

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

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

June 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 2001

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 235

CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>27</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Gloucester (January 2001)	<i>29</i>
B Code of Practice on Written Consultation.	<i>31</i>

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



Local Government Commission for England

26 June 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 27 June 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the City of Gloucester under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 2001 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 85) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in the City of Gloucester.

We recommend that Gloucester City Council should be served by 36 councillors representing 15 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

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

I would like to thank members and officers of the 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 Gloucester City Council on 27 June 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 January 2001, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in eight of the 13 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 seven wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 85-86) are that:

- **Gloucester City Council should have 36 councillors, three fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 15 wards, instead of 13 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 13 of the proposed 15 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 all of the wards expected to vary by no 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 the parish of Quedgeley.**

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 6 August 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 Abbey	3	Abbeymead ward (part); Barnwood ward (part)	Large map
2 Barnwood	3	Abbeymead ward (part); Barnwood ward (part); Eastgate ward (part); Hucclecote ward (part)	Large map
3 Barton & Tredworth	3	Barton ward (part); Eastgate ward (part); Westgate ward (part)	Large map
4 Elmbridge	2	Eastgate ward (part); Longlevens ward (part)	Large map
5 Grange	2	Podsmead ward (part); Tuffley ward (part)	Large map
6 Hucclecote	3	Abbeymead ward (part); Hucclecote ward (part)	Large map
7 Kingsholm & Wotton	2	Eastgate ward (part); Kingsholm ward (part); Westgate ward (part)	Large map
8 Longlevens	3	Kingsholm ward (part); Longlevens ward (part)	Large map
9 Moreland	3	Barton ward (part); Linden ward (part); Podsmead ward (part); Westgate ward (part)	Large map
10 Podsmead	1	Podsmead ward (part); Tuffley ward (part)	Large map
11 Quedgeley Fieldcourt	2	Quedgeley ward (part – the proposed Fieldcourt parish ward of Quedgeley parish)	Large map
12 Quedgeley Severn Vale	2	Quedgeley ward (part – the proposed Severn Vale parish ward of Quedgeley parish)	Large map
13 Robinswood	3	Abbeymead ward (part); Barnwood ward (part); Barton ward (part); Eastgate ward (part); Matson ward; Tuffley ward (part)	Large map
14 Tuffley	2	Tuffley ward (part)	Large map
15 Westgate	2	Eastgate ward (part); Linden ward (part); Westgate ward (part)	Large map

Notes: 1 Quedgeley is the only parished part of the city.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Gloucester City

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 Abbey	3	7,407	2,469	8	7,037	2,346	-3
2 Barnwood	3	6,453	2,151	-6	7,061	2,354	-2
3 Barton & Tredworth	3	6,812	2,271	-1	7,038	2,346	-3
4 Elmbridge	2	4,448	2,224	-3	4,686	2,343	-3
5 Grange	2	4,747	2,374	4	4,748	2,374	-1
6 Hucclecote	3	7,290	2,430	6	7,566	2,522	5
7 Kingsholm & Wotton	2	4,685	2,343	2	4,996	2,498	4
8 Longlevens	3	7,297	2,432	6	7,564	2,521	5
9 Moreland	3	7,194	2,398	5	7,208	2,403	0
10 Podsmead	1	2,348	2,364	3	2,300	2,300	-4
11 Quedgeley Fieldcourt	2	3,999	2,000	-13	4,760	2,380	-1
12 Quedgeley Severn Vale	2	4,596	2,298	0	5,067	2,534	5
13 Robinswood	3	7,270	2,423	6	7,505	2,502	4
14 Tuffley	2	4,606	2,303	1	4,760	2,380	-1
15 Westgate	2	3,309	1,655	-28	4,398	2,199	-9
Totals	36	82,461	-	-	86,694	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,291	-	-	2,408	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Gloucester City in Gloucestershire. We have now reviewed six districts in Gloucestershire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Gloucester City. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1976 (Report No. 164). The electoral arrangements of Gloucestershire County Council were last reviewed in May 1982 (Report No. 424). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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 councils in the city.

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. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Gloucester City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils, the parish in the city, the Member of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, the Members of the European Parliament for the South West region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 2 October 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Gloucester*, and ended on 5 March 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 Gloucester is bounded by the district of Tewkesbury to its west, north and east and by the district of Stroud to its south. It is a compact, culturally diverse city, including such landmarks as the Cathedral and the restored Victorian Dockland. It has a diverse economic base which includes a number of major engineering and high-tech companies, a well-developed service sector and insurance companies. Covering some 4,050 hectares, and with a population of 101,608, Gloucester has a population density of 25 people per hectare. The city contains only one parish, Quedgeley, situated in the south-west of the city.

13 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'.

