

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
CHESHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL

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

January 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to division boundaries, and the number of councillors and division names.

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Cheshire County Council.

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Local Government Commission for England

25 January 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 9 February 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Cheshire County Council under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in July 1999 and undertook an eleven-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 paragraphs 152) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to the electoral arrangements of Cheshire County Council.

We recommend that Cheshire County Council should be served by 51 councillors representing 51 divisions, and that changes should be made to division boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

We note that you have set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. 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 County 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 Cheshire County Council on 9 February 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 27 July 1999, after which we undertook an eleven-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 24 of the 48 divisions, the number of electors in the single-member divisions varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the county, and by more than 20 per cent in nine divisions;**
- **this level of electoral equality is expected to marginally worsen over the next five years, with the number of electors forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 25 divisions, and by more than 20 per cent in 11 divisions.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 152-153) are that:

- **Cheshire County Council should have 51 councillors, three more than at present, representing 51 divisions;**
- **as the divisions are based on borough wards which have themselves changed as a result of the recent district reviews, the boundaries of all except four divisions will be subject to change.**

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

- **In 40 of the proposed 51 divisions, the number of electors would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average, with all divisions varying by less than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to improve marginally over the next five years, with the number of electors in 41 of the proposed 51 divisions projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average by 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 7 March 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

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
CHESTER CITY	
1 Blacon	Blacon Hall ward; Blacon Lodge ward
2 Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross	Boughton Heath ward; Dodleston ward; Huntington ward; Vicars Cross ward
3 Broxton	Farndon ward; Malpas ward; Tattenhall ward; Tilston ward
4 City	Boughton ward; City & St Anne's ward; College ward
5 Gowy	Christleton ward; Kelsall ward; Tarvin ward; Waverton ward
6 Hoole & Newton	Hoole All Saints ward; Hoole Groves ward; Newton St Michael's ward; Newton Brook ward (part)
7 Mickle Trafford	Barrow ward; Elton ward; Mickle Trafford ward; Mollington ward; Saughall ward
8 Overleigh	Curzon & Westminster ward; Handbridge & St Mary's ward; Lache Park ward
9 Upton	Upton Grange ward; Upton Westlea ward; Newton Brook ward (part)
CONGLETON BOROUGH	
10 Alsager	Alsager Central ward; Alsager East ward; Alsager West ward
11 Congleton Rural	Brereton ward; Dane Valley ward; Holmes Chapel ward; stbury ward (part – the parishes of Hulme Walfield, Smallwood, Somerford and Somerford Booths)
12 Congleton Town East	Buglawton ward; Congleton North ward; Congleton South ward; Astbury ward (part – the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury)
13 Congleton Town West	Congleton Central ward; Congleton North West ward; Congleton West ward
14 Middlewich	Middlewich Cledford ward; Middlewich Kinderton ward
15 Sandbach	Sandbach North ward; Sandbach West ward
16 Sandbach East & Rode	Lawton ward; Odd Rode ward; Sandbach East ward

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
CREWE & NANTWICH BOROUGH	
17 Cholmondeley	Acton ward; Audlem ward; Bunbury ward; Minshull ward; Peckforton ward; Wrenbury ward
18 Crewe East	Delamere ward; Maw Green ward; Waldron ward
19 Crewe North	Coppenhall ward; Grosvenor ward; Leighton ward
20 Crewe South	Alexandra ward; St John's ward; Valley ward
21 Crewe West	St Barnabas ward; Wistaston Green ward
22 Doddington	Englesea ward; Haslington ward; Wybunbury ward
23 Nantwich	<i>Unchanged</i> – Barony Weaver ward; Birchin ward; Wellington ward
24 Rope	St Mary's ward; Shavington ward; Wells Green ward; Willaston ward
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON BOROUGH	
25 Central & Westminster	Central ward; Stanlow & Wolverham ward; Westminster ward; Rossmore ward (part)
26 Grange & Rossmore	Grange ward; Rivacre ward; Rossmore ward (part)
27 Groves & Whitby	Groves ward; Strawberry Fields ward; Whitby ward
28 Ledsham & Willaston	Burton & Ness ward; Ledsham ward; Willaston & Thornton ward
29 Neston & Parkgate	Little Neston ward; Neston ward; Parkgate ward; Riverside ward
30 Sutton & Manor	Pooltown ward; Sutton ward; Sutton Green & Manor ward
MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH	
31 Alderley	Alderley Edge ward; Fulshaw ward; Henbury ward; Chelford ward (part – Nether Alderley parish)
32 Bollington & Disley	Bollington Central ward; Bollington East ward; Bollington West ward; Disley & Lyme Handley ward; Rainow ward
33 Broken Cross	Macclesfield Bollinbrook ward; Macclesfield Broken Cross ward

continued overleaf

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
34 Bucklow	High Legh ward; Mere ward; Mobberley ward; Plumley ward; Chelford ward (part – the parishes of Chelford, Great Warford and Snelson)
35 Knutsford	<i>Unchanged</i> – Knutsford Bexton ward; Knutsford Nether ward; Knutsford Norbury Booths ward; Knutsford Over ward
36 Macclesfield Forest	<i>Unchanged</i> – Gawsworth ward; Macclesfield Ryles ward; Macclesfield South ward; Sutton ward
37 Macclesfield Town	Macclesfield East ward; Macclesfield Hurdsfield ward; Macclesfield Central ward (part)
38 Macclesfield West	Macclesfield Ivy ward; Macclesfield West ward; Macclesfield Central ward (part)
39 Poynton	Poynton Central ward; Poynton East ward; Poynton West ward
40 Prestbury & Tytherington	Macclesfield Tytherington ward; Prestbury ward
41 Wilmslow North	Dean Row ward; Handforth ward
42 Wilmslow South	Hough ward; Lacey Green ward; Morley & Styal ward
VALE ROYAL BOROUGH	
43 Abbey	Davenham & Moulton ward; Hartford & Whitegate ward
44 Eddisbury	Cuddington & Oakmere ward; Mara ward; Tarporley & Oulton ward
45 Frodsham & Helsby	Frodsham North ward; Frodsham South ward; Helsby ward
46 Marbury	Barnton ward; Cogshall ward; Lostock & Wincham ward; Seven Oaks & Marston ward
47 Northwich East & Shakerley	Northwich Witton ward; Rudheath & South Witton ward; Shakerley ward
48 Northwich West	Leftwich & Kingsmead ward; Northwich Castle ward; Northwich Winnington ward
49 Weaver	Forest ward; Kingsley ward; Milton Weaver ward; Weaverham ward

*Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

	Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
50	Winsford North & East	Winsford Gravel ward; Winsford Verdin ward; Winsford Wharton ward
51	Winsford South & West	Winsford Dene ward; Winsford Over ward; Winsford Swanlow ward

Notes 1 The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the six Cheshire boroughs which were completed in 1997. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.

2 The large map inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed divisions outlined above. The maps in Appendix A illustrate some of the proposed boundaries in more detail.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER CITY					
1 Blacon	1	9,928	-4	9,740	-7
2 Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross	1	10,933	6	10,960	5
3 Broxton	1	9,360	-9	9,440	-10
4 City	1	9,738	-5	10,540	0
5 Gowy	1	11,510	12	11,410	9
6 Hoole & Newton	1	9,668	-6	9,755	-7
7 Mickle Trafford	1	10,984	7	10,990	5
8 Overleigh	1	11,823	15	11,630	11
9 Upton	1	10,148	-1	10,265	-2
CONGLETON BOROUGH					
10 Alsager	1	9,828	-5	9,950	-5
11 Congleton Rural	1	9,741	-5	9,870	-6
12 Congleton Town East	1	10,477	2	11,060	5
13 Congleton Town West	1	10,352	1	10,040	-4
14 Middlewich	1	9,260	-10	9,750	-7
15 Sandbach	1	9,121	-11	9,480	-10
16 Sandbach East & Rode	1	11,721	14	11,590	11
CREWE & NANTWICH BOROUGH					
17 Cholmondeley	1	10,383	1	10,400	-1
18 Crewe East	1	11,740	14	11,720	12
19 Crewe North	1	9,705	-6	10,650	2
20 Crewe South	1	11,214	9	11,220	7
21 Crewe West	1	9,209	-11	9,230	-12

Figure 2 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
22 Doddington	1	9,345	-9	10,200	-3%
23 Nantwich	1	9,835	-5	10,240	-2
24 Rope	1	11,290	10	11,470	9
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON BOROUGH					
25 Central & Westminster	1	10,662	4	10,760	3
26 Grange & Rossmore	1	11,181	9	11,000	5
27 Groves & Whitby	1	10,184	-1	10,600	1
28 Ledsham & Willaston	1	9,231	-10	9,210	-12
29 Neston & Parkgate	1	11,632	13	11,520	10
30 Sutton & Manor	1	10,608	3	10,690	2
MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH					
31 Alderley	1	10,483	2	10,440	0
32 Bollington & Disley	1	11,767	14	11,820	13
33 Broken Cross	1	8,335	-19	8,910	-15
34 Bucklow	1	9,572	-7	9,620	-8
35 Knutsford	1	10,645	3	10,650	2
36 Macclesfield Forest	1	10,159	-1	10,480	0
37 Macclesfield Town	1	10,570	3	10,510	0
38 Macclesfield West	1	9,845	-4	9,800	-7
39 Poynton	1	11,955	16	11,880	13
40 Prestbury & Tytherington	1	8,664	-17	8,960	-18
41 Wilmslow North	1	10,270	0	10,750	2
42 Wilmslow South	1	9,989	-3	9,980	-5

continued overleaf

Figure 2 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
VALE ROYAL BOROUGH					
43 Abbey	1	9,610	-7	9,760	-7
44 Eddisbury	1	9,418	-9	9,790	-7
45 Frodsham & Helsby	1	10,999	7	11,160	6
46 Marbury	1	11,124	8	11,130	6
47 Northwich East & Shakerley	1	10,226	-1	10,480	0
48 Northwich West	1	10,146	-1	11,700	12
49 Weaver	1	10,233	-1	10,290	-2
50 Winsford North & East	1	10,020	-3	10,410	-1
51 Winsford South & West	1	10,461	2	10,980	5
Totals	51	525,302	—	534,880	—
Averages	—	10,300	—	10,488	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Cheshire County Council.

Note: The electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor as each division is represented by a single councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. 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 Cheshire County Council. Our review of the county is 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 In each two-tier county, our approach is first to complete the PERs of all the constituent districts and, when Orders for the resulting changes in those areas have been made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, then to commence a PER of the county council's electoral arrangements. The Secretary of State made Orders for new electoral arrangements in the districts in Cheshire, which we reviewed at the start of the PER programme in 1996/97, in autumn 1998.

Our Approach to County Reviews

3 In undertaking all our PERs we must have regard to:

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

4 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (second edition published in March 1998), which we supplemented in October 1998 on our approach to county reviews.

5 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the County Council, and the number, boundaries and names of electoral

divisions. Current legislation requires that county council electoral divisions should each return one councillor. In addition, the statutory Rules set out in the 1972 Act provide that each division should be wholly contained within a single district and that division boundaries should not split unwarded parishes or parish wards.

6 In considering the approach we should take to county reviews we valued the responses to the consultation we undertook in 1995 prior to the start of our PER programme, and the more recent discussions we have had with county council officers and the Local Government Association. We have also welcomed the opportunity to brief chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members of individual county councils, about our policies and procedures.

7 In October 1998 we wrote to all county councils setting out further advice on our approach to county reviews which supplemented our March 1998 *Guidance*. First, as with all our reviews, 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 configuration is most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

8 Second, the broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the county as a whole. For example, we will continue to require justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any division. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in exceptional circumstances, and will require strong justification.

9 Similarly, we will seek to ensure that the number of county councillors representing each district area within the county is commensurate with the district's proportion of the county's electorate.

10 Third, the Rules provide that, in considering county council electoral arrangements, we should have regard to the boundaries of district wards. We attach considerable importance to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. Where wards or groups of wards are not coterminous with county divisions, this can cause confusion for the electorate at local elections, lead to increased election costs and, in our view, may not be conducive to effective and convenient local government.

11 We recognise, however, that we are unlikely to achieve optimum electoral equality and complete coterminosity throughout a county area. Our objective will be to achieve the best balance between the two, taking into account our statutory criteria. While the proportion of electoral divisions that will be coterminous with the boundaries of district wards is likely to vary between counties, we would normally expect coterminosity to be achieved in a significant majority of divisions.

12 Where coterminosity is not possible in parished areas, and a district ward is to be split between electoral divisions, we would normally expect this to be achieved without dividing (or further dividing) a parish between divisions. There are likely to be exceptions to this, however, particularly where larger parishes are involved.

