

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for West Lancashire

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

*September 2000*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of West Lancashire.

Members of the Commission are:

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





## Local Government Commission for England

5 September 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 7 September 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of West Lancashire under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in February 2000 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 111) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in West Lancashire.

We recommend that West Lancashire District Council should be served by 54 councillors representing 25 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.

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. 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 West Lancashire on 7 September 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 15 February 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 13 of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in eight wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 111-112) are that:

- **West Lancashire District Council should have 54 councillors, one fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of 26 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified and seven 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 21 of the proposed 25 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 improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Burscough, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Aughton, Burscough and Up Holland;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors for Up Holland.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 17 October 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

|    | <b>Ward name</b>           | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>  | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1  | Ashurst (Skelmersdale)     | 3                            | Birch Green ward (part)   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 2  | Aughton Park               | 2                            | Aughton Park ward (Christ Church and North East parish wards of Aughton parish); Aughton Town Green ward (part – Delph parish ward (part) of Aughton parish)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 3  | Aughton & Downholland      | 3                            | Aughton Town Green ward (part – Holt Green and Town Green parish wards of Aughton parish; Delph parish ward (part) of Aughton parish; Downholland ward (the parishes of Downholland and Great Altcar) | Map 2 and large map  |
| 4  | Bickerstaffe               | 1                            | Bickerstaffe ward (the parishes of Bickerstaffe and Simonswood); Derby ward (part)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 5  | Birch Green (Skelmersdale) | 2                            | Birch Green ward (part)   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 6  | Burscough                  | 2                            | Burscough ward (part - New Lane (part), Red Cat, Richmond Park and Stanley parish wards and proposed Burscough Town parish ward of Burscough parish)  | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 7  | Derby (Ormskirk)           | 3                            | Derby ward (part)   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 8  | Digmoor (Skelmersdale)     | 2                            | Digmoor ward (part); Moorside ward (part); Tanhouse ward (part)   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 9  | Halsall                    | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 10 | Hesketh-with-Beaconsall    | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 11 | Knowsley (Ormskirk)        | 3                            | Knowsley ward; Scott ward (part)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 12 | Lathom                     | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 13 | Moorside (Skelmersdale)    | 2                            | Digmoor ward (part); Moorside ward (part)   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 14 | Newburgh                   | 1                            | Derby ward (part); Newburgh ward (the parishes of Lathom and Newburgh)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 15 | North Meols                | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 16 | Parbold                    | 2                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 17 | Rufford                    | 1                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |

|    | <b>Ward name</b>        | <b>Number of councillors</b> | <b>Constituent areas</b>  | <b>Map reference</b> |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 18 | Scarisbrick             | 2                            | Burscough ward (part – New Lane parish ward of the parish of Burscough; Scarisbrick ward (the parish of Scarisbrick))   | Maps 2 and A2        |
| 19 | Scott (Ormskirk)        | 3                            | Derby ward (part); Scott ward (part)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 20 | Skelmersdale North      | 2                            | Skelmersdale North ward (part)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 21 | Skelmersdale South      | 3                            | Skelmersdale North ward (part); Skelmersdale South ward   | Map 2 and large map  |
| 22 | Tanhouse (Skelmersdale) | 2                            | Tanhouse ward (part)  | Map 2 and large map  |
| 23 | Tarleton                | 3                            | <i>Unchanged</i>  | Map 2                |
| 24 | Up Holland              | 3                            | Up Holland North ward (part – Newgate parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish; Village parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish); Up Holland South ward (the Chequer Lane, Crawford, Hall Green and Tontine parish wards of Up Holland parish) | Maps 2 and A3        |
| 25 | Wrightington            | 2                            | Up Holland North ward (part – Newgate parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish; Roby Mill parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish; Village parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish); Wrightington ward (the parish of Wrightington)            | Maps 2 and A3        |

*Notes: 1 Ormskirk and Skelmersdale are unparished and comprise the 10 wards named.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for West Lancashire

| Ward name                  | Number of councillors | Electorate (1999) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2004) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Ashurst                  | 3                     | 4,809             | 1,603                             | 0                       | 5,164             | 1,721                             | 6                       |
| 2 Aughton Park             | 2                     | 3,206             | 1,603                             | 0                       | 3,194             | 1,597                             | -1                      |
| 3 Aughton & Downholland    | 3                     | 4,615             | 1,538                             | -4                      | 4,676             | 1,559                             | -4                      |
| 4 Bickerstaffe             | 1                     | 1,652             | 1,652                             | 3                       | 1,655             | 1,655                             | 2                       |
| 5 Birch Green              | 2                     | 3,114             | 1,557                             | -3                      | 3,046             | 1,523                             | -6                      |
| 6 Burscough                | 2                     | 3,781             | 1,891                             | 18                      | 3,810             | 1,905                             | 18                      |
| 7 Derby                    | 3                     | 6,285             | 2,095                             | 31                      | 5,356             | 1,785                             | 10                      |
| 8 Digmaor                  | 2                     | 3,069             | 1,535                             | -4                      | 3,056             | 1,528                             | -6                      |
| 9 Halsall                  | 1                     | 1,596             | 1,596                             | 0                       | 1,610             | 1,610                             | -1                      |
| 10 Hesketh-with-Beaconsall | 2                     | 2,880             | 1,440                             | -10                     | 3,090             | 1,545                             | -5                      |
| 11 Knowsley                | 3                     | 4,581             | 1,527                             | -4                      | 4,600             | 1,533                             | -5                      |
| 12 Lathom                  | 2                     | 2,925             | 1,463                             | -8                      | 3,350             | 1,675                             | 3                       |
| 13 Moorside                | 2                     | 3,152             | 1,576                             | -1                      | 3,134             | 1,567                             | -3                      |
| 14 Newburgh                | 1                     | 1,755             | 1,755                             | 10                      | 1,749             | 1,749                             | 8                       |
| 15 North Meols             | 2                     | 2,944             | 1,472                             | -8                      | 3,170             | 1,585                             | -2                      |
| 16 Parbold                 | 2                     | 3,243             | 1,622                             | 2                       | 3,250             | 1,625                             | 0                       |
| 17 Rufford                 | 1                     | 1,546             | 1,546                             | -3                      | 1,650             | 1,650                             | 2                       |
| 18 Scarisbrick             | 2                     | 2,858             | 1,429                             | -11                     | 2,920             | 1,460                             | -10                     |
| 19 Scott                   | 3                     | 4,789             | 1,596                             | 0                       | 4,780             | 1,593                             | -2                      |
| 20 Skelmersdale North      | 2                     | 3,252             | 1,626                             | 2                       | 3,200             | 1,600                             | -1                      |
| 21 Skelmersdale South      | 3                     | 5,011             | 1,670                             | 5                       | 5,070             | 1,690                             | 4                       |
| 22 Tanhouse                | 2                     | 3,097             | 1,549                             | -3                      | 3,230             | 1,615                             | 0                       |
| 23 Tarleton                | 3                     | 4,020             | 1,340                             | -16                     | 4,360             | 1,453                             | -10                     |
| 24 Up Holland              | 3                     | 4,824             | 1,608                             | 1                       | 5,113             | 1,704                             | 5                       |

| Ward name       | Number of councillors | Electorate (1999) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2004) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 25 Wrightington | 2                     | 3,232             | 1,616                             | 1                       | 3,287             | 1,644                             | 1                       |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>54</b>             | <b>86,236</b>     | –                                 | –                       | <b>87,520</b>     | –                                 | –                       |
| <b>Averages</b> | –                     | –                 | <b>1,597</b>                      | –                       | –                 | <b>1,621</b>                      | –                       |

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by West Lancashire 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 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 final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of West Lancashire. We have reviewed the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of West Lancashire. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 102). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 399). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had 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 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 councils in the district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), 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 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in 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. The proposals were taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *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 7 September 1999, when we wrote to West Lancashire District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish councils in the district, 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 District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 November 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 15 February 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for West Lancashire*, and ended on 10 April 2000. 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 West Lancashire is located in the south-west corner of Lancashire and borders the districts of Sefton to the west and Chorley and South Ribble to the east. The district is mainly rural in nature with the main exceptions being the new town of Skelmersdale and the historic market town of Ormskirk. The district has a number of attractive villages and is characterised by mainly flat, agricultural landscape.

