

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Blackpool

Report to the Electoral Commission

*April 2002*

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



## WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to the Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No 3692). The Order also transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Blackpool.



## SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Blackpool's electoral arrangements on 27 March 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 October 2001, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, the Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received by the LGCE during consultation on its draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission.**

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

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

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 87-88) are that:

- **Blackpool Borough Council should have 42 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one;**
- **the current system of whole-council elections should be retained.**

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

- **In all of the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to improve, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 4 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 14 May 2002:

**The Secretary  
Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
30 Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

*Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary*

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

*Notes: 1 Blackpool is entirely unparished.*

*2 The large map in the back of the report illustrates all of the proposed wards outlined above.*

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Blackpool

|    | Ward name       | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|----|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Anchorsholme    | 2                     | 5,506             | 2,753                             | 3                       | 5,506             | 2,753                             | 1                       |
| 2  | Bispham         | 2                     | 5,054             | 2,527                             | -5                      | 5,246             | 2,623                             | -4                      |
| 3  | Bloomfield      | 2                     | 5,281             | 2,641                             | -1                      | 5,417             | 2,709                             | 0                       |
| 4  | Brunswick       | 2                     | 5,438             | 2,719                             | 2                       | 5,438             | 2,719                             | 0                       |
| 5  | Claremont       | 2                     | 5,624             | 2,812                             | 5                       | 5,646             | 2,823                             | 4                       |
| 6  | Clifton         | 2                     | 5,346             | 2,673                             | 0                       | 5,346             | 2,673                             | -2                      |
| 7  | Greenlands      | 2                     | 5,076             | 2,538                             | -5                      | 5,592             | 2,796                             | 3                       |
| 8  | Hawes Side      | 2                     | 5,305             | 2,653                             | -1                      | 5,351             | 2,676                             | -2                      |
| 9  | Highfield       | 2                     | 5,333             | 2,667                             | 0                       | 5,333             | 2,667                             | -2                      |
| 10 | Ingthorpe       | 2                     | 5,269             | 2,635                             | -1                      | 5,683             | 2,842                             | 4                       |
| 11 | Layton          | 2                     | 5,506             | 2,753                             | 3                       | 5,506             | 2,753                             | 1                       |
| 12 | Marton          | 2                     | 5,346             | 2,673                             | 0                       | 5,346             | 2,673                             | -2                      |
| 13 | Norbreck        | 2                     | 5,289             | 2,645                             | -1                      | 5,289             | 2,645                             | -3                      |
| 14 | Park            | 2                     | 5,315             | 2,658                             | -1                      | 5,519             | 2,760                             | 1                       |
| 15 | Squires Gate    | 2                     | 5,292             | 2,646                             | -1                      | 5,342             | 2,671                             | -2                      |
| 16 | Stanley         | 2                     | 5,183             | 2,592                             | -3                      | 5,487             | 2,744                             | 1                       |
| 17 | Talbot          | 2                     | 5,537             | 2,769                             | 4                       | 5,557             | 2,779                             | 2                       |
| 18 | Tyldesley       | 2                     | 5,399             | 2,700                             | 1                       | 5,415             | 2,708                             | 0                       |
| 19 | Victoria        | 2                     | 5,298             | 2,649                             | -1                      | 5,334             | 2,667                             | -2                      |
| 20 | Warbreck        | 2                     | 5,367             | 2,684                             | 0                       | 5,389             | 2,695                             | -1                      |
| 21 | Waterloo        | 2                     | 5,496             | 2,748                             | 3                       | 5,496             | 2,748                             | 1                       |
|    | <b>Totals</b>   | <b>42</b>             | <b>112,260</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                | <b>114,238</b>    | <b>-</b>                          | <b>-</b>                |
|    | <b>Averages</b> | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,673</b>                      | <b>-</b>                | <b>-</b>          | <b>2,720</b>                      | <b>-</b>                |

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

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

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Blackpool. The review of Blackburn with Darwen is due to be completed later this year while the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) have now all been reviewed. These reviews are part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

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

3 In making final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692), i.e. the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - (c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Blackpool was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

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

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

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Blackpool is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and argued that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 27 March 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Blackpool Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified

Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Lancashire Local Councils Association, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 July 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 9 October 2001 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Blackpool*, and ended on 3 December 2001. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

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

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,551 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,596 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in two of the 22 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Anchorsholme ward where the councillor represents 13 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Blackpool*

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

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

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

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



### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received five representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Blackpool Borough Council, and borough-wide schemes from the Conservative Party, North West Region (hereafter referred to as the Conservatives) and the Blackpool 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance (hereafter referred to as the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance). It also received two representations from local organisations. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Blackpool*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which provided an excellent level of electoral equality and retained a uniform pattern of two-member wards. However, it moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, most notably in Bispham, Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Ingthorpe, Norbreck and Warbreck wards, to provide a better balance between electoral equality and the provision of strong, easily identifiable boundaries, while taking account of community identities. It proposed that:

- Blackpool Borough Council should be served by 42 councillors, compared with the current 44, representing 21 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

**Draft Recommendation**

Blackpool Borough Council should comprise 42 councillors, serving 21 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards varying by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality was forecast to improve, with no ward varying by more than 4 per cent from the borough average in 2006.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, four representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Blackpool Borough Council.

### **Blackpool Borough Council**

18 Blackpool Borough Council supported the draft recommendations subject to three proposed changes. It proposed an amendment to the boundary between Brunswick ward and Claremont ward, an amendment to the boundary between Ingthorpe ward and Norbreck ward and an amendment to the boundary between Greenlands ward and Warbreck ward. The Council argued that these proposals would provide a better reflection of community identity without leading to a worsening of electoral equality.

### **Other Representations**

19 A further three representations were received in response to the draft recommendations from councillors and residents. Councillor Fowler proposed an amendment to the boundary between Squires Gate ward and Waterloo ward for reasons of community identity. Councillor Clapham proposed transferring a number of electors from Warbreck ward to Bispham ward to provide a stronger, more easily identifiable boundary and to provide a better reflection of community identity. A resident proposed altering the electoral cycle to hold elections biennially, in order to improve turnout.



## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

20 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Blackpool is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

23 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 minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

24 Since 1996 and the last review of the area, there has been a 3 per cent decrease in the electorate of Blackpool borough. At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2 per cent from 112,260 to 114,238 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects substantial growth in Greenlands and Ingthorpe wards, although reasonable growth is also forecast in Bispham, Alexandra, Park and Stanley wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that these figures represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

25 No comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts were received during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

## **Council Size**

26 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

27 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the Council's proposal for a council of 42 members, as it considered that this would allow "a scheme to be developed which keeps many of the existing well-known wards and their boundaries intact whilst delivering electoral equality". The Conservatives supported the Council's proposal for a reduced council of 42 members. The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed a reduction in council size from 44 members to 43 members but did not provide any argumentation or evidence to support this reduction.

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

29 During Stage Three there were no representations relating to council size and we are therefore content to endorse the LGCE's draft recommendation for a reduced council size of 42 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

30 At Stage One the LGCE carefully considered all the representations received, including the borough-wide schemes put forward by Blackpool Borough Council, the Conservatives and the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance. The Borough Council and the Conservative schemes both proposed a system of 21 two-member wards while the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance put forward a scheme based on 23 one-, two- and three-member wards. Neither the Conservatives nor the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance were able to provide the LGCE with complete 2006 figures for their proposed wards, which made it difficult for the LGCE to compare the respective viability of each scheme.

31 In the light of the excellent levels of electoral equality provided by the Borough Council's scheme, the LGCE based its proposals on the Council's scheme. The LGCE considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality, the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and the need to secure effective and convenient local government than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, the LGCE accepted the point made by the Conservatives that, in certain areas, stronger boundaries would be attainable without having an undue impact on electoral equality, and it moved away from the Borough Council's proposals in certain areas to provide what it considered to be a better balance between electoral equality and the provision of strong, easily identifiable boundaries.

32 In response to the draft recommendations report, the Council supported the majority of the proposals but put forward three amendments, which they argued, would provide a better representation of community identity. Councillors proposed a further two amendments.

