

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Blackpool

October 2001

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WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

SUMMARY

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for Blackpool on 27 March 2001.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Blackpool:

- **in two of the 22 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in five wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 84-85) are that:

- **Blackpool Borough Council should have 42 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In all of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 5 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 9 October 2001. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**

- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission which, subject to Parliamentary approval, with effect from 1 April 2002 will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 3 December 2001:

**Review Manager
Blackpool Review
LGCE
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU**

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Table 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Anchorsholme	2	part of Anchorsholme ward,
2	Bispham	2	part of Bispham ward; part of Norbreck ward,
3	Bloomfield	2	part of Alexandra ward; part of Foxhall ward,
4	Brunswick	2	part of Brunswick ward; part of Claremont ward; part of Talbot ward,
5	Claremont	2	part of Claremont ward; part of Warbreck ward,
6	Clifton	2	part of Clifton ward; part of Hawes Side ward,
7	Greenlands	2	part of Greenlands ward,
8	Hawes Side	2	part of Clifton ward; part of Hawes Side ward; part of Victoria ward,
9	Highfield	2	part of Highfield ward; part of Stanley ward,
10	Inghorpe	2	part of Inghorpe ward,
11	Layton	2	part of Brunswick ward; Layton ward,
12	Marton	2	Marton ward; part of Park ward,
13	Norbreck	2	part of Anchorsholme ward; part of Inghorpe ward; part of Norbreck ward,
14	Park	2	part of Park ward,
15	Squires Gate	2	part of Highfield ward; Squires Gate ward; part of Waterloo ward,
16	Stanley	2	part of Stanley ward,
17	Talbot	2	part of Foxhall ward; part of Talbot ward,
18	Tyldesley	2	part of Foxhall ward; Tyldesley ward,
19	Victoria	2	part of Alexandra ward; part of Victoria ward,
20	Warbreck	2	part of Bispham ward; part of Greenlands ward; part of Warbreck ward,
21	Waterloo	2	part of Alexandra ward; part of Waterloo ward.

Notes: 1 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

2 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Blackpool

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Anchorsholme	2	5,506	2,753	3	5,506	2,753	1
2 Bispham	2	5,054	2,527	-5	5,246	2,623	-4
3 Bloomfield	2	5,281	2,641	-1	5,417	2,709	0
4 Brunswick	2	5,631	2,816	5	5,631	2,816	4
5 Claremont	2	5,431	2,716	2	5,453	2,727	0
6 Clifton	2	5,346	2,673	0	5,346	2,673	-2
7 Greenlands	2	5,076	2,538	-5	5,592	2,796	3
8 Hawes Side	2	5,305	2,653	-1	5,351	2,676	-2
9 Highfield	2	5,333	2,667	0	5,333	2,667	-2
10 Ingthorpe	2	5,320	2,660	0	5,734	2,867	5
11 Layton	2	5,506	2,753	3	5,506	2,753	1
12 Marton	2	5,346	2,673	0	5,346	2,673	-2
13 Norbreck	2	5,238	2,619	-2	5,238	2,619	-4
14 Park	2	5,315	2,658	-1	5,519	2,760	1
15 Squires Gate	2	5,310	2,655	-1	5,360	2,680	-1
16 Stanley	2	5,183	2,592	-3	5,487	2,744	1
17 Talbot	2	5,537	2,769	4	5,557	2,779	2
18 Tyldesley	2	5,399	2,700	1	5,415	2,708	0
19 Victoria	2	5,298	2,649	-1	5,334	2,667	-2
20 Warbreck	2	5,367	2,684	0	5,389	2,695	-1
21 Waterloo	2	5,478	2,739	2	5,478	2,739	1
Totals	42	112,260	-	-	114,238	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,673	-	-	2,720	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Blackpool Borough Council's submission.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Blackpool, on which we are now consulting. We are now reviewing Blackpool and will review Blackburn with Darwen later this year as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We reviewed the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) in 2000. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 Our last review of the electoral arrangements of Blackpool was a Directed Electoral Review carried out in December 1996 prior to Blackpool becoming a unitary authority. The previous review of the former Blackpool Borough Council was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1975 (Report no. 53).

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

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

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish councils in the district.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Electoral Commission

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *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, ie in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. In unitary authority areas the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. 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 and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 27 March 2001, when we wrote to Blackpool Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Lancashire Local Councils Association, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The Commission's Stage One consultation period was put into abeyance from 10 May 2001 until 7 June 2001 as a consequence of the General Election; the closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 July 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 9 October 2001 and will end on 3 December 2001, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them.

We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

15 With effect from 1 April 2002, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Electoral Commission will assume the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and take over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. The Boundary Committee for England's final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 Blackpool is a compact urban area, situated on the Lancashire coast. The town developed in the late nineteenth century as a holiday centre for the mill-workers of the industrial north-west, growing rapidly between 1880 and 1940. The main industry of the town remains tourism and the population of 153,600 is subject to considerable seasonal fluctuation. The town exhibits many of the problems associated with inner-city areas and is in the top 10 per cent of districts with the highest levels of deprivation.

