

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Chorley in Lancashire

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

September 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Chorley in Lancashire.

Members of the Commission are:

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Chorley town 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 Chorley 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 113) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Chorley.

We recommend that Chorley Borough Council should be served by 47 councillors representing 20 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 Borough 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 Chorley 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 Chorley:

- **in nine 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, and two 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 10 wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 113-114) are that:

- **Chorley Borough Council should have 47 councillors, one fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified and three 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 borough councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 18 of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for the parishes of Whittle-le-Woods and Withnell;**
- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull and Euxton;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Euxton and Withnell parish councils.**

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 six weeks from the date of publication.

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Adlington & Anderton	3	Adlington ward (Adlington parish); Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington ward (part – Anderton parish)	Map 2
2	Astley & Buckshaw	2	Chorley North-West ward (part – Astley Village parish); Euxton North ward (part – the proposed North East parish ward of Euxton parish)	Maps 2 and A3
3	Brindle & Hoghton	1	Brindle & Hoghton ward (the parishes of Brindle and Hoghton); Withnell ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Withnell parish)	Maps 2 and A6
4	Chisnall	2	Charnock Richard ward (Charnock Richard parish); Coppull North ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Coppull parish); Coppull South ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Coppull parish); Eccleston & Heskin ward (part – Heskin parish)	Maps 2 and A2
5	Chorley East	3	Chorley East ward (part); Chorley South-East ward (part)	Large map
6	Chorley North East	3	Chorley North-East ward; Chorley East ward (part)	Large map
7	Chorley North West	3	Chorley North-West ward (part); Chorley West ward (part)	Large map
8	Chorley South East	3	Chorley South-East ward (part); Chorley East ward (part); Chorley South-West ward (part)	Large map
9	Chorley South West	3	Chorley South-West ward (part); Chorley West ward (part)	Large map
10	Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods	3	Clayton-le-Woods East ward (part – the modified East parish ward of Clayton-le-Woods parish); Whittle-le-Woods ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Whittle-le-Woods parish)	Maps 2, A4 and A5
11	Clayton-le-Woods North	3	Clayton-le-Woods East ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Clayton-le-Woods parish)	Maps 2 and A5
12	Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Cuerden parish and West parish ward of Clayton-le-Woods parish)	Map 2
13	Coppull	3	Coppull North ward (part – part of the proposed East parish ward of Coppull parish); Coppull South ward (part – part of the proposed East parish ward of Coppull parish)	Maps 2 and A2
14	Eccleston & Mawdesley	3	Eccleston & Heskin ward (part – Eccleston parish); Mawdesley ward (Mawdesley parish)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
15	Euxton North	2	Euxton North ward (part – the proposed North West parish ward of Euxton parish)	Maps 2 and A3
16	Euxton South	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (South parish ward of Euxton parish)	Maps 2 and A3
17	Heath Charnock & Rivington	1	Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington ward (part – the parishes of Heath Charnock and Rivington)	Map 2
18	Lostock	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton)	Map 2
19	Pennine	1	Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton ward (part – the parishes of Anglezarke and Heapey); Whittle-le-Woods ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Whittle-le-Woods parish)	Maps 2 and A4
20	Wheelton & Withnell	2	Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton ward (part – Wheelton parish); Withnell ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Withnell parish)	Maps 2 and A6

Notes: 1 Chorley town is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the five wards indicated above.

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 Chorley

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 Adlington & Anderton	3	5,394	1,798	10	5,517	1,839	9
2 Astley & Buckshaw	2	2,700	1,350	-17	3,325	1,663	-1
3 Brindle & Hoghton	1	1,722	1,722	6	1,684	1,684	0
4 Chisnall	2	3,228	1,614	-1	3,325	1,663	-2
5 Chorley East	3	4,791	1,597	-2	5,105	1,702	1
6 Chorley North East	3	4,912	1,637	0	5,029	1,676	-1
7 Chorley North West	3	5,248	1,749	7	5,234	1,745	3
8 Chorley South East	3	4,818	1,606	-1	4,946	1,649	-2
9 Chorley South West	3	4,468	1,489	-9	5,281	1,760	4
10 Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods	3	5,016	1,672	3	5,149	1,716	2
11 Clayton-le-Woods North	3	5,048	1,683	3	5,047	1,682	0
12 Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden	2	3,175	1,588	-3	3,400	1,700	1
13 Coppull	3	4,915	1,638	0	4,865	1,622	-4
14 Eccleston & Mawdesley	3	4,966	1,655	2	4,885	1,628	-4
15 Euxton North	2	2,901	1,451	-11	3,295	1,648	-2
16 Euxton South	2	3,333	1,667	2	3,252	1,626	-4
17 Heath Charnock & Rivington	1	1,718	1,718	5	1,702	1,702	1
18 Lostock	2	3,276	1,638	0	3,255	1,628	-4
19 Pennine	1	1,482	1,482	-9	1,566	1,566	-7
20 Wheelton & Withnell	2	3,516	1,758	8	3,469	1,735	3
Totals	47	76,627	-	-	79,331	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,630	-	-	1,688	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Chorley 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 Chorley in Lancashire. We have now reviewed 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. We expect to undertake PERs of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool in 2001.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Chorley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 55). 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 Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

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 are now being 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 Chorley Borough 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 and town councils in the borough, the Member of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the North West region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 November 1999. 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 Chorley in 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 borough of Chorley covers some 80 square miles and has a population of just under 100,000. It lies at the heart of Lancashire's countryside on the edge of the west Pennine Moors, and at the centre of the north-west region, within easy reach of the Manchester and Merseyside conurbations. It comprises the historic market town of Chorley, which accounts for 32 per cent of the electorate, together with a large surrounding rural hinterland. The borough contains 22 parishes, but Chorley town itself is unparished.

14 The borough is served by good transport links, including the M6, the main north-south artery, the M61 link to Manchester and the M65 to north-east Lancashire. Chorley is on the main Barrow-in-Furness – Manchester Airport and Blackpool North – Buxton railway lines. The Leeds-Liverpool Canal runs through the borough.

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

16 The electorate of the borough is 76,627 (February 1999). The Council presently has 48 members who are elected from 22 wards, six of which are relatively urban and the remainder predominantly rural. Eight of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 10 are each represented by two councillors and four elect a single councillor each. The Council is elected by thirds.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Chorley borough, with around 26 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments, most notably in Chorley town and the Clayton area.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,596 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,653 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 nine of the 22 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and in two wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Chorley North-West ward where each of the two councillors represents 61 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Chorley