14 The electorate of the city is 82,477 (February 2000). The Council presently has 39 members who are elected from 13 wards, all of which are represented by three councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

15 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Gloucester, with around 30 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,114 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,223 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 eight of the 13 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the city average, three wards by more than 20 per cent and one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Quedgeley ward, where each of the three councillors represents 36 per cent more electors than the city average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Gloucester City

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 Abbeymead	3	7,964	2,655	26	8,691	2,897	30
2 Barnwood	3	6,021	2,007	-5	6,021	2,007	-10
3 Barton	3	4,948	1,649	-22	4,977	1,659	-25
4 Eastgate	3	6,107	2,036	-4	6,724	2,241	1
5 Hucclecote	3	7,484	2,495	18	7,478	2,493	12
6 Matson	3	5,540	1,847	-13	5,540	1,847	-17
7 Kingsholm	3	6,459	2,153	2	6,612	2,204	-1
8 Linden	3	5,398	1,799	-15	5,437	1,812	-18
9 Longlevens	3	6,791	2,264	7	7,014	2,338	5
10 Podsmead	3	5,663	1,888	-11	5,686	1,895	-15
11 Quedgeley	3	8,595	2,865	36	9,827	3,276	47
12 Tuffley	3	6,205	2,068	-2	6,205	2,068	-7
13 Westgate	3	5,286	1,762	-17	6,482	2,161	-3
Totals	39	82,461	-	-	86,694	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,114	-	-	2,223	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Barton ward were relatively over-represented by 22 per cent, while electors in Quedgeley ward were relatively under-represented by 36 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received nine representations, including city-wide schemes from Gloucester City Council, the Liberal Democrat Group and a local resident and a further six representations from 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 Gloucester*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the Gloucester City Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mix of single and multi-member wards in the city. However, we moved away from the City Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting 11 wards, using some of our own proposals in order to improve electoral equality. We proposed that:

- Gloucester City Council should be served by 36 councillors, compared with the current 39, representing 15 wards, two more than at present;
- the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Quedgeley parish.

Draft Recommendation

Gloucester City Council should comprise 36 councillors, serving 15 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 15 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 33 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Gloucester City Council and the Commission.

Gloucester City Council

21 The City Council broadly welcomed our draft recommendations but objected to our proposals for Barnwood and Abbey wards. It stated further that the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the City Council supported our proposed Westgate ward but that the Labour Group supported the City Council's Stage One proposals for the area.

Quedgeley Parish Council

22 Quedgeley Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for Quedgeley parish but suggested that our proposed Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards be renamed Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale.

Other Representations

23 A further 31 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from three councillors and 28 residents. Councillor Blakeley proposed a boundary amendment between our proposed Barnwood and Hucclecote wards. Councillor McLellan proposed boundary amendments to our proposed Abbey, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards. Councillor Onians objected to our proposed Tuffley ward, our proposal to transfer an area to the north-east of Painswick Road to our proposed Robinswood ward and our proposal to combine the City Council's proposed Cathedral and Severn wards in a two-member Westgate ward.

24 Five local residents supported the City Council's Cathedral and Severn wards and its proposed boundary between its proposed Longlevens and Severn wards. They objected to our proposal to transfer an area to the north-east of Painswick Road to our proposed Robinswood ward. Another local resident suggested that our proposed Grange and Podsmead wards be combined to form a new three-member ward, that an area of our proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward be transferred to our proposed Westgate ward, and that the area to the north of and including Estcourt Road in our proposed Longlevens ward be transferred to Kingsholm & Wotton ward. She also proposed amendments to our proposed Moreland ward and argued that it should retain the existing Linden ward name. Three local residents objected to our proposed Hucclecote ward while 16 local residents objected to the boundary between the proposed Kingsholm & Wotton and Longlevens wards. A local resident supported our proposed Moreland ward. Another local resident supported our proposals for Quedgeley parish but proposed a boundary amendment between our proposed Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards. Another local resident objected to the Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposals and our proposed Westgate ward.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

26 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.

27 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

29 At Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 5 per cent from 82,461 to 86,694 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expected most of the growth to be in Quedgeley ward, although a significant amount was also expected in Westgate ward. 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. Having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

30 At Stage Three the City Council noted that it had made a minor error in the allocation of forecast electors in its proposed Abbey and Barnwood wards. It confirmed that development in our proposed Barnwood ward had been misallocated to our proposed Abbey ward, resulting in our proposed Abbey ward varying by 9 per cent from the city average. We therefore consider that a modification to the ward boundary in this area is necessary to provide improved electoral

variances (detailed in paragraph 58). There was also a slight amendment to the current electorate figures in our proposed Grange and Podsmead wards. The City Council made a slight amendment to our proposed Podsmead ward and redistributed 16 electors to our proposed Grange ward which had been incorrectly allocated at Stage One. We note that this has had a minimal effect on our proposals in the area. However, subject to these amendments, we note that the forecasting of electorate projections is an inexact science and continue to consider that the City Council's electorate forecasts represent the best estimates that can be reasonably made at the present time.