17 Blackpool became a unitary authority in 1998. The electorate of the district is 112,260 (February 2001) and the borough is entirely unparished. The Council presently has 44 members who are elected from 22 wards, all of which are urban in character. Each ward is represented by two councillors and the Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,551 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,596 by the year 2006 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 two of the 22 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Anchorsholme ward where the councillor represents 13 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Blackpool

Table 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alexandra	2	4,872	2,436	-5	5,008	2,504	-4
2 Anchorsholme	2	5,755	2,878	13	5,755	2,878	11
3 Bispham	2	5,282	2,641	4	5,474	2,737	5
4 Brunswick	2	4,860	2,430	-5	4,860	2,430	-6
5 Claremont	2	5,198	2,599	2	5,198	2,599	0
6 Clifton	2	5,147	2,574	1	5,147	2,574	-1
7 Foxhall	2	4,589	2,295	-10	4,589	2,295	-12
8 Greenlands	2	5,366	2,683	5	5,882	2,941	13
9 Hawes Side	2	5,169	2,585	1	5,215	2,608	0
10 Highfield	2	5,311	2,656	4	5,311	2,656	2
11 Ingthorpe	2	5,458	2,729	7	5,872	2,936	13
12 Layton	2	5,202	2,601	2	5,202	2,601	0
13 Marton	2	5,336	2,668	5	5,336	2,668	3
14 Norbreck	2	5,349	2,675	5	5,349	2,675	3
15 Park	2	5,325	2,663	4	5,529	2,765	6
16 Squires Gate	2	4,895	2,448	-4	4,945	2,473	-5
17 Stanley	2	5,347	2,674	5	5,651	2,826	9
18 Talbot	2	4,475	2,238	-12	4,495	2,248	-13
19 Tyldesley	2	4,864	2,432	-5	4,880	2,440	-6
20 Victoria	2	4,752	2,376	-7	4,788	2,394	-8
21 Warbreck	2	5,007	2,504	-2	5,051	2,526	-3
22 Waterloo	2	4,701	2,351	-8	4,701	2,351	-9
Totals	44	112,260	-	-	114,238	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,551	-	-	2,596	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Talbot ward were relatively over-represented by 12 per cent, while electors in Anchorsholme ward were relatively under-represented by 13 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Blackpool Borough Council.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members of the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received five representations during Stage One, including three district-wide schemes; one from the Borough Council, one from the Conservative Party North West Region (hereafter referred to as the Conservatives) and one from the Blackpool 1st Alliance (hereafter referred to as the 1st Alliance). All of the representations received at Stage One may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

Blackpool Borough Council

22 The Borough Council proposed a council of 42 members, two fewer than at present, serving 21 wards, compared to the existing 22. It proposed that each of the 21 wards should be represented by two councillors. The Council supported the retention of the current system of whole council elections.

23 It proposed a new Bloomfield ward comprising the majority of Alexandra and Foxhall wards. The Council proposed amendments to all other existing wards, which allowed the retention of the existing two-member ward structure while providing a good level of electoral equality.

The Conservative Party, North West Region

24 The Conservatives proposed a reduced council of 42 members, serving 21 two-member wards. It felt that the Borough Council had concentrated on electoral equality at the expense of providing easily identifiable boundaries and reflecting community identity. It therefore put forward a scheme which, while not providing such good levels of electoral equality, they considered made use of stronger boundaries and took account of community identity. They did not, however, provide us with clear 2006 figures for their proposed wards. The Conservatives also proposed retaining the present system of whole council elections.

Blackpool 1st Alliance

25 The Blackpool 1st Alliance proposed a reduced council of 43 members, one less than at present, representing 23 wards. They proposed two three-member wards, 16 two-member wards and five single-member wards. The 1st Alliance put forward a completely new set of wards for Blackpool which it believed would “protect existing local communities and, where these do not already exist, ... encourage the creation of viable new ones”. The 1st Alliance were also unable to provide us with 2006 figures for their proposed wards. The 1st Alliance proposed a move towards a system of election by thirds.

Other Representations

26 We received a further 2 representations, both from organisations based in the existing Warbreck ward. The St Paul's Medical Centre proposed a change to the northern boundary of Claremont ward to move electors to the south of Warley Road from Warbreck ward into Claremont ward. This would include Claremont Primary School, Claremont Library, Claremont West Family Centre and St Paul's Medical Centre in Claremont ward. The Claremont West Family Centre also proposed a change to the northern boundary of Claremont ward so that the Centre would be situated in Claremont ward rather than Warbreck ward. They did not specify a new boundary between Claremont and Warbreck wards.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

27 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Blackpool and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

28 As described earlier, our prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Blackpool is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

29 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

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

31 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

32 Since 1996 and the last review of the area there has been a 3 per cent decrease in the electorate of Blackpool borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2 per cent from 112,260 to 114,238 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects substantial growth in Greenlands and Ingthorpe wards, although reasonable growth is also forecast in Bispham, Alexandra, Park and Stanley wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council 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. The Housing Land Availability Survey of the Planning and Transportation Division of the Borough Council determined the effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries.

