

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 85

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 86

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTRICT OF
WOODSPRING IN THE COUNTY OF AVON

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the District of Woodspring in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements for that district.
2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 13 May 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Woodspring District Council, copies of which were circulated to the Avon County Council, Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the district, the Members of Parliament for the constituencies concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from any interested bodies.
3. Woodspring District Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. In doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in our Report No 6 about the proposed size of the council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were asked also to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. In accordance with section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council had exercised an option for a system of elections by thirds.
5. The Woodspring District Council presented their draft scheme of representation on 22 November 1974. The Council proposed to divide the district into 37 wards each returning 1, 2 or 3 members to form a Council of 59, 2 less than at present.
6. We considered the draft scheme together with the comments sent to us and to the District Council following the publication of their draft scheme.
7. We noted that in the parish of Nailsea the District Council proposed three district wards returning a total of 4 councillors. These proposed arrangements had attracted comment from the Nailsea Parish Council who thought that each of the three proposed wards in the parish should be allocated two councillors, making a total of six members. We heard also from a local political association who suggested that the North and West wards proposed by the District Council should be combined to form a single ward returning three members leaving the East ward to return two councillors as proposed. Having studied the likely growth in the electorate of the three proposed wards over the next five years we concluded that within that period the parish would become entitled to at least five councillors but that it was doubtful whether the growth would be sufficient to justify six. We noted that the proposals submitted by the local political association provided for a total of five members and having studied their proposals in detail we decided to adopt them.
8. The District Council's proposals for Weston-Super-Mare produced comment from the same local political association and from a local councillor who suggested modifications to the District Council's proposals which provided for eight wards returning 22 councillors. The local political association suggested that there should be seven wards each returning three members and having studied their proposals, and the likely growth in the electorate in the

next five years, we decided to adopt them as the basis of our draft proposals. However, on the recommendation of the Ordnance Survey we incorporated some minor alterations to the proposed boundaries so as to secure boundary lines which were more readily identifiable on the ground.

9. We considered a number of letters which had been received in connection with the District Council's proposal to establish the parish of North Weston as a single member district ward. On the one hand it was suggested that the parish should be included in the proposed ward comprising the parishes of Weston-in-Gordano, Walton-in-Gordano, Clapton-in-Gordano, Portbury and Tickenham which would then return two councillors instead of one as proposed by the District Council. On the other hand there were letters supporting the District Council's proposal on the ground that North Weston had effectively become a part of the urban area of Portishead and that it would dominate the combined ward. We found the arguments finely balanced but concluded finally that the District Council's proposals should not be altered.

10. A number of comments had been received suggesting that the proposed ward comprising the parishes of Kewstoke, Wick St Lawrence, Paxton and Banwell should be divided with the South ward of the parish of Banwell forming a separate district ward returning one member. These proposals were opposed by the Banwell Parish Council who rejected the idea that the parish should be divided between two district wards. We considered the arguments for and against the suggested alteration and resolved that the ward proposed by the District Council should not be divided.

11. The Kenn Parish Council and the Kingston Seymour Parish Council both objected to the proposal to link these parishes with the parish of Yatton and Cleeve for district electoral purposes. Each suggested an alternative arrangement but we concluded that the District Council's proposal was to be preferred.

12. We considered a letter from a resident of Portishead suggesting that the wards in the town should be named rather than numbered as the District Council had proposed. We concurred and decided to adopt the names which the resident concerned had suggested. We noted that in a number of instances the District Council had proposed that the name of a district ward should include the names of all the parishes included within it. In some cases we thought the result very cumbersome and we decided to propose the abbreviation of the name using the name of the parish in the proposed ward with the largest electorate.

13. We received a number of other proposals which had been made to the District Council during the period when their scheme was being prepared but which they had not felt able to adopt and incorporate in their draft scheme. We concluded in every case that the District Council's decision had been appropriate.

14. Subject to the changes referred to in paragraphs 7, 8 and 12 above we decided that the District Council's draft scheme provided a reasonable basis for the District in compliance with the rules in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act and our guidelines and we formulated our draft proposals accordingly.

15. On 20 February 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make these draft proposals and the accompanying maps, which defined the proposed ward boundaries, available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that any comments should reach us by 21 April 1975.

16. Woodspring District Council informed us that they accepted the draft proposals, as did two parish councils and one individual. The Avon County Council informed us that they had no observation to make at that stage.

17. The Nailsea Parish Council at first reiterated their proposal that each of the 3 parish wards in the town should return two district councillors. In a further letter, however, they reluctantly accepted the two wards which we had proposed but requested that an additional councillor should be allocated to the proposed East ward.

