

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
CRAVEN IN NORTH
YORKSHIRE

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

November 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Craven in North Yorkshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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Peter Brokenshire

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



Local Government Commission for England

30 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 3 November 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Craven under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 125) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Craven.

We recommend that Craven District Council should be served by 30 councillors representing 19 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

We note that you have now set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Craven on 3 November 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 May 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **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 district and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2003 electoral equality is not expected to significantly improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 13 wards and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 125-126) are that:

- **Craven District Council should have 30 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 19 wards, instead of 24 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 16 of the proposed 19 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in three wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2003.**

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

- **revised warding for the parish of Skipton, a reduction in the number of councillors serving Skipton Town Council and a redistribution of councillors between the new parish wards.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations until 11 January 2000:

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

*Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Aire Valley with Lothersdale	2	Aire Valley ward (the parishes of Bradleys Both, Cononley, Farnhill and Kildwick); Glusburn ward (part – Lothersdale parish)
2 Bentham	2	Bentham ward (and parish); Ingleborough ward (part – Burton in Lonsdale parish)
3 Bolton Abbey	1	Bolton Abbey ward (part – the parishes of Appletreewick, Barden, Beamsley, Bolton Abbey, Burnsall, Draughton, Halton East, Hazlewood with Storiths and Thorpe); Calton ward (part – the parishes of Bordley, Cracoe, Hetton and Rylstone)
4 Gargrave & Malhamdale	2	Calton ward (part – the parishes of Airton, Calton, Eshton, Flasby-with-Winterburn, Hanlith, Kirkby Malham, Malham, Malham Moor, Otterburn, Scosthrop and Stirton with Thorlby); Gargrave ward (and Gargrave parish); Hellifield ward (part – the parishes of Bank Newton and Coniston Cold)
5 Cowling	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cowling parish)
6 Embsay-with-Eastby	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Embsay with Eastby parish)
7 Glusburn	2	Glusburn ward (part – Glusburn parish)
8 Grassington	1	Grassington ward (the parishes of Grassington, Hebden and Linton); Bolton Abbey (part – Hartlington parish)
9 Hellifield & Long Preston	1	Hellifield ward (part – the parishes of Hellifield, Nappa and Swinden); Ribbleside ward (part – Long Preston parish)
10 Ingleton & Clapham	2	Clapham ward (the parishes of Austwick, Clapham cum Newby and Lawkland); Ingleborough ward (part – the parishes of Ingleton and Thornton in Lonsdale)
11 Penyghent	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Giggleswick, Horton in Ribblesdale and Stainforth)
12 Settle & Ribblebanks	2	Settle ward (the parishes of Langcliffe and Settle); Ribbleside ward (part – the parishes of Halton West, Rathmell and Wigglesworth)
13 Skipton East	2	Skipton East ward (part – part of Skipton East parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton Central ward (part – part Skipton Central parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton North ward (part – part of Skipton North parish ward of Skipton parish)
14 Skipton North	2	Skipton North ward (part – part of Skipton North parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton Central ward (part – part of Skipton Central ward of Skipton parish); Skipton West ward (part – part of Skipton West ward of Skipton parish)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
15 Skipton South	2	Skipton Central ward (part – part of Skipton Central parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton East ward (part – part of Skipton East parish ward of Skipton parish)
16 Skipton West	2	Skipton West ward (part – part of Skipton West parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton South ward (Skipton South parish ward of Skipton parish); Skipton South-West ward (Skipton South-West ward of Skipton parish)
17 Sutton-in-Craven	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Sutton)
18 Upper Wharfedale	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Arncliffe, Buckden, Conistone with Kilnsey, Halton Gill, Hawkswick, Kettlewell with Starbotton, Litton and Threshfield)
19 West Craven	1	West Craven (the parishes of Broughton, Carleton, Elslack and Thornton in Craven); Hellifield ward (part – Martons Both parish)

Note: Map 2 and Appendix A, including Map A2 and the large map inside the back cover of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above. The whole district is parished.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Craven

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aire Valley with Lothersdale	2	2,632	1,316	-6	2,645	1,323	-6
2 Bentham	2	2,756	1,378	-1	2,805	1,403	-1
3 Bolton Abbey	1	1,310	1,310	-6	1,310	1,310	-7
4 Gargrave & Malhamdale	2	2,472	1,236	-11	2,488	1,244	-12
5 Cowling	1	1,609	1,609	15	1,629	1,629	15
6 Embsay-with-Eastby	1	1,488	1,488	7	1,488	1,488	5
7 Glusburn	2	3,141	1,571	12	3,164	1,582	12
8 Grassington	1	1,291	1,291	-8	1,304	1,304	-8
9 Hellifield & Long Preston	1	1,350	1,350	-3	1,427	1,427	1
10 Ingleton & Clapham	2	2,956	1,478	6	2,984	1,492	6
11 Penyghent	1	1,422	1,422	2	1,434	1,434	1
12 Settle & Ribblesbanks	2	2,761	1,381	-1	2,807	1,404	-1
13 Skipton East	2	2,761	1,381	-1	2,806	1,403	-1
14 Skipton North	2	2,671	1,336	-4	2,770	1,385	-2
15 Skipton South	2	2,933	1,467	5	2,945	1,473	4
16 Skipton West	2	2,828	1,414	-4	2,853	1,427	1
17 Sutton-in-Craven	2	2,603	1,302	-7	2,627	1,314	-7
18 Upper Wharfedale	1	1,462	1,462	5	1,473	1,473	4
19 West Craven	1	1,439	1,439	3	1,453	1,453	3
Totals	30	41,885	—	—	42,412	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,396	—	—	1,414	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided Craven District Council's submission.

Notes: 1 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.

2 The total electorate figures for 1998 and 2003 are marginally different from the totals in Figure 4 (by two and seven electors respectively) which has a negligible impact on variances.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Craven in North Yorkshire. We have now reviewed the districts in North Yorkshire (excluding York) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all principal local authority areas in England. (We expect to undertake a PER of York unitary authority in 2000/1.)

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Craven. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1976 (Report No. 174). The electoral arrangements of North Yorkshire County Council were last reviewed by the LGBC in August 1984 (Report No. 477). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in due course.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District 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 district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (updated in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and

ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

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

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. 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.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the North Yorkshire 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.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 3 November 1998, when we wrote to Craven District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Yorkshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament in the Yorkshire & Humber region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 February 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 25 May 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Craven in North Yorkshire*, and ended on 19 July 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The district of Craven is located in the western part of North Yorkshire, covers an area of approximately 118,000 hectares and is bordered to the west by Lancashire, to the south by West Yorkshire and to the north by Cumbria and the district of Richmondshire. The district has a population of over 51,300 and a population density of 0.4 persons per hectare. Craven district incorporates the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the upper parts of Airedale, Ribblesdale and Wharfedale and takes in the Wenning Valley near Bentham.

14 The district is predominantly rural in nature and includes the market towns of Skipton and Settle. There are also a number of other settlements including Bentham and Ingleton in the north and Glusburn, Crosshills and Sutton-in-Craven in the south. Thirteen settlements have a population of over 1,000 and three settlements (Glusburn, Settle and Skipton) have a population of over 3,000. The largest centres of population in the Dales area are Grassington and Threshfield. In terms of communication links, Craven is served by four principal trunk routes (A65, A59, A56 and A629) and three railway lines with the Skipton to Leeds and Bradford line in the south, Skipton to Morecambe line in the west and the Skipton to Carlisle line, via Settle, travelling north across the district. The whole district is parished and contains 73 parishes which vary considerably in terms of electorate (from Nappa with less than 10 electors to Skipton with nearly 11,200) and area (from Farnhill at approximately 2 square kilometres to Buckden at approximately 80 square kilometres).

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

16 The electorate of the district is 41,883 (February 1998). The Council presently has 34 members who are elected from 24 wards, six of

which are relatively urban (in Skipton), the remainder being predominantly rural. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are represented by two councillors each and the remaining 16 are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Craven district, with around 17 per cent more electors than two decades ago with the largest increases in the Skipton area and some growth occurring in Cowling, Embsay-with-Eastby and Upper Wharfedale wards.