13 Fourth, 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 county 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 county's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a county council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other counties.

14 Fifth, a further area of difference between county and district reviews is that we recognise it will not always be possible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse communities, for example, combining urban and rural areas. We have generally sought to avoid this in district reviews, in order to reflect the identities

and interests of local communities. Some of the existing county council electoral divisions comprise a number of distinct communities, which is inevitable given the larger number of electors represented by each councillor, and we would expect that similar situations will continue under our recommendations in seeking the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and the statutory criteria.

15 Finally, before we started our county reviews, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, in July 1998, setting out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. The Government's proposals provided for elections by halves in alternate years for all two-tier authorities. This would mean that district and county councils would each move to a cycle of elections by halves, with elections for district councils and county councils taking place in alternate years. The White Paper 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 two-member divisions in county councils to reflect a system of elections by halves.

16 In October 1998, we wrote to all local authorities, setting out our understanding of the White Paper proposals, following discussions with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Local Government Association and the Association of London Government. In brief, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, and our present *Guidance*, until such time as the legislation changes. We have power only to recommend single-member divisions in county council areas.

17 As part of this review we may also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the county. However, we made some recommendations for new parish electoral arrangements as part of our district reviews. Furthermore, this is now a power that is open to district and unitary councils. We therefore only expect to put forward such recommendations during county reviews on an exceptional basis. In any event, we are *not* able to review the administrative boundaries between local authorities or parishes, or consider the establishment of new parish areas as part of this review.

The Review of Cheshire

18 We completed the reviews of five of the Cheshire districts in March 1998 and the sixth, Crewe & Nantwich, in June 1998, and the Secretary of State has since made the Orders for the new electoral arrangements. This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Cheshire County Council. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1980 (Report No. 391).

19 Stage One of this review began on 9 February 1999, when we wrote to Cheshire County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the six borough councils in the county, Cheshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, parish and town councils in the county, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the county, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the County Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 May 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

20 Stage Three began on 27 July 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Cheshire County Council*, and ended on 11 October 1999. 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

21 Cheshire comprises the six boroughs of Chester, Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Macclesfield and Vale Royal. It has a population of approximately 670,000, covering nearly 183,000 hectares, with a population density of 4 persons per hectare. The county borders Shropshire and Staffordshire to the south, Derbyshire to the east, Flintshire in Wales to the west, and Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the new unitary authorities of Halton and Warrington to the north. Over 60 per cent of the county's population reside in the principal towns of Chester, Crewe, Ellesmere Port and Macclesfield. The county town of Chester was founded by the Romans nearly 2,000 years ago, and is a focus of financial services, shopping and tourism within the region.

22 To compare levels of electoral inequality between divisions, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors represented by the councillor for each division varies from the county average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

23 The electorate of the county is 525,302 (February 1999). The Council presently has 48 members, with one member elected from each division (Figure 3).

24 Since the last review of the County Council's electoral arrangements there has been a decrease in the electorate in Cheshire, with around 32 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago, on account of local government reorganisation in 1998, when Halton and Warrington became unitary authorities. However, in the last 20 years the electorate in the six remaining boroughs has grown by 8 per cent. The most significant growth in the county has occurred in Congleton, particularly in Middlewich & Brereton and Sandbach divisions, which both have over 17 per cent more electors than twenty years ago. Other notable increases have occurred in Crewe & Nantwich and Vale Royal boroughs, both with around 9 per cent more electors than two decades ago.

25 At present each councillor represents an average of 10,944 electors, which the County Council forecasts will increase marginally to 11,143 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 in 24 of the 48 divisions varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average and in nine divisions by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Bucklow division, in Macclesfield borough, where the councillor represents 28 per cent fewer electors than the county average.

26 As mentioned previously, in considering the County Council's electoral arrangements we must have regard to the boundaries of district wards. Following the completion of the reviews of district warding arrangements in Cheshire, we are therefore faced with a new "starting point" for considering electoral divisions. Our proposals for county divisions will be based on the new district wards as opposed to those which existed prior to the recent reviews. In view of the effect of the new district wards and changes in the electorate over the past 20 years which have resulted in electoral imbalances across the county, changes to most, if not all, of the existing county electoral divisions are inevitable.

27 In considering county council electoral arrangements, we have regard to the boundaries of district wards. The term 'coterminosity' is used throughout the report and refers to situations where the boundaries of county electoral divisions and district wards are the same, that is to say, where county divisions comprise either one or more whole district wards.

Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER CITY					
1 Blacon	1	8,304	-24	8,150	-27
2 Boughton & Vicars Cross	1	13,071	19	13,090	17
3 Broxton	1	9,111	-17	9,190	-18
4 Gowy	1	12,596	15	12,490	12
5 Hoole & Plas Newton	1	8,490	-22	8,600	-23
6 Mickle Trafford	1	9,986	-9	10,000	-10
7 Overleigh	1	12,624	15	12,680	14
8 Sealand & College	1	8,584	-2	9,110	-18
9 Upton	1	11,326	3	11,420	2
CONGLETON BOROUGH					
10 Alsager & Lawton	1	12,494	14	12,570	13
11 Congleton & Buglawton	1	9,747	-11	9,750	-13
12 Hulme	1	13,428	23	13,630	22
13 Middlewich & Brereton	1	10,544	-4	11,050	-1
14 Moreton	1	10,620	-3	10,740	-4
15 Sandbach	1	13,667	25	14,000	26
CREWE & NANTWICH BOROUGH					
16 Cholmondeley	1	10,839	-1	11,390	2
17 Crewe Central	1	11,447	5	11,470	3
18 Crewe North	1	8,985	-18	9,190	-18
19 Crewe South	1	8,214	-25	8,190	-27
20 Crewe West	1	9,994	-9	10,250	-8
21 Doddington	1	11,610	6	12,430	12
22 Nantwich	1	9,835	-10	10,240	-8

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
23 Rope	1	11,797	8	11,970	7
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON BOROUGH					
24 Central & Westminster	1	10,327	-6	10,500	-6
25 Grange & Rossmore	1	8,347	-24	8,220	-26
26 Groves & Whitby	1	11,223	3	11,630	4
27 Neston & Parkgate	1	10,622	-3	10,520	-6
28 South Wirral	1	11,838	8	11,860	6
29 Sutton & Rivacre	1	11,141	2	11,050	-1
MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH					
30 Alderley	1	8,761	-20	8,820	-21
31 Bollington & Disley	1	11,767	8	11,820	6
32 Bucklow	1	7,929	-28	7,900	-29
33 Knutsford	1	10,645	-3	10,650	-4
34 Macclesfield Forest	1	10,159	-7	10,480	-6
35 Macclesfield Ivy	1	12,423	14	12,470	12
36 Macclesfield Victoria	1	12,652	16	12,810	15
37 Poynton	1	12,820	17	12,750	14
38 Upton & Prestbury	1	10,927	0	11,490	3
39 Wilmslow Bollin	1	11,135	2	11,120	0
40 Wilmslow Dean	1	13,036	19	13,490	21
VALE ROYAL BOROUGH					
41 Brookmere	1	10,261	-6	10,300	-8
42 Eddisbury	1	12,192	11	12,680	14
43 Frodsham & Helsby	1	11,799	8	11,970	7

continued overleaf

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
44 North Vale	1	9,426	-14	9,450	-15
45 Northwich East	1	11,278	3	11,560	4
46 Northwich West	1	13,840	26	15,350	38
47 Winsford North	1	13,099	20	13,660	23
48 Winsford South	1	10,342	-5	10,730	-4
Totals	48	525,302	—	534,880	—
Averages	—	10,944	—	11,143	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cheshire County Council.

Note: Each division is represented by a single councillor; hence the electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Grange & Rossmore division in Ellesmere Port & Neston were relatively over-represented by 24 per cent, while electors in Sandbach division in Congleton were relatively under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²⁸ During Stage One we received 107 representations, including county-wide proposals from the County Council and the Conservatives. The Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (the 'CATPC') also put forward proposals for five of the six boroughs. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Cheshire County Council*.

²⁹ Our draft recommendations were substantially based on the Conservatives' proposals, while also reflecting elements of the County Council's proposals and the CATPC's proposals, together with other representations received. However, we formulated our own proposals in areas where we judged that locally generated schemes would not provide the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. We proposed that:

- (a) Cheshire County Council should be served by 51 councillors;
- (b) there should be 51 electoral divisions, involving changes to the boundaries of all but four of the existing divisions.

Draft Recommendation

Cheshire County Council should comprise 51 councillors, serving the same number of divisions.

³⁰ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors in 40 of the 51 electoral divisions varying by no more than 10 per cent from the county average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve marginally over the next five years.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

31 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 190 representations, including county-wide submissions from the County Council, the Cheshire County Conservative Group, Cheshire County Labour Group, Cheshire County Liberal Democrat Group and the Cheshire Association of Town & Parish Councils. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of the County Council and the Commission, by appointment.

Cheshire County Council

32 The County Council welcomed the proposed increase in council size and the level of representation for each borough. However, it expressed “disappointment” that we had not endorsed its Stage One proposals in full. It supported our draft recommendations for Chester city and broadly supported our proposals for Macclesfield borough, but noted that it would prefer Bollington town to be united in Bollington & Disley division, and proposed an alternative division name. In Congleton borough, it proposed modifying the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division’s boundaries with the proposed Alsager and Congleton East divisions. The County Council reiterated its Stage One proposals for Crewe & Nantwich and Ellesmere Port & Neston. In Vale Royal borough, it supported our suggested names for divisions covering Winsford and the proposed Weaver division.

Cheshire County Conservative Group

33 Cheshire County Conservative Group (‘the Conservatives’) supported our draft recommendations to increase the council size by three members, the level of representation for each borough and our proposed divisions in Chester, Crewe & Nantwich and Vale Royal boroughs. It also broadly supported our proposals for Congleton borough, but proposed a boundary modification between Congleton East and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions, and alternative names for both divisions. In addition, they substantially supported our proposals for Macclesfield borough but expressed disappointment regarding

our proposal to include Bollington town in two divisions. They also supported the proposed Ledsham & Willaston division in Ellesmere Port & Neston borough.

Cheshire County Council Labour Group

34 Cheshire County Council Labour Group (‘the Labour Party’) also supported the proposed council size, the number of county councillors allocated to each borough, and the warding arrangements for 23 divisions. It supported our proposals for Chester, but proposed modifying Sandbach East & Moreton division’s boundary with Alsager, and opposed our draft recommendation to re-ward Sandbach town, in Congleton borough. It reiterated its support for the County Council’s Stage One proposals for Crewe & Nantwich, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Macclesfield and Vale Royal boroughs.

Cheshire County Labour Party

35 Cheshire County Labour Party also supported our draft recommendation to increase the number of county councillors and the level of representation for each borough, together with our proposed divisions in Chester city. It also supported our proposed divisions that coincided with the County Council’s Stage One proposals. However, it noted that our proposals for Congleton borough would not retain the “long-standing links” between Alsager town and Lawton ward, and opposed our draft recommendation to re-ward Sandbach town. In addition, it reiterated the County Council’s Stage One proposals for Crewe & Nantwich, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Macclesfield and Vale Royal boroughs.

Cheshire County Liberal Democrat Group

36 Cheshire County Liberal Democrats (‘the Liberal Democrats’) also supported all of our proposed divisions that reflected the County Council’s Stage One proposals, together with the

proposed council size and level of distribution for each borough. It supported our draft recommendations for Chester city, but proposed alternative division names for the proposed Vicars Cross & Boughton division. In Congleton, it proposed that Lawton ward should be included in Alsager division, while it reiterated the County Council's Stage One proposals for divisions in the other four boroughs in Cheshire.

Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils

37 The Cheshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (CATPC) supported our draft recommendations for Chester, Crewe & Nantwich, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal. In addition, the CATPC stated that it did not object to the Commission's proposals for Macclesfield, but proposed several boundary modifications to the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division, in Congleton borough.

District and Borough Councils

38 Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal borough councils supported our draft recommendations relating to the number of county councillors representing each borough, but reiterated the County Council's Stage One proposals for electoral divisions in their respective boroughs. However, Congleton Borough Council noted that the County Council's Stage One proposals did not place sufficient emphasis on the representation of rural communities in the borough. Macclesfield Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for Macclesfield.