Council Size

31 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 look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

32 Gloucester City Council is at present served by 39 councillors. At Stage One the City Council proposed a reduction in council size from 39 to 36. It stated that the "piloting of the 'cabinet' [form of political structure] has meant the creation of 'executive' and 'non-executive' roles for councillors with the effect of replacing the traditional committee system with a lesser number of scrutiny and quasi-judicial committees." It argued further that a reduction in size would not have an adverse effect on the operation of the council and that the reduction in the number of councillors was supported by all political groups on the city council.

33 In its Stage One submission the Liberal Democrat Group proposed a council size of 37, a reduction of two councillors. The Liberal Democrat Group argued that the east of the city was entitled to 10 councillors, one more than that allocated by the City Council. The scheme put forward by a local resident proposed a council size of 40, an increase of one.

34 In our draft recommendations report we considered that there was a general consensus for a reduction in council size. We considered that there was a lack of evidence to support an increase in the number of councillors and was not convinced that this would command widespread support locally. We also carefully considered the Liberal Democrat Group's argument that the east of the city would be entitled to ten councillors, giving a council size of 37. However, we calculated that the area concerned would merit 9.5 councillors initially but noted that by 2005 it would merit only 9.3, and that the extra councillor was therefore not warranted. We were therefore content to endorse the City Council's proposals for a council size of 36, given that it received the support of the majority of the council and would give good electoral equality while, in our view, reflecting the statutory criteria.

35 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 36 members.

36 At Stage Three we received no specific comments regarding council size. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for a council size of 36.

Electoral Arrangements

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

38 At Stage One, three local residents objected to the City Council's proposed mixed-member ward pattern, arguing that some electors would not have the opportunity to vote as often as others. However, in view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we concluded that we should base our recommendations on the City Council's scheme. We considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. We noted the objections received with regard to the City Council's proposals for a pattern of single and multi-member wards, however, while we acknowledged that three-member wards might facilitate elections by thirds, we recognised that in order to put forward schemes which secure the best balance between electoral equality, reflecting local communities and providing for effective and convenient local government, it may be necessary to move away from a uniform pattern of three-member wards. Therefore, we remained of the view that the City Council's scheme would best meet the need to secure electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria. However, to improve electoral equality further, while having regard to local community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the City Council's proposals in four areas, affecting 11 of its proposed wards.

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

- (a) Eastgate, Kingsholm and Longlevens wards;
- (b) Abbeymead, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards;
- (c) Matson, Podsmead and Tuffley wards;
- (d) Barton, Linden and Westgate wards;
- (e) Quedgeley ward.

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

Eastgate, Kingsholm and Longlevens wards

41 These three wards are each represented by three councillors and are located in the north of the city. Eastgate, Kingsholm and Longlevens wards currently have 4 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average (1 per cent more, 1 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005).

42 The City Council proposed three new wards covering much of this area, Elmbridge and Kingsholm & Wotton wards, each represented by two councillors, and Longlevens ward

represented by three councillors. Its proposed Longlevens ward would incorporate the area of Kingsholm ward to the north of Estcourt Road and that part of the current Longlevens ward to the north of Cheltenham Road. Its proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward would comprise the remainder of the current Kingsholm ward, that part of the current Westgate ward to the east of St Oswald's Road and to the north of the railway line, and the area to the north of Metz Way to the west of the railway line and to the south of Estcourt Road and Wotton Brook from the current Eastgate ward. Its proposed Elmbridge ward would comprise that part of Eastgate ward to the north of Estcourt Road and Wotton Brook and that part of the current Longlevens ward to the south of Cheltenham Road.

43 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group objected to the City Council's proposed Kingsholm & Wotton and Longlevens wards, arguing that the "course of Wotton Brook [to the north of Cheltenham Road] would appear to be a convenient boundary". It argued further that the properties to the north of Estcourt Road had "no natural link with the centre of Longlevens". A local resident proposed that the current Longlevens ward be maintained.

44 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and decided to base our draft recommendations on the City Council's submission. Given the good electoral equality and reflection of local communities that would be secured, we proposed adopting the City Council's proposed Longlevens and Elmbridge wards in their entirety. We considered the alternative proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group but noted that, under a council size of 36, its proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward would be significantly under-represented.

45 However, we also proposed that Sandhurst Lane, and the properties to the east of it, which the City Council proposed including in its Severn ward, should be included within the proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward, as we considered that this area shared more natural links with this ward, to which it is linked by Tewkesbury Road/Kingsholm Road.