14 The district contains 20 parishes, although the towns of Ormskirk and Skelmersdale are themselves unparished. Skelmersdale town comprises 30 per cent of the district's total electorate, while the Ormskirk/Aughton area accounts for 27 per cent.

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 district 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 86,236 (February 1999). The Council presently has 55 members who are elected from 26 wards, 11 of which are relatively urban in the Ormskirk and Skelmersdale areas with the remainder being predominantly rural. Nine of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 11 are each represented by two councillors and six 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 West Lancashire district, with around 20 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Parbold and Tarleton wards, which have approximately 36 per cent and 33 per cent more electors respectively than 25 years ago.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,568 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,591 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 26 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and four wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Hesketh-with-Beaconsall ward where the councillor represents 84 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in West Lancashire*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name                  | Number of councillors | Electorate (1999) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2004) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Aughton Park             | 2                     | 2,892             | 1,446                             | -8                      | 2,880             | 1,440                             | -9                      |
| 2 Aughton Town Green       | 3                     | 3,955             | 1,318                             | -16                     | 4,020             | 1,340                             | -16                     |
| 3 Bickerstaffe             | 1                     | 1,107             | 1,107                             | -29                     | 1,110             | 1,110                             | -30                     |
| 4 Birch Green              | 3                     | 7,923             | 2,641                             | 68                      | 8,210             | 2,737                             | 72                      |
| 5 Burscough                | 3                     | 4,131             | 1,377                             | -12                     | 4,160             | 1,387                             | -13                     |
| 6 Derby                    | 3                     | 7,595             | 2,532                             | 61                      | 6,670             | 2,223                             | 40                      |
| 7 Digmaor                  | 2                     | 3,043             | 1,522                             | -3                      | 3,030             | 1,515                             | -5                      |
| 8 Downholland              | 1                     | 974               | 974                               | -38                     | 970               | 970                               | -39                     |
| 9 Halsall                  | 1                     | 1,596             | 1,596                             | 2                       | 1,610             | 1,610                             | 1                       |
| 10 Hesketh-with-Beaconsall | 1                     | 2,880             | 2,880                             | 84                      | 3,090             | 3,090                             | 94                      |
| 11 Knowsley                | 3                     | 4,358             | 1,453                             | -7                      | 4,380             | 1,460                             | -8                      |
| 12 Lathom                  | 2                     | 2,925             | 1,463                             | -7                      | 3,350             | 1,675                             | 5                       |
| 13 Moorside                | 2                     | 2,818             | 1,409                             | -10                     | 2,800             | 1,400                             | -12                     |
| 14 Newburgh                | 1                     | 1,686             | 1,686                             | 8                       | 1,680             | 1,680                             | 6                       |
| 15 North Meols             | 2                     | 2,944             | 1,472                             | -6                      | 3,170             | 1,585                             | 0                       |
| 16 Parbold                 | 2                     | 3,243             | 1,622                             | 3                       | 3,250             | 1,625                             | 2                       |
| 17 Rufford                 | 1                     | 1,546             | 1,546                             | -1                      | 1,650             | 1,650                             | 4                       |
| 18 Scarisbrick             | 2                     | 2,508             | 1,254                             | -20                     | 2,570             | 1,285                             | -19                     |
| 19 Scott                   | 3                     | 4,316             | 1,439                             | -8                      | 4,300             | 1,433                             | -10                     |
| 20 Skelmersdale North      | 3                     | 4,230             | 1,410                             | -10                     | 4,170             | 1,390                             | -13                     |
| 21 Skelmersdale South      | 3                     | 4,033             | 1,344                             | -14                     | 4,100             | 1,367                             | -14                     |
| 22 Tanhouse                | 3                     | 3,457             | 1,152                             | -27                     | 3,590             | 1,197                             | -25                     |
| 23 Tarleton                | 2                     | 4,020             | 2,010                             | 28                      | 4,360             | 2,180                             | 37                      |
| 24 Up Holland North        | 2                     | 3,130             | 1,565                             | 0                       | 3,110             | 1,555                             | -2                      |
| 25 Up Holland South        | 2                     | 2,565             | 1,283                             | -18                     | 2,880             | 1,440                             | -9                      |

| Ward name       | Number of councillors | Electorate (1999) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2004) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 26 Wrightington | 2                     | 2,361             | 1,181                             | -25                     | 2,410             | 1,205                             | -24                     |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>55</b>             | <b>86,236</b>     | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                | <b>87,520</b>     | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                |
| <b>Averages</b> | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>          | <b>1,568</b>                      | <b>-</b>                | <b>-</b>          | <b>1,591</b>                      | <b>-</b>                |

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by West Lancashire 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Downholland ward were relatively over-represented by 38 per cent, while electors in Hesketh-with-Becconsall ward were significantly under-represented by 84 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 12 representations, including district-wide schemes from West Lancashire District Council and the West Lancashire Conservative Group and Conservative Association. 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 West Lancashire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based on the Conservative Groups' proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards throughout the district. However, we moved away from the Conservative Groups' scheme in a number of areas, affecting Burscough and Scarisbrick wards and Bickerstaffe and Derby wards. We proposed that:

- West Lancashire District Council should be served by 54 councillors, compared with the current 55, representing 25 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be revised warding arrangements and redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Aughton, Burscough and Up Holland;
- there should be an increase in the number of councillors serving Up Holland Parish Council.

**Draft Recommendation**

West Lancashire District Council should comprise 54 councillors, serving 25 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 23 of the 25 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 115 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of West Lancashire District Council and the Commission.

### **West Lancashire District Council**

23 The District Council stated that it was disappointed that its proposal for a 58-member council had not been accepted. It also proposed alternative warding arrangements for our proposed Ashurst and Birch Green wards, Aughton Park and Aughton & Downholland wards and Burscough and Scarisbrick wards. It further proposed boundary modifications between Birch Green, Tanhouse, Digmaor and Moorside wards. It proposed reinstating Up Holland North and Up Holland South wards as two-member wards, and proposed alternative warding arrangements for Wrightington and Parbold wards.

### **West Lancashire Conservative Association**

24 The West Lancashire Conservative Association supported the majority of our draft proposals. Where we had moved away from its Stage One proposals it stated that it “[understood] the persuasive reasons for doing so”. However, it also stated that it supported the Council’s proposed amendment to our proposed Burscough and Scarisbrick wards.