18. From a local political party and a local councillor we received suggestions for the modification of some of the wards which we had proposed in Weston-Super-Mare. The Portbury Parish Council raised again the question of the amalgamation of the proposed North Weston and Gordano wards. In this connection we received also a letter from a local amenity group pointing out that our proposals would divide the village of Weston-in-Gordano which lay astride the boundary between the parishes of Weston-in-Gordano and North Weston. (The group pressed us to recommend the alteration of the parish boundary - this however lies outside the scope of the present review). The Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council wrote to us suggesting our proposals for the order of retirement of councillors should be modified so that the two councillors allocated to the proposed district ward comprising that parish should retire in the same year. The Yatton Parish Council and the Kingston Seymour Parish Council both proposed the retention of the present arrangements whereby the parishes of Yatton and Cleeve form one ward returning 3 members and the parishes of Kenn and Kingston Seymour are grouped with the parish of Tickenham to form a single member ward. If this was not acceptable it was suggested that the proposed Yatton ward - comprising the parishes of Kenn, Kingston Seymour, Yatton and Cleeve - should be allocated 4 members instead of three we we had proposed. Finally the Chairman of the Wick St Lawrence parish meeting raised again the question of dividing the proposed Banwell ward with the South ward of the parish of Banwell forming a separate single member district ward.

19. In view of these comments, we decided that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2)

of the 1972 Act and at our request, you appointed Mr Derek Leigh as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

20. The Assistant Commissioner held a meeting at the Town Hall, Weston-Super-Mare on 2 July 1975. A copy (without enclosures) of his report to us of the meeting is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

21. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that our draft proposals should remain unaltered except in Weston-Super-Mare where he recommended that the boundaries of the proposed Ashcombe, West and South wards be varied in accordance with the proposals of the local councillor who had written to us. This would transfer to the West ward part of the Ashcombe ward and part of the South ward to Ashcombe ward.

22. We noted that in the course of the local meeting the Clerk of Portbury Parish Council submitted that his council had not been properly consulted by the District Council as required by section 60 of the Local Government Act 1972. Subsequent to the meeting we received copies of correspondence between the District Council and the Clerk to the Portbury Parish Council in which this point was elaborated. After consideration we have concluded that the point has no substance. The objection submitted by the Parish Clerk was based on the assumption that in section 60(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the phrase "any draft proposals" includes a reference to the proposals put forward by the sub-committee of the Management and Resources Committee of the Woodspring District Council. In our view this contention is incorrect and the phrase refers in the present circumstances to the draft proposals of the Local Government Boundary Commission.

23. We noted from the correspondence between the two councils in this legal issue that the Portbury Parish Council had recently reconsidered its position on the question of the warding arrangements and that they might now be prepared to accept the Gordano ward proposed by us if it were to be assigned two district councillors. We could find nothing to justify the allocation of two councillors.

24. We considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which we had received and of the Assistant Commissioner's Report. We concluded that the alterations recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted and, subject to this amendment, we decided that our draft proposals should be confirmed as our final proposals.

25. Details of these final proposals are set out in schedule 2 to this report and on the attached maps. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps. Schedule 3 shows our proposals for the order of retirement of councillors.

26. In accordance with Section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, a copy of this report and a copy of the maps are being sent to Woodspring District Council and will be available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards, as defined on the maps, is set out in Schedule 4 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

2 October 1975

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

DISTRICT OF WOODSPRING

REPORT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Assistant Commissioner : Mr. D.B.F.P. Leigh

Date of Meeting : 2nd July 1975

File No : LGBC/D/1/4

1.1 On the 2nd July 1975 I held a meeting at the Town Hall, Weston-Super-Mare, to hear representations on the draft proposals published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for the electoral arrangements for the District of Woodspring relating to the following proposed wards :

Banwell
Gordano
North Weston
Nailsea East
Nailsea North and West
Weston-Super-Mare Ashcombe
Weston-Super-Mare North
Weston-Super-Mare South
Weston-Super-Mare West
Yatton
Easton-in-Gordano

1.2 Later the same day I visited areas discussed at the meeting.

2. A list showing the names and addresses of those attending the meeting and the interests they represented is attached.

(Document 1)

Nailsea East and Nailsea North and West WardsCommission's Proposals

3.1 Under the Commission's proposals, which are based on a District Council of 59 Councillors, Nailsea East and Nailsea North and West Wards are represented as shown in the following table:

	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>1974 Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Nailsea East	2	2450	1.35
Nailsea North and West	3	4850	2.68

Representations

3.2 Mr. A. Knight together with Mr. R.D. Vance representing Nailsea Parish Council submitted that the representation of Nailsea East Ward should be increased from 2 to 3 Councillors and put in a statement (Document 2) The basis for the submission is the unusually large scale of development in the ward which is expected to produce an increase in the electorate from 2450 to 8500 by 1979. Planning permission has been given for residential development on 127.59 acres accounting for approximately 4500 of the increase. Planning permission is expected to be given for residential development on another 45.65 acres giving a further projected increase in the number of electors to make up the total of 8500. As a result of the scale of development demands on elected representatives would be greater than usual and an immediate addition of a third Councillor for Nailsea East Ward was justified. The Nailsea Parish Council's earlier suggestion for three 2-member wards (Nailsea North, West and East) made in their letter to the Commission dated 28th November 1974 should now be regarded as their second preference.