33 The Conservatives submitted an electorate forecast for 2006 projecting a total electorate of 114,014. They did not provide any evidence for the difference between this projection and that of the Borough Council. They also did not submit any clear figures for each of their proposed wards in 2006.

34 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to both sets of figures received, are content that the Borough Council's figures represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We would, however, welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

35 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

36 Blackpool Borough Council presently has 44 members. The Borough Council proposed a reduced council of 42 members which would allow "a scheme to be developed which keeps many of the existing well-known wards and their boundaries intact whilst delivering electoral equality". The Council felt that "the number of Councillors representing Blackpool is broadly correct and the Council's proposal merely provides for a minor adjustment...to produce a scheme of electoral equality based on the existing ward structure". The Conservatives supported the Council's proposal for a reduced council of 42 members. The 1st Alliance proposed a reduction in council size from 44 members to 43 members but did not provide any argumentation or evidence to support this reduction.

37 Given the cross-party support for a reduced council of 42 members, the lack of any argumentation or evidence for any other proposal, and, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 42 members.

Electoral Arrangements

38 We have carefully considered all the representations received, including the district-wide schemes put forward by Blackpool Borough Council, the Conservatives and the 1st Alliance. The Borough Council and the Conservative schemes both proposed a system of 21 two-member wards while the 1st Alliance put forward a scheme based on 23 one-, two- and three-member wards. Neither the Conservatives nor the 1st Alliance were able to provide us with complete 2006 figures for their proposed wards and so we were unable to compare the electoral variances of all of their proposed wards.

39 The Council said that their proposal provided for a "scheme of electoral arrangements which achieves good electoral equality across the Borough whilst protecting the basic integrity of the existing two-member ward structure". The Council's scheme, largely based on the existing wards, provided an excellent level of electoral equality, with the highest electoral variance in any ward being 3 per cent by 2006.

40 The Conservatives felt that the Council had "adopted a numbers led approach rather than proposing strong, clearly defined boundaries" and, as a result of this, submitted a scheme which provided a higher level of electoral inequality but which they felt provided more easily identifiable boundaries. Due to incomplete figures for the 2006 electorates of the proposed wards we have been unable to compare the electoral variances of all of the proposed wards but we have carefully considered the boundaries put forward by the Conservatives. The Conservatives also noted that "a number of roads on the eastern boundary of Blackpool Borough cross the Borough Boundary" and considered that this was "not

conducive to good local government”. However we do not have the power to consider or amend the external boundaries of any boroughs as part of a periodic electoral review and so have been unable to consider the Conservative’s suggestions on this matter.

41 The 1st Alliance’s scheme gave a high level of electoral inequality, with three wards having an electoral variance of more than 10 percent from the borough average based on 2001 figures. We considered that there was insufficient argumentation to support such high levels of electoral inequality. As a result of this high level of electoral inequality, and the consensus between the Council and the Conservatives over a council size of 42 and a pattern of 21 two-member wards, we have decided not to adopt the 1st Alliance’s proposals. The combination of one-, two- and three-member wards proposed by the 1st Alliance leads to a completely different warding pattern to that put forward by both the Council and the Conservatives and, while we have tried to take the 1st Alliance’s boundary proposals into account wherever possible, this different warding pattern has made this extremely difficult in most areas. We are unable to consider any area in isolation and, because of the disparity between the 1st Alliance’s proposed warding arrangements and those of the Borough Council and the Conservatives, it has been very difficult to adopt any of the 1st Alliance’s proposals without providing unacceptably high levels of electoral inequality.

42 In the light of the excellent levels of electoral equality provided by the Borough Council’s scheme, we are basing our proposals on their scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, we accept the point made by the Conservatives that, in certain areas, stronger boundaries would be attainable without causing undue electoral inequality, and have thereby moved away from the Borough Council’s proposals in certain areas to provide what we consider to be a better balance between electoral equality and the provision of strong, easily identifiable boundaries.

