

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire

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

*October 2000*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire.

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)

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Newcastle-under-Lyme is inserted inside the back cover of this report.





## Local Government Commission for England

10 October 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 28 September 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Newcastle-under-Lyme under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in May 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 110) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

We recommend that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 24 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

The Local Government Act 2000 contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements, we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Newcastle-under-Lyme on 28 September 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 May 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Newcastle-under-Lyme:

- **in 10 of the 23 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and one ward varies 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 one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 110-111) are that:

- **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should have 60 councillors, four more than at present;**
- **there should be 24 wards, instead of 23 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 23 of the proposed 24 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in 23 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parish of Audley Rural and the town of Kidsgrove.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 21 November 2000:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Audley & Bignall End	3	Audley & Bignall End ward (part – Audley ward of Audley Rural parish (part) and Bignall End ward of Audley Rural parish (part))	Maps 2, A3 and A4
2 Bradwell (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Bradwell ward (part); Porthill ward (part)	Large map
3 Butt Lane	3	Butt Lane ward (Butt Lane ward of Kidsgrove parish); Kidsgrove ward (part – Kidsgrove ward of Kidsgrove parish (part))	Maps 2 and A2
4 Chesterton (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Audley & Bignall End ward (part – unparished area); Chesterton ward (part)	Large map
5 Clayton (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Large map
6 Cross Heath (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Cross Heath ward (part); Holditch ward (part); Town ward (part); Silverdale ward (part)	Large map
7 Halmerend	2	Audley & Bignall End ward (part – Audley ward of Audley Rural parish (part) and Bignall End ward of Audley Rural parish (part)); Halmerend ward (Balterley parish, Betley parish and Halmerend ward of Audley Rural parish)	Maps 2, A3 and A4
8 Holditch (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	Chesterton ward (part); Holditch ward (part)	Large map
9 Keele	2	Keele ward (part – Keele parish)	Map 2 and large map
10 Kidsgrove	3	Kidsgrove ward (part – Kidsgrove ward of Kidsgrove parish (part)); Newchapel ward (part – Newchapel ward of Kidsgrove parish (part))	Maps 2 and A2
11 Loggerheads & Whitmore	3	Loggerheads ward (Loggerheads parish); Whitmore ward (Chapel & Hill Chorlton, Maer and Whitmore parishes)	Map 2
12 Madeley	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Madeley parish)	Map 2
13 May Bank (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Cross Heath ward (part) May Bank ward (part); Wolstanton ward (part)	Large map

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
14	Newchapel	2	Newchapel ward (part – Newchapel ward of Kidsgrove parish (part))	Maps 2 and A2
15	Porthill (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	Bradwell ward (part); Porthill ward (part)	Large map
16	Ravenscliffe	2	Kidsgrove ward (part – Kidsgrove ward of Kidsgrove parish (part))	Maps 2 and A2
17	Seabridge (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Seabridge ward (part)	Large map
18	Silverdale & Knutton (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	Silverdale ward (part)	Large map
19	Silverdale & Parksite (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	Keele ward (part – unparished area); Silverdale ward (part)	Large map
20	Talke	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Talke ward of Kidsgrove parish)	Map 2
21	Thistleberry (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Large map
22	Town (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	2	Town ward (part)	Large map
23	Westlands (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	Seabridge ward (part); Westlands ward (part)	Large map
24	Wolstanton (in Newcastle-under-Lyme)	3	May Bank ward (part); Porthill ward (part); Wolstanton ward (part)	Large map

*Notes: 1 The town of Newcastle-under-Lyme is the only unparished part of the borough and comprises the 14 wards indicated in brackets.*

*2 Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map at the back of this report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme

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 Audley & Bignall End	3	4,507	1,502	-4	4,334	1,445	-5
2 Bradwell	3	4,822	1,607	3	4,779	1,593	4
3 Butt Lane	3	4,321	1,440	-8	4,250	1,417	-7
4 Chesterton	3	5,028	1,676	7	5,010	1,670	9
5 Clayton	2	3,302	1,651	5	3,125	1,563	2
6 Cross Heath	3	4,730	1,577	1	4,462	1,487	-3
7 Halmerend	2	2,951	1,476	-6	2,973	1,487	-3
8 Holditch	2	3,191	1,596	2	3,050	1,525	0
9 Keele	2	3,063	1,532	-2	3,008	1,504	-2
10 Kidsgrove	3	4,518	1,506	-4	4,512	1,504	-2
11 Loggerheads & Whitmore	3	5,258	1,753	12	5,219	1,740	14
12 Madeley	2	3,416	1,708	9	3,321	1,661	9
13 May Bank	3	5,036	1,679	7	4,794	1,598	5
14 Newchapel	2	2,868	1,434	-9	2,973	1,487	-3
15 Porthill	2	3,105	1,553	-1	2,989	1,495	-2
16 Ravenscliffe	2	3,274	1,637	4	3,143	1,572	3
17 Seabridge	3	4,673	1,558	-1	4,536	1,512	-1
18 Silverdale & Knutton	2	2,911	1,456	-7	2,883	1,442	-6
19 Silverdale & Parksite	2	2,934	1,467	-6	2,900	1,450	-5
20 Talke	2	3,211	1,606	2	3,077	1,539	1
21 Thistleberry	3	4,645	1,548	-1	4,466	1,489	-3
22 Town	2	3,437	1,719	10	3,321	1,661	9

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 %
23 Westlands	3	4,546	1,515	-3	4,304	1,435	-6
24 Wolstanton	3	4,299	1,433	-9	4,223	1,408	-8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>94,046</b>	–	–	<b>91,652</b>	–	–
<b>Average</b>	–	–	<b>1,567</b>	–	–	<b>1,528</b>	–

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.*

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

# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire. We have now reviewed the eight districts in Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent 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 was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in 1977 (Report No. 200). The electoral arrangements of Staffordshire County Council were last reviewed in 1980 (Report No. 386). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly 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 have had regard to:

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

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward.

Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie 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.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Staffordshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 28 September 1999, when we wrote to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands 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 10 January 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 9 May 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire*, and ended on 3 July 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

13 The area covered by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council extends over some 21,000 hectares in the north-west of Staffordshire. The district centres on the two towns of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Kidsgrove, and also contains a number of smaller rural villages. The M6 motorway runs through the borough and provides good communication links to both Birmingham and Manchester. The borough is home to Keele University, which is based in Keele village.

