

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for the City of Nottingham

Report to the Secretary of State for the
Environment, Transport and the Regions

May 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the City of Nottingham.

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Nottingham is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

16 May 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 18 May 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the City of Nottingham under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 1999 and undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 88) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Nottingham.

We recommend that Nottingham City Council should be served by 55 councillors representing 20 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold whole council elections every four years.

The local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the City Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the City of Nottingham on 18 May 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 14 December 1999, after which we undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Nottingham:

- **in 11 of the 27 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 88-89) are that:

- **Nottingham City Council should have 55 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of seven;**
- **elections of the whole council should continue to take place every four years.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each city councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In all the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the city average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in every ward expected to vary by no more than 7 per cent from the average for the city in 2004.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 27 June 2000:

**The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU**

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Arboretum	2	Park ward (part); Lenton ward (part); Radford ward (part); St Ann's ward (part)	Large map
2	Aspley & Strelley	3	Aspley ward; Strelley ward (part)	Large map
3	Basford	3	Basford ward (part); Portland ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part); Radford ward (part)	Large map
4	Berridge	3	Basford ward (part); Forest ward (part); Radford ward (part)	Large map
5	Bestwood	3	Bestwood Park ward; Byron ward (part); Basford ward (part)	Large map
6	Bilborough	3	Bilborough ward; Beechdale ward (part); Strelley ward (part)	Large map
7	Bridge	2	Bridge ward; Park ward (part); Trent ward (part)	Large map
8	Bulwell	3	Bulwell West ward; Bulwell East ward (part)	Large map
9	Bulwell Forest	3	Bulwell East ward (part); Byron ward (part); Portland ward (part)	Large map
10	Clifton North	3	Wilford ward; Clifton West ward (part); Clifton East ward (part)	Large map and Map A1
11	Clifton South	3	Clifton West ward (part); Clifton East ward (part)	Map A1
12	Dales	3	Greenwood ward (part); Manvers ward (part); Trent ward (part)	Large map
13	Dunkirk & Lenton	2	Abbey ward (part); Park ward (part)	Large map
14	Leen Valley	2	Beechdale ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part); Radford ward (part); Lenton ward (part)	Large map
15	Mapperley	3	Greenwood ward (part); Mapperley ward (part); St Ann's ward (part)	Large map
16	Radford & Park	3	Park ward (part); Lenton ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part)	Large map
17	Sherwood	3	Basford ward (part); Forest ward (part); Mapperley ward (part); Sherwood ward (part)	Large map
18	St Ann's	3	Manvers ward (part); Park ward (part); St Ann's ward (part); Trent ward (part)	Large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
19	Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey	2	Wollaton ward (part); Abbey ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part)	Large map
20	Wollaton West	3	Wollaton ward (part); Abbey ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part)	Large map

Notes: 1 The whole city is unparished.

2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Nottingham

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Arboretum	2	7,331	3,666	-3	7,986	3,993	4
2 Aspley & Strelley	3	10,795	3,598	-4	10,722	3,574	-7
3 Basford	3	11,350	3,783	0	11,598	3,866	1
4 Berridge	3	12,257	4,086	9	12,240	4,080	6
5 Bestwood	3	11,656	3,885	3	11,587	3,862	0
6 Bilborough	3	10,903	3,634	-3	10,795	3,598	-6
7 Bridge	2	7,453	3,727	-1	8,017	4,009	4
8 Bulwell	3	11,643	3,881	3	11,702	3,901	1
9 Bulwell Forest	3	11,314	3,771	0	11,184	3,728	-3
10 Clifton North	3	10,733	3,578	-5	11,147	3,716	-3
11 Clifton South	3	10,580	3,527	-6	11,167	3,722	-3
12 Dales	3	11,511	3,837	2	12,006	4,002	4
13 Dunkirk & Lenton	2	7,866	3,933	4	7,847	3,924	2
14 Leen Valley	2	7,364	3,682	-2	7,553	3,777	-2
15 Mapperley	3	11,932	3,977	6	12,155	4,052	5
16 Radford & Park	3	11,124	3,708	-2	11,707	3,902	2
17 Sherwood	3	11,519	3,840	2	11,470	3,823	-1
18 St Ann's	3	10,818	3,606	-4	11,037	3,679	-4
19 Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey	2	6,866	3,433	-9	7,547	3,774	-2
20 Wollaton West	3	12,070	4,023	7	11,970	3,990	4
Totals	55	207,085	-	-	211,437	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,765	-	-	3,844	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Nottingham City Council's submission.

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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the City of Nottingham. We are reviewing the eight districts in Nottinghamshire 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 currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Nottingham. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 80). Since undertaking that review, the City of Nottingham has become a unitary authority (1 April 1998).

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie 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 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the City Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. 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 general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district 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 a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. For all unitary councils, it proposed elections by thirds. It also refers to local accountability being maximised where the whole electorate in a council's area is involved in elections each time they take place, thereby pointing to a pattern of three-member wards for Nottingham to reflect a system of elections by thirds. The proposals were taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Nottinghamshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 18 May, when we wrote to Nottingham City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Nottinghamshire Local Councils Association, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city and the Members of the European Parliament for the East Midlands region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 30 August 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 14 December 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Nottingham*, and ended on 21 February 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The City of Nottingham is surrounded by the county of Nottinghamshire, and is situated on the banks of the River Trent, with a large housing estate on the southern bank. The city covers an area of approximately 7,500 hectares and with an electorate of 207,085 is one of the larger unitary authorities in the country.

14 Nottingham City was granted city status by Queen Victoria in 1897, and the City Council became an all-purpose (unitary) authority on 1 April 1998. The city centre lies to the north of the River Trent, and acts as a focus for the residential areas surrounding it. The city is well served by transport links, with the M1 motorway running to the west of the city and the East Midlands railway line linking the city with Leicester and London. The city is home to two universities, as well as Notts County Football Club and Nottingham Race Course.