33 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and we are proposing three amendments to the LGCE's draft recommendations. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

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

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

### **Brunswick, Claremont, Greenlands, Talbot and Warbreck wards**

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

36 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed the retention of the existing boundaries of Claremont ward apart from a modification to the northern boundary transferring those electors south of Carshalton Road and Derby Road, who are currently in Warbreck ward, into Claremont ward. The Council proposed moving 323 electors from the area to the east of Devonshire Road from Greenlands ward into Warbreck ward for reasons of electoral equality. It proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Brunswick ward by moving the area bordered by Cauce Street, Collingwood Avenue and Rathlyn Avenue from Brunswick ward into Layton ward. It also proposed an amendment to the western boundary of Brunswick ward with the area east of Grosvenor Street and Larkhill Street transferring from Talbot ward into Brunswick ward. It put forward a proposal to transfer those electors east of Ripon Road and north of Gloucester Avenue, currently in Foxhall ward, into an enlarged Talbot ward. Finally, the Council proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Warbreck ward, by transferring all the electors to the east of Warbreck Drive and south of Lowther Avenue, currently in Bispham ward, to Warbreck ward. With the exception of the alteration to the northern boundary of Claremont ward which was “to better reflect the identities and interests of the local community in the Claremont West area”, all of the amendments put forward by the Council were in the interests of providing better electoral equality.

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

38 The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed a new warding arrangement in this area with a shoreside two-member ward called Tower ward, comprising parts of the existing Claremont, Foxhall, Talbot and Warbreck wards. It also proposed a modified Claremont ward, comprising parts of the existing Claremont, Greenlands and Warbreck wards. The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed the retention of the majority of the existing Greenlands ward except for the transfer of an area from the south of Ingthorpe ward into Greenlands ward and the transfer of an area in the south of Greenlands ward into Claremont ward. It proposed a modified Talbot ward comprising parts of the existing Brunswick, Claremont and Talbot wards. It also proposed transferring most of the existing Brunswick ward electors into a new Park ward with parts of the existing Foxhall, Layton, Talbot and Tyldesley wards.

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

40 The LGCE carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. Its draft recommendations were based on the Council's proposals but included certain amendments which, it considered, provided a better balance between electoral equality and the provision of strong, easily identifiable boundaries.

41 The LGCE was unable to consider any area in isolation and, given that it based its proposals on a 21-ward and 42-member council, it was unable to adopt any of the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance's proposals in this area as their proposed wards were not compatible with its proposed council size and warding arrangements. It looked carefully at the northern boundary of Claremont ward and recognised that both the Council's and the Conservatives' proposals at least partly took into account the representations received by the St Paul's Medical Centre and the Claremont West Family Centre. However, neither of these proposed boundaries moved Claremont Primary School or Claremont Library into Claremont ward as put forward by the St Paul's Medical Centre, a proposal which the LGCE considered had merit. In view of this, and for reasons of community identity, the LGCE proposed a new boundary to run behind the houses on the south side of Warley Road. This moved St Paul's Medical Centre, the Claremont West Family Centre, Claremont Primary School and Claremont Library from Warbreck ward into Claremont ward. It acknowledged the point made by the Conservatives regarding stronger boundaries, but considered that their proposal for the eastern boundary of Claremont ward would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. It also looked closely at the southern boundary of Claremont ward and proposed an amendment to the existing boundary by transferring electors south of Talbot Road and east of Devonshire Road, currently in Claremont ward, into Brunswick ward. This followed part of the boundary proposed by the Conservatives and would, it considered, provide a more easily identifiable boundary while retaining a good level of electoral equality.

42 The LGCE's proposals for a revised Claremont ward had a knock-on effect on the surrounding wards and, for reasons of electoral equality, it proposed an amendment to the western boundary of Brunswick ward. The amended boundary would move electors in the area bordered to the south by Church Street and the west by Buchanan Street from the existing Talbot ward into Brunswick ward. The LGCE endorsed the remainder of the Borough Council's proposed Talbot ward. It proposed adopting the Council's proposed change to the eastern boundary of Brunswick ward with one slight change which would not affect any electors. This was to move the boundary to run behind the

properties on Heathway Avenue, as it considered that this provided a stronger boundary than the Council's proposal of a path in Kingscote Park.

