

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Wyre in Lancashire

April 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish councils in the district.

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CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>27</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Wyre: Detailed Mapping	<i>29</i>
B Wyre Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	<i>35</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>37</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Fleetwood and Thornton Cleaveleys is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

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

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

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

- **in 15 of the 27 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and four wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 this unequal representation 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 17 wards and by more than 20 per cent in five wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 95-96) are that:

- **Wyre Borough Council should have 55 councillors, one less than at present;**
- **there should be 26 wards, instead of 27 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 24 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 22 of the proposed 26 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

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

- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Catterall Parish Council.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for nine weeks from 4 April 2000. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 5 June 2000:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Bourne	3	Bourne ward (part); Mount ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2	Breck	2	Breck ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
3	Brock	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Brock ward)	Map 2
4	Calder	1	Calder ward (part – the parish of Barnacre-with-Bonds)	Map 2
5	Carleton	2	Carleton ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3 and large map
6	Catterall	1	Catterall ward (part – the parish of Catterall)	Map 2
7	Cleveleys Park	3	Bourne ward (part); Cleveleys Park ward	Map 2 and large map
8	Cabus	1	Duchy ward (part – the parish of Cabus)	Map 2
9	Garstang	3	Catterall ward (part – the parish of Kirkland); Garstang ward; Pilling ward (part – the parish of Nateby)	Map 2
10	Great Eccleston	2	Great Eccleston ward; Hambleton ward (part – the parish of Out Rawcliffe)	Map 2
11	Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall	2	Hambleton ward (part – the parishes of Hambleton and Stalmine-with-Staynall)	Map 2
12	Hardhorn	2	Breck ward (part); Hardhorn ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
13	High Cross	2	High Cross ward; Tithebarn ward (part)	Maps 2 and A4
14	Jubilee	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Jubilee ward)	Map 2 and large map
15	Mount	2	Bailey ward (part); Mount ward (part); Park ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
16	Norcross	2	Norcross ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
17	Park	2	Mount ward (part); Park ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
18	Pharos	3	Mount ward (part); Pharos ward	Map 2 and large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
19	Pilling	1	Duchy ward (part – the parish of Winmarleigh); Pilling ward (part – the parish of Pilling)	Map 2
20	Preesall	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Preesall ward)	Map 2
21	Rossall	3	Bailey ward (part); Rossall ward; Warren ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
22	Staina	3	Bourne ward (part); Staina ward	Map 2 and large map
23	Tithebarn	2	Carleton ward (part); Tithebarn ward (part)	Maps 2, A3 and A4
24	Victoria	3	Norcross ward (part); Victoria ward	Map 2 and large map
25	Warren	3	Bailey ward (part); Warren ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
26	Wyresdale	1	Calder ward (part – the parish of Bleasdale); Wyresdale ward	Map 2

Notes: 1 Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde are unparished and comprise 16 of the proposed wards indicated above.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wyre

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bourne	3	4,794	1,598	5	4,965	1,655	3
2 Breck	2	2,547	1,274	-16	3,079	1,540	-5
3 Brock	1	1,556	1,556	2	1,650	1,650	2
4 Calder	1	1,355	1,355	-11	1,680	1,680	4
5 Carleton	2	3,203	1,602	5	3,430	1,715	6
6 Catterall	1	1,439	1,439	-5	1,520	1,520	-6
7 Cleveleys Park	3	4,822	1,607	6	4,975	1,658	3
8 Cabus	1	1,384	1,384	-9	1,460	1,460	-9
9 Garstang	3	4,051	1,350	-11	4,700	1,567	-3
10 Great Eccleston	2	2,839	1,420	-7	2,890	1,445	-10
11 Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall	2	3,450	1,725	13	3,500	1,750	9
12 Hardhorn	2	2,890	1,445	-5	3,021	1,511	-6
13 High Cross	2	3,208	1,604	5	3,255	1,628	1
14 Jubilee	2	3,320	1,660	9	3,480	1,740	8
15 Mount	2	2,990	1,495	-2	3,354	1,677	4
16 Norcross	2	3,001	1,501	-1	3,270	1,635	1
17 Park	2	3,304	1,652	9	3,359	1,680	4
18 Pharos	3	4,441	1,480	-3	4,624	1,541	-4
19 Pilling	1	1,583	1,583	4	1,600	1,600	-1
20 Preesall	3	4,365	1,455	-4	4,660	1,553	-4
21 Rossall	3	4,984	1,661	9	5,093	1,698	5
22 Staina	3	4,140	1,380	-9	4,720	1,573	-2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Tithebarn	2	3,110	1,555	2	3,355	1,678	4
24 Victoria	3	4,620	1,540	1	4,740	1,580	-2
25 Warren	3	4,648	1,549	2	4,680	1,560	-3
26 Wyresdale	1	1,577	1,577	4	1,630	1,630	1
Totals	55	83,621	–	–	88,690	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,520	–	–	1,613	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wyre Borough Council.*

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Wyre in Lancashire on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We expect to review the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool in 2001. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Wyre. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1975 (Report No. 88). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 399). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. 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 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals are now being taken forward in the Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 7 September 1999, when we wrote to Wyre Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough and the Members of the European Parliament for the North-West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued

a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 15 December 1999.

