

Draft Recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Ribble Valley in Lancashire

*April 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 CBE (Deputy Chairman)  
Kru Desai  
Peter Brokenshire  
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 ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the borough.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Ribble Valley in Lancashire.

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



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley on 7 September 1999.

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

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

- **in 13 of the 24 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, in five wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 20 per cent, and two wards vary by more than 30 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards, by more than 20 per cent in five wards and by more than 30 per cent in two wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 70 - 71) are that:

- **Ribble Valley Borough Council should have 40 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 24 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in the retention of the existing number of wards, with three wards retaining their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place for the whole council every four years.**

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

- **In all but one of the proposed 24 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all 24 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Billington & Langho, Clitheroe and Longridge.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for nine weeks from 4 April 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 5 June 2000:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	1	Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward; Ribchester ward (part - Dutton parish); Waddington ward (part - Bashall Eaves parish)	Map 2
2	Alston & Hothersall	2	Alston ward (part - part of Longridge parish); Ribchester ward (part - Hothersall parish)	Maps 2 and A3
3	Billington & Old Langho	2	Billington ward (part - part of Billington & Langho parish)	Maps 2 and A2
4	Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn	1	Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (part - the parishes of Bowland Forest Low, Easington, Newton and Slaidburn); Bolton-by-Bowland ward (part - Bolton-by-Bowland parish)	Map 2
5	Chatburn	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
6	Chipping	1	Chipping ward (part - Bowland-with-Leagram and Chipping parishes); Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (Bowland Forest High parish)	Map 2
7	Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave	2	Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury ward; Mellor ward (part - Osbaldeston and Ramsgreave parishes)	Map 2
8	Derby & Thornley	2	Chipping ward (part - Thornley-with-Wheatley parish); Dilworth ward (part - part of Longridge parish)	Maps 2 and A3
9	Dilworth	2	Dilworth ward (part - part of Longridge parish)	Maps 2 and A3
10	Edisford & Low Moor	2	Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); St James's ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish)	Map 2 and large map
11	Gisburn, Rimington	1	Gisburn, Rimington ward; Bolton-by-Bowland ward (part - Gisburn Forest parish)	Map 2
12	Langho	2	Billington ward (part - Dinckley parish and part of Billington and Langho parish)	Maps 2 and A2
13	Littlemoor	2	Grammar School ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); Ribblesdale ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); St James's ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish)	Map 2 and large map

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
14	Mellor	2	Mellor ward (part - Balderstone and Mellor parishes)	Map 2
15	Primrose	2	Edisford, Low Moor and Trinity ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); St James's ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish)	Map 2 and large map
16	Read & Simonstone	2	Read ward; Simonstone ward	Map 2
17	Ribchester	1	Ribchester ward (part - Ribchester parish)	Map 2
18	St Mary's	2	Edisford, Low Moor and Trinity ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); Grammar School ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish)	Map 2 and large map
19	Sabden	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
20	Salthill	2	Grammar School ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish); Ribblesdale ward (part - part of Clitheroe parish)	Map 2 and large map
21	Waddington & West Bradford	2	Bolton-by-Bowland ward (part - Sawley parish); Grindleton & West Bradford ward; Waddington ward (part - Waddington parish)	Map 2
22	Whalley	2	Whalley ward; Waddington ward (part - Great Mitton parish); Wiswell & Pendleton ward (part - Wiswell parish)	Map 2
23	Wilpshire	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
24	Wiswell & Pendleton	1	Wiswell & Pendleton ward (part - the parishes of Mearley, Pendleton, Wiswell and Worston)	Map 2