Parish and Town Councils

39 We received representations from 26 parish and town councils in Cheshire. In Chester, Mollington, Saughall & Shotwick Park and Tarvin parish councils supported our draft recommendations. In Congleton borough, Church Lawton and Newbold Astbury-cum-Moreton parish councils and Congleton Town Council proposed modifications to the boundary of the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division. Sandbach Town Council opposed our draft recommendations for the town, while Brereton and Cranage parish councils expressed concern regarding the geographical size of the proposed Congleton Rural division. Alsager Town Council stated that it had "no objections" to

our draft recommendations. In Crewe & Nantwich borough, Shavington-cum-Gresty, Willaston and Wistaston parish councils supported our draft recommendations for their local areas.

40 We received four representations from town and parish councils in Macclesfield borough. Bollington Town Council opposed our draft recommendation to divide Bollington between two divisions. Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Parish Meeting and Sutton Parish Council supported our proposed Macclesfield South division, but both suggested alternative division names. Poynton-with-Worth Parish Council supported our proposed Poynton division. In Vale Royal borough, Barnton, Crowton, Cuddington, Davenham, Dunham Hill & Hapsford, Helsby, Oakmere and Weaverham parish councils supported our draft recommendations for their local areas. Winsford Town Council supported the County Council's Stage One proposal for the borough.

Members of Parliament

41 We received representations from four members of parliament. Ann Winterton MP generally supported our draft recommendations for Congleton borough, but suggested that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in the proposed Congleton East division. Andrew Miller MP opposed our draft recommendations for Ellesmere Port & Neston, arguing that the County Council's Stage One proposals would achieve a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. Nicholas Winterton MP substantially endorsed our draft recommendations for Macclesfield borough, but he expressed concern that Bollington town would be represented in two divisions under our draft recommendations. Mike Hall MP supported the County Council's Stage One proposals for Vale Royal borough.

Other Representations

42 We received a further 149 representations from councillors, local political parties and residents.

43 We received 15 representations regarding our draft recommendations for Congleton borough. Two councillors and 11 local residents opposed our draft recommendation to include the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury in the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division,

while the two councillors additionally proposed alternative names for two divisions. Another councillor proposed that Lawton ward should continue to be represented in a division with Alsager. Congleton Borough Liberal Democrats broadly supported our draft recommendations for the borough, and “accepted” our proposal to represent Sandbach in two divisions. In Crewe & Nantwich borough, Crewe & Nantwich Conservative Association and five councillors supported our draft recommendations, while Maw Green & Copenhall Labour Party and another councillor argued that the County Council’s Stage One proposals would achieve better electoral arrangements. In addition, Crewe & Nantwich Borough Liberal Democrat Group put forward alternative arrangements for Crewe town.

44 We received six representations concerning Ellesmere Port & Neston borough, Ellesmere Port & Neston Constituency Labour Party and four residents opposed our draft recommendations. Ellesmere Port & Neston Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations for the borough, and our proposals for the north of Chester city.

45 We received 94 representations regarding our draft recommendations for Macclesfield borough. The Macclesfield Area Committee supported our draft recommendations, but proposed that Bollington town should be wholly represented in Bollington & Disley division. Macclesfield Borough Liberal Democrat Group supported our draft recommendations for six of the proposed 12 divisions, but supported the County Council’s Stage One proposals for the remaining divisions, with a modification proposed to one division. Macclesfield Liberal Democrats, three councillors and eight residents opposed our draft recommendations for Bollington and Macclesfield towns, and reiterated the County Council’s Stage One proposals for Macclesfield town. Macclesfield Conservative & Unionist Association for Ivy/Ryles ward, a councillor and six residents supported our draft recommendations for the borough. Another councillor supported our proposed Macclesfield South division, but proposed that it should be named Macclesfield Forest.

46 Poynton & Adlington Liberal Democrats, Poynton Conservatives, two councillors and 36 local residents supported our proposed Poynton division. Four councillors and 28 local residents also opposed our draft recommendation to split

Bollington town between two divisions, two of whom supported the County Council’s Stage One proposal to combine Bollington and Prestbury towns.

47 In Vale Royal borough, Vale Royal Borough Conservative Group, Eddisbury and Weaver Vale Conservative associations, three councillors and eight residents supported our draft recommendations for the borough, while another resident supported our proposal that the borough should be represented by nine members, one more than at present. A councillor and a further seven residents supported our draft recommendation for Weaver division, while another resident reiterated the County Council’s Stage One proposal to combine Weaverham ward with Barnton ward. A councillor also supported our draft recommendation to include Barnton ward in the proposed Marbury division.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

48 As with our reviews of districts, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Cheshire County Council is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every division of the county”.

49 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 must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken, and to the boundaries of district wards.

50 We have discussed in Chapter One the additional parameters which apply to reviews of county council electoral arrangements and the need to have regard to the boundaries of district wards and coterminosity. We will also seek to ensure that the number of county councillors representing each district council area within the county is commensurate with the district’s proportion of the county’s electorate.

51 It is impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors in every division of a county. 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.

52 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, especially when also seeking to achieve coterminosity in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review.

53 We therefore recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as the boundaries of district wards and community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any division. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in exceptional circumstances and will require strong justification.

Electorate Forecasts

54 The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a marginal increase in the electorate of 2 per cent from 525,302 to 534,880 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected the majority of the growth to occur in Crewe & Nantwich and Vale Royal boroughs, with the largest growth expected to occur in the existing Northwich West division, in Vale Royal borough. It indicated that the projected figures were compiled on the basis of 1999 electoral data, and that the methodology adopted to make electoral forecasts for 2004 was the same as that used for the district reviews, including estimating rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. It stated that this has been consistently applied across all boroughs, and that much of the key information had been supplied by borough councils. Advice from the County Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to division boundaries has been obtained. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could be made at the time.

55 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

56 As explained earlier in this report, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilities convenient and effective local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

57 Cheshire County Council is at present served by 48 members. At Stage One the County Council proposed that the council size should be increased by three members, to 51. It indicated that it had sought to ensure that the number of electors represented by each county councillor would be broadly the same, and that the number of county councillors representing each borough area within the county is commensurate with its proportion of the county's electorate. It also argued that it had "embraced the principles" of the Government's Modernising Local Government agenda, and that recent changes to internal management structures had "anticipated" much of its "emphasis on streamlined decision making, effective scrutiny and best value, and taking democracy closer to local communities".

58 On this basis, the County Council agreed unanimously that a council size of 51 would offer the most appropriate number of councillors, with the number of members representing Congleton, Macclesfield and Vale Royal being increased by one, to 7, 12 and 9 respectively, while Chester, Crewe & Nantwich and Ellesmere Port & Neston would retain their existing level of representation, at nine, eight and six respectively. This proposal was endorsed by the Conservatives, Vale Royal Borough Council, Macclesfield Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group and Vale Royal Borough Council Conservative Group.

59 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, and concluded that the achievement of electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity would best be met by a council size of 51 members. This proposal has commanded broad support at Stage Three, and we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for a council size of 51 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

60 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the county-wide schemes from the County Council and the Conservatives, together with the CATPC's proposals for five of the six boroughs. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

61 As indicated above, there was broad consensus that the council size be increased to 51, and we concurred with this view. We also agreed that the number of county councillors representing Congleton, Macclesfield and Vale Royal should each be increased by one, to 7, 12 and 9 respectively, while the number of county councillors representing Chester, Crewe & Nantwich and Ellesmere Port & Neston should remain at nine, eight and six. This would ensure that each borough has a level of representation commensurate with its share of the county's electorate.

62 In our draft recommendations report, we acknowledged the difficulties faced in seeking to address the present levels of electoral inequality in Cheshire, and expressed gratitude for the positive approach taken by the County Council and the Conservatives in submitting county-wide electoral schemes. We sought to build on these proposals and other submissions received in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve further improvements in equality of representation throughout the county, better reflect the interests and identities of communities in the county, and result in a greater level of coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. Where it existed, we sought to reflect the consensus among representations for the boundaries of divisions. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations. Our proposals therefore reflected elements from the two county-wide submissions, together with some further modifications.

63 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries and to the

names of divisions. For the purposes of county electoral divisions, the six district areas in Cheshire are considered in turn, as follows:

- (a) Chester city;
- (b) Congleton borough;
- (c) Crewe & Nantwich borough;
- (d) Ellesmere Port & Neston borough;
- (e) Macclesfield borough;
- (f) Vale Royal borough.

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

Chester city

65 Under the current arrangements, Chester city is represented by nine county councillors serving nine county divisions: Blacon, Boughton & Vicars Cross, Broxton, Gowy, Hoole & Plas Newton, Mickle Trafford, Overleigh, Sealand & College and Upton. Currently, there is a high degree of electoral imbalance, with the number of electors in seven divisions varying by more than 10 per cent from the county average, and by more than 20 per cent in three divisions. This level of electoral inequality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

66 At Stage One the County Council proposed retaining nine county councillors for Chester city, with seven divisions being coterminous with the boundaries of city wards. In the city, it proposed combining Blacon Hall and Blacon Lodge wards in a revised Blacon division, with Boughton, City & St Anne's and College wards being combined in a new City division. It proposed that part of Newton Brook ward, north of the railway line, together with Upton Grange and Upton Westlea wards, should be combined in a revised Upton division, with the south part of Newton Brook ward being combined with Hoole All Saints, Hoole Groves and Newton St Michael's wards to form a new Hoole & Newton division. It also proposed combining Curzon & Westminster, Handbridge & St Mary's and Lache Park wards in a revised Overleigh division, with the relatively urban wards of Boughton Heath and Vicars Cross being combined with the more rural wards of Dodleston and Huntington to form a new Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross division. In the rural areas, it

proposed combining Barrow, Elton, Mickle Trafford, Mollington and Saughall wards in a revised Mickle Trafford division, while it proposed that Christleton, Kelsall, Tarvin and Waverton wards should form a revised Gowy division. It also proposed a revised Broxton division comprising the wards of Farndon, Malpas, Tattenhall and Tilston.

67 Under the County Council's proposals, which would result in seven of the nine divisions being coterminous with city wards, the number of electors would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average in two divisions. This level of electoral equality would improve marginally over the five-year period, with the number of electors expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in one division by 2004.

68 We received eight further submissions relating to this area. The Conservatives supported the County Council's proposals for Chester, while Chester City Council expressed concern that the County Council's proposals would not result in full coterminosity between city wards and electoral divisions, stating that this would be "confusing for the electorate". The CATPC and Ashton, Duddon, Guilden Sutton and Kelsall parish councils opposed any electoral arrangements that would divide Tarvin ward between electoral divisions. Saughall & Shotwick Park Parish Council wished to continue to be represented in a rural division.

69 In our draft recommendations report we concurred with the County Council's proposals to retain nine county councillors for Chester city. We noted that its proposal were supported by the Conservatives, and reflected the concerns expressed by the CATPC and the eight parish councils that made representations at Stage One. While we carefully considered Chester City Council's concern regarding the degree of coterminosity in the city, we noted that alternative electoral arrangements were not proposed, nor were we persuaded that any alternative electoral arrangements would represent a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity.

70 At Stage Three the County Council, the Conservatives and the Labour Party supported our draft recommendations. The Liberal Democrats also supported our proposals, subject to Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross division being renamed Vicars Cross & Dodleston or Great Boughton &

Dodleston. Mollington and Saughall & Shotwick Park parish councils supported our draft recommendation for Mickle Trafford division, while Tarvin Parish Council supported our proposed Gowy division.

71 Having given careful consideration to the representations received, we note that our draft recommendations have achieved a high degree of local support, and we have decided to confirm them as final. While we have considered the Liberal Democrats' proposed alternative division names for Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross division, in the absence of any further views, we have not been persuaded that there is sufficient evidence to warrant modifying the names of this division, and therefore confirm our proposed division names as final.

Congleton borough

72 Under current arrangements, Congleton borough is represented by six county councillors serving six divisions: Alsager & Lawton, Congleton & Buglawton, Hulme, Middlewich & Brereton, Moreton and Sandbach. Currently, the number of electors varies by more than 10 per cent in four divisions, and by more than 20 per cent in two divisions. This level of electoral imbalance is not expected to improve over the next five years.

73 At Stage One the County Council proposed increasing the number of county councillors for the borough to seven which, it argued, was its correct entitlement under a council size of 51. It proposed that Sandbach town should be divided, with Sandbach North and Sandbach West wards forming a new Sandbach & Elworth division, while Sandbach East ward would be combined with Odd Rode ward and parts of Astbury and Lawton wards to form a new Sandbach & Moreton division. The County Council proposed that Congleton town be divided between two new divisions, with Congleton Buglawton division comprising Buglawton, Congleton North and Congleton South wards, and Congleton Weirs division comprising Congleton Central, Congleton North West and Congleton West wards. It proposed that Middlewich Cledford and Middlewich Kinderton wards should form a new Middlewich division, while Alsager town and Church Lawton parish should be combined in a new Alsager & Church Lawton division. The County Council also proposed combining Brereton, Dane Valley and Holmes Chapel wards

together with part of Astbury ward to form a new Brereton division.