46 Under our draft recommendations, the wards of Elmbridge, Kingsholm & Wotton and Longlevens would have 3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more, and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average currently (3 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 5 per cent more respectively by 2005).

47 At Stage Three 17 local residents objected to our proposal to include the area to the north of and including Estcourt Road in our proposed Longlevens ward, proposing that the area be transferred to our proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward. One local resident proposed that the Deans Way/Walk area and the area to the east of Sandhurst Lane, which we proposed including within our proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward should be transferred to our proposed Westgate ward, arguing that these residents had originally been rehoused from the city centre. She further proposed that the area to the north of and including Estcourt Road should be transferred to our Kingsholm & Wotton ward, arguing that this returned the residents "to their natural and social home".

48 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. While we have sympathy with the views expressed during the consultation period with regard to our proposed Longlevens ward, we note that transferring the area to the north of and including Estcourt Road to our proposed Kingsholm & Wooton ward would result in an unacceptable level of electoral

inequality in the area; indeed, our proposed Kingsholm & Wooton ward would have 19 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average by 2005. We also considered the proposal to transfer electors from the Deans Way/Walk area and the area to the east of Sandhurst Lane from our proposed Kingsholm & Wooton ward to our proposed Westgate ward, which would have facilitated the transfer of those electors to the north of and including Estcourt Road. However, after visiting the city we have not been convinced that this proposal would best reflect community identity in the area. As stated in our draft recommendations, we proposed that Sandhurst Lane, and the properties to the east of it, which the City Council proposed including in its Severn ward, should be included within the proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward as we considered that this area shared more natural links with this ward, to which it is linked by Tewkesbury Road/Kingsholm Road. Therefore, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for Kingsholm & Wotton and Longlevens wards as we consider that they would achieve a good level electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. Given that we have not received any specific comments regarding our proposed Elmbridge ward we also propose confirming our draft recommendation for this ward as final.

49 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Elmbridge, Kingsholm & Wotton and Longlevens wards would be 3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent more and 6 per cent more than the city average respectively (3 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 5 per cent more in 2005). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Abbeymead, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards

50 The wards of Abbeymead, Barnwood and Hucclecote are each represented by three councillors and are located in the north-east of the city. Abbeymead, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards have 26 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 18 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average currently (30 per cent more, 10 per cent fewer and 12 per cent more in 2005).

51 The City Council proposed three revised three-member wards for this area. Its proposed Abbey ward would comprise the current Abbeymead ward, less the area to the north-east of Abbeymead Avenue and to the north of Lobleys Drive, and less the area to the north-east of Bittern Avenue and to the west of Abbeymead Avenue. Its proposed Barnwood ward would comprise the majority of the current Barnwood ward, less the area to the south of Heron Way and to the east of Hawthorn Avenue, together with that part of the current Abbeymead ward to the south of Coney Hill Road and to the west of Abbeymead Avenue (as described earlier) and that part of the current Hucclecote ward to the west of Gilpin Avenue/Kingstone Avenue and to the north of and including the King George V playing fields. Its proposed Hucclecote ward would comprise the remainder of the current Hucclecote ward and include the area of the current Abbeymead ward to the north of Lobleys Drive and Abbeymead Avenue. The City Council argued that its proposed Hucclecote ward was based on a “well established residential area”.

52 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group objected to the City Council’s proposals for this area, arguing that the area was entitled to an extra councillor. It proposed four new wards for the area, Abbeymead and Hucclecote, to be represented by three councillors each, and Barnwood and Abbeydale wards, represented by two councillors each.

53 A local resident supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals, arguing that their proposals would "better preserve the traditional identity of the Hucclecote area and will also more readily allow the developing community of Abbeymead to establish its own identity".

54 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We noted that under the Liberal Democrat Group's proposed 37-member council this eastern area would merit 9.8 councillors currently, and 9.6 in 2005. However, under the City Council's proposed 36-member council it would merit 9.5 councillors currently and 9.3 councillors by 2005. Therefore, as detailed earlier in this chapter, we proposed allocating nine councillors to this area, basing our draft recommendations on the City Council's scheme, subject to two boundary modifications in order to address the slight under-representation of the area that would result under its proposals. We proposed that the boundary between the proposed Abbey and Barnwood, and Robinswood wards should follow Sud Brook, thus transferring those properties to the west of Sud Brook and to the east of Painswick Road into a revised Robinswood ward. Under our draft recommendations, Abbey, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards would have 1 per cent more, equal to and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average currently (2 per cent fewer, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more respectively in 2005).

