

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Rossendale in Lancashire

*February 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 Rossendale in Lancashire.

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## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Rossendale 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 Rossendale:

- **in seven of the 13 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average. This level of electoral inequality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 61–62) are that:

- **Rossendale Borough Council should have 36 councillors, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all but one of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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 of the proposed 14 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 projected to remain constant over the next five years.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Whitworth Town Council.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 15 February 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 10 April 2000:

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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	Bacup East	3	Irwell ward; Greensclough ward (part); Stacksteads ward (part)	Large map and Map A1
2	Bacup North	3	Greensclough ward (part); Irwell ward (part)	Large map, Map A1 and Map A2
3	Cribden North	2	Cribden ward (part)	Large map
4	Cribden South	2	Cribden ward (part); Hareholme ward (part)	Large map and Map A3
5	Eden	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Large map
6	Facit & Shawforth	2	Facit & Shawforth ward as proposed of Whitworth town	Large map
7	Greenfield	3	Greenfield ward (part); Helmshore ward (part); Longholme ward (part)	Large map
8	Hareholme	3	Hareholme ward (part); Whitewell ward (part)	Large map and Map A3
9	Healey & Whitworth	2	Healey & Whitworth parish ward as proposed of Whitworth town	Large map
10	Helmshore	3	Helmshore ward (part)	Large map
11	Longholme	3	Longholme ward (part); Cribden ward (part)	Large map
12	Stacksteads	2	Stacksteads ward (part)	Large map and Map A2
13	Whitewell	3	Whitewell ward (part); Stacksteads ward (part)	Large map
14	Worsley	3	Worsley ward; Greenfield ward (part)	Large map

Notes: 1 Whitworth is the only parish in the borough, and is covered by Facit & Shawforth and Healey & Whitworth wards  
2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Rossendale

	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	Bacup East	3	4,180	1,288	-8	3,910	1,303	-7
2	Bacup North	3	3,863	1,288	-8	3,898	1,299	-7
3	Cribden North	2	2,806	1,403	0	2,812	1,406	0
4	Cribden South	2	2,647	1,324	-5	2,907	1,454	4
5	Eden	2	2,793	1,397	0	2,760	1,380	-1
6	Facit & Shawforth	2	2,839	1,420	1	2,815	1,408	1
7	Greenfield	3	4,175	1,392	-1	4,135	1,378	-2
8	Hareholme	3	4,312	1,437	3	4,259	1,420	1
9	Healey & Whitworth	2	2,860	1,430	2	2,825	1,413	1
10	Helmshore	3	4,419	1,473	5	4,464	1,488	6
11	Longholme	3	4,213	1,404	0	4,170	1,390	-1
12	Stacksteads	2	2,954	1,477	6	2,927	1,464	5
13	Whitewell	3	4,267	1,422	2	4,207	1,402	0
14	Worsley	3	4,351	1,450	4	4,321	1,440	3
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>50,363</b>	—	—	<b>50,410</b>	—	—
	<b>Average</b>	—	—	<b>1,399</b>	—	—	<b>1,400</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rossendale 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. 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 Rossendale 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 Rossendale. 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. 110). 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 order to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State in time 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, ie the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* 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 councils.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999). 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 The broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough 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 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 the borough concerned, 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, nor 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 district 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 March 1998 *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 Rossendale Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Lancashire Association of Town & Parish Councils, Whitworth Town Council, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough 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 15 February 2000 and will end on 10 April 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 Rossendale is situated in the south-east of Lancashire, and abuts Greater Manchester to the south and West Yorkshire to the east. The majority of Rossendale residents live in the towns of Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall and Whitworth, which are located in a series of deeply cut interconnected valleys surrounded by moorland. Whitworth is the only part of the borough which is parished.

17 The borough has good communication links with Manchester and adjacent areas, via the motorway network. It contains a number of leisure resources, including the East Lancashire Steam Railway which runs through the borough, and one of the few artificial ski slopes in the north-west of England.

