

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for the
City of Plymouth

Report to the Secretary of State for
Transport, Local Government and the Regions

December 2001

© Crown Copyright 2001

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no 265

CONTENTS

	page
WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	<i>29</i>
APPENDIX	
A Final Recommendations for Plymouth: Detailed Mapping	<i>31</i>

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

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Plymouth.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Plymouth's electoral arrangements on 28 November 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 19 June 2001, 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 arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Plymouth:

- **in 10 of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and two wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2005 electoral equality is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in nine wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 109-110) are that:

- **Plymouth City Council should have 57 councillors, three fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;**
- **elections should take place by thirds.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each city councillor is as nearly as possible the same, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In all of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 8 per cent from the city average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 20 wards expected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the average for the city in 2005.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing them before 15 January 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Budshead	3	part of Budshead ward; part of Estover ward; part of Southway ward	Maps A2, A3 and Large map
2	Compton	3	part of Compton ward; part of Drake ward; part of Efford ward; part of Mount Gould ward	Large map
3	Devonport	3	part of Keyham ward; part of St Peter ward; part of Stoke ward	Large map
4	Drake	2	part of Drake ward; part of Mount Gould ward	Large map
5	Efford & Lipson	3	part of Efford ward; part of Mount Gould ward	Large map
6	Eggbuckland	3	part of Eggbuckland ward; part of Honicknowle ward	Large map
7	Ham	3	part of Ham ward; part of Trelawny ward	Large map
8	Honicknowle	3	part of Budshead ward; part of Honicknowle ward	Large map
9	Moor View	3	part of Eggbuckland ward; part of Estover ward	Map A3 and Large map
10	Peverell	3	part of Compton ward; part of Drake ward; part of Trelawny ward	Large map
11	Plympton Chaddlewood	2	part of Plympton Erle ward; part of Plympton St Mary ward	Map A4
12	Plympton Erle	2	part of Plympton Erle ward	Maps 2 and A4
13	Plympton St Mary	3	part of Plympton Erle ward; part of Plympton St Mary ward	Maps 2 and A4
14	Plymstock Dunstone	3	part of Plymstock Dunstone ward	Maps 2 and A5
15	Plymstock Radford	3	part of Plymstock Dunstone ward; Plymstock Radford ward	Maps 2 and A5
16	St Budeaux	3	part of Ham ward; St Budeaux ward	Large map
17	St Peter & the Waterfront	3	part of St Peter ward; part of Sutton ward	Large map
18	Southway	3	part of Southway ward	Maps A2, A3 and Large map
19	Stoke	3	part of Drake ward; part of Keyham ward; part of St Peter ward; part of Stoke ward	Large map
20	Sutton & Mount Gould	3	part of Mount Gould ward; part of Sutton ward	Large map

Notes: 1) Plymouth is unparished and comprises the 20 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.

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

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Plymouth

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Budshead	3	9,974	3,325	2	10,128	3,376	2
2 Compton	3	9,672	3,224	-1	9,782	3,261	-2
3 Devonport	3	9,769	3,256	0	9,810	3,270	-1
4 Drake	2	6,480	3,240	0	6,643	3,322	0
5 Efford & Lipson	3	9,688	3,229	-1	9,792	3,264	-2
6 Egguckland	3	9,608	3,203	-1	10,211	3,404	3
7 Ham	3	9,955	3,318	2	9,998	3,333	1
8 Honicknowle	3	10,458	3,486	7	10,458	3,486	5
9 Moor View	3	9,823	3,274	1	10,137	3,379	2
10 Peverell	3	9,943	3,314	2	9,943	3,314	0
11 Plympton Chaddlewood	2	6,286	3,143	-3	6,289	3,145	-5
12 Plympton Erle	2	6,938	3,469	7	7,023	3,512	6
13 Plympton St Mary	3	9,891	3,297	1	10,012	3,337	1
14 Plymstock Dunstone	3	10,153	3,384	4	10,220	3,407	3
15 Plymstock Radford	3	9,265	3,088	-5	9,605	3,202	-3
16 St Budeaux	3	9,519	3,173	-2	9,664	3,221	-3
17 St Peter & the Waterfront	3	8,970	2,990	-8	9,655	3,218	-3
18 Southway	3	9,617	3,206	-1	9,715	3,238	-2
19 Stoke	3	9,625	3,208	-1	9,715	3,238	-2
20 Sutton & Mount Gould	3	9,652	3,217	-1	10,114	3,371	2
Totals	57	185,286	-	-	188,914	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,251	-	-	3,314	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Plymouth City 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 city. 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 city of Plymouth. We reviewed the district of South Hams in 1997 and the seven districts of Devon in 1999. We have now reviewed the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay 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 finish in 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Plymouth. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1978 (Report no. 294). We undertook a structural review of local government in Devon in 1994, which resulted in Plymouth becoming a unitary authority in 1998. No changes were made to the electoral arrangements of Plymouth City Council as part of this review.

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

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

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

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

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been 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 also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that

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

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, 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. In unitary authorities the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 28 November 2000, when we wrote to Plymouth City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, the local authority associations, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South 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 City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 19 February 2001. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 19 June 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Plymouth*, and ended on 13 August 2001. During this period we sought comments from the public and other interested parties 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

12 The City of Plymouth, in south-west Devon, is the largest city on the south coast of England. It is a largely urban area, with smaller, more rural settlements on its outskirts. At present the city has a population of some 255,000, covering an area of nearly 8,000 hectares. Plymouth is home to the largest naval dockyard in western Europe, and it also has busy passenger and cargo terminals and an international airport. It is linked to Cornwall and the rest of the country by rail and by the A38, which traverses the city from east to west. The city was granted unitary status in 1998, and has no parishes.

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

14 The electorate of the city is 185,286 (February 2000). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 20 three-member wards. The city is divided by the A38 Parkway which runs from east to west, and by the River Plym which runs from north to south. Four of the 20 wards lie to the east of the river; in the west five wards lie to the north of the A38 while 11 wards lie to the south. Whole-council elections are held every four years. Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Plymouth, with around 8 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments in the city.