### **Members of Parliament**

25 Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposals for Burscough and Scarisbrick wards, Up Holland and Wrightington wards, Skelmersdale South and Bickerstaffe wards and our proposed Aughton & Downholland ward, stating that these would do “severe damage” to the community identities of these areas.

### **Parish Councils**

26 We received representations direct from 14 parish councils and parish meetings. Hesketh-with-Beaconsall, Scarisbrick, Parbold, Dalton, Hilldale, Bickerstaffe, Tarleton, Aughton, Newburgh, Halsall and Simonswood parish councils, and Bispham Parish Meeting all supported our draft recommendations for their areas.

27 The Parish Council of Up Holland objected to our proposals for Up Holland and Wrightington wards and proposed that the “current Up Holland and Roby Mill District and Parish Council ward boundaries [remain] unchanged”. Rufford Parish Council reiterated their objections to the District Council’s proposals for the current Rufford ward.

## **Other Representations**

28 A further 98 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from four district councillors, one parish councillor and 91 residents, and joint submissions from three councillors regarding Birch Green ward and two councillors regarding Skelmersdale.

29 Councillor Dereli (district councillor for Burscough ward) objected to our proposals for Downholland and Aughton parishes and to our proposals for Burscough ward. She also supported the District Council's proposal for a 58-member council. Councillor Gains (district councillor for Derby ward) objected to our proposals for Derby ward while Councillor Waterworth (district councillor for Parbold ward) supported our proposed Parbold ward. Parish Councillor Blake also supported our proposals for Parbold ward. Councillor Sealey argued that Skelmersdale should have greater representation, as did Councillors White and Gibson who proposed a boundary change between Skelmersdale North and Skelmersdale South wards. District Councillors McElhinney, Sealey and McElhinney submitted a joint proposal for boundary amendments between Ashurst and Birch Green wards.

30 Three local residents supported our proposals for Parbold ward. One local resident objected to our proposed Bickerstaffe ward while another local resident supported Councillor Gains' proposals for Derby ward. A resident of Downholland ward objected to our proposals and proposed that the current arrangements be maintained. Six local residents objected to our proposed Up Holland and Wrightington wards.

31 We received 80 responses from local residents objecting to our proposed Burscough and Scarisbrick wards. They argued that our proposals would "destroy the integrity of Burscough village" and that the areas to be moved to Scarisbrick ward would have little in common and are geographically remote from Scarisbrick itself. They also argued that the Industrial Estate should remain within the ward of Burscough in the light of the plans to build an incinerator, which the residents had opposed.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

32 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for West Lancashire is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, 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”.

33 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

34 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.

35 Our *Guidance* states that, we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, 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 and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

36 At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of slightly over 1 per cent from 86,236 to 87,520 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to be in Lathom ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Up Holland South ward. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

## Council Size

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

39 West Lancashire is at present served by 55 councillors. The District Council proposed a council of 58 members which would be elected from 27 wards. The Council argued that, given the differing variations between councillor:elector ratios in the parished and non-parished areas "in order to achieve electoral equality the council size should be increased to 58 members". The District Council also argued that an increase in council size would reflect the increase in electorate since the last review.

40 The Conservative Groups put forward an alternative scheme based on a council size of 54, one less than at present, representing 25 wards. They argued that "the Council's proposals result in many changes to existing boundaries, particularly in rural parish areas, which seem unnecessary in many cases (eg. why split Halsall parish which on the present 55-member council has the best electoral ratio). The justification of splitting parishes and placing different parish wards into different, and historically alien, district wards is weakened when it is shown that a 54-member council would require much less disruption to parished areas".

41 In our draft recommendations report we stated that we would not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but would be prepared to consider the case for change where there was persuasive evidence. Although we noted the Council's proposal for an increase in council size from 55 to 58, we did not consider that there was sufficient evidence to justify such an increase, particularly as a scheme giving comparable electoral equality with a 54-member council, had been proposed.

42 During Stage Three the District Council stated that it was "disappointed that its proposal for 58 Councillors was not accepted" arguing that our draft recommendations would not "ensure fair and adequate representation". It also stated that some members had expressed the view that should a 58-member council be unacceptable an alternative 55-member option should be considered. It argued that this was on the basis that some members believed there to be an imbalance between the urban and rural areas of the district, with the urban areas being under represented. Councillor Dereli supported the District Council's proposal for a 58-member council, as did a local resident. The Conservative Groups supported our proposal for a 54-member council.

43 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 54 members. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

## Electoral Arrangements

44 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes submitted by the District Council and the Conservative Groups. We noted that was an element of consensus between both schemes in relation to the wards of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, the proposals for a new Ashurst ward and for alternative ward boundaries in Ormskirk. We also noted that there was a significant amount of opposition to the District Council’s proposals for the more rural parished areas, particularly from the parish councils affected.

45 In its submission, the District Council proposed significant change, with eight parishes being divided between district wards and part of Skelmersdale town being placed with the rural parish of Bickerstaffe. Having based its proposals on a council size of 58, the District Council stated that “given the over-riding principle of electoral equality, there was a need for some radical changes and given the predominantly rural nature of the authority and large area that is parished, it appeared inevitable that there would be an impact on the parishes with some being divided”. Although the primary objective of the Commission is to achieve electoral equality, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria, that is to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure effective and convenient local government. We have found that parishes generally reflect community areas and we therefore use them, wherever possible, as building blocks for district wards. We also seek, wherever possible, to propose wards which encompass either rural or urban areas, rather than combinations of the two. We consider that this approach is generally reflective of communities and gives better representation of the diverse interests and issues of importance affecting areas of different character.

46 We noted that the Conservative Groups’ scheme achieved similar levels of electoral equality to that put forward by the District Council, with a council size of 54. Furthermore, the scheme did not involve such widespread warding of parishes which, given the other submissions received, did not appear to enjoy local support, and we therefore based our draft recommendations on this scheme.

47 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three and are proposing amendments to the boundary between Burscough and Scarisbrick wards, and minor amendments to the boundaries between Up Holland and Wrightington wards. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford and Tarleton wards;
- (b) Burscough, Halsall, Lathom, Newburgh and Scarisbrick wards;
- (c) Aughton Town Green, Aughton Park and Downholland wards;
- (d) Ormskirk – Bickerstaffe, Derby, Knowsley and Scott wards;
- (e) Skelmersdale – Birch Green, Digmoor, Moorside, Skelmersdale North, Skelmersdale South and Tanhouse wards;
- (f) Parbold, Up Holland North, Up Holland South and Wrightington wards.

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

## **Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford and Tarleton wards**

49 These four wards lie in the north of the district and are predominantly rural in character. Hesketh-with-Becconsall, which comprises the parish of the same name, returns one councillor and is significantly under-represented, having 84 per cent more electors than the district average (94 per cent more in 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member Rufford ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is currently 1 per cent below the district average (4 per cent above in 2004). In the wards of North Meols and Tarleton, which each return two councillors, and again each comprise the parishes of those names, the number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below and 28 per cent above the district average currently (equal to and 37 per cent above in 2004).

50 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Hesketh-with-Becconsall ward be allocated an extra councillor in order to address the under-representation in the ward and proposed no change to the current North Meols ward. The District Council further proposed including the northern part of Rufford parish with Tarleton parish to form a modified Tarleton ward. The remainder of Rufford parish would then form a modified Rufford ward.