18 At present each councillor represents an average of 1,232 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,248 by the year 2003 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 district average and in five wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Skipton South ward where the councillors represent 48 per cent more electors than the district average, more than twice as many as the councillor for the neighbouring ward of Skipton South-West.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Craven



Key to Wards

- 1 Aire Valley
- 2 Bentham
- 3 Bolton Abbey
- 4 Calton
- 5 Clapham
- 6 Cowling
- 7 Embsay-with-Eastby
- 8 Gargrave
- 9 Grassington
- 10 Hellfield
- 11 Ingleborough
- 13 Penyghent
- 14 Ribbleside
- 15 Settle
- 16 Skipton Central
- 17 Skipton East
- 18 Skipton North
- 19 Skipton South
- 20 Skipton South-West
- 21 Skipton West
- 22 Sutton
- 23 Upper Wharfedale
- 24 West Craven

KEY

EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY ———

EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY - - - - -

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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aire Valley	2	2,303	1,152	-7	2,312	1,156	-7
2 Bentham	2	2,262	1,131	-8	2,311	1,156	-7
3 Bolton Abbey	1	1,012	1,012	-18	1,012	1,012	-19
4 Calton	1	1,260	1,260	2	1,260	1,260	1
5 Clapham	1	1,045	1,045	-15	1,050	1,050	-16
6 Cowling	1	1,609	1,609	31	1,629	1,629	31
7 Embsay-with-Eastby	1	1,488	1,488	21	1,488	1,488	19
8 Gargrave	1	1,392	1,392	13	1,408	1,408	13
9 Glusburn	3	3,470	1,157	-6	3,497	1,166	-7
10 Grassington	1	1,229	1,229	0	1,242	1,242	0
11 Hellifield	1	1,149	1,149	-7	1,213	1,213	-3
12 Ingleborough	2	2,405	1,203	-2	2,428	1,214	-3
13 Penyghent	1	1,422	1,422	15	1,434	1,434	15
14 Ribbleside	1	1,024	1,024	-17	1,051	1,051	-16
15 Settle	2	2,291	1,146	-7	2,323	1,162	-7
16 Skipton Central	1	982	982	-20	994	994	-20
17 Skipton East	3	3,748	1,249	1	3,773	1,258	1
18 Skipton North	2	2,082	1,041	-15	2,152	1,076	-14
19 Skipton South	1	1,824	1,824	48	1,849	1,849	48
20 Skipton South-West	1	863	863	-30	892	892	-29
21 Skipton West	1	1,692	1,692	37	1,721	1,721	38
22 Sutton	2	2,603	1,302	6	2,627	1,314	5
23 Upper Wharfedale	1	1,462	1,462	19	1,473	1,473	18

continued overleaf

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24 West Craven	1	1,266	1,266	3	1,280	1,280	3
Totals	34	41,883	—	—	42,419	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,232	—	—	1,248	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Craven District 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. For example, in 1998, electors in Skipton South-West ward were relatively over-represented by 30 per cent, while electors in Skipton South ward were relatively under-represented by 48 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 36 representations, including four district-wide schemes from the District Council, Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party, Mr Barrett (two schemes) and Glusburn Parish Council (identical to one of Mr Barrett's). We also received representations from 26 parish and town councils and parish meetings in the district, one local political group, one county and district councillor, one district councillor, one parish councillor and two local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Craven in North Yorkshire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based in part on the District Council's and in part on Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party's proposals, which achieved an improvement in electoral equality, and generally provided a pattern of two-member wards in more densely settled areas and single-member wards in rural areas. However, we moved away from both sets of proposals in a number of areas to reflect the views of some parish and town councils and parish meetings and other respondents, and to incorporate our own proposals. We proposed that:

- (a) Craven District Council should have 30 councillors, four fewer than at present;
- (b) there should be 19 wards, instead of 24 as at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (d) elections should continue to take place by thirds.

Draft Recommendation

Craven District Council should comprise 30 councillors, serving 19 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 26 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Craven District Council and the Commission.

Craven District Council

22 The District Council supported the majority of the proposed warding pattern for Craven, although it suggested a number of modifications to some of the proposed wards and ward names. It proposed that the Clayton Hall estate area of Glusburn Parish should form part of the proposed two-member Glusburn ward, rather than forming part of Sutton-in-Craven ward. It further proposed that the parishes of Bordley and Flasby-with-Winterburn should form part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward rather than remain in Calton & Gargrave ward, as proposed in the draft recommendations. The Council proposed retaining the existing wards of Bentham, Clapham and Ingleborough unchanged.

Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party

23 Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party broadly welcomed the draft recommendations, although it considered that, in some areas, insufficient account had been taken of local community identities. The Constituency Labour Party further stated that the parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone, Hetton, Bordley and Flasby-with-Winterburn should all be included in the proposed Bolton Abbey ward for community identity reasons. Furthermore, the Constituency Labour Party suggested that the proposed single-member wards of Bolton Abbey and Emsay-with-Eastby should be combined to form a two-member ward. They also proposed a two-member ward comprising the proposed single-member wards of Upper Wharfedale and Grassington which, they considered, would provide more convenient and effective local government for the area.

North Yorkshire County Council

24 The County Council objected to our draft recommendations on the grounds that “the review of electoral arrangements in each district has been carried out as a self-contained exercise, without regard for its implications for the electoral arrangements for the County Council”.

25 It reiterated its view that “significant benefits” will flow to local electors from wards and divisions having shared boundaries, wherever practicable, as it believed that a high degree of coterminosity is a pre-requisite for securing effective and convenient local government and to properly reflect the identities and interests of local communities. It argued that more enduring electoral arrangements would have been achieved if the implications for county electoral divisions had been recognised earlier in the review process, allowing district and county reviews to be carried out concurrently.

Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings

26 We received 17 representations from parish and town councils and parish meetings in Craven following publication of our draft recommendations. The parish councils of Cowling, Giggleswick, Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Kettlewell with Starbotton, Litton, Ribble Banks and Stainforth, together with Settle Town Council and Halton Gill Parish Meeting each supported the Commission’s draft recommendations as they related to their respective areas.

27 Austwick Parish Council opposed its inclusion in a new Ingleton & Clapham ward, instead proposing that it should be combined with Horton-in-Ribblesdale. Burton-in-Lonsdale Parish Council proposed no change to the existing Bentham ward. Glusburn Parish Council objected to the Clayton Hall estate area forming part of Sutton-in-Craven ward and forwarded a petition signed by 85 residents of the estate supporting a proposal to maintain the whole of Glusburn parish

within one district ward. Additionally, Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council also opposed the Clayton Hall estate area forming part of Sutton-in-Craven ward. Clapham cum Newby Parish Council opposed the proposed Ingleton & Clapham ward which it considered “cannot be in the best interests of parishioners”. Lothersdale Parish Council opposed its inclusion in a new Aire Valley ward. Langcliffe Parish Council opposed the proposed Settle & Ribblebanks ward and supported the District Council’s Stage One proposal for a new Ribble ward (which we did not adopt in our draft recommendations). Hellifield Parish Council proposed modifying our draft recommendations for Hellifield & Long Preston ward to include the parish of Halton West.

Other Representations

28 Further representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from district and county councillors and residents.

29 Councillors Hart and Place, representing Sutton-in-Craven ward, and Councillors Seward, Barrett and Dixon, representing Glusburn ward, in a joint submission opposed the Clayton Hall estate forming part of the proposed Sutton-in-Craven ward for community identity reasons. A further submission from the three Glusburn district ward councillors, along with Councillors York and Ibbotson from Aire Valley ward, proposed renaming Aire Valley ward as Aire Valley with Lothersdale ward.

30 Councillor Marshall, county councillor for Mid-Craven division and district councillor for Embsay-with-Eastby ward, proposed that the current PER should have regard to a future review of county electoral divisions in North Yorkshire. Councillor Marshall also supported the District Council’s proposal that the parishes of Bordley, Cracoe, Hetton, Rylstone and Flasby-with-Winterburn should each be located within a modified Bolton Abbey ward. Councillor Marshall did not support the proposed two-member Calton & Gargrave ward. Councillor Marshall’s representation was supported by the Chairmen of the five parishes of Bordley, Cracoe, Hetton, Rylstone and Flasby-with-Winterburn. Three residents of Glusburn opposed the inclusion of the Clayton Hall estate within the parish of Sutton for community identity reasons.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

34 Our *Guidance* states that, while 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, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change 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

35 The District Council calculated electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of 1 per cent from 41,883 to 42,419 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. Of this limited growth, it expects the greatest proportion to occur in Skipton and Hellifield parishes, with the remaining parishes having little or no growth over the five-year period. The District Council provided slightly revised forecast electorate figures for Skipton parish in its submission at the end of Stage One which had not been included in its original forecasts provided at the start of the review. These revised figures accounted for an additional 119 electors in Skipton, the result of additional housing developments in the town which had subsequently been identified in the local plan and were considered by officers at the Council to more accurately reflect anticipated development in the town. These additional electors have been included in the projected electorate stated at the beginning of this paragraph.

36 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 District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

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

39 Craven District Council presently has 34 members. At Stage One, the District Council proposed a council size of 31 members serving a pattern of single- and two-member wards across the district. Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party proposed a council size of 30, which it concluded was the optimum council size for Craven having “taken account of councillors’ views of their present workload”.