15 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,088 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 3,149 by the year 2005 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 10 of the 20 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average, in two wards by more than 20 per cent and in one ward by more than 40 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Plympton Erle ward where each of the three councillors represents 43 per cent more electors than the city average. Moreover, the distribution of councillors is incorrect. At present, based on the current council size of 60, the north-eastern part of the city is represented by six councillors, but is entitled to approximately 7.5 councillors. Conversely, the south-western part of the city has 33 councillors, but is only entitled to 30.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Plymouth

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Budshead	3	8,617	2,872	-7	8,710	2,903	-8
2 Compton	3	8,688	2,896	-6	8,767	2,922	-7
3 Drake	3	10,782	3,594	16	10,943	3,648	16
4 Efford	3	8,915	2,972	-4	8,989	2,996	-5
5 Egguckland	3	9,948	3,316	7	10,044	3,348	6
6 Estover	3	11,916	3,972	29	12,291	4,097	30
7 Ham	3	7,597	2,532	-18	7,638	2,546	-19
8 Honicknowle	3	9,261	3,087	0	9,768	3,256	3
9 Keyham	3	7,942	2,647	-14	7,984	2,661	-15
10 Mount Gould	3	7,855	2,618	-15	8,375	2,792	-11
11 Plympton Erle	3	13,266	4,422	43	13,354	4,451	41
12 Plympton St Mary	3	9,849	3,283	6	9,970	3,323	6
13 Plymstock Dunstone	3	10,650	3,550	15	10,906	3,635	15
14 Plymstock Radford	3	8,768	2,923	-5	8,919	2,973	-6
15 St Budeaux	3	8,883	2,961	-4	9,033	3,011	-4
16 St Peter	3	8,076	2,692	-13	8,565	2,855	-9
17 Southway	3	9,738	3,246	5	9,836	3,279	4
18 Stoke	3	9,106	3,035	-2	9,202	3,067	-3
19 Sutton	3	7,990	2,663	-14	8,181	2,727	-13
20 Trelawny	3	7,439	2,480	-20	7,439	2,480	-21
Totals	60	185,286	-	-	188,914	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,088	-	-	3,149	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Plymouth City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Trelawny ward were relatively over-represented by 20 per cent, while electors in Plympton Erle ward were significantly under-represented by 43 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

16 During Stage One we received six representations, including city-wide schemes from Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Unitary Labour Party, and representations from councillors, local community organisations and residents of Plymouth. 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 the City of Plymouth*.

17 Our draft recommendations were broadly based on the proposals put forward by the City Council and Plymouth Unitary Labour Party as we considered they provided excellent levels of electoral equality, both now and in five years' time. While we attempted to reflect those areas where there was some consensus regarding community boundaries, we also made some amendments and put forward our own proposals in some areas in order to better reflect local community identities and interests. We proposed that:

- Plymouth City Council should be served by 57 councillors, compared with the current 60, representing 20 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years.

Draft Recommendation

Plymouth City Council should comprise 57 councillors, serving 20 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

18 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the city average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

19 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 66 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Plymouth City Council.

Plymouth City Council

20 The City Council proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed wards of Plympton Erle and Plympton Chaddlewood and the boundary between the proposed Devonport and Stoke wards. The latter proposal would retain the area west of Devonport Road and south of the railway line in Stoke ward and transfer the area west of Mount Pleasant Recreation Ground, currently in Keyham ward, to Devonport ward. The Council also proposed modifying the boundaries of the proposed wards of Compton, Drake, Ham and Peverell, resulting in Ham ward becoming a two-member ward, while the other three wards would each have three members. The Council also proposed three two-member wards instead of the two three-member wards of Efford & Lipson and Sutton & Mount Gould. It further proposed a number of ward name changes. The City Council also submitted revised electoral figures for some of the wards proposed in our draft recommendations, claiming that “modest statistical variances” had been found which “are marginal and do not materially affect the electoral balances”.

The Plymouth Unitary Labour Party

21 The Labour Party expressed support for the proposed number of councillors and wards. However, it proposed modifying the boundary between the wards of Plympton Chaddlewood and Plympton Erle. It also proposed modifying the boundaries of Budshead, Eggbuckland and Honicknowle wards by transferring an area at the south-eastern edge of Budshead ward to Eggbuckland ward, and transferring the north-western part of Eggbuckland ward to Budshead ward. The Labour Party also proposed transferring part of Honicknowle ward to Budshead ward and transferring one property north of Victoria Park from Waterfront ward to Stoke ward. It also proposed elections by thirds in preference to whole-council elections.

The Plymouth Sutton Conservative Association

22 The Plymouth Sutton Conservative Association expressed concern “at the marked preference for the Labour Party’s proposals” and claimed that the new wards “appear to have been drawn to extract a marked political advantage”.

The Plymouth Liberal Democrats

23 The Plymouth Liberal Democrats broadly supported the ward boundary proposals but expressed dismay at the proposal to continue with three-member wards and whole-council elections, stating that such a system “discriminates against independent candidates and smaller parties”. They proposed that either the proposed wards should be further subdivided into single-member wards or that elections should be held by thirds.

Plymouth Borough Co-operative Party

24 The Plymouth Borough Co-operative Party expressed broad support for the draft recommendations, but proposed a change to elections by thirds.

Members of Parliament

25 David Jamieson MP, member for Plymouth Devonport, put forward identical proposals to those of the Labour Party concerning transferring part of Budshead ward to Eggbuckland ward, and transferring part of Eggbuckland ward to Budshead ward. He also expressed support for elections by thirds.

Other Representations

26 A further 60 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents. Keyham, Plymouth Estover, Plymstock Dunstone and Stoke Branch Labour Parties generally supported our draft recommendations, with the latter also submitting proposals for modifying a ward boundary in its area. Three of the Branch Labour Parties expressed support for elections by thirds. Councillors Jones and Wildy, members for St Budeaux ward, supported the draft recommendations, and also expressed support for elections by thirds. Councillor King, member for St Peter ward, also supported elections by thirds and proposed changing the name of Waterfront ward. Councillor Stark, member for Compton ward, supported the Council's amendments believing they would "more ably connect the electorate to the elected", while Councillor Dr Mahony, member for Trelawny ward, urged that the existing Trelawny ward be retained and expanded. Councillor Leaves, member for Efford ward, was opposed to the proposed Efford and Lipson ward, preferring two separate two-member wards. Councillor Hughes, member for Mount Gould ward, expressed support for the draft recommendations, which "have reflected the discrete communities" in the area. Councillor Nelder, member for Sutton ward, expressed support for the proposals for Sutton & Mount Gould and Waterfront wards, but favoured elections by thirds.

27 Representations were received from two community groups. Stoke Damerel Conservation Society was opposed to the proposed transfer of part of Stoke ward to Devonport ward, while the Mutley Traders and Business Association expressed concern that the proposed boundaries would entail the association's membership being spread over four wards.

28 Forty six representations were received from local residents. Lord Chave expressed full support for the draft recommendations. 27 residents expressed general support for our draft recommendations. 28 expressed a preference for elections by thirds. One resident expressed support for our proposals for Waterfront ward, but proposed including Friary Park business centre, in the ward, while another proposed modifying the boundary to include Drake's Island, and changing the name. Three residents supported our proposals for Devonport ward, although four others were opposed to part of the existing Stoke ward being included in it. Two residents requested that "some of its surplus" should be removed from Honicknowle ward and three proposed that the part of Budshead ward east of the A386 should be transferred to either Eggbuckland or Moor View ward. Two respondents proposed modifications to the boundary between Plympton Chaddlewood and Plympton Erle wards. Three residents were opposed to part of the existing Trelawny ward becoming part of Ham ward, with one proposing that the current ward should be retained in a 50-member council with 23 wards. One resident supported the draft recommendations for Compton and Drake wards, another expressed support for the City Council's original proposals, another regarded the proposals as "ill-conceived and illogical" while another resident was concerned that the present balance between the Conservative and Labour parties on the Council would not be maintained.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Plymouth 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 city”.