3.3 Mr. B. Lewis representing the Avon County Council stated that they had no observations on the proposals.

3.4 Mr. A. Rider representing the Weston-Super-Mare Liberals and Mr. A. Judge representing the North Somerset Liberal Association relied on the joint written submission of the 27th November 1974 made to the Commission. In their view 6 members for the two proposed wards would be excessive in respect of the likely electorate for the 1976 elections but a third Councillor for Nailsea East Ward would be required in 1979-80. They were not in favour of the suggestion of three 2-member wards.

3.5 Mr. D.L. Overton Secretary, and Mr. R.J. Smith Chief Development Plan Officer, Woodspring District Council, accepted the figures given in the Nailsea Parish Council's statement (Document 2). The addition of a third Councillor for Nailsea East Ward would bring the total number of Councillors to 60, the recommended maximum for non-metropolitan districts.

Assessment

3.6 The case for increasing the representation of Nailsea East Ward from 2 to 3 Councillors depends on the likely growth of the electorate which in turn depends on the accuracy of the forecast increase of population. The District Council do not differ from the Nailsea Parish Council's figures. These are based on planning permissions already given for residential development and those expected to be given in future.

Even assuming that these expectations are fulfilled, actual rates of house completion are subject to economic and other influences and are difficult to predict with certainty.

On the 1974 figures the entitlement of Nailsea East Ward is 1.35 and only if the electorate rose to 6222 by 1979 would the entitlement become 3 Councillors. The case for three 2-member wards rests upon similar arguments and as it is only the Nailsea Parish Council's second choice would not seem to offer any advantages over their current suggestion. The size of the District Council is only one Councillor below the recommended maximum for non-metropolitan district councils and to raise it to 60 at this stage would deny the possibility of increasing the representation of any other district ward without exceeding that figure. In the absence of any immediate and serious under-representation it would seem best to reserve the position until it can be seen whether the forecast population increase is in fact going to be achieved. If Mr. Knight's figure of 8500 electors by 1979 turns out to be correct then there would be a strong case for looking again at the representation of Nailsea East Ward. Accordingly I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals
for Nailsea East Ward remain
unaltered.

Commission's Proposals

- 4.1 Under the Commission's proposals Yatton Ward comprises the parishes of Yatton, Cleeve, Kenn and Kingston Seymour and returns 3 district councillors.

Representations

- 4.2 Mrs. M. Ashbee, Woodspring District Councillor for Yatton, said that before local government re-organisation Yatton had 4 district councillors and Cleeve, Kenn and Kingston Seymour 1 each. The reduction to 3 councillors under the present proposals was excessive having regard to the fact that Yatton was a growth area with industrial development. Its combination with rural parishes such as Cleeve made the task of a district councillor impossibly difficult and the number of councillors for the ward should be raised to 4.
- Mr. A. Attwood, Yatton Parish Council, Mr. I.K. Bailey representing Kingston Seymour Parish Council, and Mr. A.J. Hinton, Kenn Parish Council, supported this submission. Mr. W. Surrey, Woodspring District Councillor for Tickenham, Kenn and Kingston Seymour agreed and stressed that numbers of the electorate in urban and country areas should not be equated because of the greater problems of looking after a widely dispersed electorate in a country area.

- 4.3 Mr. B. Lewis representing the Avon County Council stated that while there was no objection to the addition of a fourth councillor for Yatton Ward there would be objection to an earlier suggestion that Yatton and Cleeve should form one 3-member ward with Kenn and Kingston Seymour grouped with Tickenham to form

a single member ward. Tickenham was in the North Somerset parliamentary constituency while the other parishes were in the Weston-Super-Mare parliamentary constituency. Similarly the parishes were in two County Council divisions.

4.4. Mr. A. Rider representing the Weston-Super-Mare Liberals drew attention to the fact that the addition of a fourth district councillor for the ward would bring the total number of district councillors up to 60.

4.5 Mr. D.L. Overton, Secretary, and Mr. R.J. Smith Chief Development Plan Officer, Woodspring District Council, stated that the 1975 electoral register showed an increase from 5229 to 5260 over the 1974 figure. No major new development was expected to take place in the ward before 1979 as there were environmental and traffic problems to be overcome. Any major proposals for industrial development would probably be included in the Avon County Structure Plan which would be available in draft for consultation in 1977.