74 The Conservatives also proposed that the borough should be represented by seven divisions, and put forward identical electoral arrangements for Congleton and Middlewich towns, although they proposed that the two Congleton town divisions should be named Congleton East and Congleton West. They proposed that Sandbach North and Sandbach West wards should be combined with part of Sandbach East ward to form a revised Sandbach division, with the remainder of Sandbach East ward being combined with Lawton and Odd Rode wards to form a new Sandbach East & Moreton division. They also proposed that Alsager town should form a new division and that Astbury, Brereton, Dane Valley and Holmes Chapel wards should be combined to form a new Congleton Rural division.

75 The CATPC's proposals were broadly similar to those put forward by the Conservatives, but they proposed that Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury parishes should be included in the proposed Congleton East division, rather than the proposed Congleton Rural division. This proposal was supported by a county councillor and a parish councillor. We also received a borough-wide scheme from the Congleton Liberal Democrats, which put forward identical arrangements to the County Council, the Conservatives and the CATPC in relation to three divisions, but also proposed separate representation for Alsager and Sandbach towns.

76 We received three further submissions from parish councils in the borough. Brereton Parish Council supported the Conservatives' proposed Congleton Rural division, although it expressed concern that the division may be "too large" for a councillor to represent. Church Lawton Parish Council proposed that the parish should continue to be represented in a division with Alsager town. Hassall Parish Council proposed that Lawton ward should continue to be represented with Alsager town.

77 In our draft recommendations report we agreed that Congleton merited seven councillors under a council size of 51 and we considered that the proposed divisions covering the towns of Alsager, Congleton and Middlewich achieved a good balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity, and enjoyed a degree of

local support. As a consequence of this, we broadly endorsed the Conservatives' and the CATPC's proposals for the rest of the borough. However, we sympathised with the view that the proposed Congleton Rural division would "encompass over 50 per cent" of the borough's area. On balance, we proposed combining Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury parishes with the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division which, in our judgement, represented a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity.

78 Under our draft recommendations, which would result in four of the proposed seven divisions being coterminous with whole borough wards, the number of electors would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average in all divisions. This level of electoral equality would remain constant over the next five years.

79 At Stage Three the County Council supported our draft recommendation to increase the number of councillors representing the borough by one member. However, it argued that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be combined with the proposed Congleton East division, and that Alsager town and Church Lawton parish should be represented in a single division. It also argued that our proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division included a number of diverse communities, while the proposed Congleton Rural division would be "far too big for one county councillor to serve".

80 Congleton Borough Council also supported the proposed increase in the level of representation for the borough. However, it argued that Lawton ward has a strong affinity with Alsager ward and should be included in the same division, that Sandbach town should be united in a single division and that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in the proposed Congleton East division. It also proposed that Congleton East and Congleton West divisions should be renamed Congleton Town East and Congleton Town West to avoid potential confusion with borough wards.

81 The Conservatives and Ann Winterton MP broadly supported our draft recommendations, but proposed that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in Congleton East division. The Labour Party and Cheshire County Labour Party

supported our draft recommendation for divisions covering Congleton and Middlewich towns, but argued that the County Council's Stage One proposals achieved a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria for the remaining four divisions. The Liberal Democrats also supported three of the proposed seven divisions, and requested that we reconsider our draft recommendations for the remaining four divisions. The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Cheshire County Labour Party each argued that the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division includes a diverse area from Sandbach to Mow Cop and Newbold Astbury, and that Alsager town and Lawton ward should be included in a single division. The Labour Party and Cheshire County Labour Party also opposed our draft recommendation to re-ward Sandbach town as a consequence of our proposed county electoral arrangements.

82 Congleton Constituency Liberal Democrats broadly supported our draft recommendations, and noted that our draft recommendations were similar to their Stage One proposals, with the exception of our proposed divisions covering Sandbach town, which they "reluctantly accept".

83 The CATPC opposed our draft recommendation to represent Sandbach in two divisions and include part of the town with the adjoining rural area, but accepted that it may be necessary to split the town, and suggested an alternative boundary between Sandbach and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions. It also proposed that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in the proposed Congleton East division, and noted that Church Lawton parish shares community identities and interests with Alsager town.

84 Brereton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations to include Brereton in a rural division, but expressed concern that the size of the proposed Congleton Rural division may be difficult for a councillor to represent effectively. Cranage Parish Council also objected to our proposed Congleton Rural division. Sandbach Town Council argued that Sandbach should continue to form a single division. Church Lawton Parish Council and a councillor opposed our draft recommendation for Sandbach East & Moreton division, arguing that Church Lawton has strong communication links with Alsager and should be included in the proposed Alsager division, while

Alsager Town Council stated that it had “no objection” to our draft recommendations.

85 Newbold Astbury-cum-Moreton Parish Council, Congleton Town Council and 11 local residents also opposed our draft recommendation for Sandbach East & Moreton division, and suggested that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury be included in the proposed Congleton East division. Congleton Town Council supported this proposal. A county councillor substantially supported our draft recommendations, although he proposed that the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in the proposed Congleton East division; he proposed that Congleton East and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions should be renamed Congleton East & Astbury and Sandbach East & Rode in the event that this proposed boundary modification was accepted. A councillor argued that Lawton ward should be represented in a division with Alsager, while another councillor endorsed the Borough Council’s proposed names for divisions covering Congleton town.

86 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that there is broad agreement regarding the level of representation for the borough and the proposed Middlewich division, and we have decided to endorse these proposals as final. We also note that there is broad agreement regarding our proposal that Congleton town be represented by two divisions. However, our proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division has not achieved a high degree of local support, and we have therefore considered alternative electoral arrangements. On balance, we have been persuaded that there is merit in combining the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury with Congleton East division, as proposed by the majority of respondents. In particular, while we note that Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury are both rural parishes, we consider that they share strong historical links and good transport connections with communities in the east of Congleton, and that they do not share as strong an affinity with communities to their west.

87 However, we note that this proposal would adversely affect the level of coterminosity achieved under our draft recommendations. We have therefore considered alternative electoral arrangements elsewhere in the borough and, on balance, we have been persuaded that there is merit

in Sandbach East ward being wholly represented in the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division, with Sandbach North and Sandbach West wards being incorporated in the proposed Sandbach division, as proposed by the County Council at Stage One. While this proposal would result in a marginally higher degree of electoral imbalance than that achieved in our draft recommendation, we consider that, in the light of evidence received at Stage Three, it would achieve a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity than our draft recommendations. This proposal would also reflect concerns expressed by the Labour Party and Cheshire County Labour Party.

88 We also propose that Congleton East, Congleton West and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions should be renamed Congleton Town East, Congleton Town West and Sandbach East & Rode respectively, in order that the constituent communities within divisions are better reflected. We do not consider that a councillor’s alternative proposal to rename Congleton East and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions

89 We note a number of respondents have objected to the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division, and have argued that Lawton ward should be incorporated in Alsager division. However, we have not been persuaded by this proposal and, in particular, note that this would result in Odd Rode ward being detached from Sandbach East & Moreton division. In our Guidance we have stated our opposition to detached electoral areas as, in general, we consider that they do not satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities. While we have considered including Odd Rode ward in the proposed Alsager division together with Lawton ward, this would result in a high degree of electoral imbalance, with both Alsager and Sandbach East & Moreton divisions having electoral imbalances greater than 50 per cent. Similarly, if Odd Rode ward was combined with the proposed Congleton Rural division both affected divisions would have electoral imbalances greater than 30 per cent, with the geographical area covered by the proposed Congleton Rural division also increasing significantly.

90 We have also considered the proposal to include Church Lawton parish in Alsager division. However, we note that these proposals would result in only three of the proposed seven divisions being coterminous with borough wards and we

have not been persuaded that this proposal would represent a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. In addition, we note that Alsager Town Council has not opposed our draft recommendations.

91 We have also considered the concern expressed by the County Council, and Brereton and Cranage parish councils regarding the size of the proposed Congleton Rural division. While the proposed Congleton Rural division would not be fully coterminous with borough wards, we consider that it comprises a number of rural communities with similar identities and interests and achieves a good level of electoral equality. Moreover, our draft recommendation for this division broadly reflects the County Council's Stage One proposal. Accordingly, in the absence of any viable alternative proposals, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation for this division as final.

92 In addition, we have considered Congleton Borough Council's proposal that Sandbach town should be represented in a single division. However, we note that our draft recommendation for the two divisions representing Sandbach town, subject to the modification outlined previously, have achieved a degree of local support. Furthermore, as we noted in our draft recommendations report, if Sandbach town was represented in a single division then it would have 36 per cent fewer electors than the county average, and we have not been persuaded that this level of electoral imbalance is justified.

93 Under our final recommendations, which would result in coterminosity in five of the seven divisions, the number of electors would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average in two divisions. This level of electoral equality is projected to marginally improve over the next five years, with the number of electors in all but one division projected to vary by less than 10 per cent by 2004.

Crewe & Nantwich borough

94 Under current arrangements Crewe & Nantwich borough is represented by eight county councillors, serving eight divisions: Cholmondeley, Crewe Central, Crewe North, Crewe South, Crewe West, Doddington, Nantwich and Rope. Currently the number of electors varies by more than 10 per cent from the county average in two divisions, and by more than 20 per cent in one division.

95 At Stage One the County Council proposed retaining eight county councillors for the borough. It proposed that there should be four divisions covering Crewe town, with Coppenhall, Leighton and Maw Green wards being combined in a revised Crewe North division; Delamere, Grosvenor and St Barnabas wards being combined in a revised Crewe West division; Alexandra, St John's and Valley wards being combined in a revised Crewe South division; and Englesea, Haslington and Waldron wards being combined in a new Crewe East & Haslington division. It also proposed combining Acton, Audlem, Bunbury, Minshull, Peckforton and Wrenbury wards in a revised Cholmondeley division, with Barony Weaver, Birchin and Wellington wards continuing to comprise Nantwich division. In addition, it proposed combining St Mary's, Willaston and Wistaston Green wards in a new Wistaston & Willaston division, with Shavington, Wells Green and Wybunbury wards forming a new Shavington & Wybunbury division.

96 The Conservatives' and the CATPC's proposals were identical to the County Council's proposals for Cholmondeley, Crewe South and Nantwich divisions while elsewhere in the borough they both proposed alternative electoral arrangements. They proposed combining Coppenhall, Grosvenor and Leighton wards in a revised Crewe North division; St Barnabas and Wistaston Green wards in a revised Crewe West division; and Delamere, Maw Green and Waldron wards in a new Crewe East division. They also proposed combining St Mary's, Shavington, Wells Green and Willaston wards to form a revised Rope division, and combining Englesea, Haslington and Wybunbury wards in a revised Doddington division.

97 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was agreement that the borough should continue to be represented by eight county councillors, and we concurred with this view. There was also agreement regarding three proposed divisions, and we were content to endorse this consensus. However, on balance, we considered that the Conservatives' and CATPC's proposals would represent the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity for the rest of the borough. In particular, we noted that their proposals would achieve separate representation for Crewe town, while the County Council proposed combining Waldron ward with adjoining rural wards. In addition, we were not persuaded that the County

Council's proposed Shavington & Wybunbury division would achieve the best possible electoral arrangements, as it would comprise diverse rural and urban communities.

98 At Stage Three the County Council, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, Cheshire County Labour Party, Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council, and a councillor supported our draft recommendations for the three divisions, but argued that the County Council's proposals would better reflect the identities and interests of communities elsewhere in the borough. The Conservatives, the CATPC, Crewe & Nantwich Conservative Association, four councillors and a resident supported our draft recommendations for the borough, while Shavington-cum-Gresty, Willaston and Wistaston parish councils all supported our draft recommendations for their respective areas. Maw Green & Coppenthal Labour Party argued that Delamere, Maw Green and Waldron wards do not share community identities and interests, and that Maw Green ward should be included in a division with Coppenthal ward.

99 Crewe & Nantwich Borough Liberal Democrat Group supported our draft recommendations for Cholmondeley, Doddington, Nantwich and Rope divisions, and supported our draft recommendation that Crewe town be separately represented from the rural area. However, it proposed alternative electoral arrangements within Crewe town. It proposed that Crewe Central division should comprise Delamere, St John's and Valley wards, Crewe North division should comprise Coppenthal, Leighton and Maw Green wards, Crewe South should comprise Alexandra and Waldron wards together with part of Wistaston Green ward, while it proposed that the remainder of Wistaston Green ward should be combined with Grosvenor and St Barnabas ward to form a revised Crewe West division. It argued that its proposals would combine areas that included similar housing types.