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

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

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

Electorate Forecasts

33 Since 1975 there has been a 7.4 per cent increase in the electorate of Plymouth. At Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 2 per cent from 185,286 to 188,914 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Mount Gould and St Peter wards, although a significant amount is also expected in Honicknowle ward. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. We accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

34 We received no comments on the Council’s overall electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available. However, the Council commented that discrepancies had been found in some ward electorate figures but stressed that they were “marginal and do not materially affect the electoral balances”. Consequently, we have adjusted the figures for the relevant wards – Compton, Devonport, Drake, Efford & Lipson, Ham, Peverell, St Budeaux, Stoke, Sutton & Mount Gould and Waterfront - in the *Final Recommendations* table.

Council Size

35 As already explained, we start by assuming 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.

36 In our draft recommendations report we adopted the proposals from the City Council and the Labour Party for a council of 57 members as we noted that there was consensus between the political parties in Plymouth as to the most appropriate number of councillors for the city and the allocation of those councillors between the four main areas of the city. At present, based on a council size of 60, the north-eastern part of the city is represented by six councillors, but is entitled to 7.5 councillors. Conversely, the south-western part of the city has 33 councillors, but is only entitled to 30. Under a council size of 57 each of the four areas would be allocated the number of councillors to which it is entitled. While the north-western and south-eastern areas would retain 15 and six councillors respectively, the south-western part of the city would be entitled to a total of 29 councillors, and the north-eastern area would be entitled to seven councillors. Thus, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 57 members.

37 During Stage Three a resident proposed either a 40-member council, based on our proposed 20 wards, or a council size of 26, serving 13 two-member wards. There was otherwise general support for our draft recommendations for a council size of 57. As we received no further proposals or evidence regarding council size, we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for a council size of 57 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

38 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council and the Labour Party. We noted the consensus for a small reduction in council size and based our draft recommendations on a council size of 57, which we considered to be the most appropriate council size for the city, having regard to the evidence submitted and to the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area. Both city-wide schemes proposed allocating four fewer councillors to the south-western part of the city and an additional councillor to the north-eastern area. We considered that this proposed allocation would provide appropriate levels of representation for each of the four areas of the city.

39 We noted that there were some areas of consensus between the two proposals regarding the extent of community boundaries in Plymouth, particularly in Plympton and Plymstock. We put forward our own proposals for warding arrangements in the area to the north of the A38 and west of the River Plym, which were based on parts of both the Council's and the Labour Party's proposals. In the area to the south of the A38 we proposed broadly basing our draft recommendations on the proposals put forward by the Labour Party, with a number of small amendments to provide for clearer and more easily identifiable boundaries.

40 At Stage Three the City Council and the Labour Party submitted further proposals, some of which reiterated their Stage One submissions. The Council proposed amendments to our draft recommendations for the proposed wards of Budshead, Compton, Drake, Efford & Lipson, Egguckland, Ham, Peverell and Sutton & Mount Gould, and proposed modifications to the

boundaries of Devonport, Stoke, Plympton Chaddlewood and Plympton Erle wards. However, as we do not propose to implement many of these proposals, for reasons given later in the report, we will not be publishing the electoral figures for the Council's revised wards. The Council also proposed a number of ward name changes. It further submitted revised electoral figures for some of the wards proposed in our draft recommendations, claiming that "modest statistical variances" had been found which "are marginal and do not materially affect the electoral balances". The Labour Party expressed support for the proposed number of councillors and wards. It also submitted proposals for amendments to the boundaries of Budshead, Eggbuckland, Honicknowle, Plympton Chaddlewood, Plympton Erle, Stoke and Waterfront wards. The Liberal Democrats broadly supported the ward boundary proposals.

41 The Plymouth Sutton Conservative Association expressed concern "at the marked preference for the Labour Party's proposals" and claimed that the new warding arrangements "appear to have been drawn to extract a marked political advantage". A local resident, commenting on boundary modifications, stated "if major changes are made...that affect the balance between the two major parties it may be necessary to make changes to the Devonport and Stoke wards to re-address the balance". We have no regard to the political views expressed by our respondents, or the affect our proposals may have regarding changes in the balance between political parties. We would draw attention to what is written in our *Guidance*: "The objective of the PER is to ensure that ... the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same. We also take into account local circumstances, including the need to secure convenient and effective local government, to reflect the identities and interests of local communities, and achieve easily identifiable electoral boundaries". In this review, we also had to rectify the incorrect distribution of councillors in the city.

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

- a) Plympton Erle and Plympton St Mary wards;
- b) Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards;
- c) Eggbuckland and Estover wards;
- d) Budshead, Honicknowle and Southway wards;
- e) Ham, St Budeaux and Trelawny wards;
- f) Compton and Drake wards;
- g) Efford, Mount Gould and Sutton wards;
- h) Keyham, St Peter and Stoke wards;

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

Plympton Erle and Plympton St Mary wards

44 These wards are situated to the east of the River Plym and north of the A38 Plympton Bypass, and are each represented by three councillors. As a result of development which has taken place in Plympton since the last review, Plympton Erle ward is significantly under-represented, with the number of electors per councillor being 43 per cent above the city average (41 per cent in 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Plympton St Mary ward is 6 per cent below the average (unchanged in 2005).

45 At Stage One we adopted the identical proposals put forward by the City Council and the Labour Party as part of our draft recommendations. In order to address the level of inequality in Plympton Erle ward, they proposed creating a new two-member Plympton Chaddlewood ward comprising parts of Plympton Erle and Plympton St Mary wards. Plympton Erle ward would return two members, while Plympton St Mary would remain a three-member ward. We noted the cross-party support for these proposals and the improved levels of electoral equality which would ensue in the Plympton area. We were content that the proposals would reflect local identities and interests well.

46 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average (equal to the average in 2005) in Plympton Chaddlewood ward, 2 per cent above the average (1 per cent above in 2005) in Plympton Erle ward and 1 per cent above (unchanged in 2005) in Plympton St Mary ward.