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

16 The electorate of the city is 207,085 (February 1999). The Council presently has 55 members who are elected from 27 wards. One ward, Byron, is currently represented by three councillors, while the remainder are represented by two councillors. The whole council is elected every four years.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been a slight decrease in the electorate in Nottingham City, with around 2 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago. At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,765 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 3,844 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 11 of the 27 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average, of which five wards vary by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Wollaton ward where the councillor represents 42 per cent more electors than the city average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Nottingham

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey	2	10,272	5,136	36	10,190	5,095	33
2 Aspley	2	7,222	3,611	-4	7,176	3,588	-7
3 Basford	2	7,512	3,756	0	7,465	3,733	-3
4 Beechdale	2	7,184	3,592	-5	7,168	3,584	-7
5 Bestwood Park	2	6,520	3,260	-13	6,497	3,249	-15
6 Bilborough	2	5,340	2,670	-29	5,296	2,648	-31
7 Bridge	2	6,790	3,395	-10	6,722	3,361	-13
8 Bulwell East	2	7,513	3,757	0	7,565	3,783	-2
9 Bulwell West	2	8,662	4,331	15	8,623	4,312	12
10 Byron	3	9,987	3,329	-12	9,889	3,296	-14
11 Clifton East	2	5,871	2,936	-22	5,812	2,906	-24
12 Clifton West	2	8,185	4,093	9	9,312	4,656	21
13 Forest	2	7,934	3,967	5	7,959	3,980	4
14 Greenwood	2	7,937	3,969	5	8,250	4,125	7
15 Lenton	2	7,551	3,776	0	8,255	4,128	7
16 Manvers	2	7,393	3,697	-2	7,375	3,688	-4
17 Mapperley	2	8,157	4,079	8	8,171	4,086	6
18 Park	2	8,297	4,149	10	9,662	4,831	26
19 Portland	2	7,685	3,843	2	7,927	3,964	3
20 Radford	2	6,616	3,308	-12	6,808	3,404	-11
21 Robin Hood	2	9,154	4,577	22	9,824	4,912	28
22 Sherwood	2	6,506	3,253	-14	6,568	3,284	-15
23 St Ann's	2	8,029	4,015	7	7,991	3,996	4
24 Strelley	2	6,054	3,027	-20	5,997	2,999	-22
25 Trent	2	6,794	3,397	-10	7,171	3,586	-7

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Wilford	2	7,257	3,629	-4	7,190	3,595	-6
27 Wollaton	2	10,663	5,332	42	10,574	5,287	38
Totals	55	207,085	-	-	211,437	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,765	-	-	3,844	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Nottingham 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Bilborough ward are currently relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while electors in Wollaton ward are significantly under-represented by 42 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received six representations, including four city-wide schemes from the City Council, Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum, City of Nottingham Conservative Federation and City of Nottingham Liberal Democrats. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Nottingham*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the City Council's proposals in the north and west of the city and upon the Forum's proposals in the centre and south of the city. However we put forward our own proposals for Arboretum, Bridge and Radford & Park wards. We proposed that:

- Nottingham City Council should be served by 55 councillors, the same as at present, representing 20 wards;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of seven wards;

Draft Recommendation

Nottingham City Council should comprise 55 councillors, serving 20 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards varying by no more than 9 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 7 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 29 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of the City Council and the Commission.

Nottingham City Council

22 The City Council stated that our draft proposals for a mixed two- and three-member ward pattern were inconsistent with our published advice and guidance. It stated that it was concerned that, given the possibility of the introduction of annual elections by the government, our proposals would create a “difficult system ... for the public to understand”, as opposed to its own Stage One scheme which recommended a pattern of all three-member wards. It also proposed that our proposed Crane ward be renamed, however, while the names Aspley and Strelley were discussed within the Council, no agreement had been reached.

Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum

23 Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum (‘The Forum’), supported our draft recommendations, putting forward two slight amendments to our proposed Radford & Park ward. It proposed running the western ward boundary between Radford & Park and Leen Valley wards along the railway line, stating that our proposed boundary would “split the historic community of Radford in half”. It also proposed a minor amendment to our proposed south-western boundary of Radford & Park ward in order to unite the Park Estate within a single ward. The Forum supported the ward naming in our draft proposals stating that “ward names should be based on existing place names wherever possible”, and strongly endorsed the ward names of Dunkirk & Lenton, Radford & Park and Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey.

The City of Nottingham Liberal Democrats

24 The City of Nottingham Liberal Democrats (‘the Liberal Democrats’) supported our proposals in over half of the wards but stated that “whilst a good number of communities are recognised and provided for ... a major exception to this is Basford community.” The Liberal Democrats proposed reconfiguring four wards: Vernon (to be renamed Basford), Leen Valley, Radford & Park and Berridge, stating this would create a “Basford ward [based] on Basford community boundaries”. The Liberal Democrats also opposed our draft recommendations for Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards, stating that the school catchment areas to the north of the city better supported their Stage One proposal.

Members of Parliament

25 Alan Simpson MP congratulated the Commission on its “overall approach” and praised the Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum “for their openness and for the seriousness with which they pursued local consultations”. He also proposed moving the western boundary of Radford & Park ward, contending that it should consequently be represented by three-members while the number

of councillors representing Leen Valley ward should be reduced to two. Graham Allen MP accepted in general that the Commission had “done a good job”, but opposed our proposed Leen Valley Ward, which he considered would split areas from the communities to which they relate.

Other Representations

26 A further 24 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from five city councillors, five local organisations and 14 local residents.

27 Councillor Edwards (representing Mapperley ward) proposed that the boundary between Sherwood and Mapperley wards should run to the rear of properties on the north side of Morley Avenue which he stated was “nearer to the core of Mapperley than many of the streets in the new Mapperley ward”.

28 The Basford & District Local History Society argued that the ward names of Basford, Broxtowe and Aspley should be retained as they date back to Anglo-Saxon, Roman and Norman times.