51 The Conservative Groups supported the District Council's proposals to allocate an additional councillor to Hesketh-with-Becconsall ward and to retain North Meols ward unchanged. However, in respect of Rufford ward, the Conservative Groups argued that "a change is only proposed because of the decision to have a 58-member council". Given a council size of 54 members, the number of electors per councillor in Rufford ward would be 3 per cent below the average (2 per cent above in 2004) and the Conservative Groups therefore proposed that Rufford ward also remain unchanged. Finally in this area the Conservative Groups proposed no change to the boundaries of Tarleton ward, but argued that it should be represented by an additional councillor due to the continuing development in the area.

52 We received two other representations regarding this area during Stage One. Rufford Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals to divide the parish between two district wards for community identity reasons. However, Tarleton Parish Council expressed initial support for the District Council's proposals.

53 We carefully examined all the evidence available and having proposed a council size of 54 members, we adopted the Conservative Groups' proposals for these wards, given that they would not require additional warding of parishes and would result in similar levels of electoral equality to the District Council's proposals. We considered that these proposals would provide for a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and therefore put them forward as part of our draft recommendations. These proposals resulted in the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford and Tarleton being 10 per cent below, 8 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 16 per cent below the district average (5 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 10 per cent below by 2004).

54 At Stage Three the West Lancashire Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations for the area. Tarleton Parish Council and Hesketh-with-Becconsall Parish Council both supported our proposals for the area and Rufford Parish Council reiterated its objections to the District Council's Stage One proposals.

55 Given the support we have received at Stage Three, we are content to endorse our draft recommendation for Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols, Rufford and Tarleton wards as final. These proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Burscough, Halsall, Lathom, Newburgh and Scarisbrick wards**

56 These wards lie across the centre of the district. Burscough ward, comprising over half the parish of Burscough, currently returns three councillors; Lathom ward, comprising the remainder of Burscough parish and Scarisbrick ward, comprising Scarisbrick parish, each return two councillors while Halsall ward, comprising the parish of Halsall, and Newburgh ward, comprising the parishes of Lathom and Newburgh, each return one councillor. Under the existing warding arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Burscough, Lathom, Scarisbrick, Halsall and Newburgh is 12 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 20 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 8 per cent above the district average respectively (13 per cent below, 5 per cent above, 19 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 6 per cent above in 2004).

57 The District Council proposed that Burscough ward be amalgamated with Lathom ward to create two new district wards. A new two-member Burscough Bridge ward would be created, comprising the New Lane, Red Cat and St John's parish wards of the current Burscough parish. A new three-member Burscough Town ward would be created, comprising the Burscough, Ellerbrook, Richmond Park and Stanley parish wards of Burscough parish. The District Council argued that the current Lathom ward comprised only parts of Burscough parish, rather than Lathom parish, which forms part of Newburgh ward, and that this causes confusion for the electorate.

58 The District Council further proposed creating a new two-member Scarisbrick with Halsall East ward, comprising polling district OB, OC and OD of the current Scarisbrick ward, and polling districts ED and EE of the existing Halsall ward, necessitating the re-warding of Scarisbrick parish. The remainder of Scarisbrick ward would then be placed in a new Aughton West ward, while the remainder of Halsall ward would be included in a new Downholland with Halsall West ward with Downholland parish (both described later). The Council also proposed a modified Newburgh ward comprising the current ward, less those electors generally to the west of the B5240 in Lathom parish, which would be included in a new Westhead ward.

59 The Conservative Groups proposed realigning the boundary between the wards of Burscough and Scarisbrick. They proposed that New Lane parish ward, less seven residents in Higgins Lane and the area around Crabtree Lane, Back Moss Lane, Cherry Grove and Red Cat Lane north of Mere Avenue, and Moss Lane north of footpath 105, currently in Red Cat parish ward, should be transferred from Burscough ward to Scarisbrick ward. They further proposed that the modified Burscough ward be represented by two councillors, one less than at present. The Conservative Groups argued that "this would transfer rural and semi-rural parts of Burscough into rural Scarisbrick with which they have a greater affinity".

60 The Conservative Groups further proposed modifying the boundary between the wards of Derby and Newburgh to additionally include those electors in Vale Lane in a modified Newburgh ward. They argued that "we do not believe that the splitting of Lathom parish, and the subsequent re-warding to create a new Westhead ward can be justified, when Derby ward's imbalance can

be lessened in other ways”. The Conservative Groups proposed no further change to Newburgh ward and no change to the wards of Halsall and Lathom.

61 We received a representation from Halsall Parish Council objecting to the District Council’s proposals to divide the parish of Halsall, including part of the parish in a district ward with part of Scarisbrick parish, on community identity grounds. Scarisbrick Parish Council also wrote opposing the District Council’s proposals and arguing that the parish should be combined with parts of Burscough ward.

62 The District Council’s proposals would have involved significant change to the area. In particular they divided the parishes of Halsall and Scarisbrick parish between two district wards, combining part of rural Scarisbrick with Aughton in order to achieve electoral equality. Although these proposals provided good levels of electoral equality, we considered that the Conservative Groups’ scheme would provide for comparable levels of electoral equality, while keeping communities together. They involved dividing only one parish, Burscough, between district wards, which already occurs under the current arrangements. We considered that including electors from the more rural parts of Burscough ward in a ward with the parish of Scarisbrick would create a ward with similar community interests. We therefore put forward the Conservative Groups’ proposals for the area as part of our draft recommendations. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Newburgh ward would be 10 per cent above the district average (8 per cent above by 2004), the number of electors per councillor in Halsall and Lathom wards would be equal to, and 8 per cent below the district average respectively (1 per cent below and 3 per cent above by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Burscough and Scarisbrick would be 9 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average (9 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2004).

63 In response to our draft recommendations the District Council objected to our proposals. It stated that Burscough ward should include Burscough Industrial Estate to provide more effective local government and better reflect community identity, and it proposed realigning the boundary between Burscough and Scarisbrick wards along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. The West Lancashire Conservative Association supported the District Council’s proposals, arguing that it provided a “clearer, more understandable boundary”. Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposals, stating that he was “concerned about the carving off of the New Lane area, an integral part of Burscough ward”. Councillor Dereli objected to our proposed Burscough and Scarisbrick wards, arguing that it showed “no sense of topography”, and that the Industrial Estate “provides work for the town of Burscough”. She proposed further that “any proposal should rename the wards now covered by Burscough and Lathom as Burscough” and put forward the ward names of Burscough North and Burscough South or Burscough East and Burscough West. Scarisbrick Parish Council supported our draft proposals for Scarisbrick and Burscough wards.

64 At Stage Three we received 80 representations from local residents objecting to our proposals for Burscough ward, 47 of whom voiced concerns about Burscough Industrial Estate and the proposed incinerator. Residents argued that if the incinerator was transferred to Scarisbrick ward “all that has been fought for on our behalf could be lost as it would no longer be under the control of those who have fought so hard to oppose it”. Residents also argued that our proposals would destroy the “integrity of the village of Burscough” and that the area is remote from Scarisbrick itself.

65 Halsall Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for Halsall ward. The West Lancashire Conservative Association supported our draft recommendations for both Halsall and Lathom wards.