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Ribble Valley

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aighton, Bailey & Chaighley	1	1,066	1,066	1	1,050	1,050	-1
2 Alston & Hothersall	2	1,991	996	-6	1,973	987	-7
3 Billington & Old Langho	2	1,629	815	-23	1,950	975	-8
4 Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn	1	956	956	-9	1,020	1,020	-4
5 Chatburn	1	1,036	1,036	-2	1,020	1,020	-4
6 Chipping	1	1,046	1,046	-1	1,040	1,040	-2
7 Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave	2	2,030	1,015	-4	2,040	1,020	-4
8 Derby & Thornley	2	2,218	1,109	5	2,196	1,098	4
9 Dilworth	2	2,028	1,014	-4	2,011	1,006	-5
10 Edisford & Low Moor	2	2,296	1,148	9	2,250	1,125	6
11 Gisburn, Rimington	1	989	989	-6	1,020	1,020	-4
12 Langho	2	2,026	1,013	-4	1,970	985	-7
13 Littlemoor	2	2,291	1,146	8	2,246	1,123	6
14 Mellor	2	2,066	1,033	-2	2,090	1,045	-1
15 Primrose	2	2,330	1,165	10	2,284	1,142	8
16 Read & Simonstone	2	2,170	1,085	3	2,130	1,065	0
17 Ribchester	1	1,128	1,128	7	1,160	1,160	9
18 St Mary's	2	2,249	1,125	6	2,205	1,103	4
19 Sabden	1	1,082	1,082	2	1,070	1,070	1
20 Salthill	2	2,270	1,135	7	2,225	1,113	5
21 Waddington & West Bradford	2	2,206	1,103	4	2,170	1,085	2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Whalley	2	2,139	1,070	1	2,305	1,153	9
23 Wilpshire	2	1,959	980	-7	1,930	965	-9
24 Wiswell & Pendleton	1	1,050	1,050	-1	1,045	1,045	-1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42,251</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: *Electorate figures are based on Ribble Valley Borough Council's submission.*

Note: *The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. 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 draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Ribble Valley in Lancashire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We expect to review the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool in 2001. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Ribble Valley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1975 (Report No. 82). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in 1980 (Report No. 399). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly after completion of the district reviews in time to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State for the 2005 county elections.

3 In undertaking these reviews, 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 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties*. This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

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

8 Third, we are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a borough’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

*Figure 3: Stages of the Review*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the borough council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

11 Following publication of the White Paper we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 7 September 1999, when we wrote to Ribble Valley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the

main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 November 1999.

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

14 Stage Three began on 4 April 2000 and will end on 5 June 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

15 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Ribble Valley is situated in central east Lancashire, and is bordered to the north-west by Lancaster borough, to the north-east by North Yorkshire, to the south and east by the boroughs of Pendle, Burnley, Hyndburn and Blackburn with Darwen, and to the west by the boroughs of Preston, South Ribble and Wyre. The borough is the largest district council area in Lancashire, covering around 58,400 hectares, but has the smallest population at some 52,000. It comprises the market towns of Clitheroe and Longridge, together with over 45 surrounding villages. Ribble Valley contains some of the most scenic countryside in the North West and a large part of it is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Agriculture forms a significant part of the economy of Ribble Valley, while manufacturing activity by large industrial companies is concentrated on the fringes of the borough. The south of the borough is served by the M65 motorway and the River Ribble runs through its heart.

17 The whole of the borough is parished, with two towns and a further 47 separate parishes. Some of these parishes have combined parish councils, and eight parishes are without a council.

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

19 The electorate of the borough is 42,251 (February 1999). The Council presently has 39 members who are elected from 24 wards. Five of the wards are each represented by three councillors, five are each represented by two councillors and 14 are single-member wards. The whole council is elected together every four years.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been little change in the electorate in Ribble Valley borough. At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,083 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,087 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 24 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, in five by more than 20 per cent and in two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalances are in Bolton-by-Bowland ward and Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward where each councillor represents 32 per cent and 34 per cent fewer electors than the borough average respectively.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Ribble Valley*

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aighton, Bailey & Chaighley	1	791	791	-27	770	770	-29
2 Alston	2	2,779	1,390	28	2,760	1,380	27
3 Billington	3	3,655	1,218	12	3,920	1,307	20
4 Bolton-by-Bowland	1	732	732	-32	750	750	-31
5 Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn	1	714	714	-34	750	750	-31
6 Chatburn	1	1,036	1,036	-4	1,020	1,020	-6
7 Chipping	1	1,186	1,186	9	1,180	1,180	9
8 Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury	1	1,267	1,267	17	1,270	1,270	17
9 Dilworth	3	3,100	1,033	-5	3,070	1,023	-6
10 Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity	3	3,767	1,256	16	3,670	1,223	13
11 Gisburn, Rimington	1	877	877	-19	910	910	-16
12 Grammar School	3	3,891	1,297	20	3,850	1,283	18
13 Grindleton & West Bradford	1	1,200	1,200	11	1,180	1,180	9
14 Mellor	3	2,829	943	-13	2,860	953	-12
15 Read	1	1,180	1,180	9	1,130	1,130	4
16 Ribblesdale	2	1,956	978	-10	1,910	955	-12
17 Ribchester	1	1,377	1,377	27	1,410	1,410	30
18 Sabden	1	1,082	1,082	0	1,070	1,070	-2
19 St James's	2	1,822	911	-16	1,780	890	-18
20 Simonstone	1	990	990	-9	1,000	1,000	-8
21 Waddington	1	1,003	1,003	-7	990	990	-9
22 Whalley	2	1,983	992	-8	2,150	1,075	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Wilpshire	2	1,959	980	-10	1,930	965	-11
24 Wiswell & Pendleton	1	1,075	1,075	-1	1,070	1,070	-2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>42,251</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>42,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Bolton-by-Bowland ward were relatively over-represented by 32 per cent, while electors in Alston ward were relatively under-represented by 28 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received eight representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Ribble Valley Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission.