43 The LGCE carefully considered the argument put forward by the Conservatives that Devonshire Road currently provides a strong and well-defined boundary between Greenlands, Warbreck and Claremont wards and looked carefully at the possibility of retaining this boundary in its entirety. However, it considered that any arrangement to retain this boundary, including the Conservative option detailed earlier, would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. Consequently, it proposed an amended version of the Council's proposed boundary between Greenlands and Warbreck wards. This boundary would move all electors on Dudley Avenue, Milford Avenue, Banbury Avenue and Raymond Avenue from Greenlands ward into Warbreck ward. In order to improve electoral equality, the LGCE also proposed an amendment to the Council's proposed northern boundary of Warbreck ward. The LGCE's proposed boundary would run around North Shore Golf Course, behind the houses on the south side of Duchess Drive, south along Warbreck Drive and then west along Wolverton Avenue to the Promenade. It considered that its proposals for these five wards would best meet the statutory criteria.

44 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Brunswick, Claremont and Talbot wards would be 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (4 per cent above, equal to and 2 per cent above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Greenlands and Warbreck wards would be 5 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (3 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

45 At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed an amendment to the proposed boundary between Brunswick ward and Claremont ward. The Council proposed retaining some of the electors in the Rossall Road area in Claremont ward, rather than transferring them into Brunswick ward. It argued that "there is little, if any, commonality of interest between the Queenstown community and those who occupy the older terrace properties to the east and the north." It stated that "they have a much greater and long established affinity with those living in other similar properties within the Claremont ward (both to the south and to the north of Talbot Road)." This amendment transposes the electoral variances of these two wards but does not otherwise alter them. The Council's proposed boundary would retain electors on the northern side of Stirling Road (1-12), the western side of Mather Street (1-43), the southern side of Talbot Road (368-428) and all those living on Cypress Grove, Laburnum Street, Rossall Road, Healey Street (1-28) and Empire Grove in Claremont ward rather than transferring them into Brunswick ward, as proposed by the LGCE's draft recommendations. The Council also put forward an amendment to the proposed boundary between Greenlands and Warbreck wards, arguing that the properties in the Ley Road and Warbreck Hill Road area "have a much greater affinity with that ward [Warbreck] than the properties selected for transfer by the Commission". This proposed amendment would not affect electoral variances.

46 Councillor Clapham proposed an amendment to the proposed boundary between Bispham and Warbreck wards. He proposed running the boundary east along Shaftesbury Avenue to the junction with Devonshire Road so that all the electors in the Ashley Close and The Knowle area would be contained within Bispham ward. He argued that "the residents of this small area consider themselves to live in Bispham, as the local road signs historically display the boundary of Bispham close to the junction of Shaftesbury Avenue and Devonshire Road."

47 Having carefully considered the representations received, the argumentation put forward by the Council for an amendment to the proposed boundary between Brunswick and Claremont wards has

been deemed persuasive, and it has been decided to move away from the draft recommendations and modify the LGCE's proposed boundary between these two wards. The proposed amendment would provide a better reflection of community identity without worsening electoral equality and so it has been decided to endorse the Council's proposed amendment in this area.

48 However, it has not been accepted that the Council's proposed amendment to the boundary between Greenlands and Warbreck wards offers an improvement on the LGCE's draft recommendations and therefore the LGCE's draft recommendations are being retained in this area. Councillor Clapham's proposed amendment to the boundary between Bispham and Warbreck wards has also not been adopted, as it is considered that North Shore Golf Course provides a natural break between the properties in Ashley Close and The Knowle area and the rest of Bispham ward.

49 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Brunswick, Claremont and Talbot wards would be 2 per cent, 5 per cent and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to, 4 per cent and 2 per cent above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Greenlands and Warbreck wards would be 5 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (3 per cent above the borough average and 1 per cent below the borough average by 2006). These wards are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards**

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

51 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed an amendment to the existing Ingthorpe ward, transferring all the electors west of Allhallows Road and north of Red Bank Road, currently in Ingthorpe ward, into Bispham ward. It also proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Bispham ward transferring all the electors to the west of Norcliffe Road, currently in Norbreck ward, into Bispham ward. The Council put forward an amendment to the southern boundary of Anchorsholme ward to move the electors in the area bordered by Brentwood Avenue and Rockwood Avenue from Anchorsholme ward into Norbreck ward. These proposals would provide much improved levels of electoral equality.