Assessment

4.6 It is necessary to consider the suggestion that the number of councillors for the proposed Yatton Ward should be increased from 3 to 4 in the context of the Commission's policy (c.f. paragraph 13 of their letter of the 13th May 1974 to the Chief Executive, Woodspring District Council) that whether there are to be whole council elections or elections by thirds the number of councillors per ward should not exceed 3 unless there are very exceptional circumstances. While the problems

of representing mixed urban and country areas are well understood it cannot be said that the situation in the proposed Yatton Ward will be exceptional since similar groupings are not uncommon. No immediate industrial development on a large scale is projected. Moreover in view of the entitlement for the ward of 2.89, falling by 1979 to 2.58, the allocation of 3 councillors is fully adequate. Accordingly I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals
for the Yatton Ward remain unaltered.

Banwell WardCommission's Proposals

- 5.1 Under the Commission's proposals Banwell Ward comprises the parishes of Banwell, Kewstoke, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence and returns 2 district councillors.

Representations

- 5.2 Mr. L.M. Chew representing the St. George's Ward Action Committee stated that Kewstoke, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence parishes did not wish to be amalgamated with Banwell Parish. Kewstoke and Banwell were 9 miles distant at their furthest points and Kewstoke's scattered population was mostly engaged in agriculture with some tourist trade. Banwell was a centre of light industry. There was, however, a community of interest between Banwell (St. George's) and the three parishes e.g. children from Puxton, Wick St. Lawrence and Banwell (St. George's) shared the same schools and the Puxton Village Hall was used by Banwell (St. George's). Banwell (South) was a more self-contained community. The three parishes of Puxton, Wick St. Lawrence and Kewstoke with Banwell (St. George's) had a combined electorate on 1974 figures of 1476 and should form a separate Ward returning 1 councillor. Banwell (South) having a 1974 electorate of 2073 should also form a separate Ward returning 1 councillor. He pointed out that Banwell (St. George's) had been split physically by the M5 with the greater part lying to the west of the motorway. This might well justify a corresponding revision of the parish ward boundary which would be acceptable as the boundary between his

proposed wards but section 78 (2) and Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1972, did not appear to allow this at present. The St. George's Action Committee had expressed dissatisfaction about their representation on the District Council especially on planning matters and had written to Avon County Council requesting that Banwell (St. George's) should form a separate parish council. They considered that there were religious, family and educational links between Banwell (St. George's) and the three parishes.

5.3 Mrs. J. Gwyn Woodspring District Councillor for Banwell and member of Banwell Parish Council put in a statement (Document 3) and said that the first choice of Banwell Parish Council was to retain the present arrangements whereby as a separate ward they returned 1 District Councillor and the parishes of Kewstoke, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence jointly did the same. However, if another solution were to be adopted Banwell parishioners were adamant that the parish should not be split. West Wick, Way Wick and Rolstone which form a considerable part of Banwell (St. George's) have close historic and personal ties with Banwell (South) The St. George's Action Committee had come into being only recently to discuss certain planning difficulties although the idea of a separate parish council for Banwell (St. George's) had been raised some years ago. There was a case for revising the boundary between the Banwell parish wards in view of the coming of the motorway and this should be looked at first if the splitting of the proposed Banwell Ward were considered at any time in the future.

5.4 Mr. A Horry Woodspring District Councillor for Kewstoke, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence and Vice-Chairman, Kewstoke Parish Council put in a statement (Document 4) and plan (Document 5) and said that Kewstoke did not wish to be dominated by the proposed new Ward and that undue attention had been paid to trying to obtain numerical equality in representation. In area Banwell had 497⁴ acres and Kewstoke, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence together had 4866 acres. The existing arrangements were best and there was little merit in change since the total number of councillors would be the same for the proposed ward. The re-alignment of the boundary of Banwell (St. George's) should be studied in relation to the new natural division created by the motorway bearing in mind that the majority of the population were now on the west side of the M5 while the hamlets of Rolstone, Way Wick and West Wick which had close links with Banwell lay to the east. Mr. L.G. Parson Chairman, Kewstoke Parish Council, agreed as did Mr. M.J. Redman, Chairman, Wick St. Lawrence Parish Meeting.

5.5 Mr. R.J. Smith, Chief Development Plan Officer, Woodspring District Council, said that any major development could be expected in the Weston-Super-Mare Wards rather than in Banwell Ward.

Assessment

5.6 Under the Commission's proposals the 1974 electorate of 3549 produces an entitlement of 1.96 for the ward falling to 1.93 on a 1979 electorate of 4000. If the Ward were divided as suggested by the St. George's Action Committee the result would be as follows:-

	<u>1974</u>		<u>1979</u>	
	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Puxton)				
Wick St. Lawrence)	1476	0.80	1550	0.74
Kewstoke)				
Banwell)				
(St. George's))				
Banwell (South)	2073	1.15	2450	1.18

If the existing arrangements were maintained on the 1974 electorate the figures would be

	<u>1974</u>	
	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Puxton)		
Wick St. Lawrence)	1042	0.58
Kewstoke)		
Banwell	2507	1.39

Banwell does differ in character from the other three rural parishes and the Commission's proposal cannot be regarded as an ideal solution. However, the difficulty about splitting Banwell Parish and tacking Banwell (St. George's) on to Puxton, Wick St. Lawrence and Kewstoke is that Banwell is resolutely opposed to such a division and this, rather than the slightly worse entitlement figures that would result, persuades me that the St. George's Action Committee's suggestion is not the right one.