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 Adlington	3	4,374	1,458	-9	4,505	1,502	-9
2 Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington	2	2,738	1,369	-14	2,714	1,357	-18
3 Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton	1	1,494	1,494	-6	1,508	1,508	-9
4 Brindle & Hoghton	1	1,514	1,514	-5	1,486	1,486	-10
5 Charnock Richard	1	1,546	1,546	-3	1,511	1,511	-9
6 Chorley East	3	4,124	1,375	-14	4,325	1,442	-13
7 Chorley North-East	3	4,180	1,393	-13	4,151	1,384	-16
8 Chorley North-West	2	5,140	2,570	61	5,002	2,501	51
9 Chorley South-East	3	4,012	1,337	-16	4,480	1,493	-10
10 Chorley South-West	3	5,240	1,747	9	5,699	1,900	15
11 Chorley West	3	4,187	1,396	-13	4,513	1,504	-9
12 Clayton-le-Woods East	3	7,640	2,547	60	7,596	2,532	53
13 Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden	2	3,175	1,588	-1	3,400	1,700	3
14 Coppull North	2	2,853	1,427	-11	2,998	1,499	-9
15 Coppull South	2	3,015	1,508	-6	2,960	1,480	-10
16 Eccleston & Heskin	3	4,229	1,410	-12	4,175	1,392	-16
17 Euxton North	2	2,955	1,478	-7	4,045	2,023	22
18 Euxton South	2	3,333	1,667	4	3,252	1,626	-2
19 Lostock	2	3,276	1,638	3	3,255	1,628	-2
20 Mawdesley	1	1,466	1,466	-8	1,431	1,431	-13
21 Whittle-le-Woods	2	3,257	1,629	2	3,483	1,742	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 %
22 Withnell	2	2,879	1,440	-10	2,842	1,421	-14
Totals	48	76,627	-	-	79,331	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,596	-	-	1,653	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Chorley South-East ward were relatively over-represented by 16 per cent, while electors in Chorley North-West ward were significantly under-represented by 61 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received 12 representations, including four borough-wide schemes from Chorley Borough Council, Chorley Conservative Party, Chorley Labour Party and Chorley Liberal Democrats, and representations from Chorley Area Committee of Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils and seven parish and town councils. 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 Chorley in Lancashire*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mix of single-, two- and three-member wards in the borough. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting 12 wards, using proposals from Chorley Labour Party and Chorley Liberal Democrats, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Chorley Borough Council should be served by 47 councillors, compared with the current 48, representing 20 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Whittle-le-Woods and Withnell, and revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull and Euxton;
- the number of councillors serving Euxton and Withnell parish councils should be increased.

Draft Recommendation

Chorley Borough Council should comprise 47 councillors, serving 20 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 18 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards varying by less than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 71 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Chorley Borough Council and the Commission.

Chorley Borough Council

23 The Borough Council supported the majority of the draft recommendations with the exception of the following changes. It reiterated that Chorley town should be served by six wards (four three-member wards, one two-member ward and one single-member ward), asserting that this proposal retains strong links and reflects the individual communities. It re-submitted its proposal for a three-member Adlington ward, extended to include parts of Anderton and Heath Charnock parishes, as it believed that this proposal had local support and achieved better electoral equality. The Council, however, stated that it would support the Commission's recommendations if they remained unchanged. It also proposed that the three wards in the Clayton area should be renamed.

Chorley Conservative Association and Chorley Borough Council Conservative Group

24 Chorley Conservative Association and Chorley Borough Council Conservative Group ("the Conservatives") noted the Commission's draft recommendations, agreeing with them in part, but with alternative proposals in a number of areas. It proposed two two-member wards in place of the three-member Clayton & Whittle ward and the single-member Pennine ward; that Anglezarke parish be transferred from Pennine ward to Heath Charnock & Rivington ward; that the existing Lostock and Mawdesley wards should be combined to form a new three-member ward in the west of the borough.

25 They further proposed that Rural North East ward be renamed Brindle & Hoghton; that Chisnall ward be renamed Welch Whittle (after a hamlet in the area); that Pennine ward be renamed Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey; and that all references to Whittle and Clayton be replaced in full with Whittle-le-Woods and Clayton-le-Woods. Additionally, they commented on the Borough Council's forecast electorate in Lostock as, they stated, two large sites in Croston had recently been given planning permission.

Chorley Labour Party

26 Chorley Labour Party supported the majority of the draft recommendations, except for re-stating its preference for Chorley town to be represented by six wards (as proposed by the Borough Council and the Labour Party at Stage One); and proposing minor ward boundary changes between Astley & Buckshaw and Euxton North wards, and between Chisnall and Coppull wards. It provided an alternative for the parish warding arrangements for Coppull parish proposing that the parish should be re-warded into East and West wards, represented by 12 and three councillors respectively. Additionally, it supported the ward names in the Clayton area,

except for reiterating that Clayton & Whittle be renamed Clayton South & Whittle, as it had proposed at Stage One.

Chorley Liberal Democrats

27 Chorley Liberal Democrats reiterated their support for their original submission, stating it was based on 50 councillors “as the small increase of 2 councillors appeared to give a ward structure that caused few changes to the parish councils”.

28 They were concerned at the impact the draft recommendations would have on the warding of parishes, in particular in Withnell, with one parish ward of 14 councillors and another with one councillor. They considered that the smaller wards would suffer due to low representation at council meetings. They proposed that Coppull parish be re-warded into three parish wards to provide a better boundary between Coppull and Chisnall wards, considering this would command better local support.

29 They also proposed that Pennine ward be renamed Canal ward, as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal was a main feature of the ward; and that the suffix “le-Woods” should be used in the Clayton and Whittle areas (e.g. Clayton-le-Woods). The Liberal Democrats also objected to Clayton & Whittle ward, comprising parts of the two parishes.

Parish and Town Councils

30 We received representations from nine parish and town councils. Adlington Town Council opposed the draft recommendation for a new Adlington & Anderton ward. Instead it reiterated its support for the Borough Council’s three-member Anderton ward, which included Adlington parish and the urban parts of Anderton and Heath Charnock parishes, considering “that the people of Anderton, Heath Charnock and Adlington can be more properly represented” under this proposal. Charnock Richard Parish Council objected to the proposed Chisnall ward, proposing instead that the existing single-member Charnock Richard ward be retained. Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council believed that it would be detrimental to both Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods parish councils to have a borough ward which straddled the two parishes. It wished to retain the full name of Clayton-le-Woods, adding that two other areas in Lancashire were called Clayton.

31 Coppull Parish Council proposed that the parish be re-warded into three wards, with the proposed South and East parish wards combined to form a South East parish ward, coterminous with Coppull borough ward. Eccleston Parish Council objected to the draft recommendations for an Eccleston & Mawdesley ward as the two parishes “are very different in character, history and function”. It supported the Borough Council’s and the Labour Party’s Stage One proposal that Eccleston parish constitute a two-member ward. Heath Charnock Parish Council proposed that Heath Charnock & Rivington ward be extended to include Anglezarke parish.

32 Heskin Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations relating to Heskin parish. It instead proposed that Eccleston and Heskin be retained as a three-member ward for community reasons; that Mawdesley and Croston wards be merged to form a three-member ward; that

Charnock Richard parish be merged with part of Coppull parish, with the A49 forming the link between the two; and that the overall council size should remain at 48 to accommodate the extra councillor in Eccleston & Heskin ward. It also enclosed a petition, signed by 264 Heskin residents, opposing the draft recommendation to include Heskin in the new Chisnall ward, on community grounds.

33 Mawdesley Parish Council, similarly to Eccleston Parish Council, objected to the proposed Eccleston & Mawdesley ward, preferring to be merged with part of Heskin parish in a single-member ward, as proposed by the Borough Council at Stage One.

34 Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council objected to the splitting of the parish between Clayton & Whittle and Pennine wards. It instead proposed that the main part of Whittle-le-Woods should be included in a new two-member Pennine ward and be renamed Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey (which reflected the Conservatives' proposal). It also proposed that the northern part of Clayton & Whittle ward should elect two councillors and be renamed Clayton East. It further proposed that Whittle-le-Woods parish should be warded into two, with the northern ward being served by two councillors, and the remainder of the parish being served by 10 councillors.

Other Representations

35 A further 58 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a borough councillor, a local organisation and local residents. Councillor Culshaw, member for Mawdesley ward, opposed the merger of Mawdesley and Eccleston because of "significant differences in the two communities". He considered that Mawdesley should remain as a single-member ward because of its "unique situation and conditions". If this were not possible, he preferred the Borough Council's Stage One option to combine Mawdesley with part of Heskin. Alternatively, he proposed the parish be merged with Lostock ward, to be renamed Chorley Rural West, as Mawdesley has links with Croston. Fifty-four local residents also opposed the merger of Mawdesley and Eccleston parishes for community identity reasons.