52 The Conservatives proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Bispham ward by transferring all the electors south of Guildford Avenue and Norbreck Road, currently in Norbreck ward, into Bispham ward. They proposed the retention of the existing Ingthorpe ward but put forward a modification to Anchorsholme ward by transferring the electors in the area bordered by Lockerbie Avenue, Luton Road and Fleetwood Avenue from Anchorsholme ward into Norbreck ward.

53 The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed a new North Shore ward, comprising parts of the existing Bispham and Warbreck wards. It also put forward a revised Norbreck ward consisting of part of the existing Bispham and Norbreck wards but transferring a small area from Norbreck ward into Anchorsholme ward. The majority of the existing Ingthorpe ward, together with part of the existing Norbreck ward, would become part of a new Bispham ward. The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance also proposed a new Whiteholme ward in the north-east of the borough comprising parts of the existing Anchorsholme, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards. It proposed a revised Anchorsholme ward comprising the majority of the existing Anchorsholme ward and part of the existing Norbreck ward.

54 Having considered the representations for these four wards, the LGCE adopted the Council's proposals subject to a number of amendments. It considered that Devonshire Road provided a strong and easily identifiable boundary and attempted to retain this boundary wherever possible, while also having regard to electoral equality. It noted that under the Council's proposal for Bispham ward, electors living on Village Way, who would be transferred into Bispham ward, would not have direct access to it. It considered that this did not provide for effective and convenient local government and, therefore, proposed retaining Devonshire Road as the western boundary between Ingthorpe and Bispham wards up to the junction with Shirley Crescent. Having looked at this area carefully, the LGCE considered that the electors on Shirley Crescent had closer ties with the residents of Norbreck ward than the residents of either Ingthorpe or Bispham wards, and so proposed amending the boundary between Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards to include the electors on Shirley Crescent and on Fleetwood Road in Norbreck ward. While this proposal leads to an electoral variance of 5 per cent above the borough average in Ingthorpe ward by 2006, the LGCE considered that this provided the best available balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

55 As a consequence of the amendment to the boundary between Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards, described earlier, which includes more electors in Norbreck ward, the LGCE proposed an amendment to the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Bispham and Norbreck wards to provide improved electoral equality. It proposed transferring all electors in the area west of Everest Drive and south of Norbreck Road from Norbreck ward into Bispham ward. It endorsed the Borough Council's proposals for the remaining boundaries in these four wards.

56 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards would be 3 per cent above, 5 per cent below, equal to and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 4 per cent below the borough average by 2006).

57 In response to the draft recommendations, the Borough Council supported the majority of the proposals in this area but put forward an amendment to the proposed boundary between Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards. The Council argued that "given the Commission's proposal to run the ward boundary behind the properties on the south side of Shirley Crescent, it appears to the Council expedient to extend the boundary behind the Devonshire Road properties rather than effect a division in the block." A representation from Councillor Clapham regarding an amendment to the proposed boundary between Bispham ward and Warbreck ward was also received and this is discussed in the previous section.

58 Careful consideration has been given to the evidence and representations received, and it has been decided that the proposal put forward by the Council for an amended boundary between Ingthorpe ward and Norbreck ward provides an improvement on the draft recommendations. Those electors on Devonshire Road currently in Ingthorpe ward do not have direct access into Ingthorpe ward whereas they would have direct access into Norbreck ward and so it is considered that transferring them into Norbreck ward would provide for more effective and convenient local government as well as offering a slightly improved level of electoral equality. Therefore an alteration to the draft recommendations is proposed to move all the electors on Devonshire Road to the north of the Red Lion Hotel, who are currently contained within Ingthorpe ward, into Norbreck ward. The remainder of the draft recommendations in this area are endorsed as final.

