

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

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

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for York is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

15 May 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 16 May 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the City of York under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 2000 and undertook a ten-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 paragraphs 223–224) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in the City of York.

We recommend that the City of York Council should be served by 47 councillors representing 22 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 be elected together every four years.

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 City 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 the City of York on 16 May 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 12 December 2000, after which we undertook a ten-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 the City of York:

- **in 15 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and three wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 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 15 wards and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 223–224) are that:

- **City of York Council should have 47 councillors, six fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, instead of 29 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 17 of the proposed 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the city average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Rural West York, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city in 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Haxby Town Council.**

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 26 June 2001:

**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	Acomb	2	Acomb ward (part); Beckfield ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2	Bishopthorpe	1	Copmanthorpe ward (part – the parishes of Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe); Knavesmire ward (part); Micklegate ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
3	Clifton	3	Bootham ward (part); Clifton ward; Monk ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
4	Derwent	1	Dunnington & Kexby ward (the parishes of Dunnington and Kexby); Strensall ward (part – the parish of Holtby)	Map 2
5	Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	3	Bishophill ward (part); Foxwood ward (part); Micklegate ward (part); Westfield ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
6	Fishergate	2	Fishergate ward (part); Guildhall ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
7	Fulford	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Fulford)	Map 2 and large map
8	Guildhall	2	Guildhall ward (part); Heworth ward (part); Monk ward (part); Walmgate ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
9	Haxby & Wigginton	3	Haxby ward (the parish of Haxby); Wigginton ward (the parish of Wigginton)	Maps 2 and A2
10	Heslington	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Heslington)	Map 2 and large map
11	Heworth	3	Bootham ward (part); Heworth ward (part); Monk ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
12	Heworth Without	1	Heworth ward (part); Heworth Without ward (the parish of Heworth Without); Monk ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
13	Holgate	3	Acomb ward (part); Beckfield ward (part); Bishophill ward (part); Holgate ward	Map 2 and large map
14	Huntington & New Earswick	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Huntington and New Earswick)	Map 2 and large map
15	Micklegate	3	Bishophill ward (part); Knavesmire ward (part); Micklegate ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
16	Osbalwick	1	Osbalwick ward (the parish of Osbalwick); Strensall ward (part – the parish of Murton)	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
17	Rural West York	3	Upper Poppleton ward (the parishes of Askham Bryan, Askham Richard, Hessay, Nether Poppleton, Rufforth and Upper Poppleton); Copmanthorpe ward (part – the parish of Copmanthorpe)	Map 2 and large map
18	Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without	3	Clifton Without ward (the parish of Clifton Without); Rawcliffe & Skelton ward (the parishes of Rawcliffe and Skelton)	Map 2 and large map
19	Strensall	2	Strensall ward (part – the parishes of Earswick, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Strensall and Towthorpe)	Map 2
20	Tang Hall	2	Fishergate ward (part); Guildhall ward (part); Walmgate ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
21	Westfield	3	Acomb ward (part); Foxwood ward (part); Micklegate ward (part) Westfield ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
22	Wheldrake	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Deighton, Elvington, Naburn and Wheldrake)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The city of York itself is the only unparished area.

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

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for the City of York

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Acomb	2	6,583	3,292	8	6,728	3,364	3
2	Bishopthorpe	1	3,161	3,161	3	3,268	3,268	0
3	Clifton	3	9,274	3,091	1	9,899	3,300	1
4	Derwent	1	2,971	2,971	-3	3,059	3,059	-6
5	Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	3	8,823	2,941	-4	9,204	3,068	-6
6	Fishergate	2	6,320	3,160	3	6,408	3,204	-2
7	Fulford	1	2,197	2,197	-28	3,284	3,284	0
8	Guildhall	2	5,854	2,927	-4	6,614	3,307	1
9	Haxby & Wigginton	3	10,449	3,483	14	10,668	3,556	9
10	Heslington	1	3,448	3,448	13	3,538	3,538	8
11	Heworth	3	9,198	3,066	0	9,479	3,160	-3
12	Heworth Without	1	3,165	3,165	3	3,206	3,206	-2
13	Holgate	3	8,911	2,970	-3	9,999	3,333	2
14	Huntington & New Earswick	3	9,615	3,205	5	10,044	3,348	2
15	Micklegate	3	9,021	3,007	-2	9,606	3,202	-2
16	Osbaldwick	1	2,586	2,586	-15	3,378	3,378	3
17	Rural West York	3	8,186	2,729	-11	8,700	2,900	-11
18	Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without	3	8,947	2,982	-3	10,167	3,389	4
19	Strensall	2	5,568	2,784	-9	6,219	3,110	-5
20	Tang Hall	2	6,692	3,346	9	7,057	3,529	8
21	Westfield	3	9,835	3,278	7	9,970	3,323	2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Wheldrake	1	3,009	3,009	-2	3,254	3,254	-1
Totals	47	143,813	-	-	153,749	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,060	-	-	3,271	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the City of York Council.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the City of York unitary authority. We are reviewing the City of York as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We completed reviews of the seven two-tier districts in North Yorkshire in November 1999. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first detailed review of the electoral arrangements of City of York unitary authority. The last such review of the former York City Council was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1976 (Report No. 166). Since undertaking that review, City of York Council has become a unitary authority on revised boundaries (April 1996). The new unitary authority area comprises the previous York City area and parts of the former districts of Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby. Electoral arrangements were also considered as part of the Commission's reviews of local government structure, although given the constraints on the timetable for those reviews and the need to afford priority to structural concerns, a detailed review of electoral arrangements was not possible. The electoral arrangements of the new unitary authority were put in place as part of the Structural and Boundary Change Order which abolished the two-tier York City Council and the County Council electoral divisions covering the area of the new authority.

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 City 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 district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), 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. In unitary authorities the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals 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 and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 16 May 2000, when we wrote to the City of York Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified North Yorkshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Yorkshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the city, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, the Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire & Humber region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 4 September 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 12 December 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of York*, and ended on 19 February 2001. 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

12 The City of York Council, which became a unitary authority in April 1996, is bounded by the district of Selby to the south, the borough of Harrogate to the west, the districts of Hambleton and Ryedale to the north-west and north-east respectively, and by East Riding of Yorkshire unitary authority to the east. Covering some 27,200 hectares, and with a population of some 177,350, York has a population density of just under 7 persons per hectare. The city council area contains 32 parishes, but the city of York itself is unparished and comprises almost 60 per cent of the council's total electorate.

13 York is famous for York Minster, the largest Gothic cathedral in Europe, and has a number of other attractions including the Castle Museum, the National Railway Museum, the Jorvik Viking Centre and the racecourse at the Knavesmire. Its main transport links include the GNER East Coast mainline railway, the A64 trunk road to Leeds and the A19 trunk road to Sunderland (and the North East) and the A1 motorway is in close proximity.

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

15 The electorate of the district is 143,813 (February 2000). The Council presently has 53 members who are elected from 29 wards, 15 of which are within the urban, unparished area of the city of York itself and the remainder are predominantly rural. Three of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 18 are each represented by two councillors and eight are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

16 As outlined earlier, City of York Council became a unitary authority on revised boundaries in April 1996. The new unitary authority area comprises the previous York City area and parts of the former districts of Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby. There has been an increase in the electorate in the unparished city area of the council, with around 5 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing development. However, much of the recent electorate growth has been as a result of housing development in the parished areas on the outskirts of the former York City Council area, most notably in Clifton Without.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,713 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,901 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average, in three wards by more than 20 per cent and in one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Clifton Without ward where the councillor represents 31 per cent more electors than the city average.

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Acomb	2	5,346	2,673	-1	5,484	2,742	-5
2 Beckfield	2	5,247	2,624	-3	5,965	2,983	3
3 Bishophill	2	5,144	2,572	-5	5,632	2,816	-3
4 Bootham	2	4,849	2,425	-11	5,301	2,651	-9
5 Clifton	2	4,940	2,470	-9	5,113	2,557	-12
6 Clifton Without	1	3,566	3,566	31	4,300	4,300	48
7 Copmanthorpe	2	6,502	3,251	20	6,750	3,375	16
8 Dunnington & Kexby	1	2,836	2,836	5	2,921	2,921	1
9 Fishergate	2	6,080	3,040	12	6,345	3,173	9
10 Foxwood	3	7,566	2,522	-7	7,725	2,575	-11
11 Fulford	1	2,197	2,197	-19	3,284	3,284	13
12 Guildhall	2	6,490	3,245	20	7,091	3,546	22
13 Haxby	3	7,383	2,461	-9	7,538	2,513	-13
14 Heslington	1	3,448	3,448	27	3,538	3,538	22
15 Heworth	2	5,234	2,617	-4	5,396	2,698	-7
16 Heworth Without	1	1,933	1,933	-29	1,974	1,974	-32
17 Holgate	2	5,030	2,515	-7	5,399	2,700	-7
18 Huntington & New Earswick	3	9,615	3,205	18	10,044	3,348	15
19 Knavesmire	2	5,019	2,510	-8	5,123	2,562	-12
20 Micklegate	2	5,293	2,647	-2	5,555	2,778	-4
21 Monk	2	5,577	2,789	3	5,704	2,852	-2
22 Osbaldwick	1	2,250	2,250	-17	3,035	3,035	5
23 Rawcliffe & Skelton	2	5,381	2,691	-1	5,867	2,934	1
24 Strensall	2	6,039	3,020	11	6,700	3,350	15
25 Upper Poppleton	2	4,796	2,398	-12	5,169	2,585	-11
26 Walmgate	2	5,400	2,700	0	5,739	2,870	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Westfield	2	4,577	2,289	-16	4,673	2,337	-19
28 Wheldrake	1	3,009	3,009	11	3,254	3,254	12
29 Wigginton	1	3,066	3,066	13	3,130	3,130	8
Totals	53	143,813	–	–	153,749	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,713	–	–	2,901	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the City of York 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Heworth Without ward are relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while electors in Clifton Without ward are relatively under-represented by 31 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Map 1: Existing Wards in the City of York

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 38 representations, including four city-wide schemes from the City of York Council, the Liberal Democrat Council Group, York Labour Party and a local resident, and representations from 18 parish and town councils, two Members of Parliament, three local political party organisations, one city councillor, two parish councillors, three residents' associations and five local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of York*.

19 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the City Council's proposals and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we proposed basing our draft recommendations on the City Council's proposals. However, in order to secure a slightly better reflection of local communities and the best balance of representation between the parished area and the unparished areas to the east and west of the River Ouse, we modified its proposals in the western part of the city, also proposing that it should be represented by an additional councillor overall. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 47 members. Our proposed increase to its proposed council size did not have too great an impact on the level of electoral equality under the Council's proposals in the remainder of the city, therefore we adopted the Council's proposals in the eastern part of the unparished area and almost all of its proposals in the remainder of the parished area. Our draft recommendations achieved an improvement in electoral equality and provided for a mixed pattern of single and multi-member wards. We proposed that:

- City of York Council should be served by 47 councillors, compared with the current 53, representing 21 wards, eight fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Haxby Town Council.

Draft Recommendation

City of York Council should comprise 47 councillors, serving 21 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 16 of the 21 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward, Rural West York, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 75 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of City of York Council and the Commission.

City of York Council

22 The City of York Council supported our draft recommendations with the exception of the proposed Rural West York and Bishopthorpe wards. It argued against our reasoning that unparished and parished areas should not be combined in the same wards, and as such did not believe that this was sufficient reason to adjust the balance of representation between the parished area and the unparished areas to the west and east of the river, and as a consequence increase council size by one member. It proposed that Copmanthorpe parish should be included in Bishopthorpe ward which should be represented by two councillors and that the north-western part of the proposed Acomb ward (from the unparished area) be included in the remainder of the proposed Rural West York ward, to be represented by two councillors. It further stated that it supported “any other minor boundary changes as the Local Government [Commission] deems appropriate and convenient in the light of representations made to them”.

Liberal Democrat Council Group

23 The Liberal Democrat Group expressed concern at the proposed reduction in council size, reiterating some of its Stage One comments. However, it submitted a number of modifications to our proposals in the unparished urban area, contending that they provided “some alternative views on achieving parity in sizes of electorate whilst uniting neighbourhoods in the same ward”. In the unparished area to the west of the river it suggested modifications to all of the proposed wards. It proposed a three-member Westfield ward which would unite all of polling district GC in the same ward, and consequently it proposed that Acomb ward should become a two-member ward. It also proposed that the boundary between Acomb and Holgate wards should follow Carr Lane, and that an area around White House Gardens should be transferred from the proposed Knavesmire ward into the proposed Micklegate ward to secure improved electoral equality. In the unparished area to the east of the river it proposed a number of minor boundary modifications which would unite the Groves neighbourhood in Guildhall ward, would use the River Foss as the boundary between Heworth, Guildhall and Clifton wards and would use the Scarborough railway as part of the boundary between Clifton and Guildhall wards.

York Green Party

24 York Green Party and a local resident submitted a joint submission, arguing that under our draft recommendations “the wards are generally too large to relate to natural communities”. They further contended that the Commission was “mistaken in failing to consider the implications for Neighbourhood Forums/Ward Committees”. They argued that the reduced council size would “undermine effective and convenient local government”, with backbench councillors having to attend more meetings. As a consequence they expressed support for the local resident’s Stage One scheme for 57 members, submitting revised figures for 2005 and, in some areas, alternative

options to improve electoral equality. However, they also submitted modifications to our proposed three-member Walmgate and Guildhall wards, proposing three revised two-member wards for the area as a whole. They had “no strong views regarding ward names” but suggested that Micklegate should reflect a ward which covers the Micklegate area within the city walls.