36 A resident of Bamber Bridge in South Ribble borough proposed that the existing three-member Clayton-le-Woods East ward be divided into two wards (one electing three councillors, the other electing two councillors), noting that the parish merits five councillors based on the current number of electors. He further proposed that, if this option was not acceptable, 500 electors should be transferred from Whittle-le-Woods to the existing Clayton-le-Woods East ward, and that this should together be divided into a three-member North ward and a two-member East ward (reflecting the Conservatives' proposal). He also queried the five-year forecast of electorate, stating that it was an underestimate but did not provide any additional evidence on the issue. A resident of Heskin supported the draft recommendation for a new Chisnall ward, and described the arguments made by Heskin Parish Council against the proposed ward as "red herrings", noting that most community facilities were either available in Heskin, Wigan or Chorley town.

37 Mawdesley Women's Institute (with a membership of 64), unanimously opposed the merger of Mawdesley and Eccleston, considering Mawdesley to be more rural, with "different interests and priorities".

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

39 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.

40 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.

41 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. 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

42 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3.5 per cent from 76,627 to 79,331 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in Chorley town, although a significant amount is also expected in the more rural Euxton North 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.

43 During Stage Three, the Conservatives questioned the Council’s forecast electorate in Lostock ward, arguing that two large sites in Croston parish, which we proposed should be part of Lostock ward, had recently been given planning permission, accounting for, they stated, an additional 187 electors in the area. However, the Borough Council has confirmed that, at the start of the review, it used the best available figures available at the time, and would therefore not be

materially amending them at this stage. Although we note the Conservatives' comments, we consider that the Council's original figures provide a clear indication of properties which would be built and occupied in the five year period. We have, however, investigated the effect of this additional development on the electoral variance for Lostock ward in 2004 and are content that, if it was included, a good level of electoral equality would be maintained. We therefore continue to consider that, given the inexact nature of electorate forecasting, the projections supplied at the start of the review provide a reasonable and prudent estimate of the growth likely to take place.

Council Size

44 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.

45 Chorley Borough Council is at present served by 48 councillors. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a council size of 47, as it believed this achieved better electoral equality overall and offered the best scheme, and the majority of its consultees favoured this size. Chorley Labour Party also favoured a council of 47 members, while Chorley Conservatives wanted to retain the existing council size of 48 and Chorley Liberal Democrats proposed a council of 50 members.

46 In our draft recommendations report we noted the representations regarding the most appropriate council size for Chorley. After considering the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 47 members.

47 At Stage Three the Liberal Democrats stated that it continued to consider that a council of 50 would provide a better warding pattern for Chorley. Heskin Parish Council proposed no change to the existing Eccleston & Heskin ward, which would entail retaining a council of 48 members. However, neither respondent submitted any significant or new evidence in support of these council sizes as part of their responses to our draft recommendations. We therefore do not consider that our recommendations to the Secretary of State should be based on either of these council sizes. In the light of the continued general support from the majority of respondents, including the Borough Council, for a 47-member council we are not persuaded that Chorley would best be served by either of the alternative council sizes proposed by the Liberal Democrats and Heskin Parish Council and propose confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 47, as final.

Electoral Arrangements

48 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the four borough-wide schemes from Chorley Borough Council, Chorley Conservatives, Chorley Labour Party and Chorley Liberal Democrats. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

49 The Council's proposals were for a reduction in council size from 48 to 47, serving 20 wards. It proposed that Chorley town be warded and served by 15 councillors, instead of the current 17, and that most of the remaining wards should be amended. Under its proposals only two wards would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, with all wards varying by 6 per cent or less from the average in 2004. The proposals received from the political parties in Chorley also achieved good electoral equality, although to varying degrees.

50 We recognised the improved electoral equality achieved by the Borough Council's scheme, compared to the existing arrangements. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we tried to reflect the consensus among respondents for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. To improve electoral equality further, having regard to local community identities and interests, we departed from the Council's proposals in Chorley town and four other areas, using proposals from Chorley Labour Party, Chorley Liberal Democrats and some of our own.

51 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported in general our draft recommendations, but reiterated its proposals for wards in Chorley town, and Adlington, Anderton & Heath Charnock and Pennine wards. Chorley Conservative Association and Chorley Borough Council Conservative Group generally accepted the draft recommendations, but proposed alternative configurations for the Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods area, and the Mawdesley area. Chorley Labour Party generally supported the draft recommendations, but reiterated its proposals for Chorley town. Chorley Liberal Democrats objected to the proposed council size of 47, preferring its Stage One proposal for 50 councillors.

52 The Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council opposed our draft recommendation to divide the parish between the new three-member Clayton & Whittle ward and the single-member Pennine ward. They instead proposed that the parish be split between two two-member wards, to be named Clayton East and Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey. As this proposal had not been previously put forward for consideration during the review and had not been the subject of consultation, we sought further evidence. We wrote to the Borough Council and the parish councils immediately concerned – Clayton-le-Woods, Heapey and Whittle-le-Woods – asking for their views and evidence regarding the alternative configuration of wards which had been suggested in this area, in order to assist us in arriving at our final recommendation. This aspect of the review is detailed in paragraphs 78 to 79.

53 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of representations received during Stage Three and the further evidence obtained thereafter and have made some modifications to our draft recommendations. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Chorley town (six wards);
- (b) Euxton North and Euxton South wards;
- (c) Clayton-le-Woods East; Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden; and Whittle-le-Woods wards;
- (d) Brindle & Houghton and Withnell wards;
- (e) Adlington; Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington; and Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton wards;
- (f) Charnock Richard; Coppull North; and Coppull South wards;
- (g) Eccleston & Heskin; Lostock; and Mawdesley wards.

54 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.

Chorley town (six wards)

55 Chorley town is located in the heart of the borough and accounts for more than 30 per cent of the borough's electorate. The area is unparished (except for Astley Village parish, presently part of Chorley North-West ward) and is currently served by 17 councillors, elected from six wards. Only Chorley North-West ward is served by two councillors; the remaining five wards are each served by three councillors. Chorley North-West and Chorley South-West wards are both under-represented, with electoral variances of 61 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. The other four wards – Chorley East, Chorley North-East, Chorley South-East and Chorley West – are all over-represented, although to varying degrees, with electoral variances of 14 per cent, 13 per cent, 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. No overall improvement is expected in 2004.

56 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the town be re-warded into six modified wards, served by 15 councillors; Chorley North, Chorley South East, Chorley South West and Chorley West would each be represented by three councillors, Chorley East ward would elect two councillors and Astley Park would be served by a single councillor. Astley Village parish, currently in Chorley North-West ward, together with the eastern part of Euxton North ward, would be included in a new two-member Astley & Buckshaw ward (detailed later). Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would vary by less than 10 per cent from the borough average in all six wards, with all wards varying by 2 per cent or less from the average in 2004.

57 Chorley Labour Party supported the Council's proposals for Chorley town, except for proposing minor boundary alterations to some of the wards and suggesting that the Borough Council's Astley & Buckshaw ward should be called Astley. In addition, Chorley Labour Party submitted an alternative proposal for the town, which provided for five three-member wards, all of which achieved electoral variances of less than 10 per cent, except for Chorley South West with a variance of 12 per cent. By 2004 all the wards would have an electoral variance of 3 per cent or less.