14 The borough contains nine parishes, ranging in size of electorate from 329 in Chapel & Hill Chorlton to over 18,000 in Kidsgrove, although the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme itself is unparished. Newcastle-under-Lyme town comprises some 60 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

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

16 The electorate of the borough is 94,046 (February 1999). The Council presently has 56 members who are elected from 23 wards, six of which are relatively rural in the west of the borough. The remaining wards are predominantly urban in and are situated in Kidsgrove and Newcastle-under-Lyme towns. Eleven of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 11 by two councillors and one ward is represented by a single councillor. The Council is elected by thirds. Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Newcastle-under-Lyme borough, with around 4 per cent more electors than two decades ago.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,679 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will decrease to 1,637 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 10 of the 23 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Chesterton ward where each of the three councillors represents 24 per cent more electors than the borough average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Newcastle-under-Lyme*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Audley & Bignall End	3	4,859	1,620	-4	4,672	1,557	-5
2 Bradwell	3	4,992	1,664	-1	4,947	1,649	1
3 Butt Lane	3	4,231	1,410	-16	4,164	1,388	-15
4 Chesterton	3	6,245	2,082	24	6,226	2,075	27
5 Clayton	2	3,302	1,651	-2	3,125	1,563	-5
6 Cross Heath	3	4,447	1,482	-12	4,217	1,406	-14
7 Halmerend	2	2,677	1,339	-20	2,710	1,355	-17
8 Holditch	2	3,032	1,516	-10	2,813	1,407	-14
9 Keele	2	3,771	1,886	12	3,703	1,852	13
10 Kidsgrove	3	5,604	1,868	11	5,380	1,793	10
11 Loggerheads	2	3,388	1,694	1	3,295	1,648	1
12 Madeley	2	3,416	1,708	2	3,321	1,661	1
13 May Bank	3	4,402	1,467	-13	4,188	1,396	-15
14 Newchapel	3	5,146	1,715	2	5,334	1,778	9
15 Porthill	2	3,268	1,634	-3	3,141	1,571	-4
16 Seabridge	3	6,024	2,008	20	5,848	1,949	19
17 Silverdale	3	5,137	1,712	2	5,088	1,696	4
18 Talke	2	3,211	1,606	-4	3,077	1,539	-6
19 Thistleberry	3	4,645	1,548	-8	4,466	1,489	-9
20 Town	2	3,440	1,720	2	3,324	1,662	2
21 Westlands	2	3,195	1,598	-5	2,992	1,496	-9

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 %
Whitmore 22	1	1,870	1,870	11	1,924	1,924	18
23 Wolstanton	2	3,744	1,872	11	3,697	1,849	13
<b>Totals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>94,046</b>	–	–	<b>91,652</b>	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>1,679</b>	–	–	<b>1,637</b>	–

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newcastle-under-Lyme 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 Halmerend ward were relatively over-represented by 20 per cent, while electors in Chesterton ward were significantly under-represented by 24 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received five representations, including borough-wide schemes from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Liberal Democrat Party, and representations from Audley Rural Parish Council, Keele Parish Council and Staffordshire County Councillor Bill Hughes. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a pattern of three- and two-member wards throughout the borough. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community interests, we decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in several areas, in particular Kidsgrove, where we put forward our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, compared with the current 56, representing 24 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parish of Audley Rural and the town of Kidsgrove.

**Draft Recommendation**

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors, serving 24 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 23 of the 24 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with only Whitmore & Loggerheads ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2004.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received nine submissions. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and the Commission.

### **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**

22 The Borough Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, but proposed amendments to ward boundaries in three areas. It proposed retaining the existing boundary between May Bank and Wolstanton wards, and amending the proposed boundary between Porthill and Wolstanton wards. It also proposed transferring St John Fisher School and the caretaker house from Town ward to Cross Heath ward.

### **The Liberal Democrats**

23 The Liberal Democrats endorsed our proposal to increase council size from 56 to 60, and accepted our proposals in relation to Kidsgrove town and Audley parish. However, they opposed our proposed Keele ward, and expressed support for Keele Parish Council's Stage One proposal to include the Bramley Green, Yew Tree Farm and Racecourse Farm areas in Keele ward. The Liberal Democrats also proposed retaining Seabridge Lane as the boundary between Seabridge and Westlands wards. Finally they expressed general disappointment that the Commission had not taken this opportunity "to implement radically needed changes" to electoral boundaries in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

### **Staffordshire Parish Council Association**

24 Staffordshire Parish Council Association made no specific comments in relation to our draft recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme, but noted that there is significant local support for a current petition to create a parish council for the Silverdale area.

### **Parish Councils**

25 We received representations from two parish councils. Madeley Parish Council expressed support for our draft recommendations, and reiterated its opposition to Keele Parish Council's Stage One proposal for the area. Loggerheads Parish Council proposed renaming Whitmore & Loggerheads ward as Loggerheads & Whitmore ward in order to reflect the relative size of the two parishes.

### **Other Representations**

26 A further four representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from borough councillors and local residents. Councillors Fear, Nixon and Hailstones (Seabridge ward) proposed amending the boundary between our proposed Seabridge and Westlands wards to follow

Seabridge Lane, arguing that the road is a “major boundary” in the area. They also argued that the Guernsey Drive area shares interests with other areas to the south of Seabridge Lane. Two local residents also proposed amending the boundary between the Seabridge and Westlands wards to follow Seabridge Lane, while another resident proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between our proposed Bradwell and Porthill wards.

## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

27 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Newcastle-under-Lyme is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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 also 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. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

31 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a decrease in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 94,046 to 91,652 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. The Council stated that its electorate forecasts were based on population and household projections supplied by Staffordshire County Council, and that it 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. It expects a gradual decline in the electorate in the majority of wards, although the electorate in a small number of wards is forecast to increase marginally. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

32 We received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## **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, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

34 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is served by 56 councillors at present. At Stage One both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed increasing the size of the council by three, to 59. The Borough Council stated that, in light of the Government's modernisation agenda, it had considered proposing a reduction in council size, but was reluctant to put forward proposals which might result in larger wards and an increased number of electors per councillor. It argued that while the current electoral arrangements reflect local communities well, a small increase in council size of three members would result in improved levels of electoral equality and would allow ward boundaries to remain relatively unchanged.

35 In their Stage One submission the Liberal Democrats argued that their proposal to create a pattern of largely three-member wards throughout the borough would require increasing the number of councillors from 56 to 59. In particular, they proposed increasing the number of councillors for the Kidsgrove area from 11 to 12 to provide for improved levels of electoral equality by 2004. The Liberal Democrats also argued that Keele ward would eventually require an additional councillor to account for the growth in the student population of Keele University.

36 In our draft recommendations report, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members.

37 At Stage Three, the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendation for a council size of 60. The Liberal Democrats also endorsed our proposals. We did not receive any other representations on this matter. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 60 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

38 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats. While the Liberal Democrats' proposals would have resulted in improved levels of electoral equality, we were not persuaded that their proposed warding arrangements would best reflect the identities and interests of the various communities within Newcastle-under-Lyme. In particular, we were concerned that their proposals did not build on existing parish boundaries, resulting in the creation of additional parish wards. Furthermore, in areas where they had proposed moving away from existing ward boundaries, we were not persuaded that their proposed boundaries would better reflect existing community ties.