40 Mr Barrett, a local resident, proposed two alternative council sizes at Stage One, one based on 36 members and the other on 34, the same as at present. He argued that both council sizes would address the wide variations in geography and population throughout Craven. Glusburn Parish Council, which proposed the same 36-member scheme as Mr Barrett, stated that the District Council’s proposals for a 31-member council would be unable to “cater for the wide variations of population throughout South Craven”. Two other respondents specifically commented on council size at Stage One. Ribble Banks Parish Council, representing the parishes of Halton West, Rathmell and Wigglesworth, was concerned that a reduction in council size could impact upon the District Council’s committee structure and result in the under-representation of rural areas. A parish councillor for Ribble Banks suggested that a reduced district council size could adversely impact upon the level of service provision for rural areas.

41 In forming our draft recommendations, we noted that all those submitting district-wide schemes commented that their proposed council size was, in part, determined by the proposed warding pattern. We also noted that of the four district-wide schemes submitted, only one, from Mr Barrett and Glusburn Parish Council, proposed increasing the current council size, to 36. Of the remaining three submissions, two – from the District Council and Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party – proposed a reduction in council size. Mr Barrett’s other scheme proposed no change to the present council size of 34. We carefully considered all the representations received before concluding on the most appropriate council size for Craven. The District Council and the Constituency Labour Party proposed a reduction in council size. While some respondents considered that a reduced council size for Craven may result in geographically larger wards which could impact upon convenient and effective local government, the District Council itself considered that 31 councillors was sufficient. Having considered the

size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 30 members.

42 This council size, rather than 31 members, would allow for a fairer distribution of councillors across the district. Under the District Council’s proposal for a 31-member council, we calculated that the electorate in the north-western area of the district (referred to as ‘The Northern Area’ later in this chapter) would be entitled to 10 councillors, based on current and forecast electorates, not 11 councillors as proposed by the District Council. In order to address this fundamental imbalance in representation across the district, while also reflecting the consensus among members for a reduction in the overall number of councillors for the district, we therefore consulted on a council size of 30.

43 During Stage Three, the District Council stated that it agreed “that a council size of 30 or 31 is acceptable”. Glusburn Parish Council commented that a proposed council size of 30 may adversely impact on the “level of service for the community in general”. Langcliffe Parish Council stated they objected to the reduced numbers of councillors for the district. A resident of Glusburn questioned the need for a reduction of four councillors.

44 We received no further representations commenting on council size and in the light of this we remain of the view that a council size of 30 reflects the balance of views on an appropriate council size for Craven and would facilitate an appropriate distribution of councillors across the district. We are therefore confirming our council size of 30 for Craven in our final recommendations.

Electoral Arrangements

45 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes from the District Council and Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

46 First, there appeared to be acknowledgement locally that the present arrangements are

unsatisfactory and capable of significant improvement. We received a number of submissions at Stage One, including four district-wide schemes, which made positive proposals for change to the present arrangements and, to varying degrees, achieved good levels of electoral equality. Second, there appeared to be a consensus among members on the District Council for a reduction in council size. As detailed earlier, we were persuaded of this view and proposed a council size of 30 in our draft recommendations, which we are retaining in our final recommendations.

47 Third, the current warding pattern contains a predominance of single- and two-member wards with two three-member wards. The District Council proposed a pattern of single- and two-member wards across the district. It stated that its proposals were influenced by the Government's White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which implied elections every two years and a pattern of mainly two-member wards, with single-member wards in more rural areas. Alternatively, the Constituency Labour Party and the two schemes from Mr Barrett, including the shared scheme with Glusburn Parish Council, proposed a greater number of two-member wards in more rural areas.

48 Finally, our draft recommendations sought to build on the proposals we received in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve significant improvements in electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We welcomed respondents making proposals for alternative warding arrangements although, inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations. Having decided on a council size of 30 for Craven, we tried to reflect the District Council's preference for single-member wards in more rural areas wherever this was compatible with electoral equality, recognising that single-member wards serve some areas under the current arrangements and were supported by a number of parish councils. We concluded that we should base our proposed warding pattern for Craven on a number of elements from both the District Council's scheme and Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party's scheme. We considered that these proposals would provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. However, in order to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from these proposals in a number of areas.

49 At Stage Three, there was a significant degree of support for our draft recommendations from respondents and, in particular, the District Council, although it suggested a number of modifications to ward boundaries and ward names.

50 As stated earlier, North Yorkshire County Council objected to our draft recommendations. It argued that the Commission's approach was likely to lead to "significant reductions" in the existing level of coterminosity, and urged us to change the review process so that district and county council reviews could be carried out concurrently during the Stage One consultation period.

51 The approach we have adopted in our PERs of two-tier county areas is the same as that taken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission. That is to first review the electoral arrangements of each of the district council areas in the county and then, once the necessary electoral change orders have been made for the districts, to review those of the County Council. This ensures that, as required by Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act, our recommendations for electoral division boundaries have regard to district ward boundaries, and that these are fixed not subject to change.

52 This is an issue which has arisen in a number of review areas. It is indicative of the tensions which can arise between the achievement of electoral equality within the individual districts of a county, each of whose electoral arrangements can vary significantly in terms of councillor:elector ratios and ward sizes, and across county council electoral divisions, while also seeking some measure of coterminosity between the two. These tensions are not readily reconciled.

53 In certain cases, it has been put to us that in reviewing district electoral arrangements we should prescribe that ward patterns and sizes should be such that they would be compatible with county council divisions. We do not believe this to be an approach the Commission should take. As a Commission, we rely heavily on local authorities and others to put proposals to us on how the electoral arrangements within their individual areas might be improved. We believe that the interests of local democracy are best served by basing our recommendations on schemes which are generated locally, address the statutory criteria, and achieve a high level of electoral equality.

54 Nevertheless, we recognise that coterminosity between county divisions and district wards is

capable of being conducive to effective and convenient local government, and we place a high value on its achievement as part of our reviews of county council electoral arrangements.

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

The Southern Area

- (a) Cowling, Glusburn and Sutton wards;
- (b) Aire Valley and West Craven wards;
- (c) Bolton Abbey and Embsay-with-Eastby wards;
- (d) Grassington ward.

Skipton Town

- (e) Skipton Central, Skipton East, Skipton North, Skipton South, Skipton South-West and Skipton West wards.

The Northern Area

- (f) Calton, Gargrave and Upper Wharfedale wards;
- (g) Hellifield, Ribbleside and Settle wards;
- (h) Penyghent ward;
- (i) Bentham, Clapham and Ingleborough wards.

56 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map A1, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

The Southern Area

57 This group of eight wards spans broadly the south-eastern area of Craven district, excluding the principal settlement of Skipton. The area contains the settlements of Embsay, Gargrave, Glusburn, Grassington, Low Bradley and Sutton-in-Craven. This part of Craven is more densely populated than the northern area and contains approximately 35 per cent of the current total electorate of the district. There is a high degree of electoral inequality in the area, with the number of electors per councillor in three wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district, with two wards over 20 per cent and one ward, Cowling, over 30 per cent.

Cowling, Glusburn & Sutton wards

58 Situated in the far south of the district, the existing wards of Cowling, Glusburn and Sutton return one, three and two councillors respectively. Cowling ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is significantly under-represented under the present arrangements, with 31 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. Glusburn ward, comprising Glusburn and Lothersdale parishes, and Sutton ward, comprising the parish of the same name, are over- and under-represented respectively by 6 per cent. Little or no improvement in electoral equality is anticipated for the three wards by 2003.

59 At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to Cowling ward. Alternatively, Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party proposed that the existing district ward and parish of Cowling should form a modified two-member ward with part of Glusburn parish (the 'Glusburn' parish register area) and be renamed Cowling with Glusburn ward. Under the District Council's proposal for a council size of 31, the single-member Cowling ward would be under-represented by 19 per cent (unchanged in 2003) and under the Constituency Labour Party's proposal for a council size of 30, the two-member Cowling with Glusburn ward would be over-represented by 5 per cent (4 per cent in 2003).

60 Glusburn Parish Council noted the relatively poor level of electoral equality achieved under the District Council's proposals for Cowling ward but preferred to retain Glusburn parish as a discrete area for district warding purposes (detailed below).

61 We carefully considered all the representations we received for the Cowling area. We noted the District Council argued that, while its proposal did not produce a high degree of electoral equality, it considered a number of features particular to Cowling which warranted special consideration. In addition to the assertion that Cowling does not share any community identity with adjoining parishes, the Council argued that the three settlements within the parish (Cowling, Ickornshaw and Middleton) shared a "strong community identity"; are geographically separated from the adjoining parish of Lothersdale, and that Cowling's location in the far south of the district precluded a better solution. Furthermore, the Council

considered that the two communities of Glusburn and Cowling parishes have separate and strong community identities.

62 We concluded that the District Council's proposal, while not achieving the same degree of electoral equality as the Constituency Labour Party's proposal, would better reflect the geographical realities of the area, providing a single-member ward for the parish of Cowling and respecting existing community ties within Cowling and adjoining wards. We therefore adopted the District Council's proposal for an unchanged Cowling ward as part of our draft recommendations.