58 Chorley Conservatives also proposed that Chorley town (less Astley Village parish) should be served by 15 councillors, representing six wards, three electing three councillors each and three electing two councillors each but did not include any specific ward boundaries. Under their proposals, two of the wards would have electoral variances of more than 10 per cent in 2004. Chorley Liberal Democrats proposed that Chorley town should be served by 16 councillors; four wards would elect three councillors each and two wards two councillors each. They did not, however, submit any detailed ward boundaries.

59 In considering these representations, we noted that both the Borough Council's and the Labour Party's proposals achieved good levels of electoral equality, reflected the statutory criteria and used clear boundaries. While we recognised that either proposal would be feasible, we noted that the Labour Party's alternative proposal for five three-member wards provided a more uniform pattern for the town, which we considered preferable in this case. We therefore included this three-member ward pattern for Chorley town as part of our draft recommendations, with a minor amendment (involving a total of 166 electors) between Chorley South East and Chorley South West wards to achieve a better balance of representation. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the average in Chorley South East ward (2 per cent below in 2004) and 9 per cent below in Chorley South West ward (4 per cent above in 2004).

60 At Stage Three both the Borough Council and Chorley Labour Party reiterated their Stage One preferences for six wards in the town. The Borough Council stated that "we recognise that five three-member wards would provide a more uniform pattern for the town", but considered that its Stage One proposal would retain "strong links" with the current electoral arrangements, while reflecting "the identities of the individual communities which make up the town". However, the Borough Council stated that it would support our draft recommendation for the town if we could not support its view. The Chorley Conservative Association stated it "has no other recommendations for the town part of the Borough".

61 We have noted that we received no other representations concerning our draft recommendations in the Chorley town area at Stage Three. Having given further consideration to the evidence in support of the first preferences of both the Borough Council and the Labour Party, we remain of the view that a uniform pattern of three-member wards within Chorley town would better reflect our statutory criteria.

62 While noting the Borough Council's qualified support for our draft recommendations for this area, we also consider that a three-member ward pattern would achieve reasonable levels of electoral equality in Chorley town. Having carefully considered the representations received, and in the absence of any further evidence, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendation for

the wards in Chorley town as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the wards in Chorley town would be 2 per cent below the borough average in Chorley East (1 per cent above in 2004), equal to the average in Chorley North East (1 per cent below in 2004), 7 per cent above in Chorley North West (3 per cent above in 2004), 1 per cent below in Chorley South East (2 per cent below in 2004) and 9 per cent below in Chorley South West (4 per cent above in 2004). Our final recommendations for Chorley town are illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

Euxton North and Euxton South wards

63 These two two-member wards are situated to the north of Chorley town, coterminous with the North and South parish wards of Euxton parish. The number of electors represented by each councillor is 7 per cent below the borough average in Euxton North ward (22 per cent above due to substantial growth by 2004) and 4 per cent above in Euxton South ward (2 per cent below in 2004).

64 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the area mostly to the east of the railway line in Euxton North ward (which is subject to extensive development within the next five years) should be included in a new two-member Astley & Buckshaw ward. The remainder of Euxton North ward would retain two councillors. The boundary between Astley & Buckshaw and Euxton North wards would follow the railway line and School Lane. No change was proposed for Euxton South ward as it would retain good electoral equality under a council of 47 members. These proposals were supported by both Chorley Labour Party and Chorley Liberal Democrats.

65 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was general support for the proposed wards in this area and included them as part of our draft recommendations. We considered that although a degree of electoral imbalance is inevitable in the short term, any further improvement in electoral equality would be difficult to achieve because of the substantial ongoing development. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would initially be 17 per cent below the borough average in Astley & Buckshaw ward (1 per cent below in 2004), 11 per cent below in Euxton North ward (3 per cent below in 2004) and 2 per cent above in Euxton South ward (4 per cent below in 2004).

66 In response to our draft recommendations, there was general support for these two wards, including from the Borough Council. Chorley Labour Party, however, proposed a minor amendment between Euxton North ward and Astley & Buckshaw ward, involving the transfer of Sunny Bank (3 electors), Junction Terrace (6 electors) and Euxton Bungalow (2 electors) to Euxton North ward. The Labour Party stated that, under our draft recommendations, Junction Terrace would be isolated from the remainder of the ward.

67 Having given careful consideration to the representations received, we are proposing to confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final, but with the minor amendments proposed by the Labour Party, as we consider that they would provide for a more logical boundary between Astley & Buckshaw and Euxton North wards. We note that this amendment would only affect 11 electors and thus would not have any material effect on electoral variances. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Astley & Buckshaw ward would be 17 per cent below the average (improving to 1 per cent below in 2004), 11 per

cent below the average in Euxton North ward (improving to 2 per cent below in 2004) and 2 per cent above the average in Euxton South ward (4 per cent below in 2004). Our final recommendations for Euxton are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A3 in Appendix A.

Clayton-le-Woods East; Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden; and Whittle-le-Woods wards

68 These three wards are located to the north of Chorley town. Clayton-le-Woods East ward (coterminous with East parish ward of Clayton-le-Woods parish) elects three councillors, each of whom represents 60 per cent more electors than the borough average (53 per cent in 2004). Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden ward comprises West parish ward of Clayton-le-Woods parish and Cuerden parish, and the two councillors for the ward each represent 1 per cent fewer electors than the average (3 per cent more in 2004). Whittle-le-Woods ward, which comprises the parish of the same name, is served by two councillors and the number of electors represented by each councillor is 2 per cent above the average (5 per cent in 2004).

69 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed no alterations to the existing Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden ward as it would retain good electoral equality under a council of 47 members and “because of its natural boundary to the east”. However, it proposed that the ward be called Clayton West & Cuerden. The three other borough-wide schemes also supported the retention of the ward on its existing boundaries and there was some consensus for the name modification. We included it as part of our draft recommendations, including the revised name; the number of electors per councillor in Clayton West & Cuerden ward would be 3 per cent below the borough average (1 per cent above in 2004) under a council size of 47.

70 However, to address the significant electoral imbalance in Clayton-le-Woods East ward, the Borough Council proposed a new three-member Clayton & Whittle ward comprising parts of Clayton-le-Woods East and Whittle-le-Woods wards; the remainder of Clayton-le-Woods East ward would be served by three councillors and be renamed Clayton North; and the remainder of Whittle-le-Woods ward would be included in a new single-member Pennine ward, together with the eastern parishes of Anglezarke, Heapey and Rivington. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be no more than 3 per cent above the borough average in all three wards (no more than 2 per cent in 2004 in all three wards). Adlington Town Council proposed two new wards, Pennine and Clayton South & Whittle, similar to those proposed by the Borough Council.

71 Chorley Labour Party supported the Council’s Clayton North ward, but put forward slightly different ward boundaries for the remaining area. It proposed a new three-member Clayton South & Whittle ward, also comprising parts of Clayton-le-Woods East ward (part of polling district 1AC) and Whittle-le-Woods ward (a lesser part of polling district AV, as compared to the Council’s). A new single-member Whittle East & Heapey ward was also proposed comprising the remainder of Whittle-le-Woods ward, together with the parishes of Anglezarke and Heapey.

72 Chorley Liberal Democrats proposed a new two-member Clayton Brook ward, comprising the northern part of Clayton-le-Woods East ward (part of polling district 2AC) and Barleyfield (from polling district 1AC); the remainder of Clayton-le-Woods East ward would be served by three councillors. They also proposed that a new two-member Whittle ward be created from polling district AV of the existing Whittle-le-Woods ward; and that the remainder of the ward

(polling district AU), together with the parishes of Heapey and Wheelton, and the Brinscall area of Withnell ward, be included in a new two-member Whittle East, Heapey, Wheelton & Brinscall ward.