The retention of the existing arrangements would satisfy most of those concerned but would produce an entitlement figure for the Puxton, Wick St. Lawrence and Kewstoke Ward of only 0.58, or 42% below the average, on the 1974 electorate while Banwell would be substantially under-represented with an entitlement figure of 1.39. Little growth can be expected in this Ward before 1979. Since the coming of the M5 Motorway Banwell (St. George's) has been physically divided and this division would seem to form a good basis for a re-alignment of the ward boundary. Were this to be done there would, in my view, be a stronger case for two single-member wards with that part of Banwell (St. George's) to the west of the motorway included with Banwell (South) in a single-member ward. In the present circumstances, however, I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals
for the Banwell Ward remain
unaltered.

Gordano and North Weston WardsCommission's Proposals

- 6.1 Under the Commission's proposals the Gordano Ward comprises the parishes of Tickenham, Portbury, Clapton-in-Gordano, Walton-in-Gordano and Weston-in-Gordano and returns 1 district councillor. North Weston Ward consists of the parish of North Weston and also returns 1 district councillor.

Representations

- 6.2 Mr. A. Reed representing Portbury Parish Council submitted that there had been no proper consultation with the Parish Council as required by Section 60 of the Local Government Act, 1972. He referred to the correspondence between the Parish Council and Woodspring District Council. There had been no effective consultation between July and October 1974. The letter signed jointly by the Chairmen of the Parish Councils of Clapton-in-Gordano, Weston-in-Gordano, Walton-in-Gordano, Portbury and North Weston dated the 18th October 1974 to Woodspring specifying their objections to the District Council's proposals had been replied to only in a short letter dated the 25th October 1974 stating that after consideration it had been decided to make no change in the proposals. This did not comply with the statutory duty to consult in the light of the decisions in Rollo and anor. v. Ministry of Town and Country Planning 1948 1AER 13 and Agricultural Horticultural and Forestry Industrial Trading Board v. Aylesbury Mushrooms Ltd 1971 1AER 280. The Commission's

proposals for Woodspring were invalid and the warding arrangements should be revised so as to provide more district councillors for rural areas and less for urban areas. As regards the proposals for Gordano Ward, under present arrangements 2 councillors represent the 5 parishes in the Gordano Valley. Under the Commission's proposals 1 councillor would represent North Weston Parish and 1 councillor the remaining four parishes and Tickenham as well. Five parishes would be too much for 1 councillor to represent properly. The number of the electorate was an insufficient guide. Due regard should be had to geography and the likely pressure on land near Portbury resulting from the £28 m. docks scheme intended for the Port of Bristol. The proposed Gordano and North Weston Wards should be merged.

6.3 Mr. L.J. Mason representing a group of residents of Weston-in-Gordano referred to his letter of the 26th November 1974 to the Commission. North Weston Parish had become urban in character and almost part of the town of Portishead whereas the other 5 parishes were rural in character. If Gordano and North Weston Wards were merged, North Weston would contribute over half the electorate and this, together with the easier communications enjoyed by a more compact area would tend to favour urban electors at the expense of rural ones. The Gordano Valley was an area of Great Landscape Value and there had been difficulties over refuse tipping within it. North Weston should be separately represented and he supported the Commission's proposal.

- 6.4 Mrs. M. McEwen-Smith representing Tickenham Parish Council supported the Commission's proposal. If, however, an additional councillor were permissible, he should be allocated to Gordano Ward. Mr. W. Surrey, Woodspring District Councillor for Tickenham, Kenn and Kingston Seymour also supported the Commission's proposal. On the point about consultation, he stated that there had been a Special Meeting of a Sub-Committee of the District Council on the 8th October 1974 to which those interested had been invited but the Gordano representative did not attend.
- 6.5 Mr. B. Lewis as Avon County Councillor for the Gordano Valley supported the Commission's proposal and said that the local residents were in favour of the split between Gordano and North Weston. In a combined Ward North Weston would be in a dominant position. Avon County Council had no observations.
- 6.6 Mr. D.L. Overton, Secretary, Woodspring District Council said that particulars of his Council's proposals had been circulated to district councillors and to clerks of parish councils in August 1974 and Portbury should have been aware of them. A report had been made to the Council and all members would have known of this. In view of the strict time-table consultation had been exemplary and fuller than in some other districts.
- 6.7 I attach a letter from Mr. W.J.R. Meere of Weston-in-Gordano which was handed in to me (Document 6)

Assessment

6.8 Consideration will no doubt be given by the Commission's legal advisers to the submission by Mr. A. Reed that the statutory requirements about consultation have not been complied with and that as a result the Commission's proposals for Woodspring are invalid.