43 For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Talbot, Warbreck
- (b) Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe, Norbreck
- (c) Alexandra, Foxhall, Tyldesley, Victoria
- (d) Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley, Waterloo
- (e) Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton, Park

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

Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Talbot and Warbreck wards

45 These five wards are situated in the centre and west of the borough. The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Claremont and Greenlands is 2 per cent and 5 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to the borough average and 13 per cent above by 2006) while the wards of Brunswick, Talbot and Warbreck are 5 per cent, 12 per cent and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (6 per cent, 13 per cent and 3 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

46 The Borough Council proposed the retention of the existing boundaries of Claremont ward apart from proposing a modification to the northern boundary to transfer those electors south of Carshalton

Road and Derby Road, who are currently in Warbreck ward, into Claremont ward. The Council proposed moving 323 electors from the area to the east of Devonshire Road from Greenlands ward into Warbreck ward for reasons of electoral equality. It proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Brunswick ward to move the area bordered by Counce Street, Collingwood Avenue and Rathlyn Avenue from Brunswick ward into Layton ward. It also proposed an amendment to the western boundary of Brunswick ward with the area east of Grosvenor Street and Larkhill Street transferring from Talbot ward into Brunswick ward. It put forward a proposal to transfer those electors east of Ripon Road and north of Gloucester Avenue, currently in Foxhall ward, into an enlarged Talbot ward. Finally, the Council proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Warbreck ward, to move the boundary north to transfer all electors to the east of Warbreck Drive and south of Lowther Avenue, currently in Bispham ward, to Warbreck ward. With the exception of the alteration to the northern boundary of Claremont ward which was “to better reflect the identities and interests of the local community in the Claremont West area”, all of the amendments put forward by the Council were in the interests of providing better electoral equality. Under the Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Talbot and Warbreck wards would be 2 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 6 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to the borough average, 1 per cent above, 2 per cent above, 2 per cent below and equal to the borough average by 2006).

47 The Conservatives put forward two options with regard to Claremont and Greenlands wards. The first of these involved using Talbot Road as the southern boundary of Claremont ward and including electors from the Teesdale Avenue and Courtfield Avenue area, currently in Greenlands ward, in a revised Claremont ward to provide improved electoral equality. The other option, and the one favoured by the Conservatives, was to use Devonshire Road up to the junction with Mansfield Road as the eastern boundary of Claremont ward, and Talbot Road as the southern boundary. The Conservatives contended that this would provide for a stronger and more easily identifiable boundary but this option would give an electoral variance of 10 per cent below the borough average for Claremont ward with a variance of 7 per cent above the average for Greenlands ward. The Conservatives proposed moving the majority of Talbot ward into an expanded Foxhall ward and also put forward a revised Brunswick ward, transferring all electors north of Church Street from Talbot ward into Brunswick ward. The Conservatives proposed an amended Warbreck ward, transferring those electors west of Warbreck Drive and south of Lowther Avenue, currently in Bispham ward, into Warbreck ward. The Conservatives proposed removing Talbot ward entirely by moving the electors currently contained in Talbot ward into Brunswick, Foxhall and Tyldesley wards as detailed above and below. Under the Conservative’s proposals the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands and Warbreck would be 2 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average in 2001 respectively.

48 The 1st Alliance proposed a new warding arrangement in this area with a shoreside two-member ward called Tower ward, comprising parts of the existing Claremont, Foxhall, Talbot and Warbreck wards. It also proposed a modified Claremont ward, comprising parts of the existing Claremont, Greenlands and Warbreck wards. The 1st Alliance proposed the retention of the majority of the existing Greenlands ward but the transfer of an area from the south of Ingthorpe ward into Greenlands ward and the transfer of an area in the south of Greenlands ward into Claremont ward. It proposed a modified Talbot ward to comprise parts of the existing Brunswick, Claremont and Talbot wards. It also proposed removing Brunswick ward entirely and transferring most of the existing ward into a new Park ward with parts of the existing Foxhall, Layton, Talbot and Tyldesley wards. Under the 1st Alliance’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Claremont, Greenlands, Park, Talbot and Tower

wards would be equal to the borough average, 8 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 12 per cent above and 9 per cent below in 2001 respectively.

49 The St Paul's Medical Centre proposed a change to the northern boundary of Claremont ward to move Claremont Primary School, Claremont Library, Claremont West Family Centre and St Paul's Medical Centre from Warbreck ward into Claremont ward. It proposed a new boundary running west from the junction of Devonshire Road and Warley Road to the promenade. The Claremont West Family Centre also proposed a change to the northern boundary of Claremont ward to move the Centre, currently situated in Warbreck ward, into Claremont ward. They stated that they specifically serve Claremont ward and so stated that the Centre should be situated within Claremont ward. However, they did not put forward any specific proposal for the new boundary.