29 A local resident supported our draft recommendations for Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey ward, but proposed a minor amendment to our Radford & Park ward boundaries, also suggesting that Bridge ward be renamed The Meadows & Castle Marina ward. Another local resident accepted our draft recommendations but argued that the ward names of Vernon, Berridge and Crane bore “no resemblance to the local amenities”. He proposed that the ward name Aspley be retained in place of our proposed Crane ward.

30 A further 20 responses were received from the Nottingham Labour Party Local Government Committee, the Radford Credit Union, Lenton & Radford Neighbourhood Association, St Peter’s Parochial Church Council, Councillor Aslam (representing Lenton ward), Councillor Casson (representing Wollaton ward), Councillor Crowley (representing Park ward), Councillor Trimble (representing Park ward) and 12 local residents. These responses were all in support of the proposal put forward by The Forum, to run the boundary between Radford & Park and Leen Valley wards along the railway line (to the west of the proposed boundary), thereby retaining the whole of the Radford community within a single ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

31 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for the City of Nottingham is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, 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 to 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”.

32 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

33 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for 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.

34 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, but we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

35 At Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 2 per cent from 207,085 to 211,437 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be around the city centre, mainly due to the building of student accommodation. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

36 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

37 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume 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.

38 Nottingham City Council is at present served by 55 councillors. At Stage One the City Council and The City of Nottingham Conservative Federation (‘the Conservatives’) proposed a small reduction in council size to 54, while the Liberal Democrats and the Forum both proposed retaining the existing council size of 55. The Conservatives stated that they considered that “there is an arguable case for 60, or even 72 [councillors]” but, although invited to do so, did not submit a scheme for either council size.

39 In our draft recommendations report we stated that we would not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but would be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. In this case, we had four city-wide schemes based broadly upon the existing council size, and we did not receive any persuasive evidence to support a significant increase in council size.

40 During Stage Three we received no further comments on council size. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 55 members.

Electoral Arrangements

41 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the city-wide schemes from the Nottingham City Council, Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum, City of Nottingham Liberal Democrats and City of Nottingham Conservative Federation. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

42 There was little consensus between the schemes with regard either to ward boundaries or the number of councillors per ward and there was limited evidence in support of some of the proposals. The schemes put forward similar council sizes, with the City Council and the Conservatives proposing 54 councillors, a decrease of one councillor, and the Liberal Democrats and the Forum proposing 55 councillors, the same as at present. All four city-wide proposals would also lead to a significant improvement in the level of electoral equality. A variety of ward patterns was proposed, with the City Council proposing a pattern of three-member wards, the Conservatives proposing a pattern of two-member wards, and the Liberal Democrats and the Forum putting forward mixed warding patterns of both two- and three-member wards.

43 Having carefully considered all the submissions received, we concluded that a uniform ward pattern would not be the best approach in reflecting the communities within the city. After visiting the area, we considered that the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria would be achieved through a predominantly three-member ward structure, but that in the city centre and the south-west of the city, community ties would be best reflected by a warding

pattern consisting of two-member wards. We therefore based our draft recommendations on the City Council's scheme in the north and west of the city and upon the Forum's proposals in the centre and south of the city. We believed that this would achieve improved electoral equality whilst having regard to the statutory criteria.

44 At Stage Three the City Council commented on our proposed scheme of two- and three-member wards stating that it "appeared to be less consistent with the Commission's published advice and guidance than that of the City Council's submission" while the Forum commented that a system of two- and three-member wards "would be fair and ... easily understood by voters". Councillor Trimble, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident also stated that two- and three-member wards were more consistent with meeting the identity of local communities.

45 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Clifton East, Clifton West and Wilford wards;
- (b) Bridge, Greenwood, Lenton, Park and Trent wards;
- (c) Abbey, Aspley, Beechdale, Bilborough, Strelley and Wollaton wards;
- (d) Bestwood Park, Bulwell East, Bulwell West and Byron wards;
- (e) Basford, Forest, Portland, Radford and Robin Hood wards;
- (f) Manvers, Mapperley, Sherwood and St Ann's wards;

46 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Clifton East, Clifton West and Wilford wards

47 The three wards of Clifton East, Clifton West and Wilford are each represented by two councillors and are located to the south of the River Trent. Clifton East and Wilford wards currently have 22 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (24 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2004). Clifton West ward currently has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average, increasing to 21 per cent more than the average by 2004.

48 At Stage One, the City Council and the Forum proposed creating two wards to the south of the river, each represented by three councillors, arguing that "the River Trent forms one of the strongest natural boundaries within the City of Nottingham." The Forum proposed a slightly different boundary to that proposed by the City Council between its proposed Clifton North & Wilford and Clifton South wards. Its boundary would run to the south of Nottingham Trent University, along the centre of Glapton Lane and Stanesby Rise and to the rear of the properties on the south side of Lanthwaite Road, Bainton Grove and Glencoe Road, arguing that "the [Nottingham Trent University] campus and Glapton Lane are clear boundaries and Lanthwaite Road is also a dividing line." The Conservatives proposed three two-member wards for the area, largely retaining the existing Wilford ward while modifying the boundary between Clifton East and Clifton West wards to provide better electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats proposed that

the area to the south of the River Trent should be divided between Clifton East and Clifton West wards and that the Wilford area to the north of the A52, and south of the River Trent, should be combined with the Meadows Estate area to the north of the River Trent in a revised Bridge ward.

49 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and were content to put forward the proposals of the Forum as our draft recommendations. We considered that the River Trent did provide a significant barrier between the communities to the north and south and that, on balance, the Forum's proposals best reflected community ties while achieving a reasonable level of electoral equality. However, we proposed that the two three-member wards should be named Clifton North and Clifton South, as proposed by the City Council.