100 Under these proposals, which would result in six coterminous divisions, all eight divisions would vary by less than 10 per cent. This level of electoral equality is expected to marginally deteriorate over the next five years, with the proposed Crewe North division projected to vary by more than 10 per cent.

101 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that while our proposals for Cholmondeley, Crewe South and Nantwich divisions were broadly supported, this was not the

case elsewhere in the borough. However, given the diversity of views expressed at Stage Three and having considered the possibility of alternative divisions in the borough, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations would provide the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity, and have decided to confirm them as final. We have again considered the County Council's Stage One proposals, but while they would achieve complete coterminosity between divisions and wards and a good level of electoral equality, we have not been persuaded that they would achieve satisfactory community representation. As indicated in our draft recommendations report, we have reservations regarding a number of their proposed divisions which would combine urban and rural communities.

102 We have also considered the proposals put forward by Crewe & Nantwich Borough Liberal Democrats for Crewe town, and note that they achieve a good level of electoral equality. However, as indicated previously, our proposed Crewe South division has achieved broad support, and we remain satisfied that it achieves the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In addition, there was also broad consensus that all divisions should be fully coterminous with borough wards, and we note that these proposals would split Wistaston Green ward. In addition, Wistaston Parish Council supported our draft recommendations.

103 Furthermore, we have not been persuaded by Maw Green & Coppenthal Labour Party's proposal to combine Coppenthal, Leighton and Maw Green wards in a single division, as it would necessitate alternative electoral arrangements in adjoining areas and, as indicated above, we are not persuaded that any of the alternative proposals put forward achieve the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity for the borough. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for county council electoral arrangements in Crewe & Nantwich borough as final, without modification.

Ellesmere Port & Neston borough

104 Under current arrangements Ellesmere Port & Neston is represented by six county councillors, serving six divisions: Central & Westminster, Grange & Rossmore, Groves & Whitby, Neston & Parkgate, South Wirral and Sutton & Rivacre. At present the number of electors per councillor varies

by more than 20 per cent from the county average in one division. This level of electoral inequality is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

105 At Stage One the County Council proposed retaining six county councillors for the borough. It proposed combining Central and Stanlow & Wolverham wards together with parts of Westminster and Whitby wards in a revised Central & Westminster division; Grange and Rossmore wards together with part of Westminster ward would form a revised Grange & Rossmore division; and Pooltown, Rivacre and Sutton wards would form a revised Sutton & Rivacre division. It also proposed combining Groves and Strawberry Fields wards together with parts of Sutton Green & Manor and Whitby wards in a revised Groves & Whitby division; Burton & Ness, Ledsham and Willaston & Thornton wards together with the remainder of Sutton Green & Manor ward would form a new Ledsham & Willaston division; and Little Neston, Neston, Parkgate and Riverside wards would form a revised Neston & Parkgate division.

106 Under the County Council's proposals, which would result in two out of six coterminous divisions, the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the county average in one division. This level of electoral equality is expected to improve over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor varying by less than 10 per cent from the average in all six divisions by 2004. The Conservatives supported the County Council's proposals in Ellesmere Port & Neston. No other representations were received regarding the borough.

107 In our draft recommendations report we agreed that the borough should continue to be represented by six county councillors. However, while we noted that the County Council's proposals would achieve a good level of electoral equality, we had reservations regarding the level of coterminosity that would result, with only one-third of electoral divisions being coterminous with borough wards. We were not persuaded that this level of coterminosity was justified, and we decided that an option locally consulted upon by the County Council at Stage One, but not adopted as its submission, offered better electoral arrangements.

108 We proposed that Central, Stanlow & Wolverham and Westminster wards should be combined in a new Central & Westminster

division, that Grange and Rivacre division together with part of Rossmore divisions should be combined in a new Grange & Rossmore division, and that Groves, Strawberry Fields and Whitby wards should be combined in a new Groves & Whitby division. We proposed combining Pooltown, Sutton and Sutton Green & Manor wards in a new Sutton & Manor division, with Burton & Ness, Ledsham and Willaston & Thornton wards being combined in a new Ledsham & Willaston division, and Little Neston, Neston, Parkgate and Riverside wards forming a new Neston & Parkgate division. We considered that our draft recommendations achieved the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity.

109 Under our draft recommendations, which would result in four of the six divisions being coterminous with borough wards, the number of electors would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the county average in all but one division, both initially and in 2004.

110 At Stage Three the County Council reiterated its Stage One proposals, arguing that they would achieve "better equality of representation" than our draft recommendations. The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Cheshire County Labour Party argued that our draft recommendations placed too great an emphasis on coterminosity and had disregarded local communities, and reiterated the County Council's Stage One proposals. Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council and Ellesmere Port & Neston Constituency Labour Party also supported the County Council's Stage One proposals, while Andrew Miller MP argued that the County Council's Stage One proposals achieved a better level of electoral equality and better reflected the identities and interests of communities than our draft recommendations. In particular, he noted that the boundaries of three of the County Council's proposed divisions would utilise the boundary of a proposed Education Action Zone. We received three submissions from local residents also opposing our draft recommendations. The Conservatives supported our draft recommendation to retain the borough's existing level of representation, and the proposed Ledsham & Willaston division. The CATPC and Ellesmere Port & Neston Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations.

111 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that there is broad agreement that six county councillors should continue to

represent the borough, and there is also agreement regarding our proposed Neston & Parkgate division. We are content to endorse this consensus. Our draft recommendations for the remaining five divisions have not achieved a high degree of support. However, while we note that the County Council's Stage One proposals would achieve a marginally better level of electoral equality than our draft recommendations, they would result in a low level of coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards, and we have not been persuaded that a satisfactory case for this has been made. We consider that there would be significant disadvantages in relation to such a low level of coterminosity, and we are not persuaded that the County Council's Stage One proposals would secure convenient and effective local government for the borough.

112 We note the concern expressed regarding the representation of the interests and identities of communities under our draft recommendations. However, we have not been persuaded on the evidence put forward at Stage Three that our draft recommendations would have a significant adverse affect on the representation of communities. Furthermore, our draft recommendations would utilise a number of strong and easily identifiable boundaries such as the A41 Chester Road and A5032 Chester Road. Therefore, in the absence of any alternative proposals that would achieve a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, in their entirety.

Macclesfield borough

113 Under current arrangements, Macclesfield borough is represented by 11 county councillors serving 11 county divisions: Alderley, Bollington & Disley, Bucklow, Knutsford, Macclesfield Forest, Macclesfield Ivy, Macclesfield Victoria, Poynton, Upton & Prestbury, Wilmslow Bollin and Wilmslow Dean. Currently, there is a relatively high degree of electoral imbalance in the borough, with the number of electors varying by more than 10 per cent from the county average in six divisions, and by more than 20 per cent in one division. This level of electoral inequality is expected to deteriorate, with three divisions projected to vary by more than 20 per cent by 2004.

114 At Stage One the County Council proposed increasing the number of county councillors for the

borough to 12 which, it argued, was its correct entitlement under a council size of 51. It proposed that there should be four divisions covering Macclesfield town, with Macclesfield Bollinbrook and Macclesfield Broken Cross wards together with the part of Macclesfield Tytherington ward east of the B5091 Manchester Road being combined in a new Macclesfield North division; Macclesfield Central and Macclesfield West wards together with the part of Macclesfield Ivy ward north of Ivy Lane being combined in a new Macclesfield Central division; Macclesfield East and Macclesfield Hursfield wards together with the remaining part of Macclesfield Tytherington ward being combined in a new Macclesfield East division; and Macclesfield Ryles and Macclesfield South wards and part of Macclesfield Ivy ward being combined with Gawsworth ward in a new Macclesfield South division.

115 It proposed that Knutsford should continue to form a division in its own right, and that there should be two divisions covering Wilmslow, with Wilmslow North division comprising Dean Row and Handforth wards, and Wilmslow South division comprising Hough, Lacey Green and Morley & Styal wards. It proposed that the rural area adjoining Knutsford should be represented in a single division, with High Legh, Mere, Moberley and Plumley wards being combined with the parishes of Chelford, Great Warford, Lower Withington and Snelson to form a revised Bucklow division; Alderley Edge and Fulshaw wards being combined with the parishes of Eaton, Henbury, Marton, Nether Alderley, Over Alderley and Siddington parishes in a revised Alderley division; and Bollington Central, Bollington East, Bollington West and Prestbury wards being combined in a new Bollington & Prestbury division. It also proposed that Poynton Central and Poynton West wards should be combined to form a revised Poynton division, with Poynton East ward being combined with Disley & Lyme Handley, Rainow and Sutton wards in a new Pennine division.

116 The Conservatives also proposed that the number of county councillors representing the borough should be increased to 12 and put forward identical electoral arrangements to the County Council for Knutsford and Wilmslow, although they proposed alternative names for the divisions covering Wilmslow. The Conservatives' proposed Alderley and Bucklow divisions were similar to the County Council's proposals, although the

Conservatives proposed that the whole of Henbury ward should be contained in the proposed Alderley division.

117 They proposed that there should be five divisions covering Macclesfield town, with Macclesfield Bollinbrook and Macclesfield Broken Cross wards being combined in a new Broken Cross division; part of Macclesfield Central ward being combined with Macclesfield East and Macclesfield Hurdsfield wards in a new Macclesfield Town division; the remainder of Macclesfield Central ward being combined with Macclesfield Ivy and Macclesfield West wards in a new Macclesfield West division; Macclesfield Ryles and Macclesfield South wards continuing to be combined in a division with Gawsorth and Sutton wards, to be named Macclesfield South division; and Macclesfield Tytherington ward being combined with Prestbury ward in a new Prestbury & Tytherington division. They also proposed combining Poynton Central, Poynton East and Poynton West wards to form a revised Poynton division, with Bollington Central, Bollington East and Bollington West wards continuing to be combined with Disley & Lyme Handley and Rainow wards in Bollington & Disley division.

118 The CATPC and a resident put forward proposals broadly similar to the County Council's scheme, while the Macclesfield Borough Liberal Democrats supported the County Council's proposals and Bollington Town Council supported the County Council's proposal for Bollington. In addition, 57 respondents supported the Conservatives' proposed Poynton division. In addition, six respondents supported the Conservatives' proposals for their local areas.

119 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was broad agreement that the number of county councillors representing the borough should be increased by one and regarding the proposed divisions for Knutsford and Wilmslow, and we concurred with this view. We also noted that the County Council's and the Conservatives' proposed Alderley and Bucklow divisions would be similar. However, on balance, we endorsed the Conservatives' proposals as they achieved a higher degree of coterminosity in this area, while appearing to satisfactorily reflect the identities and interests of communities. In Macclesfield town, we noted that both proposals would result in two divisions not being fully coterminous with borough wards, but we considered that the

Conservatives' proposals better reflected the interests and identities of communities in the town.

120 In particular, their proposed Macclesfield South division would retain the boundaries of the existing Macclesfield Forest division, while the County Council's proposals would combine parts of Macclesfield town with the rural area and we were not persuaded that this would satisfactorily reflect the identities and interests of communities in either area. Furthermore, our draft recommendations utilised strong and easily identifiable boundaries, including the West Coast Main Line. In particular, we noted that the Conservatives' proposals would retain Poynton parish in a single division, and we were persuaded that Poynton formed a cohesive community and that the County Council's proposals would not reflect the identities and interests of Poynton as they would combine Poynton East ward with rural parishes to its east, with which it does not share any direct communication links.

121 We modified the Conservatives' proposals for Bollington & Disley and Prestbury & Tytherington divisions, as we were not persuaded that the relatively high levels of electoral imbalance in their proposals were justified. We therefore proposed that Bollington West ward should be combined with Prestbury & Tytherington division.

122 Under our draft recommendations, which would result in eight of the 12 divisions being coterminous with borough wards, the number of electors would vary by more than 10 per cent in two divisions both initially and over the next five years.

123 At Stage Three the County Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations for the borough, on the grounds that they "support existing community links and identities" and generally "avoid the creation of contrived artificial divisions". However, it objected to our proposal to include Bollington West ward in Bollington West, Prestbury & Tytherington division, and proposed that Bollington should continue to be represented in a division with rural parishes to its east. It also proposed Macclesfield Forest be retained as a division name. The Macclesfield Area Committee made a separate representation putting forward the same view. The CATPC accepted our draft recommendations, but expressed some concern that they would combine rural and urban areas in the proposed Alderley and Bollington & Disley

divisions. The Conservatives and a councillor supported our proposals, but expressed disappointment that Bollington would be split between two divisions.