47 At Stage Three the City Council proposed modifying the boundary between Plympton Chaddlewood ward and Plympton Erle ward to include New Park Road, Waggon Hill and Wallace Road in Plympton Erle ward as they “have an established affinity with Plympton St Maurice and no connection whatsoever with the Plympton Chaddlewood area”. The Labour Party expressed concern that three estates were divided by the boundary between Plympton Chaddlewood and Plympton Erle wards, and so proposed placing the whole of Yealmpstone Farm and Longbrook Farm estates in Plympton Erle ward, placing the whole of the New Park estate in Plympton Chaddlewood ward and moving the Wain Park Estate from Plympton Erle ward to Plympton Chaddlewood ward. Two residents also proposed boundary modifications. One proposed that the whole of the Wain Park and New Park estates should be placed in Plympton Chaddlewood ward, with the Yealmpstone Farm and Longbrook Farm estates in Plympton Erle ward; another made the same proposal, but in addition proposed transferring part of Plympton Erle ward to the south of Waggon Hill/Longcause to Plympton Chaddlewood ward. One resident questioned the need to create a new ward in Plympton, claiming that only minor adjustments to existing boundaries, in order to even up numbers, were necessary.

48 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendations and modify the proposed boundary between Plympton Chaddlewood and Plympton Erle wards to follow Ridgeway, Waggon Hill and the backs of the houses to the west of Wain Park. This would place the Wain Park estate, with its access from Ridgeway, in Plympton Chaddlewood ward, and the New Park Road, Longbrook Farm and Yealmpstone Farm estates in Plympton Erle ward. In our opinion, this would address the concerns over community interests and identities expressed by the respondents, by keeping estates together and utilising clear boundaries.

49 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Plympton Chaddlewood, Plympton Erle and Plympton St Mary wards would be 3 per cent below, 7 per cent above and 1 per cent above the city average respectively (5 per cent below, 6 per cent above and 1 per cent above in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A4 in Appendix A.

Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards

50 Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards lie to the east of the River Plym and south of the A38 Plympton Bypass, and are each represented by three councillors. Plymstock Dunstone ward is relatively under-represented at present, with 15 per cent more electors per

councillor than the city average (unchanged in five years' time). Plymstock Radford ward has 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (6 per cent fewer by 2005).

51 At Stage One the City Council proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards in order to address the relatively high level of electoral inequality in the current Plymstock Dunstone ward. The Labour Party proposed more substantial amendments to the boundary between the two wards. We received one further representation in relation to this area. On behalf of the councillors for the Plymstock area, Councillor Patrick Nicholson (Plympton St Mary ward) put forward an alternative boundary between Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards. As we considered that the City Council's proposals would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in Plymstock, we put forward the Council's Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards as part of our draft recommendations, subject to one amendment. We considered that the Southgate Avenue area shares greater community ties with the Holmwood Avenue area than with Reddicliffe Close to the west, and proposed retaining Southgate Avenue within the proposed Plymstock Dunstone ward. In order to provide acceptable levels of electoral equality in both wards, we also proposed transferring the part of the current Plymstock Dunstone ward to the west of Goosewell Road and north of Holmwood Avenue to the revised Plymstock Radford ward.

52 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the city average (3 per cent above in 2005) and 5 per cent below the average (3 per cent below in 2005) in Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards respectively.

53 No specific response was received from the City Council, or any political party, concerning this part of our draft recommendations. A Plymstock resident expressed support for our proposals for the area. In the absence of any further submissions, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

54 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the city average (3 per cent above in 2005) and 5 per cent below the average (3 per cent below in 2005) in Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards respectively. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A5 in Appendix A.

Eggbuckland and Estover wards

55 Eggbuckland and Estover wards lie to the north of the A38 Parkway and west of the River Plym, and are each represented by three councillors. At present Estover ward is significantly under-represented, with 29 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to improve over the next five years, and Estover ward is forecast to have 30 per cent more electors per councillor than the average by 2005. Eggbuckland ward has 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average, improving slightly to 6 per cent more by 2005.

56 At Stage One the City Council proposed combining part of Eggbuckland ward with part of Estover ward to form a revised two-member Estover ward. The remaining part of Eggbuckland ward would be combined with another part of Estover ward and part of Honicknowle ward to form a revised three-member Eggbuckland ward. The remaining part of the current Estover ward would be combined with part of Southway ward to form a new Derriford ward, as discussed later.

57 The Labour Party also proposed transferring part of Eggbuckland ward to a revised Estover ward, which it proposed renaming Moor View ward. The new three-member Moor View ward would also include part of the current Estover ward. Under its proposals the remaining part of Eggbuckland ward would be combined with part of Estover ward to form a new three-member Crownhill ward.

58 As we were not persuaded that either of the two schemes would appropriately reflect local community identities and interests, we based our draft recommendations for this part of the city on a combination of the City Council's proposals and the Labour Party's scheme, with some further amendments to ward boundaries. We adopted the Labour Party's three-member Moor View ward, although we proposed one minor amendment to the western boundary of the ward in order to better reflect community identities and interests. While we noted that the A386 forms a strong community boundary in this area, we considered that the properties on the eastern side of the road, adjacent to Plymouth City Airport, share greater community links with areas to the west of Tavistock Road. We therefore proposed that the western boundary of Moor View ward should run to the rear of these properties before rejoining Tavistock Road to the north of Plymbridge Lane.

59 To the south of Moor View ward, we proposed a revised three-member Eggbuckland ward, broadly based on the City Council's Eggbuckland ward, which, we judged, would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. However, we noted that the Crownhill area is physically separated from the area to the south of Fort Austin Avenue by the Plumer House and Crownhill Court offices, and considered that it shares greater community ties with the Budshead Road area to the west of the A386. We therefore proposed amending the northern boundary of the revised Eggbuckland ward to run along the centre of Fort Austin Avenue and Crownhill as far as St Peter's Road. In order to provide improved electoral equality, we also proposed amending the Council's Eggbuckland ward to include the part of Honicknowle ward to the east of Sheridan Road and south of Chaucer Way.

60 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average (3 per cent above in 2005) in the three-member Eggbuckland ward and 1 per cent (2 per cent above in 2005) in the three-member Moor View ward

61 At Stage Three the City Council proposed changing the name of Moor View ward to Elmholt. The Labour Party proposed an amendment to the draft recommendations for these wards. It proposed that the Charlton Road area of Budshead ward should be transferred to Eggbuckland ward as it is "the only part of the proposed Budshead ward to lie to the east of the A386, which at this location is a six-lane dual highway". The Labour Party also claimed that this part of the proposed ward "has no natural links and little in common" with the rest of the ward, and that its natural links were with Crownhill Village in Eggbuckland ward. To compensate for this transfer of electors the Labour Party proposed transferring to Budshead ward the area in Eggbuckland ward west of the A386 and south of Crownhill Road, claiming it had more in common with the Kirkwall Road area to the north than the new Manadon development to the south. This proposal was also submitted by David Jamieson, MP for Plymouth Devonport. Four residents, while supporting our draft recommendations, also submitted the same proposal. Plymouth Estover Branch Labour Party supported the draft recommendations for the existing Estover ward, stating that the proposed Budshead and Moor View wards would "comprise whole communities within natural boundaries".