Parish and Town Councils

25 Rufforth Parish Council fully supported our proposed three-member Rural West York ward and opposed the City Council’s proposed modifications to the Rural West York ward, further stating that “the parishes were against their wards being mixed with city wards as they were so unlike in character and had different needs”. Askham Richard Parish Council supported our proposed three-member Rural West York ward, stating that it felt “it is essential that the rural communities are kept together”. It also opposed the City Council’s alternative proposal in the western parished area. Hessay Parish Council supported our proposed three-member Rural West York ward as it would avoid “the inclusion of the unparished city area in a predominantly rural, wholly parished ward”. It also supported the proposed Rural West York ward name.

26 Bishopthorpe Parish Council stated that it “fully supports” our proposed Bishopthorpe ward. It stated that this proposal secured excellent electoral equality, whereas if the parish were also joined with Copmanthorpe parish, electoral equality would worsen which “would defeat the objective of the review to balance out the representation numbers”. It supported the inclusion of Middlethorpe in the revised ward, but suggested that Middlethorpe Grange should also be included in the ward. It also stated that the draft recommendations report “was easy to follow, gave good reasoned arguments supported by all the facts available and had sound recommendations”.

27 Copmanthorpe Parish Council initially stated that it was pleased to be included in the proposed Rural West York ward as it would avoid the parish being linked with part of the urban City of York area. However, it subsequently submitted a further representation stating that a number of residents had “expressed ... [that] they would much prefer to stay more or less as we are, ie in a ward based on Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe”. Acaster Malbis Parish Council opposed our single-member Bishopthorpe ward, expressing support for the retention of the current two-member Bishopthorpe ward (with the inclusion of the Middlethorpe area).

28 Fulford Parish Council supported our proposal to retain the existing Fulford ward. Wheldrake Parish Council supported our proposal to retain the current Wheldrake ward. It supported the reduction of city councillors and wards and also argued that “rural and urban areas should be represented separately”. It supported the retention of the “four-year cycle of elections”. Elvington Parish Council supported our draft recommendations.

29 Dunnington Parish Council supported our proposed single-member Dunnington ward, but suggested that it be named Derwent ward as the River Derwent forms the ward’s eastern boundary. It supported the reduced council size as it would reduce the costs and expenses incurred by members and was of the view that “the new executive system would be able to cope with this reduction in numbers by reducing the numbers on the scrutiny committees”. It supported the retention of whole council elections.

30 Heworth Without Parish Council agreed with our proposed Heworth Without ward, but suggested that Hempland School be incorporated into the ward as “most of the children attending the school live in the Heworth Without area”. Stockton-on-the-Forest Parish Council commented on a parish boundary issue stating that the whole of Hopgrove Lane South should not be divided and all of it should be included in Strensall ward.

31 Wigginton Parish Council stated that it was “pleased to note that Wigginton will be paired with Haxby, with whom we already have a good working relationship and many shared facilities, rather than our other neighbouring parishes of Clifton or Skelton”. However, it also stated that it was “concerned that there will no longer be a councillor solely representing the parish of Wigginton on the City of York Council”. Skelton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations.

Political Organisations

32 York Liberal Democrat Federation considered that the proposed council size of 47 members was too low, contending that the current council size of 53 “allows for greater accountability”. It was of the view that “community cohesion and interests have not been fully considered”, suggesting that the Liberal Democrat Group’s Stage One proposals “should be re-examined”. It welcomed the proposals concerning Haxby and Wigginton, and Huntington and New Earswick, but suggested that the southern boundary of Haxby South West parish ward should follow the ring-road. It also supported the retention of “elections on a four-yearly cycle”.

33 City of York Conservative Association stated that our draft recommendations were “an improvement on the original proposals put forward by the City Council”. Its only concern was “the disappearance of the old Fishergate ward”, further stating that the proposed Walmgate ward did not take into account the two completely different “sections” of the ward which “have no natural connection”. It expressed support for elections by thirds. The City of York Conservative Constituency Association stated that it supported our draft recommendations.

34 City of York Constituency Labour Party stated that while it had noted our draft recommendations, it would leave it to others to make detailed comments, although it stated that it had a “strong preference for annual elections”.

35 The Green Party’s Campaign Co-ordinator expressed similar views to those put forward in the Green Party’s joint submission. He also opposed our proposed Guildhall and Walmgate wards, proposing that the area as a whole should be represented by three two-member wards to better reflect local communities. He opposed our proposal to retain whole council elections, contending that “York was long used to elections by thirds and these should be reinstated”.

36 Haxby & Wigginton Liberal Democrats stated that they were pleased that Haxby and Wigginton had not been split up, reiterating the view that “there is a sense of shared identity between the two communities, so a Haxby & Wigginton ward does make sense”. However, they further stated that they were unhappy with “the continued reduction in the number of councillors serving our area” contending that “the amount of constituent casework generated shows no sign of a similar reduction”.

Other Representations

37 A further 52 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from five city councillors, two chairpersons of parish councils, three residents' associations, a chairman of a residents' association, four ward committees, two local organisations and 35 local residents.

38 City Councillors Galloway and Reid supported the Liberal Democrat Group's revised wards in the Westfield area, contending that this would include all of the Foxwood community within one ward. Councillor Galloway also stated that these modifications were supported by Foxwood ward, Westfield ward and Acomb ward Liberal Democrat Associations. City Councillor Potter also proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed Acomb and Holgate wards to follow the centre of Carr Lane "and across Boroughbridge Road taking Ouseacres as the boundary on that side of the road". She also supported the inclusion of the Leeman Road area in our proposed Holgate ward.

39 Foxwood Ward Committee stated "that the Ward Committee believes that the whole of the present polling district GC (electors currently voting at Foxwood Community Centre) should remain within one ward". Micklegate Ward Committee stated that "there is no advantage in changing the Micklegate ward and it should be kept as it is". Three local residents also wished to retain the current two-member Micklegate ward. Another local resident suggested that our proposed Micklegate ward be named Dringhouses to better reflect the area contained in the ward.

40 City Councillor Hopton supported our proposed Rural West York ward, further stating that "all six parish councils in the Upper Poppleton ward have ... expressed their support for the three-member ward to include the parish of Copmanthorpe with Upper Poppleton ward". She opposed the Council's proposed modifications to the Rural West York ward.

41 City Councillor Galvin opposed our proposal to divide the current Copmanthorpe ward, contending that the current ward should be retained as there is "a clear linking ... a communality of interest and a sense of community" between the three parishes in the current ward. He further contended that our proposal would result in Copmanthorpe being transferred into a different parliamentary constituency which would lead to confusion for electors. He also proposed that Copmanthorpe ward be renamed York South West Rural ward, or Bishopthorpe with Copmanthorpe & Acaster Malbis ward.

42 Poppleton Ward Residents' Association stated that "all representatives from the villages within the ward were pleased to give [the draft recommendations] their wholehearted support", further stating that it was opposed to any mix of urban and rural areas. It expressed opposition to the Council's proposed modifications to the Rural West York ward. It supported the retention of whole council elections every four years. The Chairman of Poppleton Ward Residents' Association also supported our proposed Rural West York ward. He opposed the Council's proposed modifications to this ward as he did not support the combination of the urban area with a more rural ward. He contended that "a strong historical link exists between Copmanthorpe and the Poppletons", citing a number of local shared amenities. He further argued that community ties exist in the area as the local police and community liaison group covers the whole of Copmanthorpe and the Upper Poppleton ward and that the Ainsty Parishes Group comprises the

parishes of Copmanthorpe, Askham Richard, Askham Bryan, Rufforth and the Poppletons. He supported the retention of whole council elections every four years.

43 The Chairman of Bishopthorpe Parish Council suggested that some local residents of Copmanthorpe who did not welcome the changes to their area “were older and recollected on their association with Bishopthorpe by going to the library and using the shops” and contended that “over time it has changed and these facilities are available in Copmanthorpe”, suggesting that “the majority of Copmanthorpe residents do not feel the same association [with Bishopthorpe]”.

44 A local resident agreed that “a 46 or 47 member council is suitable for York”, but opposed our proposed Rural West York ward. He proposed a single-member The Poppletons ward comprising the parishes of Nether Poppleton and Upper Poppleton. He also argued that Copmanthorpe should remain with Bishopthorpe in a two-member ward. Six other local residents also opposed our proposal to include Copmanthorpe parish in the Rural West York ward, proposing that the existing two-member Bishopthorpe ward be retained. Another local resident requested that Middlethorpe Grange be included in the proposed Bishopthorpe ward rather than the proposed Micklegate ward.

45 The Chair of Heslington Parish Council responded to comments made by two respondents at Stage One that “there are no local villagers on the parish council”, stating that “all nine of [Heslington’s] Parish Councillors live within half a mile of the centre of the village, and most live closer than that”. Heslington Village Trust supported the retention of the current Heslington ward unchanged. It further supported the proposal that no change be made to the parish electoral arrangements and that the parish should not be warded. A local resident was “disappointed” that Heslington Parish Council’s current electoral arrangements were to remain unchanged (ie not warded). She also questioned the Council’s electorate forecasts for the parish, contending that 232 new student rooms are planned to be built within the parish.

46 Fishergate Ward Committee, Fishergate Ward Committee Planning Group and 13 local residents opposed our proposals affecting the current Fishergate ward. A number of respondents contended that our three-member Walmgate ward would combine Fishergate with Tang Hall; two areas which share few links and have different community identities. The majority of respondents proposed that the two-member Fishergate ward be retained, or that the area covered by our proposed three-member Walmgate and Guildhall wards be represented by three two-member wards in order to better reflect communities. Walmgate Ward Committee stated that our proposals for Walmgate created a ward “which covers two distinct communities, separated by Walmgate Stray”, also suggesting that Walmgate ward should “move eastwards to include Osbaldwick”.

47 York Federation of Residents & Community Associations expressed concern about our proposed Walmgate, Clifton and Knavesmire wards, suggesting that they join together “areas where electorate have little in common either in natural geography or community relationships”. It also suggested that large wards would be much less manageable and would have a detrimental effect on the operation of the current “inner-city Forum system” and the allocation of financial resources. It also stated that “it was generally agreed the urban and rural areas should be kept separate”.

48 Clifton Residents' Association proposed a modified Clifton ward, using the whole length of the railway line as the ward's eastern boundary and revising its northern boundary to include an area to the south-east of Water Lane (from Clifton Without parish). It contended that properties to the east of the railway line have "no connections except one of social housing" with the remainder of the Clifton ward and should be included in a revised Heworth ward.

49 The Chair of the Governing Body of Hempland Primary School proposed that the school be included in Heworth Without ward. A local resident suggested that Heworth Without and Heworth wards should be combined to form a four-member ward. Another local resident suggested that the western boundary of Heworth ward should follow the River Foss to unite the Groves area in Guildhall ward and to better reflect local communities.

50 A local resident stated that our proposed Holgate and Knavesmire wards seemed "broadly sensible" but suggested that Knavesmire ward should be named Scarcroft ward as Scarcroft Road, Scarcroft Hill and Scarcroft Primary School are all situated in the centre of the ward. He opposed our proposed Guildhall ward, as it would continue to divide the Groves area, and opposed our proposed Walmgate ward as it would link the Tang Hall area with the Fulford Road area with which it has few links.

51 Another local resident suggested some minor boundary modifications and proposed that Knavesmire ward should be named Millthorpe ward or even Micklegate ward, and that Micklegate ward should be named Dringhouses & Woodthorpe ward to reflect the area that it covers. He also suggested alternative ward names for wards in the parished area.

52 Two local residents wished to retain the current ward names of Walmgate, Micklegate, Bootham and Monk on historical grounds. Two local residents suggested alternative combinations of parishes to form wards in the northern and eastern parts of the rural area.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

53 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for the City of York 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”.

54 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.

55 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.

56 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 be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five year period.

Electorate Forecasts

57 At Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 7 per cent from 143,813 to 153,749 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Fulford ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Osbaldwick and Clifton Without wards. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

58 We received one comment on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three. A local resident, who stated that she was writing “on behalf of many villagers”, questioned the Council’s electorate forecasts for Heslington parish, contending that “new accommodation for 232 new student houses/rooms were passed by the Council and are to be built within the parish boundary”.

further arguing that the university expects its student population to increase by around 2,000 over the next five years and that many will be accommodated on the university campus.

59 We considered the representation received from the local resident and forwarded her submission to the City Council for comment. In response the City Council stated that its original forecast electorate figures “do account for student growth in the City” and are “based on assumptions used to produce the sub-national population projections by the Office for National Statistics”, further stating that a number of the proposed student dwellings would actually be more modern replacement accommodation. In the light of all the evidence received, we have not been persuaded to move away from the City Council’s original electorate forecasts and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

60 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.

61 City of York Council presently has 53 members. During Stage One we received proposals based on a number of different council sizes. The City Council proposed reducing council size by seven, from 53 to 46 members. It argued that this reduction in council size would “not impact negatively on the operation of the Council’s political management structures”, arguing that it would “in no way impinge[s] upon the Council’s ability to elect members onto the Executive, nor on the Executive’s capacity to undertake their duties and responsibilities”. It further contended that “the introduction of new political management arrangements in York has streamlined the decision making process leaving non Executive members freer to undertake their representative role ... in their wards and to get involved in the Scrutiny process” and that it had discovered that “there are more than enough members for the committees within the new structure”. The Council’s proposed scheme was endorsed by the Labour and Conservative Groups.

62 The Liberal Democrat Group submitted a city-wide scheme based on 54 members, an increase of one, which was broadly supported by the York Liberal Democrat Federation. It stated that “Local Government Reorganisation in 1995 saw a major reduction in the number of councillors in the area”, contending that the councillor:elector ratio under its proposed council size “would not be too low in the context of an authority of the type and locality”. It opposed the Council’s proposed 46-member council, arguing that it was “substantially reduced in size and hence offers less accountability”.

63 York Labour Party stated that it had “an open mind on the question of the number of elected members”. It noted that “City of York Council has just introduced new managerial arrangements with an executive and scrutiny/representative division”, arguing that “in the new system it might be desirable to reduce the number of councillors as in the City of York Council’s submission”. However, it submitted a city-wide scheme based on 54 members which it said contained “critical comments on” and was “a direct response to that produced by the Liberal Democrats”.