39 Our draft recommendations were largely based on the Borough Council's scheme. We considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or the other scheme submitted at Stage One.

Moreover, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals would achieve reasonable electoral equality and, by building on a principle of least change, would reflect community ties well. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in several areas.

40 In response to our draft recommendations report we received submissions from the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrats, two parish councils, three borough councillors and three local residents. We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Butt Lane and Talke wards;
- (b) Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards;
- (c) Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards;
- (d) Loggerheads, Madeley and Whitmore wards;
- (e) Keele and Silverdale wards;
- (f) Clayton, Seabridge and Westlands wards;
- (g) Thistleberry and Town wards;
- (h) Cross Heath, May Bank and Wolstanton wards;
- (i) Bradwell and Porthill wards;
- (j) Chesterton and Holditch wards.

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

### **Butt Lane and Talke wards**

42 Butt Lane and Talke wards cover part of Kidsgrove town in the north-east of the borough, and are coterminous with Butt Lane and Talke wards of Kidsgrove Town Council respectively. Butt Lane ward is currently represented by three councillors and has 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (15 per cent fewer than the average by 2004), while Talke ward is represented by two councillors and has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average (6 per cent fewer than the average by 2004).

43 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed only minimal change in this area, retaining the existing electoral arrangements of Talke ward and enlarging Butt Lane ward to include the part of Kidsgrove ward to the south of the A50 Liverpool Road and west of Ravenscliffe Road. The Liberal Democrats proposed more extensive change, transferring the part of the current Butt Lane ward to the south of St Saviour's Street, Mitchell Drive, Higher Ash Road, Beech Drive and Park Avenue to a revised three-member Talke ward. Under their proposals, the remaining part of Butt Lane ward would be combined with part of Kidsgrove ward to form a new three-member West Kidsgrove ward.

44 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to increase the total number of councillors representing the Kidsgrove area from 11 to 12 would

appropriately reflect the level of representation to which the town is entitled. However, we were not persuaded that Talke ward should be enlarged to include part of the current Butt Lane ward as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. We considered that Talke area is a separate community with distinct identities and interests, and that Linley Road and the A5011 Newcastle Road form a clear and identifiable boundary which effectively separates the two distinct communities. We considered that the current Talke ward reflects community identities in the area well, and proposed retaining the existing electoral arrangements of the ward.

45 We were not persuaded that either of the borough-wide schemes submitted to us at Stage One would appropriately reflect the identities and interests of the various communities in the Butt Lane area of Kidsgrove. We considered that the Kidsgrove to Stoke-on-Trent railway line forms a strong community boundary in the south-west of Kidsgrove, and that areas to the east of the railway line share few community ties with the Butt Lane area. We therefore proposed including the part of Kidsgrove ward to the west of the Macclesfield to Stoke-on-Trent railway line in a revised Butt Lane ward.

46 At Stage Three, the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Butt Lane and Talke wards. The Liberal Democrats endorsed our proposals for the Kidsgrove area, acknowledging that our draft recommendations would “enhance and improve local representation for the people of Kidsgrove”. We received no further representations in relation to this area.

47 Having considered all the evidence received at Stage Three, we remain content that our draft recommendations would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and confirm them as final. We do, however, propose a minor amendment to the boundary between Butt Lane and Talke wards in order to unite all properties on Westmoorland Avenue within Butt Lane ward. This change would affect no electors. Under our final recommendations, the three-member Butt Lane ward and two-member Talke ward would have 8 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004). Our proposed Butt Lane and Talke wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

## **Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards**

48 Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards lie to the north and east of the Crewe to Stoke-on-Trent railway line in Kidsgrove, and are coterminous with Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards of Kidsgrove Town Council. Each ward is currently represented by three councillors. At present Kidsgrove ward has 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (10 per cent more than the average by 2004), and Newchapel ward has 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent more than the average by 2004).

49 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed transferring the part of Newchapel ward to the south of Whitehill Road and north of Mount Road to a revised three-member Kidsgrove ward, thereby uniting the Nabswood Road and Tawney Close area, and Winghay Road and Whitefield Road area within Kidsgrove ward. The remaining part of the existing Newchapel ward would form a revised three-member Newchapel ward. The Council also proposed transferring part of the current Kidsgrove ward to a revised Butt Lane ward, as detailed above. The Liberal Democrats also proposed considerable change in this area. Under their proposals, the part of

Newchapel ward to the south of Whitehill Road would be combined with the part of the current Kidsgrove ward to the south of William Road, Lamb Street, Heathcote Street and The Avenue and to the east of Boathorse Road in a new East Kidsgrove ward. The remaining part of Kidsgrove ward would be combined with Butt Lane ward in a new West Kidsgrove ward, as discussed previously.

50 As discussed previously, in our draft recommendations report we concurred with the Liberal Democrats' proposal to increase the number of councillors serving the Kidsgrove area from 11 to 12. However, we considered that the existing Talke and Butt Lane wards reflect community identities and interests well and proposed that they should remain unchanged, with the exception of the area to the west of the Macclesfield to Stoke-on-Trent railway line as detailed above. In order to improve electoral equality we therefore proposed allocating an additional councillor to the area broadly covered by the existing Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards. We recognised that this proposal limited the extent to which we were able to consider the schemes submitted by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats for this area, but considered that our proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either of the alternative borough-wide schemes submitted to us at this stage.

51 We considered that the area to the north of Whitehill Road and east of Galleys Bank shares significant ties with the Kidsgrove community, and proposed transferring this area from Newchapel ward to a revised three-member Kidsgrove ward. We also proposed that the roads having sole access from Mount Road, currently in Newchapel ward, should also form part of Kidsgrove ward. We also proposed creating a new two-member Ravenscliffe ward covering the area to the south of Liverpool Road and Atwood Street, and west of Whiteridge Road.

52 At Stage Three, the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards, as discussed previously. The Liberal Democrats endorsed our proposals for the Kidsgrove area. We received no further representations in relation to this area.

53 Having considered all the evidence received at Stage Three, we remain content that our draft recommendations would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and confirm them as final. Under our final recommendations, Kidsgrove and Newchapel wards would have 4 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor respectively, while Ravenscliffe ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent and 3 per cent fewer, and 3 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004). Our proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

### **Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards**

54 Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards lie in the north of the borough and include the settlements of Audley, Bignall End and Halmerend. Audley & Bignall End ward comprises Audley and Bignall End wards of Audley Rural parish and an unparished area to the east, and is represented by three councillors. The two-member Halmerend ward comprises Balterley and Betley parishes, Halmerend ward of Audley Rural parish and an unparished area to the east. Audley & Bignall End ward has 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average

(5 per cent fewer than the average by 2004), while Halmerend ward has 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (17 per cent fewer than the average by 2004).