6.9 If the Portbury Parish Council's suggestion for the merger of Gordano and North Weston Wards were adopted the entitlements would compare with the Commission's proposal which would be as shown in the following table:

	<u>1974</u>		<u>1979</u>	
	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Gordano	1851)	1.02)	1900)	0.92)
) 3948) 2.18) 4600) 2.22
North Weston	2097)	1.16)	2700)	1.30)

On the 1979 figures, it will be noted, the preponderance of North Weston electors becomes greater than at present. The parish councils are divided on the question. Tickenham are firmly opposed to a merger. Weston-in-Gordano, who were not represented at the meeting, are not apparently pursuing their earlier objection to the proposals. Walton-in-Gordano, in their letter of 19th August 1974 to the Woodspring District Council, stated that a combined ward of 6 parishes would be unacceptable unless the number of Councillors were increased from 2 to 3. Such an increase would,

in my view, be unjustifiable having regard to the entitlements. Portbury, Clapton-in-Gordano and North Weston favour the combined ward. Both cases are arguable but on balance I am persuaded that there is a difference of character between, on the one hand, Tickenham and the rural parishes of the Gordano Valley and, on the other hand the relatively urban North Weston Parish. A further consideration is the undesirability of bringing into being a ward containing a substantial proportion of unwilling parishes unless there are very clear advantages in so doing. Accordingly I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposals
for the Gordano and North Weston
Wards remain unaltered.

Weston-Super Mare Ashcombe Ward
 North Ward
 South Ward
 West Ward

Commission's Proposals

7.1 Under the Commission's proposals each of these wards returns 3 councillors and the entitlements are as follows:

	<u>1974</u>	
	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Ashcombe	5865	3.24
North	5295	2.93
South	5750	3.18
West	5125	2.83

Representations

7.2 Mr. E. Lloyd, Chairman, Weston-Super-Mare Labour Party and Leader of the Labour Group, Woodspring District Council supported by Mr. A. Gosnall, Weston-Super-Mare Co-operative Party, proposed that the Forest Drive area, which is shown Marked 'A' on the attached plan (Document 7) and had a 1974 electorate of 198 should be transferred from Ashcombe Ward to West Ward and that the Milton Brow area, which is shown marked 'B' on the plan and had a 1974 electorate of 597 should be transferred from North Ward to Ashcombe Ward. Future growth of West Ward had been optimistically assessed and was likely to lag behind planning forecasts. The Forest Drive area consisted of types of houses that had more in common with West Ward, which it would strengthen, than with the remainder of Ashcombe Ward. In compensation the Milton Brow area should be taken out of North

Ward and transferred to Ashcombe Ward. In the absence of Councillor M.P. Watts, Mr. Lloyd referred also to his suggestion that the Bridge Road area which is shown on the attached plan (Document 8) and had a 1974 electorate of 437 should be transferred from South Ward to Ashcombe Ward with which it had a greater affinity. It would also be more convenient for the elderly to get to Ashcombe Ward Polling Station than to the South Ward Polling Station. Councillor Watts agreed with the transfer of Forest Drive as proposed by the Labour Party.

7.3 Mr. B. Lewis, Avon County Council, stated that there were no objections to these proposals.

7.4 Mr. A. Rider, Weston-Super-Mare Liberals, supported the Labour Party submission that the Forest Drive area should go from Ashcombe to West Ward. He considered that the electorate of the Forest Drive area might well grow to 500. He would not object to the transfer of the Bridge Road area from South to Ashcombe, but Milton Brow, which was a self-contained area, should remain in North Ward.

Assessment

7.5 The effects of the transfers proposed based on the 1974 electorate would be

Labour Party

West Ward	gain	198
North Ward	loss	597
Ashcombe Ward	net gain	319

Mr. Watts

West Ward	gain	198
South Ward	loss	437
Ashcombe Ward	net gain	239

The effects on electorates and entitlements would be as shown in the following table. Entitlements under the Commission's proposals are shown in brackets.

	<u>No. of Cllrs</u>	<u>Labour Party</u>		<u>Mr. Watts</u>	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Ashcombe	3 (3.24)	6184	3.42	6104	3.38
North	3 (2.93)	4698	2.60	-	-
South	3 (3.18)	-	-	5313	2.94
West	3 (2.83)	5323	2.94	5323	2.94

There would appear to be good reasons for the suggested transfer of the Forest Drive area to West Ward, for it was not disputed that, partly as a result of its geographical limitations, development in this ward has lagged behind in the past and may well continue to do so. The Labour Party's second proposal, that the Milton Brow area should go from North Ward to Ashcombe Ward in compensation, seems to have less to recommend it than Mr. Watts' alternative, that the Bridge Road area should transfer from South Ward to Ashcombe Ward. On the 1974 figures, Mr. Watts' proposal improves the entitlement for South Ward (3.18 to 2.94) and West Ward (2.83 to 2.94) at the expense of making the position in Ashcombe Ward (3.24 to 3.38) slightly worse although on the 1979 projection the Ashcombe figure should improve somewhat. Mr. Watts' proposal seems to offer some advantage over the Commission's proposal and on balance I prefer it. Accordingly I