73 Chorley Conservatives proposed that Clayton-le-Woods East ward should be divided into two new wards, Clayton le Woods East, served by three councillors, and Clayton le Woods North, served by two councillors. No change was proposed for Whittle ward.

74 In our draft recommendations report, we noted the similarity between the proposals from the Borough Council and the Labour Party, including the proposal to create a new ward comprising parts of Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods. We also noted that the communication links between the two areas are relatively good, and combining them in the same ward would appear to reflect community identities reasonably. The Liberal Democrats' proposals were based on a council size of 50 members, with a different ward configuration and we therefore could not adopt them, and the proposals from the Conservatives retained large electoral imbalances and were inconsistent with our aim of achieving electoral equality.

75 We therefore considered that the Council's proposals for this area would have the advantage of achieving good electoral equality, utilise clear boundaries and have regard to community identities, and therefore included the majority of them as part of our draft recommendations. However, we proposed modifying the new Pennine ward to exclude Rivington parish (which would be included in a new Heath Charnock & Rivington ward, detailed later). Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Pennine ward would initially be 9 per cent below the borough average (7 per cent in 2004).

76 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposals for this area, but proposed that the three ward names containing Clayton or Whittle be amended to include the "le-Woods" suffix. Chorley Labour Party also supported the draft recommendations for the area, but repeated its Stage One proposal that Clayton & Whittle be renamed Clayton South & Whittle. Chorley Conservatives, Whittle-le-Woods and Heath Charnock parish councils proposed that Anglezarke parish be transferred from Pennine ward to Heath Charnock & Rivington ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed that Pennine ward be renamed Canal ward "as the Leeds-Liverpool canal is a main feature in the ward".

77 The Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council objected to the proposed wards in the Whittle and Clayton area, and instead proposed that the main part of Whittle-le-Woods parish, together with Heapey parish, be included in a new two-member Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey ward, and that the northern part of Whittle-le-Woods, together with the Clayton part of the proposed Clayton & Whittle ward and Oakcroft (part of Clayton parish) be included in a new two-member Clayton East ward. They also proposed that Anglezarke parish be transferred to the proposed Heath Charnock & Rivington ward. In addition, Chorley Conservatives proposed that all references to Clayton and Whittle "be replaced with the full title" – Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods. A resident of Bamber Bridge, South Ribble borough, supported the proposed Clayton West & Cuerden ward, but proposed the retention of the existing Clayton East ward. The resident also proposed an alternative Clayton East ward, with boundaries in the south similar to those proposed by the Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council.

78 In considering the views received at Stage Three for warding patterns in this area, we considered that the alternative proposal had merit in terms of meeting the statutory criteria, but had not been put forward previously. The proposal had, therefore, not been subject to wider consultation and we decided to seek the views of interested parties. We wrote to the Borough Council, Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council, Heapey Parish Council and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council asking for their views and further evidence on the alternative ward configuration in this area which had been put forward by the Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council, so that we could take all views into consideration before arriving at our final recommendations.

79 In response, Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council stated that it would “fully support” the alternative proposal for this area. Heapey Parish Council, however, objected to the proposal to combine Heapey with most of Whittle-le-Woods, considering that it “would be overwhelmed by the combining of the two areas”. The Parish Council stated that it considered the draft recommendations for Pennine ward “would best suit the needs of Heapey Parish”. The Borough Council also objected to the Conservatives’ and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council’s alternative proposal. The Borough Council noted that under the alternative proposal Whittle-le-Woods parish would remain divided between two wards, as under the draft recommendations. In particular, it stated that it preferred the draft recommendations for this area, as “the unbuilt area to the east of the motorway in Whittle-le-Woods is more rural in character and is therefore more suited to form links with other rural communities to the east of the Borough”. It also stated that the draft recommendations would better serve the current cycle of elections by thirds. We did not receive any additional evidence from Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council.

80 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three and the responses to the limited period of further consultation. We note that there is no consensus behind the Conservatives’ and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council’s alternative proposal. We also consider that our draft recommendations are based on good communication links between the two areas, and reasonably reflect community identities while utilising clear boundaries. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations for the ward boundaries in this area as final.

81 However, we note the general support to rename wards containing Clayton and Whittle, and therefore propose that Clayton North, Clayton West & Cuerden and Clayton & Whittle wards be renamed Clayton-le-Woods North, Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden and Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods respectively. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods ward would be 3 per cent above the average (2 per cent above in 2004), 3 per cent above in Clayton-le-Woods North ward (equal to the average in 2004), 3 per cent below in Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden ward (1 per cent above in 2004) and 9 per cent below in Pennine ward (7 per cent below in 2004). Our final recommendations for Clayton-le-Woods, Whittle-le-Woods, Anglezarke and Heapey are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4 and A5 in Appendix A.

Brindle & Hoghton and Withnell wards

82 These two wards are located in the extreme north of the borough. Brindle & Hoghton ward comprises the parishes of the same names, and the number of electors represented by the single councillor for the ward is 5 per cent below the borough average (10 per cent in 2004). Withnell ward is coterminous with Withnell parish and elects two councillors, each of whom represents 10 per cent fewer electors than the average (14 per cent in 2004).

83 The Council's Stage One proposals for these two wards included a new single-member Rural North East ward, comprising the parishes of Brindle and Hoghton, and the northern rural part of Withnell parish, with the remainder of Withnell (the settlements of Abbey Village, Withnell Fold, Withnell Mill and Brinscall), together with neighbouring Wheelton parish, forming a new two-member Wheelton & Withnell ward. These proposals were supported by Chorley Labour Party, although they stated a preference for retaining Brindle & Hoghton as a ward name, instead of Rural North East.

84 Chorley Liberal Democrats proposed a new two-member ward, comprising the parishes of Brindle and Hoghton, together with the Abbey Village, Withnell Mill and Withnell Fold settlements of Withnell parish, with the remainder of Withnell parish (the Brinscall area) included in a new two-member ward (detailed later). Hoghton Parish Council proposed no change to its existing borough warding arrangements, while Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council wrote directly to the Commission in support of a ward (which featured under the Borough Council's 48-member proposal during its local consultation) comprising the northern parishes of Brindle, Hoghton, Withnell and Wheelton.

85 After carefully considering the proposals for this area we included the Council's proposed Rural North East and Wheelton & Withnell wards in our draft recommendations, as we believed these would best meet the statutory criteria, while facilitating a good scheme throughout the borough. Although some electoral inequality would persist in the short term, any attempts to address it would have a detrimental effect on our proposals for the surrounding wards. Moreover, electoral equality in the two wards would improve considerably by 2004.

86 At Stage Three the Borough Council and the Labour Party supported the draft recommendations for this area. The Conservatives, objecting to the name of the proposed Rural North East ward, proposed that it be renamed Brindle & Hoghton "as this reflects the mass of the population, and would be the only non-urban Ward without a descriptive name".

87 In the light of the representations received, we propose confirming our draft recommendations in this area as final while adopting the proposal to restore the existing ward name to the proposed Rural North East ward. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Brindle & Hoghton and Wheelton & Withnell wards would be 6 per cent above and 8 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to the average and 3 per cent above in 2004 respectively). Our final recommendations for Brindle, Hoghton, Wheelton and Withnell are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A6 in Appendix A.

Adlington; Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington; and Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton wards

88 Adlington ward, comprising the parish of the same name, and Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington ward, comprising the three parishes of the same names, are located in the south-eastern corner of the borough. The wards are served by three and two councillors respectively, and the number of electors represented by each councillor is 9 per cent below the borough average in Adlington (unchanged in 2004) and 14 per cent below in Anderton, Heath Charnock & Rivington (18 per cent in 2004). The single-member Anglezarke, Heapey & Wheelton ward comprises the three parishes of the same name; the number of electors represented by the councillor is 6 per cent below the average (9 per cent in 2004).