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 50,508 (February 1999). The Council presently has 36 members who are elected from 13 wards. Ten wards are each represented by three councillors and three are each represented by two councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Rossendale borough, with around 8 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing development and demographic change. The most notable increases have been in Cribden and Helmshore wards, with each having about 1,300 more electors than 20 years ago. However, there have been significant decreases in Stacksteads and Worsley wards, with each having around 500 fewer electors than 20 years ago.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,403 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will remain largely unchanged over the next five years, 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 seven of the 13 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and six wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Helmshore ward where each councillor represents 29 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Rossendale*

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 Cribden	3	5,444	1,815	29	5,710	1,903	35
2 Eden	2	2,793	1,397	0	2,760	1,380	-2
3 Facit & Shawforth	2	2,194	1,097	-22	2,170	1,085	-23
4 Greenfield	3	4,513	1,504	7	4,490	1,497	7
5 Greensclough	3	3,597	1,199	-15	3,640	1,213	-14
6 Hareholme	3	4,403	1,468	5	4,350	1,450	3
7 Healey & Whitworth	2	3,505	1,753	25	3,470	1,735	23
8 Helmshore	3	5,412	1,804	29	5,450	1,817	29
9 Irwell	3	4,187	1,396	-1	4,220	1,407	0
10 Longholme	3	4,083	1,361	-3	4,040	1,347	-4
11 Stacksteads	3	3,097	1,032	-26	3,070	1,023	-27
12 Whitewell	3	4,260	1,420	1	4,220	1,407	0
13 Worsley	3	3,020	1,007	-28	2,990	997	-29
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>50,508</b>	–	–	<b>50,580</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>1,403</b>	–	–	<b>1,405</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rossendale 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 Stacksteads ward were relatively over-represented by 26 per cent, while electors in Healey & Whitworth ward were relatively under-represented by 25 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 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 Rossendale Borough Council and Whitworth Town Council.

23 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 two representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, both of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission by appointment.

#### **Rossendale Borough Council**

24 The Borough Council proposed retaining a council of 36 members, serving 14 wards, one more than at present. The Council reached a consensus regarding the boundaries of nine wards. However, it put forward two alternative proposals for wards in Bacup and Haslingden, to reflect both majority and minority views. Both of the Council's schemes would provide much improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all 14 wards varying by less than 8 per cent in both 1999 and 2004. The Council also sought to preserve "community identity and the existing townships". It stated that it intended to give further consideration to proposed ward names subsequent to the publication of these recommendations.

25 The Council argued that under a council size of 36, Rawtenstall merited 13 councillors, one more than at present, while Bacup should be represented by eight councillors, one fewer than at present. The Council's proposals are summarised at Appendix B.

#### **Other Representations**

26 We received one further representation from the North West Conservatives, supporting the Rossendale Borough Conservative Group.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

27 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Rossendale 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”.

28 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.

29 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.

30 Our *Guidance* states that 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 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**

31 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting that the number of electors in the borough would remain constant over the next five years, with around 50,600 electors. However, it expects growth to occur in Cribden ward, due to ongoing residential development. 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.

32 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**

33 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

34 Rossendale Borough Council presently has 36 members. The Borough Council proposed that this number be retained. We received no further submissions relating to council size.

35 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 36 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

36 After careful consideration of the evidence received at Stage One, we consider that there is merit in the scheme submitted by the Borough Council for nine of the 14 wards and in both of the alternative proposals put forward by the Council for wards in Bacup and Haslingden. We consider that both proposals would represent a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. In particular, we note that these proposals would each significantly improve electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by less than 8 per cent in all 14 wards in 1999 and 2004.

37 In view of this improved level of electoral equality, and the Council's emphasis on the representation of the interests and identities of communities, together with the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that the majority proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or the minority scheme. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in two areas. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Haslingden (three wards) and Eden ward;
- (b) Rawtenstall (four wards);
- (c) Bacup (three wards);
- (d) Whitworth (two wards).

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

### **Haslingden (three wards) and Eden ward**

39 Haslingden is situated in the west of the borough and is represented by three wards, Greenfield, Helmshore and Worsley, each represented by three councillors. Eden ward is served by two councillors and covers the communities of Edenfield and Stubbins, together with

adjoining moorland. Under current arrangements, Greenfield and Helmshore wards have 7 per cent and 29 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively. Worsley ward has 28 per cent fewer electors than the borough average, while the number of electors per councillor in Eden ward is equal to the average. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years.