66 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and officers from the Commission have visited the area. We considered a number of different options to better reflect community identity, however, we found that all the options would result in high levels of electoral inequality. We consider that including the Industrial Estate within Burscough ward would better reflect community identity in the south of the ward, while affecting a minimal number of electors. We are also of the opinion that the north eastern area of Burscough Town has strong community links with the remainder of Burscough Town and has poor communications links with Scarisbrick ward. We therefore propose that the boundary between Burscough and Scarisbrick wards should run south along Curlew Lane and take in all the properties on Monks Lane and Crabtree Lane and then follow the Leeds-Liverpool Canal as far as the current western boundary of Burscough ward. While we realise that this proposal would result in an electoral variance of 18 per cent in the proposed Burscough ward, we consider that this is an exceptional case and that the community links and identity shared by those electors in the north and south of Burscough Town warrant this larger than normal electoral variance.

67 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Burscough and Scarisbrick wards would be 18 per cent more and 11 per cent less than the district average initially (18 per cent more and 10 per cent fewer in 2004). Given the support received at Stage Three we are content to confirm our proposed Halsall and Lathom wards as final.

### **Aughton Town Green, Aughton Park and Downholland wards**

68 These three wards lie in the south-west corner of the district. Aughton Town Green and Aughton Park wards cover the parish of Aughton, to the south of Ormskirk town. The three-member Aughton Town Green ward is currently over-represented by 16 per cent, while the two-member Aughton Park is over-represented by 8 per cent (16 per cent below and 9 per cent below the district average in 2004). The single-member Downholland ward is predominantly rural and comprises the parishes of Downholland and Great Altcar. Under the existing electoral arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Downholland ward is 38 per cent below the district average (39 per cent below in 2004).

69 At Stage One the District Council proposed that part of Halsall parish be combined with Downholland ward, in a new single-member Downholland with Halsall West ward. It further proposed dividing the Aughton area into two new wards; Aughton East and Aughton West. Aughton West ward, represented by two councillors, would comprise the more rural western part of the parish and part of Scarisbrick ward. The remainder of Aughton parish would then form a new three-member Aughton East ward and cover the relatively urban part of the parish.

70 The Conservative Groups proposed realigning the boundary between the wards of Aughton Town Green and Aughton Park to include those electors in Westhaven Crescent, Greenwood Close, Haven Brow and Moss Delph Lane area, currently in Aughton Town Green ward, in a modified Aughton Park ward. They further proposed that the remainder of Aughton Town Green ward should be combined with the parish of Downholland in a modified Downholland ward, and

that Halsall ward should remain unchanged. They argued that they made the proposal to place Downholland with Aughton with reluctance, but that this option would keep parishes intact, including Halsall, which would remain unchanged, and provide a better alternative than dividing Scarisbrick parish and placing parts of the parish with Aughton. They further argued that “the road to Downholland Cross runs into Aughton Town Green ward so communication links exist”. The Conservative Groups proposed that this new ward be named Aughton with Downholland and be represented by three councillors.

71 We received three representations from parish councils concerning this area during Stage One. Aughton Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposal to include part of Scarisbrick parish with the parish of Aughton, and instead proposed combining Aughton with Downholland parish. Downholland Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposals to transfer electors from Halsall ward to Downholland ward on the grounds that this would be disruptive to communities. Halsall Parish Council also objected to the District Council’s proposals to divide Halsall, placing parts of the parish with Downholland and Scarisbrick for community identity reasons.

72 We carefully considered the proposals for this area and after examining the District Council’s proposals and the representations received from local parishes from the area we concluded that dividing the rural parishes of Halsall and Scarisbrick, and in particular, placing part of rural Scarisbrick with Aughton would not reflect community identities and interests. We therefore considered that the Conservative Groups’ proposals achieved comparable levels of electoral equality under a 54-member scheme while having better regard to the statutory criteria. We also note the support of Aughton Parish Council for the Conservative Groups’ proposal to place part of the parish with Downholland. We therefore put forward the Conservative Groups’ proposals for the area as part of our draft recommendations. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Aughton Park, Aughton with Downholland and Halsall wards would be equal to, 4 per cent below and equal to the district average respectively (1 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2004).

73 At Stage Three the District Council proposed that the current Aughton Park, Aughton Town Green and Downholland wards be combined to form a two-member rural ward while the Aughton Park and Town Green areas form a three-member urban ward. It argued that the high electoral variances were justified as the “community ties are the more important considerations”.

74 The West Lancashire Conservative Association objected to the District Council’s Stage Three proposals arguing that its proposals would “involve major re-warding” and would create a high electoral imbalance. Aughton Parish Council supported our proposals for Aughton Park and Aughton & Downholland wards and stated that it found the District Council’s proposals “inappropriate as they would result in the splitting up of an established community”. It stated further that it considered itself a rural parish and that as such the “joining of Aughton Town Green ward with Downholland & Great Altcar would be apt and keep the parishes intact”.

75 Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposals for the area stating that they would damage community identity. Councillor Dereli objected to our proposals for the area arguing that “although Aughton has a parish council, it is essentially part of a conurbation with Ormskirk,

while Downholland is a truly rural community”. A local resident also objected to our proposals in this area.

76 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. However, we consider that the District Council’s proposals would not best meet the statutory as their proposals would lead to an unacceptably high level of electoral variance (over 20 per cent). Given the support we have received for our proposals we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Aughton Park and Aughton & Downholland wards as final. These proposals are shown in more detail on the large map at the back of this report.

### **Bickerstaffe, Derby, Knowsley and Scott wards**

77 The single-member ward of Bickerstaffe lies in the south of the district, comprises the parishes of Bickerstaffe and Simonswood and is relatively rural in character. The three-member wards of Knowsley and Scott cover the unparished area of Ormskirk town, while Derby ward covers part of the town and a more rural area to the east. Electors in the wards of Bickerstaffe, Knowsley and Scott are all currently over-represented, by 29 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. The 1999 electoral register indicated that electors in Derby ward are under-represented by 61 per cent, however, the 2000 register shows this imbalance decreasing dramatically with a decrease in the number of electors in the ward from 7,595 to 6,629 due to more accurate registration of students at Edge Hill College.

78 During Stage One the District Council proposed a number of modifications to the boundaries of these wards. It proposed that the boundary between the wards of Scott and Knowsley be realigned so that it would follow Southport Road for its whole length. Scott ward would, however, additionally include that part of Derby ward to the west of the railway line. These proposals were supported by the Conservative Groups.

79 The District Council proposed creating a new Westhead ward comprising that part of Derby ward generally east of Scarth Hill Lane and Lady’s Walk and that part of the current Newburgh ward generally west of the B5240. Finally in this area the Council proposed that the southern part of Skelmersdale South ward should form part of an enlarged Bickerstaffe ward.

80 The Conservative Groups objected to the Council’s proposals to include part of Skelmersdale South ward with Bickerstaffe and to create a new Westhead ward. They instead proposed that part of Derby ward (polling district IA and part of polling districts IB and IE) should be combined with Bickerstaffe parish in a modified Bickerstaffe ward. They argued that this would involve the combination of areas with a similar rural character. At Stage One we also received a submission from a district councillor in Skelmersdale, requesting that the town wards retain their external boundary.