55 In response to our draft recommendations the City Council objected to our proposals to combine that part of its proposed Abbey and Barnwood wards to the east of Painswick Road and to the west of Sud Brook in our proposed Robinswood ward. It argued that its objection was based on "the retention of well established historic community relationships with those properties ... having a community identity with both the Barnwood and proposed Abbey wards".

56 Councillor Blakeley proposed a boundary amendment between our proposed Barnwood and Hucclecote wards. She proposed that the boundary run north along the western side of the King George V playing field, to the rear of the properties on the western side of Brookfield Road and to the rear of the properties on the southern side of Hucclecote Road. As an alternative she proposed that the boundary be amended to run along the centre of Upton Lane as far as Barnwood Road. She argued that the western side of Brookfield Road had been a major part of the village of Hucclecote for a "very long time". She also objected to our proposals to transfer part of the current Abbeymead ward to our proposed Hucclecote ward. Councillor McLellan proposed a number of boundary amendments in order to "try to equalise the ward sizes and to try to improve community cohesion". He proposed that Curlew Road, Redpoll Way and Redstart Way be transferred from Barnwood ward to Abbey ward, arguing that the area is "effectively part of Abbeydale and would sit more easily within the ward". He also suggested that the western side of Brookfield Road be transferred from our proposed Barnwood ward to Hucclecote ward. Councillor Onians objected to our proposals to transfer the area of Painswick Road to the south-west of Sud Brook to our proposed Robinswood ward.

57 Five local residents objected to our proposals for the area of Painswick Road to the south-west of Sud Brook, arguing that the area shares more natural links with the current Abbeymead ward. Two local residents objected to our boundary between our proposed Barnwood and Hucclecote wards, arguing that the area around Brookfield Road and Lilliesfield Avenue are geographically cut off from the remainder of Barnwood ward by North Upton Lane. They also objected to our proposal to transfer part of the current Abbeymead ward to our proposed Hucclecote ward. One local resident supported the Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposals

arguing that it better reflected the interests of the local communities, while another objected to the Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposals.

58 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. We have noted the objection to our proposal to transfer the area on Painswick Road to the south-west of Sud Brook to our proposed Robinswood ward but note that, as stated in our draft recommendations the City Council's proposed Abbey, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards would be under-represented, meriting 9.3 councillors by 2005. We stated that by transferring these electors to our proposed Robinswood ward this area would receive the correct allocation of nine councillors. Having visited the area, we have not been convinced that our proposals for the area to the north of Painswick Road would significantly compromise community identity in the area and remain satisfied that the area shares good links with the rest of our proposed Robinswood ward. Given the amendment to the projected electorate figures for our proposed Abbey and Barnwood wards (mentioned earlier) we have carefully considered Councillor McLellan's proposed boundary amendment between our proposed Abbey and Barnwood wards and have been persuaded that the area around Curlew Road, Redpoll Way and Redstart Way share better links with our proposed Abbey ward than with our proposed Barnwood ward. We also note that this would improve electoral equality in both wards. Therefore, we propose that the boundary between our proposed Abbey and Barnwood wards be amended to run north from Sud Brook, to the rear of the properties on the northern side of Curlew Road, Redpoll Way and Redstart Way, before rejoining our proposed boundary on Bittern Avenue.

59 We have also carefully considered the proposals received for our proposed Hucclecote ward. We note however that, given our proposal to transfer electors from our proposed Abbey ward to our proposed Barnwood ward, a further transfer of electors from Barnwood ward to Hucclecote ward would have a detrimental effect on electoral equality in the area. We are also of the view that the area around Brookfield Road and Hucclecote Road has adequate links with the rest of our proposed Barnwood ward and have therefore not been persuaded to amend our proposals in the area. We have also considered the objections to our proposals to combine part of the current Abbeymead ward in our proposed Hucclecote ward. We accept that our proposals in this area are not ideal but note that transferring this area to either our proposed Abbey or Barnwood wards would result in an unacceptably high level of electoral inequality. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Hucclecote ward as final.

60 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Abbey, Barnwood and Hucclecote wards would be 8 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the city average respectively (3 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Matson, Podsmead and Tuffley wards

61 Matson, Podsmead and Tuffley wards are located in the south of the city and are each represented by three councillors. The three wards currently have 13 per cent fewer, 11 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (17 per cent fewer, 15 per cent fewer and 7 per cent fewer in 2005).