¹²⁴ The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Cheshire County Labour Party supported our draft recommendations for Knutsford, Wilmslow North and Wilmslow South divisions, but opposed our draft recommendations for the rest of the borough, arguing that the County Council's Stage One proposal achieved a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. They both argued that Bollington town and Macclesfield Central should each be united in single divisions. The Labour Party additionally argued that the County Council's Stage One proposal to split Tytherington ward between two divisions has merit as it would utilise the B5091 Manchester Road, which it considered forms a strong and easily identifiable boundary. A county councillor and three residents supported the County Council's Stage One proposals for divisions in the north east of the borough.

¹²⁵ Macclesfield Borough Council, Macclesfield Conservative & Unionist Association for Ivy/Ryles ward, a councillor and six residents supported our draft recommendations, one of whom also opposed the County Council's Stage One proposal to divide Tytherington ward. In addition, Nicholas Winterton MP and two councillors also substantially supported our proposals, but expressed concern regarding the representation of Bollington town. Bollington Town Council, four councillors and 28 residents argued that Bollington town should be represented in a single division. Of these, two councillors supported the County Council's Stage One proposal to unite Bollington in a division with Prestbury, while another resident supported the Conservatives' proposal to represent Bollington town in a single division with parishes to its east.

¹²⁶ Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Parish Meeting, Sutton Parish Council and a councillor supported our proposal to retain Macclesfield Forest division's boundaries, but Sutton Parish Council and the councillor proposed that we should also retain the division name, while Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Parish Meeting proposed that the division should be named Macclesfield Uplands to better reflect the geographical character of the area.

¹²⁷ Poynton-with-Worth Parish Council, Poynton Conservatives, Poynton & Adlington Liberal Democrats, two councillors and 36 residents supported our proposed Poynton division, while one of the councillors also opposed our proposal for Bollington. A councillor supported our proposals for Macclesfield town, while another councillor supported our proposed Bucklow division.

¹²⁸ We received representations from the Macclesfield Liberal Democrats, three councillors and eight residents opposing our draft recommendations for Macclesfield town, arguing that the County Council's Stage One proposals better reflect the interest and identities of communities in Central and Ivy wards. In addition Macclesfield Liberal Democrats argued that Bollington should be represented in a single division. Another councillor also supported the County Council's Stage One proposals for the town, but proposed that Macclesfield Ivy ward should be wholly represented in a division with rural parishes to its south. and a councillor also supported the County Council's proposals for Macclesfield town, while another councillor supported our draft recommendations for Macclesfield town.

¹²⁹ Macclesfield Borough Liberal Democrat Group supported our draft recommendations for five divisions in the west of the borough and the proposed Poynton division. However, it supported the County Council's Stage One proposals for Macclesfield town and its proposed Bollington & Prestbury division. In addition, it suggested that Disley & Lyme Handley, Rainow and Sutton wards should be combined in a new Peak Edge division.

¹³⁰ Under Macclesfield Borough Liberal Democrat Group's proposals, which would result in six of the 12 divisions being coterminous with borough wards, two divisions would have an electoral imbalance greater than 10 per cent and one division would have an imbalance greater than 20 per cent. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years, with the number of electors varying by more than 10 per cent in three divisions and by more than 20 per cent in one division.

¹³¹ Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that our draft recommendation to increase the number of county councillors

representing the town by one has been broadly supported. We also note that our proposed Knutsford, Poynton, Wilmslow North and Wilmslow South divisions have achieved a high degree of support, and we are content to endorse these proposals as our final recommendations. However, our proposal to include Bollington West ward in a division with Macclesfield Tytherington and Prestbury wards has not been broadly supported and we have been persuaded, on the evidence put forward at Stage Three, that wholly representing Bollington town in a single division would achieve the best balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. In particular, we consider that Bollington forms a strong and cohesive community, and that its identities and interests would be best served by combining it with parishes to its east, as proposed by the County Council at Stage Three, rather than combining part of the town with Prestbury and Tytherington. We also note that this proposal reflects the concerns of the majority of respondents regarding this area. As a consequence of this boundary modification, we propose that Bollington West, Prestbury & Tytherington division should be named Prestbury & Tytherington.

¹³² We consider that the proposal put forward by the County Council, Sutton Parish Council and a councillor to retain Macclesfield Forest as a division name has merit, as it would appear to satisfactorily reflect the proposed division's constituent communities. We have not been persuaded that Macclesfield Forest & Wildboarclough Parish Meeting's proposal to name the division Macclesfield Uplands would enjoy a higher degree of local support.

¹³³ We have not been persuaded to adopt the County Council's Stage One submission for Macclesfield town and adjoining divisions, as proposed by a number of respondents including the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Cheshire County Labour Party. As indicated in our draft recommendations report, we were not persuaded that the County Council's Stage One proposal achieved the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity as it would combine part of Macclesfield Ivy ward together with Macclesfield Ryles and Macclesfield South wards, in Macclesfield town, with the rural area. We were not persuaded that Macclesfield Ivy ward south of Ivy Lane shares strong identities and interests with

rural parishes in Gawsworth ward, nor that Gawsworth ward should be represented in a different division from Sutton ward. In addition, we note that while our proposed Broken Cross division would have an electoral imbalance of 19 per cent, its boundaries would utilise the West Coast main line and the A537 Chester Road. We consider that these boundaries are strong and easily identifiable, and note that the part of Macclesfield Tytherington ward to the west of the B5091 Manchester Road, which the County Council proposed combining with Macclesfield Bollinbrook and Macclesfield Broken Cross wards at Stage One, would only be linked to those wards by one road – the A538 Beech Road – in the south of Tytherington.

¹³⁴ Furthermore, while we note a number of respondents opposed our proposal to represent Macclesfield Central ward in two divisions, we consider that our draft recommendations would achieve the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity in Macclesfield town and adjoining areas. If Macclesfield Central ward was united in a single division and represented in either Macclesfield Town or Macclesfield West division, both divisions would have an electoral imbalance greater than 20 per cent.

¹³⁵ As a consequence of our proposal for adjoining areas, we are not persuaded that the Macclesfield Borough Liberal Democrats' proposed Peak Edge division would represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, as our proposal to retain Sutton ward in Macclesfield Forest division enjoys a degree of local support. In addition, the number of electors in the proposed Peak Edge division would vary by 24 per cent from the county average and, under their proposals for the borough, only six of the 12 divisions would be coterminous with borough wards.

¹³⁶ Under our final recommendations, which would result in eight coterminous divisions, the number of electors would vary by more than 10 per cent in four divisions, both in 1999 and 2004.

Vale Royal borough

¹³⁷ Under current arrangements, Vale Royal is represented by eight county councillors serving eight divisions: Brookmere, Eddisbury, Frodsham & Helsby, North Vale, Northwich East, Northwich West, Winsford North and Winsford South. Currently, there is relatively high degree of electoral

imbalance in the borough, with the number of electors varying by more than 10 per cent in four divisions, and with one division varying by more than 20 per cent. By 2004 this level of electoral inequality is projected to deteriorate further, with two divisions varying by more than 20 per cent and the number of electors in Northwich West division projected to vary by 38 per cent from the average.

¹³⁸ At Stage One the County Council proposed increasing the number of county councillors for the borough to nine. It proposed that there should be two divisions covering Northwich, with Northwich Witton and Rudheath & South Witton wards being combined with part of Lostock & Wincham ward to form a revised Northwich East division and Leftwich & Kingsmead, Northwich Castle and Northwich Winnington wards forming a revised Northwich West division. It also proposed that Winsford should continue to be covered by two divisions, with Winsford North & East division comprising Winsford Gravel, Winsford Verdin and Winsford Wharton wards, and Winsford South & West comprising Winsford Dene, Winsford Over and Winsford Swanlow wards.

¹³⁹ In the north of the borough, the County Council proposed combining Frodsham North, Frodsham South and Helsby wards to form a revised Frodsham & Helsby division, with Cogshall, Forest, Kingsley, Mara, Milton Weaver and Seven Oaks & Marston wards forming a revised North Vale division and Barnton and Weaverham wards forming a new Weaver Banks division. In the south of the borough, it proposed combining Cuddington & Oakmere and Hartford & Whitegate wards in a new Abbey division, with Davenham & Moulton, Shakerley, Tarporley & Oulton wards and Lostock Gralam Village parish ward being combined in a new South Vale division.

¹⁴⁰ Under the County Council's proposals, which would result in seven coterminous divisions, the number of electors in all divisions would vary by less than 10 per cent from the county average in 1999. This level of electoral variance is expected to marginally deteriorate over the next five years, with the number of electors in one division varying by 12 per cent from the average by 2004.

¹⁴¹ The Conservatives and the CATPC put forward identical arrangements for the borough, which reflected the County Council's proposed level of representation and the proposed divisions for

Winsford town, Frodsham & Helsby and Northwich West. They also proposed that a new Northwich East & Shakerley division should comprise Northwich Witton, Rudheath & South Witton and Shakerley wards.

¹⁴² They proposed that there should be three divisions in the north of the borough, with Forest, Kingsley, Milton Weaver and Weaverham wards forming a new Weaver division, while Barnton, Cogshall, Lostock & Wincham and Seven Oaks & Marston wards should be combined in a new Marbury division. In the south of the borough, the Conservatives and the CATPC proposed combining Cuddington & Oakmere, Mara and Tarporley & Oulton wards to form a revised Eddisbury division, with Davenham & Moulton and Hartford & Whitegate wards being combined to form a new Abbey division.

¹⁴³ Under the Conservatives' and the CATPC's proposals, which would result in complete coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards, the number of electors would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the county average in all divisions. This level of electoral imbalance is expected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years, with one division projected to vary by 12 per cent from the county average by 2004.

¹⁴⁴ We received 22 further submissions relating to the borough. Vale Royal Borough Council supported the County Council's proposals for the borough on the grounds that they better reflected the interests and identities of communities in the borough. Vale Royal Conservative Group, two county councillors and four local residents supported the Conservatives' and the CATPC's proposals for the borough, although Vale Royal Conservative Group proposed alternative names for six divisions. Two parish councils supported the County Council's proposals for their local areas, while one parish council supported the Conservatives' and CATPC's proposals for its area, and 11 local residents opposed the County Council's proposed Weaver Banks division.

¹⁴⁵ In our draft recommendations report we endorsed the County Council's, the Conservatives' and the CATPC's proposals for the level of representation, and the proposed divisions for Frodsham & Helsby, Northwich West and Winsford town. In the rest of the borough, we concluded that the proposals put forward by the

Conservatives and the CATPC achieved the best possible balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. In particular, we noted that these proposals achieved a marginally lower level of electoral imbalance, better reflected the identities and interests of communities on the evidence received at Stage One, and achieved a higher degree of coterminosity than the County Council's proposals.

¹⁴⁶ At Stage Three the County Council supported our proposed division names for Weaver, Winsford North & East and Winsford South & West, but did not comment on proposed division boundaries in Vale Royal borough. The Conservatives and the CATPC supported our draft recommendations, on the grounds that they achieved a good level of electoral equality, represented the identities and interests of communities and achieved full coterminosity with borough wards. Vale Royal Borough Conservative Group, Dunham Hill & Hapsford Parish Council, Winsford Town Council, Eddisbury and Weaver Vale Conservative associations, three councillors and eight residents also supported our draft recommendations for the borough, while another resident supported our proposal to increase the level of representation for the borough by one member.

¹⁴⁷ The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Cheshire County Labour Party and Vale Royal Borough Council supported our suggested level of representation for the borough, together with our proposed Frodsham & Helsby, Northwich West, Winsford North & East and Winsford South & West divisions, but reiterated the County Council's Stage One proposals for the remaining five divisions, arguing that our draft recommendations did not satisfactorily reflect the identities and interests of communities. In particular, Vale Royal Borough Council argued that our proposed Northwich East & Shakerley division would combine diverse rural and urban areas, and that the County Council's Stage One proposal to combine Barnton and Weaverham wards in a division would include similar urban communities. It also supported the County Council's proposed Abbey division, in preference to our draft recommendation. Mike Hall MP also supported the County Council's Stage One proposals for the borough, arguing that its proposed Weaver Banks division combined "similar communities". He also argued that our proposal to combine Shakerley ward with Northwich town did not reflect the identities and

interests of communities, unlike the County Council's Stage One proposal for the area.