50 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these five wards. As mentioned above, we are unable to consider any area in isolation and, given that we are basing our proposals on a 21 ward and 42 member council, we are unable to adopt any of the 1st Alliance's proposals in this area as their proposed wards are not compatible with our proposed council size and warding arrangements. We looked carefully at the northern boundary of Claremont ward and recognise that both the Council's and the Conservatives' proposals at least partly take into account the representations received by the St Paul's Medical Centre and the Claremont West Family Centre. However, neither of these proposed boundaries moved Claremont Primary School or Claremont Library into Claremont ward as put forward by the St Paul's Medical Centre and, in view of this and for reasons of community identity, we are proposing a new boundary to run behind the houses on the south side of Warley Road. This moves St Paul's Medical Centre, the Claremont West Family Centre, Claremont Primary School and Claremont Library from Warbreck ward into Claremont ward. We acknowledge the point made by the Conservatives regarding stronger boundaries but consider that their proposal for the eastern boundary of Claremont ward would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. We also looked closely at the southern boundary of Claremont ward and are proposing an amendment to the existing boundary to transfer electors south of Talbot Road and east of Devonshire Road, currently in Claremont ward, into Brunswick ward. This follows part of the boundary proposed by the Conservatives and would, we consider, provide a more easily identifiable boundary while retaining a good level of electoral equality.

51 Our proposals for a revised Claremont ward would have a knock-on effect on the surrounding wards and, for reasons of electoral equality, we are proposing an amendment to the western boundary of Brunswick ward. The amended boundary would move electors in the area bordered to the south by Church Street and the west by Buchanan Street from Talbot ward into Brunswick ward. We are content to endorse the remainder of the Borough Council's proposed Talbot ward. We propose adopting the Council's proposed change to the eastern boundary of Brunswick ward with one slight change which does not affect any electors. This is to move the boundary to run behind the properties on Heathway Avenue as we consider that this provides a stronger boundary than the Council's proposal of a path in Kingscote Park.

52 We have carefully considered the argument put forward by the Conservatives that Devonshire Road currently provides a strong and well-defined boundary between Greenlands, Warbreck and Claremont wards and we looked carefully at the possibility of retaining this boundary in its entirety. However, we considered that any arrangement to retain this boundary, including the Conservative option detailed above, would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. Consequently, we propose an amended version of the Council's proposed boundary between Greenlands and Warbreck wards. This

boundary would move all electors on Dudley Avenue, Milford Avenue, Banbury Avenue and Raymond Avenue from Greenlands ward into Warbreck ward. In order to provide improved levels of electoral equality, we are also proposing an amendment to the Council's proposed northern boundary of Warbreck ward. Our proposed boundary would run around North Shore Golf Course, behind the houses on the south side of Duchess Drive, south along Warbreck Drive and then west along Wolverton Avenue to the Promenade. We consider that our proposals for these five wards would provide good electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria.

53 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Brunswick, Claremont and Talbot wards would be 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (4 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 2 per cent above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Greenlands and Warbreck wards would be 5 per cent and equal to the borough average respectively (3 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average by 2006). We would welcome the views of interested parties regarding these proposals at Stage Three. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover.

Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards

54 These four wards are all situated in the north of the borough. The number of electors per councillor in Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards is 13 per cent, 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 5 per cent above the borough average respectively (11 per cent, 5 per cent, 13 per cent and 3 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

55 The Borough Council proposed an amendment to the existing Ingthorpe ward, transferring all electors west of Allhallows Road and north of Red Bank Road, currently in Ingthorpe ward, into Bispham ward. It also proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Bispham ward to transfer all electors to the west of Norcliffe Road, currently in Norbreck ward, into Bispham ward. The Council put forward an amendment to the southern boundary of Anchorsholme ward to move electors in the area bordered by Brentwood Avenue and Rockwood Avenue from Anchorsholme ward into Norbreck ward. These proposals would provide much improved levels of electoral equality and, under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck would be 3 per cent above, 1 per cent above, 3 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 3 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

56 The Conservatives proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Bispham ward to transfer all electors south of Guildford Avenue and Norbreck Road, currently in Norbreck ward, into Bispham ward. They proposed the retention of the existing Ingthorpe ward but put forward a modification to Anchorsholme ward to transfer electors in the area bordered by Lockerbie Avenue, Luton Road and Fleetwod Avenue from Anchorsholme ward into Norbreck ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck would be 2 per cent above, 1 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively in 2001.

57 The 1st Alliance proposed a new North Shore ward, comprising parts of the existing Bispham and Warbreck wards. It also put forward a revised Norbreck ward consisting of part of the existing Bispham and Norbreck wards but transferring a small area from Norbreck ward into Anchorsholme ward. The

majority of the existing Ingthorpe ward, together with part of the existing Norbreck ward would become part of a new Bispham ward. The 1st Alliance also proposed a new Whiteholme ward in the north east of the borough comprising parts of the existing Anchorsholme, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards. It proposed a revised Anchorsholme ward comprising the majority of the existing Anchorsholme ward and part of the existing Norbreck ward. Under the 1st Alliance's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Anchorsholme, Bispham, Norbreck, North Shore and Whiteholme wards would be 6 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 8 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent below the borough average respectively in 2001.