89 The Council's Stage One proposals for this area included three modified wards: Adlington ward's boundary would be extended to include parts of both Anderton (polling district E) and Heath Charnock (polling district F) parishes; the remainder of both Anderton and Heath Charnock parishes would form a new single-member Anderton & Heath Charnock ward; and a new single-member Pennine ward would comprise the parishes of Anglezarke, Heapey and Rivington, together with part of Whittle-le-Woods parish (polling district AU and part of polling district AV). Under these arrangements the number of electors per councillor would initially be 7 per cent above the borough average in Adlington ward (5 per cent in 2004), 9 per cent above in Anderton & Heath Charnock ward (5 per cent in 2004) and 2 per cent below in Pennine ward (equal to the average in 2004).

90 Chorley Labour Party proposed a different warding pattern in this part of the borough. A new three-member Adlington & Anderton ward would comprise the parishes of the same name; a new single-member West Pennine ward would comprise the parishes of Heath Charnock and Rivington; and a new single-member Whittle East & Heapey ward would comprise Anglezarke and Heapey parishes, together with part of Whittle-le-Woods parish (polling district AU and part of polling district AV). Chorley Liberal Democrats also wrote at Stage One proposing no change to Adlington ward; a new three-member ward, comprising the parishes of Anderton, Anglezarke, Heath Charnock and Rivington, together with 400 electors from the existing Chorley South-East ward; and a new two-member ward, comprising the parishes of Heapey and Wheelton, together with the Brinscall area of Withnell parish and polling district AU of Whittle-le-Woods parish. Adlington Town Council proposed a similar warding pattern to the Borough Council's for this area, while Rivington Parish Council proposed no change to its current electoral arrangements.

91 We carefully considered the proposals for this area and although electoral equality would be similar under all the proposals received, we judged that the Labour Party's proposals would have the advantage of retaining similar communities together in wards, minimise the need to split parishes between wards and would therefore command local support. We considered that the Borough Council's proposal to include parts of both Anderton and Heath Charnock parishes in an enlarged Adlington ward would not reflect community identities well. Likewise, its proposed Pennine ward, which stretches from the north of Chorley town to the south-east corner of the borough, would not in our view best reflect community identity or facilitate convenient and effective government. We also felt that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to include part of Chorley town with rural parishes in a ward would not, in our view, best meet the statutory criteria

and was, in any case, based on a 50-member council, and therefore we did not adopt their proposal for this area.

92 We therefore included the Labour Party's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, with a slight amendment to utilise the Borough Council's proposed boundary in the Whittle-le-Woods east area. However, we adopted the names of Heath Charnock & Rivington and Pennine, as suggested by the Council, instead of West Pennine and Whittle East & Heapey, as we considered they would better reflect the communities concerned.

93 In response to our consultation report, the Borough Council reiterated its proposal for an enlarged three-member Adlington ward, extended to include parts of Anderton and Heath Charnock parishes, although it stated that it would support the Commission's recommendations if its proposal could not be accommodated. Adlington Town Council objected to our proposed Anderton & Adlington ward. It stated that the Town Council "voted unanimously in favour" of the Borough Council's Stage One proposal for an enlarged Adlington ward.

94 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. While we note the continued support for an enlarged Adlington ward from the Borough Council and Adlington Town Council we do not consider that we have received materially new evidence which would persuade us to adopt this proposal. We remain of the opinion that splitting parishes between wards should be avoided if there is a viable alternative. Moreover, accommodating these proposals would lead to a consequential effect on the overall warding pattern in the south-east of the borough. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Adlington & Anderton ward would be 10 per cent above the borough average (9 per cent in 2004) and 5 per cent above in Heath Charnock & Rivington ward (1 per cent in 2004). Our final recommendations for Adlington, Anderton, Heath Charnock and Rivington are illustrated on Map 2.

Charnock Richard; Coppull North; and Coppull South wards

95 The single-member Charnock Richard ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is situated to the south-west of Chorley town and the number of electors represented by the councillor is 3 per cent below the borough average (9 per cent in 2004). Coppull North and Coppull South wards are coterminous with the North and South parish wards of Coppull parish, and are each served by two borough councillors. The wards are situated in the south of the borough and the number of electors represented by each councillor is 11 per cent below the average in Coppull North (9 per cent in 2004) and 6 per cent below in Coppull South (10 per cent in 2004).

96 The Council's Stage One proposals for these three wards included a new two-member Chisnall ward, comprising Charnock Richard parish, polling district AH of Coppull North ward, polling district AL of Coppull South ward (with a slight modification to include all the properties in Coppull Moor Lane in one ward) and part of Heskin parish. The remainder of Coppull North and Coppull South wards would form a new three-member Coppull ward, while the remainder of Heskin parish would be included in a new Rural South West ward, detailed later. The number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the borough average in Chisnall ward (unchanged in 2004) and equal to the average in Coppull ward (4 per cent below in 2004).

Chorley Labour Party's proposals differed slightly in this area, in that it included the whole of Heskin parish and only part of polling district AL of Coppull parish in a new Chisnall ward. Under the Labour Party's proposals the number of electors per councillor would initially be 1 per cent below the average in Chisnall ward (unchanged in 2004) and equal to the average in Coppull ward (4 per cent below in 2004).

97 Chorley Liberal Democrats' proposals were similar to the Council's Stage One proposals. They proposed a modified two-member Coppull South ward, extended to include 288 electors from Coppull North ward; and that the remainder of Coppull North ward, together with the parishes of Charnock Richard and Heskin, should form a modified three-member ward. Charnock Richard Parish Council proposed no change to its existing arrangements. Heskin Parish Council proposed that, if change was necessary, a new three-member ward should be created with the M6 forming the eastern boundary, comprising the parishes of Eccleston, Heskin and Ulnes Walton, together with parts of Euxton and Charnock Richard parishes; and another three-member ward should comprise the parishes of Croston, Bretherton and Mawdesley.

98 While each of the schemes proposed similar wards and achieved similar levels of electoral equality, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals had the advantage of better addressing the statutory criteria. We therefore proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals, subject to including the whole of Heskin parish in the new Chisnall ward, as proposed by both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. We consider that this amendment has the advantage of keeping the whole of Heskin parish together, which would command local support, and achieved better electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the borough average in Chisnall ward (2 per cent below in 2004) and equal to the average in Coppull ward (4 per cent below in 2004). We did not consider that the proposals from Heskin Parish Council were consistent with our aim of achieving electoral equality as one of the proposed wards would retain an electoral variance of 16 per cent (worsening to 20 per cent in 2004).

99 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our proposals for this area. Chorley Labour Party proposed a minor boundary amendment between Chisnall and Coppull wards affecting no electors. It proposed that the boundary between Chisnall and Coppull wards, rather than following Coppull Moor Lane east to the railway line, and then west along the existing boundary, follow the line of a public footpath which runs from Coppull Moor Lane north to Springfield Road. The Labour Party also proposed alternative parish warding for Coppull parish, considering the draft recommendations for warding arrangements for the parish council to be "unnecessarily complicated". It proposed instead that the parish be divided into two parish wards, East and West, to be represented by 12 and three councillors respectively.