55 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed amending the boundary between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards in order to unite the Miles Green settlement within Halmerend ward. The part of Audley & Bignall End ward to the south of Dean Brook and the B5500 Nantwich Road would also be transferred to Halmerend ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed more extensive change in this area. Under their proposals, the part of Halmerend ward to the east of the dismantled railway line would be combined with part of Silverdale ward to form a new Silverdale & Halmerend ward, as detailed below. The area to the west of the disused railway line would be transferred to a new Madeley, Wrinehill, Betley & Balterley ward, together with the part of the current Audley & Bignall End ward to the west of the M6 motorway. The Miles Green settlement would be transferred from Halmerend ward to a revised three-member Audley & Bignall End ward, while the unparished area in the east of the current Audley & Bignall End ward would be transferred to a new Chesterton North ward, as detailed below.

56 In our draft recommendations report we noted that while the existing arrangements for this area reflect community ties well, it was necessary to address the significant level of electoral inequality which currently exists in Halmerend ward. While we recognised that the Liberal Democrats' proposal would provide reasonable electoral equality, we did not consider that their proposal to divide Halmerend ward would adequately reflect community ties in this area. In particular, we considered that there is a close association of interests between Balterley, Betley and Halmerend parishes, and relatively few ties between the largely rural Halmerend and Alsagers Bank communities and the more urban Silverdale area. We noted that both borough-wide schemes submitted to us proposed uniting the Miles Green area within a single ward and considered that the proposal had some merit. We considered that the Borough Council's proposal to include the Miles Green and Nantwich Road areas in a revised Halmerend ward would better reflect existing community ties than the current arrangements, and would also provide improved electoral equality in Halmerend ward. We therefore proposed putting forward the Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations.

57 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our proposed Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards. The Liberal Democrats endorsed our draft recommendations for Audley Parish, stating that our proposals are "a substantial improvement on present arrangements". We received no further representations in relation to this area.

58 Having considered all the evidence received at Stage Three, we remain content that our draft recommendations would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area, and confirm them as final. Under our final recommendations, the three-member Audley & Bignall End ward and two-member Halmerend ward would have 4 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004). The proposed boundary between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards is illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A4 and A5 in Appendix A.

## **Loggerheads, Madeley and Whitmore wards**

59 Loggerheads, Madeley and Whitmore wards lie in the south and west of the borough, and are largely rural in character. Loggerheads ward is coterminous with the parish of Loggerheads and Madeley ward is coterminous with the parish of Madeley, each being represented by two councillors. Whitmore ward comprises the parishes of Chapel & Hill Chorlton, Maer and Whitmore and is represented by a single councillor. At present, Loggerheads ward has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, Madeley has 2 per cent more and Whitmore has 11 per cent more (1 per cent, 1 per cent and 18 per cent more than the average by 2004 respectively).

60 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed combining the current Loggerheads and Whitmore wards to form a new three-member Whitmore & Loggerheads ward and retaining the existing electoral arrangements for Madeley ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed a greater degree of change in this area, transferring the eastern part of Madeley Heath to a revised Keele ward, as detailed below. The remaining part of Madeley ward would be combined with the part of the current Halmerend ward to the west of the disused railway line and the part of the current Audley & Bignall End ward to the west of the M6 to form a new three-member Madeley, Wrinehill, Betley & Balterley ward, as well as part of the current Whitmore ward. The part of Whitmore ward to the north of Heath Road, Holbrook's Wood and Trentham Road would be transferred to a new Keele ward, as detailed below. The remaining part of Whitmore ward would be combined with the current Loggerheads ward to form a new three-member Loggerheads & Whitmore ward.

61 Keele Parish Council proposed enlarging Keele ward to include the part of Madeley parish to the east of Madeley Heath, and the part of Whitmore parish to the north-east of the A53 Whitmore Road.

62 In our draft recommendations report we noted that the boundary between the current Keele, Madeley and Whitmore wards is coterminous with existing parish boundaries, and we considered that the boundary defines community identities in the area well. Under both the Liberal Democrats' and Keele Parish Council's proposals several additional parish wards would need to be created in order to maintain coterminosity between parish ward boundaries and borough ward boundaries, as required under Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. We were reluctant to create small parish wards in order to facilitate borough warding arrangements. Furthermore, we were concerned that, under Keele Parish Council's proposals, the Madeley Heath Farm area and the Shutlanehead and The Lymes areas would be isolated from the other communities which form part of Keele ward. We were not persuaded that these communities would be better represented under either the Liberal Democrats' or Keele Parish Council's proposals.

63 We considered that, by building on existing parish structures, the Borough Council's proposals would have the advantage of achieving reasonable electoral equality while retaining clear and identifiable boundaries. While we noted that under a council size of 60 the Council's proposed Whitmore & Loggerheads ward would have 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2004, we considered that its proposals would provide the best balance available between electoral equality and the need to have regard to community interests

and identities in the area. Accordingly, we proposed putting forward the Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations.

64 At Stage Three, the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for the Loggerheads, Madeley and Whitmore wards. The Liberal Democrats opposed our draft recommendations for Madeley and Whitmore. They reiterated their support for Keele Parish Council's Stage One proposal to combine parts of Madeley and Whitmore with Keele parish to form a two-member Keele ward (increasing to three members as Keele University expands). They argued that the residents in these areas "see themselves as part of the Keele community in every respect. They do not identify with Whitmore". Madeley Parish Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, and expressed particular support for our decision not to adopt the Liberal Democrats' and Keele Parish Council's proposal for the area. Loggerheads Parish Council accepted our draft recommendations, but strongly objected to the name of Whitmore & Loggerheads ward. It proposed that it should be Loggerheads & Whitmore ward in order to reflect the relative size of the two parishes.

65 Having considered all the evidence received at Stage Three, we remain content that our draft recommendations would provide the most appropriate balance between electoral equality and community interests and identities. We remain of the view that the Liberal Democrats' and Keele Parish Council's proposals for this area would not adequately reflect the statutory criteria and we therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. However, we propose renaming Whitmore & Loggerheads ward as Loggerheads & Whitmore ward. Under our final recommendations our proposed two-member Madeley and three-member Loggerheads & Whitmore wards would have 9 per cent and 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 14 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004).

### **Keele and Silverdale wards**

66 Keele and Silverdale wards lie to the west of Newcastle-under-Lyme town and are represented by two and three councillors respectively. Keele ward comprises the parish of Keele, as well as an unparished area to its east, and the Parksite area, which is also unparished. Silverdale ward includes the Silverdale and Knutton areas. Both wards are currently under-represented. Keele ward has 12 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Silverdale ward has 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (13 per cent and 4 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004).

67 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed dividing the current Silverdale ward to form a new two-member Silverdale & Knutton ward, and a new two-member Silverdale & Parksite ward which would also include the unparished Parksite area, currently in Keele ward. The boundary between the Council's proposed Silverdale & Knutton and Silverdale & Parksite wards would run eastwards along the centre of Church Street from St Luke's Church, to the rear of properties on the west side of Chapel Street, and along the centre of the High Street and Mill Street. Under its proposals, properties to the north of Keele Road, including the municipal golf course, would be transferred from Silverdale ward to a revised Keele ward.

68 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, both Keele and Silverdale wards would be enlarged to include parts of surrounding wards, and would return two and three councillors respectively. The Liberal Democrats proposed including areas of Madeley and Whitmore parishes in a revised Keele ward as detailed above, and incorporating parts of the current Silverdale and Thistleberry wards in their proposed Keele ward. The Parksite area, currently in Keele ward, would be transferred to a revised Silverdale ward, which would also include parts of the current Halmerend and Madeley wards to the east of the dismantled railway line, as discussed previously. The Knutton area to the east of Cheviot Close, Oak Road and Church Lane, currently in Silverdale ward, would be transferred to a new Knutton & Holditch ward, as discussed later. Based on a council size of 59, the Liberal Democrats' proposed Keele and Silverdale & Halmer End wards would each have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, both now and in five years' time.

69 Keele Parish Council argued that the existing Keele ward "comprises two wholly unrelated communities" and supported the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the Parksite area from Keele ward to a new Silverdale & Parksite ward. Under Keele Parish Council's proposals, parts of Madeley and Whitmore parishes would be included in a revised Keele ward, as discussed previously. The area of Silverdale and Thistleberry wards adjacent to the eastern boundary of the current Keele ward, would also be included in the proposed Keele ward. The Parish Council estimated that the enlarged Keele ward would contain an additional 100 to 150 electors as a result of its proposals. Staffordshire County Councillor Bill Hughes (Silverdale division) argued that the consultation process undertaken by the Borough Council in relation to the Periodic Electoral Review and its proposals for Silverdale had been inadequate.

70 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there is a degree of consensus regarding the proposal to include the Parksite area of Keele ward in a revised Silverdale ward, and considered that there was some merit in the proposal. Parksite is a relatively new urban settlement adjacent to Silverdale, and we were satisfied that it shares more significant community ties and communication links with the Silverdale area than with Keele parish. We were also aware that there is significant local support for the creation of a parish council for Silverdale, which would include the Parksite area. However, we were not persuaded that the identities and interests of residents of the Silverdale area would be appropriately reflected under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We considered that the largely rural Halmer End and Alsagers Bank settlements have little in common with the more urban Silverdale area.

71 We therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposals for Silverdale as part of our draft recommendations, subject to some minor modifications. We proposed uniting all the properties on Mill Street within Silverdale & Knutton ward, and amending the boundary between Silverdale & Knutton and Silverdale & Parksite wards to include properties to the north of Church Street and west of Chapel Street in Silverdale & Parksite ward.

72 As discussed previously, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' and Keele Parish Council's proposals for Keele ward would appropriately reflect the identities and interests of areas surrounding Keele parish. We considered that the M6 motorway forms a clearly identifiable and widely recognised boundary between Keele and Whitmore wards, and were content to retain it as the southern boundary of Keele ward. We considered that the area to the north of Keele Road, currently in Silverdale ward, shares few communication links with

Silverdale and is more easily accessed from Keele, and concurred with the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the area to Keele ward.

73 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Keele and Silverdale wards. As outlined above, the Liberal Democrats objected to our draft recommendations in relation to this area, arguing that our proposal to retain the existing boundary between Keele and Whitmore wards would be "potentially divisive and alienating to this community". Madeley Parish Council expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area and was "strongly opposed" to Keele Parish Council's Stage One proposals. We received a further representation from Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, drawing our attention to local support for the creation of a parish council for the Silverdale area.

74 In light of the evidence received at Stage Three, we remain content that our draft recommendations best reflect the identities and interests of communities in this area and confirm our draft recommendations as final. We note the concerns raised by the Liberal Democrats, but consider that this is a matter which would be more appropriately addressed by a further parishing review. Under our final recommendations, Keele ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer than average by 2004), while Silverdale & Knutton and Silverdale & Parksites wards would have 7 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004).

### **Clayton, Seabridge and Westlands wards**

75 Clayton, Seabridge and Westlands wards lie in the south of the Newcastle town area, to the south and west of Lyme Brook and east of the A53 Whitmore Road. Clayton ward is situated to the east of the A519 Clayton Road, while Westlands and Seabridge wards lie to the north and south of Sutherland Drive and Dartmouth Avenue respectively. The two-member Clayton and Westlands wards have 2 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while the three-member Seabridge ward has 20 per cent more than the average respectively (5 per cent and 9 per cent fewer, and 19 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004).

76 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed minimal change in this area. Under its proposals, the part of the current Seabridge ward to the north of Seabridge Lane would be transferred to a revised three-member Westlands ward and the existing two-member Clayton ward would be retained. The Liberal Democrats proposed combining the part of Clayton ward to the south of Clayton Lane and Cornwall Avenue with the part of the current Seabridge ward to the south of Seabridge Lane and east of Guernsey Drive to form a new three-member Westbury ward. Under their proposals, the remaining part of Seabridge ward would be combined with the part of Clayton ward to the south of Buckmaster Avenue and the part of the current Westlands ward to the south of Dartmouth Avenue to form a new three-member Seabridge & Clayton ward. The remaining parts of Westlands and Clayton wards would be combined with the part of the Town ward to the east of Lower Street and Pool Dam, and south of Ryecroft and King Street to form a revised three-member Westlands ward which would be represented by three councillors, one more than at present.

77 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the existing Clayton ward reflects community ties well, and has strong and clearly identifiable boundaries. Furthermore, based on a council size of 60, Clayton ward would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality, and we were therefore content to put forward the Borough Council's proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

78 We also considered that Lyme Brook, which forms the northern boundary of the current Westlands ward, constitutes a significant boundary between the primarily residential Westlands area and the more commercial Town ward, and were not persuaded that sufficient community ties exist between the two areas to justify combining them, as under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. We concurred with the Borough Council's proposal to allocate an additional member to an enlarged Westlands ward, and were content to put forward its proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, subject to some minor amendments. We proposed including the Guernsey Drive area in a revised Westlands ward and in order to further improve electoral equality, we proposed retaining the part of the current Seabridge ward to the east of Roe Lane Playing Fields in a revised Seabridge ward.