59 Under the final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Anchorsholme, Bispham, Ingthorpe and Norbreck wards would be 3 per cent above, 5 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above, 4

per cent below, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent below the borough average by 2006). These wards are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo wards**

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

61 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between Highfield and Stanley wards to provide an improved level of electoral equality. It proposed transferring all electors west of Johnsville Avenue and on Kingsmede, currently in Stanley ward, into Highfield ward. The Council also proposed an amendment to the boundary between Highfield and Squires Gate wards, to move the electors in the area west of Highfield Road Recreation Ground and east of Lodore Road from Highfield ward into Squires Gate ward. Consequently, in order to improve electoral equality it put forward an amendment to the northern boundary of Squires Gate ward, moving the electors south of Horncliffe Road and Tudor Place from Waterloo ward into Squires Gate ward. Again to improve electoral equality, the Council proposed a modification to the northern boundary of Waterloo ward, transferring the electors south of Waterloo Road from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward.

62 The Conservatives proposed the retention of the existing Highfield and Stanley wards but proposed an amendment to the Squires Gate ward. They proposed the same boundary as the Council, moving the electors south of Horncliffe Road from Waterloo ward into Squires Gate ward but proposed retaining the rest of the existing boundary between Squires Gate ward and Waterloo ward. The Conservatives also put forward the same change to the northern boundary of Waterloo ward as the Council, transferring all the electors south of Waterloo Road from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward.

63 The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed an amended Squires Gate ward comprising the majority of the existing Squires Gate ward and part of the existing Highfield ward. It also proposed a new Arnold ward, comprising the majority of the existing Waterloo ward and parts of the existing Highfield and Squires Gate wards. It proposed an amended Highfield ward which would contain the majority of the existing Highfield ward and part of the existing Stanley ward, while a new Moss ward would contain the majority of the existing Stanley ward.

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

65 The LGCE was content to endorse the Borough Council's proposals in the remainder of this area as it considered that they provided a good balance between electoral equality and the provision

of strong and easily identifiable boundaries. This warding arrangement would also ensure that Waterloo Road became part of Waterloo ward, thereby addressing the issue raised by the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance that Waterloo Road was not included in Waterloo ward.

66 Under the draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Highfield, Squires Gate, Stanley and Waterloo wards would be equal to the borough average, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

67 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations in this area. The only representation received regarding this area was from Councillor Fowler, who proposed a minor amendment to the proposed boundary between Squires Gate ward and Waterloo ward to provide a better reflection of community identity. He proposed retaining the existing boundary between Squires Gate and Waterloo wards in the Tudor Place area and argued that “the residents of Tudor Place have a closer relationship with Waterloo ward than they do with Squires Gate ward”, as the residents of Tudor Place are “separated from Squires Gate ward by a) an open space b) a main road and c) a built up bridge over the railway line namely Harrowside”.

68 The representations received during the consultation period have been carefully considered and the argument put forward by Councillor Fowler is seen as a convincing one. It is considered that retaining the existing boundary in the Tudor Place area would provide a better reflection of community identity and would provide for more effective and convenient local government than the boundary put forward in the draft recommendations. Therefore an amendment to the LGCE’s draft recommendations in this area is recommended and the existing boundary in the Tudor Place area is to be retained as part of the final recommendations. The remainder of the draft recommendations in this area are endorsed as final.

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

### **Alexandra, Foxhall, Tyldesley and Victoria wards**

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

71 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed combining the majority of the existing Alexandra and Foxhall wards to create a new Bloomfield ward. It argued that there is less feeling of community identity in this area of Blackpool than in some outer areas of the town and, therefore, proposed merging the two wards in this area. Blackpool Football Club play at Bloomfield Road, the ground is located within this proposed ward and so the proposed name for the new ward was Bloomfield ward. The new ward would use the existing northern boundary of Foxhall ward and would include the electors in the area bordered by Park Road, Ashton Road, Central Drive and Waterloo Road.