100 Chorley Liberal Democrats proposed that some 380 electors be transferred from Chisnall ward to Coppull ward. Coppull Parish Council proposed alternative parish warding for Coppull parish, so that the parish be represented by 15 members, as at present, divided between three parish wards, North, North West and South East, to be represented by six, two and seven councillors respectively. The Parish Council stated that "this would command better local support and also equate to the Borough average in 2004". Heskin Parish Council opposed the inclusion of its area in Chisnall ward. Charnock Richard Parish Council objected to the proposed Chisnall

ward and repeated their Stage One proposal that Charnock Richard ward should remain unchanged.

101 Having carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period, we are including the minor boundary change proposed by Chorley Labour Party, as it provides a clearer boundary. We note the proposals from the Liberal Democrats and Coppull Parish Council, but are unable to include them as part of our final recommendations, as their proposal for an enlarged Coppull South East parish ward would require a consequential amendment to the boundary between borough wards in this area, transferring 380 electors from Chisnall ward to Coppull ward. This would result in worsened variances from the average both now and in 2004 (13 per cent). We would not put forward this proposal to the Secretary of State, as an option achieving better electoral equality is available. We also noted the proposal for alternative parish warding in Coppull parish from the Labour Party. We asked Coppull Parish Council, in the light of the fact that we are unable to adopt its preferred parish warding arrangement, to comment on this alternative. The Parish Council stated that, “although not completely happy with the new proposal”, it prefers “this alternative to the one published in the draft recommendations”.

102 We note Coppull Parish Council’s preference for the Labour Party’s East and West parish wards. Additionally, we accept the Labour Party’s argument that its alternative borough ward boundary would provide for a more identifiable boundary between Chisnall and Coppull wards. We, therefore, propose confirming our draft recommendations as final for these wards together with these two amendments. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Chisnall and Coppull wards would be 1 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (2 per cent below and 4 per cent below in 2004 respectively). Our final recommendations for Charnock Richard, Coppull and Heskin are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Eccleston & Heskin; Lostock; and Mawdesley wards

103 These three wards are located in the west of the borough. Eccleston & Heskin ward comprises the two parishes of the same name, and is served by three councillors; the number of electors per councillor is 12 per cent below the borough average (16 per cent in 2004). Lostock ward comprises the parishes of Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton and is served by two councillors, each of whom represents 3 per cent more electors than the borough average (2 per cent fewer in 2004). Mawdesley ward, comprising the parish of the same name, elects a single councillor, who represents 8 per cent fewer electors than the average for the borough (13 per cent in 2004).

104 At Stage One there was general support for no change to the existing Lostock ward as it would retain good electoral equality under a council size of 47. We therefore included Lostock ward on its current ward boundaries as part of our draft recommendations. The number of electors represented by the two councillors would initially be equal to the borough average (4 per cent below in 2004).

105 However, to rectify the electoral imbalances in the remaining two wards, the Borough Council proposed that Eccleston parish should form a new ward on its own, served by two councillors, and that Mawdesley parish, together with part of Heskin parish, should form a new

single-member Rural South West ward. The remainder of Heskin parish would be included in the new Chisnall ward (detailed earlier).

106 Chorley Labour Party supported the Council's proposed Eccleston ward, but proposed no change to Mawdesley ward and included the whole of Heskin parish in the new Chisnall ward, as stated earlier. Under these arrangements Mawdesley ward would have an electoral variance of 10 per cent (15 per cent in 2004). Chorley Liberal Democrats also included the whole of Heskin in a new three-member ward, but proposed that Eccleston and Mawdesley parishes should together form a new three-member ward. As stated earlier, Heskin Parish Council proposed two new three-member wards in this western part of the borough, one of which would retain a relatively high electoral imbalance.

107 After due consideration of the representations received, and in view of our proposals elsewhere in the area, we proposed that the parishes of Eccleston and Mawdesley should together form a new three-member ward, as suggested by the Liberal Democrats. Although Eccleston on its own would achieve reasonable electoral equality, neighbouring Mawdesley on its own would retain an unacceptable level of electoral equality. Furthermore, we noted that the communication links between the two areas are relatively good and maintaining Mawdesley on its current boundary would be inconsistent with our aim of achieving electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Eccleston & Mawdesley ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average (4 per cent below in 2004).

108 In response to our consultation report the Borough Council and the Labour Party supported our draft recommendations in this area. Chorley Conservatives proposed that if there must be a link in the area, then Lostock and Mawdesley should together form a new three-member ward. Eccleston Parish Council objected to the proposed Eccleston & Mawdesley ward and instead supported the Borough Council's Stage One proposal that the parish form a two-member ward. Heskin Parish Council proposed that the existing Eccleston & Heskin ward be retained and that Mawdesley parish be transferred to a three-member Lostock ward. Mawdesley Parish Council objected to the proposed Eccleston & Mawdesley ward, proposing instead that it should be linked with part of Heskin parish in a single-member ward. Councillor Culshaw, member for Mawdesley ward, proposed that Mawdesley parish remain a single-member ward, or that it be linked with part of Heskin parish, proposing that it be part of a three-member Lostock ward as a third option. Mawdesley Women's Institute and 54 Mawdesley residents also opposed the proposed new Eccleston & Mawdesley ward.

109 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We note there is opposition to our proposed Eccleston & Mawdesley ward. However, although a ward containing Eccleston parish alone would achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality, the existing Mawdesley ward, containing the parish of the same name, is currently over represented by 8 per cent, forecast to deteriorate to 13 per cent from the average by 2004. We do not consider that sufficient additional evidence and argumentation has been submitted to justify this level of electoral inequality and remain of the view that we could not recommend a single-member ward for Mawdesley to the Secretary of State. We also note that there is no strong support from Mawdesley for a linkage with Lostock ward and would not wish to adopt this proposal as an alternative. We also are not convinced of the merits of retaining the existing Eccleston & Heskin ward noting, in particular, that Eccleston Parish Council did not make such

a proposal. Moreover, we cannot look at a single area of the borough in isolation and the consequential effect of such a proposal on the remainder of the west of the borough would result in large variances in neighbouring wards.

110 We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for wards in the west of the borough as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Eccleston & Mawdesley ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average and equal to the average in Lostock ward (4 per cent below in both wards in 2004). Our final recommendations for Croston, Bretherton, Eccleston, Mawdesley and Ulnes Walton are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

111 At Stage One we received no proposals for change to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

112 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

113 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:

- we propose a minor amendment between Chisnal and Coppull wards, which would not affect any electors;
- we propose a minor amendment between Astley & Buckshaw and Euxton North wards, involving 11 electors;
- we propose that Rural North East ward be renamed Brindle & Hoghton, and that Clayton & Whittle, Clayton North and Clayton West & Cuerden wards be renamed Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods, Clayton-le-Woods North and Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden wards respectively.

114 We conclude that, in Chorley:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 48 to 47;
- there should be 20 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

115 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	48	47	48	47
Number of wards	22	20	22	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,596	1,630	1,653	1,688
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	9	2	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	2	0	3	0

116 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 nine to two with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004, with all wards varying by less 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

Chorley Borough Council should comprise 47 councillors serving 20 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 and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

117 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 borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull, Euxton, Whittle-le-Woods and Withnell parishes to reflect the proposed borough wards.

118 The parish of Coppull is currently warded into two parish wards, North and South, served by seven and eight councillors respectively. At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the parish be re-warded into four new wards to reflect its proposed borough wards in the area: South electing a single councillor, North West electing two councillors, and East and North electing six councillors each. North West and South parish wards would be included in the new Chisnall ward for borough warding purposes, while East and North parish wards would be coterminous with the modified Coppull borough ward. In the light of our proposals for borough wards in this area, we included the Council’s proposed warding for Coppull parish as a draft recommendation.