58 Having considered the representations for these four wards, we propose adopting the Council's proposals subject to a number of amendments. We consider that Devonshire Road provides a strong and easily identifiable boundary and we have attempted to retain this boundary wherever possible, given regard to electoral equality. We note that under the Council's proposal for Ingthorpe ward, electors living on Village Way, who would be transferred into Bispham ward, would not have direct access into Bispham ward. We consider that this does not provide effective and convenient local government and, therefore, propose retaining Devonshire Road as the western boundary between Ingthorpe and Bispham wards up to the junction with Shirley Crescent. Having looked at this area carefully, we consider that the electors on Shirley Crescent have closer ties with the residents of Norbreck ward than the residents of either Ingthorpe or Bispham wards, and so propose amending the boundary between Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards to include the electors in Shirley Crescent and on Fleetwood Road in Norbreck ward. While this proposal leads to an electoral variance of 5 per cent above the borough average in Ingthorpe ward by 2006, we consider that this provides the best available balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We would, however, welcome comments on our proposals during Stage Three.

59 Due to the amendment to the boundary between Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards described above which includes more electors in Norbreck ward, we propose an amendment to the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Bispham and Norbreck wards to provide improved electoral equality. We propose transferring all electors in the area west of Everest Drive and south of Norbreck Road from Norbreck ward into Bispham ward. We endorse the Borough Council's proposals for the remaining boundaries in these four wards.

60 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards would be 3 per cent above, 5 per cent below, equal to and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 4 per cent below the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Alexandra, Foxhall, Tyldesley and Victoria wards

61 These four wards are situated in the south and west of the borough. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Alexandra, Foxhall, Tyldesley and Victoria wards is 5 per cent, 10 per cent, 5 per cent and 7 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent, 12 per cent, 6 per cent and 8 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

62 The Borough Council proposed combining the majority of the existing Alexandra and Foxhall wards to create a new Bloomfield ward. It argued that there is less feeling of community identity in this area of Blackpool than in some outer areas of the town and, therefore, proposed the merging of two wards in this area to "achieve the overall goal of amending the existing ward structure to deliver

electoral equality, whilst avoiding the need for significant change across the whole of the Borough”. Blackpool Football Club play at Bloomfield Road and the ground is located within this proposed ward. It stated that the proposed name of Bloomfield “has a long-standing significance for this part of Blackpool and...reflects the importance for this area and for the town of the current redevelopment of the Bloomfield Road Football Club Stadium which lies at the heart of this proposed new ward”. The Council also argued that “the name has no association with either of the existing wards of Foxhall or Alexandra, thereby facilitating a fresh start and not a “takeover bid” by either of the old ward names”. The new ward would use the existing northern boundary of Foxhall ward, and would include electors in the area bordered by Park Road, Ashton Road, Central Drive and Waterloo Road.

63 The creation of a new Bloomfield ward would have a knock-on effect on the other wards in this area and the Council proposed amendments to the existing wards of Tyldesley and Victoria to provide improved electoral equality. It proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Tyldesley ward to transfer electors in the area bordered by Park Road, Palatine Road, Ripon Road, Gloucester Avenue and Whitegate Drive from Foxhall ward into Tyldesley ward. The Council proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Victoria ward to transfer electors in the area contained by Central Drive and Grasmere Road from Alexandra ward into Victoria ward. It also put forward an amendment to the southern boundary of Victoria ward to transfer electors in the area south of Hemingway and east of Marton Drive from Victoria ward into Hawes Side ward. Under the Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Bloomfield, Tyldesley and Victoria would be 1 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (equal to the borough average, equal to the borough average and 2 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

64 The Conservatives put forward substantially different wards in this area as a result of taking a different approach to the question of where to amalgamate two wards to reduce the total number of wards to 21. The Conservatives proposed an amended Foxhall ward, moving a number of electors from the west of Talbot ward into Foxhall ward and a number of electors from the east of Foxhall ward into Tyldesley ward. Talbot ward itself would be removed as outlined above. The Conservatives proposed an amended Tyldesley ward which would move a number of electors from Foxhall, Brunswick and Talbot wards into Tyldesley ward. They also proposed moving a number of electors from the south of Tyldesley ward into Alexandra, Foxhall and Victoria wards respectively. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, an amended Alexandra ward would take in part of the existing Tyldesley ward while electors to the south of Waterloo Road and west of Yeadon Way would be transferred from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward. An amended Victoria ward would transfer electors from the south of Tyldesley ward into Victoria ward and would transfer electors south of Marton Drive from Victoria ward into Hawes Side ward. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Alexandra, Foxhall, Tyldesley and Victoria would be 4 per cent below, 3 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively in 2001.