64 A local resident submitted a city-wide scheme based on a 57-member council size, an increase of four members. He was of the view that an increase in the number of councillors was

justified, arguing that since the creation of the new City of York unitary authority “anecdotal evidence suggests a huge increase in workload for many councillors”. He opposed the Council’s proposal to reduce council size to 46 members, contending that this would be “inherently undesirable”.

65 York Green Party opposed a reduction in council size to 46 members as “many members are already ‘worked off their feet’”, arguing that a reduced council size “will make the council more remote and unaccountable to its electors”.

66 We also noted that, as part of the Council’s Stage One consultation process, the majority of parishes expressed support for a reduced council size, the most favoured being a 46-member council with the second most favoured being a 51-member council. We also noted that some individual parishes expressed support for more than one council size, but that the primary concern of almost all of the parishes was to express support for a scheme which would retain separate representation for the parished and unparished areas of the council, in order to secure the best reflection of the identities and interests of local communities. This view was also supported by Hugh Bayley MP, who supported the retention of “separate representation for York’s urban core and for the outer suburbs and villages” as he was of the view that this was important “because the suburbs and villages, and their parish councils, have always stressed their different needs and separate identities from the urban core”.

67 In our draft recommendations report we stated that the Commission will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but will be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. Having considered all of the representations received at Stage One (including those received by the City of York Council which were included as an appendix to its submission), we noted that there was significant opposition to the combination of unparished and parished areas of the council in the same ward. We carefully considered all of the city-wide schemes submitted at Stage One and noted that the Council’s scheme would secure the smallest number of mixed parished and unparished wards and, in our view, would therefore secure the best reflection of the identities and interests of local communities, while also securing good electoral equality. Furthermore, the Council’s scheme would not require any parish warding, whereas the other schemes submitted, while securing reasonable electoral equality, would result in higher levels of mixed parished/unparished wards (with differing levels of consequential parish warding), thereby, in our opinion, providing a poorer reflection of local community identity and less identifiable boundaries in a number of areas.

68 We acknowledged that the Council’s proposals would result in a notable reduction in council size, from 53 to 46 members, and noted the concerns expressed by some local interested parties. However, we were of the view that the Council had submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a reduced council size would not have a detrimental effect on the operation of the Council’s internal political management. In addition, we noted that there was also some broad support locally for a reduced council size from a number of parishes, York Labour Party and John Grogan MP, as it would enable a better reflection of the identities and interests of the communities in the parished and unparished areas.

69 We also noted that some respondents questioned how the new electoral wards would affect the City Council’s current Ward Committee (Neighbourhood Forum) structure and operation.

However, we were of the view that such local arrangements are a matter for the City Council to determine and are not an issue that we can take into consideration when formulating our proposals.

70 We therefore based our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme. However, in order to secure a slightly better reflection of local communities we proposed modifications to its proposals in the western part of the city. The Council proposed combining the north-western part of the current Beckfield ward from the unparished urban area with four rural parishes to the west of it to form a single-member ward. Officers from the Commission having visited the area, we were of the view that this would not provide for a satisfactory reflection of local communities. We therefore proposed retaining the north-western part of the unparished Beckfield ward within a ward in the urban area of the city.

71 However, as a consequence of this modification, we noted that the level of representation between the parished area, the unparished city area to the east of the River Ouse and the unparished city area to the west of the river would not be balanced. Under a 46-member council the parished area would be entitled to 20.3 councillors initially (20.6 by 2005), the unparished area to the east of the river would be entitled to 11.9 councillors (11.8 by 2005) and the unparished area to the west of the river would be entitled to 13.8 councillors (13.6 by 2005). However, under the Council's scheme the unparished area to the west of the river would only be allocated 13 councillors, which would mean that it would be slightly under-represented both initially and by 2005. In view of this imbalance of representation between the three areas of the council, and given that the area to the west of the river would be entitled to additional representation, we considered alternative council sizes. We concluded that if an additional councillor were allocated to the unparished area to the west of the river, providing for an overall council size of 47 members (a reduction of six from the existing council size), a better balance of representation across the City Council area would be achieved.

72 Under a 47-member council size the parished area would be entitled to 20.7 councillors (21 by 2005), the unparished area to the west of the river would merit 14.1 councillors (13.9 by 2005) and the unparished eastern area would merit 12.2 councillors (12.1 by 2005); under our modified 47-member scheme these areas would be allocated 21, 14, and 12 councillors respectively. Therefore, in view of the improvement to the balance of representation and the fact that each area of the council would be represented by the appropriate number of councillors, and 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 47 members.

73 At Stage Three, there was a mixed reception to our proposed reduction in council size. The Council, the local Conservative Associations, a number of parish councils and a local resident supported a reduced council size, although the Liberal Democrat Group, Liberal Democrat Federation and the Green Party reiterated their Stage One concerns, contending that it would result in less accountability. We have considered the representations received but, on balance, remain of the view that our proposed council size of 47 would provide for the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria, particularly as it would, on the whole, not involve combining rural and parished areas with the urban, unparished areas. A number of respondents specifically stated that they supported our draft recommendations on the

basis that they would not combine parished and unparished areas. We are therefore content to confirm our proposed council size of 47 as final.

Ward Names

74 In its Stage One submission the Council did not provide ward names for any of its proposed wards, which were simply numbered for identification. It further stated that “it is hoped that the Council will be given the opportunity in Stage Three to propose suitable ward names”. The city-wide schemes submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group and a local resident included names for all of their proposed wards, and a number of respondents suggested names for individual wards.

75 As outlined above, we based our draft recommendations on the City Council’s scheme. However, given that it did not submit any proposed ward names, we gave careful consideration to all the representations received and we put forward our own proposed ward names for consultation which, in our view, reflected local community identities. We sought to incorporate locally derived proposals where possible, while also having regard to existing ward names and the names of the parishes which have been grouped to form wards where relevant. We welcomed views on all our proposed ward names during Stage Three.

76 At Stage Three the majority of respondents accepted our proposed ward names, however, alternative names for some of our proposed wards were put forward. Dunnington Parish Council proposed that our proposed Dunnington ward be named Derwent ward. Three local residents proposed alternative ward names in the unparished area which included Micklegate ward being named Dringhouses or Dringhouses & Woodthorpe ward and Knavesmire ward being named either Micklegate, Millthorpe or Scarcroft ward. One of these residents also suggested simplified ward names in the parished area including West York, North West York, North East York and South York. Two local residents wished to retain the current ward names of Walmgate, Micklegate, Bootham and Monk on historical grounds, as these names related to the “ancient roads leading out of the city and their ancient gateways (called ‘bars’)”.

77 We have noted all the alternative ward names put forward by respondents and have taken into account the reasons put forward to support these proposals. In the light of this further evidence and local preferences we are therefore proposing to modify three of our proposed ward names, as detailed later in this report.

Parish Administrative Boundaries

78 During Stage One a number of parish councils and other respondents suggested slight modifications to parish boundaries, in order to address a number of minor boundary anomalies. The joint parish council of Strensall and Towthorpe parishes proposed that the two should be amalgamated into one parish (on the basis that they are currently administered as one).

79 In our draft recommendations report we stated that we have no power to recommend changes to parish administrative boundaries as part of this PER. Nevertheless, given that, where they exist, parishes form the building blocks for district wards, we felt it appropriate to draw attention

to the fact that, during the course of our review, a number of parish boundary anomalies had been identified.

80 We further stated that under the provisions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, two-tier district councils and unitary authorities may undertake reviews of the parish arrangements in their areas and make recommendations to the Secretary of State. When we have completed our PER of the City of York, we believed there would be considerable benefit in the City of York Council conducting such a review.

81 At Stage Three a number of comments were made regarding external parish boundaries. Stockton-on-the-Forest Parish Council suggested that the whole of Hopgrove Lane South be included in Strensall ward, York Liberal Democrat Federation proposed that the boundary in the southern part of Haxby parish be aligned with the ring-road and Bishopthorpe Parish Council and a local resident proposed that the area containing Middlethorpe Grange should be included in Bishopthorpe ward.

82 As outlined in our draft recommendations report, we have no power to recommend changes to parish administrative boundaries as part of this PER. However, we remain of the view that it is appropriate to draw attention to the fact that, during the course of our review, a number of parish boundary anomalies have been identified, and that there would be considerable benefit in the City of York Council conducting a parish review, under the provisions of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, when we have completed our PER.

Electoral Arrangements

83 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the city-wide schemes from the City of York Council, the Liberal Democrat Council Group, York Labour Party and a local resident. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

84 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the City Council's proposals and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, and given that our proposed increase to its proposed council size would not have too great an impact on the level of electoral equality that would be secured under its proposals in the unparished area to the east of the River Ouse and in the majority of the parished area, we concluded that we should base our recommendations on the City Council's scheme. Even under a 47-member council size we considered that the majority of this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, in order to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we moved away from the City Council's proposals in the western half of the city council area and in one area to the north of the city.

85 At Stage Three the City Council stated that it supported our draft recommendations with the exception of "those recommendations concerning the wards referred to as York Rural West and Bishopthorpe". However, it further stated that it supported "any other minor boundary changes

as the Local Government [Commission] deems appropriate and convenient in the light of representations made to them”.

86 The Council submitted detailed argument as to why it did not support our proposals on the western side of the city, expressing the view that it did not agree with our assertion that the parished and unparished areas should not be combined within the same ward, stating that it “did not and does not see any merit or dismerit in linking them”. It argued that “generally on a practical level balancing parished and unparished areas does not work”. In addition, it did not agree with the way we had sub-divided the city into three broad areas (ie the unparished area to the east of the river, unparished area to the west of the river and the parished area) to obtain a balance of representation across the city. It contended that this methodology could be extended further to show that we had slightly over-represented the parished area to the west of the River Ouse and under-represented the parished area to the east of the river. As a consequence the Council broadly reiterated its support for its own proposals for the western part of the city, proposing that Copmanthorpe parish should remain in a two-member ward with the parishes of Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis and that part of the north-western part of the proposed unparished Acomb ward should be linked with the remainder of the parished Rural West York ward to form a two-member ward.

87 However, having considered all the representations received, we have noted that almost all of the parish councils that the Council proposed including in its revised Rural West York ward opposed its proposal and expressed support for our proposed three-member Rural West York ward. We also noted that while the parishes of Copmanthorpe and Acaster Malbis stated that they would prefer to remain in a two-member ward with Bishopthorpe parish, Bishopthorpe Parish Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. Furthermore, Councillor Hopton, Poppleton Ward Residents’ Association and the Chairman of Poppleton Ward Residents’ Association also supported our proposals in this area.

88 We have therefore had to carefully consider all the representations received and all the possible ward configurations in this western area. However, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations which, in our view, achieve the best balance between securing electoral equality, reflecting the identities and interests of local communities and providing for identifiable boundaries (therefore providing for effective and convenient local government). We remain of the view that the parished area should not be combined with the urban unparished area and have noted that our proposed Rural West York has, on balance, received notable local support. We have also noted that some evidence has been submitted to say that community links between the composite areas of the ward do already exist. We therefore propose confirming our proposed Rural West York and Bishopthorpe wards as final, albeit with one very minor boundary modification, detailed later in this report. Given the high level of support for our draft recommendations in the remainder of the parished area we propose confirming them as final, albeit with one ward name change.

89 Elsewhere in the city, we have carefully considered all the representations received during Stage Three and have noted that there have been a large number of well-argued, detailed submissions, the majority of which put forward modifications to our proposed boundaries in the unparished urban area. These have lead us to reconsider a number of our proposed boundaries and have resulted in us putting forward a higher number of modifications than would usually be

expected. However, we are of the view that sufficient evidence has been put forward to suggest that these modifications would receive a high level of local support, while securing a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations.

90 We have noted that both the York Liberal Democrat Federation and the Green Party reiterated support for schemes put forward at Stage One that were based on significantly larger council sizes to our draft recommendations. Given that we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendation that City of York Council's electoral arrangements should be based on a council size of 47 members, it has not been possible to adopt either of these schemes as they are not compatible with our proposed council size. However, we have also noted that the Liberal Democrat Council Group and the Green Party submitted specific boundary modifications to our proposed scheme in the unparished area. We are of the view that these modifications address a number of concerns and proposals put forward by many local respondents at Stage Three and therefore propose adopting the Liberal Democrat Group's modifications in the western and north-eastern parts of the city and the Green Party's modifications in the south-eastern part of the city.

91 For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

(a) **The parished area**

- Upper Poppleton and Copmanthorpe wards
- Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake wards
- Dunnington & Kexby, Strensall, Osbaldwick and Heworth Without wards
- Huntington & New Earswick, Haxby, Wigginton, Rawcliffe & Skelton and Clifton Without wards

(b) **York city (the unparished area)**

- Bishophill, Knavesmire, Micklegate and Foxwood wards
- Westfield, Acomb, Beckfield and Holgate wards
- Guildhall, Fishergate and Walmgate wards
- Clifton, Bootham, Monk and Heworth wards

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

The parished area

Upper Poppleton and Copmanthorpe wards

93 These two two-member wards are situated in the parished area to the west and south-west of the city. Upper Poppleton ward comprises the parishes of Askham Bryan, Askham Richard, Hessay, Nether Poppleton, Rufforth and Upper Poppleton. The number of electors per councillor in Upper Poppleton ward is currently 12 per cent below the city average (11 per cent below by 2005). Copmanthorpe ward (comprising the parishes of Acaster Malbis, Bishopthorpe and Copmanthorpe) is currently under-represented by 20 per cent (16 per cent by 2005).