#### **Ribble Valley Borough Council**

23 The Borough Council proposed a council of 40 members, one more than at present, serving 26 wards compared to the existing 24. The Council proposed a mixture of two-member and single-member wards across the borough, reflecting where necessary the sparsity of the rural population. The Borough Council noted that its submission was approved over that of the Liberal Democrats by the casting vote of the chairman of the Council's Policy and Finance Committee. In formulating its submission it conducted a consultation exercise with local interest groups. It considered that its proposals would achieve substantial improvements to electoral equality while reflecting the other statutory criteria. Under the Borough Council's scheme seven wards would retain their existing boundaries while the boundaries of the remaining wards would change.

24 Under the Borough Council's proposals three wards would initially vary by more than 10 per cent from the average and one ward, Billington & Old Langho, would vary by more than 20 per cent from the average in 1999. In 2004 one ward, Grindleton & West Bradford, would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average, in fact varying by 11 per cent.

#### **Ribble Valley Liberal Democrats**

25 The Liberal Democrat members of Ribble Valley Borough Council, supported by the local Liberal Democrat Party ('the Liberal Democrats'), submitted for consideration an alternative scheme which had been consulted on during the Borough Council's consultation period. They proposed a council of 40 members comprising 16 two-member wards and eight single-member wards. Under this proposal one ward, Billington & Old Langho, would initially vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average in 1999, in fact varying by more than 20 per cent. In 2004 no wards would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average.

## **Parish and Town Councils**

26 We received submissions from two parish councils and one town council during Stage One. Clitheroe Town Council considered that “whatever the outcome of the review, the boundaries of the Clitheroe Town Council wards ..... should remain identical”. Bowlands Forest Lower Division Parish Council supported retaining the existing arrangements in its area. West Bradford Parish Council supported the proposal to form a two-member ward together with Grindleton parish and Waddington parish.

## **Other Representations**

27 We received three other representations during Stage One, from a political organisation and two residents. The North West Conservatives stated that they supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council. They also stated that these proposals had the support of local Conservative councillors and the Ribble Valley Conservative Association. A resident expressed concern that the existing ward of Billington was dominated by the village of Langho. A further resident stated that the number of borough councillors should be reduced and expressed a preference for a system of elections by thirds.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley 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 per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

29 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on 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.

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

31 Our *Guidance* states that although we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, 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. We therefore strongly 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 community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

32 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a small increase in the electorate of less than 1 per cent from 42,251 to 42,400 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects the growth to be unevenly distributed across the district, with several wards experiencing a small decrease in their electorate. The most noticeable increase in electorate is forecast to be in Billington ward (265 electors). The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

33 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Borough Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

34 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government. Ribble Valley Borough Council presently has 39 members. The Borough Council proposed increasing the existing council size to 40, comprising 14 two-member wards and 12 single-member wards. The Liberal Democrat Party also proposed an increase in council size to 40, comprising 16 two-member wards and eight single-member wards. A resident of the borough proposed that the current council size should be reduced to a maximum of 30.