50 At Stage Three we received only one comment regarding our draft recommendations for the area to the south of the River Trent. The Liberal Democrats supported our proposals and as we have received no other comments with regard to our draft recommendations we are content to confirm our proposed Clifton North and Clifton South wards as final, with the number of electors per councillor being 5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the city average respectively (3 per cent fewer in both wards in 2004).

Bridge, Greenwood, Lenton, Park and Trent wards

51 These five two-member wards cover the centre and south-east of the city, including the Meadows Estate and part of the Sneinton area. Bridge and Trent wards currently each have 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average, and are forecast to have 13 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than the average by 2004. Lenton ward currently has equal to the city average number of electors per councillor, but is forecast to have 7 per cent more than the average by 2004. Greenwood and Park wards have 5 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average respectively, and this level of electoral equality is expected to deteriorate to 7 per cent and 26 per cent more than the average by 2004.

52 At Stage One the City Council proposed three wards, each represented by three councillors, covering much of this area. Its proposed Castle ward would incorporate the majority of the current Bridge ward, part of Trent ward and part of Park ward. It proposed that the western part of Park ward should be combined with the southern part of Abbey ward in a new Priory ward, and a new Dales ward, comprising the remainder of Trent ward, together with the southern area of Greenwood ward and Manvers ward. It argued that this would unite the majority of the Sneinton community within one ward. The Council's proposed Arboretum ward would comprise Lenton ward, less the area to the west of Lenton Boulevard, together with the northern area of Park ward, part of St Ann's ward and the southernmost area of Radford ward. It argued that this new ward would form a compact inner city ward, incorporating the whole of Nottingham Trent University. The Forum proposed a mixed pattern of wards for this area. It proposed a two-member The Meadows & Riverside ward, a new three-member Sneinton & Bakersfield ward and a two-member The Park & City Centre ward. It also proposed that the current Lenton ward be divided between the proposed Radford South and Radford North & Hyson Green wards.

53 At Stage One the Conservatives proposed four two-member wards for this area. They proposed a revised Park ward reflecting the current ward less the area to the north, which would form part of a new Arboretum ward. The existing Bridge ward would be combined with the

southern part of Trent ward to form a new Riverside ward, while Lenton ward, less the area to the east of Alfreton Road and west of Lenton Boulevard, would be combined with part of Robin Hood ward to form a new Radford ward. They also proposed that the existing Greenwood ward should be expanded to include the south-eastern area of the existing Trent ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed a three-member Bridge ward, combining the current ward, the majority of the current Trent ward and the Wilford area of Wilford ward, as detailed earlier. They proposed a revised Park ward, comprising the southern part of the current ward and a revised Lenton ward, largely based on the current ward. Both wards would be represented by two councillors. They proposed largely retaining the existing Greenwood ward, represented by two councillors, with the exception of a small area which would form part of a revised Mapperley ward.

54 We considered the representations received at Stage One in relation to this area. We were of the view that the area to the east of Lady Bay Bridge had a greater affinity with the Sneinton area to its north than The Meadows area to its west, and we were content to endorse the City Council's Dales ward. We were not, however, persuaded to combine The Meadows area, to the south of the city centre, with The Park area, to its west, as we considered that these communities share few links or common identity. While we recognised that Derby Road is a significant boundary, we considered that The Park area would be better combined with the Radford area to its north. We therefore proposed an amended Bridge ward, which would reflect the City Council's proposed Castle ward less The Park area and would be represented by two councillors. Our proposed Radford & Park ward would be represented by two councillors and would combine The Park estate, to the east of Harlaxton Drive and west of Maid Marion Way, with that part of Lenton ward to the west of Alfreton Road and east of Lenton Boulevard. Our proposed Arboretum ward would incorporate that part of the existing Park and St Ann's wards to the west of Sherwood Street, south of Gregory Boulevard and north of Alfreton Road and Upper Parliament Street and that part of the existing Radford ward to the east of Chadwick Road. We considered that these proposals would reflect community ties in this area well, and would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. Our proposed two-member Arboretum, Bridge and Radford & Park wards would have 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (with all three wards having 4 per cent more than the average in 2004). Our proposed three-member Dales ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the average initially (4 per cent more in 2004).

55 In response to our draft recommendations for this area we received a total of 24 responses. The Forum proposed running the boundary between Radford & Park and Leen Valley wards along the railway line, to the west of the proposed boundary at Lenton and Radford Boulevards, thereby retaining the whole of the Radford community within a single ward. This proposal would create a three-member Radford & Park ward while the number of councillors representing Leen Valley ward would reduce from three to two. This proposal received support from 23 other respondents at Stage Three, including the Liberal Democrats, the Nottingham Labour Party, an MP, four city councillors, three local community organisations and 13 local residents. The Forum also proposed a minor amendment to our proposed south-western boundary between Radford & Park and Dunkirk & Lenton wards. They proposed that the boundary run south between Barrack Lane and Harlaxton Drive and run behind the houses on the western side of Lenton Avenue. The Forum argued that Barrack Lane is part of the Park Estate and should therefore be included in Radford & Park ward. A local resident argued that our proposed name for Bridge ward had little local meaning and suggested the alternative Meadows and Castle Marina.

56 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and are content to endorse both amendments put forward by the Dunkirk & Lenton Partnership Forum. We consider that these amendments better reflect community links and ties, provide more easily identifiable boundaries and improve the levels of electoral equality in Radford & Park and Leen Valley wards. Having received no further comments, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations with regard to Arboretum, Dales and Bridge wards as final. We carefully considered the name of Bridge ward in light of the views of a local resident but did not feel that the suggested alternative name of Meadows & Castle Marina properly represented community identity in the north of the ward, and given the prominence of three bridges in the south of the ward, are content to put forward the name of Bridge ward as part of our final recommendations.

57 Under our final recommendations Arboretum, Bridge and Radford & Park wards would have 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (4 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent more than the average in 2004). Our proposed three-member Dales ward would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average initially (4 per cent more in 2004).