62 In order to address the current over-representation of this area, at Stage One the City Council proposed four new wards; Robinswood ward, to be represented by three councillors, a two-member Tuffley ward, a two-member Grange ward and a single-member Podsmead ward. Its proposed Robinswood ward would comprise the current Matson ward, that part of the current Eastgate ward to the south of the railway line and Painswick Road and that part of the current Barton ward to the south of the railway line. It would also comprise that part of the current Tuffley ward to the east of Stroud Road. Its proposed Podsmead ward would comprise that part of the current Podsmead and Tuffley wards to the north of Cole Avenue. The City Council argued that its proposed Podsmead ward was based on a “well established residential area with extensive commercial sites”. Its proposed Grange ward would comprise that part of the current Podsmead ward to the south of Cole Avenue and “residential areas” from the current Quedgeley ward to the north of Sims Lane and east of Bristol Road. Its proposed Tuffley ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Tuffley ward.

63 The Liberal Democrat Group supported the City Council’s proposals for this area, while a local resident objected to the City Council’s proposals.

64 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We based our draft recommendations on the City Council’s submission, albeit with boundary modifications. As a consequence of our proposal that Quedgeley parish should be divided between two wards (detailed later), we proposed that an area to the west of the railway line in the proposed Tuffley ward should be included instead within a revised Grange ward, in order to secure good electoral equality. We also proposed that the properties around Randwick Road and Nymphsfield Road, and those properties on Grange Road to the west of the railway line, should be included in the revised Grange ward, as we considered that this would improve electoral equality further while having regard to the statutory criteria. We also proposed that the area to the south of the railway line in the proposed Podsmead ward be transferred to the proposed Tuffley ward, as we considered that this would provide a more identifiable boundary between the two wards. We further proposed that the boundary between the City Council’s proposed Tuffley and Robinswood ward should follow the existing boundary as far as Reservoir Road and then run south following the western boundary of Robinswood Hill Country Park, in order to improve electoral equality. Under our draft proposals, our proposed Grange, Podsmead, Robinswood and Tuffley wards would have 3 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 6 per cent more and 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average currently (1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer respectively in 2005).

65 At Stage Three Councillor Onians objected to our proposals for Tuffley ward arguing that the area to the north of St Barnabas Close is unrelated in character to the rest of the ward and that the area around Holmwood Drive is a natural part of the area and that our boundary behind the houses on Tuffley Lane would confuse people. A local resident stated that she could see no logic in dividing the current Podsmead ward between our proposed Grange and Podsmead wards.

66 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. In our draft recommendations, we stated that, as a consequence of our proposals for Quedgeley parish, an area of the City Council’s proposed Tuffley ward needs to be transferred to our proposed Grange ward in order to provide for a good level of electoral equality. This, therefore, necessitated boundary amendments to the north of St Barnabas Close within the City Council’s

proposed Tuffley ward, in order to secure a good level of electoral equality in this area. We were of the view that whilst securing a good level of electoral equality in our proposed Tuffley ward our proposals had regard to the statutory criteria. We also considered the proposal to combine our proposed Grange and Podsmead wards in a three-member ward but are of the view that Cole Avenue forms an identifiable boundary between the two wards and that community identity is better served by a two-member Grange ward and a single-member Podsmead ward. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Grange, Podsmead, Robinswood and Tuffley wards as final.

67 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Grange, Podsmead, Robinswood and Tuffley wards would be 4 per cent more, 3 per cent more, 6 per cent more and 1 per cent more than the city average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer, 4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer in 2005). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Barton, Linden and Westgate wards

68 Barton and Linden wards are located in the central part of the city and are each represented by three councillors. Westgate ward covers the centre of the city and an area along the city's western boundary. Barton, Linden and Westgate wards currently have 22 per cent fewer, 15 per cent fewer and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average (25 per cent fewer, 18 per cent fewer and 3 per cent fewer in 2005).

69 At Stage One the City Council proposed four new wards for this area. Its proposed three-member Moreland ward would comprise the majority of the current Linden ward together with that part of the current Barton ward to the south of Tredworth Road. It would also include that part of the current Westgate ward to the south of Trier Way and to the west of Parkend Road. Its proposed three-member Barton & Tredworth ward would comprise that part of the current Eastgate ward to the south of Metz Way and that part of Barton ward to the north of Tredworth Road. It would also comprise a small area of the current Westgate ward to the east of Park End Road. Its proposed single-member Cathedral ward would comprise that part of the current Westgate ward to the south of the railway line and to the west of Trier Way and to the east of the Quay and the docks area. Its proposed single-member Severn ward would comprise the area of the current Quedgeley ward to the west of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, together with The Quay, Royal Oak Road, St Oswald's Road and Tewkesbury Road from the current Westgate ward. It argued that although by 2005 its proposed Severn ward would have 12 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average it is a "large, sparsely populated, rural hinterland with well defined natural boundaries".

70 The Liberal Democrat Group supported the City Council's proposals for this area and a local resident objected to the City Council's proposals. Another local resident objected to the City Council's proposals for the Westgate ward area.