81 We carefully considered all the representations and evidence received during Stage One. Given the local consensus and the improved levels of electoral equality that would result, we adopted the District Council’s proposals to realign the boundaries between the wards of Knowsley and Scott and between the wards of Derby and Scott. However, we did not consider that the District Council’s proposals for the remainder of this area would improve electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We considered that its proposal for a new

Westhead ward would involve creating a parish ward for Lathom parish of insufficient size to provide for convenient and effective local government at parish level. We further considered that its proposals to include part of Skelmersdale South ward with the more rural parish of Bickerstaffe would not reflect communities in the area. We concurred with the views of Councillor Hunes that proposed warding arrangements should reflect the community identity of Skelmersdale, by reflecting the boundaries of the town.

82 We therefore adopted the Conservative Groups' proposals in the wards of Derby and Bickerstaffe, although we proposed the inclusion of polling district IA and parts of polling district IE only to provide a more clearly identifiable boundary. The number of electors per councillor in this enlarged Bickerstaffe ward would be 3 per cent above the district average (2 per cent by 2004). We also proposed adopting the District Council and Conservative Groups' proposals for the remainder of Derby ward and the wards of Knowsley and Scott. Under a 54-member council the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Derby, Knowsley and Scott would be 31 per cent above, 4 per cent below and equal to the average respectively (10 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 2 per cent below the average by 2004). Although these proposals would initially show a large imbalance in Derby ward, the levels of electoral equality under both the 2000 electoral register and the five-year forecasts would be greatly improved.

83 At Stage Three the West Lancashire Conservative Group supported our proposals for the area. Bickerstaffe Parish Council supported our proposal for Bickerstaffe ward as too did Simonswood Parish Council who stated that they "incorporate electors of a similar cultural background".

84 Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposed Bickerstaffe ward. Councillor Gains objected to our proposals for Derby and Bickerstaffe wards, arguing that the areas transferred to Bickerstaffe ward see themselves as "part of a greater Lathom". He proposed that the District Council's Stage One proposal for a single-member ward be adopted with minor amendments, and suggested it should be called Westhead & Lathom Park. He stated that our proposals divide "a natural community of interest" and that should the area achieve Parish Council status it would find itself in three polling areas. He further proposed that a decision be postponed until further information was gathered. A local resident stated that they had "no strong feelings against being joined with Bickerstaffe" but stated that Councillor Gains' proposal had "much more to commend it". Another local resident stated that they objected to the Westhead area being joined to Bickerstaffe, arguing that South Lathom including Westhead should have its own district councillor.

85 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. As we have received no specific comments with regard to Knowsley and Scott wards we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. We are not minded to change our proposals in Bickerstaffe and Derby wards, having not been convinced that a new Westhead & Lathom ward would better provide for convenient and effective local government whilst having regard to the statutory criteria. In the light of the support that our draft recommendations received, we are content to confirm our proposed Bickerstaffe and Derby wards as final. These proposals are shown in more detail on the large map at the back of this report.

## **Birch Green, Digmoor, Moorside, Skelmersdale North, Skelmersdale South and Tanhouse wards**

86 These six wards cover the unparished urban area of Skelmersdale. Digmoor and Moorside wards are each represented by two councillors, while Birch Green, Skelmersdale North, Skelmersdale South and Tanhouse are each represented by three councillors. The town as a whole merits its current allocation of 16 councillors, however, the current ward boundaries do not provide for an equitable distribution of councillors throughout the town. The ward of Birch Green is currently under-represented by 68 per cent (72 per cent in 2004), while the remaining wards are all over-represented: Digmoor ward by 3 per cent, Moorside by 10 per cent, Skelmersdale North by 10 per cent, Skelmersdale South by 14 per cent and Tanhouse by 27 per cent (5 per cent, 12 per cent, 13 per cent, 14 per cent and 25 per cent in 2004).

87 During Stage One the District Council proposed dividing Birch Green ward, creating a new three-member Ashurst ward, covering polling districts QE and QF and part of polling district QD. Under the Council's scheme the remainder of polling district QD, polling districts QA and QC, and part of polling district QB would comprise a modified Birch Green ward. The remainder of polling district QD would form part of a new Skelmersdale East ward, with the majority of the current Tanhouse ward (less the area generally to the east of Stanhouse Road) and polling district TD from the current Skelmersdale North ward.

88 As stated earlier, the Council proposed that part of the current Skelmersdale South ward should be included in an enlarged Bickerstaffe ward; it further proposed that polling district UC of Skelmersdale South ward should be included in a new Skelmersdale Central ward with the remainder of Skelmersdale North, leaving a modified Skelmersdale South ward comprising the remainder of that ward. The Council did not propose any changes to the wards of Digmoor and Moorside.

89 The Conservative Groups also proposed creating a new three-member Ashurst ward on similar boundaries to those proposed by the Council, but did not propose realigning the boundary between the wards of Birch Green and Tanhouse. They did, however, propose realigning the boundary between Digmoor ward and Tanhouse ward, including those electors in Eskbank in Tanhouse ward. The Conservative Groups also proposed including polling district TA, currently in Skelmersdale North ward, in Skelmersdale South ward. Finally in this area the Conservative Groups proposed realigning the boundary between the wards of Digmoor and Moorside.

90 During Stage One we also received a submission from Councillor Hunes arguing that the communities within the town of Skelmersdale should be reflected and that the town should continue to be represented by 16 councillors, with three councillors each representing Skelmersdale North and Skelmersdale South wards.

91 Given the evidence available, we adopted parts of both the District Council and Conservative Groups' schemes. In order to address the significant levels of under-representation in Birch Green ward, we adopted proposals to create a new three-member Ashurst ward, comprising polling districts QE, QF and part of QD, although on slightly amended boundaries. We did not, however, propose any further boundary modifications to Birch Green ward which would then be represented by two councillors. Although improvements to electoral equality were possible, we

considered that these proposals would also provide for clear and identifiable boundaries and would generally reflect communities in the area. We were also persuaded to adopt the Conservative Groups' proposals for the wards of Digmaor, Moorside and Tanhouse.

92 We considered the Council's proposals to include part of Skelmersdale South ward in a ward with Bickerstaffe parish, to include part of Tanhouse ward with Skelmersdale North ward (crossing the River Tawd) and the proposal to include part of Tanhouse ward in a modified Up Holland North ward, however we did not consider that these proposals would reflect local communities. We concurred with the views of Councillor Hunes that the town area should be considered together, however, given the distribution of electors we did not propose the retention of two three-member wards for Skelmersdale North and Skelmersdale South. We proposed instead that, while Skelmersdale South should continue to be represented by three councillors, Skelmersdale North ward should be represented by two councillors.

93 These proposals would result in the number of electors per councillor in Ashurst ward being equal to the average (6 per cent above the average in 2004) and 3 per cent below the average in Birch Green ward (6 per cent below the average in 2004). The number of electors per councillor in Tanhouse ward being 3 per cent below the average (equal to the average by 2004), 4 per cent below the average in Digmaor ward (6 per cent by 2004) and 1 per cent below the average in Moorside (3 per cent by 2004).