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

14 Stage Three began on 4 April 2000 and will end on 5 June 2000. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Wyre is bounded by the Irish Sea along parts of its western and northern boundaries, by the City of Lancaster to the north, the districts of Ribble Valley, Preston and Fylde to the east and south respectively, and by Blackpool along the remainder of its western boundary. Wyre is quite diverse in character, extending from the Forest of Bowland (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in the east, across the agricultural mosslands of North Lancashire to the coastal plain in the north and west.

17 With a population of approximately 104,900, covering some 28,332 hectares, Wyre has a population density of just under 4 people per hectare. Almost three-quarters of the borough's population is resident in the three principal settlements of Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde. The main rural settlements are Knott End and Garstang, with the remainder of Wyre's population dispersed amongst numerous smaller settlements. Wyre's major transport links are situated mainly in the east of the borough, and include the A6, the M6 motorway, the Lancaster Canal and the west coast main line railway.

18 The borough contains 21 parishes, although the towns of Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde are unparished and comprise respectively 24 per cent, 30 per cent and 18 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

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

20 The electorate of the borough is 83,621 (February 1999). The Council presently has 56 members who are elected from 27 wards, 17 of which are relatively urban in the towns of Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde and the remainder being predominantly rural. Nine of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 11 are each represented by two councillors and seven are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

21 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Wyre borough, with around 10 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Great Eccleston, Garstang, Hambleton, Carleton and Bourne wards.

22 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,493 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,584 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 27 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, four wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Great Eccleston ward where the councillor represents 59 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Wyre

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bailey	3	3,804	1,268	-15	3,840	1,280	-19
2	Bourne	3	5,549	1,850	24	5,720	1,907	20
3	Breck	2	2,908	1,454	-3	3,440	1,720	9
4	Brock	1	1,556	1,556	4	1,650	1,650	4
5	Calder	1	1,473	1,473	-1	1,800	1,800	14
6	Carleton	2	3,963	1,982	33	4,190	2,095	32
7	Catterall	1	1,685	1,685	13	1,770	1,770	12
8	Cleveleys Park	3	4,047	1,349	-10	4,200	1,400	-12
9	Duchy	1	1,584	1,584	6	1,660	1,660	5
10	Garstang	2	3,442	1,721	15	4,060	2,030	28
11	Great Eccleston	1	2,378	2,378	59	2,410	2,410	52
12	Hambleton	2	3,911	1,956	31	3,980	1,990	26
13	Hardhorn	2	2,529	1,265	-15	2,660	1,330	-16
14	High Cross	2	2,623	1,312	-12	2,670	1,335	-16
15	Jubilee	2	3,320	1,660	11	3,480	1,740	10
16	Mount	2	2,815	1,408	-6	3,270	1,635	3
17	Norcross	2	3,291	1,646	10	3,560	1,780	12
18	Park	3	3,915	1,305	-13	3,970	1,323	-16
19	Pharos	2	2,517	1,259	-16	2,600	1,300	-18
20	Pilling	1	1,746	1,746	17	1,790	1,790	13
21	Preesall	3	4,365	1,455	-3	4,660	1,553	-2
22	Rossall	3	3,748	1,249	-16	3,840	1,280	-19
23	Staina	3	4,120	1,373	-8	4,700	1,567	-1
24	Tithebarn	2	2,935	1,468	-2	3,180	1,590	0
25	Victoria	3	4,330	1,443	-3	4,450	1,483	-6
26	Warren	3	3,608	1,203	-19	3,630	1,210	-24

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Wyresdale	1	1,459	1,459	-2	1,510	1,510	-5
Totals	56	83,621	–	–	88,690	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,493	–	–	1,584	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Wyre Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Warren ward were relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in Great Eccleston ward were relatively under-represented by 59 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

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

Wyre Borough Council

25 The Borough Council submitted a borough-wide scheme, based on a mixture of single and multi-member wards, which would reduce overall council size by one, from 56 to 55 members. It contended that its proposed scheme would “rectify the current imbalance of representation across the whole of the borough”, secure better electoral equality, reflect local communities, use identifiable boundaries and result in only “minimal disruption to wards which function satisfactorily”.

26 In Fleetwood the Council proposed modifying the boundaries of all the existing wards and reducing the number of councillors representing the town by three to 13. In Thornton Cleveleys it proposed modifying all but one of the existing wards, retaining 16 councillors for the town overall. In Poulton-le-Fylde the Council proposed modifying the boundaries of all the existing wards but proposed retaining a pattern of five two-member wards. In the remaining rural area in the east of the borough the Council proposed modifying the boundaries of all but one of the present wards and increasing the number of councillors representing the area overall by two to 16.

27 Under the Council’s proposals, five wards would initially vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, with one ward, Breck, varying by 20 per cent. By 2004, however, no ward would vary by more than 10 per cent. The Council’s proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Wyre Borough Council Labour Group

28 The Labour Group put forward proposals for the Fleetwood area only. They also proposed that Fleetwood be represented by 13 councillors overall, putting forward proposals for four three-member wards and one single-member ward. Its proposals would utilise a number of existing boundaries, and by 2004 all its proposed wards would vary by no more than 8 per cent from the borough average.