62 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. Although we note the fact that a major road runs between the Charlton Road area and the rest of

Budshead ward, we are also aware that there is a barrier to the south between this area and Eggbuckland ward. In our draft recommendations report, we wrote “we note that the Crownhill area is physically separated from the area to the south of Fort Austin Avenue by the Plumer House and Crownhill Court offices, and consider that it shares greater community ties with the Budshead Road area to the west of the A386”. We are still of that opinion, and so do not propose amending our draft recommendations for this area. As a consequence, there is no need to transfer the area in Eggbuckland ward west of the A386 to Budshead ward. We are also not minded to change the name of Moor View ward to Elmholt ward, as proposed by the City Council, as there is no evidence of other community support for the change.

63 In the absence of any further proposals, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average (3 per cent above in 2005) in Eggbuckland ward and 1 per cent (2 per cent above in 2005) in Moor View ward. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A3 in Appendix A, and on the large map inside the back cover of this report.

Budshead, Honicknowle and Southway wards

64 Budshead, Honicknowle and Southway wards lie to the north of the A38 Parkway, and broadly to the west of the A386 Tavistock Road, and are each represented by three councillors. At present Budshead and Southway wards have 7 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (8 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more than the average by 2005). Honicknowle ward currently has equal to the average number of electors per councillor for the city as a whole, and is forecast to have 3 per cent more than the average in five years' time.

65 At Stage One, the City Council proposed a new three-member Derriford ward, comprising part of the current Estover ward together with part of the current Southway ward. The remaining part of Southway ward, less the part to the south of Tamerton Foliot Road, would form a revised two-member Southway ward. The Council noted that its proposals would “ensure that existing links between Southway and the ancient Village of Tamerton Foliot are maintained”. The City Council proposed transferring part of the current Southway ward to a revised two-member Budshead ward, which would also include part of the current Budshead ward, part of Estover ward and part of Honicknowle ward. Finally, the Council proposed combining the remaining parts of Budshead and Honicknowle wards to form a revised three-member Honicknowle ward.

66 The Labour Party proposed a revised three-member Southway ward, comprising the current ward less the Tamerton Foliot area to the west of Coombe Lane, together with part of Estover ward. The Tamerton Foliot area would be combined with part of the current Budshead ward to form a revised three-member Budshead ward. Honicknowle ward would be expanded to include the Agaton Fort Road area from the current Budshead ward, and the Kirkwall Road area from Estover ward, and would continue to be represented by three councillors.

67 As we were not persuaded that either of the two city-wide schemes for the northern part of Plymouth would appropriately reflect local community identities and interests in their entirety, we put forward our own proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, drawing on part of each of the two schemes. We proposed one minor amendment to Southway ward, transferring the Lake View Close area to a revised Budshead ward, and we proposed transferring Ernesettle from the current Budshead ward to a revised Honicknowle ward. The

remaining part of Budshead ward, to the north of Budshead Creek, would be combined with the Looseleigh Lane area to the west of the A386 Tavistock Road, and the Crownhill area to the south of Brest Road and north of Fort Austin Avenue, to form a revised three-member Budshead ward. Finally, we proposed a revised three-member Honicknowle ward, comprising the Ernesettle area from Budshead ward and the part of the current Honicknowle ward to the west of St Peter's Road, Chaucer Way and Sheridan Road.

68 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average (unchanged in 2005) in the three-member Budshead ward, 7 per cent above (5 per cent above in 2005) in the three-member Honicknowle ward and 1 per cent below (2 per cent below in 2005) in the three-member Southway ward.

69 At Stage Three the Labour Party proposed transferring an area at the eastern end of Honicknowle ward, to the north of Crownhill Road, to Budshead ward on the grounds that many of the residents are elderly and "crossing the Crownhill Road can present some difficulty". This proposal was also submitted by David Jamieson, MP for Plymouth Devonport. Plymouth Estover Branch Labour Party expressed its support for our proposed Budshead ward. Three residents, while supporting the draft recommendations, requested that further thought be given to Honicknowle ward by "removing some of its surplus"; another objected to the changes proposed for the Ernesettle/Honicknowle area, while another expressed approval for the proposed Southway ward.

70 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We note the proposal submitted by the Labour Party and David Jamieson MP to transfer part of Honicknowle ward to Budshead ward; however, we do not propose implementing it as it fails to meet our statutory criteria. The existing boundary, being a deep valley, is a strong natural boundary, restricting access to Budshead ward, whereas there is good access for the roads in question from Crownhill Road, in the proposed Honicknowle ward. As it was not clear what respondents meant by Honicknowle ward's "surplus", and in the absence of any further submissions, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

71 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average (unchanged in 2005) in Budshead ward, 7 per cent above (5 per cent above in 2005) in Honicknowle ward and 1 per cent below (2 per cent below in 2005) in Southway ward. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated Map 2 and Map A2 in Appendix A, and on the large map inside the back cover of this report.

Ham, St Budeaux and Trelawny wards

72 Ham, St Budeaux and Trelawny wards lie to the north and west of Plymouth city centre, south of the A38 Parkway, and are each represented by three councillors at present. Ham and Trelawny wards are relatively over-represented at present, with 18 per cent and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average. These levels of electoral equality are not expected to improve over the next five years, with Ham and Trelawny wards forecast to have 19 per cent and 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively by 2005. St Budeaux ward has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average at present, unchanged by 2005.

73 At Stage One, the City Council proposed enlarging the three-member St Budeaux ward, by including the northern part of Ham ward, whereas the south-eastern part of Ham ward would be transferred to a revised three-member Trelawny ward. The revised Ham ward would be

represented by two councillors, rather than three as at present. To the south, the Council's proposed Trelawny ward would also comprise the northern part of Drake ward and the north-west corner of Compton ward. The Labour Party also proposed an enlarged three-member St Budeaux ward, to include the north-western part of Ham ward. The revised three-member Ham ward would be enlarged to include the north and north-west of Trelawny ward. Under the Labour Party's proposals the remaining part of the current Trelawny ward would form part of a new three-member Peverell ward.

74 We based our draft recommendations for this part of Plymouth on the proposals put forward by the Labour Party as we were not persuaded that the City Council's proposals would appropriately reflect local community identities and interests in this area. In particular, we noted that the Council's proposed Trelawny ward would divide the distinct and close-knit Peverell Park Road community. However, we noted that there were some similarities between the two city-wide schemes in relation to the revised St Budeaux ward, and we were content to reflect these areas of agreement in our draft recommendations. We proposed that the boundary between St Budeaux and Ham wards should follow the A3064 St Budeaux bypass south from the A38 Parkway and run to the rear of properties on the south side of Weston Mill Hill, Fletemoor Hill and Cardinal Avenue, before rejoining the current ward boundary to the west of Rodney Street. We proposed adopting the Labour Party's three-member Ham ward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to one minor amendment. We proposed that the Corporation Road and Harnorlen Road area should be transferred from Ham ward to the new Peverell ward, as these two roads are accessible only from Ham Drive, and we considered that the area shares stronger community ties with the Ham Drive area to its south than with Pennycross to the north.