79 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Clayton, Seabridge and Westlands wards. The Liberal Democrats expressed opposition to our draft recommendations arguing that "Seabridge Lane is a natural boundary and should be accepted as such". Councillors Fear, Nixon and Hailstones (Seabridge ward) also objected to our draft recommendations for Seabridge and Westlands wards and expressed support for the Borough Council's Stage One proposals. They argued that the properties to the north of Seabridge Lane are served by shops, a public house and library to the north of Seabridge Lane while residents of the Channel Islands estate, situated to the south of Seabridge Lane, have more natural affinity with the Westbury Park development. Two local residents also opposed our draft recommendations in this area, arguing that Seabridge Lane is a significant boundary and that the area to the south of it should be retained in Seabridge ward.

80 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and recognise that there has been some local opposition to the boundary between our proposed Seabridge and Westlands wards. However, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that alternative proposals would better reflect community identities. We also note that the Borough Council has expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area and that the Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposal favoured combining the Channel Islands estate and the area to the north of Seabridge Lane within the same ward. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. Under our final recommendations, Clayton, Seabridge and Westlands wards would have 5 per cent more and 1 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than the average number of electors per councillor for the borough respectively (2 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004)

### **Thistleberry and Town wards**

81 The three-member Thistleberry ward and two-member Town ward cover some of the central parts of Newcastle-under-Lyme town, including the commercial centre and the residential Thistleberry Avenue area. Thistleberry ward is bounded in the south by the A53 Whitmore Road and the M6 motorway, and in the north by the B5044 Silverdale Road. Town ward lies to the

north of Thistleberry ward, and its northern boundary follows the dismantled railway line from Knutton Lane to King Street, running to the south of Newcastle-under-Lyme College. At present Thistleberry ward has 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, and Town ward has 2 per cent more than the average (9 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more than the average by 2004).

82 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing electoral arrangements of Thistleberry and Town wards. The Liberal Democrats proposed minimal change to the current Thistleberry ward, transferring the area to the south of Hands Wood (containing no electors) to a revised Keele ward, while part of the current Town ward would be transferred to an enlarged Westlands ward, as detailed above. Under their proposals, the remaining part of Town ward to the north of Ryecroft and King Street would be combined with part of the current Cross Heath ward in a revised Cross Heath ward, as detailed below.

83 In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was a degree of consensus regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for Thistleberry area. However, we did not consider that the southern area of the current Town ward shares significant community ties with the northern area of Westlands ward, as discussed previously. We were satisfied that the existing electoral arrangements in Thistleberry and Town wards reflect community ties well, and noted that under the Borough Council's proposals both wards would continue to have reasonable levels of electoral equality. We were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area would better represent community identities and interests than the existing arrangements, and we were therefore content to put forward the Council's proposal to retain the existing electoral arrangements for these wards as part of our draft recommendations subject to the proposed amendments to the northern boundary of Town ward.

84 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Thistleberry and Town wards, but proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Cross Heath and Town wards, in order to unite St John Fisher School and the caretaker house within the proposed Cross Heath ward. We received no further representations in relation to this area.

85 In light of the evidence received at Stage Three, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to a minor boundary modification. We consider that the Borough Council's proposal to amend the boundary between Cross Heath and Town wards has merit, and have decided to adopt it as part of our final recommendations. This change would affect only three electors. Under our final recommendations the proposed three-member Thistleberry ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors than the borough average, while the two-member Town ward would have 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004).

### **Cross Heath, May Bank and Wolstanton wards**

86 The three-member Cross Heath and May Bank wards and two-member Wolstanton ward cover a substantial residential area north of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre. Cross Heath ward covers a large area directly to the north of the town's commercial centre, extending from Wilmot Drive in the west to Hoon Avenue, Wulstan Drive and Sandy Lane in the east, and is bounded in the north by Milehouse Lane and Lower Milehouse Lane. May Bank ward lies to the

east of Hoon Avenue and Wulstan Drive, and is bounded in the north by Milehouse Lane and in the east by Southlands Avenue and Alexandra Road. Wolstanton ward is bounded in the west by Hassam Parade, in the south by Milehouse Lane and Alexandra Road, and in the north by Dimsdale Parade West, Park Avenue and Pitgreen Lane. Cross Heath and May Bank wards have 12 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Wolstanton ward has 11 per cent more than the average (14 per cent fewer, 15 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004).

87 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed extensive change in this area. Under its proposals, the part of Holditch ward to the west of Liverpool Road would be transferred to a revised May Bank ward and Wolstanton ward would be enlarged to include the part of Holditch ward to the east of Liverpool Road, and properties to the south of Dimsdale Parade West, currently in Bradwell ward. The proposed Wolstanton ward would be represented by three councillors, one more than at present.

88 The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the Wilmot Drive area and the Whitehouse Road area from Cross Heath ward to a new three-member Knutton & Holditch ward as detailed below. They proposed combining the remaining part of Cross Heath ward with the part of Town ward to the north of Rycroft and King Street, to form a revised Cross Heath ward. Under their proposals, the roads adjoining Stratford Avenue (Burleigh Grove, Eltham Gardens, Highfield Grange and Dorridge Grove) would be transferred to a revised May Bank ward, which would also include the part of the current Cross Heath ward to the east of Sandy Lane. The remaining part of Wolstanton ward would be combined with the part of the current Porthill ward to the south of Porthill and Watlands Avenue to form a new three-member Wolstanton & Porthill ward.

89 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the communities on either side of Liverpool Road share significant communications and transport links, and were not persuaded to put forward the Council's proposals for this area in their entirety. Nevertheless, we considered that the Council's proposal to unite the areas either side of Lower Milehouse Lane, and the Liberal Democrats' proposal to unite the areas around Milehouse Lane each had some merit. We considered that the part of Holditch ward to the east of Talke Road and Redmine Close shares few communication links either with the Wolstanton area to its east or with the remaining part of Holditch ward in the north, and proposed transferring the area to a revised three-member Cross Heath ward.

90 In order to further improve electoral equality in Cross Heath ward, we proposed transferring the area to the east of the A527 Brampton Road to a revised May Bank ward. We considered that The Brampton is a well-defined and clearly identifiable geographic community centred on Sandy Lane and Brampton Road, which shares some affinity with May Bank ward and in our view should remain united within one ward. We noted that Dorridge Grove, Highfield Grange, Eltham Gardens and Burleigh Grove are currently isolated from the remaining part of Wolstanton ward, having their sole access from Stratford Avenue, and that they share good communication links with the adjoining part of May Bank ward. We were therefore content to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals to unite the Dorridge Grove area within May Bank ward as part of our draft recommendations.

91 We concurred with the Borough Council’s proposal to allocate an additional councillor to an enlarged Wolstanton ward. However, in order to more accurately reflect community identities and interests in the Wolstanton area, we proposed uniting both sides of Dimsdale Parade West and Park Avenue within Wolstanton ward, and transferring the part of Porthill ward to the south of Oaklands Avenue to the revised three-member Wolstanton ward. In order to further improve electoral equality in both May Bank and Wolstanton wards, we also proposed transferring the part of May Bank ward to the north of Sparch Hollow to the revised Wolstanton ward.

92 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Cross Heath ward, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary with Town ward, as detailed above. It proposed retaining the existing boundary between May Bank and Wolstanton wards, arguing that our proposal to unite the Dorridge Grove area within May Bank ward “is an unnecessary change”, and that its proposal “helps to reduce the electoral variance in May Bank”. It also proposed retaining the existing boundary between Wolstanton and Porthill wards, arguing that Dimsdale Parade and Park Avenue form “natural boundaries”. The Council also proposed retaining Boulton Street and George Street within Porthill ward, arguing that Boulton Street forms “a natural boundary between Porthill and Wolstanton”. The Council noted that its proposals in relation to this area would not have a significant effect on levels of electoral equality. We received no further representations in relation to this area.

93 Having considered all the evidence received we have not been persuaded that the Borough Council’s proposal to retain the Highfield Grange and Dorridge Grove area within Wolstanton ward would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations for this area. While we accept that the Council’s proposal would provide for improved levels of electoral equality in May Bank and Wolstanton wards, we note that Highfield Grange and Dorridge Grove are isolated from Wolstanton ward, having their sole road access from Jubilee Road in May Bank ward.

94 We have given careful consideration to the Borough Council’s proposal to amend the boundary between our proposed Porthill and Wolstanton wards. However, in light of our proposal to confirm our draft recommendation for the southern boundary of Wolstanton as final, the Council’s proposed amendments would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral equality in Wolstanton ward. We recognise, however, that under our draft recommendations Boulton Street would be divided between Porthill and Wolstanton wards, and propose amending the boundary to retain the whole of Boulton Street and George Street within Porthill ward, as largely proposed by the Borough Council.

95 Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to largely confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to the boundary amendments detailed above. Under our final recommendations, Cross Heath and May Bank wards would have 1 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Wolstanton ward would have 9 per cent fewer (3 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 8 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004).

## **Bradwell and Porthill wards**

96 Bradwell and Porthill wards in the north of Newcastle-under-Lyme town lie to the east of the A34 Talke Road, and are represented by three and two councillors respectively. Bradwell ward is bounded in the south by Dimsdale Parade West, and in the south-east by Clare Avenue. Porthill ward lies to the north of Pitgreen Lane, Park Avenue and Dimsdale Parade West, and is bounded in the west by Clare Avenue. The boundary between the current Porthill and Bradwell wards runs to the north of Beaconsfield, The Limes and Melvyn Crescent and follows the A500 trunk road boundary to the borough boundary. Under the current electoral arrangements, Bradwell and Porthill wards have 1 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2004).

97 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed minimal change in this area, retaining the existing electoral arrangements of Porthill ward, and transferring properties on the south side of Dimsdale Parade West from Bradwell ward to Wolstanton ward, as discussed previously. The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the part of Bradwell ward to the south of Bradwell Lane, including both sides of Clare Avenue, to a revised Chesterton ward, as detailed below, and combining the remaining part of Bradwell ward with the part of Porthill ward to the north of Watlands Avenue and Porthill to form a revised three-member Bradwell ward. The remaining part of the current Porthill ward would be transferred to a new Wolstanton & Porthill ward, as detailed above.

98 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the A34 Talke Road forms a strong community boundary in the north of Newcastle-under-Lyme town, and that the Bradwell area shares few community ties with Chesterton and Holditch to its west. We noted that the existing electoral arrangements of Bradwell and Porthill wards appear to reflect the identities and interests of communities in the area well, and would continue to have reasonable levels of electoral equality under a council size of 60. However, as a result of our proposals for Wolstanton ward, Porthill ward would be over-represented and, in order to improve electoral equality we proposed transferring part of Bradwell ward to a revised Porthill ward. Under our proposals, Bradwell Grange would be united with the eastern side of Clare Avenue in Porthill ward, and Doulton Drive and Jasper Close, which are accessed from Bradwell Lane, would also be included in Porthill ward. We also proposed a further minor amendment to unite St Lucy's Drive, Beaconsfield and Second Avenue within Bradwell ward.

99 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Bradwell and Porthill wards subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between Porthill and Wolstanton wards, as detailed above. A local resident proposed amending the boundary between Bradwell and Porthill wards in order to unite St Lucy's Drive, Beaconsfield, Haven Grove and Second Avenue within Porthill ward, arguing that "the residents of these areas being adjacent to Porthill Bank regard themselves as being Porthill residents, looking to the shopping areas of Porthill and Wolstanton". Having considered the evidence received we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to a minor amendment. We consider that the proposal to amend the boundary between Porthill and Bradwell ward would reflect community ties well, and are content to adopt it as part of our final recommendations.

100 Under our final recommendations, the three-member Bradwell ward would have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while our two-member Porthill ward would have 1 per cent fewer than the average (4 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004).

### **Chesterton and Holditch wards**

101 Chesterton and Holditch wards in the north of Newcastle-under-Lyme town are currently represented by three and two councillors respectively. Chesterton ward lies to the west of the A34 Talke Road, and is bounded in the south by Apedale Road, Castle Street and Wolstanton Road. Located to the south of Wolstanton Road, Holditch ward includes the Broad Meadow and Church Fields areas and Wolstanton Golf Course, and is bounded in the east by Hassam Parade. Its southern boundary follows Milehouse Lane and Lower Milehouse Lane, and runs to the north of Wilmot Drive and to the west of Weston Close. Chesterton ward has 24 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Holditch ward has 10 per cent fewer than the average (27 per cent more and 14 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2004).

102 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed transferring parts of the current Holditch ward to its revised Cross Heath and Wolstanton wards, as detailed above. Under its proposals, the remaining part of Holditch ward would be combined with the part of Chesterton ward to the south of Albert Street, Brittain Avenue and Rowley Avenue to form a revised Holditch ward. The Council's revised Chesterton ward would also include the unparished area currently in the eastern part of Audley & Bignall End ward.

103 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, the part of Chesterton ward to the north of Apedale Road, Victoria Street and Brick Kiln Lane would be combined with the unparished area in the east of Audley & Bignall ward to form a new three-member Chesterton North ward. The remaining part of Chesterton ward would be combined with the part of Bradwell ward to the south of Bradwell Lane and west of Clare Avenue, and the part of Holditch ward to the north of Lomer Road, to form a revised Chesterton ward. The remaining part of Holditch ward would form part of a new three-member Knutton & Holditch ward.

104 In our draft recommendations report we recognised that the existing levels of electoral inequality in Chesterton and Holditch wards are such that maintaining the current electoral arrangements would be unacceptable. However, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would adequately reflect the diverse identities and interests of the various communities in the northern part of Newcastle-under-Lyme town. We noted that Broad Meadow and Church Fields and the Knutton and Lower Milehouse Lane areas are physically separated by the Holditch Road and Byrmbro Road industrial sites and Wolstanton Golf Course, and we were not persuaded that they share significant community ties or substantial communication links. Similarly we considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Chesterton ward would breach the A34 Talke Road, combining several diverse and geographically detached areas of the current Holditch, Chesterton and Bradwell wards.

105 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or the Liberal Democrats' scheme, and were content to adopt their proposals as part of our draft

recommendations. We noted that the Beasley area shares good communication links with Holditch ward through London Road and Wolstanton Road, and considered that the Council's proposals would reflect community identities in this area well. In particular, its proposals would have the advantage of uniting Wolstanton Road and adjoining roads (Springfield Close, Haddon Grove, Farcroft Avenue, Dimsdale View, Bamber Place and Rosendale Avenue) within Holditch ward. We also concurred with the proposal to transfer the unparished area in the east of Audley & Bignall End ward to Chesterton ward, as put forward by both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, thereby uniting those areas accessed from the B5500 Audley Road within Chesterton ward.

106 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations for Chesterton and Holditch wards. The Liberal Democrats made no specific comments about Chesterton and Holditch wards and we received no further representations in relation to this area. Having received no further views regarding our proposals for this area, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

107 Under our final recommendations, Chesterton and Holditch wards would have 7 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent more and equal to the average respectively by 2004).

## **Electoral Cycle**

108 At Stage One we received no proposals for change to the existing electoral cycle of the borough. The Liberal Democrats noted that their proposal, which would provide for a predominance of three-member wards, would allow for the continuation of elections by thirds. The Borough Council made no comment in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. We therefore proposed retaining the present system of elections by thirds.

109 At Stage Three the Borough Council accepted our proposal to retain the present cycle of elections by thirds, and the Liberal Democrats also endorsed our draft recommendation. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation to retain the present system of elections by thirds as final.

## **Conclusions**

110 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- We propose amending the boundary between Bradwell and Porthill wards.
- We propose amending the boundary between Porthill and Wolstanton wards.
- We propose amending the boundary between Cross Heath and Town wards.
- We propose renaming Whitmore & Loggerheads ward as Loggerheads & Whitmore ward.

111 We conclude that, in Newcastle-under-Lyme:

- there should be a increase in council size from 56 to 60;
- there should be 24 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

112 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

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

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	56	60	56	60
Number of wards	23	24	23	24
Average number of electors per councillor	1,679	1,567	1,637	1,528
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	10	1	10	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

113 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 10 to one, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would continue in 2004, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Loggerheads & Whitmore, varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

# Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

114 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 should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Audley Rural Parish and Kidsgrove town to reflect the proposed borough wards.

115 The parish of Audley Rural is currently served by 15 councillors representing three wards: Audley, Bignall End and Halmerend. Each ward returns five councillors. In our draft recommendations report we proposed amending the boundary between Halmerend parish ward and Audley and Bignall End parish wards in order to reflect the proposed boundary between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend borough wards. At Stage One, Audley Rural Parish Council requested that its parish councillors be redistributed in order to more accurately reflect the distribution of the electorate between the current three wards, and we were content to put this forward for the purposes of consultation.

116 In response to our draft recommendations report the Borough Council accepted our proposals for borough warding arrangements in this area. The Liberal Democrats endorsed our draft recommendations for Audley Parish Council, acknowledging that they “are a substantial improvement on present arrangements”. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of our proposed warding arrangements in the area, we confirm our draft recommendations for Audley Rural parish as final.

**Final Recommendation**  
Audley Rural Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Audley (returning four councillors), Bignall End (six councillors) and Halmerend (five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Maps A4 and A5 in Appendix A.

117 Kidsgrove Town Council is currently served by 23 councillors representing four wards. Butt Lane, Kidsgrove and Newchapel town council wards currently return six councillors each, and Talke town council ward returns five councillors. In our draft recommendations report we proposed increasing the number of borough councillors representing Kidsgrove from 11 to 12. We also proposed revising the boundaries between the four existing borough wards and creating a new Ravenscliffe ward. As a consequence of our draft recommendations for borough warding arrangements in Kidsgrove we propose increasing the number of councillors serving Kidsgrove Town Council by one to 24, and amending the boundaries between Butt Lane, Kidsgrove and Newchapel town council wards to reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries.

118 In response to our draft recommendations report, the Borough Council accepted our proposals for borough warding arrangements in this area, while the Liberal Democrats endorsed

our proposals, noting that they would “enhance and improve local representation for the people of Kidsgrove”. Having considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for Kidsgrove Town Council as final, subject to a minor amendment to reflect the amended borough ward boundary between Butt Lane and Talke wards, as detailed above.

**Final Recommendation**  
Kidsgrove Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, one more than at present, representing five town council wards: Butt Lane (returning six councillors), Kidsgrove (six councillors), Newchapel (four councillors), Ravenscliffe (four councillors) and Talke (four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

119 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough, and are confirming this as final.

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

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme*



## 6 NEXT STEPS

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

121 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made before 21 November 2000.

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

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



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Newcastle-under-Lyme area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 to A4 and the large map at the back of this report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the Kidsgrove area (eastern part).

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the Kidsgrove area (western part).

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed boundary between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards (eastern part).

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed boundary between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend wards (western part).

The **large map** inserted inside the back cover of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Newcastle-under-Lyme town.

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Kidsgrove (eastern part)*

*Map A3: Proposed Boundary Between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend Wards (western part)*

*Map A4: Proposed Boundary Between Audley & Bignall End and Halmerend Wards (eastern part)*

*Map A5: Proposed Warding of Kidsgrove (western part)*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of five wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Whitmore & Loggerheads ward as Loggerheads & Whitmore.

*Figure B1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bradwell	Bradwell ward (part); Porthill ward (part)
Cross Heath	Cross Heath ward (part); Holditch ward (part); Silverdale ward (part); Town ward (part)
Porthill	Bradwell ward (part); Porthill ward (part)
Town	Cross Heath ward (part); Town ward (part)
Wolstanton	May Bank ward (part); Porthill ward (part); Wolstanton ward (part)

*Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bradwell	3	4,869	1,623	4	4,825	1,608	5
Cross Heath	3	4,634	1,545	-1	4,371	1,457	-5
Porthill	2	2,988	1,494	-5	2,876	1,438	-6
Town	2	3,440	1,720	10	3,324	1,662	9
Wolstanton	3	4,369	1,456	-7	4,290	1,430	-6

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.*

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