71 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and were content to endorse the City Council's proposed Barton & Tredworth and Moreland wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, given the high levels of electoral imbalance in its proposed Cathedral and Severn wards by 2005, we proposed that these two wards should be combined to

form a revised two-member Westgate ward. We proposed that the existing Westgate ward boundaries along the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal should be retained, before following the centre of St Anns Way and Trier Way. The boundary would then follow the railway line westwards before following the centre of St Oswald's Road and Sandhurst Lane northwards. We stated that this would avoid the need for Quedgeley parish to be split between four city wards. We considered that the area to the east of Sandhurst Lane should be transferred to the proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward. Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Barton & Tredworth, Moreland and Westgate wards would have 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 28 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the city average initially (3 per cent fewer, equal to and 9 per cent fewer respectively by 2005).

72 At Stage Three the City Council stated that the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council supported our proposed two-member Westgate ward but that the Labour Group on the Council proposed that the City Council's proposed Cathedral and Severn wards should be adopted.

73 Councillor Onians objected to our proposed Westgate ward and suggested that the City Council's proposed Cathedral ward be adopted. She argued that the Cathedral area has different needs to the Hempsted area of our proposed ward. Five local residents supported the City Council's proposed Cathedral ward, arguing that the area has a "clearly defined boundary that lies within the Inner Relief road". Another local resident supported our proposed Westgate ward but suggested that the Deans Way/Walk and Sandhurst areas be transferred from our proposed Kingsholm & Wotton ward to our proposed Westgate ward (described earlier). She argued that our proposed Moreland ward should retain the name Linden and that the existing eastern ward boundary to the rear of the properties on Stroud Road between our Barton & Tredworth and Moreland wards be retained. Another local resident supported our proposed Moreland ward name, arguing that it was a "name known to all".

74 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and note the lack of consensus with regard to our proposed Westgate ward. However, as stated in our draft recommendations, we noted that the City Council's proposed single-member Cathedral and Severn wards would have higher levels of electoral equality than a two-member Westgate ward based on its existing boundaries. Therefore, given the lack of consensus as to the best warding pattern in the area, and given the fact that our proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality, whilst having regard to the statutory criteria, we are confirming our proposed Westgate ward as final. We carefully considered the local resident's proposed boundary amendment for our proposed Barton & Tredworth and Moreland wards but noted that combining the area to the rear of the properties on Stroud Road with our proposed Barton & Tredworth ward would result in electoral variances of more than 10 per cent in both our proposed Barton & Tredworth and Moreland wards. We have also considered the local resident's suggestion that our proposed Moreland ward retain the name Linden. However, we have not been convinced that this proposal would secure local support. We therefore confirm our proposed Barton & Tredworth, Moreland and Westgate wards as final.

75 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Barton & Tredworth, Moreland and Westgate wards would be 1 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 28 per

cent fewer than the city average respectively (3 per cent fewer, equal to and 9 per cent fewer in 2005). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Quedgeley ward

76 Quedgeley ward, comprising the parish of the same name, is located in the south-west of the city and is represented by three councillors. Quedgeley ward currently has 36 per cent more electors per councillor than the city average (47 per cent more in 2005) and is the most under-represented ward in the city.

77 The City Council put forward two new wards for the Quedgeley area and also proposed that two smaller areas of the current Quedgeley ward should be transferred to its proposed Grange and Severn wards. It proposed that the area of Quedgeley parish to the west of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal be transferred to its proposed Severn ward and that an area to the north of RAF Quedgeley, east of Bristol Road and to the north of Sims Lane, be transferred to its proposed Grange ward. It proposed that the remaining area of the parish be split along School Lane to form two two-member wards.

78 The Liberal Democrat Group stated that it had concerns regarding the City Council's proposals for the area. A local resident objected to the City Council's proposals, arguing that the parish has "retained a distinct character of its own". The local resident also proposed that the proposed wards be named Quedgeley North West and Quedgeley South East or South Quedgeley and Canalside wards.

79 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We concluded that Quedgeley ward would not be best served by being split between four new wards, as proposed by the City Council, and we were of the view that the consequential effect on the electoral arrangements of the parish council would not provide for effective and convenient local government. We noted that under a council size of 36, Quedgeley parish would be entitled to almost exactly four city councillors. Therefore, we proposed that the current ward be split between two new two-member wards, Fieldcourt and Severn Vale. We proposed that the boundary should run north behind the properties on Goss Wood Corner and along the northern edge of the school playing field, along St James', with all the properties within Farriers End and RAF Quedgeley being included within Fieldcourt ward. We considered that these arrangements would better reflect community links and identity in the parish than the City Council's proposals. We carefully considered the alternative ward names submitted at Stage One, but were not convinced that they would enjoy widespread support. Our proposed Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards would have 13 per cent fewer and equal to the city average number of electors per councillor currently (1 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005).

80 Quedgeley Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for its parish but proposed that our Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards be renamed Quedgeley Fieldcourt ward and Quedgeley Severn Vale ward, arguing that this would help to retain the identity of the parish. A local resident supported our proposals for Quedgeley parish but proposed that the boundary between our Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards be amended. She proposed that Woodlands Caravan Park be included within our proposed Fieldcourt ward, arguing that access is from School Lane. She further proposed that the boundary follow the boundary of Severn Vale School "without making

a detour round the Nature Reserve” and run to the north of Beech Green Primary School and Laburnam Gardens before running east along Severnvale Road and north along Bristol Road before rejoining our proposed boundary. Five local residents acknowledged the retention of the existing Quedgeley parish boundary.

81 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We have been persuaded that our proposed Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards should be renamed Quedgeley Fieldcourt ward and Quedgeley Severn Vale ward as we consider that this would help to retain the identity of the parish. We considered the proposal to amend the boundary between our proposed wards and as a consequence propose a boundary amendment. We propose adopting part of the local resident’s proposal that the boundary run north from the city boundary along the western and then northern sides of Woodlands Caravan Park and follow the boundary of Severn Vale School. However, we have not been persuaded that the local resident’s further amendments would better reflect community identity in the area than those proposed in our draft recommendations, and are therefore confirming the remainder of our draft recommendations as final.

82 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale wards would be 13 per cent fewer and equal to the city average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more in 2005). Our final recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Electoral Cycle

83 At Stage One the City Council proposed no change to the existing electoral cycle of elections by thirds. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds.

84 At Stage Three no further comments were received, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

85 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:

- a boundary amendment between Abbey and Barnwood wards;
- a minor boundary amendment between Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards;
- the proposed Fieldcourt be renamed Quedgeley Fieldcourt;
- the proposed Severn Vale ward be renamed Quedgeley Severn Vale ward.

86 We conclude that, in Gloucester:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 39 to 36;
- there should be 15 wards, two more than at present;
- the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

87 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	39	36	39	36
Number of wards	13	15	13	15
Average number of electors per councillor	2,114	2,291	2,223	2,408
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	2	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	1	3	0

88 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 eight to two with only one ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the city average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with no wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation
 Gloucester City Council should comprise 36 councillors serving 15 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

89 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 district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Quedgeley parish to reflect the proposed city wards.

90 The parish of Quedgeley is currently served by 16 councillors representing five wards: Central, East, Field Court, Severn Vale and South. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Quedgeley parish should be split between two new parish wards, Fieldcourt and Severn Vale, to be coterminous with our proposed city wards of the same name.

91 In response to our consultation report, Quedgeley Parish Council supported our proposal that it comprise 16 councillors representing two wards. However, it proposed that our proposed Fieldcourt and Severn Vale wards be prefixed with the parish name Quedgeley. A local resident stated that she was “dubious about the practicalities of eight member wards”.

92 In the light of the responses we have received we have revised our city warding arrangements. We therefore confirm that the boundary between our proposed Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale wards should be amended accordingly. We have noted the concerns of the local resident with regard to the practicalities of eight member parish wards, but given the support of the parish council for this arrangement, have not been persuaded to amend our proposals in this area.

Final Recommendation

Quedgeley Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Quedgeley Fieldcourt (returning eight councillors) and Quedgeley Severn Vale (returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed city ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

93 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of Quedgeley parish.

94 Quedgeley Parish Council supported our proposal that there be no change to the electoral cycle. A local resident argued that switching to elections by halves would reduce the inconvenience of long lists of candidates and create greater public accountability.

95 We have noted the comment received at Stage Three from the local resident. However, 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 in two-tier areas. Statutorily, we have no power to recommend

a change to biennial elections. We therefore propose no change to the electoral cycle of Quedgeley parish.

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

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

6 NEXT STEPS

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

97 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 6 August 2001.

98 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

Draft Recommendations for Gloucester

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only four wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

Figure A1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Abbey	Abbeymead ward (part); Barnwood ward (part)
Barnwood	Abbeymead (part); Barnwood ward (part); Eastgate ward (part); Hucclecote ward (part)
Fieldcourt	Quedgeley ward (part – the proposed Fieldcourt parish ward of Quedgeley parish)
Severn Vale	Quedgeley ward (part – the proposed Severn Vale parish ward of Quedgeley parish)

Figure A2: 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 %
Abbey	3	6,958	2,319	1	7,076	2,359	-2
Barnwood	3	6,902	2,301	0	7,022	2,341	-3
Fieldcourt	2	3,999	2,000	-13	4,760	2,380	-1
Severn Vale	2	4,596	2,298	0	5,067	2,534	5

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

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

APPENDIX B

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 D1: 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