94 At Stage Three the District Council objected to our proposals in the area. It proposed that the boundaries of Birch Green and Tanhouse wards and Digmaor and Moorside be realigned. Councillors McElhinney, Sealey and McElhinney proposed a boundary amendment between Ashurst and Birch Green wards arguing that it "does not make sense" to move the areas of Fairhaven, Fairlie, Fairstead and Falklands into Ashurst ward, as they belong to the Birch Green Estate Management Board's area of responsibility. Councillor Sealey further argued that Skelmersdale should have "17.5-18 councillors representing it". He stated that our proposals for Skelmersdale North ward change natural boundaries and break up local ties in both Skelmersdale North and Bickerstaffe wards. He also argued that the natural boundaries of Tanhouse and Digmaor wards had "not been taken into consideration" and that the Commission had "failed to recognise ... the socio-economic factors ... when deciding how many councillors are warranted per ward". Councillors White and Gibson objected to our proposals in Skelmersdale North and Skelmersdale South wards and argued that moving polling district TD to Skelmersdale South ward rearranged a traditional and identifiable boundary. They proposed moving 284 electors to Skelmersdale South ward, which they argued justified the need for "both wards to maintain the same level of representation, i.e. 3 councillors each". Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposed Skelmersdale South and Bickerstaffe wards.

95 The West Lancashire Conservative Association objected to the District Council's proposals for Skelmersdale, arguing that in urban areas it "should be possible to draw boundaries closely enough defined to minimise electoral variance" and that the Council's proposals for Digmaor and Moorside would result in electoral variances of over 10 per cent.

96 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. Under a 54-member council Skelmersdale is entitled to 16 councillors and so we are not proposing an increase in the number of councillors representing the area. We have some

sympathy for the proposals submitted by the District Council and Councillors McElhinney, Sealey and McElhinney for Ashurst and Birch Green wards but given the lack of local consultation we are not convinced that they would have local support. Also, in the light of the support for our draft recommendations from the West Lancashire Conservative Association we are confirming our draft recommendations for Ashurst and Birch Green wards as final.

97 We also considered the District Council's proposals for Digmaor, Moorside and Tanhouse wards but are of the opinion that they would have an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality given that there is a viable alternative available. We have also considered the proposal submitted by Councillors White and Gibson. Again, these proposals would lead to an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality in Skelmersdale North and Skelmersdale South wards which would be unwarranted in the light of the alternative warding arrangements which are available. Therefore we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Digmaor, Moorside, Skelmersdale North, Skelmersdale South and Tanhouse wards as final. These recommendations are shown in detail on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Parbold, Up Holland North, Up Holland South and Wrightington wards**

98 These wards are situated in the east of the district and are each represented by two councillors. Parbold ward, comprising the parishes of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale and Parbold is currently under-represented by 3 per cent (2 per cent in 2004), while Up Holland South ward comprising the Up Holland parish wards of Hall Green, Chequer Lane, Tontine and Crawford and Wrightington ward comprising Wrightington parish are over-represented by 18 per cent and 25 per cent respectively (10 per cent and 24 per cent in 2004). Up Holland North ward comprising the Up Holland parish wards of Roby Mill, Village and Newgate currently has the same number of electors per councillor as the district average (2 per cent fewer in 2004).

99 At Stage One the District Council proposed warding the parish of Hilldale, currently in Parbold ward, with part of the parish being included in a modified Wrightington ward along with Wrightington parish and the Roby Mill parish ward of Up Holland, currently in Up Holland North ward. Additionally the Council proposed that Up Holland North ward included part of the current Tanhouse ward as described earlier. The Council proposed no change to Up Holland South ward.

100 The Conservative Groups proposed no change to Parbold ward, but proposed the creation of a new Up Holland ward comprising the current Up Holland South ward and that part of Up Holland North ward generally south of Mill Lane, Dingle Road, Grove Road and Parliament Street. The remainder of Up Holland North ward and the parish of Wrightington would then form a modified Wrightington ward.

101 We also received submissions from the parish councils of Up Holland and Wrightington. Up Holland Parish Council requested that the number of parish councillors representing the parish ward of Chequer Lane be increased from one to two, but did not make specific comments on district warding in the area. Wrightington Parish Council requested that the area continue to be represented by two district councillors.

102 Having considered all the evidence available we did not consider that warding Parbold parish would reflect community identities in the area or is necessary under a council size of 54, when the number of electors per councillor in Parbold ward would be 2 per cent above the district average initially, equal to the average in 2004. We therefore proposed adopting the Conservative Groups' proposal for no change to Parbold ward. We did not consider that including part of the current unparished Tanhouse ward in a modified Up Holland North ward, as proposed by the District Council, would most accurately reflect community identities in the area. We therefore adopted the Conservative Groups' proposals for the wards of Wrightington and Up Holland. We considered that such warding arrangements would reflect communities in the area, retaining the majority of the Up Holland area in a single ward, while also resulting in improved levels of electoral equality. This proposal would not involve warding parishes for the first time, although it would require modifications to the parish warding for Up Holland parish. These proposals would result in the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Up Holland and Wrightington being equal to the average initially (4 per cent above the average by 2004) and 2 per cent above the average (2 per cent in 2004) respectively.

103 At Stage Three the District Council objected to our proposed Up Holland and Wrightington wards, arguing that our proposals attempted to "secure electoral equality in Wrightington but at the expense of community ties within Up Holland". They proposed reinstating Up Holland North and Up Holland South wards, represented by two councillors each, transferring Hallbridge Gardens to Up Holland South ward and Dalton Parish into Up Holland North ward instead of Parbold ward. Hilldale and Bispham parishes would be transferred to a single-member Wrightington ward, excluding Dangerous Corner, and the remaining part of Parbold ward would be combined with Appley Bridge in a two-member ward. It argued that this would "reflect certain characteristics common to each" and better reflect the geography and topography of the area.

104 The parish council of Up Holland objected to our proposals in the area, arguing that they incorporated areas of Up Holland "distinct from Roby Mill and remote from the communities that make up the Wrightington District ward". It proposed that the current Up Holland district and Roby Mill parish boundaries remain unchanged. Colin Pickthall MP objected to our proposals for Up Holland and Wrightington wards. Councillor Sealey objected to our proposal to place Roby Mill in Wrightington ward, arguing that our proposals went against our own guidelines.

105 The West Lancashire Conservative Association stated that the District Council's proposals would be "more disruptive than the Commission's" arguing that it would involve the "transfer of Hilldale, Bispham and Dalton parishes to other and alien district wards".

106 We received 6 representations from local residents objecting to our proposals for the area. Three residents raised concerns with regard to Green Belt issues in the current Up Holland North ward, one resident stating that boundary changes "could lead to a change in decisions made, which could drastically change the environment for Up Holland and Roby Mill." Another resident argued that the areas of Up Holland and Wrightington are physically separate and that Up Holland is a "fairly cohesive community". A further resident argued that living in a small community meant that their councillor was local and accessible. Another local resident objected to our proposal to include Hallbridge Gardens in Wrightington ward, arguing that they did not believe they would be provided with the facilities and support they need, while another resident

argued that our proposals would disrupt ecclesiastical boundaries and did not take into account “natural community and cultural boundaries”.

107 At Stage Three the parish councils of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale and Parbold all supported our draft recommendations for Parbold ward. Dalton Parish Council stated that the existing arrangements reflect “social and geographical links which have strengthened over the years”. We received representations from four local residents who also supported our draft proposals for Parbold ward.