75 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in the three-member St Budeaux ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent above in the three-member Ham ward (equal to the average in 2005).

76 At Stage Three the City Council proposed a two-member Ham ward. It proposed that West Down Road and Hungerford Road should be in Peverell ward rather than Ham ward, as the residents "consider themselves to be part of the Trelawny/Peverell area rather than Ham". The City Council also commented that it was "not logical" to include the Manadon Demesne, St Pancras and Fountains Crescent areas in Ham ward. It stated that Fountains Crescent is "accessed from Honicknowle Lane and is physically apart from the 'Scottish' Crescents and Ham Lane". It also contended that the Demesne is regarded as part of upper Peverell and linked with the Tor community which is in Peverell ward, and that the St Pancras area has links with both the Demesne and Fountains Crescent. The Council proposed balancing this by moving the southern boundary of Peverell ward, as outlined below. The Council further proposed that Peverell ward should be called Trelawny ward.

77 Councillor Mahoney, member for Trelawny ward, also proposed that the Manadon Demesne and Pennycross areas should be in Peverell ward, which he proposed should be called Trelawny ward, as they are separated from the Ham ward estates "by the pedestrianised Ham Lane and Ham Woods". He also maintained that their access is on to Honicknowle Lane and the eastern end of Ham Drive "which is most definitely part of the Beacon Park, Peverell area of the city". In addition he proposed that Beacon Down Avenue and associated roads should be part of Peverell ward as "these roads were historically in Trelawny ward before the last review". Councillor Mahoney further proposed that the roads at the south-west of the existing Trelawny ward, Westdown Road, Hungerford Road, the south end of North Prospect and the south side of Beacon Park Road, which would be transferred to Ham ward under our draft

recommendations, should be retained in Trelawny ward. A resident proposed the same amendments to the Ham ward/Peverell ward boundary as Councillor Mahoney. Another resident also proposed the same amendments as the City Council.

78 Councillor Jones, member for St Budeaux ward, supported the proposed boundaries “for Plymouth in general and St Budeaux ward in particular”.

79 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. While we note the arguments put forward by the City Council and the other respondents to retain the Pennycross and Fountains Crescent areas in Peverell ward, we are not persuaded that the community identity arguments put forward are strong enough to justify amending our draft recommendations, in view of the fact that the modifications to the proposed boundaries would necessitate consequential boundary changes to the proposed Drake and Peverell wards, as discussed below. Although it is true that access for the roads in these areas is on to Honicknowle Lane and the eastern end of Ham Drive, we would contend that Ham Drive is, in fact, a road which links the whole of the northern residential area of the proposed Ham ward, so being a unifying rather than a divisive factor in the ward. As we are not proposing to amend our draft recommendations in this area, we do not propose transferring the Beacon Down Avenue area from Ham ward to Peverell ward as this proposal presupposed the transfer of the Fountains Crescent and Pennycross areas. We also do not propose modifying the boundary to include Westdown Road, Hungerford Road, the south end of North Prospect and the south side of Beacon Park Road in Peverell ward, as, in our opinion, the community identity arguments are not strong enough to justify a worsening of electoral equality. We note the proposals to change the name of Peverell ward to Trelawny ward. However, as we are not recommending retaining the northern boundary of the existing Trelawny ward, such that the existing Trelawny ward would form only a minority of the proposed Peverell ward, we do not consider the name Trelawny to be appropriate in the circumstances.

80 In the absence of any further proposals, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these two wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average (unchanged in 2005) in St Budeaux ward and 1 per cent above (equal to the average in 2005) in Ham ward. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map inside the back cover of this report.

Compton and Drake wards

81 Compton and Drake wards cover the northern parts of Plymouth city centre, and are each represented by three councillors. At present, Compton ward has 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (7 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Drake ward is relatively under-represented, with 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the average, both now and in five years' time.

82 At Stage One the City Council proposed a revised two-member Drake ward, comprising the north-eastern part of the existing Drake ward, together with the part of Compton ward to the west of Mannamead Road and Thorn Park. The remaining parts of the current Drake ward would be transferred to a new St Andrew ward and revised Mount Gould and Stoke wards. The Council also proposed a revised three-member Compton ward, comprising the rest of the current ward, together with the western part of Efford ward to the north of Landford Road. Compton ward would also include the part of Mount Gould ward to the north of Furzehill Road.

83 The Labour Party proposed transferring the southern part of the current Trelawny ward to a new three-member Peverell ward, which would also include the northern part of Drake ward and the western part of Compton ward. The remainder of the current Drake ward would be combined with the western part of Mount Gould ward to form a revised two-member Drake ward. The Labour Party also proposed a revised three-member Compton ward, comprising the remaining part of the current Compton ward, together with the north-west part of Efford ward. The revised Compton ward would also include the part of Drake ward to the east of Pentillie Road and north of Chester Place, and Moor View Terrace and Alexandra Place, currently in Mount Gould ward. We also received a representation from Mutley Community Association, which proposed linking the Mutley area with the Greenbank area for city warding purposes.

84 We based our draft recommendations for this part of Plymouth on the proposals put forward by the Labour Party. While we noted that both city-wide schemes would provide excellent levels of electoral equality, we were not persuaded that the City Council's proposals would appropriately reflect local community identities and interests in this area. We considered that the Labour Party's proposed Peverell ward would better reflect the focus of the communities which surround the northern part of Central Park, and so we adopted the Labour Party's three-member Peverell ward, subject to one minor amendment to retain those properties on the northern side of Mutley Road within Peverell ward. We considered that the Labour Party's proposed Drake ward would better reflect the identities and interests of the area to the north of the commercial centre of the city and were content to put it forward, subject to one minor boundary amendment; we proposed retaining Napier Terrace, Houndiscombe Road and Chester Place within the revised two-member Drake ward, and utilising the Plymouth to Totnes railway line as the boundary between Drake and Compton wards. We also largely adopted the Labour Party's proposed three-member Compton ward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to two amendments to the western boundary, as we noted that its proposals would unite both sides of the Mutley Plain community within Compton ward, addressing some of the concerns raised by Mutley Community Association.

85 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average (2 per cent below in 2005) in the three-member Compton ward, equal to the average (2 per cent below in 2005) in the three-member Peverell ward and 2 per cent below (1 per cent below in 2005) in the two-member Drake ward.