63 At Stage One, in order to address the relative under-representation in Sutton ward and over-representation in Glusburn ward, the District Council proposed a new two-member ward comprising most of Glusburn parish, and a modified Sutton ward comprising a small area of the parish, the Clayton Hall estate containing 190 electors, along with the whole of Sutton parish. In order to accommodate this proposed district warding pattern, the District Council proposed creating two parish wards for the parish of Glusburn. Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party also proposed warding Glusburn parish, with the Crosshills parish register area forming part of a new two-member district ward with the adjoining parishes of Cononley and Lothersdale. It proposed no change to the existing boundaries of Sutton ward, which would continue to return two councillors. Under the District Council's proposals, based on a council size of 31, the electoral variances in Glusburn and Sutton-in-Craven ward would be 9 per cent and 3 per cent respectively (both unchanged in 2003). The Constituency Labour Party's proposed Glusburn and Sutton ward would have an electoral variance of 8 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (both 7 per cent in 2003). In addition, Glusburn Parish Council and Mr Barrett, as part of their 36-member scheme, proposed the creation of two district wards for Glusburn based on the two parish register areas of Glusburn and Crosshills.

64 In our draft recommendations, we carefully considered the representations we received for this area. We noted that, under a council size of 30, the electorate in Glusburn parish, should it comprise a two-member district ward, would be relatively under-represented on the District Council (by 12 per cent both initially and in 2003) while the electorate in the neighbouring Sutton parish, if

served by a two-member district ward, would be relatively over-represented on the District Council (by 7 per cent both initially and in 2003). We were not persuaded that the Constituency Labour Party's proposal to ward Glusburn parish (and include part of the parish with Cowling parish) would sufficiently reflect the community links between this and surrounding parishes, and it would achieve only a modest improvement in electoral equality when compared to the District Council's proposals.

65 We noted that the District Council's proposals would retain the greatest part of Glusburn parish within a single two-member district ward, and would provide an equitable level of representation. We considered this proposal, along with alternative possibilities such as the whole parish of Glusburn returning two district councillors, and concluded that the District Council's proposals to ward the parish would achieve an acceptable balance between the statutory criteria.

66 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Cowling ward, but added "the Council recommends that Glusburn Parish is not warded and ... that the Clayton Hall Estate is retained in Glusburn ward". They also considered that the whole of Sutton parish should form a two-member ward. Glusburn Parish Council and Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council also supported the Clayton Hall estate forming part of a two-member Glusburn ward for community identity reasons. Glusburn Parish Council also forwarded a petition signed by 85 residents of the Clayton Hall estate supporting their inclusion in Glusburn district ward. Additionally, we received representations from five district councillors and three local residents who also opposed the Clayton Hall estate forming part of Sutton-in-Craven ward.

67 We have re-examined our draft recommendations for these three wards. We consider that our draft recommendations for Cowling ward would continue to provide the best achievable levels of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria in this area and we are therefore confirming them as final. We are, however, persuaded by the community identity arguments put forward at Stage Three proposing that the whole of Glusburn, including the Clayton Hall estate area, should form a single two-member ward with a two-member Sutton-in-Craven ward comprising the parish of Sutton only. While this warding pattern would not achieve the same degree

of electoral equality as under our draft recommendations, we consider it would better reflect the statutory criteria in the area. Under our final recommendations, the electoral variance for Cowling would be 15 per cent (unchanged in 2003) and under our proposed Glusburn ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 12 per cent from the district average, and in Sutton-in-Craven ward it would vary by 7 per cent (both unchanged in 2003).

Aire Valley and West Craven wards

68 North of Cowling, Glusburn and Sutton wards lie the two-member Aire Valley ward and the single-member West Craven ward. Aire Valley ward, comprising Bradleys Both, Cononley, Farnhill and Kildwick parishes, is currently over-represented with 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. The councillor for West Craven ward, comprising Broughton, Carleton, Elslack and Thornton in Craven parishes, represents 3 per cent more electors than the average. No change in electoral equality is forecast by 2003.

69 At Stage One, the District Council proposed extending the existing two-member Aire Valley ward to include the parish of Lothersdale (currently in Glusburn ward). The Constituency Labour Party proposed that the parishes of Bradleys Both, Farnhill and Kildwick should form a single-member Aire Valley ward, and Cononley parish should form part of a modified Glusburn ward. Both the District Council and the Constituency Labour Party proposed adding the parish of Martons Both (currently in Hellifield ward) to the existing West Craven ward to form a modified single-member ward. Under the District Council's proposals, based on a council size of 31, the average number of electors per councillor in Aire Valley ward would be 3 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2003) and, under the Constituency Labour Party's proposals for a council size of 30, it would be 4 per cent above (3 per cent above in 2003). The electoral variance in the modified West Craven ward would be 3 per cent above the average (unchanged in 2003) based upon a council size of 30.

70 We considered that the District Council's proposed Aire Valley ward would achieve good electoral equality while having regard to local community ties and be compatible with our

proposed warding pattern elsewhere in the district. We therefore included it as part of our draft recommendations. We also consulted on a modified West Craven ward, as proposed by both the District Council and the Constituency Labour Party, which would also achieve good electoral equality.

71 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Aire Valley and West Craven wards. Lothersdale Parish Council opposed its inclusion in Aire Valley ward, stating that the new warding pattern would not reflect the interests and identities of the local community but did not propose an alternative for the area. Alternatively, it proposed that Aire Valley ward should be renamed Aire Valley with Lothersdale, which was supported by the District Council and the existing Glusburn and Aire Valley ward councillors.

72 We noted the concerns raised by Lothersdale Parish Council that it does not share community links with the adjoining parishes which would comprise a modified Aire Valley ward. However, we remain satisfied that our proposals would achieve good electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria when considering these wards together with proposals for the district as a whole. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for these two wards as final, subject to renaming Aire Valley ward as Aire Valley with Lothersdale. Under our final recommendations, the electoral variances would be 6 per cent in Aire Valley with Lothersdale ward and 3 per cent in West Craven ward with no change anticipated in 2003.

Bolton Abbey and Embsay-with-Eastby wards

73 These two wards lie to the north and east of Skipton and each returns a single councillor under the existing arrangements. Bolton Abbey ward comprises the parishes of Appletreewick, Barden, Beamsley, Bolton Abbey, Burnsall, Draughton, Halton East, Hartlington, Hazlewood with Storiths and Thorpe, and is significantly over-represented with 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (19 per cent fewer in 2003). Embsay-with-Eastby ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is significantly under-represented with 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (19 per cent more in 2003).

74 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a reconfiguration of the existing Bolton Abbey and Grassington wards with the parishes of Appletreewick and Hartlington forming part of a modified Grassington ward with Linton parish (currently in Grassington ward) and the parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone and Stirton with Thorlby (currently in Calton ward) forming part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward. The District Council proposed no change to the existing single-member Embsay-with-Eastby ward, arguing that “there is every justification in terms of community identity and interest, and convenient and effective local government for retaining this single parish as a district ward in its own right”. Under its proposals for a 31-member council, the average number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Bolton Abbey ward (5 per cent below in 2003) and 10 per cent above the district average in Embsay-with-Eastby ward (9 per cent above in 2003). The Constituency Labour Party proposed including the parishes of Embsay with Eastby and Stirton with Thorlby in a new two-member Bolton Abbey with Embsay ward, arguing that the area of the lower Wharfe Valley “has many connections with Embsay-with-Eastby, and to a lesser extent, with Stirton with Thorlby”. The average number of electors per councillor in its proposed Bolton Abbey with Embsay ward would be 4 per cent below the average (5 per cent below in 2003).

75 Hetton Parish Meeting proposed no change to Calton ward, arguing that the District Council’s proposals to transfer the parishes of Cracoe and Rylstone from Calton ward into an enlarged Bolton Abbey ward failed to take account of the close community and social ties between these two parishes and Hetton parish.

76 We carefully considered the Stage One representations received for this area when forming our draft recommendations. We proposed a number of modifications to Bolton Abbey ward after having examined the alternative proposals from the District Council and the Constituency Labour Party together with the existing ward patterns in the area, in order to achieve a good ward scheme in the wider area. We proposed retaining Stirton with Thorlby parish in a modified Calton ward and transferring Hartlington parish into an enlarged Grassington ward (from Bolton Abbey ward). We also proposed a number of changes to the boundary between the existing Calton and Bolton Abbey wards, resulting in the

parishes of Cracoe, Hetton and Rylstone forming part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward which, in addition to improving electoral equality and providing a good district warding pattern, would reflect the preference of Hetton Parish Meeting for remaining in the same district ward as Cracoe and Rylstone parishes. These changes, we concluded, would achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality in Bolton Abbey ward and, along with further modifications detailed later, surrounding wards.