108 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received during the Stage Three. We have considered the District Council’s proposals for the area but note the disruption they would cause to the parishes of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale and Parbold, who all support our draft recommendations for Parbold ward. We have no evidence that the District Council’s proposals would be more acceptable to local residents than our draft recommendations, since they do not appear to have been the subject of local consultation. We considered a number of different warding options for Wrightington and Up Holland wards but they resulted in unacceptably high level of electoral inequality which we judged not to be warranted in terms of the improved community identity. We consider that those electors in the Roby Mill parish ward of Up Holland parish have good transport links with Wrightington and that retaining the existing, easily identifiable boundary along Dingle Road and Parliament Street would result in minimal disruption to these electors. However, we do consider that the houses on the northern side of Mill Lane from number 26 to 36 should be united with those on the southern side of Mill Lane in Up Holland ward in order to better reflect community identity and links. Under our final recommendations Parbold, Up Holland and Wrightington wards would have 2 per cent more, 1 per cent more and 1 per cent more than the district average currently (equal to, 5 per cent more and 1 per cent more in 2004). These recommendations are shown in more detail on Map A3 in Appendix A.

## **Electoral Cycle**

109 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

110 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation to retain the existing electoral cycle as final.

## Conclusions

111 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:

- boundary modifications between Burscough and Scarisbrick wards;
- a minor boundary realignment between Up Holland and Wroughtington wards.

112 We conclude that, in West Lancashire:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 55 to 54;
- there should be 25 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

113 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

|  | 1999 electorate      |                       | 2004 forecast electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements     | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors  | 55                   | 54                    | 55                       | 54                    |
| Number of wards  | 26                   | 25                    | 26                       | 25                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                              | 1,568                | 1,597                 | 1,591                    | 1,621                 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 13                   | 4                     | 14                       | 1                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 8                    | 1                     | 8                        | 0                     |

114 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 4 with only Derby ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with only one ward, Burscough, varying by more than 10 per cent from

the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

West Lancashire District Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

**Parish Council Electoral Arrangements**

115 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 changes to the warding arrangements for parishes of Aughton, Burscough and Up Holland to reflect the proposed district wards.

116 The parish of Aughton is currently served by 12 councillors representing five wards: Holt Green, Town Green, Delph, Christ Church and North East. In the light of the proposed boundary amendment between Aughton Park and Aughton & Downholland district wards we proposed as part of our draft recommendations a consequential minor boundary realignment between the parish wards of Christ Church and Delph. We received no further submissions regarding this amendment at Stage Three, and we therefore confirm our draft recommendation for the warding of Aughton parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Aughton Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Christ Church (three councillors), Delph (three councillors), Holt (one councillor), North East (two councillors) and Town Green (three councillors). The parish ward boundaries of Delph and Christ Church should be modified to reflect the proposed district ward boundaries between Aughton & Downholland district ward and Aughton Park district ward, as illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

117 The parish of Burscough is currently served by 14 councillors representing seven wards: Red Cat, New Lane, Stanley, Richmond Park, Burscough Town, St John’s and Ellerbrook. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed a boundary realignment between the parish wards of Red Cat and Stanley in order to reflect the district ward boundaries between Burscough and Scarisbrick wards. We also proposed a redistribution of parish councillors between these two wards, with Red Cat and Stanley parish wards being represented by one and three parish councillors respectively.

118 At Stage Three we received opposition to our proposed district warding arrangements from the District Council, the West Lancashire Conservative Association, Colin Pickthall MP and 80 local residents. Scarisbrick Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. In the light of the responses we have revised our proposed district warding arrangements. We therefore confirm that the boundary between the parish wards of New Lane and Burscough Town should be amended accordingly.

**Final Recommendation**  
Burscough Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Burscough Town (two councillors), Ellerbrook (three councillors), New Lane (one councillor), Red Cat (one councillor), Richmond Park (one councillor), Stanley (three councillors) and St John's (three councillors). We are also proposing that the parish ward boundary be realigned to run along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal between the parish wards of New Lane and Burscough to reflect the district ward boundary.

119 The parish of Up Holland is currently served by 10 councillors, representing seven wards: Roby Mill, Village, Newgate, Crawford, Chequer Lane, Hall Green and Tontine. In the light of our draft recommendations for district ward boundaries in this area we proposed boundary modifications between the parish wards of Roby Mill, Village and Newgate. At the request of Up Holland Parish Council we also proposed that Chequer Lane parish ward be served by two councillors, instead of the current one, thereby increasing the total number of councillors on the parish council from 10 to 11.

120 In response to our draft recommendations the parish council of Up Holland and two local residents queried that an enlarged Roby Mill parish ward would only be served by one parish councillor. Having considered all the evidence received, we propose that Roby Mill parish ward be served by two councillors, instead of the current one, and with the additional parish councillor allocated to Chequer Lane parish ward the number of councillors on the parish council would increase from 10 to 12. We are also proposing that the district ward boundary between Wrightington and Up Holland wards be amended to unite the north and south sides of Mill Lane in Up Holland ward. We therefore propose that the parish ward boundary between Newgate and Roby Mill parish wards be amended accordingly. We confirm these and the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
Up Holland Parish Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, instead of the current 10, representing seven wards: Roby Mill (two councillors), Village (one councillor), Newgate (three councillors), Crawford (one councillor), Hall Green (two councillors), Tontine (one councillor) and Chequer Lane (two councillors). We propose that the boundary between the parish wards of Roby Mill, Village and Newgate should reflect the district ward boundary as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

121 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
For parish councils, elections should continue to be held at the same time as elections for the principal authority.

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for West Lancashire*

## 6 NEXT STEPS

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

123 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 before 17 October 2000.

124 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 West Lancashire: Detailed Mapping**

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

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

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding for Burscough and Scarisbrick.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding for Up Holland and Wrightington.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the Aughton, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale areas.

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for West Lancashire: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding for Burscough and Scarisbrick*

*Map A3 : Proposed Warding for Up Holland and Wrightington*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for West Lancashire

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.

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

| Ward name    | Constituent areas   |
|--------------|---|
| Burscough    | Burscough ward (part – Burscough, Richmond Park and Stanley parish wards and the Red Cat parish ward (part) of Burscough parish)  |
| Scarisbrick  | Burscough ward (part – New Lane parish ward and Red Cat parish ward (part) of Burscough parish); Scarisbrick ward (Scarisbrick parish)  |
| Up Holland   | Up Holland North ward (part – Newgate parish ward (part) and Village parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish); Up Holland South ward (the Chequer Lane, Crawford, Hall Green and Tontine parish wards of Up Holland parish) |
| Wrightington | Up Holland North ward (part – the Roby Mill parish ward and Newgate parish ward (part) and Village parish ward (part) of Up Holland parish); Wrightington ward (Wrightington parish)  |

*Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

| Ward name    | Number of councillors | Electorate (1999) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2004) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Burscough    | 2                     | 3,495             | 1,748                             | 9                       | 3,524             | 1,762                             | 9                       |
| Scarisbrick  | 2                     | 3,144             | 1,572                             | -2                      | 3,206             | 1,603                             | -1                      |
| Up Holland   | 3                     | 4,789             | 1,596                             | 0                       | 5,078             | 1,693                             | 4                       |
| Wrightington | 2                     | 3,267             | 1,634                             | 2                       | 3,322             | 1,661                             | 2                       |

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