Abbey, Aspley, Beechdale, Bilborough, Strelley and Wollaton wards

58 These six two-member wards cover the west of the city. Abbey and Wollaton wards currently have 36 per cent and 42 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (33 per cent and 38 per cent more in 2004) while Aspley, Beechdale, Bilborough and Strelley wards have 4 per cent, 5 per cent, 29 per cent and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (7 per cent, 7 per cent, 31 per cent and 22 per cent fewer in 2004).

59 The Council's Stage One proposal put forward a pattern of four three-member wards to cover most of this area. It proposed a new Priory ward, which it argued would unite the whole of the Nottingham University campus within a single ward. It proposed a revised Wollaton ward, a revised Bilborough ward and a new Crane ward to incorporate parts of the existing Strelley, Aspley and Robin Hood wards.

60 The Forum proposed a new two-member Dunkirk & Lenton ward, arguing that this ward would unite the three communities of Dunkirk, Old Lenton and New Lenton. It proposed a new two-member Lenton Abbey & Wollaton East ward comprising the Nottingham University and Sutton Passeys Crescent areas of Abbey ward, the Lenton Abbey area of Wollaton ward and the part of Robin Hood ward to the south of Wollaton Road. Its proposed Wollaton West ward would comprise the remainder of Wollaton and Abbey wards, together with that part of Bilborough ward to the south of Trowell Road. It proposed combining the majority of the existing Bilborough ward with Beechdale ward to form a new three-member Beechdale & Bilborough ward. The Forum proposed a new Broxtowe Estate & Strelley ward, combining the existing Strelley ward with the northern part of Aspley ward, arguing that this ward would bring together similar types of housing. This new ward would be represented by two councillors. It combined the remainder of Aspley ward with the southern part of Portland ward and northern part of Robin Hood ward in a three-member Aspley & Whitemoor ward.

61 The Conservatives proposed seven two-member wards to cover these six existing wards, including a University ward, a Raleigh ward, a Wollaton ward, and an expanded Bilborough ward. They proposed combining part of Beechdale ward with Robin Hood ward, that Strelley ward be expanded to encompass part of Aspley ward, and a revised Aspley ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Abbey ward, enlarged Wollaton and Bilborough wards, a modified Strelley ward and a two-member Aspley & Stockhill ward.

62 We carefully considered the proposals for this area and concluded that the proposals put forward by the Forum would best reflect community identity in its proposed Dunkirk & Lenton, Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey and Wollaton West wards. However we proposed minor modifications to all three wards to provide improved boundaries and better reflect community ties. We proposed that the western boundary of Dunkirk & Lenton ward be amended slightly to run along University Boulevard rather than the northern shore of the boating lake as this is a more easily identifiable boundary. We also proposed minor modifications to The Forum's proposed three-member Wollaton West and two-member Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey wards in order to provide improved boundaries and better reflect community ties. We proposed that the whole of Wollaton Park and all roads leading from Radford Bridge Road be contained within Wollaton West ward. We also proposed retaining the boundary of the railway line, as put forward by the Council and the Conservatives. We were also content to base our draft recommendations on the proposals put forward by the City Council for its proposed Bilborough and Crane wards, which we considered would unite areas with similar interests and community ties and provide good boundaries. However, we also proposed a number of minor amendments to improve electoral equality. We proposed that the eastern boundary of Bilborough ward run along the centre of Beechdale Road for its entire length, including the Aspley Park Drive area in a new Leen Valley ward. We also proposed that those properties accessed from Helston Drive should form part of our proposed Bilborough ward. In order to provide better electoral equality, we proposed that the existing ward boundary to the rear of the properties on Melbourne Road should be retained as the new eastern boundary for our proposed Crane ward.

63 At Stage Three the City Council commented on our proposed naming of Crane ward and stated that, although the Council had discussed the alternatives of Aspley and Strelley, it had not been able to endorse either. The Forum put forward an amendment to the boundary between Dunkirk & Lenton and Radford & Park wards, proposing that the boundary should run between Barrack Lane and Harlaxton Drive as it considers that Barrack Lane is part of the Park Estate. The Liberal Democrats supported our recommendations in Dunkirk & Lenton, Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey, Bilborough and Crane wards, but proposed incorporating parts of Wollaton West into the proposed Leen Valley ward as part of a new scheme for our proposed Vernon ward. A local resident supported our proposals for Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey ward, citing the similarity of the two estates, Lenton Abbey and Middleton Boulevard. The Basford & District Local History Society objected to our proposals to replace the ward name of Aspley, which they stated was a name "dating from Norman times". Councillor Skinner also objected to our proposed Crane ward, stating that it bore "no connection with the area", and suggested retaining the name Aspley, while the Liberal Democrats suggested renaming the ward Aspley & Broxtowe.

64 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three and have decided largely to confirm our draft recommendations. We are content to endorse the slight boundary amendment suggested by the Forum, as it would appear to improve

community links without significantly affecting electoral equality. However, we have not been persuaded to amend the boundary between Wollaton West and Leen Valley wards, as we consider that our draft proposals provide a stronger boundary between Wollaton East and Leen Valley wards and received local support at Stage Three. In view of the objections received to our proposed Crane ward name we propose renaming the ward Aspley & Strelley, to better reflect the communities contained within it. Our final recommendations would result in Aspley & Strelley, Bilborough and Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey wards having 4 per cent, 3 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (7 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent fewer in 2004), with Dunkirk & Lenton and Wollaton West wards having 4 per cent and 7 per cent more electors than the city average initially (2 per cent and 4 per cent more in 2004).

Bestwood Park, Bulwell East, Bulwell West, and Byron wards

65 These four wards are situated in the north of the city. Bestwood Park, Bulwell East and Bulwell West wards are each represented by two councillors, while Byron ward is represented by three councillors. Bestwood Park and Byron wards cover the Bestwood and Top Valley area and currently have 13 per cent and 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average. Bulwell East ward has equal to the city average number of electors per councillor while Bulwell West ward has 15 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average. Byron ward is currently the only three-member ward in Nottingham.

66 At Stage One, the Council proposed reconfiguring the existing four wards to create three wards, each represented by three councillors. It proposed a Bulwell ward comprising the whole of Bulwell West ward and that part of Bulwell East ward to the west of the railway line and Bestwood Road, which it argued would unite “the two parts of Bulwell using the natural boundary of the railway line”. It proposed that the remainder of Bulwell East ward should be combined with that part of Portland ward to the north of Kersall Drive, and that part of Byron ward to the west of Old Farm Road and Muirfield Road, to form a new Bulwell Forest ward. It proposed that the remainder of Byron ward be combined with Bestwood Park ward and that part of Basford ward north of the hospital, to form a new Bestwood ward. It argued that this ward would “include the whole of the Bestwood Park and Bestwood Estate”. At Stage One, The Forum proposed three wards covering the northern part of the city. It proposed a three-member Bulwell West ward, encompassing the existing ward, the western part of Bulwell East ward and the northernmost part of Portland ward. It proposed a two-member Bulwell East ward which would incorporate the existing ward less the area transferred to the proposed Bulwell West ward, and the Highbury Vale area from Portland ward. Its proposed three-member Bestwood & Top Valley ward would comprise the northern parts of the existing Byron and Bestwood Park wards.

67 The Conservatives proposed five two-member wards for this part of the city. They proposed a new Bulwell ward comprising the northern part of the existing Bulwell West ward and the part of Bulwell East ward to the west of the railway line. They proposed that the southern part of Bulwell West ward, broadly to the south of the railway station, should be combined with that part of Portland ward to the west of the railway line and a small section of Robin Hood ward to form a new Cinderhill ward. Their proposed Highbury ward would comprise part of Bulwell East ward together with the majority of the eastern half of Portland ward. They proposed reducing the existing Byron ward and enlarging the existing Bestwood Park ward. Bestwood Park ward would

be renamed Bestwood ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed four wards for this area, dividing the Bulwell area into northern and southern areas. Their proposed two-member Bulwell North ward would incorporate the northern parts of the existing Bulwell East and Bulwell West wards, while the new three-member Bulwell South ward would incorporate the southernmost parts of the existing Bulwell East and Bulwell West wards and northernmost parts of Portland ward. They proposed extending Byron ward southwards to incorporate that part of Basford ward to the north of the hospital, and extending Bestwood Park southwards to incorporate the Longmead Drive area of Basford ward.

68 We carefully considered all the representations received during Stage One and were content to endorse the City Council's proposals for this area. We considered that these proposals would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality and would reflect community ties in the area. In particular, the proposed wards would unite the Main Street shopping area within Bulwell ward, and the Bestwood Park and Bestwood Estate areas in a new Bestwood ward. In addition, the proposed wards would utilise the railway line as an easily identifiable boundary between Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards, and would unite the roads either side of Arnold Road.

69 At Stage Three the City Council did not comment on our draft proposals for this area. The Liberal Democrats objected to our proposals for Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards, preferring their original proposal for the Bulwell area, stating further that the school catchment areas for the area supported their original recommendation. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a boundary amendment between Bulwell Forest and Vernon wards as part of their scheme for a new Basford ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed amending the boundary so that our proposed Bulwell Forest ward incorporated the northern part of the existing Portland ward.

70 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. However we have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations for Bulwell Forest ward as we considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundary would provide poorer electoral equality. We do, however, propose to address a minor boundary anomaly in Bulwell Forest ward. We propose that the southern boundary should run behind properties on the northern side of Oakleigh Street and Gabrielle Close in order to provide for a more identifiable boundary. We are otherwise content to confirm our proposed Bestwood, Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards as final, with the number of electors per councillor being 3 per cent more, 3 per cent more and equal to the city average respectively (equal to, 1 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer in 2004).

Basford, Forest, Portland, Radford and Robin Hood wards

71 The five two-member wards of Basford, Forest, Portland, Radford and Robin Hood are located to the north of the city centre. Basford ward has equal to the city average number of electors per councillor while Forest, Portland and Robin Hood wards have 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average respectively. Radford ward currently has 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average.

72 The Council proposed a new Vernon ward combining that part of the existing Basford ward to the west of Hucknall Road and north of Valley Road, the current Portland ward less the Highbury Vale area and the Whitemoor area of Radford and Robin Hood wards to the west of

Radford Road and north of Wilkinson Street. It argued that this ward would “encompass all of the Old Basford area of the city”, and would use the ring road and arterial roads to form easily identifiable boundaries. It proposed that the Longmead Drive area of Basford ward should form part of a revised Sherwood ward. It proposed that the current Forest ward, less the area to the east of Hucknall Road (which would form part of a revised Sherwood ward), should be combined with that part of Radford ward to the south of Valley Road and east of Radford Road to form a new Berridge ward, arguing that this ward would be neat and compact, using the ring road and major arterial routes as its boundaries. It also proposed that the Hyson Green area of Radford ward would be combined with the majority of Robin Hood ward and parts of Beechdale and Lenton wards to form a new Leen Valley ward.

73 The Forum put forward a proposal for a modified Basford ward, and for Robin Hood ward to be divided between the proposed Aspley & Whitemoor, Radford North & Hyson Green, Radford South and Lenton Abbey & Wollaton West wards. It proposed that Radford ward should be expanded to form a new Radford North & Hyson Green ward, and that the existing Forest ward be reduced to form a two-member Forest Fields ward.

74 At Stage One the Conservatives proposed that Robin Hood ward should be divided between surrounding wards and that Portland ward should be modified and renamed Cinderhill ward. They proposed modifying the boundaries of the existing Basford ward and retaining Radford ward largely on its existing boundaries, but renaming it Hyson Green ward. They proposed that the remainder of Forest ward be combined with the southernmost part of Sherwood ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed three three-member wards for this area of the city. They proposed extending Basford ward to incorporate the central part of Portland ward and northern parts of Radford and Forest wards, while the remainder of Portland ward would be divided between Aspley and Bulwell South wards. The eastern area of the existing Forest ward would be transferred to Sherwood ward, while Forest ward would be expanded to incorporate the majority of Radford ward and western part of St Ann’s ward.