35 Therefore, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the agreement between the two borough-wide schemes regarding such an increase, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 40 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

36 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received during Stage One, and in particular the borough-wide schemes received from the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats. We note in particular that there is significant agreement between the two schemes for proposals across the borough. Moreover, in such areas where agreement exists, we note that under these proposals there would generally be substantial improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, satisfactorily reflecting the other statutory criteria. Consequently we are adopting the proposals agreed between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats as part of our draft recommendations. In the remaining area where the two schemes do not agree, we note that the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats would achieve better electoral equality while, we judge, taking into account the other statutory criteria. Therefore in the remaining area we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposals as the basis for our draft recommendations. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (i) Clitheroe town (the wards of Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity, Grammar School, Ribblesdale and St James's);
- (ii) Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury, Mellor and Wilpshire wards;
- (iii) Billington ward;
- (iv) Read, Simonstone and Whalley wards;
- (v) Chatburn, Sabden and Wiswell & Pendleton wards;
- (vi) Bolton-by-Bowland, Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn, Gisburn, Rimington, Grindleton & West Bradford and Waddington wards;
- (vii) Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley and Ribchester wards;
- (viii) Alston, Chipping and Dilworth wards.

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

### **Clitheroe town (the wards of Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity, Grammar School, Ribblesdale and St James's)**

38 Clitheroe town is the largest settlement in the borough, comprising some 25 per cent of its overall population, and has a town council. Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity and Grammar School wards are each represented by three councillors, while Ribblesdale and St James's wards are each represented by two. The number of electors per councillor is 16 per cent above the borough average in Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity ward (13 per cent in 2004), 20 per cent above in Grammar School ward (18 per cent in 2004), 10 per cent below in Ribblesdale ward (12 per cent in 2004) and 16 per cent below in St James's ward (18 per cent in 2004).

39 At Stage One the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats submitted identical proposals for warding arrangements in Clitheroe town, proposing a pattern of five new two-member wards. Under their proposals a new Littlemoor ward would cover much of the existing Ribblesdale ward and a new Primrose ward would cover the majority of St James's ward together with part of Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity ward to the east of Henthorn Road and an area of Grammar School ward around Parson Lane. A new Edisford & Low Moor ward would comprise most of Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity ward lying to the west of Henthorn Road, together with an area in the north of St James's ward generally to the north of Brown Street. In the north of the town, they proposed that a new St Mary's ward should cover that part of Grammar School ward generally to the west of York Street, Princess Avenue, Pimlico Road and the railway line, together with part of Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity ward around Buccleuch Avenue. A new Salthill ward would comprise the remainder of Grammar School ward together with part of Ribblesdale ward around Derby Street. The Borough Council stated that Clitheroe Town Council had supported these proposals.

40 Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 9 per cent above the borough average in Edisford & Low Moor ward (6 per cent in 2004), 8 per cent above in Littlemoor ward (6 per cent in 2004), 10 per cent above in Primrose ward (8 per cent in 2004), 6 per cent above in St Mary's ward (4 per cent in 2004) and 7 per cent above in Salthill ward (5 per cent in 2004).

41 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received regarding Clitheroe town. We note the agreement between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats regarding warding arrangements in the town and that such proposals also enjoy some local support. Consequently, in view of the improvements to electoral equality which would result under these proposals, together with the use of clearly defined boundaries, we are adopting them as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are shown on the large map at the back of this report.

### **Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury, Mellor and Wilpshire wards**

42 These three wards are situated in the south-west of the district. Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury ward (which comprises Clayton-le-Dale and Salesbury parishes) is represented by one councillor, Mellor ward (which comprises the parishes of Balderstone, Mellor, Osbaldeston and Ramsgreave)

is represented by three councillors, and Wilpshire ward (comprising the parish of the same name) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 17 per cent above the average in Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury ward both now and in 2004, 13 per cent below in Mellor ward (12 per cent below in 2004) and 10 per cent below in Wilpshire ward (11 per cent in 2004).

43 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a configuration of three two-member wards which, it argued, would appear to satisfy the preferences of most of the parishes in the area, while securing improvements to electoral equality. Consequently, the Borough Council proposed transferring Ramsgreave parish from Mellor ward to Clayton-le-Dale & Salesbury ward, and renaming the ward Clayton-le-Dale & Ramsgreave. It proposed that Wilpshire ward should remain unchanged. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent below the borough average in Clayton-le-Dale & Ramsgreave both now and in 2004, 4 per cent above in Mellor ward (5 per cent above in 2004) and 7 per cent below in Wilpshire ward (9 per cent in 2004).

44 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a pattern of three two-member wards in this area. They proposed transferring the parishes of Osbaldeston and Ramsgreave from Mellor ward to a new Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave ward, while retaining Wilpshire ward on its existing boundaries. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the borough average in Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave ward both now and in 2004, 2 per cent below in Mellor ward (1 per cent below in 2004) and 7 per cent below the borough average in Wilpshire ward (9 per cent in 2004).