¹⁴⁸ We received a further 17 representations. Weaverham Parish Council, together with eight local residents supported our draft recommendation to include Weaver ward in a division with parishes to its west, and opposed the County Council's Stage One proposal to combine Barnton and Weaverham wards. Barnton Parish Council and a councillor supported our draft recommendation to broadly retain the existing Brookmere division, albeit renamed Marbury. A local resident opposed our draft recommendations, and reiterated the County Council's Stage One proposals, particularly relating to the proposed Weaver Banks division. Crowton, Cuddington, Davenham and Helsby parish councils also supported our draft recommendations for their local areas. Oakmere Parish Council argued that Delamere and Oakmere parishes should be retained in a single division.

¹⁴⁹ Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that while our proposals for Frodsham & Helsby, Northwich West, Winsford North & East and Winsford South & West divisions have achieved a high degree of local support, this was not the case elsewhere, with a number of respondents arguing that the County Council's Stage One proposals would achieve a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity than our draft recommendations. However, in the light of evidence received, and having considered the possibility of alternative divisions in the borough, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations would provide the best balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity, and have decided to confirm them as final. In particular, as already indicated, our draft recommendations would achieve marginally better electoral equality, and we remain of the view that they provide a better reflection of the identities and interests of communities, and achieve complete coterminosity.

¹⁵⁰ We note that our draft recommendations have achieved a high degree of local support, especially in relation to our proposed Marbury and Weaver divisions. We consider that the River Weaver forms an effective boundary between these two proposed divisions, and note that the river is not breached by a road at any point along the boundary between Barnton and Weaverham wards. In addition, while

we note that our proposed Northwich West & Shakerley division combines part of Northwich town with the rural Shakerley ward, we are not persuaded that the County Council's Stage One proposal relating to Shakerley ward would achieve a satisfactory balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. Its proposed South Vale division (comprising Davenham & Moulton, Shakerley and Tarporley & Oulton wards together with part of Lostock Wincham division) would create an arc-shaped division covering some 20 miles in length, combining communities which do not share any communication links. We do not consider that the County Council's Stage One proposals would secure effective and convenient local government in this area.

151 We have also examined the Borough Council's proposal that we endorse the County Council's Stage One proposed Abbey division. However, as a consequence of our proposals elsewhere in the borough, we are not persuaded that this proposed division achieves a better balance between electoral equality, the statutory criteria and coterminosity. We propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, without modification.

Conclusions

152 Having considered all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we propose that:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 48 to 51, serving 51 divisions;
- (b) changes should be made to the boundaries of all but three of the existing divisions.

153 We have decided to substantially endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) In Congleton borough, the two proposed divisions covering Congleton town should be renamed Congleton Town East and Congleton Town West and the proposed Sandbach East & Moreton division should be renamed Sandbach East & Rode. The parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury should be included in the proposed Congleton Town East division, while Sandbach East ward should be wholly represented in Sandbach East & Rode division.
- (b) In Macclesfield borough, Bollington town should be wholly represented in the proposed Bollington & Disley division, and our draft recommendation to name a division Bollington West, Prestbury & Tytherington should be modified to Prestbury & Tytherington as a consequence. We also propose that Macclesfield Forest should be retained as a division name.

154 Figure 4 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing

*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/ divisions	48	51	48	51
Average number of electors	10,944	10,300	11,143	10,488
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	24	11	25	10
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	9	0	11	0

them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

155 As shown in Figure 4, our draft recommendations for Cheshire County Council would result in a reduction in the number of divisions with an electoral variance of more than 20 per cent from the county average from nine to none. This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue over the next five years. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Final Recommendation

Cheshire County Council should comprise 51 councillors serving the same number of divisions, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and at Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

6. NEXT STEPS

156 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements for Cheshire County Council and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

157 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 earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

158 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

Draft Recommendations for Cheshire: Detailed Mapping

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

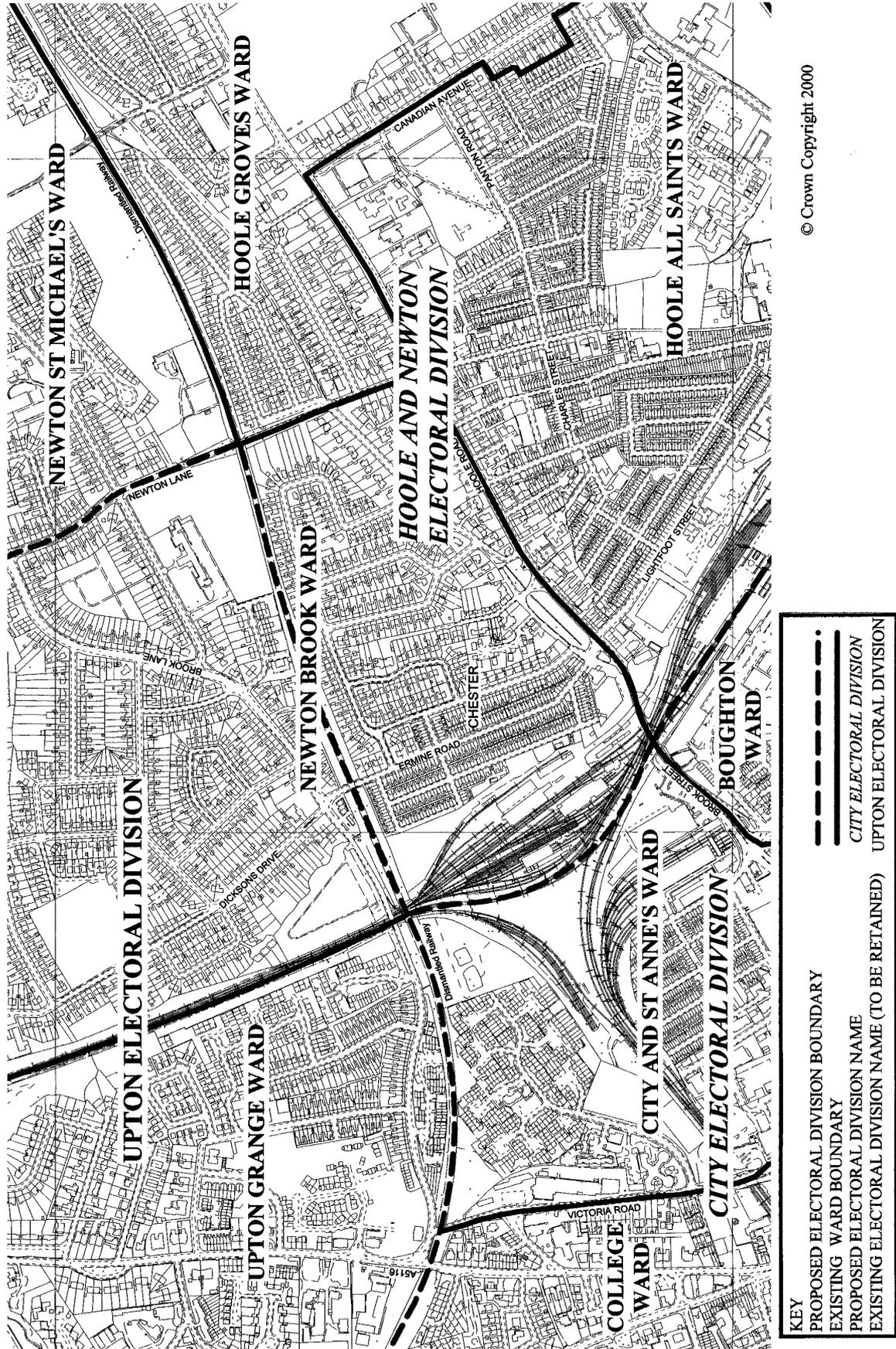
Map A1 illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the east of Chester

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the west of Ellesmere Port

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in central Macclesfield

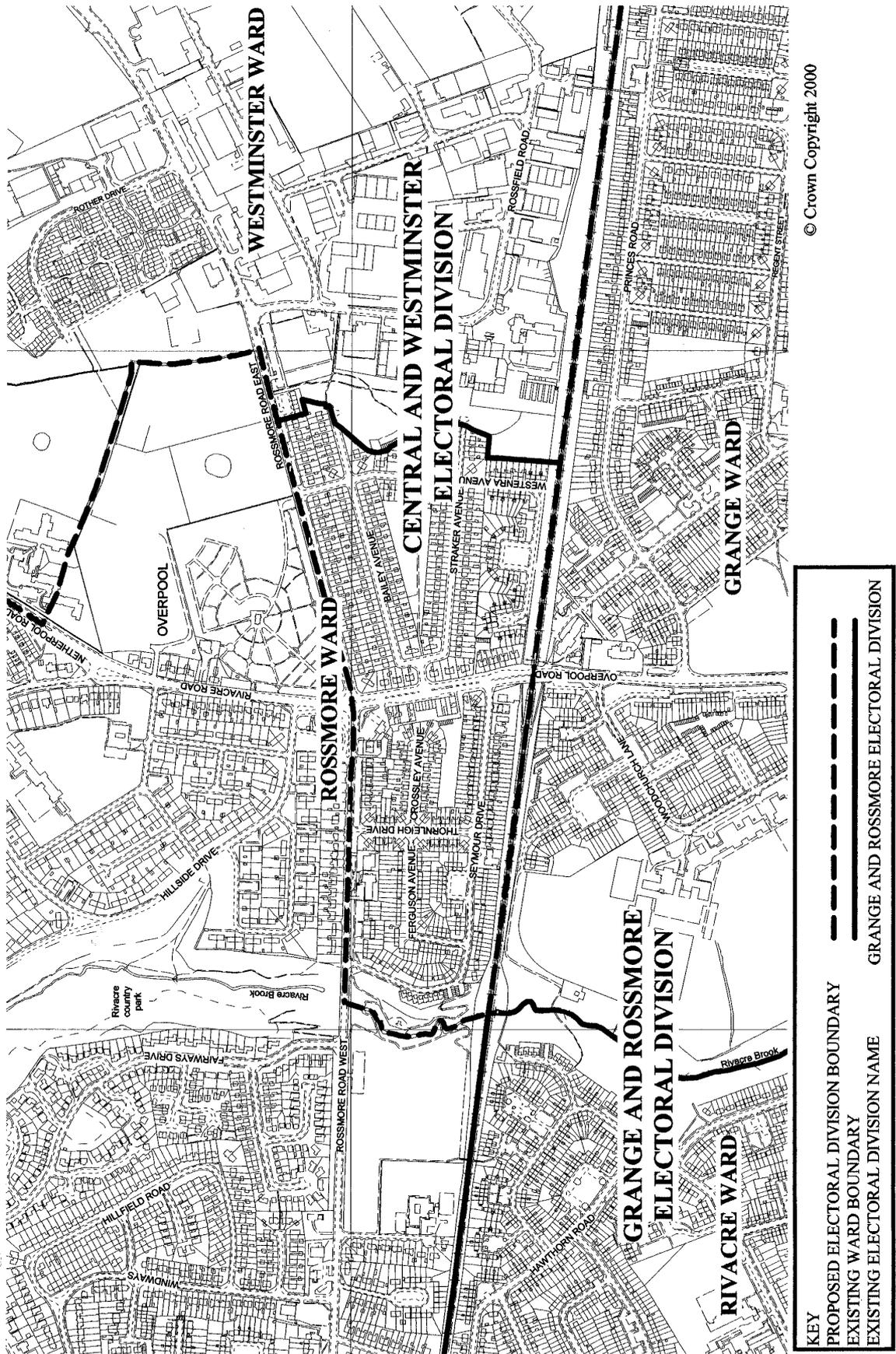
The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates, in outline form, the Commission's proposed divisions for Cheshire, including constituent borough wards and parishes.