94 At Stage One City of York Council proposed a new single-member Ward Ten comprising the parishes of Upper Poppleton and Nether Poppleton. It contended that “the two villages are very closely linked both demographically and by communities”. It also proposed a new single-member Ward Eleven comprising the parishes of Rufforth, Hessay, Askham Bryan, Askham Richard and the north-western part of the current Beckfield ward from the unparished city area. It argued that the parished area was “too small to stand alone in a single-member ward” and therefore proposed that “there needs to be an intake of voters from the city area” in order to secure good electoral equality. It stated that “whilst this [proposal] results in a mix of urban and rural communities, the number of voters in each is very similar, ensuring that the views of one part of the ward would not swamp the other”.

95 The Council further proposed a slight modification to the current Copmanthorpe ward. It proposed a two-member Ward Fourteen, comprising the current Copmanthorpe ward and the Middlethorpe area from the southern part of the current Knavesmire ward from the unparished city area. It argued that “Middlethorpe has a strong sense of community identity with Bishopthorpe using the facilities provided by the village”. Under a council size of 46, the number of electors per councillor in the Council’s proposed Wards Ten, Eleven and Fourteen would be 2 per cent above, equal to and 5 per cent above the city average initially (5 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 2 per cent above by 2005).

96 Nether Poppleton Parish Council was of the view that a two-member ward combining the parishes of Upper Poppleton, Nether Poppleton and Rufforth “would be numerically correct and probably acceptable”, but also expressed support for a ward covering all the parishes on the west side of the city area. Hessay Parish Council objected to the Council’s proposal to include the parish in a ward with part of the unparished, urban area, as it believed that this would “undermine [its] rural status”. It stated that it would prefer to retain its association with the current Upper Poppleton ward, but also suggested that the ward could be enlarged to include the parish of Skelton and be represented by two members, contending that this would maintain “the rural integrity of the villages”.

97 Rufforth Parish Council wished to avoid combining rural and urban areas, contending that “the new ward boundaries should not cross the old city boundaries”. It supported the retention of the current two-member Upper Poppleton ward, but proposed that it be renamed Poppleton & Rufforth ward to “reflect the area of the ward better”. However, it also suggested, “should there be a need for change”, a three-member Rural West York ward comprising the existing Upper Poppleton ward and Copmanthorpe parish. Askham Bryan Parish Council opposed the Council’s proposal to include it in a ward with part of the unparished, urban area. It stated that it wished to remain in a rural ward. Askham Richard Parish Council also opposed this proposal, stating that it did not want to be included in a ward with part of the urban area, contending that “it would difficult for one person to represent two widely differing views”. It stated that if the current Upper Poppleton ward were retained it would be “a more natural ward, keeping us wholly rural”.

98 Copmanthorpe Parish Council did not consider “that there needs to be any change to the present parish of Copmanthorpe”. Bishopthorpe Parish Council acknowledged that it “would be difficult to say [it] would object” to retaining the current Copmanthorpe ward, but expressed a preference for single-member wards in the parished area.

99 City Councillor Hopton opposed the Council's proposal to combine part of the urban, unparished area with parishes to the west of the city, arguing that their "interests, issues and concerns are very different". She suggested that Upper Poppleton ward could be linked with Skelton parish and become a two-member ward to secure good electoral equality while being an entirely rural ward. She also stated that if alternative proposals were put forward she "would request that we remain a wholly rural ward".

100 The Chairman of Nether Poppleton Parish Council proposed retaining the status quo. However, he also expressed a preference for a 51-member council, comprising all three-member wards, stating that a three-member ward in the western part of the rural area would reflect local community identities. He expressed opposition to combining urban and rural areas and also objected to proposals which would split parishes between wards.

101 Poppleton Ward Residents' Association proposed retaining the current Upper Poppleton ward, although it suggested that the ward should be named Poppleton & Rufforth ward. It opposed any combination of parished and unparished areas, suggesting that it would support a larger ward comprising all of the parishes to the west of the city, which would keep the rural area separate from the urban area. It proposed that this new ward could be named Rural West York.

102 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One. As outlined earlier in this chapter, we noted the local opposition to combining parts of the parished area with parts of the unparished city area. While we based our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme, we proposed boundary modifications in this part of the city council area in order to secure a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities while securing reasonable electoral equality.

103 We proposed that the part of the current Beckfield ward that the Council proposed combining with the parished area to the west of it (in a new Ward Eleven) should be retained in a ward within the unparished city area. As a consequence of this modification, the unparished city area to the west of the River Ouse would be entitled to additional representation. We therefore proposed that it should be represented by 14 councillors, rather than 13 as put forward by the City Council, which would result in an overall council size of 47 members.

104 As a consequence of this modification, under a council size of 47, the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Ten and Fourteen would be 4 per cent above and 7 per cent above the city average initially (8 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2005). However, its proposed Ward Eleven would be over-represented by 48 per cent initially (50 per cent by 2005). We were of the view that this was an unacceptable level of electoral imbalance and therefore considered alternative combinations of parishes to form new wards in order to secure better electoral equality across this area as a whole.

105 We noted the suggestion to retain the current two-member Upper Poppleton ward unchanged. However, under a council size of 47, it would be over-represented by 22 per cent initially (21 per cent by 2005), which we considered to be an unacceptable level of electoral imbalance. Similarly, if the parishes of Nether Poppleton, Upper Poppleton and Rufforth were grouped to form a two-member ward (as suggested by Nether Poppleton Parish Council), this ward would be over-represented by 35 per cent initially (34 per cent by 2005) under a council size

of 47; if it were represented by only one councillor it would be under-represented by 29 per cent initially (32 per cent by 2005).

106 We also considered the proposal that the parishes of Upper and Nether Poppleton could be linked with Skelton parish to form a new ward. However, we noted that while the parishes are geographically close they are separated by the River Ouse and there are no direct road links between the two areas.

107 Therefore, in the absence of any other viable alternatives, we put forward for consultation a new three-member Rural West York ward, as suggested by Rufforth Parish Council and Poppleton Ward Residents' Association (and broadly supported by Nether Poppleton Parish Council and the Chair of Nether Poppleton Parish Council). Under a council size of 47, the number of electors per councillor in the new Rural West York ward (comprising the current Upper Poppleton ward and the parish of Copmanthorpe) would be 11 per cent below the city average both initially and by 2005. We were of the view that this proposal would secure the best balance currently available between securing electoral equality and reflecting the identities and interests of local communities. The electoral imbalance achieved, while higher than we would ideally seek, is acceptable given that the proposed ward would avoid the inclusion of the unparished city area in a predominantly rural, wholly parished ward, therefore providing for a better reflection of community identities and more identifiable boundaries than the Council's proposals.

108 As a consequence of our proposed Rural West York ward, we also modified the Council's proposed Ward Fourteen. We therefore put forward a new single-member Bishopthorpe ward comprising the parishes of Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis with the Middlethorpe area from the current Knavesmire ward. We noted that this proposal would include part of the unparished area in a ward with two parishes, however, we were of the view that this would not be detrimental to the community identity of the proposed ward, as Middlethorpe is separated from the majority of the urban area by the racecourse and the River Ouse and, in our view, shares more community links with Bishopthorpe. We proposed that this ward should be named Bishopthorpe ward, given that the parish of Bishopthorpe contains the largest settlement in this area. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed single-member Bishopthorpe ward would be 3 per cent above the city average initially (equal to the average by 2005).

109 At Stage Three the City of York opposed our proposed Rural West York and Bishopthorpe wards. It argued against our reasoning that unparished and parished areas should not be combined in the same wards, and as such did not believe that this was sufficient reason to adjust the balance of representation between the parished area and the unparished areas to the west and east of the river. It proposed that Copmanthorpe parish should be included in Bishopthorpe ward which should be represented by two councillors and that the north-western part of the proposed Acomb ward (from the unparished area) be included in the remainder of the proposed Rural West York ward.

110 Councillor Hopton, Poppleton Ward Residents' Association, the Chairman of Poppleton Ward Residents' Association, Rufforth Parish Council, Askham Richard Parish Council and Hessay Parish Council all supported our proposed three-member Rural West York ward, opposing the Council's alternative proposal to include part of the urban unparished area in a

revised two-member Rural West York ward. A number of arguments were put forward to support our proposals including the fact that this would avoid the combination of parished, more rural areas in a ward with the urban, unparished area.

111 Councillor Hopton stated that the parish councils in the Upper Poppleton ward “welcomed the Commission’s proposal for a new Rural West York ward, pleased that the Commission had understood their concerns”. Poppleton Ward Residents Association stated that the inclusion of Copmanthorpe Parish in the Rural West York ward would “enhance [its] position as far as local authority and housing association tenants are concerned”. It also argued that “the rural areas have nothing in common and no links with the Beckfield area of York”, contending that, to counter some suggestions of Copmanthorpe residents, “children from the existing Upper Poppleton ward who live in Askham Bryan and Askham Richard also attend Tadcaster schools”. The Chairman of Poppleton Ward Residents Association contended that “a strong historical link exists between Copmanthorpe and the Poppletons” stating that from 1974 to 1996, the parishes of Askham Bryan and Askham Richard were part of Selby District Council with Copmanthorpe parish. He also contended that further links exist between the two areas including the local police and community liaison group which covers the whole of Copmanthorpe and the Upper Poppleton ward and the Ainsty Parishes Group which comprises the parishes of Copmanthorpe, Askham Richard, Askham Bryan, Rufforth and the Poppletons (both of which meet quarterly to discuss issues common to all the villages).

112 Bishopthorpe Parish Council fully supported our proposed single-member Bishopthorpe ward, contending that it secured excellent electoral equality. It supported the inclusion of the Middlethorpe area in the revised ward, but suggested that Middlethorpe Grange should also be included in the ward, suggesting that the ward’s northern boundary should follow from the river to Bishopthorpe Road, then Green Lane to Sim Baulk Lane, before running north of the A64 to the interchange of the A64 and the A1036 before running southwards to the parish boundary. The proposal to include Middlethorpe Grange in Bishopthorpe ward was supported by the residents concerned who stated that they shared community links with Bishopthorpe. The Chairman of Bishopthorpe Parish Council suggested that some local residents of Copmanthorpe who did not welcome the changes to their area “were older and recollected on their association with Bishopthorpe by going to the library and using the shops” and contended that “over time it has changed and these facilities are available in Copmanthorpe”, suggesting that “the majority of Copmanthorpe residents do not feel the same association [with Bishopthorpe]”. He also contended that some local residents’ responses to our draft proposals “were not made with the benefit of reading your full recommendation”.

113 Copmanthorpe Parish Council initially stated that it was pleased to be included in the proposed Rural West York ward as it would avoid the parish being linked with part of the urban City of York area. However, it subsequently submitted a further representation stating that a number of residents had “expressed ... [that] they would much prefer to stay more or less as we are, ie in a ward based on Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe”. Acaster Malbis Parish Council opposed our single-member Bishopthorpe ward, expressing support for the retention of the current two-member Bishopthorpe ward (with the inclusion of the Middlethorpe area).

114 Councillor Galvin also proposed that the current two-member Bishopthorpe ward should be retained, arguing that Copmanthorpe shares no links with the Poppleton area. He also

contended that the current Upper Poppleton ward should be retained, stating that a high electoral variance was justified given that the ward covers a large area and as it would help to keep its rurality. He further contended that our proposal would transfer Copmanthorpe into a different parliamentary constituency which would lead to confusion for electors, a point that was also raised by a local resident. Councillor Galvin also proposed that Copmanthorpe ward be named York South West Rural ward, or Bishopthorpe with Copmanthorpe & Acaster Malbis ward.

115 Six local residents also opposed our proposal to include Copmanthorpe parish in the Rural West York ward, also proposing that the existing two-member Bishopthorpe ward be retained. Another local resident opposed our proposed Rural West York ward. He proposed that the parishes of Nether Poppleton and Upper Poppleton form a single-member The Poppletons ward and also argued that Copmanthorpe should remain with Bishopthorpe in a two-member ward.

116 As outlined earlier, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations in this area. In the light of local support, and given that our scheme would reflect the identities and interests of local communities and secure identifiable boundaries, we remain of the view that the parished area to the west of the city should not be combined with part of the urban unparished area. In the light of this, and having reconsidered all the alternative options in this area, we remain of the view that our proposed Rural West York ward would provide for the best balance available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have also noted that this proposal received the majority of support from local respondents. However, we acknowledge that there is some local opposition to the inclusion of Copmanthorpe in our proposed Rural West York ward, however, we consider that there are some community links that already exist in the area, including the police and community liaison group and the Ainsty Parishes Group.

117 We have also noted that two respondents contended that our proposal would result in Copmanthorpe being included in a different parliamentary constituency. However, as outlined in our *Guidance*, we acknowledge that in devising electoral schemes it may be necessary to recommend ward boundaries which do not coincide with existing parliamentary constituency boundaries, but we are of the view that this is not a sufficient reason to justify modifying our proposals in this area. The new district wards created by the periodic electoral review will form the “building blocks” for future reviews of parliamentary constituencies.

118 We have noted that Bishopthorpe Parish Council proposed that Middlethorpe Grange should be included in the proposed Bishopthorpe ward, a proposal which is supported by the local residents concerned. We agree that, given Middlethorpe Grange’s location on the outskirts of Bishopthorpe, these residents share closer links with Bishopthorpe. We have considered the proposed boundary put forward by Bishopthorpe Parish Council (as detailed above), however, we are of the view that an even more identifiable boundary would be secured by utilising the A64 ring road as the proposed Bishopthorpe ward’s northern boundary, and therefore propose modifying our proposed Bishopthorpe ward accordingly. This modification will have a negligible affect on electoral equality.

119 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Rural West York ward (comprising the current Upper Poppleton ward and the parish of Copmanthorpe) and single-member Bishopthorpe ward (comprising the parishes of

Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis, the Middlethorpe area from the current Knavesmire ward and the Middlethorpe Grange area from the current Micklegate ward) would be 11 per cent below and 3 per cent above the city average initially (11 per cent below and equal to the average by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake wards

120 These three single-member wards are situated in the parished area to the south-east of the city. Fulford ward (comprising the parish of Fulford) is currently over-represented by 19 per cent. However, by 2005 it is forecast to be under-represented by 13 per cent as a consequence of housing development. Heslington ward (comprising the parish of Heslington) is currently under-represented by 27 per cent (22 per cent by 2005). Wheldrake ward comprises the parishes of Deighton, Elvington, Naburn and Wheldrake. The number of electors per councillor in Wheldrake ward is currently 11 per cent above the city average (12 per cent above by 2005).

121 The City Council proposed retaining the existing single-member wards of Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake unchanged, identifying the wards as Ward One, Ward Two and Ward Three respectively. Under a council size of 46 the Council's proposed Ward One would be over-represented by 30 per cent initially. However, this level of electoral imbalance is expected to improve to be only 2 per cent below the city average by 2005 as a consequence of housing development. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Two and Three would be 10 per cent above and 4 per cent below the city average initially (6 per cent above and 3 per cent below by 2005).

122 Heslington Parish Council wished to retain the existing arrangements affecting the parish. It argued that any changes would "divide the community ... and undermine our ability to act as an effective parish council". A local resident was of the view that "there is no clear reason why the University should remain forever part of this essentially rural ward [Heslington]", suggesting that the University area should be linked with "adjoining urban areas" and that Heslington village should "join adjoining rural areas and/or the neighbouring Badger Hill district".

123 Elvington Parish Council supported the Council's proposal to retain the current single-member Wheldrake ward unchanged, arguing that this would be "in the best interests of representation of the people".

124 We considered all the representations received at Stage One and noted that there was local support for retaining the three current single-member wards in this area unchanged, as proposed by the Council in its Stage One submission. Under the existing council size all three of these wards would be notably under-represented by 2005, however, under a council size of 47, the number of electors per councillor in the single-member wards of Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake would be 28 per cent below, 13 per cent above and 2 per cent below the city average respectively (equal to, 8 per cent above and 1 per cent below the city average by 2005).

125 Given the good electoral equality, reflection of local communities and identifiable boundaries that would be secured, we therefore retained the current single-member wards of Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake unchanged. We also retained the existing Fulford and Heslington ward names as they reflect the names of the parishes that comprise the wards. With

regard to Wheldrake ward we retained the current name as it reflects the largest settlement contained within the ward; however, we welcomed views on our proposals during Stage Three.

126 At Stage Three the Council, the Conservative Constituency Association and Elvington Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. Wheldrake Parish Council supported our proposal to retain the current Wheldrake ward as the grouping of the four parishes within the ward “best represents the electorate of this area”. It argued that “rural and urban areas should be represented separately, so that like voice can be heard with like” further contending that “in this way it will reflect the identity and interests of our local community, and secure effective and convenient local government”. It also stated that existing ward names should be used.

127 Fulford Parish Council supported our proposed Fulford ward, stating that it was “entirely in agreement with the recommendations ... and in particular that Fulford should remain a single-member ward with the boundaries and name unchanged”.

128 The Chair of Heslington Parish Council responded to the comments made by two respondents at Stage One that “there are no local villagers on the parish council”, stating that “all nine of [Heslington’s] Parish Councillors live within half a mile of the centre of the village, and most live even closer than that”. She contended that the comment made at Stage One was inaccurate and “gives a false impression”. Heslington Village Trust supported the retention of the current Heslington ward unchanged. It also supported the proposal that no change be made to the parish electoral arrangements and that the parish should not be warded. It acknowledged that the University is the “biggest threat to the character and integrity of the village” but stated that “the Parish Council, Village Trust and University have established a regular series of meetings to discuss matters of mutual concern” contending that these have been “successful and fruitful”. It argued that “any changes to ward boundaries that excluded the University would inevitably weaken this relationship, and lead to the adversarial relationships of the past that we have all worked hard to overcome”.

129 A local resident, “on the behalf of many villagers”, expressed disappointment that Heslington parish’s current arrangements are to remain unchanged (ie not warded). She also questioned the Council’s electorate forecasts for the parish, contending that 232 new student rooms are planned to be built within the parish and further arguing that the university expects its student population to increase by approximately 2,000 over the next five years, and that many will be accommodated within the university campus. She also contended that “most permanent residents” felt a close affiliation to the Badger Hill area, contending that this is within the ecclesiastical parish serving Heslington.

130 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three and have noted that there is local support for our proposed Fulford and Wheldrake wards. In the light of this local support, and given that they would secure good electoral equality by 2005, we therefore propose confirming them as final.

131 We have noted that a local resident has expressed concern over our proposal to retain the existing Heslington ward unchanged. She also queried the electorate forecasts for the parish, however, as detailed earlier in this chapter, we remain satisfied that they represent the best forecasts currently available. We have also noted the representation made by the Heslington

Village Trust that the Parish Council, the Village Trust and the University meet regularly to discuss matters of “mutual concern”. Having considered all the representations received, and in the absence of any viable alternative being put forward, we propose endorsing our proposed Heslington ward as final.

132 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed single-member wards of Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake would be 28 per cent below, 13 per cent above and 2 per cent below the city average initially (equal to, 8 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Dunnington & Kexby, Strensall, Osbaldwick and Heworth Without wards

133 These four wards are situated in the parished area to the north-east and east of the city. The single-member Dunnington & Kexby ward comprises the parishes of Dunnington and Kexby. The two-member Strensall ward comprises the parishes of Earswick, Holtby, Murton, Stockton-on-the-Forest, Strensall and Towthorpe. The number of electors per councillor in the existing Dunnington & Kexby and Strensall wards is 5 per cent above and 11 per cent above the city average respectively (1 per cent above and 15 per cent above by 2005). The single-member Osbaldwick ward (comprising the parish of Osbaldwick) is currently over-represented by 17 per cent. However, by 2005 it is forecast to be under-represented by 5 per cent as a result of housing development. The single-member Heworth Without ward (comprising Heworth Without parish) is currently the most over-represented ward in the city council area with an electoral variance of 29 per cent (32 per cent by 2005).

134 In this area the Council proposed modifications to all four of the existing wards. It proposed a new single-member Ward Four comprising the parishes of Dunnington, Kexby and Holtby, arguing that Holtby has no community identity with the “far removed” villages in the remainder of Strensall ward. It also proposed a new single-member Ward Five comprising the parishes of Osbaldwick and Murton. It argued that Murton parish has “a stronger link to the village of Osbaldwick” than with the “far removed villages” in the remainder of the current Strensall ward. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council’s proposed Wards Four and Five would be 5 per cent below and 17 per cent below the city average initially (8 per cent below and 1 per cent above by 2005).

135 As a consequence of its proposed Wards Four and Five, the Council proposed a new two-member Ward Thirteen comprising the remainder of the current Strensall ward (the parishes of Strensall, Towthorpe, Earswick and Stockton-on-the-Forest). It argued that the ward would be “more compact and does not lose community identity”. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council’s proposed Ward Thirteen would be 11 per cent below the city average initially (7 per cent below by 2005).

136 The Council also proposed a new single-member Ward Six comprising the parish of Heworth Without and an area to the east of Malton Road and Hempland Drive, from the current Monk ward. It argued that such a proposal (which would include part of the unparished area in a ward with part of the parished area) was justified because, under a 46-member council, “without this adjustment there would be a voter deficit in the [current Heworth Without] ward of 38 per

cent in 2000 rising to 41 per cent by 2005". It further contended that "the urban area is continuous across the proposed adjustment and is acceptable from a community point of view". Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Ward Six would be 1 per cent above the city average initially (4 per cent below by 2005).

137 Strensall & Towthorpe Parish Council was of the view that "the present Strensall ward is geographically too large". It opposed any proposal that would split the two parishes, stating that it would prefer the parishes of Strensall and Towthorpe to form a ward of their own. However, it also proposed that the two parishes could be linked to Earswick parish or New Earswick parish and Haxby North East parish ward to create a new ward, with a third, less favoured option, which would incorporate Stockton-on-the-Forest parish. It also suggested that the "name of Strensall is somewhat misleading when it in fact covers six distinct and widely separated parish areas".

138 A local resident commented on the current Osbaldwick and Heworth Without wards and the boundary between the two parishes. He stated that the Meadlands (and adjoining roads) have no direct road connection with the centre of Osbaldwick and that residents in that area do not use facilities in Osbaldwick village. He contended that his area should be "absorbed somehow into the City of York" but not into Heworth Without ward "which has no village centre and is just a collection of houses".

139 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, and were of the view that the Council's proposals would secure an improved level of electoral equality and a slightly better reflection of local community identities. We noted the local resident's comments regarding the current parish of Osbaldwick and whether the Meadlands area should be included within a different ward to the remainder of the parish. While we were aware that it is not directly linked to the rest of the residential area in the parish, we were also aware that a significant amount of new housing development is forecast for the parish over the five years to 2005. In this case, we were of the view that any proposed parish warding at this time may not facilitate, or may even be detrimental to, the appropriate reflection of the parish's electorate in the future and therefore we did not propose any parish warding at the present time.

140 Under our proposed council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Four, Five and Thirteen would be 3 per cent below, 15 per cent below and 9 per cent below the city average respectively (6 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 5 per cent below by 2005). We adopted the Council's proposed Wards Four, Five and Thirteen as part of our draft recommendations, however, we proposed that the three wards should be named Dunnington, Osbaldwick and Strensall respectively, after the largest settlements contained within each ward. We welcomed views on our proposals during Stage Three.

141 We noted that the Council's proposed Ward Six would combine Heworth Without parish with part of the unparished area to its west. While we acknowledged that this combination goes against our proposal not to combine the parished and unparished areas, we were of the view that in this case it would not have such an adverse effect on community identity. Officers from the Commission having visited the area, we were of the view that the residential area in the western part of Heworth Without parish is very similar in nature to those properties in the eastern part of the current Monk ward and form part of the same community; there are also currently some roads

(including Whitby Avenue and Algarth Road) which are split between the unparished and parished areas.

142 Therefore, given the good electoral equality that would be secured, we adopted the Council's proposed Ward Six, albeit with one minor modification to secure a more identifiable boundary (which would not affect any electors). We proposed that the proposed ward's western boundary should be moved slightly further westwards to follow the centre of Malton Road and Stockton Lane. We also proposed that the ward should be named Heworth Without as the parish of that name forms the majority of the ward. Under a council size of 47, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed single-member Heworth Without ward would be 3 per cent above the city average initially (2 per cent below by 2005).

143 At Stage Three the Council and the Conservative Constituency Association supported our draft recommendations. Dunnington Parish Council supported our proposed single-member Dunnington ward, but suggested that it should be named Derwent ward as the River Derwent forms the eastern boundary of the proposed ward. Stockton-on-the-Forest Parish Council requested that the whole of Hopgrove Lane South be included in Strensall ward and not be divided as at present. A local resident opposed the proposal to link Murton parish in a ward with Osbaldwick parish, suggesting that as Murton parish has more in common with Stockton-on-the-Forest and Holtby parishes, which all have rural and farming links, they should form a single-member ward.

144 Heworth Without Parish Council agreed with our proposed Heworth Without ward, but suggested that Hempland School be incorporated into the ward as "most of the children attending the school live in the Heworth Without area". The Chair of Governors of Hempland Primary School also suggested that Hempland Primary School and grounds be included in Heworth Without ward, into which its main entrance leads. He also contended that "the community centre for Heworth Without is sited on land leased by the school" and that it would be more appropriate for it to be included in Heworth Without ward. A local resident questioned whether Heworth Without ward would be "viable" as a single-member ward and suggested that it be "included with Heworth [ward] to make a total of four councillors".

145 We have considered all the representations received at Stage Three and have noted that there is majority support for our draft recommendations in this area. Given this local support we therefore propose largely confirming our draft recommendations as final. However, we propose adopting Dunnington Parish Council's suggestion that our proposed Dunnington ward should be named Derwent ward as we agree that the River Derwent is an identifiable topographical feature in that area.

146 Furthermore, we have noted the proposals that Hempland Primary School should be included in Heworth Without ward as its main entrance leads into the ward and as the school serves this area. We note that this minor boundary modification would not affect any electors and agree that it would provide for a more identifiable boundary and more effective and convenient local government, and therefore propose adopting it as part of our final recommendations.

147 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed single-member Derwent, Heworth Without and Osbaldwick wards would be 3 per cent below,

3 per cent above and 15 per cent below the city average initially (6 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 3 per cent above by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed two-member Strensall ward would be 9 per cent below the city average initially (5 per cent below by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

Huntington & New Earswick, Haxby, Wigginton, Rawcliffe & Skelton and Clifton Without wards

148 These five wards are situated in the parished area to the north of the city. The three-member Huntington & New Earswick ward (comprising the parishes of Huntington and New Earswick) is currently under-represented by 18 per cent (15 per cent by 2005). The three-member Haxby ward (comprising the parish of Haxby) is currently over-represented by 9 per cent (13 per cent by 2005). The single-member Wigginton ward (comprising the parish of Wigginton) is currently under-represented by 13 per cent (8 per cent by 2005). The two-member Rawcliffe & Skelton ward comprises the parishes of Rawcliffe and Skelton. The number of electors per councillor in Rawcliffe & Skelton ward is 1 per cent below the city average (1 per cent above by 2005). The single-member Clifton Without ward comprises the parish of Clifton Without and is currently the most under-represented ward in the city council area, with the number of electors per councillor being 31 per cent above the city average (48 per cent above by 2005).

149 The City Council proposed dividing the current three-member Huntington & New Earswick ward into three single-member wards. It proposed a Ward Seven comprising that part of Huntington parish to the south of the dismantled railway/Stratford Way and to the east of Huntington Road (less an area around Brockfield Road). It further proposed a Ward Eight, comprising the northern part of Huntington parish (to the north of the dismantled railway), and a Ward Nine comprising that part of Huntington parish around Brockfield Road and New Earswick parish. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Seven, Eight and Nine would be 3 per cent below, 8 per cent above and 3 per cent above the city average respectively (2 per cent below, 2 per cent above and equal to the city average by 2005).

150 The Council proposed a three-member Ward Fifteen which would combine the parishes of Wigginton and Haxby in one ward. It argued that "the two parishes have a strong sense of community and merge into each other forming one large urban mass in the north of the council's area". Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Ward Fifteen would be 11 per cent above the city average initially (6 per cent above by 2005). The Council put forward a new three-member Ward Sixteen, comprising the parishes of Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Ward Sixteen would be 5 per cent below the city average initially (1 per cent above by 2005).

151 Huntington Parish Council was of the view that the current Huntington & New Earswick ward "was not ideal", proposing that the parish should "be paired with Old Earswick [parish] instead of New Earswick [parish] whilst still retaining three member representation". It also stated that it would "reject any notion of a divided Huntington".

152 Haxby Town Council stated that it supported the creation of a new three-member ward comprising the parishes of Haxby and Wigginton. It argued that this proposal “preserves the existing community links ... and is the only realistic expression of the realities on the ground”. It contended that “Haxby & Wigginton form a discrete and geographically distinct community which needs separate representation within the unitary authority to preserve and enhance its community spirit”. It also requested that the parish be divided in four new town council wards (two three-member wards and two four-member wards), but stated that it was “content to leave the delineation of these wards to the discretion of the Commission”. Wigginton Parish Council recognised that in order to address the under-representation in the current Wigginton ward it may need to be joined with other areas, stating that it felt that it had “more in common with wards, which like us, are [to] the north of the outer ring road”. It further contended that it “would be of more benefit to our residents” if the parish were linked “with our neighbours Haxby than those in the more urban communities such as Clifton or Rawcliffe”.

153 Skelton Parish Council supported the Council’s proposed three-member ward comprising the parishes of Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without. Rawcliffe Parish Council opposed the combination of urban and rural areas to form wards. It also expressed its support for the Council’s proposal for a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without. Clifton Without Parish Council argued that the population of its area has increased considerably since the last review, and that added to this “is the number of larger planning permissions given for housing development, some of which is already proceeding”. It suggested that “serious consideration be given to the increase in the representation of [the] parish” in order to address the under-representation that currently exists in the ward.

154 York Liberal Democrat Federation opposed the proposal to split Huntington parish between three wards, arguing that it would be “socially divisive” and that such a split of the parish would result in it being divided between three parliamentary constituencies. Haxby & Wigginton Branch Liberal Democrats were of the view that the creation of a new ward comprising the parishes of Haxby and Wigginton could be justified as “there is sufficient communal identity between the two parishes”. They also stated that there are well-established links between the two areas which have “clearly identifiable communities”.

155 We considered all the representations received in this area at Stage One. While we acknowledged that the Council’s proposal to divide the current Huntington & New Earswick ward into three single-member wards would secure good electoral equality, we were of the view that it would not provide for a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities than the current arrangements, nor would it secure more identifiable boundaries. We also noted the opposition to the Council’s proposals in this area, particularly from Huntington Parish Council, which did not wish the parish to be split between three wards. Therefore we retained the existing three-member Huntington & New Earswick ward unchanged, as it would secure good electoral equality under a council size of 47, with the number of electors per councillor being 5 per cent above the city average initially (2 per cent above by 2005).

156 We also considered the Council’s proposed Wards Fifteen and Sixteen and were of the view that they would provide for the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, while also receiving support from local interested parties. In order to reflect the parishes which comprise the proposed new wards, we put forward two new ward names for consultation. We

proposed that the Council's proposed Ward Fifteen should be named Haxby & Wigginton ward, and that its proposed Ward Sixteen should be named Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without ward. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in the proposed three-member Haxby & Wigginton and Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without wards would be 14 per cent above and 3 per cent below the city average initially (9 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2005).

157 At Stage Three the Council, the Conservative Constituency Association and Skelton Parish Council supported our draft recommendations. The York Liberal Democrat Federation stated that it welcomed the proposals concerning Haxby and Wigginton, and Huntington and New Earswick, contending that "they accord broadly with local opinion and maintain community cohesion and local interests". It also suggested that the southern boundary of Haxby South West parish ward should follow the ring-road. The Haxby & Wigginton Liberal Democrats stated that they were "pleased that Haxby and Wigginton have not been arbitrarily split up and merged with neighbouring areas", reiterating the view that "there is a sense of shared identity between the two communities, so a Haxby & Wigginton ward does make sense". However, they further stated that they were unhappy with "the continued reduction in the number of councillors serving our area", stating that prior to local government reorganisation in 1995 the area was represented by five district councillors, currently there are four, further reducing to three under our proposals, further contending that "the amount of constituent casework generated shows no sign of a similar reduction".

158 Wigginton Parish Council stated that it was "pleased to note that Wigginton will be paired with Haxby, with whom we already have a good working relationship and many shared facilities, rather than our other neighbouring parishes of Clifton or Skelton". However, it also stated that it was "concerned that there will no longer be a councillor solely representing the parish of Wigginton on the City of York Council".

159 A local resident opposed our proposal for Rawcliffe, stating that "Clifton Without is on the edge of the City Centre whilst Skelton is beyond the outer ring road in an almost rural area", and that as such our proposed Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without ward "does not correspond to a community". He suggested that "a more appropriate solution could be one based on amalgamating the 'rural' communities outside York's ring road to form wards" contending that "in Skelton's case, this would mean an amalgamation with Poppleton".

160 Having considered all the representations received we have noted that there is broad support for our draft recommendations in this area. We have noted the proposal that the southern boundary of Haxby parish should follow the ring-road, however, as outlined earlier, we are unable to propose changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of this review. Therefore, in the light of the local support, we propose confirming our draft recommendations in this area as final. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member wards of Haxby & Wigginton, Huntington & New Earswick and Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without would be 14 per cent above, 5 per cent above and 3 per cent below the city average initially (9 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

York city (the unparished area)

Bishophill, Knavesmire, Micklegate and Foxwood wards

161 These four wards are situated to the west of the River Ouse, in the central and south-western parts of the unparished York city area. The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Bishophill and Knavesmire wards is 5 per cent below and 8 per cent below the city average respectively (3 per cent below and 12 per cent below by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Micklegate ward and the three-member Foxwood ward is 2 per cent below and 7 per cent below the city average respectively (4 per cent below and 11 per cent below by 2005).

162 The Council proposed a new three-member Ward Twenty Four, comprising all of the current Knavesmire ward and the majority of the current Bishophill ward, less an area on the western side of the railway line, to the west of St Paul's Terrace, which would be included in its proposed Ward Twenty One (discussed later in this chapter). It also proposed a new three-member Ward Twenty Three, comprising the current Micklegate ward and the southern half of the current Foxwood ward, to the south of Otterwood Lane/Bellhouse Way. It argued that "the main community of Micklegate is in the south and immediately adjacent to Foxwood", and that "the two wards are strongly linked by residential roads". It further proposed that the remainder of the current Foxwood ward should form a new single-member Ward Twelve. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Twenty Four, Twenty Three and Twelve would be 1 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 6 per cent above the city average respectively (1 per cent above, 1 per cent below and equal to the city average by 2005).

163 A local resident suggested that the area to the north of Holgate Road and to the west of the railway line identifies with and should be transferred to Holgate ward. He also suggested that the area to the south of Dalton Terrace/Albermarle Road "identify as much with parts of Knavesmire and Micklegate wards as they do with Bishophill".

164 As detailed earlier in this report, we based our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme. However, in order to secure the best balance of representation across the city council area as a whole, we proposed that the unparished area to the west of the River Ouse should be allocated an additional councillor. In this area we noted that even under a council size of 47 the majority of the Council's proposals would secure the best balance between good electoral equality and reflecting local community identities. However, we were of the view that a number of minor amendments could be made to secure slightly more logical and more identifiable boundaries, some of which had been suggested by Stage One respondents.

165 We adopted the Council's proposed Ward Twenty Four, however, in order to secure a more logical western boundary we modified it in two places. In the northern part of the ward, we proposed that the boundary should follow the railway line so that area around St Paul's Terrace would not be included in the new ward and would remain in a ward to the west of the railway line, as suggested by a local resident (to be discussed later). In the central and southern parts of the ward we proposed that the boundary should follow the southern boundaries of the properties on the south side of Pulleyn Drive and that the remainder of the boundary should subsequently

follow the centre of Tadcaster Road before broadly following the western boundary of the racecourse (which is currently split between two wards). We further proposed that the ward should be named Knavesmire (around which the ward is focused). Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Knavesmire ward would be 2 per cent above the city average both initially and by 2005.

166 We further proposed adopting the Council's proposed Ward Twenty Three, albeit with the two boundary modifications mentioned above and two further amendments in order to secure slightly better boundaries. We modified the northern boundary of the Council's proposed ward so that Wenham Road, Teal Drive and the area to the north of the western end of Foxwood Lane were transferred into a revised two-member Westfield ward (to be discussed later). We proposed naming this ward Micklegate, given that the majority of the ward comprises the current Micklegate ward. Under a council size of 47, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Micklegate ward would be 1 per cent below the city average initially (3 per cent below by 2005).

167 As discussed earlier, we proposed that the unparished area to the west of the River Ouse should be represented by one additional councillor. In the light of this, and having considered the most appropriate area in which to accommodate this extra councillor, we proposed that the Council's proposed single-member Ward Twelve should be enlarged and be represented by two councillors. We were of the view that this would facilitate the creation of a revised ward pattern to the north of this area (as a consequence of our proposal to retain part of the current Beckfield ward within a ward in the unparished area), while also securing a slightly better reflection of local communities and good electoral equality.

168 We therefore proposed a revised two-member Westfield ward, comprising the remainder of the current Foxwood ward (to the north of our proposed Micklegate ward), and the southern part of the current Westfield ward to the south of Grange Lane/Gale Lane and Tudor Road/Kingsthorpe. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed two-member Westfield ward would be 3 per cent above the city average initially (3 per cent below by 2005). We proposed retaining the current Westfield ward name as we were of the view that it would best reflect the area covered by our revised ward.

169 At Stage Three the Council and the Conservative Constituency Association supported our draft recommendations.

170 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed modifications to all our proposed wards, which it considered would better reflect local communities and secure more identifiable boundaries while also securing good electoral equality. It proposed that all of the Foxwood community should be contained in one ward and as a consequence proposed an enlarged Westfield ward, to be represented by three councillors. It proposed that the enlarged ward should include all of the GC polling district to the south, and that the proposed ward's northern boundary should be moved northwards to follow the length of Wetherby Road, The Green and York Road. As a consequence, in order to secure better electoral equality, it proposed that the area to the south of St George's Place (the Whitehouse Estate) be transferred from our proposed Knavesmire ward into our proposed Micklegate ward. It also proposed that the eastern boundary of our proposed Micklegate ward should move eastwards to follow the existing boundary along the centre of the

Knivesmire so that residents of the Middlethorpe Estate (to the west of the Knivesmire) could remain in a ward committee dealing with the funding for this area which they use for recreational purposes. The Liberal Democrat Group also proposed that its revised Micklegate ward should be named Woodthorpe & Dringhouses. The number of electors per councillor in the Liberal Democrats' revised three-member Knivesmire ward and new three-member Woodthorpe & Dringhouses and Westfield wards would be 2 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 7 per cent above the city average initially (2 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent above by 2005).

171 Councillors Galloway and Reid contended that our proposals would spilt the Foxwood community between two wards and expressed support for the Liberal Democrat Group's modifications. Both Councillors supported the proposal that all of GC polling district should be included in an enlarged Westfield ward, with Councillor Galloway further stating that the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals were also supported by the Foxwood ward, Westfield ward and Acomb ward Liberal Democrat Associations. The Foxwood Ward Committee stated "that the Ward Committee believes that the whole of the present polling district GC (electors currently voting at Foxwood Community Centre) should remain within one ward".

172 Micklegate Ward Committee stated that "there is no advantage in changing the Micklegate ward and it should be kept as it is". Three local residents also proposed retaining the current Micklegate ward, contending that a larger ward would be more difficult to manage. As detailed earlier, Bishopthorpe Parish Council, and the local residents concerned, suggested that Middlethorpe Grange should be transferred from Micklegate ward into Bishopthorpe ward. The Green Party, in its joint submission, suggested that the name Micklegate should reflect a ward which actually covers the Micklegate area within the city walls. A local resident suggested that Micklegate ward should be named Dringhouses to better reflect the area contained within the ward, while another local resident proposed that the ward should be named Dringhouses & Woodthorpe.

173 Another local resident stated that our proposed Knivesmire ward seemed "broadly sensible" but suggested that the ward should be named Scarcroft ward, contending that it was a historic name and a "more neutral and unifying name". He stated that Scarcroft Road and Scarcroft Hill currently divide the existing wards which form the new ward, which would included Scarcroft Green and Scarcroft allotments, and that children from both parts of the new ward attend Scarcroft primary school. A local resident proposed that Knivesmire ward should be named Millthorpe or Micklegate ward. Two other local residents wished to see the Micklegate ward name retained for historical reasons.

174 We have carefully considered all the representations received and have noted that there was strong local opposition to our proposed Westfield ward. A large number of respondents were of the view that our proposal would divide the Foxwood community, contending that it should be united within one ward. We have therefore given careful consideration to the Liberal Democrat Group's revised wards in this area which have sought to address this issue. We have noted that its proposals would unite all of the Foxwood community within an enlarged Westfield ward. Furthermore, we concur that using Wetherby Road, The Green and York Road as the revised ward's northern boundary would provide for a more identifiable boundary and would also enable the Chapel Fields estate to be contained wholly within one ward. We consider that its consequent modifications to the boundary between Micklegate and Knivesmire wards would not have too

detrimental an affect on local community identity and would also facilitate the achievement of reasonable electoral equality. Therefore, in the light of local support, we propose adopting the Liberal Democrat Group's modifications to our proposals in this area, albeit with two minor modifications.

175 We have noted that the Liberal Democrat Group proposed utilising the existing boundary between Knavesmire and Micklegate wards so that residents of the Middlethorpe Estate would be part of a ward committee involved with the funding linked to land they use for recreational purposes. We have considered this proposal; however, we have also had to consider the fact that it is necessary to ensure that all of our proposed ward boundaries are tied to ground detail. The existing boundary is currently undefined as it is not tied to any ground detail. It is for this reason that we propose confirming our proposed boundary in this area, following the property boundaries to the east of the Middlethorpe Estate. As outlined earlier, we also propose modifying the southern boundary of the proposed Micklegate ward to follow the A64 ring-road in order to include Middlethorpe Grange in Bishopthorpe ward.

176 We have also considered the alternative ward names put forward in this area. We have noted that there is broad agreement that the Westfield ward name should be retained and therefore agree that the revised Westfield ward should retain that name. However, we have noted that it has been suggested that Micklegate ward should be named either Dringhouses, Dringhouses & Woodthorpe or Woodthorpe & Dringhouses. In the light of the representations received, we have therefore been persuaded that the revised Micklegate ward should be named Dringhouses & Woodthorpe ward as this would better reflect the areas that it covers. Furthermore, we have noted that a number of respondents proposed renaming Knavesmire ward as Scarcroft, Millthorpe or Micklegate. Having considered all the representations received we have also noted that two local residents wished to retain the "historic" name of Micklegate. We have also noted that the Micklegate itself is contained in the northern part of Knavesmire ward and therefore propose that the revised Knavesmire ward should be named Micklegate ward.

177 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the proposed three-member wards of Micklegate, Dringhouses & Woodthorpe and Westfield would be 2 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 7 per cent above the city average initially (2 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent above by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

Westfield, Acomb, Beckfield and Holgate wards

178 These four two-member wards are situated to the west of the River Ouse, in the north-western part of the unparished area. The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Westfield and Acomb is currently 16 per cent below and 1 per cent below the city average respectively (19 per cent below and 5 per cent below by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Beckfield and Holgate is currently 3 per cent below and 7 per cent below respectively (3 per cent above and 7 per cent below by 2005).

179 The Council proposed a new three-member Ward Twenty Two comprising the current Westfield and Acomb wards. It also proposed a new Ward Twenty One, comprising the current Holgate ward, the area to the west of St Paul's Terrace from the current Bishophill ward and the

south-eastern part of Beckfield ward (to the south-east of Plantation Drive and to the south of Boroughbridge Road). Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Twenty Two and Twenty One would be 6 per cent above and equal to the city average initially (1 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2005).

180 The Council proposed that the remainder of the current Beckfield ward should be included in its proposed Ward Eleven with the parished area to the west (as outlined earlier). However, as discussed earlier, a number of parishes opposed this proposal to include part of the unparished city area in a ward with part of the parished area to the west.

181 A local resident stated that the Leeman Road area "probably has more in common with Holgate than any other ward, especially as railway land on both sides of the tracks has started to be developed".

182 As a consequence of our proposal to retain all of the current Beckfield ward within a ward in the unparished area, and our proposed Westfield ward, we proposed modifications to the Council's scheme in this area in order to secure the best balance currently available between good electoral equality, the reflection of local communities and the provision of identifiable boundaries. We proposed a new three-member Acomb ward comprising the remainder of the current Westfield ward, all of the current Acomb ward and an area from the north-western part of the current Beckfield ward (to the west of Carr Lane, to the south of Boroughbridge Road and to the north-west of Millgates). Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Acomb ward would be 4 per cent above the city average initially (1 per cent below by 2005).

183 We further proposed a modified three-member Holgate ward which was broadly based on the Council's proposed Ward Twenty One. We proposed that the revised ward should comprise all of the current Holgate ward, that part of the current Bishophill ward to the west of the railway line (around St Paul's Terrace, as detailed earlier) and the remainder of the current Beckfield ward (to the east of Carr Lane, the north of Boroughbridge Road and to the south-east of Millgates). While we acknowledged that this ward would cover quite a wide area we were of the view that there are a number of significant roads which link it, including Boroughbridge Road/Poppleton Road, Acomb Road/Holgate Road and Hamilton Drive. We retained the existing ward name of Holgate as the majority of the ward comprises the current ward of the same name. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Holgate ward would be 4 per cent below the city average initially (1 per cent below by 2005).

184 At Stage Three the Council proposed that the north-western part of our proposed Acomb ward (an area to the north of Melwood Grove and to the north-west of Wheatlands Grove) should be transferred into a revised Rural West York ward, as detailed earlier. The Conservative Constituency Association supported our draft recommendations.

185 As a consequence of its revised three-member Westfield ward, the Liberal Democrat Group proposed a revised two-member Acomb ward and a revised three-member Holgate ward in order to secure better electoral equality and more identifiable boundaries. It proposed that the revised Acomb ward's southern boundary should follow the length of Wetherby Road, The Green and York Road and the ward's eastern boundary should follow the length of Carr Lane to

Boroughbridge Road and then follow the eastern boundary of the properties in the cul-de-sacs to the east of Ouseacres, then on to the railway line and the River Ouse. The number of electors per councillor in the Liberal Democrat Group's revised two-member Acomb ward and three-member Holgate ward would be 11 per cent above and 5 per cent below the city average initially (6 per cent above and equal to the average by 2005).

186 Councillors Galloway and Reid supported the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals, with Councillor Galloway further stating that they were also supported by the Foxwood ward, Westfield ward and Acomb ward Liberal Democrat Associations. Councillor Potter supported the inclusion of the Leeman Road area in a revised Holgate ward, arguing that it has more in common with this area than with Beckfield and that "this will increase in future years with the development of the land behind the station". However, she opposed the inclusion of the area to the north of Boroughbridge Road and west of Ouse Acres in the revised ward, contending that "there will be a lack of community feeling between this area and the rest of the proposed new Holgate ward". She proposed that this area should be included in Acomb ward and that the boundary between the revised Holgate and Acomb wards should "follow the length of Carr Lane and across the Boroughbridge Road taking Ouseacres as the boundary on that side of the road". A local resident stated that our proposed Holgate ward seemed "broadly sensible" but that "a revision to avoid splitting the Boroughbridge Road community ... would further improve the new ward".

187 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three. As detailed earlier, we do not propose adopting the Council's revised Acomb ward as we do not consider that a ward combining both parished and unparished areas would provide for the best reflection of local communities in this area and would not receive local support. However, as a consequence of our proposal to adopt the Liberal Democrat Group's revised three-member Westfield ward, we are also proposing to adopt its revised two-member Acomb and three-member Holgate wards as part of our final recommendations, as we consider that they would provide for a better reflection of local communities and more identifiable boundaries. However, in order to secure improved electoral equality we propose adopting Councillor Potter's proposed boundary between the two wards so that it would follow the centre of Carr Lane to Boroughbridge Road and then follow the centre of Ouseacres then to the railway line and the River Ouse.

188 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our revised two-member Acomb ward and three-member Holgate ward would be 8 per cent above and 3 per cent below the city average initially (3 per cent above and 2 per cent above by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

Guildhall, Fishergate and Walmgate wards

189 These three two-member wards are situated to the east of the River Ouse, in the central and south-eastern parts of the unparished York city area. The wards of Guildhall and Fishergate are currently under-represented by 20 per cent and 12 per cent respectively (22 per cent and 9 per cent by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in Walmgate ward currently equals the city average, however by 2005 it is forecast to be 1 per cent below the city average.

190 The Council proposed creating a new three-member Ward Nineteen, comprising the current Guildhall ward, the FB polling district from Fishergate ward, an area to the south of Grosvenor Road, to the east of Burton Stone Lane and to the north of A19 road from Clifton ward and an area around the Foss Island Industrial Estate from Walmgate ward. As a consequence of this proposal, it proposed that the remainder of the current Fishergate ward should be combined with the remainder of the current Walmgate ward (less the area around the Foss Islands Industrial Estate) to form a new three-member Ward Seventeen. Under a council size of 46 the number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Wards Nineteen and Seventeen would be 2 per cent below and equal to the city average initially (1 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2005).

191 A local resident suggested that "if it is decided that the ... terraced part of Fishergate should be separated off, the natural boundary of this neighbourhood ... would either be Hospital Fields Road or Maple Grove". He also contended that the area to the east of Green Dykes Lane in the north-eastern part of the current Fishergate ward is "part of the Tang Hall area".

192 We considered the Council's proposals in this part of the city area and concluded that they would secure the best balance between securing an improved level of electoral equality, reflecting the identities and interests of local communities and providing for identifiable boundaries. We adopted the Council's proposed Ward Nineteen, however, given that the ward is centred around the Guildhall area we proposed that the new ward should be named Guildhall. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Guildhall ward would be equal to the city average initially (2 per cent above by 2005).

193 We noted the comments put forward from a local resident regarding the Council's proposed Ward Seventeen. However, while we acknowledged that the ward covers quite a varied area, we were of the view that it secures the best balance between the competing requirements of the statutory criteria, and in the absence of any other viable alternative we proposed adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. Given that the majority of the ward covered the Walmgate area we retained the existing name of Walmgate. Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Walmgate ward would be 2 per cent above the city average initially (equal to the city average by 2005).

194 At Stage Three the Council and the Conservative Constituency Association supported our draft recommendations.

195 The Green Party and a local resident, in their joint submission, put forward modifications to our proposed three-member Walmgate and Guildhall wards in order to better reflect local communities, proposing three revised two-member wards for the area as a whole. They proposed a revised Fishergate ward comprising the majority of the existing ward, less that area to the east of Green Dykes Lane/University Road, and that area to the south of Tower Street, Paragon Street and Lawrence Street from Guildhall ward. The remainder of our proposed Walmgate ward and that area to the east of Green Dykes Lane/University Road would form a revised Walmgate ward and the remainder of our proposed Guildhall ward would form a revised two-member ward. The number of electors per councillor in their proposed two-member Fishergate, Walmgate and Guildhall wards would be 3 per cent above, equal to and equal to the city average initially (2 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 5 per cent above by 2005).

196 City of York Conservative Party stated that it was concerned at “the disappearance of the old Fishergate ward”. It further stated that the proposed Walmgate ward did not take into account the two completely different “sections” of the ward which are separated by Walmgate Stray and the University. It contended that the two areas “have no natural connection and travelling between the two areas of the ward would involve a lot of travelling and passing through other wards”.

197 Fishergate Ward Committee, Fishergate Ward Committee Planning Group and 14 local residents opposed our proposals affecting the current Fishergate ward. A number of respondents contended that our three-member Walmgate ward would combine Fishergate with Tang Hall, two areas which share few links and have different community identities. The majority of respondents proposed that the two-member Fishergate ward be retained, or that the area covered by our proposed three-member Walmgate and Guildhall wards be represented by three two-member wards, in order to better reflect communities. Walmgate Ward Committee stated that our proposals for Walmgate created a ward “which covers two distinct communities, separated by Walmgate Stray”. York Federation of Residents & Community Associations considered that our proposed Walmgate ward would join together areas which have little in common either in geographical or community terms. The Green Party Campaigns Co-ordinator also opposed our proposed Walmgate and Guildhall wards, also proposing that the area as a whole should be represented by three two-member wards to better reflect local communities.

198 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed that the area to the east of Granville Terrace and to the south of Arthur Street be transferred from the proposed Guildhall ward into the proposed Walmgate ward. It also proposed modifying the north-eastern boundary of Guildhall ward to follow a longer section of the railway line, and proposed that the north-eastern boundary of Guildhall ward should be modified to follow the River Foss and the south-western boundary of The Grange in order to unite the Groves area in one ward. The number of electors per councillor in its revised three-member Walmgate and Guildhall wards would be 8 per cent above and 3 per cent above the city average initially (6 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2005).

199 We have carefully considered all of the representations received regarding this area and have noted that there was significant opposition to our proposals, mainly based on community identity grounds. The majority of respondents expressed the view that our proposed Walmgate ward would combine the two distinctly different communities of Fishergate and Tang Hall in the same ward. A large number of respondents suggested that the area covered by Walmgate and Guildhall wards should be represented by three two-member wards in order to better reflect local communities.

200 Therefore, in the light of the local opposition to our draft proposals in this area, we have considered the alternative ward configuration put forward jointly by the Green Party and a local resident for three two-member wards: Fishergate, Guildhall and Walmgate. We have been persuaded that this would provide for a better reflection of local communities and more identifiable boundaries than our draft recommendations while securing a similar level of electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting their revised wards in this area, in addition to incorporating the Liberal Democrat Group’s modifications to the proposed Guildhall ward, in order to facilitate the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have considered the proposed ward names for these three revised wards and propose retaining the

current ward names of Fishergate and Guildhall. However, we propose modifying the Walmgate ward name as we have noted that a number of respondents referred to the area covered by the revised ward as Tang Hall and as a section of Tang Hall Lane runs through the centre of the ward. We therefore propose that the revised ward be named Tang Hall.

201 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed two-member wards of Fishergate, Guildhall and Tang Hall would be 3 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 9 per cent above the city average initially (2 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 8 per cent above by 2005). We are aware that this would result in a slightly higher electoral variance in our proposed Tang Hall ward but we are of the view that it is acceptable given the overall better reflection of communities. Our final recommendations are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

Clifton, Bootham, Monk and Heworth wards

202 These four two-member wards are situated to the east of the River Ouse in the northern and eastern parts of the city. The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Clifton and Bootham is 9 per cent below and 11 per cent below the city average respectively (12 per cent below and 9 per cent below by 2005). The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Monk and Heworth is 3 per cent above and 4 per cent below the city average respectively (2 per cent below and 7 per cent below by 2005).

203 As a consequence of its proposed Ward Nineteen, the Council proposed a new three-member Ward Eighteen, comprising the remainder of the current Clifton ward and all of the current Bootham ward. It also proposed a new three-member Ward Twenty, comprising the current Heworth ward and the western part of the current Monk ward (predominantly to the west of Malton Road). It further proposed that the eastern part of Monk ward should be included in a new single-member Ward Six with Heworth Without parish, as outlined earlier.

204 A local resident commented that the western part of the current Monk ward, the area to the west of the River Foss and to the east of Park Grove, “identifies with the rest of the Groves district, most of which currently lies within Guildhall ward”, suggesting that the Groves area should be unified in one ward.

205 As outlined earlier, we adopted the Council’s proposals in this area as our draft recommendations. We were of the view that they would secure the best balance between securing electoral equality, reflecting local communities and securing good boundaries. We noted the comment regarding the Groves area and acknowledged that the retention of the existing boundary in that area would mean that the Groves area remained divided between two wards. We considered modifying the Council’s proposed boundary in this area to include all of the Groves area in the proposed Guildhall ward but noted that this would result in a poorer level of electoral equality. However, we welcomed views from local interested parties regarding this issue during Stage Three.

206 We proposed that the Council’s proposed Ward Eighteen should be named Clifton ward, as that area comprises the majority of the ward. Furthermore, we proposed that the Council’s proposed Ward Twenty should be named Heworth ward as the ward is focused upon the Heworth

area (including Heworth Green/Heworth Road and Heworth Golf Course). Under a council size of 47 the number of electors per councillor in our proposed three-member Clifton and Heworth wards would be equal to and 4 per cent above the city average initially (equal to and 1 per cent above by 2005).

207 At Stage Three the Council and the Conservative Constituency Association supported our draft recommendations.

208 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed that the railway line should continue to be used as a boundary in the south-eastern part of the Clifton ward and that the area between Grosvenor Road and Bootham should be retained in Clifton ward. In order to secure more identifiable boundaries, a better reflection of local communities and good electoral equality the Liberal Democrat Group also proposed that the River Foss should be used as the ward boundary between the proposed Clifton and Heworth wards, and between the proposed Heworth and Guildhall wards, with the student residences at The Grange being included in Clifton ward. It contended that these modifications would unite the Groves neighbourhood in one ward and provide for more identifiable boundaries. The number of electors per councillor in its revised Heworth and Clifton wards would be equal to and 1 per cent above the city average initially (3 per cent below and 1 per cent above by 2005).

209 Clifton Residents Association proposed a modified Clifton ward, using the railway line as the ward's eastern boundary and revising its northern boundary to include an area to the south of Water Lane (from Clifton Without Parish). It contended that this proposal would not include properties to the east of the railway line in the revised ward which have "no connections except one of social housing". It further stated that "Clifton has a strong identity" and that "Clifton is defined geographically to the north by the open ground called the Backies, to the south by the river the east by the railway lines and to the west by Clifton Without". It further suggested that the area to the east of the railway line should be included in a revised Heworth ward, contending that "the identity would not be lost or swallowed up". A local resident also suggested that the area to the north-west of the railway line (between Grosvenor Road and Bootham) should be included in Clifton ward.

210 A local resident suggested a modification to the western boundary of Heworth ward, contending that our proposed boundary would isolate the Montrose Avenue area "from the rest of the immediate community of Muncastergate and Heworth". She stated that this area does not "have any connection with [the Clifton] community" and proposed transferring the area to the south-east of Huntington Road (around Montrose Avenue and Bellfarm Avenue) into Heworth ward. She also proposed that the eastern part of the Groves area should be transferred into Guildhall ward (with the boundary following a longer section of the River Foss) contending that this would unite the "well-known area" of the Groves.

211 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three. As outlined earlier, we propose adopting the Liberal Democrat Group's modifications to our proposed Guildhall ward. In addition, we propose adopting its modifications to the proposed Heworth and Clifton wards in order to secure a better reflection of local communities and more identifiable boundaries. These boundary modifications received the support of some local residents during Stage Three, with one of the main benefits stated being uniting the Groves area in one ward.

212 These modifications also partially adopt the Clifton Residents' Association's proposal in that a larger section of the railway line would be used as Clifton ward's southern boundary. However, we do not propose adopting its proposed ward in its entirety, as it would result in the warding of Clifton Without Parish and the inclusion of part of it with the unparished area. This, in our view, would not secure more identifiable boundaries, provide for a better reflection of local community identity or facilitate a good electoral scheme across the city as a whole. We also propose including Hempland School in Heworth Without ward, as suggested by two respondents, to secure a slightly better boundary, as detailed earlier.

213 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our revised three-member Heworth and Clifton wards would be equal to and 1 per cent above the city average initially (3 per cent below and 1 per cent above by 2005). Our final recommendations are shown on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

214 At Stage One, we received five representations regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council proposed retaining whole-council elections every four years, a proposal which was supported by Rufforth Parish Council.

215 York Labour Party referred to the Government's 1998 White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, expressing the view that "even though there is no legislation as yet to implement elections by thirds there almost certainly will be during the life of the city's new electoral arrangement". Hugh Bayley MP stated that "the old City of York Council had annual elections which was good for democratic accountability and popular with the public, I hope this can be reinstated".

216 A local resident, who submitted a 57-member city-wide scheme based mainly on two-member wards, argued that this pattern would facilitate "the holding of elections on a 'cycle' as opposed to once every four years". He further stated that it "would allow biennial elections across almost the whole city".

217 We carefully considered all representations received and noted that there was a mixture of views, expressing support for whole-council elections, elections by thirds and biennial elections. However, in our draft recommendations report we stated that, in the first instance, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the Local Government Act 2000, we can only continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections. Statutorily, we have no power to recommend a change to biennial elections.

218 We considered the Council's proposal to retain whole-council elections and noted that it was endorsed by both the Labour and Conservative Groups and supported by a parish council. The proposal to introduce annual elections received less support locally. Given that there appeared to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained, we therefore proposed no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the City Council.

219 At Stage Three the Council supported our draft recommendations. York Liberal Democrat Federation supported the retention of elections “on a four-yearly cycle”. Dunnington Parish Council, Wheldrake Parish Council, Poppleton Ward Residents’ Association and the Chairman of Poppleton Ward Residents’ Association also supported the retention of whole-council elections every four years.

220 City of York Conservative Association supported elections by thirds, contending that “this would be beneficial to the City and local democracy as a whole”. City of York Constituency Labour Party stated that it “had a strong preference for annual elections” contending that they “enhance the democratic process”.

221 A local resident suggested that councillors should be elected for three-year terms and that in three-member wards this should be on a “rolling basis” with a councillor standing down each year.

222 Having considered all the Stage Three representations, we have noted that a number of respondents commented on the proposed electoral cycle for the City of York Council, and that there was support for and opposition to our proposal to retain the current cycle of whole-council elections. On balance, however, we remain of the view that there is a majority of support locally for the retention of whole-council elections. Therefore, we propose confirming our draft recommendation to retain whole-council elections as final.

Conclusions

223 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:

- in the western part of the unparished urban area, we propose adopting the Liberal Democrat Group’s modifications which provide for a new three-member Westfield ward and revised two-member Acomb ward, in addition to minor boundary modifications between the proposed Micklegate and Knavesmire wards, and Holgate and Acomb wards;
- in the eastern part of the unparished urban area, we propose adopting a combination of the Liberal Democrat Group’s modifications and those submitted jointly by the Green Party and a local resident, which provide for revised two-member Fishergate and Guildhall wards and a new two-member Tang Hall ward, in addition to minor boundary modifications between the proposed Guildhall, Heworth and Clifton wards;
- we propose that Knavesmire ward should be named Micklegate ward, that Micklegate ward should be named Dringhouses & Woodthorpe ward and that Dunnington ward should be named Derwent ward.

224 We conclude that, in the City of York:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 53 to 47;
- there should be 22 wards, seven fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 25 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	53	47	53	47
Number of wards	29	22	29	22
Average number of electors per councillor	2,713	3,060	2,901	3,271
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	5	14	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	1	4	0

226 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 15 to five. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with only one ward, Rural West York, varying by more than 10 per cent from the city average, at 11 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation
 City of York Council should comprise 47 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

227 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough.

228 The parish of Heslington is currently served by nine councillors and is unwarded. During Stage One, two local residents expressed concern that as a consequence of York University being situated within Heslington parish there are no local villagers on the parish council, suggesting that the parish could be warded so that the university area comprises one parish ward and the village of Heslington forms another. However, Heslington Parish Council wished to retain the existing arrangements affecting the parish, arguing that any changes would “divide the community ... and undermine our ability to act as an effective parish council”.

229 We considered both the options put forward and given that there was only limited support for the proposal to ward the parish, and in view of the fact that the parish council itself did not wish to be warded, we did not propose making any changes to Heslington Parish Council’s electoral arrangements. However, we welcomed views from local interested parties regarding this issue during Stage Three.

230 At Stage Three a local resident expressed disappointment that Heslington Parish Council’s current electoral arrangements were to remain unchanged (ie not warded), and “on the behalf of many villagers”, reiterated her Stage One views that the Village and University areas merited separate representation on the Parish Council. Heslington Village Trust supported the retention of Heslington ward unchanged. It further supported the proposal that no change be made to the parish electoral arrangements and that the parish should not be warded. It stated that “the Parish Council, Village Trust and University have established a regular series of meetings to discuss matters of mutual concern” arguing that “any changes to ward boundaries that excluded the University would inevitable weaken this relationship”. The Chair of Heslington Parish Council wished to respond to an assertion made by a Stage One respondent, pointing out that all nine of the parish councillors lived within half a mile of Heslington village centre. No other comments were received.

231 We have considered all the representations received regarding the electoral arrangements for Heslington Parish. However, we have not been persuaded that there is sufficient local support in favour of warding Heslington Parish and therefore we remain of the view that no change should be made to Heslington Parish’s electoral arrangements.

232 The parish of Haxby is currently served by 14 councillors representing two wards: Haxby North East and Haxby West (both represented by seven councillors). At Stage One, Haxby Town Council contended that “having wards with numerous councillors causes confusion”, requesting that the parish “should be divided into four parish wards. Two wards should return three councillors each and the other two wards should return four councillors each.” It further stated that “the [Town] Council is content to leave the delineation of these wards to the discretion of the Commission”.

233 Our city warding proposals would not result in a need to divide the parish, therefore we put forward revised parish wards based on the existing parish wards. We proposed that the current North East ward should be divided into two new wards with a new parish ward boundary following the centre of the railway line, the northern boundary of the properties in Usher Park Road and the centre of Usher Lane and Station Road to the parish boundary. That part of the current Haxby North East parish ward to south and east of the proposed boundary should form a new Haxby East parish ward (represented by four councillors) with that part to the north and west of the boundary forming a new Haxby North parish ward (represented by three councillors).

234 We also proposed that the current Haxby West parish ward be divided into two new wards, with the new parish ward boundary following the centre of Holly Tree Lane and Oak Tree Lane, before following behind the properties on the eastern side of Eastfield Avenue. That part of the current Haxby West ward to the south and west of the proposed boundary should form a new Haxby South West ward (represented by three councillors) with that part to the north and east of the proposed boundary forming a new Haxby Central parish ward (represented by four councillors).

235 At Stage Three no comments were received from the City Council or Haxby Parish Council in response to our consultation report. Therefore, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Haxby parish as final.

Final Recommendation
Haxby Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Haxby East (returning four councillors), Haxby North (returning three councillors), Haxby South West (returning three councillors) and Haxby Central (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries are as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

236 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the City Council area. At Stage Three we received no comments relating to this issue and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation
Parish and town council elections should continue to take place every four years and should be held at the same time as elections for the city ward of which they are part.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for the City of York

6 NEXT STEPS

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

238 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 26 June 2001.

239 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 the City of York: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the City of York area.

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Haxby parish.

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

Map A1: Final Recommendations for the City of York: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Haxby Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for the City of York

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of 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 Dunnington ward as Derwent ward.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Acomb	Acomb ward; Beckfield ward (part); Westfield ward (part)
Bishopthorpe	Copmanthorpe ward (part – the parishes of Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe)
Clifton	Bootham ward; Clifton ward (part)
Guildhall	Clifton ward (part); Fishergate ward (part); Guildhall ward; Heworth ward (part); Walmgate ward (part)
Heworth	Heworth ward (part); Monk ward (part)
Heworth Without	Heworth Without ward (the parish of Heworth Without); Monk ward (part)
Holgate	Beckfield ward (part); Bishophill ward (part); Holgate ward
Knavesmire	Bishophill ward (part); Knavesmire ward (part); Micklegate ward (part)
Micklegate	Micklegate ward (part); Foxwood ward (part); Westfield ward (part)
Walmgate	Fishergate ward (part); Walmgate ward (part)
Westfield	Foxwood ward (part); Micklegate ward (part); Westfield ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Acomb	3	9,532	3,177	4	9,737	3,246	-1
Bishopthorpe	1	3,158	3,158	3	3,265	3,265	0
Clifton	3	9,223	3,074	0	9,848	3,283	0
Guildhall	3	9,185	3,062	0	9,968	3,323	2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Heworth	3	9,579	3,193	4	9,868	3,289	1
Heworth Without	1	3,165	3,165	3	3,206	3,206	-2
Holgate	3	8,839	2,946	-4	9,926	3,309	1
Knavesmire	3	9,385	3,128	2	9,977	3,326	2
Micklegate	3	9,118	3,039	-1	9,505	3,168	-3
Walmgate	3	9,351	3,117	2	9,773	3,258	0
Westfield	2	6,302	3,151	3	6,365	3,183	-3

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by the City of York Council.

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

APPENDIX C

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table C1: Commission compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies with this requirement
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain	The Commission complies with this requirement
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals	The Commission complies with this requirement
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement