

Draft Recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Southampton in Hampshire

January 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 (Deputy Chairman)
Kru Desai
Peter Brokenshire
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.

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Southampton in Hampshire.

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

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Southampton on 20 July 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 Southampton:

- **in three of the 15 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city;**
- **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 five wards and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 87-88) are that:

- **Southampton City Council should have 48 councillors, three more than at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, instead of 15 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all 15 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 6 per cent from the city average.**
- **This improved 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 2 per cent from the average for the city in 2004.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 18 January 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 13 March 2000:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Bargate	3	Bargate ward (part)
2	Bassett	3	Bassett ward (part); Coxford ward (part); Shirley ward (part)
3	Bevois	3	Bargate ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
4	Bitterne	3	Bitterne ward (part); Sholing ward (part)
5	Bitterne Park	3	Bitterne Park ward (part); Harefield ward (part); Peartree ward (part)
6	Coxford	3	Coxford ward (part); Redbridge Ward (part)
7	Freemantle	3	Freemantle ward (part); Bargate ward (part); Millbrook ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
8	Harefield	3	Harefield ward (part); Bitterne ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part)
9	Millbrook	3	Millbrook ward (part); Freemantle ward (part); Redbridge ward (part)
10	Peartree	3	Peartree ward (part); Bitterne ward (part); Sholing ward (part); Woolston ward (part)
11	Portswood	3	Portswood ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
12	Redbridge	3	Redbridge ward (part); Coxford ward (part); Millbrook ward (part)
13	Shirley	3	Shirley ward (part); Freemantle ward (part); Redbridge ward (part)
14	Sholing	3	Sholing ward (part); Bitterne ward (part); Peartree ward (part); Woolston ward (part)
15	Swaythling	3	Bassett ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part); Portswood ward (part)
16	Woolston	3	Woolston ward (part)

Notes: 1 The whole city is 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 Southampton

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 Bargate	3	9,776	3,259	-6	10,831	3,610	2
2 Bassett	3	10,723	3,574	3	10,655	3,552	0
3 Bevois	3	9,928	3,309	-4	10,786	3,595	1
4 Bitterne	3	10,275	3,425	-1	10,506	3,502	-1
5 Bitterne Park	3	10,216	3,405	-1	10,496	3,499	-1
6 Coxford	3	10,931	3,644	5	10,826	3,609	2
7 Freemantle	3	10,293	3,431	-1	10,806	3,602	2
8 Harefield	3	10,519	3,506	1	10,466	3,489	-2
9 Millbrook	3	10,646	3,549	3	10,730	3,577	1
10 Peartree	3	10,200	3,400	-2	10,463	3,488	-2
11 Portswode	3	10,369	3,456	0	10,745	3,582	1
12 Redbridge	3	10,463	3,488	1	10,551	3,517	-1
13 Shirley	3	10,477	3,492	1	10,702	3,567	1
14 Sholing	3	10,446	3,482	1	10,486	3,495	-1
15 Swaythling	3	10,457	3,486	1	10,685	3,562	0
16 Woolston	3	10,213	3,404	-2	10,568	3,523	-1
Totals	48	165,932	-	-	170,302	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,457	-	-	3,548	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Southampton City Council.

Notes: 1 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.

2 The total electorate figures for 1999 and 2004 differ marginally from those contained in Figure 4, which has a negligible impact on electoral variances.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Southampton in Hampshire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 11 districts in Hampshire and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Southampton. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1975 (Report No. 105). Since undertaking that review, the City of Southampton has become a unitary authority (1 April 1997).

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 City Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

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 Second, the broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district 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 Third, we are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have

found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 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 Hampshire districts and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils, 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.

12 Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Southampton City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament for the South East 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 25 October 1999.

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

14 Stage Three began on 18 January 2000 and will end on 13 March 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 city of Southampton covers an area of approximately 4,880 hectares and has a population of 214,859. It was granted unitary status in 1997. The M27 to the north and the coast to the south form strong boundaries to the city. Southampton is a major commercial port and a significant regional centre of industry. The city is also the site of several large developments including the West Quay development in the city's main commercial area. The city has good communication links, being served by rail and road links to London and the rest of the UK, as well as the nearby international airport and ferry links to the Isle of Wight. There are no parish councils in the city.

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 city 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 city is 165,916 (February 1999). The Council presently has 45 members who are elected from 15 wards, all of which are represented by three councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Southampton city, with around 5 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,687 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 3,784 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 three of the 15 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average. The worst imbalance is in Bitterne ward where the councillor represents 16 per cent fewer electors than the city average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Southampton

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 Bargate	3	12,714	4,238	15	14,025	4,675	24
2 Bassett	3	12,390	4,130	12	12,531	4,177	10
3 Bitterne	3	9,254	3,085	-16	9,265	3,088	-18
4 Bitterne Park	3	11,728	3,909	6	11,906	3,969	5
5 Coxford	3	11,751	3,917	6	11,516	3,839	1
6 Freemantle	3	10,654	3,551	-4	11,076	3,692	-2
7 Harefield	3	10,116	3,372	-9	10,086	3,362	-11
8 Millbrook	3	10,008	3,336	-10	10,075	3,358	-11
9 Peartree	3	10,745	3,582	-3	11,051	3,684	-3
10 Portswood	3	10,985	3,662	-1	11,480	3,827	1
11 Redbridge	3	10,361	3,454	-6	10,509	3,503	-7
12 Shirley	3	9,988	3,329	-10	10,057	3,352	-11
13 Sholing	3	11,906	3,969	8	12,179	4,060	7
14 St Lukes	3	11,610	3,870	5	12,437	4,146	10
15 Woolston	3	11,706	3,902	6	12,108	4,036	7
Totals	45	165,916	-	-	170,301	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,687	-	-	3,784	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Southampton 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 1999, electors in Bitterne ward were relatively over-represented by 16 per cent, while electors in Bargate ward were relatively under-represented by 15 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 Southampton City Council.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the City Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 18 representations during Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council, the Conservative Group and the Liberal Democrat Party, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the City Council and the Commission.

Southampton City Council

23 Southampton City Council unanimously proposed a council of 48 members, three more than at present, representing 16 three-member wards, instead of the current 15. It stated that its proposal was drawn up in order to achieve electoral equality, retain local community ties and use identifiable geographical boundaries. The City Council had initially consulted on three schemes (A, B and C), which differed most substantially in the west of the city and, of the responses received, there was general support for Scheme B which also formed the basis of the City Council's formal proposals to us. The Council's preferred proposal included a new Swaythling ward in the north-east of the city, and the division of the existing Bassett ward (which lies to the north of the city centre) between four neighbouring wards. Under the Council's proposal, all the existing ward boundaries would be modified. The Council also proposed the retention of elections by thirds.

24 Under the City Council's scheme, the number of electors per councillor is expected to vary from the average for the city by less than 8 per cent in all wards. By 2004, no ward is expected to vary by more than 2 per cent.

Southampton City Council Conservative Group

25 The Conservative Group on the Council ('the Conservatives') proposed a council of 48 members, representing 16 three-member wards. The Conservatives considered that their proposals were based on minimising change to the existing arrangements, in order to reflect existing communities. Their proposals also included a new Swaythling ward, but modified the remaining wards to achieve improvements to electoral equality. They proposed the retention of the existing Bassett ward, albeit with a more westerly orientation, to reflect the strong community identity of the area in question. Under the Conservatives' proposals all the existing ward boundaries would be modified.

26 Under the Conservatives' scheme, the number of electors per councillor is expected to vary from the city average by less than 8 per cent in all wards. By 2004, no ward is expected to vary by more than 3 per cent.

Southampton Liberal Democrat Party

27 Southampton Liberal Democrat Party ('the Liberal Democrats') also proposed a council of 48 members, representing 16 three-member wards. The Liberal Democrats considered that their proposals secured the greatest improvements to electoral equality of the three schemes debated by the Council. They also proposed a new Swaythling ward and changes to all of the existing ward boundaries. They proposed that St Lukes ward should be renamed Bevois for historical and community reasons. The Liberal Democrats believed that their proposals offered minimum disruption of present identities and continuity for the electors.

28 Under the Liberal Democrats' scheme, the number of electors per councillor is expected to vary from the city average by less than 6 per cent in all wards. By 2004, no ward is expected to vary by more than 2 per cent.

Members of Parliament

29 Michael Colvin MP, member for Romsey, supported the proposals put forward by the Conservatives on the Council. He particularly supported the retention of Bassett ward, as he considered that it had a strong and independent community identity.

Other Representations

30 A further 14 representations were received from local political parties, a local group and nine local residents (two of whom made a joint submission). Southampton Labour Party supported the City Council's proposals for a council of 48 members, representing 16 three-member wards. It considered that the Council's proposals utilised clearly identifiable boundaries, having regard to existing communities. However, it suggested that the proposed Town ward would be more appropriately called Bargate. Southampton Itchen Conservative Association supported the Conservatives' proposals, arguing that the other city-wide schemes did not reflect local community identities and interests. Southampton Test Conservative Association supported the proposals put forward by the Conservatives on the Council for the west of the city - the Test parliamentary constituency plus Bassett ward. Romsey Conservative Association supported the Conservatives' proposals, with particular reference to Bassett ward. Councillor Samuels supported the Conservatives' proposals as he considered that they secured improvements to electoral equality while reflecting local community identities. Southampton Regeneration Partnership (Community Development Association) supported the principles of the review, in particular that ward boundaries should reflect identifiable communities.

31 Six residents of the city made representations in support of the Conservatives' proposals and two residents of the city supported the City Council's proposals. One resident of the city opposed the proposals for Woolston ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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

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

36 The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 165,916 to 170,301 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects this growth to be relatively evenly distributed across the city, with the most noticeable increases in Bargate ward (1,311 electors) and St Lukes ward (827 electors). The 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. Advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

37 A resident of the city queried the electorate forecasts for Woolston ward, considering that the projections are too high. However, having sought further clarification from the City Council, we remain content that their forecasts for the Woolston area are reasonable. We accept that

forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the City Council's figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

38 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

39 Southampton City Council presently has 45 members. At Stage One the City Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats each proposed a council of 48 members. The City Council argued that such an increase was justified as "a 16 ward proposal provides better geographical distribution, more adequately satisfies the community tie issue and [achieves] better electoral balance". It also indicated that consideration had been given to the impact which such an increase in council size would have upon the council's internal management structures. Each of the three groups who proposed city-wide schemes also argued that such an increase was justified in view of the additional responsibilities taken on by councillors since Southampton City Council became a unitary authority in 1997.

40 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members. While we are cautious about increases in council size, the fact that such an increase commands cross-party support, and facilitates schemes giving excellent electoral equality and which generally appear to reflect community identities well, has persuaded us that such an increase is appropriate.

Electoral Arrangements

41 We have carefully considered the three city-wide schemes which were received from the City Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. We are grateful for the positive approach taken by the respondents, who each submitted detailed city-wide proposals for change to the proposed electoral arrangements. From these representations some considerations have emerged which have informed us when preparing our draft recommendations.

42 We note, in particular, the areas of agreement between the three city-wide schemes. As outlined above, there was a consensus for an increase in council size from 45 to 48, with each scheme proposing a pattern of entirely three-member wards, as at present. Moreover, each of the three schemes proposed that the River Itchen (and the River Itchen Navigation Canal) should be utilised as a ward boundary throughout its entire length, with six wards falling to the east of the river and 10 to the west, the correct allocation given the relative numbers of electors in each area. All three schemes also proposed a Swaythling ward, although they differed on the precise boundaries for such a ward.

43 We note that each of the three city-wide schemes would secure substantial improvements to electoral equality across the city when compared with the current arrangements. However, we also note that each has differed in some areas regarding the precise boundaries which it has proposed, and we note the arguments put to us about community identities in the city. We have tried to reflect such considerations in formulating our draft recommendations, although we note that there is no consensus locally on the precise boundaries of such communities.

44 We have therefore sought to reflect such consensus as exists between the various schemes for warding arrangements in particular areas of the city. In the areas where such agreement does not exist we have tried to utilise the proposals which would achieve the greatest improvements to electoral equality while, we judge, reflecting the other statutory criteria. We have also put forward our own modifications where we consider that the proposals of all three schemes can be improved upon. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Peartree, Sholing and Woolston wards;
- (b) Bitterne, Bitterne Park and Harefield wards;
- (c) Bassett, Portswood and Shirley wards;
- (d) Coxford, Millbrook and Redbridge wards;
- (e) Bargate, Freemantle and St Lukes wards.

45 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.

Peartree, Sholing and Woolston wards

46 The three wards of Peartree, Sholing and Woolston are situated in the extreme south-east of the city. Currently, the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent below the city average in Peartree ward (remaining the same in 2004), 8 per cent above in Sholing ward (7 per cent above in 2004) and 6 per cent above in Woolston ward (7 per cent above in 2004).

47 At Stage One the City Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all made identical proposals for a modified Woolston ward. Noting that the city boundary formed the eastern and southern boundaries of the ward, while the western boundary is the River Itchen, they all proposed that the northern boundary should follow Portsmouth Road, Manor Road South and the railway line. They generally stated that such an arrangement would improve electoral equality while reflecting local community identities. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the city average in Woolston ward (1 per cent below in 2004).

48 The City Council and the Liberal Democrats also submitted the same proposals for modifying Sholing and Peartree wards. In addition to the proposed modifications to the northern boundary between these wards and the modified Woolston ward, they each proposed that an area around Sullivan Road should be transferred from Sholing ward to Bitterne ward. They also proposed that Sholing ward should be further modified to include part of Bitterne ward around Chatsworth Road while its western boundary should be modified to follow Station Road, Middle

Road and Rosoman Road. In addition to these modifications they each proposed that the northern boundary of Peartree ward should be modified to follow Maybray King Way, Bitterne Road West and the railway line. They each stated that their proposals would improve electoral equality while reflecting local community identities.

49 Under the City Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the city average in Peartree ward (unchanged in 2004) and 1 per cent above the city average in Sholing ward (1 per cent below the average in 2004).

50 The Conservatives alternatively proposed that, in addition to the modification to the northern boundary of Woolston ward (described above), Sholing ward should be amended to transfer an area around the south of Middle Road to Peartree ward, while an area around the north of Middle Road would form part of Bitterne ward. The Conservatives proposed that Peartree ward should be modified further to transfer an area around Chessel Crescent to Bitterne ward, while an area around Bullar Road would form part of a modified Bitterne Park ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Peartree ward (unchanged in 2004) and 2 per cent below the city average in Sholing ward (also unchanged in 2004).

51 A resident of the city opposed the proposals for Woolston ward, stating in particular that the further use of the railway line, which was proposed under all three city-wide schemes, would not reflect existing local community identities.