77 At Stage One, the District Council expressed a preference for single-member wards in the more rural areas of the district wherever this was compatible with the primary aim of achieving electoral equality. We noted that following our modifications detailed above, the electoral variances in a modified single-member Bolton Abbey ward and an unchanged single-member Embsay-with-Eastby ward would be 8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively in 2003. While recognising that combining these two single-member wards to form a ward for the area would achieve even better electoral equality, we judged that, in this case, retaining single-member wards would achieve acceptable electoral equality, reflect the District Council’s preference for single-member wards in more sparsely populated areas and retain the existing pattern of single-member wards in the area. Furthermore, Embsay-with-Eastby ward would retain its existing boundary, therefore respecting existing community identities. Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party proposed a two-member ward for this area, although as a result of our proposed changes previously outlined, the Constituency Labour Party’s proposed Bolton Abbey with Embsay ward would be on different ward boundaries to our proposed single-member wards of Bolton Abbey and Embsay-with-Eastby. On balance, we decided to consult upon two single-member wards for this area, with no change to the boundaries of Embsay-with-Eastby ward and Bolton Abbey ward on modified boundaries.

78 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendation to retain Embsay-with-Eastby ward on its existing boundaries. However, the District Council suggested enlarging our proposed Bolton Abbey ward to include the parishes of Bordley and Flasby-with-Winterburn which, under our draft recommendations, would form part of Calton & Gargrave ward. The District Council argued that these two parishes share community links with the three parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone and Hetton (which would be located in

our proposed Bolton Abbey ward). The District Council also proposed renaming Bolton Abbey ward as Aire-Wharfe ward to reflect the location of these two rivers within the ward.

79 Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party also proposed that Bordley and Flasby-with-Winterburn parishes should form part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward, which they remained of the view should also include Embsay-with-Eastby parish, thereby forming a two-member ward. Councillor Marshall, county councillor for Mid-Craven division and district councillor for Embsay-with-Eastby ward, also supported the five parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone, Hetton, Flasby-with-Winterburn and Bordley being located within the same district ward for community identity reasons.

80 We have carefully considered the representations we received for these two wards. We were concerned that under our draft recommendations, there would be no direct road access from Bordley parish to the adjoining parishes also included in our proposed Calton & Gargrave ward. Additionally, we noted that this modification would not impact upon the acceptable electoral equality achieved in Calton & Gargrave and Bolton Abbey wards. We therefore propose in our final recommendations that the parish of Bordley should form part of Bolton Abbey ward in order to better reflect the statutory criteria. However, we are unable to adopt the proposal that Flasby-with-Winterburn parish should also form part of Bolton Abbey ward due to the adverse impact on electoral equality this would have on the proposed ward of Calton & Gargrave. In addition, we have noted the proposal to change the names of Bolton Abbey ward to Aire-Wharfe but consider that Bolton Abbey continues to better reflect the identity of the ward. Under our final recommendations, the electoral variances would remain unchanged from our draft recommendations in these two wards.

Grassington ward

81 The single-member ward of Grassington lies in the east of the district and the number of electors per councillor is equal to the district average, with no change anticipated by 2003. The ward currently comprises Grassington, Hebden and Linton parishes.

82 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a single-member Grassington ward containing the parishes of Appletreewick, Grassington, Hartlington (currently in Bolton Abbey ward) and Hebden,

which would achieve a good level of electoral equality. Linton parish would form part of Bolton Abbey ward. The Constituency Labour Party proposed a two-member ward comprising the whole of the existing Grassington and Upper Wharfedale wards, to be named Upper Wharfedale ward. Under the District Council's proposed single-member Grassington ward, based on a council size of 31, the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average (unchanged in 2003). Under the Constituency Labour Party's proposed two-member Upper Wharfedale ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the average (unchanged in 2003). Appletreewick Parish Council supported the District Council's proposed Grassington ward while Hebden Parish Council considered that the "geographical limitations" within the area should be taken into account when considering ward patterns. Councillor Luty, member for Upper Wharfedale ward, proposed no change to the current Grassington ward.

83 We considered the representations received and in our draft recommendations we concluded that a two-member ward for the area, as suggested by the Constituency Labour Party, would not reflect existing community ties. We were also concerned that its geographical size may impact upon the convenience and effectiveness of local government in the area. In the light of our proposal for Bolton Abbey ward, we were also unable to adopt the Council's proposals concerning Grassington ward. We therefore proposed retaining the existing single-member ward of Grassington, with the addition of the adjoining parish of Hartlington, which would achieve a good level of electoral equality in the area while reflecting local preferences for minimal change to the existing ward. Under our proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2003).

84 At Stage Three, the District Council supported the proposed Grassington ward. Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party suggested combining our proposed Grassington and Upper Wharfedale wards to form a two-member Grassington & Wharfedale ward. Councillor Marshall, county councillor for Mid-Craven division and district councillor for Embsay-with-Eastby ward, supported our draft recommendations for a single-member Grassington ward. We received no further comments at Stage Three. In considering the Constituency Labour Party's representation, we have not been persuaded that the proposal to

combine Grassington and Upper Wharfedale wards would achieve better electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations nor would it reflect the Council's expressed view that the more rural areas of Craven should be single-member wards, wherever this is compatible with achieving good electoral equality. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Grassington ward as final.

Skipton Town

85 The market town of Skipton is the largest settlement in Craven, comprising approximately 27 per cent of the district's electorate. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the town and parish of Skipton is served by nine district councillors returned from a total of six wards. Based on a council size of 30, the electorate in Skipton merits a total of eight councillors, a reduction of one.

Skipton Central, Skipton East, Skipton North, Skipton South, Skipton South-West and Skipton West wards

86 Under the existing arrangements the nine councillors for Skipton are returned from four single-member wards, one two-member ward and one three-member ward. The town presently contains the two wards with the greatest electoral inequality in the district with the average number of electors per councillor being 48 per cent above the average in Skipton South ward and 37 per cent above the average in Skipton West ward (with little or no change expected in 2003).

87 At Stage One, the District Council, Skipton Town Council and Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party all proposed re-warding Skipton to create four new two-member district wards. They all proposed the same ward boundaries and the same ward names. However, Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party noted that "the ward names do not accurately reflect the geographical location of the wards, being based on existing ward names".

88 A new Skipton West ward would comprise the existing Skipton West ward, except for an area south of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, with the canal forming part of the southern boundary for the proposed new ward; plus part of the existing Skipton North ward (broadly west of The Bailey and north of the A6131 and A59); and part of

Skipton Central ward (an area south of Newmarket Street and broadly north of Middle Town and an area around Sun Moor Drive).

89 A proposed new Skipton South ward would comprise the whole of the existing Skipton South-West and Skipton South wards and that part of Skipton West ward north of Broughton Road and south of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. The District Council argued that this new ward, containing the Broughton Road, Burnside, Carleton Road, Keighley Road and New Town areas of Skipton, would contain a mixture of housing types and would maintain strong community links. The eastern boundary of the proposed Skipton South ward would follow the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to the east of Snaygill Industrial Estate, which would also form the western boundary of a modified Skipton East ward.

90 The modified Skipton East ward would contain the western part of the existing Skipton Central ward around the Middle Town area along with the southern part of the existing Skipton East ward (broadly south of a line to the rear of properties along Short Bank Road). The District Council argued that this arrangement would include most of the Middle Town area in one ward, where at present the area is divided between Skipton Central and Skipton East wards. The Council stated that the proposed ward would also maintain the strong community links between the Horse Close and Greatwood areas.

91 A new Skipton North ward would comprise parts of the existing Skipton North ward (broadly the Regents estate area), Skipton East ward (east of Short Bank Road) and a small part of Skipton West ward (between Otley Road and the railway line). The Council argued that the proposed Skipton North ward would be "based on the Hurrs Road/Moorview Estates, Shortbank Road and the Regents Estate".

92 Under these proposals, based on a council size of 30 and utilising our revised ward names (detailed over) the electoral variances would be 1 per cent in Skipton East ward (1 per cent in 2003), 4 per cent in Skipton North ward (2 per cent in 2003), 5 per cent in Skipton South ward (4 per cent in 2003) and 4 per cent in Skipton West ward (1 per cent in 2003).

93 We carefully considered the three representations we received, which submitted agreed proposals for

the district wards in Skipton at Stage One. We welcomed this consensus for change. The proposed re-warding of the town would achieve good electoral equality, utilise easily identifiable ward boundaries and respect existing community ties in Skipton, and we therefore adopted the locally derived proposals as part of our draft recommendations. However, we noted the Constituency Labour Party's comment regarding the appropriateness of the proposed ward names which, it stated, did not appear to reflect their geographical positions within the town. Although the proposed names seemed to be based on which of the existing wards forms the greatest part of the new wards, we concluded that the new wards could be named more conveniently and accurately according to their geographical location within the town. We proposed using the same names of Skipton East, Skipton North, Skipton South and Skipton West, but in a different order to that put forward by respondents.

94 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our proposed warding of Skipton town. We received no further comments on our proposals for this area and are therefore confirming our draft warding pattern for Skipton as final, together with the ward names put forward in our draft recommendations.