86 At Stage Three the City Council proposed creating a three-member Trelawny ward by moving the southern boundary of Peverell ward to the north to follow the southern and eastern boundaries of Central Park, Broad Park Road and Weston Park Road, before cutting through the houses to join the proposed boundary with Compton ward at Thornhill Road. The Council contended that "some of the Park Avenues look towards the Peverell Corner shopping area, while the remainder ... look towards the Hyde Park 'Village' shopping area and Mutley Plain". The City Council further proposed transferring the area around Hermitage Road from Peverell ward to the enlarged three-member Drake ward, and leaving the area west of Mutley Plain in Drake ward. The Council contended that these proposals "would bring the Mutley/Green Bank area into two wards, rather than the three at present and the three proposed by the Commission". It further contended that there is no consensus locally on the need for both sides of Mutley Plain to be in one ward, claiming that the draft recommendations' proposal for this area "frustrates the concept of a Mutley community". These proposals were also put forward by Councillor Mahoney, member for Trelawny ward, and a local resident. The Mutley Traders and Business Association expressed concern that the proposed boundary changes would result in the association's membership being spread over four wards. A local resident expressed support for the proposed boundary changes for Compton and Drake wards.

87 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. While we note the arguments put forward by the City Council and the other respondents, we are not persuaded that the community identity arguments put forward are strong enough to justify amending our draft recommendations in this area. In particular, it would appear that the Council's boundary between its proposed Trelawny and Drake wards has been drawn up as a consequence of its proposed changes to the boundary between Ham and Peverell wards, brings no improvement in terms of community identities and is somewhat arbitrary.

88 We are, therefore, confirming our draft recommendations for these two wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average (2 per cent below in 2005) in the three-member Compton ward, equal to the average (2 per cent below in 2005) in the three-member Peverell ward and 2 per cent below (1 per cent below in 2005) in the two-member Drake ward. Our final recommendations for this area are illustrated on the large map inside the back cover of this report.

Efford, Mount Gould and Sutton wards

89 The three-member Efford, Mount Gould and Sutton wards cover the area to the north and east of Plymouth city centre, and are bounded by the A38 Parkway in the north and by the River Plym in the east. Efford ward has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average at present, and is forecast to have 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005. Mount Gould and Sutton wards are more significantly over-represented, with 15 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively. These levels of electoral equality are expected to improve marginally over the next five years, with Mount Gould and Sutton wards forecast to have 11 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2005.

90 At Stage One the City Council proposed transferring part of the current Efford ward to a revised Compton ward. Under its proposals most of the remaining part of Efford ward would form a revised two-member Efford ward. The rest of Efford ward would form part of a revised three-member Mount Gould ward, comprising some of the current Mount Gould ward together with part of Drake ward. The Council proposed combining part of the current Mount Gould ward with part of Sutton ward to form a revised two-member Sutton ward. The remaining part of the current Sutton ward would form part of a new two-member St Andrew ward, as described below.

91 Under the Labour Party's proposals, the part of Efford ward not being transferred to Compton ward would be combined with the northern part of Mount Gould ward to form a new three-member Efford & Lipson ward. The western part of the current Mount Gould ward would be transferred to a revised Drake ward. The Labour Party proposed combining the remaining part of Mount Gould ward with the eastern part of Sutton ward to form a new three-member Sutton & Mount Gould ward. The remaining part of the current Sutton ward would form part of a new Waterfront ward, as described below.

92 We based our draft recommendations for this part of Plymouth on the proposals put forward by the Labour Party. While we noted that both city-wide schemes would provide excellent levels of electoral equality, we were not persuaded that the City Council's proposals would appropriately reflect local community identities and interests in this area. We were content that the Labour Party's proposed Efford & Lipson and Sutton & Mount Gould wards would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and adopted them as part of our draft recommendations for Plymouth, without amendment.

93 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average (1 per cent above in 2005) in the three-member Efford & Lipson ward and 2 per cent below (equal to the average in 2005) in the three-member Sutton & Mount Gould ward.

94 At Stage Three the City Council stated that it regarded the proposed wards as “artificial and contrived”, proposing instead three two-member wards, which it claimed would “better reflect communities”. It proposed retaining most of the existing Efford ward in its current boundaries, and retaining most of the existing boundary between Sutton and Mount Gould wards, apart from in the west. Councillor Hughes, member for Mount Gould ward, and Councillor Nelder, member for Sutton ward, supported the draft recommendations on community identity grounds. Councillor Leaves, member for Efford ward, proposed that Efford should remain as a two-member ward and that Lipson should also be a two-member ward, linked with either Mount Gould or Laira.

95 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. While we note the arguments put forward by the City Council and Councillor Leaves, we are not persuaded that the community identity arguments put forward are strong enough to justify amending our draft recommendations in this area. We also note that Councillors Hughes and Nelder expressed support for our draft recommendations on the grounds of community identity.

96 We are, therefore, confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average (1 per cent above in 2005) in the three-member Efford & Lipson ward and 2 per cent below (equal to the average in 2005) in the three-member Sutton & Mount Gould ward. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map inside the back cover of this report.

Keyham, St Peter and Stoke wards

97 The three-member Keyham, St Peter and Stoke wards lie to the west of the city centre, broadly to the south-west of the A3064 Wolseley Road. Stoke ward has 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). St Peter and Keyham wards are relatively over-represented at present, with 13 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (9 per cent and 15 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

98 At Stage One, the City Council proposed a new two-member St Andrew ward comprising the western part of the current Sutton ward and the eastern part of St Peter ward. The new St Andrew ward would also include a small south-western part of Drake ward. The remaining part of the current St Peter ward would be combined with part of Keyham ward and part of Stoke ward, to form a new three-member St Aubyn ward. The remaining part of the current Keyham ward would be combined with the northern part of Stoke ward to form a revised two-member Keyham ward. The remaining part of Stoke ward would form a revised two-member Stoke ward, which would also include part of Drake ward.

99 The Labour Party proposed combining the part of St Peter ward to the east of Stonehouse Creek and south of Devonport High School for Boys with the western part of Sutton ward to form a new three-member Waterfront ward. It also proposed a new three-member Devonport ward, comprising most of the current Keyham ward, together with the part of St Peter ward to

the west of Stonehouse Creek and King Road and the part of Stoke ward to the south of the Plymouth to St Budeaux railway line and west of Devonport Road. The Labour Party further proposed a revised three-member Stoke ward, comprising the remaining part of the current ward together with part of Keyham ward, part of St Peter ward and part of Drake ward. We received one further representation from a resident of West Hoe who argued that the area shares greater community links with the city centre and the remaining part of the Hoe than with the other areas of St Peter ward.