North West Conservatives

29 The North West Conservatives supported a 55-member council, but opposed Wyre Borough Council's proposals for the rural area. They stated that they supported "the retention of existing links with minimum disruption to parishes", and put forward an alternative Great Eccleston ward, proposing the retention of Brock, Catterall, Garstang and Pilling wards unchanged. They stated that their proposals were also supported by local Conservative councillors and the Blackpool North, Fleetwood, Lancaster and Wyre Conservative Associations.

Parish Councils

30 We received representations from four parish councils. Pilling Parish Council suggested alternative groupings of parishes to form wards in the central part of the rural area, proposing that Winmarleigh parish should be included with Pilling and Nateby parishes in a new two-member ward. Stalmine-with-Staynall Parish Council stated that it would prefer that the parish formed a new single-member ward, and that the remainder of Hambleton ward be represented by two councillors. It also suggested that Hambleton ward be named Mid Wyre or Wyre Bank. Bilsborrow & Myerscough Parish Council made no specific comment, but wanted to be informed of our draft recommendations affecting both parishes and Bilsborrow village. Kirkland Parish Council commented on changes in population density throughout the borough's parishes.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

31 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Wyre is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same as stated in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

32 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 next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

33 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.

34 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, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

35 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 6 per cent from 83,621 to 88,690 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the Calder and Garstang wards, although a significant amount is also expected in the more urban wards of Mount, Breck and Staina. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

37 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.

38 Wyre Borough Council presently has 56 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 55 members in order to provide for greater equality of representation between Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys, Poulton-le-Fylde and the remaining rural area. It proposed that Thornton Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde should maintain their existing levels of representation, that Fleetwood should be represented by three fewer councillors and that the rural area should receive two additional councillors. The North West Conservatives supported a 55-member council size and the Labour Group also proposed that Fleetwood should be represented by 13 councillors overall.

39 Given the general consensus regarding the number of councillors that should represent Wyre, and in view of the improvement to the balance of representation overall, together with the fact that under a 55-member council each area in the borough would be represented by the appropriate number of councillors, we concur with the Council's proposals in respect of council size.

40 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 55 members.

Electoral Arrangements

41 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Council's proposals we have concluded that we should generally base our recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, in order to secure slightly more identifiable boundaries, therefore providing for more effective and convenient local government, and a better reflection of the identities and interests of local communities, while securing good electoral equality, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in three areas. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Fleetwood (six wards)
- (b) Thornton Cleveleys (six wards)
- (c) Poulton-le-Fylde (five wards)
- (d) The rural area
 - Brock, Great Eccleston and Hambleton wards
 - Calder, Wyresdale and Duchy wards
 - Garstang and Catterall wards
 - Pilling and Preesall wards

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

Fleetwood (six wards)

43 Fleetwood is situated in the north-west of the borough and currently comprises two two-member wards and four three-member wards. The two-member wards of Pharos and Mount cover the eastern part of Fleetwood, bordering the Wyre estuary, and are both over-represented by 16 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. By 2004, the number of electors per councillor in Pharos ward is forecast to be 18 per cent below the borough average, while in Mount ward the number of electors per councillors is forecast to be 3 per cent above the average, as a result of housing development.

44 The three-member wards of Warren, Bailey, Rossall and Park cover the western and central parts of Fleetwood. Warren ward is currently the most over-represented ward in the borough with an electoral variance of 19 per cent (24 per cent by 2004). The current Bailey, Rossall and Park wards are also over-represented by 15 per cent, 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively (19 per cent, 19 per cent and 16 per cent by 2004).

45 During Stage One the Council proposed reducing the number of councillors representing Fleetwood by three, from 16 to 13, in order to reduce the over-representation that currently exists in the town and to secure an improved balance of representation across the borough as a whole. In the western area of the town it proposed that the north-eastern corner of the current three-member Rossall ward be transferred into a revised Bailey ward, and that the modified Rossall ward be represented by two councillors. The Council also put forward a revised Bailey ward, comprising the north-eastern part of Rossall ward and the western half of the existing Bailey ward, proposing that the revised ward be represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Rossall and Bailey wards would be equal to and 12 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent below and 6 per cent above by 2004).

46 In the northern part of Fleetwood, the Council proposed an enlarged three-member Warren ward, comprising all of the existing ward together with the north-eastern part of Bailey ward and a section of the north-western part of Mount ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Warren ward would be 6 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent above by 2004). The Council also proposed including part of the north-western part of Mount ward in a revised two-member Pharos ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Pharos ward would be 3 per cent above the borough average initially (equal to the average by 2004).

47 In the southern and eastern parts of the town, the Council proposed a revised two-member Mount ward, comprising the remainder of the existing Mount ward, the south-eastern part of Bailey ward and the north-eastern part of Park ward. It also proposed that the remainder of the current Park ward should form a revised two-member Park ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed wards of Mount and Park would be 7 per cent below and 3 per cent above the borough average initially (2 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2004).

48 The Labour Group also proposed that Fleetwood should be represented by 13 councillors overall, putting forward proposals for four three-member wards and one single-member ward. The Labour Group proposed a revised three-member Rossall ward, comprising all of the current ward, part of Bailey ward (the area to the south of Grange Road) and part of the southern part of the golf course from Warren ward (containing no electors). It also proposed a revised three-member Warren ward, comprising almost all of the existing ward and part of Bailey ward (the area to the north of Grange Road and to the west of Beach Road). The Labour Group further proposed that the remainder of Bailey ward (polling district WAB) should form a revised single-member Bailey ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed wards of Rossall, Warren and Bailey would be 9 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 13 per cent above the borough average initially (5 per cent above, 8 per cent below and 7 per cent above by 2004).

49 The Labour Group proposed an enlarged three-member Pharos ward, comprising the current ward and the north-western part of Mount ward (to the north of Warrenhurst Road). It also proposed that the remaining part of Mount ward be combined with the current Park ward to create a revised three-member Park ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed Pharos and Park wards would be 4 per cent below and 6 per cent above the borough average initially (6 per cent below and 8 per cent above the average by 2004).

50 We have carefully considered both the schemes submitted for this area during Stage One and acknowledge the fact that both proposals agree that Fleetwood should be represented by 13 councillors overall. Given that under a 55-member council size Fleetwood would be entitled to 13 councillors, we concur with the Council's and Labour Group's proposals that the town be represented by 13 councillors overall.

51 We have noted that the Council's scheme for Fleetwood is based on a mixture of two- and three-member wards, as is the case under the existing arrangements, and that its proposals would secure good levels of electoral equality. However, the Labour Group's scheme would secure more identifiable boundaries (particularly in the northern and north-eastern parts of the town), therefore providing for more effective and convenient local government, and a slightly better reflection of local community identities, while also securing reasonable electoral equality. Having considered both schemes, we propose basing our draft recommendations in Fleetwood on a combination of the Labour Group's and Council's proposals, with some slight modifications of our own, in order to secure an appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

52 Given the more identifiable boundaries and reasonable electoral equality that would be secured under the Labour Group's proposed Rossall ward, we propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report. We also propose putting forward the Labour Group's proposed Warren ward, with one slight modification in order to improve electoral equality by 2004. We propose modifying the proposed ward's southern boundary to follow the centre of the northern section of the Broadway rather than Beach Road. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Warren ward, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report, would be 2 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent below by 2004).

53 As the current Pharos ward covers the north-eastern peninsula of Fleetwood there are limited options as to how the existing over-representation in the ward can be addressed. However, given the slightly better boundaries proposed under the Labour Group's scheme resulting, in our view, in a slightly better reflection of the interests and identities of local communities, we propose adopting it as part of our draft recommendations. However, in order to improve electoral equality slightly, we propose that the ward's southern boundary should follow the centre of Belmont Road, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Pharos ward would be 3 per cent below the borough average initially (4 per cent below by 2004).

54 As a consequence of our modification to the Labour Group's proposed Warren ward, we are putting forward our own proposals for two two-member wards in the remaining south-eastern part of Fleetwood, which are broadly based on the Borough Council's proposals. We propose putting forward the Council's revised two-member Park ward as part of our draft recommendations, with a modification in order to secure reasonable electoral equality overall in this south-eastern area. We propose modifying the north-eastern boundary of the Council's proposed Park ward to include all of Lingfield Road, Hazeldene Road and Wingrove Road in the revised ward, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Park ward would be 9 per cent above the borough average initially (4 per cent above by 2004).

55 We are also proposing a revised two-member Mount ward, comprising the eastern half of the current Bailey ward, the north-eastern part of Park ward and the majority of the southern part of Mount ward. We propose transferring the most southerly part of Mount ward into a revised Bourne ward, as we are of the view that the electors in Springfield Terrace and the Holiday Parks on Fleetwood Road share closer links to that area. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Mount ward, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, would be 2 per cent below the borough average initially (4 per cent above by 2004). We would very much welcome views on our proposals for Fleetwood during Stage Three.

Thornton Cleveleys (six wards)

56 Thornton Cleveleys is situated in the west of the borough, to the south of Fleetwood, and currently comprises four three-member wards and two two-member wards. The two-member Jubilee ward, in the north-western part of the town, is currently under-represented by 11 per cent (10 per cent by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member wards of Cleveleys Park and Bourne, in the northern and north-eastern parts of the town, is 10 per cent below and 24 per cent above the borough average respectively (12 per cent below and 20 per cent above by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Victoria ward, in the south-western part of the town, is 3 per cent below the borough average (6 per cent below by 2004). In the southern part of the town, the number of electors per councillor in the two-member Norcross ward and the three-member Staina ward is 10 per cent above and 8 per cent below the borough average (12 per cent above and 1 per cent below by 2004).

57 At Stage One the Council proposed that the town should continue to be represented by 16 councillors and that a pattern of two- and three-member wards in the town should be retained. The Council proposed retaining unchanged the existing two-member Jubilee ward. Under a 55-member council the number of electors per councillor in an unchanged Jubilee ward would be 9 per cent above the borough average initially (8 per cent above by 2004).

58 The Council also proposed a revised three-member Cleveleys Park ward, comprising the existing ward and the north-western part of Bourne ward (an area to the west of Fleetwood Road North and to the north of Bourne Way). It also proposed a revised three-member Bourne ward, comprising the majority of the remainder of the existing ward, less those properties in and around Hulme Avenue which shares closer links with properties situated to the east of the railway line. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Cleveleys Park and Bourne wards would be 6 per cent above and 4 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent above and 2 per cent above by 2004).

59 The Council further proposed a revised three-member Victoria ward, comprising all of the existing ward, the eastern side of Meadows Avenue from the north-western part of Norcross ward and an area to the west of Amounderness Way and to the south of Anchorsholme Lane, from the south-western part of Norcross ward. As a consequence of these proposals the Council put forward a revised two-member Norcross ward, comprising the remaining area of the current ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Victoria and Norcross wards would be 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average initially (2 per cent below and 1 per cent above by 2004). The Council also proposed a revised three-member Staina ward, comprising the current ward and the area around Hulme Avenue from Bourne ward (as outlined above). The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Staina ward would be 9 per cent below the borough average initially (2 per cent below by 2004).

60 Given that under a 55-member council size Thornton Cleveleys would be entitled to 16 councillors, we agree with the Council's proposal that the town should retain its existing level of representation. In view of the constraints of the borough boundary to the west of the town and the River Wyre to the east, and given the good level of electoral equality that would be secured in almost all of the proposed wards, we propose adopting the Council's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, albeit with one modification to the northern boundary of the proposed Bourne ward. As detailed earlier, we propose transferring the most southerly part of Mount ward into Bourne ward, as we are of the view that Springfield Terrace and the surrounding area have closer links with Bourne ward. As a consequence, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bourne ward would be 5 per cent above the borough average (3 per cent above by 2004).

61 We acknowledge that under our draft recommendations our proposed Jubilee ward would be slightly under-represented by 9 per cent initially (8 per cent by 2004). However, we are of the view that this level of electoral imbalance is unavoidable, given the constraints of the borough boundary to the south of the ward and the sea to the west, and in view of the fact that the Rossall Road and the tramway would provide for an identifiable eastern boundary. We would welcome comments on our draft recommendations for Thornton Cleveleys, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, during Stage Three.

Poulton-le-Fylde (five wards)

62 Poulton-le-Fylde is situated in the south-western corner of the borough and currently comprises five two-member wards. In the eastern part of the town, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Breck and Hardhorn is 3 per cent below and 15 per cent below the borough average. As a result of housing development the number of electors per councillor in Breck ward is expected to be 9 per cent above the average by 2004, although the number of electors per councillor in Hardhorn ward would be 16 per cent below the average by that time. Carleton ward, in the north-west of the town, is currently under-represented by 33 per cent (32 per cent by 2004). In the western part of the town, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Tithebarn and High Cross is 2 per cent below and 12 per cent below the borough average (almost equal to and 16 per cent below by 2004).

63 During Stage One the Council proposed retaining a pattern of five two-member wards in Poulton-le-Fylde, but put forward modifications to some of the existing ward boundaries in order to address the under-representation in the current Carleton ward. In the eastern part of the town, the Council proposed modifying the southern boundary of the current Breck ward, transferring an area to the west of the railway line and to the south of Wembley Avenue and Princess Avenue into Hardhorn ward, and transferring an area to the east of the railway line and to the south of Garstang Road East into Breck ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised wards of Breck and Hardhorn would be 20 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average initially (8 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2004).

64 In the western part of the town the Council proposed modifying the southern boundary of Carleton ward in order to reduce the under-representation in the ward. It proposed transferring the western end of Blackpool Road, the area to the south of Blackpool Road / Poulton Road and the area around The Avenue (to the east of Poulton Road) in a revised Tithebarn ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Carleton ward would be 5 per cent above the borough average initially (6 per cent above by 2004).

65 As a consequence of its proposed Carleton ward, the Council also proposed modifying the boundary between Tithebarn and High Cross wards, proposing to include the southern part of Tithebarn ward in a revised High Cross ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Tithebarn and High Cross wards would be 2 per cent above and 5 per cent above the borough average initially (4 per cent above and 1 per cent above by 2004).

66 Given that under a 55-member council size Poulton-le-Fylde would be entitled to 10 councillors, we agree with the Council's proposal that the town should continue to be represented by 10 councillors. In view of the constraints of the borough boundary to the west, south and east of the town, and given the reasonable level of electoral equality that would be secured, we propose basing our draft recommendations for this area on the Council's proposals.

67 We have noted that the Council's proposed Breck ward would initially be over-represented by 20 per cent, although this level of electoral imbalance would improve by 2004, as a result of housing development, when the proposed ward would be over-represented by 8 per cent. However, in order to secure a slightly better level of electoral equality in the proposed Breck ward, we propose retaining the southern side of Princess Avenue, and all of Queen's Close and

King's Close in Breck ward. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Breck and Hardhorn wards, as shown on Map A2, would be 16 per cent below and 5 per cent below the borough average initially (5 per cent below and 6 per cent below by 2004).

68 In the west of the town, we propose adopting the Council's proposed Carleton, Tithebarn and High Cross wards, as shown on Maps A3 and A4, as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome comments on our draft recommendations for Poulton-le-Fylde from all interested parties during Stage Three.

The rural area

Brock, Great Eccleston and Hambleton wards

69 These three wards cover the southern part of the rural area in the east of the borough. The single-member Great Eccleston ward (comprising the parishes of Great Eccleston, Inskip-with-Sowerby and Upper Rawcliffe-with-Tarnacre) is the most under-represented ward in the borough with an electoral variance of 59 per cent (52 per cent by 2004). The two-member Hambleton ward (comprising the parishes of Hambleton, Stalmine-with-Staynall and Out Rawcliffe) is also under-represented, with an electoral variance of 31 per cent (26 per cent by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member Brock ward (comprising the parishes of Claughton-on-Brock, Bilsborrow and Myerscough) is 4 per cent above the borough average (4 per cent above by 2004).

70 At Stage One, in order to address the current under-representation that exists, the Council proposed allocating an additional councillor to this area. It proposed creating a new two-member Great Eccleston with Brock ward, comprising the parishes of Great Eccleston and Inskip-with-Sowerby from the existing Great Eccleston ward and all of the existing Brock ward. It argued that "it is impossible to combine any two of the three parishes [within the existing Great Eccleston ward] into a viable single-member ward" and that "[Great Eccleston] ward is bounded by the borough boundary [to the south and west] and is extremely difficult to add to another parish to make a viable two-member ward". However, as part of its Stage One submission the Council also forwarded a representation received from Bilsborrow Parish Council, which stated that it considered "the present representation arrangement within Brock ward to be completely satisfactory" and that it "object[ed] to the proposed amalgamation with Great Eccleston ward".

71 As a consequence of its proposed Great Eccleston with Brock ward the Council proposed transferring the parish of Upper Rawcliffe-with-Tarnacre into Hambleton ward, which would be represented by three councillors rather than the current two. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Great Eccleston with Brock and Hambleton wards would be 13 per cent above and 3 per cent below the borough average initially (10 per cent above and 7 per cent below by 2004).

72 The North West Conservatives stated that they supported a 55-member council for the borough, but opposed the Borough Councils proposals for wards in the rural area. They put forward a revised single-member Great Eccleston ward, comprising the parishes of Great Eccleston and Inskip-with-Sowerby, and proposed retaining the single-member Brock ward unchanged. The number of electors per councillor in their proposed Brock and Great Eccleston

wards would be 2 per cent above and 24 per cent above the borough average (2 per cent above and 18 per cent above by 2004).

73 In its submission, Stalmine-with-Staynall Parish Council discussed alternative combinations of parishes in which the parish could be included to form a revised ward, concluding, however, that it would prefer that Stalmine-with-Staynall parish form a single-member ward in its own right. As a consequence of this proposal it suggested that the remainder of Hambleton ward (less Stalmine-with-Staynall parish) should continue to be represented by two councillors. It also contended that the current ward name of Hambleton “causes confusion” as it was of the view that there is only a limited affinity between the village of Hambleton and the larger area covered by the existing ward of the same name. It suggested that if the existing Hambleton ward were retained unchanged, it should be named Mid Wyre or Wyre Bank.

74 We have considered all the proposals for warding arrangements in this area and we agree with the Council that this area should be allocated an additional councillor in order to address the under-representation that currently exists. However, while we acknowledge that the Council’s proposals would secure reasonable electoral equality, we are of the view that they would not provide the most appropriate reflection of local communities. With regard to the Council’s proposed Great Eccleston with Brock ward, we have noted that there are no direct road links between the parishes of Myerscough and Inskip-with-Sowerby and, officers from the Commission having visited the area, we are of the view that the village of Great Eccleston shares greater links with the village of St Michael’s on Wyre in the parish of Upper Rawcliffe-with-Tarnacre. Having considered the comments put forward by the North West Conservatives and Bilborrow Parish Council we agree that the single-member Brock ward should be retained on its existing boundaries giving an electoral variance of 2 per cent both initially and by 2004.

75 As outlined above, under a 55-member council, this area as a whole would be entitled to five councillors. As a consequence of our proposal to retain unchanged the single-member Brock ward, it has been necessary to consider alternative configurations of parishes to create wards in the remainder of this area (to be represented by four councillors overall). We considered the North West Conservatives’ proposed single-member Great Eccleston ward but noted that it would be under-represented by 24 per cent (18 per cent by 2004). Similarly, if Stalmine-with-Staynall parish were to form a single-member ward it would be over-represented by 23 per cent initially (26 per cent by 2004), and if the remainder of the existing Hambleton ward continued to be represented by two councillors it would be over-represented by 10 per cent initially (14 per cent by 2004).

76 Given that these proposals would secure unacceptable levels of electoral inequality we have considered further configurations of parishes to form wards which would secure the appropriate balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have noted the Council’s comments regarding the constraints of the borough boundary and agree that it limits any options for alternative wards in this area. However, we are proposing a revised two-member Great Eccleston ward (comprising the current Great Eccleston ward and the parish of Out Rawcliffe from Hambleton ward) and a new two-member Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall ward (comprising the parishes of Hambleton and Stalmine-with-Staynall from Hambleton ward), in order to secure the best balance possible between electoral equality, reflecting the identities and interests of local communities and securing identifiable boundaries, and in order to facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the rural area.

77 The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Great Ecclestone and Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall wards would be 7 per cent below and 13 per cent above the borough average initially (10 per cent below and 9 per cent above by 2004). Given that our revised Hambleton ward would comprise the parishes of Hambleton and Stalmine-with-Staynall we propose that it should be called Hambleton & Stalmine-with-Staynall ward to reflect the communities that it represents. However, in the light of the comments made by Stalmine-with-Staynall Parish Council, we would welcome comments from all interested parties on proposed ward names, and all our draft recommendations for this area, during Stage Three.