The Northern Area

95 The remaining 10 wards cover the central and northern areas of the district and contain the settlements of Settle, High Bentham and Ingleton. The area is relatively sparsely populated and contains a number of prominent geographical features such as Malham Moor and Ingleborough peak which determine the settlement pattern and communication links in the area. This area contains approximately 38 per cent of the total electorate for Craven. Six wards are currently over-represented while four are under-represented, with five wards out of the 10 suffering an electoral variance over 10 per cent.

Calton, Gargrave and Upper Wharfedale wards

96 These three wards are each represented by one councillor under the present arrangements. The electoral variance in Calton ward is 2 per cent (1 per cent in 2003), 13 per cent in Gargrave ward (unchanged in 2003), and 19 per cent (18 per cent in 2003) in Upper Wharfedale ward. Calton ward currently comprises 15 parishes – Airton, Bordley, Calton, Cracoe, Eshton, Flasby-with-Winterburn,

Hanlith, Hetton, Kirby Malham, Malham, Malham Moor, Otterburn, Rylstone, Scosthrop and Stirton with Thorlby. Upper Wharfedale ward currently comprises the eight parishes of Arncliffe, Buckden, Conistone with Kilnsey, Halton Gill, Hawkswick, Kettlewell with Starbotton, Litton and Threshfield.

97 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a reconfiguration of Calton and Upper Wharfedale wards. The Council proposed an enlarged Calton ward incorporating the parishes of Coniston Cold and Bank Newton (currently in Hellifield ward) and the four Littondale parishes of Arncliffe, Halton Gill, Hawkswick and Litton (currently in Upper Wharfedale ward) and excluding the parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone and Stirton with Thorlby, which would be transferred into a modified Bolton Abbey ward. The Council proposed that the remaining parishes of the existing Upper Wharfedale ward, Buckden, Conistone with Kilnsey, Kettlewell with Starbotton and Threshfield, should form a single-member Wharfedale ward. It proposed no change to Gargrave ward. Under the Council's proposals, based on a council size of 31, the average number of electors per councillor in Calton ward would be 9 per cent below the average, 3 per cent above in Gargrave ward and 6 per cent below in Wharfedale ward with little or no change anticipated by 2003. The Constituency Labour Party proposed transferring the parishes of Bank Newton, Conistone Cold and Gargrave into the existing Calton ward, forming a modified two-member ward to be renamed Calton & Gargrave ward. As noted earlier, the whole of Upper Wharfedale ward and Grassington wards would together form a new two-member Upper Wharfedale ward under the Constituency Labour Party's proposals. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the district average in Calton & Gargrave ward (6 per cent below in 2003) and 4 per cent below in Upper Wharfedale ward (unchanged in 2003).

98 The District Council noted that its proposal to combine the four Littondale parishes with Malhamdale in an enlarged Calton ward had caused some concern locally, but argued that the need for electoral equality had warranted the proposal. Conistone Cold Parish Council argued that the District Council's proposed Calton ward "would be far too large and difficult for one person to keep in touch with the electorate". Kirby Malham Parish Meeting added that "the geological divide of Malham Moor will ... divide the ward into two

separate parts". Kirby Malhamdale Parish Council opposed the suggested separation of Hetton parish from the neighbouring parishes of Cracoe, Rylstone and Stirton with Thorlby on community identity grounds.

99 The parish councils of Arncliffe, Buckden, Halton Gill, Hawkswick, Kettlewell with Starbotton and Litton all made representations at Stage One opposing the District Council's proposals to transfer the Littondale parishes into an enlarged Calton ward, citing the upland geography of the area and community identity arguments. Councillor Luty, member for Upper Wharfedale ward, with the support of a number of parishes within the existing Upper Wharfedale ward, proposed no change to the existing ward's boundaries.

100 We noted the views expressed at Stage One in relation to the three wards of Calton, Gargrave and Upper Wharfedale. Given our earlier proposals for Bolton Abbey ward, we were unable to adopt the District Council's proposals without modification. We therefore made a number of modifications to the Council's proposed Calton ward, with Hetton parish forming part of Bolton Abbey ward and Stirton with Thorlby remaining in Calton ward, as this would improve electoral equality and, we judged, better reflect community links in the area. We judged that the Council's proposals would not secure convenient and effective representation for the area covered by the Littondale parishes, primarily as a result of the parishes' geographical isolation from the rest of Calton ward. These four parishes supported remaining in Upper Wharfedale ward. We therefore consulted upon no change to Upper Wharfedale ward which would retain good electoral equality.

101 While recognising that a single-member Gargrave ward would have absolute electoral equality, a single-member Calton ward, without the four Littondale parishes and with our proposed modifications, would be over-represented by 25 per cent. In this case, therefore, we proposed combining the single-member Gargrave ward (and parish) with the single-member Calton ward, to form a two-member Calton & Gargrave ward. This two-member ward would not be significantly larger in geographical terms than a single-member Calton ward, yet it would significantly improve upon electoral equality across the wider area and hopefully would address local concerns about adequate representation in such a large area. We believed that, given the geographical constraints of

the area, the slightly higher than ideal electoral inequality which would result in Calton & Gargrave ward was unavoidable. Under our draft recommendations the electoral variance in Calton & Gargrave ward would be 11 per cent and in Upper Wharfedale ward it would be 5 per cent (12 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2003).

102 At Stage Three, the District Council proposed that the parishes of Bordley and Flasby-with-Winterburn, which would form part of our proposed Calton & Gargrave ward, should form part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward. Skipton & Ripon Constituency Labour Party and Councillor Marshall also made similar proposals. Councillor Marshall also supported Upper Wharfedale ward as contained in the draft recommendations. As detailed above, we have concluded that the parish of Bordley should form part of a modified Bolton Abbey ward in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government in the area. We have received no further comments on the proposed warding pattern for Calton & Gargrave and Upper Wharfedale wards, and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations, subject to Bordley parish forming part of Bolton Abbey ward as final. The District Council proposed that Calton & Gargrave ward should be called Gargrave & Malhamdale, noting the settlement of Calton is small and could be confused with the village and parish of Carleton, also located in Craven. The Council added "the northern part of the existing Calton ward (including Calton Parish) is well known locally as Malhamdale". We consider this alternative name would better reflect the composition of the ward and we are adopting it as part of our final recommendations. The electoral variances in these two wards would be unchanged in our final recommendations from our draft recommendations.

Hellifield, Ribbleside and Settle wards

103 The single-member wards of Hellifield and Ribbleside and the two-member Settle ward are all relatively over-represented under the current arrangements by 7 per cent, 17 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 16 per cent and 7 per cent in 2003). Hellifield ward currently comprises the parishes of Bank Newton, Coniston Cold, Hellifield, Martons Both, Nappa and Swinden. Ribbleside ward comprises the parishes of Halton West, Long Preston, Rathmell and Wigglesworth, and Settle ward comprises the parishes of Langcliffe and Settle.

104 At Stage One, the District Council proposed transferring the parish of Martons Both (currently in Hellifield ward) into an enlarged West Craven ward and the parishes of Coniston Cold and Bank Newton (currently in Hellifield ward) into a modified Calton ward, as detailed earlier. Hellifield, Nappa and Swinden parishes, together with the parishes of Halton West, Rathmell and Wigglesworth (currently in Ribbleside ward) would form a revised single-member Hellifield ward. The Council also proposed that Settle ward should be modified to comprise the parishes of Long Preston (from Ribbleside ward) and Settle with Langcliffe parish, to form a new Ribble ward. Under the Council's proposals, based on a council size of 31, the average number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the district average in Hellifield ward and 5 per cent below in Settle ward (2 per cent below and 5 per cent below respectively in 2003). The Constituency Labour Party proposed an alternative configuration for the area at Stage One, with a single-member Hellifield & Long Preston ward comprising the parishes of Hellifield, Long Preston, Nappa and Swinden and a two-member Settle & Ribblebanks ward comprising the parishes of Halton West, Langcliffe, Rathmell, Settle and Wigglesworth. Under these proposals the electoral variance would be 3 per cent in Hellifield & Long Preston ward and 1 per cent in Settle & Ribblebanks ward (1 per cent in both wards in 2003).

105 Ribble Banks Parish Council, a joint parish council for the parishes of Halton West, Rathmell and Wigglesworth, opposed the District Council's proposals, arguing that the more rural parishes could be "dominated by the interests of Hellifield" under such a proposal. Councillor Dinsdale, a parish councillor for Ribble Banks, supported these concerns and Wigglesworth Parish Council added that the parish has greater links with Settle than with Hellifield. Councillor Graham, member for Settle ward, stated that the District Council's proposals to modify the existing wards in a number of areas, including Settle ward, had not taken sufficient account of "community interest, local ties and the geographical features". In commenting on the District Council's proposal to create a new ward which would include Settle and Long Preston parishes, Settle Town Council argued that there were few community links between these two parishes. A local resident stated that "Settle naturally turns to Langcliffe".