45 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. In particular, we note the agreement between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats on retaining the existing arrangements for Wilpshire ward. While we note that under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be forecast to worsen slightly over the five-year period, we consider that the proposal would achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality while taking into account the statutory criteria. We are therefore adopting the proposal to retain Wilpshire ward on its existing boundaries as part of our draft recommendations. In the case of the schemes for the remaining area, we note that the proposals put to us by the Liberal Democrats would provide better levels of electoral equality while, we judge, providing a satisfactory balance of the other statutory criteria. Consequently, we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave ward and Mellor ward as part of our draft recommendations.

### **Billington ward**

46 The three-member Billington ward is situated in the south of the borough. The ward comprises Billington & Old Langho and Dinckley parishes. Due to the substantial amount of new housing developments which are forecast to be built in the area, the present level of under-representation is forecast to worsen by 2004, with the number of electors per councillor being 12 per cent above the average in Billington ward currently, worsening to 20 per cent in 2004.

47 At Stage One the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats each submitted the same proposals for this area. Specifically they proposed that this area should be covered by two two-member wards. A new Billington & Old Langho ward would comprise the northern part of Billington & Langho parish and would include an area of new development at the Brockhall

hospital site. A new Langho ward would comprise the southern part of Billington & Langho parish together with Dinckley parish. The Borough Council stated that these proposals would achieve improvements to electoral equality by 2004, while enjoying some support from the local parishes. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 23 per cent below the borough average in Billington & Old Langho ward (8 per cent in 2004) and 4 per cent below the average in Langho ward (7 per cent in 2004).

48 We have given careful consideration to the proposals which we have received for this area, and in view of the consensus between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats we are adopting their proposals without amendment. While we note that there would be substantial electoral inequality in Billington & Old Langho ward initially, the new residential development in the area would lead to significant improvements in electoral equality over the five-year period. Our proposals are shown on Map A2 in Appendix A.

### **Read, Simonstone and Whalley wards**

49 These three wards are situated in the south-east of the borough. Read and Simonstone wards (each of which comprises the parish of the same name) are each represented by a single councillor, while Whalley ward (which also comprises the parish of the same name) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor is currently 9 per cent above the borough average in Read ward (4 per cent in 2004), 9 per cent below the average in Simonstone ward (8 per cent in 2004) and 8 per cent below the average in Whalley ward (1 per cent in 2004).

50 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that the wards of Read, Simonstone and Whalley should be retained on their existing boundaries as it argued that this would offer the best reflection of local community identities. Under its proposals for a council size of 40, the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent above the borough average in Read ward (7 per cent in 2004), 6 per cent below the borough average in Simonstone ward both now and in 2004, and 6 per cent below the borough average in Whalley ward (1 per cent above in 2004).

51 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Simonstone and Read wards should be combined to form a new two-member Read & Simonstone ward as this would provide improved electoral equality while providing a better reflection of local settlement patterns. They proposed that Whalley parish should be represented by two councillors and should be expanded to include Great Mitton and Little Mitton parishes. Under their proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the borough average in Read & Simonstone ward (equal to the average in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Whalley ward (9 per cent in 2004).

52 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received during Stage One. With regard to the proposals for Read and Simonstone wards, we note that the Borough Council proposed retaining the two single-member wards on their existing boundaries, while the Liberal Democrats proposed that they should be combined to form a two-member ward. Having visited the area, we do not consider that to combine these parishes in a single ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, would have an adverse impact on community identities locally and, in the light of the improvements to electoral equality which would be secured, we are adopting their proposed Read & Simonstone ward as part of our draft recommendations. In the case of Whalley ward, we are also adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a two-member ward in this area as we

consider that it would achieve reasonable electoral equality and reflect the statutory criteria while facilitating proposals which would meet our objectives across the wider borough area.

### **Chatburn, Sabden and Wiswell & Pendleton wards**

53 The three single-member wards of Chatburn, Sabden and Wiswell & Pendleton are situated in the south east of the borough. The number of electors per councillor is 4 per cent below the borough average in Chatburn ward (6 per cent below in 2004), equal to the average in Sabden ward (2 per cent above in 2004) and 1 per cent below the average in Wiswell & Pendleton ward (2 per cent below in 2004).

54 At Stage One both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed that the wards of Chatburn and Sabden should be retained on their existing boundaries, while Little Mitton parish would be transferred from Wiswell & Pendleton ward to form part of a new ward to the west. Each ward would retain its existing level of representation. Under the Borough Council's and Liberal Democrats' schemes, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the borough average in Chatburn ward (4 per cent in 2004), 2 per cent above in Sabden ward (1 per cent in 2004) and 1 per cent below in Wiswell & Pendleton ward both now and in 2004.

55 We have considered the proposals in this area and concluded that in view of the good levels of electoral equality which would result together with the consensus which exists between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, we are adopting their proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

### **Bolton-by-Bowland, Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn, Gisburn, Rimington, Grindleton & West Bradford and Waddington wards**

56 These five single-member wards are situated in the centre and north-east of the borough. The area as a whole is over-represented - the number of electors per councillor is 32 per cent below the borough average in Bolton-by-Bowland ward (31 per cent in 2004), 34 per cent below the average in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (31 per cent in 2004), 19 per cent below in Gisburn, Rimington ward (16 per cent in 2004), 11 per cent above in Grindleton & West Bradford ward (9 per cent in 2004) and 7 per cent below in Waddington ward (9 per cent in 2004). Bolton-by-Bowland ward comprises the parishes of Bolton-by-Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley; Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward comprises the parishes of Bowland Forest High, Bowland Forest Low, Easington, Newton & Slaidburn; Gisburn, Rimington ward comprises the parishes of Gisburn, Horton, Middop, Newsholme, Paythorne and Rimington; Grindleton & West Bradford ward comprises Grindleton and West Bradford parishes; and Waddington ward comprises the parishes of Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton and Waddington.

57 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Gisburn, Rimington ward should be expanded to include the parish of Gisburn Forest (currently in Bolton-by-Bowland ward). It proposed that the remainder of Bolton-by-Bowland ward should be combined with the parishes of Easington, Newton and Slaidburn (currently in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward) to form a new Newton, Slaidburn, Sawley & Bolton-by-Bowland ward. The Borough Council proposed that Grindleton & West Bradford ward should be retained on its existing boundaries. It proposed that Waddington ward should be expanded to include Little Mitton parish (currently in Wiswell &

Pendleton ward). The Council stated that while its proposals would not satisfy all of the parties who responded to its own consultation exercise, it considered “its proposals to be the best of the options available”, as they secured improvements to electoral equality across the area concerned. Under the Borough Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the borough average in Gisburn, Rimington ward (4 per cent in 2004), 14 per cent above in Grindleton & West Bradford ward (11 per cent in 2004), 2 per cent above in Newton, Slaidburn, Sawley & Bolton-by-Bowland ward (7 per cent in 2004) and 3 per cent below in Waddington ward (4 per cent in 2004).

58 While the Liberal Democrats agreed with the Borough Council’s proposed modification to Gisburn, Rimington ward, in the remaining area they proposed an alternative warding configuration to that put forward by the Borough Council. They proposed that a new two-member Waddington & West Bradford ward should comprise Grindleton & West Bradford ward together with Sawley parish (currently in Bolton-by-Bowland ward) and Waddington parish (currently in the ward of that name). The Liberal Democrats also proposed that a modified Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward should comprise the parishes of Bowland Forest Low, Easington, Newton and Slaidburn (currently in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward) together with Bolton-by-Bowland parish (currently in Bolton-by-Bowland ward). The Liberal Democrats argued that their proposals would achieve a more equitable distribution of the electorate while providing a satisfactory reflection of community identities locally. Under the alternative proposals included in the Liberal Democrats’ scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 9 per cent below the borough average in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (4 per cent in 2004) and 4 per cent above in Waddington & West Bradford ward (2 per cent in 2004).

59 Bowlands Forest Lower Division Parish Council supported retaining the existing arrangements in its area. West Bradford Parish Council supported the proposal to form a two-member ward together with Grindleton parish and Waddington parish.

60 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. We note the agreement between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats regarding the warding arrangements for Gisburn, Rimington ward and are therefore including this ward as part of our draft recommendations. In the remaining area, while we note the preference of the Borough Council for retaining a pattern of single-member wards, we also note that such proposals would result in a substantial electoral imbalance in one ward. Consequently, having visited the area, we are proposing to adopt the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for the wards of Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn and Waddington & West Bradford as we consider that they offer a satisfactory balance of the need to improve electoral equality and the other statutory criteria.

### **Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley and Ribchester wards**

61 These two single-member wards are situated in the centre and west of the borough. The number of electors per councillor is 27 per cent below the borough average in Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward (29 per cent in 2004) and 27 per cent above the average in Ribchester ward (30 per cent above in 2004). Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward comprises the parish of the same name, while Ribchester ward comprises the parishes of Dutton, Hothersall and Ribchester.

62 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward should be expanded to include Bowland Forest Low parish (currently in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward) and Dutton parish (currently in Ribchester ward). It proposed that Ribchester ward should then comprise that parish alone, thereby transferring Hothersall parish to form part of a ward to the west, described later. The Council argued that such an arrangement would provide a good balance of the need to seek improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the other statutory criteria. Under the Borough Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the borough average in Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward (1 per cent in 2004) and 7 per cent above the average in Ribchester ward (9 per cent in 2004).

63 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward should be expanded to include Dutton parish (currently in Ribchester ward) and Bashall Eaves parish (currently in Waddington ward). The Liberal Democrats agreed with the Borough Council's proposed Ribchester ward. Under their alternative proposal, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the borough average in Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward (1 per cent below in 2004).

64 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received. In view of the consensus between the two schemes with regard to the proposed Ribchester ward, which would meet our objectives, we are adopting this ward as part of our draft recommendations. In the case of the differing proposals for Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward, we note that each scheme would provide similarly good levels of electoral equality. However, in conducting this review we are unable to look at any single area in isolation but must consider the impact which any proposals would have upon our scheme for the wider area. Consequently, we are adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal for Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward as we judge that it would provide a good level of electoral equality, while facilitating an improved scheme for the wider area.

### **Alston, Chipping and Dilworth wards**

65 These three wards are situated in the west of the borough. Chipping ward is represented by a single councillor, Alston ward by two councillors and Dilworth ward by three councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 28 per cent above the average in Alston ward (27 per cent in 2004), 9 per cent above in Chipping ward both now and in 2004 and 5 per cent below in Dilworth ward (6 per cent in 2004). Chipping ward comprises the parishes of Bowland-with-Leagram, Chipping and Thornley-with-Wheatley, while Alston ward and Dilworth ward each comprise a ward of Longridge parish.

66 At Stage One the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats submitted the same proposals for warding in this area. Specifically, they proposed that a modified single-member Chipping ward should comprise the parishes of Bowland-with-Leagram and Chipping (currently in Chipping ward) together with Bowland Forest High parish (currently in Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward). The remaining area would be covered by three two-member wards: a new Derby & Thornley ward would comprise Thornley-with-Wheatley parish together with the western part of the existing Dilworth ward; the remainder of Dilworth ward would be combined with an area in the north of Alston ward to form a modified Dilworth ward; the remainder of Alston ward would be combined with Hothersall parish to form a new Alston & Hothersall ward.

67 Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the borough average in Alston & Hothersall ward (7 per cent in 2004), 1 per cent below the average in Chipping ward (2 per cent in 2004), 5 per cent above the average in Derby & Thornley ward (4 per cent in 2004) and 4 per cent below in Dilworth ward (5 per cent in 2004).

68 Having carefully considered the evidence which we have received in this area, we note that the proposals which were put to us by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats achieve significant improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, adequately reflecting the statutory criteria. We are therefore adopting the proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map A3.

## **Electoral Cycle**

69 The Borough Council commented that it wished to continue to be elected together every four years. A resident of the borough proposed that the Council should be elected by thirds. We received no other proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, in the absence of evidence of general support for a change in the Council's electoral cycle, we are not recommending any change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

## **Conclusions**

70 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- (i) there should be an increase in council size from 39 to 40;
- (ii) there should be 24 wards, as at present;
- (iii) the boundaries of 21 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should remain the same;
- (iv) the whole council should continue to be elected together every four years.

71 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals where they are in agreement. In the remaining area where the two schemes do not agree we have adopted the Liberal Democrats' proposals as they would provide better levels of electoral equality while, we judge, representing a satisfactory reflection of the statutory criteria.

72 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and forecast electorates for the year 2004.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	39	40	39	40
Number of wards	24	24	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	1,083	1,056	1,087	1,060
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	13	1	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	1	5	0

73 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Ribble Valley Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from 13 to one. By 2004 electoral equality is anticipated to improve further with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Ribble Valley Borough Council should comprise 40 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

**Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

74 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Billington & Langho, Clitheroe and Longridge.

75 Billington & Langho Parish Council is currently served by nine councillors and the parish is unwarded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Billington & Langho parish should be warded into two, one parish ward covering the Langho settlement, to be called Langho, and the other covering the remainder of the parish, to be called Billington & Old Langho. The Borough Council did not include proposals for distributing the councillors between these two wards. As this proposal forms part of our draft recommendations

we are adopting the Borough Council’s parish warding arrangements for Billington & Langho Parish Council. In the absence of specific proposals relating to the distribution of councillors between the two wards concerned, we propose that Billington & Old Langho parish ward should be represented by five councillors, while Langho parish ward should be represented by four.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Billington & Langho Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Billington & Old Langho (five councillors) and Langho (four). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2.

76 Clitheroe Town Council is currently served by 10 councillors who represent four wards - Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity, Grammar School, Ribblesdale and St James’s - which are coterminous with the borough wards. Edisford, Low Moor & Trinity and Grammar School wards are each represented by three councillors, while Ribblesdale and St James’s are each represented by two. In the light of our draft recommendations for borough warding in Clitheroe, we propose creating five new parish wards - Edisford & Low Moor, Littlemoor, Primrose, St Mary’s and Salthill - to correspond with the five new borough wards proposed by the Borough Council. We propose that each parish ward should return two councillors.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Clitheroe Town Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Edisford & Low Moor, Littlemoor, Primrose, St Mary’s and Salthill, each returning two councillors. The boundaries between the five parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

77 Longridge Town Council is currently served by 10 councillors representing two wards, Alston and Dilworth, each of which is represented by five councillors. In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Longridge parish, which reflects the Borough Council’s proposals, we propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with those of the borough wards within the parish. This would create a new Derby parish ward. The Borough Council proposed that each parish ward should be represented by four councillors, an increase of two for the parish as a whole. We consider that such a proposal is justified and are including it as part of our draft recommendations.

**Draft Recommendation**

Longridge Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, two more than at present, representing three wards: Alston, Derby and Dilworth, each returning four councillors. The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A3.

78 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district.

**Draft Recommendation**

For parish councils, elections should continue to take place at the same time as for the principal authority.

**79 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Ribble Valley*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

80 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Ribble Valley. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 June 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

81 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

82 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



# APPENDIX A

## **Draft Recommendations for Ribble Valley: Detailed Mapping**

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

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Billington & Langho parish.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed re-warding of Longridge parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Clitheroe.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Ribble Valley: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Billington & Langho Parish*

*Map A3: Proposed Re-warding of Longridge Parish*

## APPENDIX B

### Ribble Valley Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Borough Council in nine wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

*Figure B1: Ribble Valley Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley ward; Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (part - Bowland Forest Low parish); Ribchester ward (part - Dutton parish)
Clayton-le-Dale & Ramsgreave	Clayton-le-Dale ward; Mellor ward (part - Ramsgreave parish)
Grindleton & West Bradford	<i>Unchanged</i>
Mellor	Mellor ward (part - the parishes of Balderstone, Mellor and Osbaldeston)
Newton, Slaidburn, Sawley & Bolton-by-Bowland	Bolton-by-Bowland ward (part - Bolton-by-Bowland and Sawley parishes); Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn ward (part - the parishes of Easington, Newton and Slaidburn)
Read	<i>Unchanged</i>
Simonstone	<i>Unchanged</i>
Waddington	Waddington ward; Wiswell & Pendleton ward (part - Little Mitton parish)
Whalley	<i>Unchanged</i>

*Figure B2: Ribble Valley Borough Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (1999)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2004)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	1	1,077	1,077	2	1,070	1,070	1
Clayton-le-Dale & Ramsgreave	2	1,894	947	-10	1,900	950	-10
Grindleton & West Bradford	1	1,200	1,200	14	1,180	1,180	11
Mellor	2	2,202	1,101	4	2,230	1,115	5
Newton, Slaidburn, Sawley & Bolton-by-Bowland	1	1,079	1,079	2	1,130	1,130	7
Read	1	1,180	1,180	12	1,130	1,130	7
Simonstone	1	990	990	-6	1,000	1,000	-6
Waddington	1	1,028	1,028	-3	1,015	1,015	-4
Whalley	2	1,983	992	-6	2,150	1,075	1

*Source: Electorate figures are based on Ribble Valley Borough Council's submission.*

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

# APPENDIX C

## The Statutory Provisions

### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

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<sup>1</sup>The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

#### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.