75 At Stage Two we carefully considered the proposals for this area and proposed creating a new Arboretum ward, which would incorporate part of the existing Radford ward, focussing on the area around the Arboretum. Elsewhere in this area, however, we based our draft recommendations on the scheme put forward by the City Council. We considered that the Council’s proposals would provide compact wards which achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality, utilise good boundaries and reflect community ties. However, we proposed a number of minor boundary changes to its proposed Leen Valley ward. We proposed that the western boundary between the proposed Bilborough and Leen Valley wards should run along Beechdale Road for its entire length, incorporating the Aspley Park Drive area in Leen Valley ward. We also considered that the Southwold Drive area shares an affinity with the areas to its east, and proposed including this area in Leen Valley ward. We also proposed retaining the existing boundary to the east of Melbourne Road, as we considered that this is easily recognisable, and transferring the Hyson Green area to the east of Chadwick Road to the new Arboretum ward.

76 At Stage Three the City Council did not comment on our draft proposals for this area. We received 24 representations in favour of moving the ward boundary between Leen Valley and Radford & Park wards to the railway line (discussed earlier). The Liberal Democrats submitted a scheme for this area which involved the reshaping of four wards, Vernon (to be renamed

Basford), Leen Valley (to be renamed Western ward), Berridge and Radford & Park wards. The Liberal Democrats argued that Basford is mentioned in the Domesday Book and, has a “recognisable, vibrant and living community”. It also stated that the catchment area of the Ellis Guildford Secondary school is too large to be represented by three councillors. The Liberal Democrats proposed that the southern part of our proposed Vernon ward be transferred to Leen Valley ward along with the Charlbury Road area of Wollaton West ward (mentioned previously). They proposed that Robin Hood ward polling districts D and E and Lenton ward polling district E be transferred from Leen Valley ward to Radford & Park ward (mentioned previously). The Liberal Democrats also proposed that the whole of the Highbury Vale Estate be included in Bulwell Forest ward, arguing that the “residents (if asked) will affirm almost unanimously that they live in Bulwell”. They also proposed a number of changes to the south-eastern boundary of Vernon ward, moving the northern and western parts of Berridge ward into Vernon ward, and proposed that Charlesworth Avenue and the adjacent houses on Radford Road should become part of Berridge ward. A local resident objected to our proposed Vernon ward name, stating that the Basford area had “no connection with the name Vernon”; he also objected to our proposed Berridge ward name, suggesting Forest, Noel or Haydn. The Basford & District Local History Society also objected to the loss of the name Basford which, they stated, “dates back to Anglo-Saxon days”.

77 We have considered carefully the representations received at Stage Three and have decided to largely confirm our draft recommendations. However, we consider that the boundary amendment between Leen Valley and Radford & Park wards should be adopted as part of our final recommendations, and we are content that Leen Valley should become a two-member ward while Radford & Park ward should return three councillors (as mentioned earlier). We consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals would provide significantly poorer ward boundaries without better reflecting community identity or significantly affecting electoral equality. We considered that the Liberal Democrats’ proposed Western ward was not a more identifiable ward name. However, we are content that our proposed Vernon ward should retain the existing ward name Basford, thereby providing a more easily identifiable ward name for the area. We were not persuaded to change Berridge ward name as the suggested alternatives do not provide a more identifiable name for the area. Our final recommendations would result in our two-member Leen Valley ward having 2 per cent fewer electors than the city average initially (2 per cent fewer in 2004). Basford and Berridge wards would have equal to and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average initially (1 per cent more and 6 per cent more in 2004).

Manvers, Mapperley, Sherwood and St Ann’s wards

78 These four two-member wards are located in the east of the city. Mapperley and St Ann’s wards currently have 8 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average respectively, while Manvers and Sherwood wards have 2 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively.

79 The City Council proposed that these four wards should be reconfigured to form three three-member wards. It proposed that Sherwood ward be expanded northwards to include the hospital to the north of Valley Road and Longmead Drive area (currently in Basford ward), westwards to include the area to the north of Private Road and incorporating Woodthorpe Grange (currently in Mapperley ward) and the area between Hucknall and Mansfield roads (currently in Forest

ward). It argued that this would unite “both sides of the district shopping centre along Mansfield Road” and reflect the natural community boundaries. It proposed an amended Mapperley ward, incorporating the northern parts of the existing St Ann’s and Greenwood wards, which it stated would incorporate all the residential areas of Mapperley Park, and the area to the south of Woodborough Road which “relates to the Mapperley area”. It proposed that the southern boundary should run along the centre of Elm Avenue, Cranmer Street and Woodborough Road to the south of Hungerhill Gardens, along the centre of Ransom Road, St Bartholomew’s Road and Thorneywood Rise, Marmion Road and Carlton Road. It proposed combining that part of Park ward to the east of Mansfield Road with the majority of Manvers ward (less the Sneinton area which it proposed transferring to the new Dales ward) to form a modified St Ann’s ward. The Council argued that this ward would “encompass the whole of the St Ann’s area of the city respecting the true boundaries of the community”.

80 The Forum also proposed three three-member wards covering this eastern area. It submitted modified boundaries for the existing Sherwood ward and an amended Mapperley ward, which would extend southwards to incorporate the northern parts of St Ann’s and Greenwood ward. The western part of the existing St Ann’s ward would then be combined with the majority of Manvers ward to create an amended St Ann’s ward, combining similar types of housing.

