton Road west of Wulfstain Way, incorporating the culs-de-sac of Lilac Court and St Margaret's Square. Additionally, the revised Coleridge ward would take in the triangle of land bounded by Hills Road, Purbeck Road and the railway line, currently in Trumpington ward. Its revised Romsey ward would comprise the existing Romsey ward, with the addition of some further properties on Coleridge Road and all of Greville Road, with the boundary meeting up with the railway line to the west. The existing ward names in this area would be retained.

71 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the city average in Cherry Hinton ward (equal to the average by 2006), 11 per cent below in Coleridge ward (equal to the average by 2006) and 3 per cent above in Romsey ward (3 per cent below by 2006).

72 We have carefully considered the City Council's proposals for these three wards. We note that the City Council's proposals keep the existing Romsey ward united, which was the focus of some concern during its own consultation period. We consider that the proposed ward utilises strong boundaries, and that the addition of properties in the Greville Road area has a beneficial effect on electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting the City Council's proposed Romsey ward in full. We do, however, propose making amendments to the City Council's proposed Cherry Hinton and Coleridge wards to provide for better boundaries and a better reflection of community identity. We propose that the four properties on Birdwood Road, which the City Council had proposed transferring to its proposed Cherry Hinton ward, remain in our proposed Coleridge ward, to avoid unnecessarily dividing the road between two district wards. We propose that this boundary should then continue to follow the City Council's proposed boundary, but that the properties around the Cherry Hinton

Road/Misselton Court/Bullen Close area to the west of the petrol station be transferred to our proposed Coleridge ward. We consider that not only will this give the properties in the two culs-de-sac vehicular access to the rest of the ward, but that the petrol station on Cherry Hinton Road provides a natural break in this residential area and that its eastern edge provides an identifiable boundary.

73 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Cherry Hinton ward (4 per cent below by 2006), 7 per cent below in Coleridge ward (4 per cent above by 2006) and 3 per cent above in Romsey ward (3 per cent below by 2006). While we acknowledge that this would result in a slight deterioration in electoral equality compared with the City Council's scheme, we are of the view that this is justified given the better reflection of communities and more identifiable boundaries that would be secured. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards**

74 These two three-member wards are located in the south of the city. The number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent below the city average in Queen Edith's ward (6 per cent below by 2006) and 3 per cent below in Trumpington ward (15 per cent above by 2006).

75 At Stage One, the City Council proposed transferring properties to the south of Cherry Hinton Road in the existing Queen Edith's ward to its proposed Cherry Hinton and Coleridge wards, as detailed earlier. It also proposed extending Queen Edith's ward westwards to incorporate the eastern part of the existing Trumpington ward, so that the railway line would form its new western boundary. Its revised Trumpington ward would reflect this change, in addition to the transfers from the existing Market and Petersfield wards, as described earlier. The existing ward names in this area would be retained.

76 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Queen Edith's ward (equal to the average by 2006) and 12 per cent below in Trumpington ward (1 per cent below by 2006).

77 The Liberal Democrats proposed that "If the garage on the corner of Cherry Hinton and Hills Roads were to be redeveloped for housing it might be better if it was in Coleridge ward". However, we do not propose amending the City Council's boundary to reflect this as we must take a view on the likelihood of that change taking place within five years, and recommend accordingly. As this does not appear to be the case in this area, we are not convinced that the boundary should be amended.

78 We have carefully considered the City Council's proposals for these two wards. We consider that the enlargement of the current Queen Edith's ward is a logical one and that the railway line provides an identifiable boundary. In the City Council's proposed Trumpington ward, we consider that the transfer of areas from the existing Market and Petersfield wards, as detailed above, facilitates the provision of better electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting the City Council's proposed Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards in full.

79 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Queen Edith's and Trumpington wards would be the same as under the City Council's proposals. Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

80 We received three responses regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council itself stated that "When the Working Party first met to discuss the boundary review all parties were unanimous in their desire to retain a system of three member wards, with election by thirds".

81 The Labour Party, in their critique of the alternative options for the City's electoral arrangements, supported the retention of election by thirds because, in its view, this system allows electors to have "an equal say". However, it stated that, if a 36 single-member ward scheme were adopted, this "conflicts with the principle of 'an equal say'...if we were to continue with elections by thirds". It acknowledged that the alternative, whole council elections, contradicts the Government's desire to hold more frequent elections.

82 The Liberal Democrats stated that "At an early stage all four parties (Conservative, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat) involved in the deliberations on the ward boundary proposals agreed that the City should retain three member wards with councillors retiring in rotation three years out of four so that elections should be held every year".

83 We considered carefully all the comments received. At present, the majority view appears to be that the present electoral cycle should be retained and we therefore propose no change.

## **Conclusions**

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

- a council of 42 members should be retained;
- there should continue to be 14 wards;
- the boundaries of all of the 14 existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

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

- in the north of the city, we propose making minor boundary amendments to the City Council's proposed Arbury, Castle, King's Hedges and West Chesterton wards;
- in the south of the city we propose that a small number of properties on Birdwood Road be transferred to our proposed Coleridge ward to unite the whole of the road, while also transferring properties in the Cherry Hinton Road/Misselton Court/Bullen Close area to our proposed Coleridge ward.

86 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect 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	42	42	42	42
Number of wards	14	14	14	14
Average number of electors per councillor	2,070	2,070	2,202	2,202
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	2	9	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	0	6	0

87 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Cambridge City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from eight to two. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 5 per cent.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Cambridge City Council should comprise 42 councillors serving 14 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 Cambridge City*

## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

88 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Cambridge City contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 28 January 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.

89 Express your views by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Cambridge City 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](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

90 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 A

### 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](http://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*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
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.