52 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. With regard to the proposal for Woolston ward, we have noted the views of the resident regarding the unsuitability of the proposed northern boundary of the ward. However, in conducting this review we are unable to have regard to any area in isolation but must consider the impact which any modification would have upon the wider area. Therefore, in view of the agreement between all of the city-wide schemes which we have received, we are putting forward the proposed Woolston ward as part of our draft recommendations. With regard to the proposed Peartree and Sholing wards, we note that both the City Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals and those of the Conservatives would achieve significant improvements to electoral equality. However, we consider that the proposals put forward by the City Council and the Liberal Democrats would provide the better balance of the need to secure improvements to electoral equality and the statutory criteria, while facilitating our proposals for neighbouring wards. We are therefore adopting their proposals as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Bitterne, Bitterne Park and Harefield wards

53 These three wards are located in the east of the city. Bitterne and Harefield wards lie wholly to the east of the River Itchen, while Bitterne Park ward straddles the river. The number of electors per councillor is currently 16 per cent below the city average in Bitterne ward (18 per cent in 2004), 6 per cent above in Bitterne Park ward (5 per cent in 2004) and 9 per cent below the city average in Harefield ward (11 per cent in 2004).

54 The City Council and the Liberal Democrats submitted the same proposals for Bitterne ward. In addition to the modifications proposed to the boundaries with Peartree and Sholing wards (described above), they each proposed that Bath Close, Bramwell Court, Court Close and Milbury Crescent should be transferred from Bitterne ward to Harefield ward. They both stated that their proposals would reflect local community identities. Under their proposed boundary modification the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average, both at present and in 2004.

55 The City Council proposed that, in addition to modifications to the southern boundaries of Harefield and Bitterne Park wards (described earlier), the River Itchen and the Itchen Navigation should form the western and northern boundaries of Bitterne Park ward, while the city boundary would form the eastern boundary of both Bitterne Park and Harefield wards. The Council proposed that the boundary between the two wards should follow Glenfield Avenue, Mousehole Lane, Neva Road, Avon Road, Witts Hill, Wakefield Road, Meggeson Avenue and Cutbush Lane. It considered that its proposals would reflect local community identities. Under the City Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the city average in Bitterne Park ward (the same in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Harefield ward (2 per cent below in 2004).

56 The Liberal Democrats' proposals for Bitterne Park and Harefield wards only differed from the City Council's proposals in one area. Specifically, the Liberal Democrats put forward a different boundary between the two wards, which would follow Ozier Road, Litchfield Road, Cleveland Road, Wakefield Road, Witts Hill, Mousehole Lane and Glenfield Avenue. They considered that their proposal would generally reflect local community identities, although they noted that it would divide Townhill Park between Bitterne Park and Harefield wards. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be the same as under the City Council's proposals.

57 The Conservatives proposed that, in addition to their changes to Peartree and Sholing wards, the northern boundary of Bitterne ward should be modified to include an area around Angel Close, currently in Harefield ward. The Conservatives also proposed that the River Itchen should form the northern and western boundaries of Bitterne Park ward. They proposed that the boundary between their proposed Bitterne Park and Harefield wards should follow Midanbury Lane, Thorold Road, Avon Road, Witts Hill, Vanguard Road, to the east of Lytham Road and Onibury Road, then run to the north of Hazelwood Road before joining the city boundary. Under the Conservatives' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Bitterne ward (equal to the average in 2004), 3 per cent below in Bitterne Park ward (unchanged in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Harefield ward (2 per cent below in 2004).

58 We have given careful consideration to the three schemes for this area. While we note that each would secure substantial improvements to the existing arrangements, we judge that the City Council's proposals would achieve the best level of electoral equality between the three wards, while utilising well-defined boundaries and providing the best reflection of existing community identities. We are therefore adopting the City Council's proposals for the wards of Bitterne, Bitterne Park and Harefield as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are detailed on the large map at the back of this report.

Bassett, Portswood and Shirley wards

59 The three wards of Bassett, Portswood and Shirley are situated generally in the centre and north of the city. The number of electors per councillor is currently 12 per cent above the city average in Bassett ward (10 per cent above in 2004), 1 per cent below in Portswood ward (1 per cent above in 2004) and 10 per cent below in Shirley ward (11 per cent below in 2004).

60 Each of the three city-wide schemes included proposals for a new Swaythling ward in the north-east of the city, although each proposed different boundaries for the ward. Specifically, the City Council divided the existing Bassett ward between the proposed wards of Hampton Park, Lordswood, Shirley and Swaythling. It proposed that the new Swaythling ward should comprise that part of Bitterne Park ward lying to the north of the River Itchen and the Navigation Canal, together with that part of Bassett ward which lies to the east of a boundary running along Violet Road, Glen Eyre Road and north along the A33. An additional part of the existing Bassett ward, lying to the east of the A33, would be combined with the north of Portswood ward and part of St Lukes ward to form a new Hampton Park ward. Shirley ward would be modified so that the Winchester Road would form its northern boundary, the A33 would form its eastern boundary, the A3057 would form its western boundary, and the southern boundary would run to the south of The Common along Thornbury Avenue and Howard Road before joining the A3057. The remainder of Bassett ward, together with the part of Coxford ward lying to the east of Rownhams Road North, Lordshill Centre East, Tangmere Drive, south of Lewis Silkin Way, Aldermoor Road, part of Tanners Brook and Springford Road, together with the part of Shirley ward lying to the north of the Winchester Road and east of Dale Road, would form a new Lordswood ward.

61 The City Council considered that its proposals for these wards would generally improve electoral equality while reflecting community identities and utilising clearly identifiable boundaries. Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Hampton Park ward (1 per cent in 2004), 7 per cent above in Lordswood ward (2 per cent in 2004), 2 per cent above in Shirley ward (1 per cent in 2004) and 3 per cent above in Swaythling ward (2 per cent in 2004).

62 The Conservatives considered that “it is most important to retain the community and the identity of Bassett and therefore Bassett ward remains, although with a more westerly orientation”. Consequently the Conservatives proposed that Bassett ward should be modified in the west to include an area around Seymour Road together with the Southampton General Hospital site (currently in Shirley ward) and an area around the Hollybrook Cemetery (currently in Coxford ward). In the east they proposed that the boundary of Bassett ward should be modified further to follow Dahlia Road, part of Honeysuckle Road, Lilac Road, then run to the east of Courtland Gardens and Bassett Green, then west along Bassett Green Road, before joining the city boundary to the east of Monks Wood Close. The remainder of the existing Bassett ward would be combined with that part of Bitterne Park ward that lies to the north of the River Itchen and the Navigation Canal, and part of Portswood ward to the north of, and including the whole of, Broadlands Road, to form a new Swaythling ward. The Conservatives proposed that Portswood ward should be further modified to include an area around Tennyson Road (currently in St Lukes ward). They also proposed that, in addition to the modification to the boundary of Shirley ward detailed earlier, the remainder of Shirley ward which lies to the north of Winchester

Road should form part of Millbrook ward. In the south the boundary of Shirley ward would be extended to include an area around Atherley Road (currently in Freemantle ward).

63 Under the Conservatives' proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Bassett ward (2 per cent below in 2004), 1 per cent below in Portswood ward (1 per cent above in 2004), 3 per cent above in Shirley ward (2 per cent above in 2004) and 1 per cent below the city average in Swaythling ward (unchanged in 2004).

64 The Liberal Democrats made a similar proposal to that put forward by the Conservatives, to extend Bassett ward to the west, although they did not propose transferring Southampton General Hospital from Shirley ward to Bassett ward. They proposed that the eastern boundary of the ward should follow Tulip Road, part of Honeysuckle Road, Daisy Road, Bluebell Road, a footpath through Daisy Dip and then across Bassett Green to join the city boundary. A new Swaythling ward would comprise the remaining part of Bassett ward, together with that part of Bitterne Park ward which lies to the north of the River Itchen and the Navigation Canal, and a similar area of Portswood ward to that included in the Conservatives' submission. The Liberal Democrats proposed that Portswood ward should be further modified to include a similar area of St Lukes ward around Tennyson Road to that proposed by the Conservatives, and a further area of St Lukes ward north of Westwood Road. In addition to the modifications detailed earlier, they proposed that Shirley ward should be amended to include part of Freemantle ward, north of Raymond Road, together with the area of Millbrook ward east of the Romsey Road. The Liberal Democrats stated that their proposals would improve electoral equality while better reflecting local community identities. They particularly opposed the City Council's proposals for Hampton Park, Lordswood and Swaythling wards as they considered that these would not be as good a reflection of community identities.

65 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the average in Bassett ward (2 per cent in 2004), 1 per cent above the average in Portswood ward (equal to the average in 2004), 1 per cent above in Shirley ward (unchanged in 2004) and equal to the average in Swaythling ward (unchanged in 2004).

66 Michael Colvin MP, member for Romsey, Romsey Conservative Association, Southampton Test Conservative Association, Councillor Samuels and three residents of the city opposed the proposal to divide Bassett ward between four other wards, as proposed by the City Council. In particular, Mr Colvin considered that "Bassett has a strong and independent identity of its own and the need to retain the social and geographical identity of [its] community is extremely important". One resident of the area supported the City Council's proposals, stating in particular that its proposed Lordswood ward would better reflect community identities than the existing arrangements.

67 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received for the three existing wards in this area, and to the proposals for Bassett ward in particular. We note that each of the three schemes has included proposals for a Swaythling ward in the north-east of the city, although with differing boundaries. In light of this consensus and the good reflection of the statutory criteria achieved through such a proposal, we consider that we should include a new Swaythling ward as part of our draft recommendations. However, in looking at the proposals for

Bassett ward we share the concerns expressed by the Conservatives and others regarding the City Council's proposal to divide the area between four neighbouring wards. Having considered the evidence and visited the area, we judge that Bassett ward does reflect a coherent community. Therefore, in formulating our draft recommendations, for both this and the surrounding wards, we have investigated the balance between the improved electoral equality across the area and the statutory criteria, and have decided to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals for the four wards of Bassett, Portswood, Shirley and Swaythling as part of our draft recommendations, subject to two amendments to further reflect community identities. First, we propose that the northern part of the boundary between Bassett and Swaythling wards should reflect the Conservatives' proposals, thereby transferring the Bassett Green area to Bassett ward. Second, we propose that the area around Arcadia Close should be retained in Coxford ward as it would appear to have closer links with this area than with Bassett ward.