81 The Conservatives proposed that the westernmost part of Manvers ward be combined with the northernmost part of Greenwood ward and easternmost part of St Ann’s ward, and renamed St Ann’s ward. They proposed that the remainder of the existing St Ann’s ward be combined with the northern area of Park ward, southern part of Radford ward and eastern part of Lenton ward to form a new Arboretum ward. They proposed expanding the existing Sherwood ward northwards and eastwards. Under their scheme the existing Mapperley ward would be extended southwards slightly, and the northernmost part of the existing Mapperley ward would be transferred to the amended Sherwood ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed two two-member and two three-member wards for this western area of the city. They proposed an extended three-member Sherwood ward, a modified two-member Mapperley ward and an amended St Ann’s ward which would be represented by an additional councillor. The Liberal Democrats also proposed that Manvers ward be enlarged and continue to be represented by two councillors.

82 We received one other proposal for this area from Councillor Edwards, who argued that all the houses on Morley Avenue and Private Road should be united in Mapperley ward to better reflect community ties in the area. He also proposed that we should also consider transferring the properties on Gordon Rise and Maurice Drive for the same reason.

83 Having considered all the representations received, we concluded that the warding arrangements put forward by the City Council best reflected community ties, while providing reasonable levels of electoral equality. In particular, we considered that Mansfield Road, which is the main shopping area in Sherwood, should be united within the amended Sherwood ward, as proposed by the City Council and Liberal Democrats. We considered that the Council’s proposed boundary between Mapperley and St Ann’s wards of Elm Avenue would unite the St Ann’s area in one ward, rather than dividing it between wards as the Conservatives and The Forum proposed, and would also largely unite the Mapperley area. We also considered Councillor Edwards’ proposal to include Morley Avenue, Private Road, Gordon Rise and Maurice Drive within Mapperley ward. However, given the deterioration in electoral equality that would result

from the proposal, for the purposes of consultation, we proposed that these roads should remain part of Sherwood ward, but welcomed views from interested parties at Stage Three. Our draft proposals resulted in Mapperley, Sherwood and St Ann's wards having 5 per cent more, 3 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5 per cent more, equal to and 4 per cent fewer in 2004).

84 At Stage Three the City Council did not comment on our proposals for the area, the Liberal Democrats supported our proposals and a local resident supported our plans for the Edwards Lane Estate, stating that it was better served by being part of Sherwood ward. We received only one further proposal for the area, from Councillor Edwards, who reiterated that Morley Avenue should be united within the new Mapperley ward.

85 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and have decided to largely confirm our draft recommendations as final. However, we consider that the slight boundary amendment between Mapperley and Sherwood wards put forward by Councillor Edwards, uniting both sides of Morley Avenue in Mapperley ward, should be adopted as part of our final recommendations. We consider that the slight worsening in electoral equality which would result is justified in terms of the improved community ties resulting from uniting the road within a single ward. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Mapperley, Sherwood and St Ann's wards would have 6 per cent more, 2 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average initially (5 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer in 2004).

Electoral Cycle

86 At Stage One we received two representations regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council supported its present system of elections for the entire council every four years, while the Liberal Democrats requested that the city have elections by thirds (not by halves as was stated in our draft recommendations). The Forum and Conservatives mentioned the possibility of more frequent elections if directed by Parliament, but did not express a preference for any particular electoral cycle. In our draft recommendations report, we therefore proposed that the existing system of whole-council elections every four years be retained.

87 At Stage Three the Liberal Democrats returned with a proposal for elections by thirds. They argued that this would have the "potential to lead to more democratically responsive local government" and might "possibly [increase] turnouts due to force of habit". A local resident stated that electoral cycles "might best be something that local people should decide". Given the lack of widespread support for a change in electoral cycle we are content to confirm as final our draft recommendations for whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

88 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the amendments indicated in the following areas:

- boundary modifications between Radford & Park and Leen Valley wards, and between Radford & Park and Dunkirk & Lenton wards;
- the proposed Crane ward should be renamed Aspley & Strelley ward;
- the proposed Vernon ward should retain the ward name Basford;
- a minor boundary realignment between Mapperley and Sherwood wards;
- a minor boundary realignment between Bulwell Forest and Basford wards.

89 We conclude that, in the City of Nottingham:

- a council of 55 members should be retained;
- there should be 20 wards, seven fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

90 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	55	55	55	55
Number of wards	27	20	27	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,765	3,765	3,844	3,844
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	0	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	8	0

91 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 11 to none. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further by 2004, with no ward varying by more than 7 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation
 Nottingham City Council should comprise 55 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover of this report. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Nottingham

6 NEXT STEPS

92 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Nottingham and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

93 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 27 June 2000.

94 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Local Government Sponsorship Division
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Nottingham: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Nottingham area.

Map A1 illustrates the proposed boundary between Clifton North and Clifton South wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Nottingham City.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Clifton North and Clifton South wards

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Nottingham

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of five wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Crane ward as Aspley & Strelley ward, and Vernon ward as Basford ward.

Figure B1: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bulwell Forest	Bulwell East ward (part); Byron ward (part); Portland ward (part)
Dunkirk & Lenton	Abbey ward (part); Park ward (part)
Leen Valley	Beechdale ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part); Radford ward (part); Lenton ward (part)
Mapperley	Greenwood ward (part); Mapperley ward (part); St Ann’s ward (part)
Radford & Park	Park ward (part); Lenton ward (part); Robin Hood ward (part)
Sherwood	Basford ward (part); Forest ward (part); Mapperley ward (part); Sherwood ward (part)

Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bulwell Forest	3	11,314	3,771	0	11,184	3,728	-3
Dunkirk & Lenton	2	7,985	3,993	6	7,966	3,983	4
Leen Valley	3	11,029	3,676	-2	11,183	3,728	-3
Mapperley	3	11,839	3,946	5	12,062	4,021	5
Radford & Park	2	7,340	3,670	-3	7,958	3,979	4
Sherwood	3	11,612	3,871	3	11,563	3,854	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Nottingham 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 borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.