65 The 1st Alliance proposed a new Revoe ward which would comprise parts of the existing Alexandra, Tyldesley and Foxhall wards. They also proposed a new Whitegate ward comprising parts of the existing Alexandra, Tyldesley and Victoria wards. A new Waterloo ward would comprise the majority of the existing Victoria ward with part of the existing Hawes Side ward. The 1st Alliance also proposed a new South Shore ward comprising parts of the existing Alexandra, Squires Gate and Waterloo wards. Under the 1st Alliance’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Revoe, South Shore, Waterloo and Whitegate wards would be 6 per cent above, equal to the borough average, 1 per cent below and 8 per cent below the borough average respectively.

66 We have carefully considered all representations received regarding the four wards in this area. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, we are basing our recommendations on the proposals of the Borough Council and, due to the highly urban nature of the area, any changes in one area inevitably have knock-on effects for other wards. As a result of this, if we were to adopt the Conservatives' or the 1st Alliance's proposals, which are substantially different to those put forward by the Borough Council in these four wards, this would have implications for ward boundaries in other areas of Blackpool. Additionally, the Council provided argumentation for the amalgamation of Alexandra and Foxhall wards into a new ward to be named Bloomfield ward. We have received little evidence of strong communities in this area and, due to the fairly homogenous housing in the area, consider that the boundaries put forward by the Council are sensible and do not breach any strong, natural boundaries. The Council's proposed wards also provide excellent levels of electoral equality and we are, therefore, content to endorse the Council's proposals for all four wards in this area. We would, however, welcome local comments on our proposals at Stage Three.

67 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bloomfield and Victoria wards would be 1 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (equal to the borough average and 2 per cent below the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Tyldesley ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average (equal to the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo wards

68 These four wards are all situated in the extreme south of the borough. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo wards is 4 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 8 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent above, 5 per cent below, 9 per cent above and 9 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between Highfield and Stanley wards to provide an improved level of electoral equality. It proposed transferring all electors west of Johnsville Avenue and on Kingsmede, currently in Stanley ward, into Highfield ward. The Council also proposed an amendment to the boundary between Highfield and Squires Gate wards, to move electors in the area west of Highfield Road Recreation Ground and east of Lodore Road from Highfield ward into Squires Gate ward. In order to improve electoral equality it put forward an amendment to the northern boundary of Squires Gate ward, to move electors south of Horncliffe Road and Tudor Place from Waterloo ward into Squires Gate ward. Again to improve electoral equality, the Council proposed a modification to the northern boundary of Waterloo ward, to transfer electors south of Waterloo Road from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward. Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo would be 1 per cent above, 1 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent below, 1 per cent below, equal to and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

70 The Conservatives proposed the retention of the existing Highfield and Stanley wards but proposed an amendment to the Squires Gate ward. They proposed the same boundary as the Council to move electors south of Horncliffe Road from Waterloo ward into Squires Gate ward but proposed retaining the rest of the existing boundary between Squires Gate ward and Waterloo ward. The Conservatives

also put forward the same change to the northern boundary of Waterloo ward as the Council, transferring all electors south of Waterloo Road from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo would be equal to the borough average, 1 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively in 2001.

71 The 1st Alliance proposed an amended Squires Gate ward comprising the majority of the existing Squires Gate ward and part of the existing Highfield ward. It also proposed a new Arnold ward, comprising the majority of the existing Waterloo ward and parts of the existing Highfield and Squires Gate wards. An amended Highfield ward would contain the majority of the existing Highfield ward and part of the existing Stanley ward, while a new Moss ward would contain the majority of the existing Stanley ward. Under the 1st Alliance's proposals, the number of electors per councillor for the proposed Arnold, Highfield, Moss and Squires Gate wards would be 11 per cent below, 5 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 5 per cent below the borough average respectively in 2001.

72 Having looked carefully at the proposals received for these four wards, we have decided to adopt the proposals put forward by the Borough Council with one amendment to the boundary between Highfield ward and Stanley ward. We consider that the houses to the west of Johnsville Avenue have a closer relationship with Stanley ward than they have with Highfield ward and are of the opinion that the existing boundary which runs behind these houses is a strong boundary. We therefore propose retaining the existing boundary up to the junction with Highfield Road, as advocated by the Conservatives. We propose moving Highfield High School from Stanley ward into Highfield ward as we consider that Highfield High School should be in Highfield ward. To provide better electoral equality we are adopting the Borough Council's proposal to amend the boundary and move all electors in Kingsmede from Stanley ward into Highfield ward.

73 We are content to endorse the Borough Council's proposals in the remainder of this area as we consider that they provide a good balance between electoral equality and the provision of strong and easily identifiable boundaries. They would also ensure that Waterloo Road becomes part of Waterloo ward, thereby addressing the issue raised by the 1st Alliance that Waterloo Road was nowhere near Waterloo ward.