106 We carefully considered the representations received for this area at Stage One and we concluded that the two locally derived proposals both had merits: the District Council's submission appeared to better reflect the geography of the area, particularly the location of the River Ribble, whereas the Constituency Labour Party's proposals would achieve slightly better electoral equality. On balance, we decided to consult on the Constituency Labour Party's proposed Hellifield & Long Preston and Settle & Ribblebanks wards, which would achieve a good level of electoral equality and, we judged, better reflect community ties in the area.

107 At Stage Three, the District Council supported our draft recommendations for Hellifield & Long Preston and Settle & Ribblebanks wards. Hellifield Parish Council also supported our proposed Hellifield & Long Preston ward but added that the parish of Halton West should also form part of the ward. Settle Town Council supported the proposed Settle & Ribblebanks ward.

108 We have carefully considered the views received in response to our draft recommendations but do not consider the inclusion of Halton West parish within the proposed Hellifield & Long Preston ward would better reflect the statutory criteria or achieve as good electoral equality in this and surrounding wards. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Hellifield & Long Preston and Settle & Ribblebanks wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the electoral variances would remain unchanged from our draft recommendations.

Penyghent ward

109 Penyghent ward, located in the north-west of the district and comprising the parishes of Giggleswick, Horton in Ribblesdale and Stainforth, currently returns one councillor. Under present arrangements, the number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the district average (unchanged in 2003).

110 At Stage One, to address this level of under-representation, the District Council proposed that the parishes of Giggleswick and Stainforth (currently in Penyghent ward) and Langcliffe parish (currently in Settle ward) should together form a new single-member Ribble ward. The Constituency Labour Party proposed no change to the existing Penyghent ward. The average number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed

Ribble ward, based on a council size of 31, would be 1 per cent below the district average (unchanged in 2003) and under the Constituency Labour Party's proposed Penyghent ward, based on a council size of 30, would be 2 per cent above the average (1 per cent in 2003).

111 We received representations from all three constituent parishes of the existing Penyghent ward during Stage One. Giggleswick Parish Council stated that it preferred no change to the existing ward pattern in the area; however, if change were to be implemented, it found the District Council's proposed warding pattern to be "acceptable". Stainforth Parish Council and Horton in Ribblesdale Parish Council argued against any change to Penyghent ward, stating that the current ward pattern reflects the geography of the area and local ties.

112 In formulating our draft recommendations, we acknowledged the comparable levels of electoral equality which would be achieved under both proposals. However, in view of our proposals for adjoining parishes and therefore the district as a whole, and the representations we received, we decided to consult upon no change to Penyghent ward, which would give a high degree of electoral equality. The electoral variance in Penyghent ward would be 2 per cent above the average (1 per cent above in 2003).

113 At Stage Three, the District Council supported the proposal for no change to Penyghent ward as did the parish councils of Giggleswick, Stainforth and Horton-in-Ribblesdale. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendation for this ward as final.

Bentham, Clapham and Ingleborough wards

114 The three wards of Bentham, Clapham and Ingleborough are located in the far north-west of the district. The single-member Clapham ward (comprising the parishes of Austwick, Clapham cum Newby and Lawkland) and the two two-member wards of Bentham (Bentham parish) and Ingleborough (Burton in Lonsdale, Ingleton and Thornton in Lonsdale parishes) are all under-represented under the current arrangements, with electoral variances of 15 per cent, 8 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. Little or no improvement in electoral equality is forecast by 2003.

115 At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to the existing two-member wards of Bentham and Ingleborough which, under a reduced council size, would have worse electoral equality. The Council proposed that Clapham ward should be enlarged to include Horton in Ribblesdale parish, currently in Penyghent ward. The Constituency Labour Party proposed enlarging Bentham ward to include the parish of Burton in Lonsdale (currently in Ingleborough ward) and combining the parishes of Ingleton and Thornton in Lonsdale (currently in Ingleborough ward) with the existing Clapham ward to form a new two-member Ingleborough ward.

116 Under the District Council's proposals, based on a council size of 31, the electoral variance in Bentham ward would be 16 per cent, in Clapham ward 5 per cent and in Ingleborough ward 11 per cent, with little or no change anticipated in 2003. Under the two wards proposed by the Constituency Labour Party, the electoral variance would be 1 per cent in Bentham ward and 6 per cent in Ingleborough ward (unchanged in 2003) based on a council size of 30.

117 Bentham Town Council supported no change to the existing ward pattern and the constituent parishes of the existing Ingleborough ward each supported the District Council's proposals for no change to the present arrangements in the area. Austwick Parish Council supported the District Council's proposals to combine the existing Clapham ward with the parish of Horton in Ribblesdale.

118 In analysing various options for change in this area, we considered the electorate sizes and levels of representation under each of the proposals received. The area covered by the existing Bentham, Ingleborough and Clapham wards has an electorate of 5,712 (5,789 in 2003). Under a council size of 30, the electorate would be entitled to 4.1 councillors, both initially and in 2003. Under the Constituency Labour Party's proposals, this area would have four councillors, serving its proposed wards of Bentham and Ingleborough.

119 At Stage One, the District Council proposed an alternative warding pattern in the area, including the parish of Horton-in-Ribblesdale, from Penyghent ward, in a modified Clapham ward. The total electorate in this slightly larger area is 6,084 (6,161 in 2003) and, under a council size of 30, the

electorate would be entitled to 4.3 councillors (4.4 in 2003). However, the District Council proposed five councillors for this area, serving its proposed wards of Bentham, Ingleborough and Clapham.

120 We concluded that, under the District Council's proposals, the north-west area would have a greater level of representation than the rest of the district, that this would be inequitable and was not justified. Although the Council argued that its warding pattern for this area should be considered as a special case in comparison with the rest of the district, there is a possible alternative warding arrangement which would achieve better electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore proposed adopting Bentham and Ingleborough wards as proposed by the Constituency Labour Party, although we renamed the latter ward Ingleton & Clapham in order to better reflect the constituent areas of the new ward.

121 At Stage Three, the District Council asked the Commission "to look again at the case for retaining [Bentham, Clapham and Ingleborough wards] as separate entities". They added that under our draft recommendations, the distinct community identities of the settlements of Clapham, Austwick, Lawkland and Ingleton would not be adequately reflected in a geographically large ward. The District Council added that "if the Commission is hampered by the requirement for electoral equality it should at the very least consider options which would reduce the size of the proposed two-member ward" and that two single-member wards may provide an alternative warding pattern. The parish councils of Austwick and Clapham cum Newby both opposed our proposed Clapham & Ingleton ward, which Austwick Parish Council considered did not reflect the close ties between it and Horton in Ribblesdale parish. Burton-in-Lonsdale Parish Council argued that it shares greater links with the parishes of Thornton in Lonsdale and Ingleton than Bentham and therefore argued for the retention of the existing Ingleborough ward.

122 We have carefully re-examined our draft recommendations for the north-west corner of Craven. If we were to recommend retaining the existing wards of Ingleborough and Clapham, the electoral variances under the current electorate and based on a council size of 30 would be 14 per cent and 25 per cent respectively and consequently 19 per cent in Bentham. Equally, a two-member ward comprising Ingleton and Thornton in Lonsdale parishes would have an electoral variance of 32 per cent from the district average and a single-member

ward comprising the parishes of Austwick, Lawkland and Clapham cum Newby would have an electoral variance of 25 per cent. We do not consider such imbalances can be justified when an alternative, locally derived warding pattern is available which, we judge, achieves acceptable electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. Furthermore, while we acknowledge that our proposed ward of Ingleton & Clapham would be geographically large, we judge that the pattern of settlements and road connections within the ward would not adversely impact upon the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Bentham and Ingleton & Clapham wards as final, with the electoral variances under our final recommendations remaining unchanged in these two wards from our draft recommendations.

Electoral Cycle

123 We received no comments at Stage One regarding change to the current electoral cycle for Craven as permitted under the current legislation. We therefore proposed no change to the current cycle of elections by thirds.

124 At Stage Three, the District Council stated that "the Council wishes to continue the cycle of elections by thirds until the Government changes the electoral cycle for all local authorities". We received no other comments on Craven's electoral cycle during Stage Three and therefore propose no change to the current cycle of elections by thirds as our final recommendation.

Conclusions

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

- (a) the Clayton Hall estate area of Glusburn parish should form part of Glusburn ward;
- (b) the parish of Bordley should be transferred from our (renamed) Gargrave & Malhamdale ward into Bolton Abbey ward;
- (c) Aire Valley ward should be renamed Aire Valley with Lothersdale;
- (d) Calton & Gargrave ward should be renamed Gargrave & Malhamdale.