100 We based our draft recommendations for this part of Plymouth on the proposals put forward by the Labour Party. While we noted that both city-wide schemes would provide excellent levels of electoral equality we considered that the Labour Party's proposals would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and we were content to put forward its proposals without amendment. We considered that the proposed three-member Waterfront ward would reflect the identities and interests of the communities which surround the commercial centre of the city, while the proposed Devonport ward would cover the areas surrounding the dockyards on the River Tamar.

101 Under our draft recommendations for these three-member wards the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the city average (1 per cent below in 2005) in Waterfront ward, equal to the average (1 per cent below in 2005) in the Devonport ward and 1 per cent below (2 per cent below in 2005) in Stoke ward.

102 At Stage Three the City Council proposed that the area to the west of Mount Pleasant Recreation Ground which is currently in Keyham ward should be part of the proposed Devonport ward and that area between Devonport Road and the railway line, currently in Stoke ward, should remain in Stoke ward. It also proposed dividing the proposed Devonport ward into a two-member Keyham ward in the north and a single-member St Aubyn ward in the south. It further proposed that the name of the proposed Waterfront ward should be changed to St Andrew. Stoke Damerel Conservation Society and five local residents were also opposed to the proposed transfer of part of Stoke ward to Devonport ward. Three residents supported our proposals for Devonport ward.

103 The Labour Party proposed the transfer of one property, The Lodge, currently in St Peter ward, from the proposed Waterfront ward to the proposed Stoke ward. It pointed out that The Lodge, being in Victoria Park, is the only property on the north side of the park to be included in Waterfront ward. This proposal was also submitted by Stoke Branch Labour Party. Councillor Nelder, member for Sutton ward, supported our proposals for Waterfront ward. Councillor King, member for St Peter ward, proposed changing the name of Waterfront ward to include 'St Peter'. One resident also expressed support for our proposals for Waterfront ward, but proposed including in the ward Friary Park, which he referred to as an important business centre, while another proposed modifying the boundary between Waterfront and Devonport wards, changing the name of Waterfront ward to St Peter & the Waterfront ward and including Drake's Island in Waterfront ward

104 Having carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendations. We propose modifying the boundary between the proposed Devonport and Stoke wards to include the area to the west of Mount Pleasant Recreation Ground, currently in Keyham ward, in our proposed Devonport ward, and to include the area south of the railway line and west of Devonport Road in our proposed Stoke ward, rather than in Devonport ward. In our opinion, this would address the concerns over community interests and identities expressed by the City Council and other

respondents. We also propose modifying the boundary between Stoke ward and Waterfront ward to include The Lodge in Stoke ward; this would have a minimal effect on electoral equality. We further propose modifying the boundary between Waterfront ward and Sutton & Mount Gould ward to include Friary Park in Waterfront ward. This would involve 30 electors, and would have a minimal effect on electoral equality. We do not propose modifying the boundary between Waterfront ward and Devonport ward as the proposed boundary, which follows the polling district boundary, is natural and well-defined. However, we propose changing the name of Waterfront ward to St Peter & the Waterfront ward, as there is some evidence of local support for such a change. We note the comment concerning Drake's Island; it is, in fact, already situated in Waterfront ward, although it was not shown on the mapping in our draft recommendations. This has now been rectified.

105 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the city average (1 per cent below in 2005) in Devonport ward, 8 per cent below (3 per cent below in 2005) in St Peter & the Waterfront ward and 1 per cent below (2 per cent below in 2005) in Stoke ward. Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

106 At Stage One we received two proposals in relation to the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council itself supported retaining the present cycle of whole-council elections every four years. The Labour Party proposed adopting a system of elections by thirds, stating that "it has long been the policy of Plymouth Labour Party to move from the system of whole-council elections every four years". Having carefully considered all representations, we noted that there appeared to be no clear cross-party support for a change to the present electoral cycle and therefore did not propose to change the current cycle of whole-council elections.

107 At Stage Three the City Council made no further comments on the electoral cycle. The Labour Party reiterated its view that Plymouth would be better served by elections by thirds, stating that with "a single tier of local government...it would be appropriate for the electoral arrangements to be made more representative and accountable, which annual elections would bring". The Liberal Democrats proposed elections by thirds as one of two alternatives to whole-council elections, being of the opinion that the main advantage would be to prevent "the hugely disruptive see-saw shifts in power". David Jamieson, MP for Plymouth Devonport, was in favour of elections by thirds as "this appears to be the pattern across the country that Unitary Authorities have moved to" and it "would help provide a fairer basis for elections in Plymouth". Support was also expressed by Plymouth Borough Co-operative Party, Keyham, Plymstock Dunstone and Stoke Branch Labour Parties, Councillors Jones and Wildy, members for St Budeaux ward, Councillor King, member for St Peter ward, and Councillor Nelder, member for Sutton ward. 28 residents also expressed their support for such a change in the system of voting, with one maintaining it would be a "more representative and accountable system", while another said it would remind councillors that "they are there to take care of all the citizens".

108 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. We note that, unlike at Stage One, there is clear evidence of some cross-party support and of considerable local support for a change in the electoral cycle in Plymouth. In the light of this, we propose moving away from our draft recommendations and propose that Plymouth City Council's electoral cycle should be changed from whole-council elections to elections by thirds.

Conclusions

109 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 amending the boundary between Devonport ward and Stoke ward in two areas, transferring the area bounded by the railway line, Devonport Road and Exmouth Road from Devonport ward to Stoke ward, and transferring the area bounded by Albert Road, Keppel Place, Mount Pleasant Recreation Ground, Pasley Street and Victoria Place from Stoke ward to Devonport ward;
- we propose amending the boundary between Stoke ward and Waterfront ward to include The Lodge, in Victoria Park, in Stoke ward;
- we propose amending the boundary between Plympton Chaddlewood ward and Plympton Erle ward to run along Ridgeway, Waggon Hill and behind the houses in Wain Park;
- we propose renaming Waterfront ward as St Peter & the Waterfront ward;
- we propose changing the electoral cycle from whole-council elections to elections by thirds.

110 We conclude that, in Plymouth:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 60 to 57;
- there should be 20 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should hold elections by thirds.

111 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	57	60	57
Number of wards	20	20	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,088	3,251	3,149	3,314
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	10	0	9	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	2	0	3	0

112 As Table 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 10 to none, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Plymouth City Council should comprise 57 councillors, serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should hold elections by thirds.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Plymouth

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

114 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 15 January 2002.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Plymouth: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Plymouth area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the city and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 to A5 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary between Budshead and Southway wards.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Budshead, Moor View and Southway wards.

Map A4 illustrates the boundary of the proposed Plympton Chaddlewood ward.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed boundary between Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Plymouth city centre.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Plymouth: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Boundary between Budshead and Southway Wards

Map A3: Proposed Boundary between Budshead, Moor View and Southway Wards

Map A4: Proposed Boundary of Plympton Chaddlewood Ward

Map A5: Proposed Boundary between Plymstock Dunstone and Plymstock Radford wards