Calder, Wyresdale and Duchy wards

78 These three single-member wards cover the north-eastern part of the rural area. The number of electors per councillor in Calder ward, which comprises the parishes of Barnacre-with-Bonds and Bleasdale, is currently 1 per cent below the borough average. However, as a result of housing development, the number of electors per councillor is forecast to be 14 per cent above the average by 2004. The number of electors per councillor in the wards of Wyresdale (comprising the parishes of Nether Wyresdale and Forton) and Duchy (comprising the parishes of Cabus and Winmarleigh) is 2 per cent below and 6 per cent above the borough average (5 per cent below and 5 per cent above by 2004).

79 In order to accommodate the forecast increase in electorate in Calder ward, the Council proposed transferring the parish of Bleasdale into a revised Wyresdale ward, and as a consequence it proposed that the parish of Barnacre-with-Bonds should form a revised Calder ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised single-member wards of Calder and Wyresdale would be 11 per cent below and 4 per cent above the borough average initially (4 per cent above and 1 per cent above by 2004). In order to achieve improved electoral equality in the central and western parts of the rural area the Council proposed transferring Winmarleigh parish into a revised Pilling ward (detailed below), suggesting that the parish of Cabus should form a single-member ward of the same name. The number of electors per councillor in the new Cabus ward would be 9 per cent below the borough average both initially and by 2004.

80 Pilling Parish Council suggested that if Cabus parish were combined with Garstang ward, Winmarleigh parish could be transferred into a revised Pilling ward. It stated that as it believed that "each councillor should represent up to 1,500 electors, the above ward will qualify for two borough councillors".

81 We have considered Pilling Parish Council's proposal to combine the parishes of Cabus and Garstang in a revised ward, but have noted that this would not secure good electoral equality. Under a 55-member council, if such a ward were represented by two councillors (as proposed by Pilling Parish Council) it would be under-represented by 59 per cent initially (71 per cent by 2004), and even if it were to be represented by three councillors it would be under-represented by 6 per cent initially (14 per cent by 2004).

82 While the Council's proposed Wyresdale ward would cover a fairly large geographical area we have noted that it would secure a very good level of electoral equality while, in our opinion, reflecting local community identities. Furthermore, the Council's proposed Calder and Cabus wards would secure better electoral equality than Pilling Parish Council's proposals. We are also of the view that as the Council's proposed wards would comprise whole parishes, they would reflect local communities and secure identifiable boundaries, therefore providing for more effective and convenient local government. We therefore propose putting forward the Council's proposed Calder, Wyresdale and Cabus wards as part of our draft recommendations, as shown on Map 2, and would welcome views on our proposals during Stage Three.

Garstang and Catterall wards

83 The single-member Catterall ward (comprising the parishes of Catterall and Kirkland) and the two-member Garstang ward (comprising the parish of Garstang) are situated in the central part of the rural area. Both wards are under-represented: Catterall ward by 13 per cent and Garstang ward by 15 per cent (12 per cent and 28 per cent respectively by 2004).

84 During Stage One the Council put forward a revised single-member Catterall ward (comprising solely the parish of the same name) and a revised Garstang ward (comprising the current Garstang ward, the parish of Kirkland from Catterall ward and the parish of Nateby from Pilling ward), proposing that the revised Garstang ward should be represented by three councillors rather than the present two. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised wards of Catterall and Garstang would be 5 per cent below and 11 per cent below the borough average initially (6 per cent below and 3 per cent below by 2004). However, as part of its Stage One submission the Council also forwarded a representation received from Kirkland Parish Council, stating that it "share[s] many community interests with Catterall" and that it has "a very longstanding connection with the councillor for Catterall ward which we would be very reluctant to sever".

85 The North West Conservatives proposed the retention of the existing Catterall, Garstang and Pilling wards unchanged, contending that "this arrangement commands strong local support".

86 We have carefully considered all the proposals put forward for this area during Stage One. We have noted that the North West Conservatives propose retaining the existing Catterall and Garstang wards unchanged. However, under a 55-member council, if the existing Garstang ward were retained unchanged it would be under-represented by 13 per cent initially, deteriorating to 26 per cent by 2004 as a result of housing development. We are of the view that this level of electoral imbalance is unacceptable, and that it is therefore necessary to modify the existing arrangements in order to secure better electoral equality.

87 We note the views put forward by Kirkland Parish Council, however, officers from the Commission having visited the area, while we agree that it shares close links with the parish of Catterall, we are of the view that it also has ties with the neighbouring parish of Garstang, with the two parishes being linked by the A6 main road. Given the better level of electoral equality that would be secured under the Council's proposals, we propose adopting its modified Garstang and Catterall wards, as shown on Map 2, as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on our proposals during Stage Three.

Pilling and Preesall wards

88 These two wards are situated in the north-western part of the rural area. The single-member Pilling ward (comprising the parishes of Pilling and Nateby) is currently under-represented by 17 per cent (13 per cent by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Preesall ward (comprising the parish of Preesall) is 3 per cent below the borough average (2 per cent below by 2004).