74 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo wards would be equal to the borough average, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park wards

75 These five wards are situated in the south-east of the borough. Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park wards is 1 per cent, 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 5 per cent and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent below, equal to the borough average, equal to the borough average, 3 per cent above and 6 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

76 The Borough Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards for reasons of electoral equality. It proposed moving all electors on Eskdale Close and Saxby

Grove and those to the east of Elaine Avenue from Hawes Side ward into Clifton ward. They also proposed running the boundary straight across the industrial estate from the rear of the houses on Eskdale Close to the junction of Cowley Road and Vicarage Lane. It proposed an amendment to the western boundary of Hawes Side ward to transfer electors in the area east of Marton Drive and south of Hemingway from Hawes side ward into Victoria ward. The Council proposed a change to the western boundary of Layton ward to move electors in the area bordered by Rathlyn Avenue, Collingwood Avenue, and Counce Street from Brunswick ward into Layton ward. It also proposed a slight change to the boundary between Marton and Park wards in the Staining area to move some electors from Park ward into Marton ward, uniting all electors in the Staining area in Marton ward. Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park would be equal to, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

77 The Conservatives proposed a slight modification to the boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards to provide an improved level of electoral equality. They proposed transferring all electors on Elaine Avenue, Eskdale Close, Senior Avenue and Saxby Grove from Hawes Side ward into Clifton ward. The Conservatives proposed a similar amendment to the western boundary of Layton ward as the Council, with the exception of keeping those electors west of Layton Road in Brunswick ward. The Conservatives also put forward the same amendment as the Council to the boundary between Marton and Park wards to move electors on Broad Oak Lane in the Staining area from Park ward into Marton ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park would be 3 per cent above, 2 per cent above, 2 per cent below, equal to the borough average and equal to the borough average respectively in 2001.

78 The 1st Alliance proposed a new Welcome ward, comprising parts of the existing Clifton and Hawes Side wards. It also proposed a new three-member Marton ward, comprising parts of the existing Clifton, Hawes Side and Marton wards. It put forward an amended single-member Clifton ward, containing the majority of the existing Clifton ward and an amended Layton ward, which would contain the majority of the existing Layton ward and parts of the existing Brunswick and Talbot wards. A new Parklands ward would contain the majority of the existing Park ward and part of the existing Marton ward. Under the 1st Alliance's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Clifton, Layton, Marton, Parklands and Welcome wards would be 10 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 11 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 5 per cent below the borough average respectively in 2001.

79 We have looked carefully at all the representations received regarding this area and, with minor amendments, are content to endorse the Council's proposals. We consider that the Council's proposed boundary between Clifton ward and Hawes Side ward, which runs across the industrial estate does not provide a strong and easily identifiable boundary. We therefore propose substantially retaining the existing boundary of Vicarage Lane, with slight modifications to transfer electors living to the east of Vicarage Lane from Clifton ward into Hawes Side ward as we feel that this would facilitate effective and convenient local government. We propose retaining the existing boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards, as put forward by the Conservatives, up to Skipton Close and Eskdale Close where we propose adopting the Council's proposals.

80 We are endorsing the Council's proposals for a revised Layton ward but propose one slight change to tie the boundary to the back of the properties on Heathway Avenue, which would not affect any

electors. We endorse the Council's proposed amendment to the boundary between Hawes Side and Victoria wards. We also endorse the proposal put forward by both the Council and the Conservatives to transfer electors in Staining from Park ward into Marton ward but propose leaving the existing boundary to the west of Staining and running the boundary along the edge of a field to the district boundary as we consider that this would provide a clearer boundary. We also propose a slight amendment to the boundary between Marton and Park wards to tie it to ground detail where, at present, it crosses a golf course. This proposal would not affect any electors. We are content to retain the existing boundaries in the remainder of this area.

81 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park wards would be equal to the borough average, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent above, equal to the borough average and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

82 We received three representations regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council itself proposed the retention of the current system of whole-council elections. The Conservatives also supported "the continuation of the historic arrangements for all-out elections every 4 years" but the 1st Alliance proposed a change to a system of elections by thirds, as they felt that "whole-council elections requires considerable financial and logistical resources that are generally not available to smaller parties and independents". The 1st Alliance felt that elections by thirds "would not require the same level of resources" and so would encourage increased participation.

83 However, given the consensus and cross-party support shown by the Council and the Conservatives on this issue, there appears to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained and we therefore propose no change.

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 44 to 42;
- there should be 21 wards;
- the boundaries of all 22 existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

85 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- revised ward boundaries in Bispham, Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Ingthorpe, Norbreck and Warbreck wards;
- minor boundary amendments in Anchorsholme, Clifton, Hawes Side, Highfield, Layton, Marton, Park, Stanley and Talbot wards.

86 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	44	42	44	42
Number of wards	22	21	22	21
Average number of electors per councillor	2551	2673	2596	2720
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	2	0	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	0	0

87 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Blackpool Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from two to none. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 5 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Blackpool Borough Council should comprise 42 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Blackpool

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

88 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Blackpool contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 3 December 2001. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

89 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

90 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

APPENDIX A

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table A1: LGCE compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.