RECOMMEND that the boundaries of the proposed Weston-Super-Mare Ashcombe, West and South Wards be varied in accordance with the proposal of Councillor M.P. Watts as illustrated on the plan annexed (Document 8)

Easton-in-Gordano WardCommission's Proposals

- 8.1 Under the Commission's proposal this ward returns 2 district councillors and by virtue of the scheme for election of the Council by thirds, the election of 1 councillor occurs in the 1st year and 1 in the 3rd year.

Representations

- 8.2 Note Before proceeding with this matter I drew attention to the doubt that exists about the legality of the Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council's suggestion and pointed out that any discussion and recommendation would be subject to the advice received by the Commission.

Mr. G.H. Hughes Clerk of the Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council said that the 2 councillors for Easton-in-Gordano Ward should be elected in the same year so as to save the expense of having two separate elections. The suggestion if adopted would have no material effect on the scheme for election by thirds shown at Annex B. to the Commission's draft proposals of February 1975 but would simply mean that a total of 20 councillors instead of 19 would be elected in the first year and a total of 19 instead of 20 in the third year.

8.3 Mr. A. Rider speaking as a member of the Woodspring District Council and a parish councillor said that if the suggestion were accepted other wards might wish to make similar applications. The proposal would conflict with the principle of election by thirds and should be resisted.

Assessment

8.4 While the effect of the Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council's proposal would, of itself, be as stated by Mr. Hughes, there are several other wards which return 2 district councillors and these would have an equally valid case for holding a single election for both members. If the principle were accepted for Easton-in-Gordano other wards might make similar requests and this would seem to offer possibilities of dispute as to the years in which elections should take place and other questions. Even if the suggestion is legally compatible with the scheme for the election of the Council by thirds I doubt whether it offers any advantages on balance and I

RECOMMEND that the Commission's proposal for the election of Councillors for the Easton-in-Gordano Ward remain unaltered.

Bernie Leigh

SKV August 1975

WOODSPRING DISTRICT: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBERS OF COUNCILLORS

NAME OF WARD	NO OF COUNCILLORS
BACKWELL	2
BANWELL	2
BLAGDON	1
CHURCHILL	1
CLEVEDON CENTRAL	1
CLEVEDON EAST	1
CLEVEDON NORTH	1
CLEVEDON SOUTH	1
CLEVEDON WALTON	1
CLEVEDON WEST	1
CONGRESBURY	1
EASTON IN GORDANO	2
GORDANO	1
HUTTON	1
LOCKING	1
LONG ASHTON	2
NAILSEA EAST	2
NAILSEA NORTH & WEST	3
NORTH WESTON	1
PORTISHEAD CENTRAL	1
PORTISHEAD COAST	1
PORTISHEAD SOUTH	1
PORTISHEAD WEST	1
WESTON-SUPER-MARE ASHCOMBE	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE EAST	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE ELLENBOROUGH	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE NORTH	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE SOUTH	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE UPHILL	3
WESTON-SUPER-MARE WEST	3
WINFORD	1
WINSCOMBE	2
WRAXALL	1
WRINGTON	1
YATTON	3

ELECTION BY THIRDS

ORDER OF RETIREMENT AND PARISH ELECTIONS

ORDER OF RETIREMENT

NAME OF WARD	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
Backwell	2	1	-	1 PE
Banwell	2	1 PE	-	1
Blagdon	1	-	1 PE	-
Churchill	1	1 PE	-	-
Clevedon Central	1	-	1)	-
Clevedon East	1	-	1)	-
Clevedon North	1	-	1)	-
Clevedon South	1	-	1)	-
Clevedon Walton	1	-	1)	-
Clevedon West	1	-	1)	-
Congresbury	1	1 PE	-	-
Easton-in Gordano	2	1	-	1 PE
Gordano	1	-	1 PE	-
Hutton	1	-	1 PE	-
Locking	1	-	-	1 PE
Long Ashton	2	1	-	1 PE
Nailsea East	2	1	1 PE)	-
Nailsea North & West	3	1	1 PE)	1
North Weston	1	-	-	1 PE
Portishead Central	1	-	-	1)
Portishead Coast	1	-	-	1)
Portishead South	1	-	-	1)
Portishead West	1	-	-	1)
Weston-Super-Mare Ashcombe	3	1	1	1
Weston-Super-Mare East	3	1	1	1
Weston-Super-Mare Ellenborough	3	1	1	1

WOODSPRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

ELECTION BY THIRDS

ORDER OF RETIREMENT AND PARISH ELECTIONS

ORDER OF RETIREMENT

NAME OF WARD	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
Weston-Super-Mare North	3	1	1	1
Weston-Super-Mare South	3	1	1	1
Weston-Super-Mare Uphill	3	1	1	1
Weston-Super-Mare West	3	1	1	1
Winford	1	-	1 PE	-
Winscombe	2	1	-	1 PE
Wraxall	1	1 PE	-	-
Wrington	1	1 PE	-	-
Yatton	3	1	1 PE	1
	59	19	20	20

PE = Parish Elections for any parishes within the ward which have parish councils.