89 At Stage One the Council proposed retaining the three-member Preesall ward unchanged. It also proposed a revised Pilling ward, comprising the parish of Pilling from the current Pilling ward, and the parish of Winmarleigh from Duchy ward. The number of electors in the Council's revised Preesall and Pilling wards would be 4 per cent below and 4 per cent above the borough average initially (4 per cent below and 1 per cent below by 2004).

90 As outlined earlier Pilling Parish Council proposed that Winmarleigh parish should be included in a revised Pilling ward. The North West Conservatives proposed the retention of the existing Pilling ward unchanged.

91 Having considered all the representations put forward during Stage One, we have noted that if the existing Pilling ward were retained on its present boundaries, as put forward by the North West Conservatives, under a 55-member council it would be under-represented by 15 per cent initially (11 per cent by 2004). Similarly, if the parish of Winmarleigh were included in an enlarged Pilling ward, as proposed by Pilling Parish Council, the modified single-member ward would be under-represented by 28 per cent initially (23 per cent by 2004). If such a modified Pilling ward were represented by two councillors it would be over-represented by 36 per cent initially (38 per cent by 2004).

92 In view of the better electoral equality that would be secured, and in order to facilitate a good electoral scheme elsewhere in the rural area, we propose adopting the Council's revised single-member Pilling ward as part of our draft recommendations. Similarly, given the good level of electoral equality that would be secured in an unchanged Preesall ward under a 55-member council, we agree with the Council and are proposing the retention of the existing three-member Preesall ward unchanged. We would welcome views on our draft recommendations, as shown on Map 2, during Stage Three.

Electoral Cycle

93 We received one representation regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council itself stated "the Council has always favoured whole council elections" and that its proposed electoral arrangements would "not change the current local circumstances".

94 We have considered the Council's comments and as there appears to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained, we propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the Borough Council.

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 56 to 55;
- there should be 26 wards;
- the boundaries of all but three of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

96 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations generally on the Borough Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- in Fleetwood we propose basing our recommendations on a mixture of the Labour Group's and the Council's proposals, with our own modifications in the central and southern areas;
- in Poulton-le-Fylde we propose modifying the boundary between the Council's proposed Breck and Hardhorn wards;
- we propose retaining unchanged Brock ward and a revised warding pattern in the south-western part of the rural area.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	56	55	56	55
Number of wards	27	26	27	26
Average number of electors per councillor	1,493	1,520	1,584	1,613
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	4	17	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	0	5	0

98 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Wyre Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from 15 to four. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

Draft Recommendation

Wyre Borough Council should comprise 55 councillors serving 26 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. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

99 The parish of Catterall is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. At the request of the parish council, the Borough Council proposed that Catterall parish should be served by one additional councillor, thereby increasing the total number of councillors on the Parish Council from nine to 10.

100 Our proposed borough warding arrangements would not result in change to this area and we are content to put forward the Council's proposal for consultation.

Draft Recommendation

Catterall Parish Council should comprise 10 parish councillors, instead of the current nine.

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

Draft Recommendation

For parish councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the Borough Council.

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

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wyre

5 NEXT STEPS

103 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 June 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the Borough Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

104 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Wyre: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Wyre area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3 and A4 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary between Breck and Hardhorn wards.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Carleton and Tithebarn wards.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary between Tithebarn and High Cross wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Fleetwood and Thornton Cleveleys.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Wyre: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Boundary between Breck and Hardhorn wards

Map A3: Proposed Boundary between Carleton and Tithebarn wards

Map A4: Proposed Boundary between Tithebarn and High Cross wards

APPENDIX B

Wyre Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those put forward by the Borough Council only in 11 wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

Figure B1: Wyre Borough Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bailey	Bailey ward (part); Rossall ward (part)
Bourne	Bourne ward (part)
Breck	Breck ward (part); Hardhorn ward (part)
Great Eccleston with Brock	Brock ward; Great Eccleston ward (part – the parishes of Great Eccleston and Inskip-with-Sowerby)
Hambleton	Great Eccleston ward (part – the parish of Upper Rawcliffe-with-Tarnacre); Hambleton ward
Hardhorn	Breck ward (part); Hardhorn ward (part)
Mount	Bailey ward (part); Mount ward (part); Park ward (part);
Park	Park ward (part)
Pharos	Mount ward (part); Pharos ward;
Rossall	Rossall ward (part)
Warren	Bailey ward (part); Mount ward (part); Warren ward;

Figure B2: Wyre Borough Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bailey	2	3,394	1,697	12	3,430	1,715	6
Bourne	3	4,754	1,585	4	4,925	1,642	2
Breck	2	2,433	1,217	-20	2,965	1,483	-8
Great Eccleston with Brock	2	3,439	1,720	13	3,560	1,780	10
Hambleton	3	4,406	1,469	-3	4,480	1,493	-7
Hardhorn	2	3,004	1,502	-1	3,135	1,568	-3
Mount	2	2,825	1,413	-7	3,280	1,640	2
Park	2	3,145	1,573	3	3,200	1,600	-1
Pharos	2	3,147	1,574	3	3,230	1,615	0
Rossall	2	3,043	1,522	0	3,135	1,568	-3
Warren	3	4,583	1,618	6	4,875	1,625	1

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

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