Map A1
 Proposed warding arrangements on the east of Chester



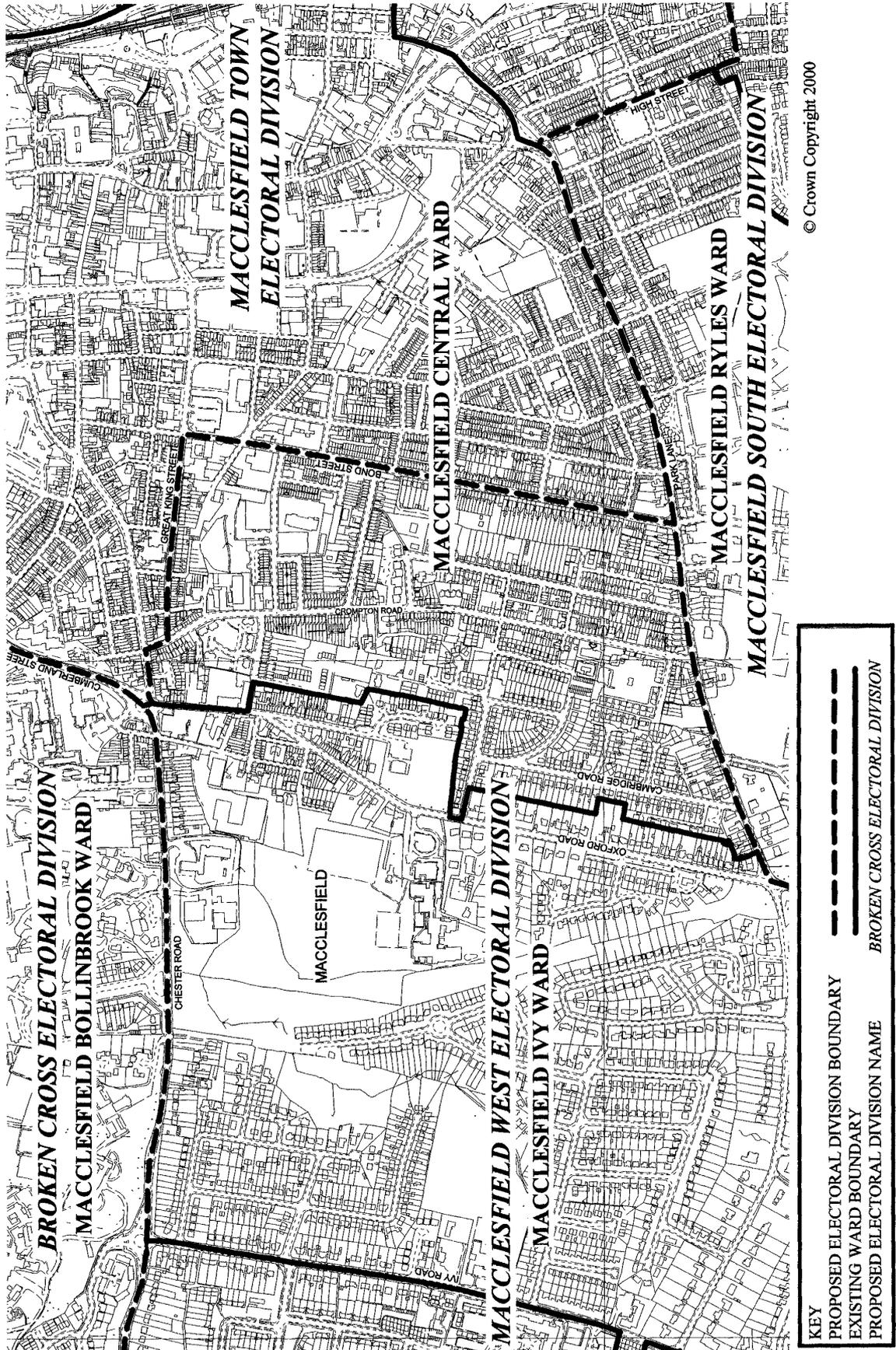
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Map A2
 Proposed warding arrangements in the west of Ellesmere Port



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Map A3
 Proposed warding arrangements in central Macclesfield



APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Cheshire

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of divisions. The only other changes from draft to final recommendations, which are not included in Figure B1, are that we propose that Congleton East and Congleton West divisions should be renamed Congleton Town East and Congleton Town West, and that Sandbach East & Moreton should be renamed Sandbach East & Rode (in Congleton borough). In Macclesfield borough, we propose that Bollington West, Prestbury & Tytherington division should be renamed Prestbury & Tytherington and that Macclesfield South division should be named Macclesfield Forest.

*Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary*

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
CHESTER CITY	
1 Blacon	Blacon Hall ward; Blacon Lodge ward
2 Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross	Boughton Heath ward; Dodleston ward; Huntington ward; Vicars Cross ward
3 Broxton	Farndon ward; Malpas ward; Tattenhall ward; Tilston ward
4 City	Boughton ward; City & St Anne's ward; College ward
5 Gowy	Christleton ward; Kelsall ward; Tarvin ward; Waverton ward
6 Hoole & Newton	Hoole All Saints ward; Hoole Groves ward; Newton St Michaels ward; Newton Brook ward (part)
7 Mickle Trafford	Barrow ward; Elton ward; Mickle Trafford ward; Mollington ward; Saughall ward
8 Overleigh	Curzon & Westminster ward; Handbridge & St Mary's ward; Lache Park ward
9 Upton	Upton Grange ward; Upton Westlea ward; Newton Brook ward (part)

continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
CONGLETON BOROUGH	
10 Alsager	Alsager Central ward; Alsager East ward; Alsager West ward
11 Congleton East	Buglawton ward; Congleton North ward; Congleton South ward
12 Congleton Rural	Brereton ward; Dane Valley ward; Holmes Chapel ward; Astbury ward (part – the parishes of Hulme Walfield, Smallwood, Somerford and Somerford Booths)
13 Congleton West	Congleton Central ward; Congleton North West ward; Congleton West ward
14 Middlewich	Middlewich Cledford ward; Middlewich Kinderton ward
15 Sandbach	Sandbach North ward; Sandbach West ward; Sandbach East ward (part – Sandbach East ward of Sandbach town as proposed)
16 Sandbach East & Moreton	Lawton ward; Odd Rode ward; Astbury ward (part – the parishes of Moreton cum Alcumlow and Newbold Astbury); Sandbach East ward (part – Sandbach South ward of Sandbach town as proposed)
CREWE & NANTWICH BOROUGH	
17 Cholmondeley	Acton ward; Audlem ward; Bunbury ward; Minshull ward; Peckforton ward; Wrenbury ward;
18 Crewe East	Delamere ward; Maw Green ward; Waldron ward
19 Crewe North	Coppenhall ward; Grosvenor ward; Leighton ward
20 Crewe South	Alexandra ward; St John's ward; Valley ward
21 Crewe West	St Barnabas ward; Wistaston Green ward
22 Doddington	Englesea ward; Haslington ward; Wybunbury ward
23 Nantwich	Barony Weaver ward; Birchin ward; Wellington ward
24 Rope	St Mary's ward; Shavington ward; Wells Green ward; Willaston ward
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON BOROUGH	
25 Central & Westminster	Central ward; Stanlow & Wolverham ward; Westminster ward; Rossmore ward (part)

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
26 Grange & Rossmore	Grange ward; Rivacre ward; Rossmore ward (part)
27 Groves & Whitby	Groves ward; Strawberry Fields ward; Whitby ward
28 Ledsham & Willaston	Burton & Ness ward; Ledsham ward; Willaston & Thornton ward
29 Neston & Parkgate	Little Neston ward; Neston ward; Parkgate ward; Riverside ward
30 Sutton & Manor	Pooltown ward; Sutton ward; Sutton Green & Manor ward
MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH	
31 Alderley	Alderley Edge ward; Fulshaw ward; Henbury ward; Chelford ward (part – Nether Alderley parish)
32 Bollington & Disley	Bollington Central ward; Bollington East ward; Disley & Lyme Handley ward; Rainow ward
33 Bollington West, Prestbury & Tytherington	Bollington West ward; Macclesfield Tytherington ward; Prestbury ward
34 Broken Cross	Macclesfield Bollinbrook ward; Macclesfield Broken Cross ward
35 Bucklow	High Legh ward; Mere ward; Mobberley ward; Plumley ward; Chelford ward (part – the parishes of Chelford, Great Warford and Snelson)
36 Knutsford	<i>Unchanged</i> – Knutsford Bexton ward; Knutsford Nether ward; Knutsford Norbury Booths ward; Knutsford Over ward
37 Macclesfield South	Gawsworth ward; Macclesfield Ryles ward; Macclesfield South ward; Sutton ward
38 Macclesfield Town	Macclesfield East ward; Macclesfield Hurdsfield ward; Macclesfield Central ward (part)
39 Macclesfield West	Macclesfield Ivy ward; Macclesfield West ward; Macclesfield
40 Poynton	Poynton Central ward; Poynton East ward; Poynton West ward

continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Division name (by borough council area)	Constituent borough wards
41 Wilmslow North	Dean Row ward; Handforth ward
42 Wilmslow South	Hough ward; Lacey Green ward; Morley & Styal ward
VALE ROYAL BOROUGH	
43 Abbey	Davenham & Moulton ward; Hartford & Whitegate ward
44 Eddisbury	Cuddington & Oakmere ward; Mara ward; Tarporley & Oulton ward
45 Frodsham & Helsby	<i>Unchanged</i> – Frodsham North ward; Frodsham South ward; Helsby ward
46 Marbury	Barnton ward; Cogshall ward; Lostock & Wincham ward; Seven Oaks & Marston ward
47 Northwich East & Shakerley	Northwich Witton ward; Rudheath & South Witton ward; Shakerley ward
48 Northwich West	Leftwich & Kingsmead ward; Northwich Castle ward; Northwich Winnington ward
49 Weaver	Forest ward; Kingsley ward; Milton Weaver ward; Weaverham ward
50 Winsford North & East	Winsford Gravel ward; Winsford Verdin ward; Winsford Wharton ward
51 Winsford South & West	Winsford Dene ward; Winsford Over ward; Winsford Swanlow ward

Note: The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the six Cheshire districts which were completed in 1997. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by borough council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
CHESTER CITY					
1 Blacon	1	9,928	-4	9,740	-7
2 Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross	1	10,933	6	10,960	5
3 Broxton	1	9,360	-9	9,440	-10
4 City	1	9,738	-5	10,540	0
5 Gowy	1	11,510	12	11,410	9
6 Hoole & Newton	1	9,668	-6	9,755	-7
7 Mickle Trafford	1	10,984	7	10,990	5
8 Overleigh	1	11,823	15	11,630	11
9 Upton	1	10,148	-1	10,265	-2
CONGLETON BOROUGH					
10 Alsager	1	9,828	-5	9,950	-5
11 Congleton East	1	10,352	1	10,540	0
12 Congleton Rural	1	9,741	-5	9,870	-6
13 Congleton West	1	9,959	-3	10,040	-4
14 Middlewich	1	9,260	-10	9,750	-7
15 Sandbach	1	10,940	6	11,310	8
16 Sandbach East & Moreton	1	10,420	1	10,280	-2
CREWE & NANTWICH BOROUGH					
17 Cholmondeley	1	10,383	1	10,400	-1
18 Crewe East	1	11,740	14	11,720	12
19 Crewe North	1	9,705	-6	10,650	2

continued overleaf

Figure B2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
20 Crewe South	1	11,214	9	11,220	7
21 Crewe West	1	9,209	-11	9,230	-12
22 Doddington	1	9,345	-9	10,200	-3
23 Nantwich	1	9,835	-5	10,240	-2
24 Rope	1	11,290	10	11,470	9
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON BOROUGH					
25 Central & Westminster	1	10,662	4	10,760	3
26 Grange & Rossmore	1	11,181	9	11,000	5
27 Groves & Whitby	1	10,184	-1	10,600	1
28 Ledsham & Willaston	1	9,231	-10	9,210	-12
29 Neston & Parkgate	1	11,632	13	11,520	10
30 Sutton & Manor	1	10,608	3	10,690	2
MACCLESFIELD BOROUGH					
31 Alderley	1	10,483	2	10,440	0
32 Bollington & Disley	1	9,882	-4	9,890	-6
33 Bollington West, Prestbury & Titherington	1	10,549	1	10,890	-1
34 Broken Cross	1	8,335	19	8,910	-15
35 Bucklow	1	9,572	-7	9,620	-8
36 Knutsford	1	10,645	3	10,650	2
37 Macclesfield South	1	10,159	-1	10,480	0
38 Macclesfield Town	1	10,570	3	10,510	0
39 Macclesfield West	1	9,845	-4	9,800	-7
40 Poynton	1	11,955	16	11,880	13
41 Wilmslow North	1	10,270	0	10,750	2

Figure B2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Cheshire

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Variance from average %
42 Wilmslow South	1	9,989	-3	9,980	-5
VALE ROYAL BOROUGH					
43 Abbey	1	9,610	-7	10,410	-1
44 Eddisbury	1	9,418	-9	9,760	-7
45 Frodsham & Helsby	1	10,999	7	9,790	-7
46 Marbury	1	11,124	8	11,130	6
47 Northwich East & Shakerley	1	10,226	-1	11,700	12
48 Northwich West	1	10,146	-1	10,480	0
49 Weaver	1	10,233	-1	11,160	6
50 Winsford North & East	1	10,020	-3	10,290	-2
51 Winsford South & West	1	10,461	2	10,980	5
Totals	51	525,302	—	534,880	—
Averages	—	10,300	—	10,488	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Cheshire County Council

Note: The electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor as each division is represented by a single councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