68 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in Bassett ward (equal to the average in 2004), equal to the average in Portswood ward (1 per cent above in 2004), 1 per cent above in Shirley ward (both now and in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Swaythling ward (equal to the average in 2004). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Coxford, Millbrook and Redbridge wards

69 These three wards lie in the west of the city. The number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent above the city average in Coxford ward (1 per cent in 2004), 10 per cent below in Millbrook ward (11 per cent in 2004) and 6 per cent below in Redbridge ward (7 per cent in 2004).

70 The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats submitted identical proposals for Coxford and Redbridge wards. In addition to the modifications to Coxford ward detailed earlier, each proposed that its western boundary should be modified to follow Alder Road at the southern end (thereby transferring part of Redbridge ward to Coxford ward), and Romsey Road at the northern end (thereby transferring part of Coxford ward to Redbridge ward). They each proposed a further modification to Redbridge ward to transfer the area to the south-east of First Avenue from Redbridge ward to Millbrook ward. They each stated that their proposals would respect existing community ties in the area concerned. Under their proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the city average in Coxford ward (1 per cent in 2004) and 1 per cent above the city average in Redbridge ward (1 per cent below in 2004).

71 As detailed earlier, the Conservatives proposed that Millbrook ward should be extended to include part of Shirley ward lying to the north of Winchester Road and west of Southampton General Hospital, Tremona Road and Dale Road. The Conservatives proposed modifying the eastern boundary of Millbrook ward to follow Regent's Park Road, Millbrook Point Road and thence to the city boundary. Under the Conservatives' proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the average in Millbrook ward (2 per cent in 2004).

72 The Liberal Democrats proposed that, in addition to the modification to the boundary with Redbridge ward (detailed earlier), the boundary between Millbrook ward and Shirley ward should be modified in the north to follow the centre of Romsey Road. They also proposed that the

boundary between Millbrook and Freemantle wards should be modified to follow Beatrice Road, Randolph Street, Edward Road, Foundry Lane, Millbrook Road West and Millbrook Point Road. They argued that such a configuration would unify the Regents Park and Lower Shirley communities. Under the Liberal Democrats proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in Millbrook ward (1 per cent in 2004).

73 In addition to the modifications to the boundary of Coxford ward (detailed earlier) the City Council proposed that its southern boundary should be amended to follow Colne Avenue, Green Lane, Romsey Road and Winchester Road, thereby transferring an area of Redbridge ward to Coxford Ward. The Council also proposed that Redbridge ward should be further modified to include the area of Millbrook ward generally to the south of Romsey Road and to the west of Tebourba Way, while the area of Redbridge ward to the east of First Avenue would be transferred to Millbrook ward. The remaining part of Millbrook ward would then be included in a modified Freemantle ward, which would have a more westerly orientation. Under its proposal the eastern boundary of Freemantle ward would follow Shirley Road, part of Payne's Road, Park Road, Cracknore Road and then head generally south to the city boundary. The City Council stated that its proposals would secure good improvements to electoral equality while reflecting local community identities and interests. Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in Coxford ward (2 per cent above in 2004), 3 per cent above in Freemantle ward (equal to the average in 2004) and 2 per cent above the city average in Redbridge ward (1 per cent above in 2004).

74 Two residents of the city considered that Millbrook ward should be retained. One resident of the city supported the City Council's proposal to divide Millbrook ward between Coxford, Freemantle and Redbridge wards.

75 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area and note that all three schemes would achieve substantial improvements to existing levels of electoral equality in the three wards concerned. However, our proposals for neighbouring areas prevent us from adopting the City Council's proposals for these wards. Moreover, we found that there is consensus between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats regarding their proposals for Coxford and Redbridge wards, which utilise well-defined boundaries and, we judge, reflect local community identities. We are therefore adopting the proposals from the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives for Coxford and Redbridge wards as part of our draft recommendations, subject to the amendment to Coxford ward detailed earlier. In the case of Millbrook ward, we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal as part of our draft recommendations, as we consider that it would offer the best balance between the need to improve electoral equality and the other statutory criteria, while facilitating our proposals for the wider area.

76 Under our draft recommendations for Coxford, Millbrook and Redbridge wards the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above, 3 per cent above and 1 per cent above the city average respectively (2 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the average respectively in 2004). The proposed ward boundaries are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Bargate, Freemantle and St Lukes wards

77 These three wards are situated in the centre and south of the city, with Bargate ward containing much of the city's main commercial area. The average number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the city average in Bargate ward (24 per cent in 2004), 4 per cent below in Freemantle ward (2 per cent in 2004) and 5 per cent above in St Lukes ward (10 per cent above in 2004).

78 The City Council proposed a new ward, to be named Polygon, comprising part of the existing Freemantle ward which lies to the east of Cracknore Road, Park Road, Paynes Road, Howard Road, Thornbury Avenue and Raymond Road, part of St Lukes ward lying to the south of Southampton Common, and part of Bargate ward lying to the west of The Avenue, London Road, Above Bar Street and High Street. The Council proposed that Bargate ward should then be modified to include the area of St Lukes ward lying to the south of St Mary's Road, Onslow Road, Bevois Valley Road, Thomas Lewis Way and Dukes Road. The City Council also proposed that St Lukes ward should be modified so that The Avenue would form its western boundary, while its northern boundary would follow part of the Southampton to Portsmouth railway line, St Denys Road, part of Portswood Road, part of Brookvale Road and Westfield Road. The River Itchen would form the ward's eastern boundary. Under the Council's proposals Bargate ward would be renamed Town, while St Lukes ward would be renamed Bevois.

79 Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the city average in Bevois ward (2 per cent below in 2004), 5 per cent below in Polygon ward (equal to the average in 2004) and 8 per cent below the city average in Town ward (2 per cent above in 2004).

80 The Conservatives proposed that Bargate ward should be modified to cover an identical area to that proposed by the City Council, although they proposed that it should retain its existing name. In addition to the modification to the boundary between Freemantle and Millbrook wards (detailed earlier), and the modification to the boundary between Freemantle ward and the ward to the east (as under the City Council's proposal for Town ward), the Conservatives proposed that the northern boundary of Freemantle ward should be modified to follow Shirley Road, Landguard Road, Hill Lane, Wilton Avenue, Harborough Road, Kenilworth Road and Henstead Place. They also proposed that, in addition to the modifications to the southern boundary of St Lukes ward, its eastern boundary should be modified to follow Bevois Hill and Portswood Road. The Conservatives generally stated that their proposals reflected existing community ties, while utilising well-defined ward boundaries.

81 Under the Conservatives' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent below the city average in Bargate ward (2 per cent above in 2004), equal to the average in Freemantle ward (1 per cent above in 2004) and equal to the average in St Lukes ward (3 per cent above in 2004).

82 The Liberal Democrats proposed that, in addition to the modification to the boundary between Freemantle and Millbrook wards detailed earlier, the Evelyn Crescent area (currently in Freemantle ward) should be transferred to Shirley ward, while the boundary with St Lukes

ward should be modified to follow The Avenue. The western boundary of Bargate ward should be modified to follow Southern Road and Solent Road (thereby transferring an area of Bargate ward to Freemantle ward), while its northern boundary should follow the rear of Carlton Road, Bedford Place, London Road, Brunswick Place, Charlotte Place, St Andrews Road, Northam Road, a section of railway line and Longcroft Street (thereby transferring an area of Bargate ward to St Lukes ward). The Liberal Democrats proposed that St Lukes ward should be further modified so that the area to the north of Westwood Road and the area around Woodside Road would be transferred to Portswood ward. They also proposed that St Lukes ward should be renamed Bevois, as they argued that “the conversion of St Lukes Church to a Sikh temple has removed the sole surviving landmark bearing the former ward name”. Furthermore they argued that their proposed wards would reflect community ties locally.

83 Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the city average in Bargate ward (2 per cent above in 2004), 4 per cent below in Bevois ward (1 per cent above in 2004) and 1 per cent below the city average in Freemantle ward (2 per cent above in 2004).

84 We received one further submission regarding this area from the Southampton Labour Party stating that “the name Bargate may be more appropriate than the name Town as proposed in the City Council submission”.

85 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. In particular, we note the agreement between the City Council and the Conservatives regarding the proposals for Bargate ward. However, we are concerned at the level of inequality which would continue to exist in this ward under their proposals. Furthermore we consider that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals both for Bargate ward and for neighbouring wards would achieve a more equitable distribution of electorate while, we judge, reflecting the other statutory criteria. We are therefore including the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for the three wards in this area as part of our draft recommendations. With regard to the issue of ward names, we consider that the name Bargate continues to reflect this area covering the city’s main commercial area and therefore propose that it should be retained for the purposes of consultation. In the case of the existing St Lukes ward, we note that the City Council and the Liberal Democrats each proposed that the ward should be renamed Bevois. We consider that this ward name would better reflect the area concerned and has the agreement of two of the three political parties and we are therefore adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Electoral Cycle

86 At Stage One the City Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed that the City Council should continue to be elected by thirds. We received no other proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the city. Accordingly, we recommend that the present system of elections by thirds should be retained.

Conclusions

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

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 45 to 48;
- (b) there should be 16 wards, one more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward;
- (d) elections should continue to be held by thirds.

88 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the City Council's proposals for the area to the east of the River Itchen, and on the Liberal Democrats' proposals for the area to the west, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- (a) we propose a modification to the boundary between Bassett ward and Coxford ward;
- (b) we propose a modification to the boundary between Bassett ward and Swaythling ward.

89 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and 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	45	48	45	48
Number of wards	15	16	15	16
Average number of electors per councillor	3,687	3,457	3,784	3,548
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	3	0	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	1	0

90 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Southampton City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the city average from three to none. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city.

Draft Recommendation

Southampton City Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 16 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.

Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Southampton

5 NEXT STEPS

91 We are putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Southampton. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 13 March 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 City Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

92 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Southampton 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

93 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

Southampton City Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the City Council in 10 wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

Figure A1: Southampton City Council's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bevois	Portswood ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
Coxford	Coxford ward (part); Millbrook ward (part); Redbridge ward (part); Shirley ward (part)
Freemantle	Freemantle ward (part); Bargate ward (part); Millbrook ward (part); Redbridge ward (part)
Hampton Park	Bassett ward (part); Portswood ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
Lordswood	Bassett ward (part); Coxford ward (part); Shirley ward (part)
Polygon	Bargate ward (part); Freemantle ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
Redbridge	Redbridge ward (part); Millbrook ward (part)
Shirley	Shirley ward (part); Bassett ward (part); Freemantle ward (part)
Swaythling	Bassett ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part)
Town	Bargate ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)

Figure A2: Southampton City 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 %
Bevois	3	9,782	3,261	-6	10,385	3,462	-2
Coxford	3	10,681	3,560	3	10,806	3,602	2
Freemantle	3	10,654	3,551	3	10,652	3,551	0
Hampton Park	3	10,589	3,530	2	10,720	3,573	1
Lordswood	3	11,080	3,693	7	10,823	3,608	2
Polygon	3	9,853	3,284	-5	10,696	3,565	0
Redbridge	3	10,604	3,535	2	10,752	3,584	1

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 %
Shirley	3	10,625	3,542	2	10,777	3,592	1
Swaythling	3	10,641	3,547	3	10,846	3,615	2
Town	3	9,553	3,184	-8	10,861	3,620	2

Source: Electorate figures are based on Southampton City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Southampton City Council Conservative Group's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Conservative Group in 14 wards, where the Conservative Group's proposals were as follows:

Figure A3: Southampton City Council Conservative Group's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bargate	Bargate ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
Bassett	Bassett ward (part); Coxford ward (part); Shirley ward (part)
Bitterne	Bitterne ward (part); Harefield ward (part); Peartree ward (part); Sholing ward (part)
Bitterne Park	Bitterne Park ward (part); Harefield ward (part); Peartree ward (part)
Coxford	Coxford ward (part); Redbridge ward (part)
Freemantle	Freemantle ward (part); Bargate ward (part); Millbrook ward (part)
Harefield	Harefield ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part)
Millbrook	Millbrook ward (part); Bargate ward (part); Redbridge ward (part); Shirley ward (part)
Peartree	Peartree ward (part); Sholing ward (part); Woolston ward (part)
Portswood	Portswood ward (part); St Lukes ward (part)
St Lukes	St Lukes ward (part); Bargate ward (part)
Shirley	Shirley ward (part); Freemantle ward (part)
Sholing	Sholing ward (part); Woolston ward (part)
Swaythling	Bassett ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part); Portswood ward (part)

Figure A4: Southampton City Council Conservative Group'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 %
Bargate	3	9,553	3,184	-8	10,861	3,620	2
Bassett	3	10,574	3,525	2	10,465	3,488	-2
Bitterne	3	10,626	3,542	2	10,612	3,537	0
Bitterne Park	3	10,077	3,359	-3	10,349	3,450	-3
Coxford	3	10,848	3,616	5	10,743	3,581	1
Freemantle	3	10,346	3,449	0	10,786	3,595	1
Harefield	3	10,465	3,488	1	10,434	3,478	-2
Millbrook	3	10,738	3,579	4	10,876	3,625	2
Peartree	3	10,278	3,426	-1	10,569	3,523	-1
Portswood	3	10,304	3,435	-1	10,748	3,583	1
St Lukes	3	10,337	3,446	0	10,925	3,642	3
Shirley	3	10,630	3,543	3	10,809	3,603	2
Sholing	3	10,210	3,403	-2	10,455	3,485	-2
Swaythling	3	10,268	3,423	-1	10,553	3,518	-1

Source: Electorate figures are based on Southampton City Council's Conservative Group'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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Southampton Liberal Democrat Party's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Liberal Democrat Party in five wards, where the Liberal Democrat Party's proposals were as follows:

Figure A5: Southampton Liberal Democrat Party's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bassett	Bassett ward (part); Coxford ward; Shirley ward (part)
Bitterne Park	Bitterne Park ward (part); Harefield ward (part); Peartree ward (part)
Coxford	Coxford ward (part); Redbridge ward (part)
Harefield	Harefield ward (part); Bitterne ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part)
Swaythling	Bassett ward (part); Bitterne Park ward (part); Portswood ward (part)

Figure A6: Southampton Liberal Democrat Party'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 %
Bassett	3	10,882	3,627	5	10,814	3,605	2
Bitterne Park	3	10,294	3,431	-1	10,507	3,502	-1
Coxford	3	10,848	3,616	5	10,743	3,581	1
Harefield	3	10,441	3,480	1	10,456	3,485	-2
Swaythling	3	10,381	3,460	0	10,609	3,536	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on Southampton Liberal Democrat Party'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 city. 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 districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. 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.

¹The 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:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- 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.