72 The creation of a new Bloomfield ward would have a knock-on effect on the other wards in this area and the Council proposed amendments to the existing wards of Tyldesley and Victoria to

provide improved electoral equality. It proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Tyldesley ward to transfer the electors in the area bordered by Park Road, Palatine Road, Ripon Road, Gloucester Avenue and Whitegate Drive from Foxhall ward into Tyldesley ward. The Council proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Victoria ward by transferring the electors in the area contained by Central Drive and Grasmere Road from Alexandra ward into Victoria ward. It also put forward an amendment to the southern boundary of Victoria ward by transferring the electors in the area south of Hemingway and east of Marton Drive from Victoria ward into Hawes Side ward.

73 The Conservatives put forward substantially different wards in this area as a result of taking a different approach to the question of where to amalgamate two wards to reduce the total number of wards to 21. The Conservatives proposed an amended Foxhall ward, moving a number of electors from the west of Talbot ward into Foxhall ward and a number of electors from the east of Foxhall ward into Tyldesley ward. Talbot ward itself would disappear as outlined earlier. The Conservatives proposed an amended Tyldesley ward which would move a number of electors from Foxhall, Brunswick and Talbot wards into Tyldesley ward. They also proposed moving a number of electors from the south of Tyldesley ward into Alexandra, Foxhall and Victoria wards respectively. Under the Conservatives' proposals, an amended Alexandra ward would take in part of the existing Tyldesley ward while the electors to the south of Waterloo Road and west of Yeadon Way would be transferred from Alexandra ward into Waterloo ward. An amended Victoria ward would transfer the electors from the south of Tyldesley ward into Victoria ward and would transfer the electors south of Marton Drive from Victoria ward into Hawes Side ward.

74 The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed a new Revoe ward which would comprise parts of the existing Alexandra, Tyldesley and Foxhall wards. They also proposed a new Whitegate ward, comprising parts of the existing Alexandra, Tyldesley and Victoria wards. A new Waterloo ward would comprise the majority of the existing Victoria ward with part of the existing Hawes Side ward. The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance also proposed a new South Shore ward comprising parts of the existing Alexandra, Squires Gate and Waterloo wards.

75 The LGCE carefully considered all representations received regarding the four wards in this area. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the LGCE based its recommendations on the proposals of the Borough Council and, due to the highly urban nature of the area, any changes in one area inevitably have knock-on effects for other wards. As a result of this, if the LGCE had adopted the Conservatives' or the 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance's proposals, which were substantially different to those put forward by the Borough Council in these four wards, this would have had implications for ward boundaries in other areas of Blackpool. Additionally, the Council provided argumentation for the amalgamation of Alexandra and Foxhall wards into a new Bloomfield ward. The LGCE received little evidence of strong communities in this area and, due to the fairly homogenous nature of the housing in the area, considered that the boundaries put forward by the Council were sensible and did not breach any strong, natural boundaries. The Council's proposed wards also provided excellent levels of electoral equality and the LGCE was, therefore, content to endorse the Council's proposals for all four wards in this area.

76 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bloomfield and Victoria wards would be 1 per cent and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (equal to and 2 per cent below the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Tyldesley ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average (equal to the borough average by 2006).

77 During Stage Three no representations were received regarding this area and the draft recommendations are therefore being endorsed in their entirety as final. The electoral variances would remain the same as in the draft recommendations and the proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

### **Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park wards**

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

79 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards for reasons of electoral equality. It proposed moving all the electors on Eskdale Close and Saxby Grove and those to the east of Elaine Avenue from Hawes Side ward into Clifton ward. It also proposed running the boundary straight across the industrial estate from the rear of the houses on Eskdale Close to the junction of Cowley Road and Vicarage Lane. It proposed an amendment to the western boundary of Hawes Side ward to transfer the electors in the area east of Marton Drive and south of Hemingway from Hawes Side ward into Victoria ward. The Council proposed a change to the western boundary of Layton ward to move the electors in the area bordered by Rathlyn Avenue, Collingwood Avenue, and Caunce Street from Brunswick ward into Layton ward. It also proposed a slight change to the boundary between Marton and Park wards in the Staining area by moving some electors from Park ward into Marton ward, uniting all the electors in the Staining area in Marton ward.