126 We conclude that, in Craven:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 34 to 30;
- (b) there should be 19 wards, five less than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

¹²⁷ Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

¹²⁸ As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 13 to three, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This improved level of electoral equality would continue in 2003. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Craven District Council should comprise 30 councillors serving 19 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map A1 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

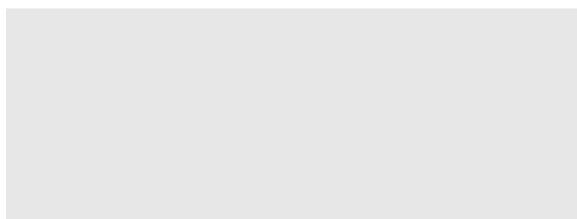
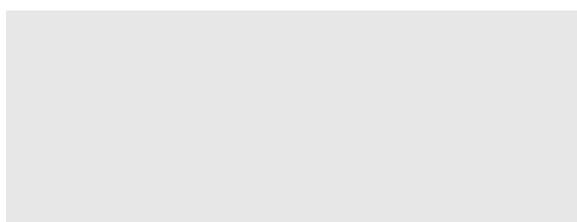
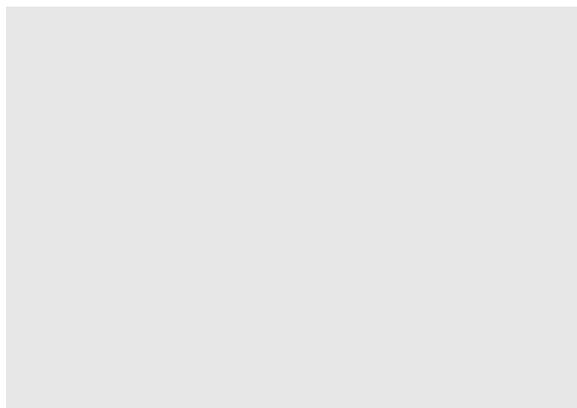
Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

¹²⁹ 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, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Skipton and Glusburn to reflect the proposed district wards.

Figure 4 : Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	34	30	34	30
Number of wards	24	19	24	19
Average number of electors per councillor	1,232	1,396	1,248	1,414
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	13	3	13	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	4	0

130 The parish of Skipton is currently served by 18 councillors representing six parish wards which are the same as the existing district wards: Skipton Central, Skipton East, Skipton North, Skipton



Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Craven



Key to Wards

- 1 Aire Valley with Lothersdale
- 2 Bentham
- 3 Bolton Abbey
- 4 Cowling
- 5 Embsay-with-Eastby
- 6 Gargrave and Malhamdale
- 7 Grassington
- 8 Glusburn
- 9 Helliwell and Long Preston
- 10 Ingleton and Clapham
- 11 Penyghent
- 12 Settle and Ribblesdale
- 13 Skipton East
- 14 Skipton North
- 15 Skipton South
- 16 Skipton West
- 17 Sutton-in-Craven
- 18 Upper Wharfedale
- 19 West Craven

KEY

PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY ———

EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY - - - - -

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6. NEXT STEPS

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

138 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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

APPENDIX A

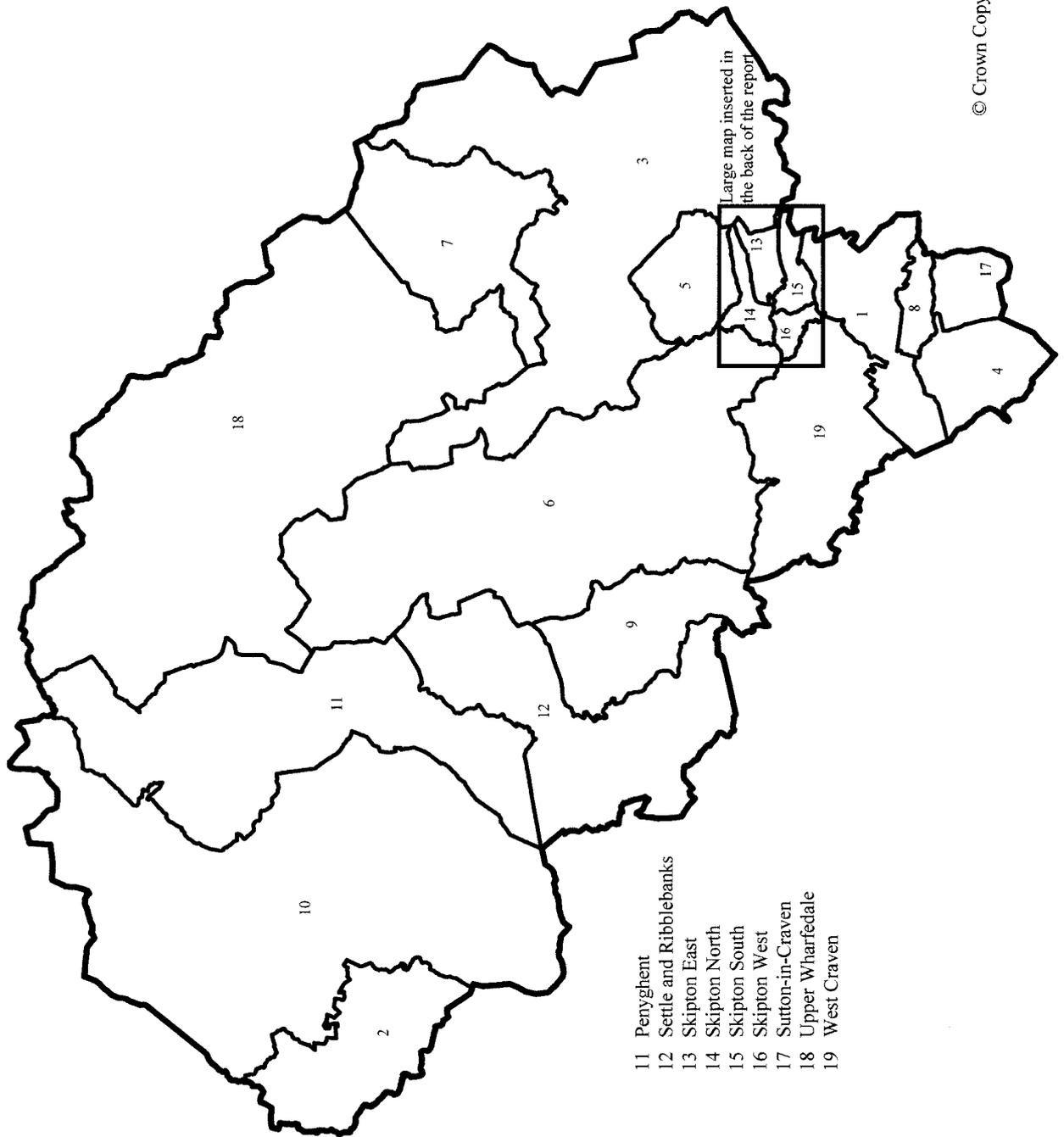
Final Recommendations for Craven: Detailed Mapping

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

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

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

Map A1:
 Final Recommendations for Craven: Key Map



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Key to Wards

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Aire Valley with Lothersdale | 11 | Penyghent |
| 2 | Bentham | 12 | Settle and Ribblesbanks |
| 3 | Bolton Abbey | 13 | Skipton East |
| 4 | Cowling | 14 | Skipton North |
| 5 | Embsay-with-Eastby | 15 | Skipton South |
| 6 | Gargrave and Malhamdale | 16 | Skipton West |
| 7 | Grassington | 17 | Sutton-in-Craven |
| 8 | Glusburn | 18 | Upper Wharfedale |
| 9 | Hellfield and Long Preston | 19 | West Craven |
| 10 | Ingletton and Clapham | | |

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Craven

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only four wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Calton & Gargrave ward as Gargrave & Malhamdale and Aire Valley ward as Aire Valley with Lothersdale.

*Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas (existing wards)
Bolton Abbey	Bolton Abbey ward (part – the parishes of Appletreewick, Barden, Beamsley, Bolton Abbey, Burnsall, Draughton, Halton East, Hazlewood with Storiths and Thorpe); Calton ward (part – the parishes of Cracoe, Hetton and Rylstone)
Calton & Gargrave	Calton ward (part – the parishes of Airton, Bordley, Calton, Eshton, Flasby-with-Winterburn, Hanlith, Kirby Malham, Malham, Malham Moor, Otterburn, Scosthrop, and Stirton with Thorlby); Hellifield ward (part – the parishes of Bank Newton and Conistone Cold); Gargrave ward (and Gargrave parish)
Glusburn	Glusburn ward (part – part of Glusburn parish)
Sutton-in-Craven	Sutton ward (Sutton parish); Glusburn ward (part – part of Glusburn parish)

Figure B2:

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bolton Abbey	1	1,297	1,297	-7	1,297	1,297	-8
Calton & Gargrave	2	2,485	1,243	-11	2,501	1,251	-12
Glusburn	2	2,951	1,476	6	2,974	1,497	5
Sutton-in-Craven	2	2,793	1,397	0	2,817	1,409	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Craven District 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.