119 At Stage Three Chorley Liberal Democrats and Coppull Parish Council proposed alternative parish warding for Coppull parish. They proposed that East and South parish wards, as proposed in the draft recommendations, be combined to form a South East parish ward, to be represented by seven councillors. This would require 380 electors being transferred from Chisnall borough ward to Coppull borough ward to ensure coterminosity between parish and borough wards.

120 Chorley Labour Party proposed that Coppull parish be divided into two parish wards: East (that part of the parish in Coppull ward) and West (that part of the parish in Chisnall ward), to be represented by 12 and three councillors respectively.

121 We carefully examined both Stage Three proposals for Coppull, and noted that the Liberal Democrats’ and Coppull Parish Council’s proposal would have a detrimental impact on borough warding in the area, and are unable to support such parish warding. However, we noted that the Labour Party’s proposal would not impact upon borough wards and would provide for less complicated arrangements at parish level. We therefore asked the Parish Council to comment on this proposal. The Parish Council stated its preference for the Labour Party’s option over the draft recommendations.

122 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the comments made by Coppull Parish Council, we propose adopting Chorley Labour Party’s proposal for warding Coppull parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Coppull Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: East (returning 12 councillors) and West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

123 The parish of Euxton is currently warded into two parish wards, North and South, served by eight and nine councillors respectively. The Borough Council proposed at Stage One that North parish ward be divided into two new wards to reflect the proposed borough wards in the area: North East electing two councillors and North West electing eight councillors. It also proposed that South parish ward should elect eight councillors instead of the current nine. North East parish ward would be included in the new Astley & Buckshaw ward for borough warding purposes, North West parish ward would be coterminous with the modified Euxton North ward

and South parish ward would continue to be coterminous with Euxton South borough ward. In the light of our proposals for borough wards in this area, we included the Council’s proposed warding for Euxton parish as a draft recommendation.

124 At Stage Three Chorley Labour Party proposed two amendments to the boundary between Astley & Buckshaw and Euxton North borough wards. These minor amendments would transfer 11 electors from Astley & Buckshaw ward to Euxton North ward.

125 As a consequence of adopting the Labour Party’s proposed borough warding amendment we propose amending North East parish ward’s boundary to reflect the borough warding in this area.

Final Recommendation
Euxton Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, one more than at present, representing three wards: North East (returning two councillors), North West (eight) and South (eight). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

126 The parish of Whittle-le-Woods is currently served by 12 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, in line with its borough warding proposals in the area, the Borough Council proposed that the parish should be warded into two wards, East and West, served by three and nine councillors respectively. East parish ward would form part of the new Pennine borough ward and West parish ward would form part of the new Clayton & Whittle borough ward. In the light of our proposals for borough wards in this area, we included the Council’s proposed warding for Whittle-le-Woods parish as a draft recommendation.

127 At Stage Three Chorley Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council objected to the proposed division of Whittle-le-Woods parish between the new three-member Clayton & Whittle ward and the single-member Pennine ward and instead proposed that the parish be split between two two-member wards, to be named Clayton East and Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey. We conducted a limited further consultation with the Borough Council and the parishes of Clayton-le-Woods, Heapey and Whittle-le-Woods to gather further views on this proposal. Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council supported this alternative proposal; however, both Chorley Borough Council and Heapey Parish Council objected to it, considering that the draft recommendations would better reflect community identities in this area.

128 Having examined all the evidence available, and noting the lack of consensus in this area, we are confirming our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area as final. Therefore, in the light of our final recommendations for borough warding in this area, we are also confirming our draft recommendations for warding Whittle-le-Woods parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards, East (returning three councillors) and West (nine). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

129 The parish of Clayton-le-Woods is currently warded into three parish wards: East, North and West, served by five, six and four councillors respectively. At Stage One, following its borough warding proposals, the Borough Council proposed that the boundary between East and North parish wards be modified to reflect the proposed borough ward boundary. It also proposed that East ward should be represented by four councillors and North ward by seven councillors. East parish ward would form part of the new Clayton & Whittle borough ward and North parish ward would be coterminous with the new Clayton North borough ward. No change was proposed for West parish ward. In the light of our proposals for borough wards in this area, we included the Council's proposed warding for Clayton-le-Woods parish as a draft recommendation.

130 At Stage Three Chorley Conservatives and Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council objected to the proposed division of Whittle-le-Woods parish between the new three-member Clayton & Whittle ward and the single-member Pennine ward and instead proposed that the parish be split between two two-member wards, to be named Clayton East and Whittle-le-Woods & Heapey. We conducted a limited consultation with the Borough Council and the parishes of Clayton-le-Woods, Heapey and Whittle-le-Woods to gather further views on this proposal. Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council supported this alternative proposal; however, both Chorley Borough Council and Heapey Parish Council objected to it, considering that the draft recommendations better reflect community identities in this area. Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council did not comment on warding in the remainder of the parish.

131 Having examined all the evidence available, and noting the lack of consensus in this area, we are confirming our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area as final. Therefore, in the light of our final recommendations for borough warding in this area, we are also confirming our draft recommendations for warding Clayton-le-Woods parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards, East (returning four councillors), North (seven) and West (four). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A5 in Appendix A.

132 The parish of Withnell is currently served by 12 councillors and is not warded. In line with its borough warding proposals in the area, the Borough Council proposed at Stage One that the parish should be warded into two wards, North and South, served by one councillor and 13 councillors respectively. North parish ward would form part of the new Rural North East borough

ward and South part of the new Wheelton & Withnell borough ward. In the light of our proposals for borough wards in this area, we included the Council’s proposed warding for Withnell parish as a draft recommendation.

133 At Stage Three we received no further views on the warding of Withnell parish and in the light of our proposals for borough warding we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Draft Recommendation
Withnell Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, two more than at present, representing two wards, North (returning one councillor) and South (returning 13 councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A6 in Appendix A.

134 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough, 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 Chorley

6 NEXT STEPS

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

136 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 six weeks from the date of publication.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Chorley: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Maps A2 to A6 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed re-warding of Coppull parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed re-warding of Euxton parish.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed re-warding of Whittle-le-Woods parish.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed re-warding of Clayton-le-Woods parish.

Map A6 illustrates the proposed re-warding of Withnell parish.

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

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Chorley: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Re-warding of Coppull Parish

Map A3: Proposed Re-warding of Euxton Parish

Map A4: Proposed Re-warding of Whittle-le-Woods Parish

Map A5: Proposed Re-warding of Clayton-le-Woods Parish

Map A6: Proposed Re-warding of Withnell Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Chorley

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of four wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose that Rural North East ward be renamed Brindle & Hoghton, and that Clayton & Whittle, Clayton North and Clayton West & Cuerden wards be renamed Clayton-le-Woods & Whittle-le-Woods, Clayton-le-Woods North and Clayton-le-Woods West & Cuerden wards respectively.

Figure B1: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Astley & Buckshaw	Chorley North-West ward (part – Astley Village parish); Euxton North ward (part – the proposed North East parish ward of Euxton parish)
Chisnall	Charnock Richard ward (Charnock Richard parish); Eccleston & Heskin ward (part – Heskin parish); Coppull North ward (part – the proposed North West parish ward of Coppull parish); Coppull South ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Coppull parish)
Coppull	Coppull North ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Coppull parish); Coppull South ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Coppull parish)
Euxton North	Euxton North ward (part – the proposed North West parish ward of Euxton 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 %
Astley & Buckshaw	2	2,711	1,356	-17	3,336	1,668	-1
Chisnall	2	3,228	1,614	-1	3,325	1,663	-2
Coppull	3	4,915	1,638	0	4,865	1,622	-4
Euxton North	2	2,890	1,445	-11	3,284	1,642	-3

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Chorley 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.