80 The Conservatives proposed a slight modification to the boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards to provide an improved level of electoral equality. They proposed transferring all the electors on Elaine Avenue, Eskdale Close, Senior Avenue and Saxby Grove from Hawes Side ward into Clifton ward. The Conservatives proposed a similar amendment to the Council to the western boundary of Layton ward with the exception of keeping those electors west of Layton Road in Brunswick ward. The Conservatives also put forward the same amendment as the Council to the boundary between Marton and Park wards by moving the electors on Broad Oak Lane in the Staining area from Park ward into Marton ward.

81 The 1<sup>st</sup> Alliance proposed a new Welcome ward, comprising parts of the existing Clifton and Hawes Side wards. It also proposed a new three-member Marton ward, comprising parts of the existing Clifton, Hawes Side and Marton wards. It put forward an amended single-member Clifton ward, containing the majority of the existing Clifton ward and an amended Layton ward, which would contain the majority of the existing Layton ward and parts of the existing Brunswick and Talbot wards. A new Parklands ward would contain the majority of the existing Park ward and part of the existing Marton ward.

82 The LGCE looked carefully at all the representations received regarding this area and, with minor amendments, was content to endorse the Council's proposals. It considered that the Council's proposed boundary between Clifton ward and Hawes Side ward, which ran across the industrial estate, did not provide a strong and easily identifiable boundary. It proposed to substantially retain the existing boundary of Vicarage Lane, with slight modifications to transfer the electors living to the east of Vicarage Lane from Clifton ward into Hawes Side ward, as it felt that this would facilitate effective and convenient local government. The LGCE proposed retaining the existing

boundary between Clifton and Hawes Side wards, as put forward by the Conservatives, up to Skipton Close and Eskdale Close, where it proposed adopting the Council's proposals.

83 The LGCE endorsed the Council's proposals for a revised Layton ward but proposed one slight change to tie the boundary to the back of the prope

84 tries on Heathway Avenue, which would not affect any electors. It endorsed the Council's proposed amendment to the boundary between Hawes Side and Victoria wards. It also endorsed the proposal put forward by both the Council and the Conservatives to transfer the electors in Staining from Park ward into Marton ward but proposed leaving the existing boundary to the west of Staining and running the boundary along the edge of a field to the district boundary, as it considered that this would provide a clearer boundary that would adhere to ground detail. The LGCE also proposed a slight amendment to the boundary between Marton and Park wards to tie it to ground detail where, at present, it crosses a golf course. This proposal would not affect any electors. The LGCE was content to retain the existing boundaries in the remainder of this area.

85 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Clifton, Hawes Side, Layton, Marton and Park wards would be equal to the borough average, 1 per cent below, 3 per cent above, equal to and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 2 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2006).

86 At Stage Three no representations were received regarding this area and the draft recommendations are therefore being endorsed in their entirety as final. The electoral variances would remain the same as in the draft recommendations and the proposed wards are illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

## **Electoral Cycle**

87 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycles. We are therefore unable to consider the proposal of a local resident to move to biennial elections.

## **Conclusions**

88 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, it has been decided to substantially endorse those draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- a modification to the boundary between Brunswick ward and Claremont ward;
- a modification to the boundary between Ingthorpe ward and Norbreck ward;
- a modification to the boundary between Squires Gate ward and Waterloo ward.

89 It is concluded that, in Blackpool:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 44 to 42;
- there should be 21 wards, one fewer than at present;

- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

90 Table 4 shows the impact of the final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

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

|  | 2001 electorate      |                       | 2006 forecast electorate |                       |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements     | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors  | 44                   | 42                    | 44                       | 42                    |
| Number of wards  | 22                   | 21                    | 22                       | 21                    |
| Average number of electors per councillor                              | 2,551                | 2,673                 | 2,596                    | 2,720                 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 2                    | 0                     | 5                        | 0                     |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 0                    | 0                     | 0                        | 0                     |

91 As Table 4 shows, the recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from two to none. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with no wards varying by more than 4 per cent from the average. It is concluded that these recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

Blackpool Borough Council should comprise 42 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover of the report.

*Map 2: Final Recommendations for Blackpool*

## 6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

92 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in Blackpool and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692).

93 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 14 May 2002.

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

The Secretary  
Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
30 Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW