

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Preston in Lancashire

*February 2000*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their 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 statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish councils in the borough.

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

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## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Preston on 7 September 1999.

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

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

- **in seven of the 19 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and four 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 four wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 58-59) are that:

- **Preston Borough Council should continue to have 57 councillors;**
- **there should be 22 wards, instead of 19 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of three, and Tulketh ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

These draft 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 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 8 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **two additional parish councillors for the parish of Lea.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 15 February 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 10 April 2000:

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

**Fax: 020 7404 6142**

**E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Ashton	2	Ashton ward (part); Larches ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2	Barracks	3	Sherwood ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
3	Brookfield	3	Brookfield ward; Deepdale ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
4	Broughton	2	Preston Rural East ward (part – the parish of Haighton); Preston Rural West ward (part – the parishes of Broughton and Woodplumpton)	Map 2
5	Cadley	2	Cadley ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
6	Deepdale	2	Central ward (part); Deepdale ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
7	Fishwick	2	Fishwick ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
8	Fulwood	2	Moor Park ward (part); Sharoe Green ward (part); Sherwood ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
9	Greyfriars	3	Cadley ward (part); Greyfriars ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
10	Ingol	3	Greyfriars ward (part); Ingol ward	Map 2 and large map
11	Larches	3	Ashton ward (part); Larches ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
12	Lea	3	Preston Rural West ward (part – the parish of Lea)	Map 2
13	Moor Park	2	Moor Park ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
14	Ribbleton	3	Fishwick ward (part); St Matthew's ward (part); Ribbleton ward	Map 2 and large map
15	Riversway	3	Riversway ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
16	Rural North	3	Preston Rural East ward (part – the parishes of Barton, Goosnargh, Grimsargh and Whittingham)	Map 2
17	Sharoe Green	3	Sharoe Green ward (part); Sherwood ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
18	St George's	2	Central ward (part); Moor Park ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

19	St Matthew's	3	Deepdale ward (part); St Matthew's ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
20	Town Centre	3	Avenham ward; Central ward (part); Fishwick ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
21	Tulketh	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2 and large map
22	University	2	Central ward (part); Riversway ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

*Notes: 1 Broughton, Lea and Rural North wards are parished, as indicated above. The remaining 19 wards are unparished.*

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Preston

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 Ashton	2	3,561	1,781	2	3,508	1,754	-2
2 Barracks	3	4,609	1,536	-12	5,080	1,693	-5
3 Brookfield	3	5,480	1,827	5	5,417	1,806	1
4 Broughton	2	3,167	1,584	-9	3,340	1,670	-7
5 Cadley	2	3,974	1,974	13	3,872	1,936	8
6 Deepdale	2	3,807	1,904	9	3,687	1,844	3
7 Fishwick	2	3,578	1,789	3	3,527	1,764	-1
8 Fulwood	2	3,528	1,764	1	3,475	1,738	-3
9 Greyfriars	3	5,428	1,809	4	5,367	1,789	0
10 Ingol	3	5,775	1,925	10	5,710	1,903	6
11 Larches	3	5,607	1,869	7	5,678	1,893	6
12 Lea	3	4,102	1,367	-22	5,239	1,746	-2
13 Moor Park	2	3,714	1,857	6	3,712	1,856	4
14 Ribbleton	3	5,671	1,890	8	5,636	1,879	5
15 Riversway	3	4,394	1,465	-16	5,437	1,812	1
16 Rural North	3	5,073	1,691	-3	5,650	1,883	5
17 Sharoe Green	3	5,114	1,705	-2	5,021	1,674	-6
18 St George's	2	3,362	1,681	-4	3,378	1,689	-6
19 St Matthew's	3	5,004	1,668	-4	5,074	1,691	-5
20 Town Centre	3	5,755	1,918	10	5,413	1,804	1
21 Tulketh	3	5,161	1,720	-1	5,150	1,717	-4
22 University	2	3,621	1,811	4	3,528	1,764	-1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>99,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>101,899</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the 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 draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Preston in Lancashire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We expect to review the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool in 2001. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Preston. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1988 (Report No. 567). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 399). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly after completion of the district reviews in order to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State in time for the 2005 county elections.

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

- the statutory criteria 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* in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix B).

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 councils in the borough.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties*. This 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 then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. For example, 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 borough 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 borough’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other boroughs.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 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.

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the *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. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 7 September 1999, when we wrote to Preston Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council,

Lancashire Police Authority, the Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament 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.

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

14 Stage Three began on 15 February 2000 and will end on 10 April 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

15 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The Borough of Preston lies at the heart of Lancashire and covers some 14,239 hectares. The borough is bounded to the south by the river Ribble, and the boroughs of Fylde to the west, Wyre to the north-west and Ribble to the east. The urban area of Preston Town covers less than 30 per cent of the borough but accounts for nearly 90 per cent of the borough's population. The rural area, which generally covers the current wards of Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West, is made up of eight parishes: Barton, Broughton, Goosnargh, Grimsargh, Houghton, Lea, Whittingham and Woodplumpton.

17 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'.

18 The electorate of the borough is 99,459 (February 1999). The Borough Council presently has 57 members who are elected from 19 wards, 17 of which are in Preston and relatively urban and the remainder which are predominantly rural. All of the wards are each represented by three councillors and the Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Preston, with around 3 per cent more electors than a decade ago as a result of new housing developments. The most noticeable increases have been in Preston Rural West and Sherwood wards.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,745 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,788 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 seven of the 19 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, four wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Preston Rural West ward where the councillor represents 36 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Preston*

Figure 4: 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	Ashton	3	4,822	1,607	-8	4,742	1,581	-12
2	Avenham	3	4,887	1,629	-7	4,541	1,514	-15
3	Brookfield	3	4,634	1,545	-11	4,590	1,530	-14
4	Cadley	3	4,922	1,641	-6	4,832	1,611	-10
5	Central	3	6,623	2,208	27	6,533	2,178	22
6	Deepdale	3	4,945	1,648	-6	4,850	1,617	-10
7	Fishwick	3	4,133	1,378	-21	4,075	1,358	-24
8	Greyfriars	3	4,987	1,662	-5	4,892	1,631	-9
9	Ingol	3	5,242	1,747	0	5,225	1,742	-3
10	Larches	3	4,346	1,449	-17	4,444	1,481	-17
11	Moor Park	3	5,237	1,746	0	5,196	1,732	-3
12	Preston Rural East	3	5,246	1,749	0	5,816	1,939	8
13	Preston Rural West	3	7,096	2,365	36	8,410	2,803	57
14	Ribbleton	3	4,659	1,553	-11	4,637	1,546	-14
15	Riversway	3	5,368	1,789	3	6,406	2,135	19
16	Sharoe Green	3	5,227	1,742	0	5,130	1,710	-4
17	Sherwood	3	6,961	2,320	33	7,399	2,466	38
18	St. Matthew's	3	4,963	1,654	-5	5,033	1,678	-6
19	Tulketh	3	5,161	1,720	-1	5,148	1,716	-4
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>99,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>101,899</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Preston 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 Fishwick ward were relatively over-represented by 21 per cent, while electors in Preston Rural West ward were relatively under-represented by 36 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Preston Borough Council and its constituent parish councils.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received five representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

#### **Preston Borough Council**

23 The Borough Council proposed a council of 57 members, the same as at present, serving 22 wards, compared to the existing 19 wards. Currently Preston has a uniform pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough; however, the Borough Council proposed in its submission to move to a multi-member ward scheme of two- and three-member wards. It stated that it considered a multi-member scheme would secure convenient and effective local government within the borough.

24 The Borough Council proposed modifying the boundaries within the ‘urban’ Preston area in order to improve the levels of electoral equality (with the exception of the existing Tulketh ward). In the more rural (parished) parts of the borough, it proposed the creation of a new three-member Lea ward, comprising the parish of Lea. It also proposed transferring the parish of Houghton from Preston Rural East ward to a new two-member Broughton ward. The modified Preston Rural East ward would be renamed Rural North ward.

#### **Parish Councils**

25 We received representations direct from Grimsargh and Lea parish councils. Grimsargh Parish Council asked for a boundary review to be conducted in order to take into account some 100 dwellings which are being built on land adjacent to the parish. The parish council also opposed the proposal to place Houghton parish in an alternative ward, arguing that Houghton parish has a “natural affinity” with Grimsargh and that consideration should be given to the amalgamation of the two parishes. Lea Parish Council similarly requested a parish boundary review but also supported the Lea borough ward which would be coterminous with the parish. It also proposed modifications to the parish warding arrangements.

#### **Other Representations**

26 We received a further two representations; from the North West Conservatives and a local resident. The North West Conservatives stated that it “supported the retention of existing links with minimum disruption to parishes”. A local resident recommended modifications to polling district and parliamentary boundaries.



## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

27 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Preston is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities 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”.

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

29 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.

30 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective 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 start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

31 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2 per cent from 99,459 to 101,899 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the north-western urban area, although a significant amount is also expected in the more rural parish of Lea. The Borough Council has 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.

32 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Borough Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

33 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government. Preston Borough Council presently has 57 members, which the Borough Council proposed to retain. No other representations were made with regard to council size.

34 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by the retention of a council of 57 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

35 In view of the lack of opposition to the Borough Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other proposals submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in one area. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West wards;
- (b) Cadley, Greyfriars and Ingol wards;
- (c) Ashton, Larches, Riversway and Tulketh wards;
- (d) Avenham, Central, Deepdale and Moor Park wards;
- (e) Sharoe Green and Sherwood wards;
- (f) Brookfield, Fishwick, St Matthew's and Ribbleton wards.

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

### **Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West wards**

37 The two three-member wards of Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West are broadly composed of the parished areas of the borough. Preston Rural East currently comprises the parishes of Broughton, Lea and Woodplumpton. Preston Rural West comprises the parishes of Barton, Houghton, Goosnargh, Grimsargh and Whittingham. Preston Rural East ward is currently equal to the borough average but will vary by 8 per cent above by 2004. Preston Rural West ward is particularly under-represented and varies by 36 per cent above the borough average currently (57 per cent above by 2004).

38 During Stage One, the Borough Council proposed modifying the boundaries of the two existing wards in the rural area. It proposed a new three-member Lea ward, which would be coterminous with the Lea parish boundary. The proposed ward would initially vary by 22 per cent below the borough average but, due to projected housing development in the area, would vary by only 2 per cent below by 2004. Lea Parish Council supported the proposal for a Lea borough

ward, but proposed alternative parishing arrangements for Cottam parish ward. A local resident proposed modifying polling district and parliamentary boundaries.

39 The Borough Council also proposed a two-member Broughton ward, comprising the parishes of Broughton, Houghton and Woodplumpton and a three-member Rural North ward, comprising the parishes of Barton, Goosnargh, Grimsargh and Whittingham. During Stage One, Grimsargh Parish Council opposed the proposed Rural North ward, arguing that Grimsargh and Houghton residents share a close affinity and should be in the same borough ward.

40 We acknowledge the views of Grimsargh Parish Council and accept that there may be good links between Grimsargh and Houghton parishes. However, if the present Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West wards were to remain unchanged, the number of electors per councillor in the ward would vary from the borough average by 57 and 8 per cent respectively by 2004. This level of electoral inequality cannot in our view be justified.

41 We have examined those representations made directly to us regarding the proposals for Preston Rural East and Preston Rural West wards and we have explored alternative warding arrangements. However, we have concluded that the three wards proposed by the Borough Council provide the best balance between the need for electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and we therefore put the proposals forward for consultation. Under the Borough Council's proposals the three proposed wards of Broughton, Lea and Rural North would initially vary by 9 per cent below, 22 per cent below and 3 per cent below the borough average respectively (7 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 5 per cent above by 2004). We would welcome further views on our proposals. The large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

### **Cadley, Greyfriars and Ingol wards**

42 The three wards of Cadley, Greyfriars and Ingol are located in the north-western corner of the urban area of Preston and currently vary by 6 per cent below, 5 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (10 per cent below, 9 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2004).

43 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring properties between Tanterton Hall Road and the golf course to Ingol ward, in order to provide a clearer boundary between the existing Greyfriars and Ingol wards. The Borough Council argued that in order to retain three councillors for Greyfriars ward it would be necessary to transfer polling district JA from Cadley ward to Greyfriars ward, with the modified Cadley ward being represented by two councillors, initially varying by 13 per cent above the borough average (8 per cent above by 2004). We have closely examined the Borough Council's proposed Cadley ward, as well as an alternative ward configuration, to improve on the initial variance of 13 per cent. However, we are of the view that the Borough Council's proposals best meet the statutory criteria. We propose the transfer of a further 48 electors from Greyfriars ward (Sheraton Park) to Ingol ward to enhance the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Ingol and Greyfriars ward. We consider that this boundary modification, together with those proposed by the Borough Council, best meet the need for electoral equality and clear geographical boundaries. The proposed Cadley, Greyfriars and Ingol wards would initially vary by 13 per cent above, 4 per cent above, and 10 per cent above the

borough average respectively (8 per cent, equal to and 6 per cent above by 2004). Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

### **Ashton, Larches, Riversway and Tulketh wards**

44 The four wards of Ashton, Larches, Riversway and Tulketh are located on the south-western urban edge of the borough and currently vary by 8 per cent below, 17 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (12 per cent below, 17 per cent below, 19 per cent above and 4 per cent below by 2004).

45 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring electors from Ashton ward to the over-represented Larches ward. The proposed modification would result in a modified two-member Ashton ward, with Larches ward continuing to be represented by three councillors. The Borough Council projected a substantial growth in the electorate for Riversway ward by 2004. It proposed transferring 974 electors from Riversway ward to a new two-member University ward, which would otherwise become significantly under-represented by 2004. The Borough Council proposed that the current Tulketh ward should remain unchanged due to its good level of electoral equality both currently and by 2004.

46 We propose adopting the Borough Council's modified Riversway and University wards as part of our draft recommendations and support the Borough Council's proposal for an unchanged Tulketh ward. However, we propose a minor boundary amendment between Ashton and Larches wards. Currently the boundary between the two wards follows Pedlars Lane, but moves into the Ashton Park where it is unidentifiable. We propose that the boundary follow a footpath around the park to the point where it meets Blackpool Road, which would, in our view, facilitate a clearer boundary between the two wards. The proposed Ashton, Larches, Riversway, Tulketh and University wards would vary by 2 per cent above, 7 per cent above, 16 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 4 per cent above the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 6 per cent above, 1 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2004). Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

### **Avenham, Central, Deepdale and Moor Park wards**

47 Avenham, Central, Deepdale and Moor Park wards are located at the centre of urban Preston and currently vary by 7 per cent below, 27 per cent above, 6 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (15 per cent below, 22 per cent above, 10 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2004).

48 During Stage One, the Borough Council proposed modifications to all of the four existing wards. It proposed that the current Avenham ward should gain electors from the existing Central and Fishwick wards. Part of the current Central ward, which contains the town centre, would transfer to a new three-member Town Centre ward. The Borough Council also proposed a new two-member St George's ward which would be formed from parts of the current Central and Moor Park wards. It also proposed modifications to the boundary between the proposed St George's and Deepdale wards to enhance electoral equality in the wards. Deepdale ward would be further modified (see below). The Borough Council proposed transferring some electors from Central ward, between Argyll Road and Burrow Road, to the proposed Deepdale ward. We were

not originally convinced by the proposed boundary between St George's and Deepdale wards. However, officers from the Commission have visited the area concerned and are content that the proposals are valid given the geographical constraints of the area. The Borough Council also proposed modifying Moor Park ward by transferring electors to the proposed Fulwood and St George's ward. The modified Moor Park ward would be represented by two councillors. Having considered Borough Council's proposals, we consider they represent the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are adopting them as our draft recommendations for this area, without modification.

49 The proposed Deepdale, Moor Park, St George's and Town Centre wards would initially vary by 9 per cent above, 6 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 10 per cent above the borough average (3 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average by 2004). We would welcome further views on our proposals. See Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

### **Sharoe Green and Sherwood wards**

50 The two wards of Sharoe Green and Sherwood are on the edge of urban Preston town and currently are equal to and 33 per cent above the borough average respectively (4 per cent below and 38 per cent above by 2004).

51 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed addressing the high level of electoral inequality in Sherwood ward by disbanding it and forming two new wards, Fulwood and Barracks.

52 The new two-member Fulwood ward would comprise polling districts H and HA from the existing Sharoe Green ward and polling district FC from the existing Moor Park ward. The Council noted that additional electors would be needed in order to merit a two-member ward and therefore proposed that part of polling district G from the existing Sherwood ward should also be transferred to the proposed Fulwood ward. The Borough Council's proposed three-member Barracks ward would be created from the remainder of Sherwood ward.

53 We are of the view that the Borough Council's proposals for this area best meet the statutory criteria and are an adequate reflection of local communities. We therefore intend adopting the Borough Council's proposals in our draft recommendations. However, we propose that the boundary between the proposed Fulwood and Sharoe Green wards should follow the southern boundary of the Royal Preston Hospital. This would provide for an enhanced boundary between the two proposed wards and affects no electors. The proposed wards of Barracks, Fulwood and Sharoe Green would initially vary by 12 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (5 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 6 per cent below by 2004). Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

### **Brookfield, Fishwick, Ribbleton and St Matthew's wards**

54 Brookfield, Fishwick, Ribbleton and St Matthew's wards are located in the south-western corner of the borough and currently vary by 11 per cent below, 21 per cent below, 11 per cent below and 5 per cent below the borough average respectively (14 per cent below, 24 per cent

below, 14 per cent below and 6 per cent below by 2004).

55 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring some 850 electors from the existing Deepdale ward (polling district E) to Brookfield ward. The modified Brookfield ward, which the Borough Council proposed should continue to be served by three councillors, would vary by 1 per cent above the borough average by 2004. The Borough Council also proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed Fishwick and Ribbleton wards. It also proposed increasing the electorate in the proposed Ribbleton ward by transferring some 1000 electors from Fishwick and St Matthew's wards to the modified Ribbleton ward. The modified Fishwick ward would be represented by two councillors and Ribbleton ward by three councillors.

56 Having carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals in this area, we are content to endorse its proposals for Brookfield, Fishwick, Ribbleton and St Matthews wards. The proposed wards would vary by 5 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 8 per cent above and 4 per cent below the borough average (1 per cent above, 1 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 5 per cent below by 2004. Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report illustrate details of the proposed changes.

## **Electoral Cycle**

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

## **Conclusions**

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

- (a) a council of 57 members should be retained;
- (b) there should be 22 wards, three more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of three wards;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

59 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations entirely on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose a minor departure from them as summarised below:

- (a) we propose modifying the boundary between Ingol and Greyfriars wards to include the whole of Sheraton Park in Ingol ward;
- (b) we propose modifying the boundary between the proposed Ashton and Larches wards (affecting no electors), to provide a more clearly identifiable boundary; and

- (c) we propose modifying the boundary between the proposed Fulwood and Sharoe Green wards (affecting no electors), to provide a more clearly identifiable boundary.

60 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	57	57	57	57
Number of wards	19	22	19	22
Average number of electors per councillor	1,745	1,745	1,788	1,788
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	4	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	1	4	0

61 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Preston Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from seven to four. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 8 per cent from the average for the borough.

**Draft Recommendation**

Preston Borough Council should comprise 57 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

**Parish Council Electoral Arrangements**

62 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.

63 Lea Parish Council requested that the number of councillors representing the parish should be increased from 12 to 14. The Parish Council proposed that the boundaries of the three existing

parish wards should be retained. Cottam parish ward should be represented by five parish councillors, two more than at present, while Lea South and Lea Town parish wards would continue to be represented by eight parish councillors and one parish councillor respectively. We concur with this proposal.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Lea Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, two more than at present, representing three wards: Cottam (returning five councillors), Lea South (returning eight councillors) and Lea Town (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should remain unchanged.

64 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough.

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

**65 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Preston and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Preston*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

66 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Preston. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 10 April 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

67 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

68 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



# APPENDIX A

## Preston Borough Council’s Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Borough Council in only two wards, where the Council’s proposals were as follows:

Figure A1: Preston Borough Council’s Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Greyfriars	Cadley ward (part); Greyfriars ward (part)
Ingol	Greyfriars ward (part); Ingol ward

Figure A2: Preston Borough Council’s Proposals: 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 %
Greyfriars	3	5,507	1,836	5	5,415	1,805	1
Ingol	3	5,687	1,896	9	5,662	1,900	6

Source: Electorate figures are based on Preston Borough Council’s submission.

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



## APPENDIX B

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to boroughs within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear<sup>1</sup>. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- (a) the number of councillors;
- (b) the need for parish wards;
- (c) the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- (d) the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- (e) the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

#### **Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements**

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.