40 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Eden ward should retain its existing boundaries. However, it submitted two alternative proposals for wards in Haslingden, both of which retained three three-member wards for the town. The majority proposal argued that the B6232 Grane Road should be retained as a ward boundary as it formed a “natural break in the development pattern”. It proposed modifying the boundary between Greenfield ward and Worsley ward to the east of the town centre, with the area north of Hillside Road forming part of Worsley ward. Under the majority proposal, the revised boundary between Greenfield and Helmshore wards would follow the existing boundary along Jubilee Road, and then part of the B6214 Helmshore Road, before following Elizabeth Drive and the western side of the Knowsley Road Industrial Estate and then crossing Rossendale Golf Course. Under the majority proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Greenfield, Helmshore and Worsley wards would vary by 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

41 The minority proposal was broadly similar to the majority scheme for Haslingden. However, it argued that the boundary between Helmshore and Worsley wards should be modified to include the area adjoining Calf Hey, Holden Wood and Ogden reservoirs and electors north of Windsor Avenue and west of the A56 in Worsley ward. The minority proposal would also include electors on roads which are only accessible from Grane Road and the area north of Wells Street, in Worsley ward. It also proposed retaining part of Broadway as Greenfield’s south-eastern ward boundary. Under the minority proposals, all three wards in Haslingden would vary by no more than 3 per cent from the borough average in both 1999 and 2004.

42 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that there is a consensus regarding the number of councillors and wards that would best represent Haslingden under a council size of 36, and we concur with this view. There is less agreement regarding ward boundaries within the town. However, while both proposals would achieve a much improved level of electoral equality, we consider that the majority proposal achieves the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we are concerned that the minority proposal would divide Knowl Gap Avenue between Helmshore and Worsley wards as we are not persuaded that this would best represent the interests and identities of communities. Furthermore, the majority proposal would combine the Bent Gate area with other urban areas to its north, while the minority proposal would include it in Helmshore ward, from which it would be separated by school playing fields and Rossendale Golf Course.

43 However, we propose a minor modification to the suggested boundary between Greenfield and Helmshore wards. We propose that the boundary should follow the north side of the Sports Centre grounds, which we consider to be a better boundary than both the majority and minority proposals, which divide the B6214 Helmshore Road arbitrarily. This modification would affect a total of 108 electors. We are therefore content to endorse the Borough Council’s majority proposal, subject to this minor modification.

44 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Greenfield, Helmshore and Worsley wards would vary by 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 4 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is not expected to significantly change over the next five years.

### **Rawtenstall (four wards)**

45 Rawtenstall is the largest town in the borough, and is covered by four three-member wards: Cribden, Hareholme, Longholme and Whitewell. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Cribden, Hareholme, Longholme and Whitewell wards varies by 29 per cent, 5 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent from the average respectively. This level of electoral imbalance is not projected to significantly change in three of these wards over the next five years, however electoral inequality is expected to deteriorate further in Cribden ward, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by more than 30 per cent by 2004.

46 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that Rawtenstall should be represented by 13 councillors, one more than at present, due to housing development in Cribden ward. It proposed that Cribden should be represented by two two-member wards, with the area north of Hugh Rake and Short Clough Lane forming a new Cribden North ward, while the rest of the existing Cribden ward, less the area bounded by Haslingden Old Road and the moorland adjoining Oakenhead Wood Old Road, would form a new Cribden South ward. It proposed that the area north of Haslingden Old Road should be transferred to a revised Longholme ward. It also proposed that the area bounded by Hurst Lane and Newchurch Road should be transferred from Hareholme ward to the new Cribden South ward, to improve electoral equality. It suggested that a small area to the south of the A681 Bacup Road, including Stansfield Road and Duke Street should be transferred from Whitewell ward to Hareholme ward to correct a “local anomaly”, while an area east of Fearn Moss and Fearn Hall in Stacksteads wards would be included in Whitewell ward. In addition, it proposed a minor modification between Longholme and Greenfield wards which would not affect any electors, to provide a more easily identifiable ward boundary. Hareholme, Longholme and Whitewell wards would continue to be each represented by three councillors.

47 Under the Borough Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Cribden South, Hareholme and Whitewell wards would vary by 5 per cent, 3 per cent, and 2 per cent from the borough average respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Cribden North and Longholme wards would be equal to the average. This level of improved electoral equality is forecast to continue over the next five years.

48 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that the Borough Council’s proposal would secure the correct level of representation for Rawtenstall, given a council size of 36. We consider that the Council’s scheme achieves the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and we are content to endorse it without modification. In particular, we note that the Council’s proposals for Cribden South ward would include the majority of the new development in the area, and would appear to reflect the interests and identities of communities in the rest of the town.

## **Bacup (three wards)**

49 The town of Bacup straddles the A671 Rochdale Road and the A681 Todmorden Road, and comprises the wards of Greensclough, Irwell and Stacksteads, each represented by three councillors. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor varies by 15 per cent, 1 per cent and 26 per cent in Greensclough, Irwell and Stacksteads wards respectively. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to change significantly over the next five years.

50 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted a majority and minority scheme for wards in Bacup. However, both proposals would largely retain the current Stacksteads ward, and would reduce the number of councillors for the ward from three to two. Both schemes proposed that the area east of Fearn Moss should be included in the proposed Whitewell ward, as indicated previously, and also suggested transferring the part of Stacksteads ward bounded by Fernhill Drive and the area north of the dismantled railway to Irwell ward.

51 There was less agreement regarding the proposed boundaries between Greensclough and Irwell wards, although both schemes proposed that the area should continue to be divided between two three-member wards. The majority proposal held that the existing boundary between these wards was “arbitrary and difficult to identify”. It proposed that a new Bacup East ward should include electors south of the A681 Todmorden Road and east of the A671 Rochdale Road, and that a new Bacup North ward should cover the area to the north and west of the A671 and A681 roads, to the east of Stacksteads ward.

52 Under the majority proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bacup East, Bacup North and Stacksteads ward would vary by 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 6 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

53 The minority proposal sought to substantially retain the existing arrangements, arguing that they reflect the interests and communities in Greensclough and Irwell wards. It proposed minor boundary modifications so that the boundary between these wards would follow main roads through the town centre, with the area to the north of Bankside Lane and west of the A671 Burnley Road, together with the area east of Gladstone Street and the area bounded by St James Street and South Street, being transferred from Irwell ward to Greensclough ward.

54 Under the minority proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Greensclough, Irwell and Stacksteads ward would vary by 7 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years.

55 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that both proposals would achieve improved levels of electoral equality. There is consensus that Bacup merits eight councillors, under a council size of 36, and we concur with this view. We propose endorsing the majority proposals for Bacup, as we consider that the A671 Rochdale Road and the A681 Todmorden Road form strong and easily identifiable boundaries. We are not persuaded that the boundaries proposed under the minority scheme would be as strong, as they would utilise minor roads such as South Street and Gladstone Street, which we do not consider would be as easily identifiable for electors as ward boundaries.

56 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Bacup East, Bacup North and Stacksteads wards would vary by 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 6 per cent from the borough average respectively. This improved level of electoral equality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

### **Whitworth (two wards)**

57 Whitworth is the only parish in the borough and is situated in the south-east of the Rossendale, neighbouring Calderdale and Rochdale metropolitan boroughs, in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester respectively. Under current arrangements, Facit & Shawforth ward has 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while Healey & Whitworth ward has 25 per cent more electors per councillor than the average.

58 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining two two-member wards for the town, but put forward a revised boundary between the two wards. It proposed that all electors west of Market Street and north of Lloyd Street, together with the Cowm Park Estate to the east of Cowm Park Way be transferred from Healey & Whitworth ward to Facit & Shawforth ward. The Borough Council forwarded a submission from Whitworth Town Council, supporting the Borough Council's proposal for Whitworth.

59 Having carefully considered the representations received, we consider that the Borough Council's proposal achieves the best possible balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and is supported by Whitworth Town Council. However, we propose a minor modification to the boundary between these wards, so that the boundary follows geographical features as it crosses the moorland adjoining the urban area. We are content to substantially endorse the Borough Council's proposals as our draft recommendations, subject to this minor modification. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Facit & Shawforth and Healey & Whitworth would vary by less than 2 per cent in both wards in 1999 and 2004.

### **Electoral Cycle**

60 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we propose retaining the present system of elections by thirds.

### **Conclusions**

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

- (a) a council of 36 members should be retained;
- (b) there should be 14 wards, one more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

62 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council’s majority proposal, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- (a) we propose modifying the boundary between Facit & Shawforth and Healey & Whitworth wards, to utilise geographical features across moorland;
- (b) we propose that the northern edge of the Sports Centre grounds, in Helmshore ward, should form the boundary between Greenfield and Helmshore wards.

63 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with 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	36	36	36	36
Number of wards	13	14	13	14
Average number of electors per councillor	1,403	1,399	1,405	1,400
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	0	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	0	6	0

64 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Rossendale Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from seven to none both in 1999 and 2004.

**Draft Recommendation**  
 Rossendale Borough Council should comprise 36 councillors serving 14 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and at Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

# Town Council Electoral Arrangements

65 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 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for Whitworth Town Council to reflect the proposed borough wards.

66 The parish of Whitworth is currently served by 12 councillors representing four wards: Facit, Healey, Shawforth and Whitworth. In order to facilitate our proposed borough warding arrangements, we propose that Whitworth parish should be divided between two parish wards, Facit & Shawforth and Healey & Whitworth. We propose that the parish should continue to be represented by 12 members. This proposal reflects the Borough Council’s Stage One submission for Whitworth and has the support of Whitworth Town Council.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Whitworth Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Facit & Shawforth and Healey & Whitworth (each returning six councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

67 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of Whitworth Town Council.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Elections for Whitworth Town Council should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

**68 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Rossendale and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, 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 Rossendale*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

69 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Rossendale. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 10 April 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.

70 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager  
Rossendale 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)

71 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 Rossendale: Detailed Mapping**

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

**Map A1** illustrates the proposed boundary between Bacup East and Bacup North wards;

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed boundary between Bacup North and Stacksteads wards;

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed boundary between Cribden South and Hareholme wards.

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

*Map A1: Proposed boundary between Bacup East and Bacup North wards*

*Map A2: Proposed boundary between Bacup North and Stacksteads wards*

*Map A3: Proposed boundary between Cribden South and Hareholme wards*

## APPENDIX B

### Rossendale Borough Council's Majority Proposal

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

*Figure B1: Rossendale Borough Council's Majority Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Facit & Shawforth	Facit & Shawforth ward; Healey & Whitworth ward (part)
Greenfield	Greenfield ward (part); Helmshore ward (part); Longholme ward (part)
Healey & Whitworth	Healey & Whitworth ward (part)
Helmshore	Helmshore ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Facit & Shawforth	2	2,839	1,420	1	2,815	1,408	1
Greenfield	3	4,283	1,428	2	4,243	1,414	1
Healey & Whitworth	2	2,860	1,430	2	2,825	1,413	1
Helmshore	3	4,311	1,437	3	4,356	1,452	4

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rossendale 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

## Rossendale Borough Council's Minority Proposal

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

*Figure B3: Rossendale Borough Council's Minority Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Facit & Shawforth	Facit & Shawforth ward; Healey & Whitworth ward (part)
Greenfield	Greenfield ward (part); Helmshore ward (part); Longholme ward (part)
Greensclough	Greensclough ward; Irwell ward (part)
Healey & Whitworth	Healey & Whitworth ward (part)
Helmshore	Helmshore ward (part)
Irwell	Irwell ward (part); Stacksteads ward (part)
Worsley	Worsley ward; Greenfield ward (part); Helmshore ward (part)

*Figure B4: Rossendale Borough Council's Minority Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Facit & Shawforth	2	2,839	1,420	1	2,815	1,408	0
Greenfield	3	4,272	1,424	1	4,249	1,416	1
Greensclough	3	3,912	1,304	-7	3,945	1,315	-7
Healey & Whitworth	2	2,860	1,430	2	2,825	1,413	0
Helmshore	3	4,311	1,437	2	4,356	1,452	3
Irwell	3	3,980	1,327	-6	4,023	1,341	-5
Worsley	3	4,163	1,388	-1	4,133	1,378	-2

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Rossendale 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. 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:

- (a) the number of councillors;
- (b) the need for parish wards;
- (c) the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- (d) the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- (e) 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.

10 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.