For the purpose of this table, year 2 is deemed to be the normal parish election year ie 1976, 1979 and every fourth year thereafter.

DISTRICT OF WOODSPRING. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARIES. SCHEDULE 4

NOTE : Where the boundary is described as following a road, railway or river it should be deemed to follow the centre line of these features unless otherwise stated.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE WEST WARD

Commencing at a point where the western boundary of the District meets the southern boundary of Kewstoke CP at Low Water Level; thence southeastwards along the said southern boundary to Beach Road; thence southwestwards along the said road and continuing along the path from the said road to the unnamed road leading from Worlebury Hill Reservoir to Worlebury Hill Road; thence eastwards along the said unnamed road and Worlebury Hill Road to a point opposite the eastern boundary of Weston Woods; thence generally southwards to and along said boundary to the northern boundary of No 14 Underwood Avenue; thence southeastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 14 to 2 Underwood Avenue to the rear boundary of No 19 Upper Bristol Road; thence northeastwards along the rear boundaries of Nos 19 to 35 Upper Bristol Road to the access road to Milton Quarry; thence southeastwards along said road to Upper Bristol Road; thence southwestwards along said road and Bristol Road Lower to Manor Road thence southwestwards along said road to Milton Road; thence southwestwards along said road to Gerard Road; thence northwestwards and westwards along Gerard Road, Boulevard and Waterloo Street and continuing westwards and northwards along South Parade to Knightstone Road; thence westwards along said road to National Grid Reference ST 3166361748; thence due westwards to the western boundary of the District; thence generally northeastwards along the said boundary to the point of commencement.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE NORTH WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of West Ward meets the southern boundary of Kewstoke CP; thence generally eastwards along the said southern boundary and continuing generally southeastwards and southwards along the western boundaries of Wick St Lawrence CP and Banwell CP to New Bristol Road; thence westwards along said road to High Street; thence generally westwards along said street and continuing along Spring Hill and Upper Bristol Road to the eastern boundary of West Ward thence generally northwestwards, westwards and northeastwards along said boundary to the point of commencement.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE ASHCOMBE WARD

Commencing at a point where the eastern boundary of West Ward meets the southern

CLEVEDON EAST WARD

The East Ward of the parish of Clevedon as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

CLEVEDON NORTH WARD

The North Ward of the parish of Clevedon as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

CLEVEDON WEST WARD

The west ward of the parish of Clevedon as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

CLEVEDON CENTRAL WARD

The Central Ward of the parish of Clevedon as proposed by the Woodspring District Council .

PORTISHEAD COAST WARD

The No 3 Ward of the parish of Portishead as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

PORTISHEAD CENTRAL WARD

The No 2 Ward of the parish of Portishead as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

PORTISHEAD WEST WARD

The No 4 Ward of the parish of Portishead as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

PORTISHEAD SOUTH WARD

The No 1 Ward of the parish of Portishead as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

NAILSEA NORTH AND WEST WARD

The North Ward and the West Ward of the parish of Nailsea as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

NAILSEA EAST WARD

The East Ward of the parish of Nailsea as proposed by the Woodspring District Council.

NORTH WESTON WARD

The parish of North Weston.

GORDANO WARD

The parishes of Tickenham
Portbury
Clapton-in-Gordano
Walton-in-Gordano
Weston-in-Gordano

EASTON-IN-GORDANO WARD

The parish of Easton-in-Gordano.

WRAXALL WARD

The parishes of Wraxall
Abbots Leigh

LONG ASHTON WARD

The parish of Long Ashton

YATTON WARD

The parishes of Yatton
Cleeve
Kenn
Kingston Seymour

BACKWELL WARD

The parishes of Backwell
Flax Bourton
Barrow Gurney
Brockley

BANWELL WARD

The parishes of Banwell
Kewstoke
Puxton
Wick St Lawrence

CONGRESBURY WARD

The parish of Congresbury

WRINGTON WARD

The parish of Wrington

WINFORD WARD

The parishes of Dundry
Winford

LOCKING WARD

The parish of Locking

HUTTON WARD

The parishes of Hutton
Bleadon

WINSCOMBE WARD

The parishes of Winscombe
Loxton

CHURCHILL WARD

The parish of Churchill

BLAGDON WARD

The parishes of Blagdon
Burrington
Butcombe