

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Canterbury in Kent

October 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 and town councils in the city.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the city of Canterbury, and the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Canterbury on 9 May 2000.

- **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 Canterbury:

- **in 16 of the 25 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 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 18 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 10 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 109-110) are that:

- **Canterbury City Council should have 50 councillors, one more than at present;**
- **there should be 24 wards, instead of 25 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and five 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 city councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 19 of the proposed 24 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district 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 six per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

- **new warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for Chartham parish;**
- **revised warding arrangements for Sturry parish.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 17 October 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 11 December 2000:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Barham Downs	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – Barham Downs ward (the parishes of Adisham, Barham, Kingston and Womenswold)	Map 2
2	Barton	3	Barton ward (part); Northgate ward (part)	Large map
3	Blean Forest	2	Blean Forest ward (the parishes of Hackington and St Cosmos & St Damian in the Blean); St Stephens ward (part)	Large map
4	Chartham & Stone Street	2	Chartham ward (part – the proposed Chartham parish ward of Chartham parish); Stone Street ward (the parishes of Lower Hardres, Petham, Upper Hardres and Waltham)	Map A2
5	Chestfield & Swalecliffe	3	Chestfield ward (Chestfield parish and the unparished area); Swalecliffe ward (part)	Large map
6	Gorrell	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – Gorrell ward	Large map
7	Greenhill & Eddington	2	Herne ward (part – part of the unparished area); Heron ward (part)	Large map
8	Harbledown	1	Chartham ward (part – the proposed Chartham Hatch parish ward of Chartham parish); Harbledown ward (Harbledown parish)	Map A2
9	Harbour	2	Harbour ward; Tankerton ward (part)	Large map
10	Herne & Broomfield	3	Herne ward (part – Herne & Broomfield parish and part of the unparished area); Heron ward (part)	Large map
11	Heron	3	Heron ward (part); Reculver ward (part); West Bay ward (part)	Large map
12	Little Stour	1	Little Stour ward (the parishes of Ickham & Well, Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux); Northgate ward (part)	Large map
13	Marshside	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – Marshside ward (the parishes of Chislet, Hoath, Westbere and Hersden parish ward of Sturry parish)	Map 2
14	Northgate	2	Northgate ward (part); St Stephens ward (part)	Large map
15	North Nailbourne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – North Nailbourne ward (the parishes of Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne, Bishopsbourne and Bridge)	Large map
16	Reculver	3	Reculver ward (part)	Large map
17	St Stephens	3	St Stephens ward (part)	Large map
18	Seasalter	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – Seasalter ward	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
19	Sturry North	1	Sturry North ward (Sturry North parish ward of Sturry parish); Sturry South ward (part – part of Sturry South parish ward of Sturry parish)	Map A3
20	Sturry South	1	Sturry South ward (part – part of Sturry South parish ward of Sturry parish)	Map A3
21	Tankerton	2	Swalecliffe ward (part); Tankerton ward (part)	Large map
22	West Bay	2	West Bay ward (part)	Large map
23	Westgate	3	Westgate ward (part); Wincheap ward (part)	Large map
24	Wincheap	3	Barton ward (part); Westgate ward (part); Wincheap ward (part)	Large map

Notes: 1 Canterbury City contains four areas: the city of Canterbury, Herne Bay, the rural area and Whitstable. Of these, the rural area is entirely parished and the three other areas contain one parish each.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Canterbury

	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	Barham Downs	1	2,192	2,192	7	2,192	2,192	0
2	Barton	3	6,009	2,003	-3	6,181	2,060	-6
3	Blean Forest	2	4,542	2,271	10	4,547	2,274	4
4	Chartham & Stone Street	2	3,645	1,823	-11	4,494	2,247	3
5	Chestfield & Swalecliffe	3	6,409	2,136	4	6,705	2,235	2
6	Gorrell	2	4,322	2,161	5	4,395	2,198	1
7	Greenhill & Eddington	2	3,796	1,898	-8	4,155	2,078	-5
8	Harbledown	1	2,083	2,083	1	2,111	2,111	-3
9	Harbour	2	4,072	2,036	-1	4,206	2,103	-4
10	Herne & Broomfield	3	5,518	1,839	-11	6,201	2,067	-5
11	Heron	3	6,413	2,138	4	6,659	2,220	2
12	Little Stour	1	2,081	2,081	1	2,096	2,096	-4
13	Marshside	1	1,966	1,966	-4	2,184	2,184	0
14	Northgate	2	4,510	2,255	10	4,612	2,306	6
15	North Nailbourne	1	2,100	2,100	2	2,113	2,113	-3
16	Reculver	3	6,449	2,150	4	6,911	2,304	5
17	St Stephens	3	6,182	2,061	0	6,837	2,279	4
18	Seasalter	3	5,422	1,807	-12	6,373	2,124	-3
19	Sturry North	1	2,203	2,203	7	2,218	2,218	1
20	Sturry South	1	2,295	2,295	12	2,310	2,310	6
21	Tankerton	2	4,012	2,006	-3	4,153	2,077	-5
22	West Bay	2	4,558	2,279	11	4,627	2,314	6

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 %
23 Westgate	3	6,282	2,094	2	6,536	2,179	0
24 Wincheap	3	5,825	1,942	-6	6,459	2,153	-1
Totals	50	102,886	-	-	109,275	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,058	-	-	2,186	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Canterbury City Council's submission.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Canterbury in Kent on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the 12 two-tier districts in Kent as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Canterbury. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in December 1975 (Report No. 123). The electoral arrangements of Kent County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 402). We completed a directed electoral review of Medway in 1996. We expect to commence a periodic electoral review of Medway later this year, and of the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we must have 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 (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 City Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the city.

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. 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 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 2000/01 PER programme, including the Kent districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which,

among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order 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 two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

12 Stage One began on 9 May 2000, when we wrote to Canterbury City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Kent County Council, Kent Police Authority, the local authority associations, Kent Association of Parish Councils, parish and town councils in the city, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 31 July 2000.

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

14 Stage Three began on 17 October 2000 and will end on 11 December 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 Canterbury is bordered by the Kent districts of Thanet and Dover to the east, Shepway to the south and Ashford and Swale to the west. The north of the city borders the North Sea. It has an electorate of 102,886 which is forecast to increase to 109,275 by 2005. It covers an area of 31,056 hectares and has a population of some 138,600, giving a population density of around 4 persons per hectare. The historic city of Canterbury is situated in the geographical heart of the district and is circled by a large rural hinterland, which is entirely parished. The Council area also includes Herne Bay and Whitstable, which are situated on the coast to the north of the city. The city of Canterbury and the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable are substantially unparished, but contain one parish each.

17 The City Council area contains 26 parishes. The city of Canterbury itself comprises 30 per cent of the total electorate for the district.

18 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 district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

19 The electorate of the city is 102,886 (February 2000). The Council presently has 49 members who are elected from 25 wards, with the rural area being represented by 10 single-member wards, the city of Canterbury by five three-member wards, Herne Bay by four three-member wards and Whitstable by six two-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

20 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Canterbury city, with around 15 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments and growth in student numbers. The most notable increases have been in Herne and Blean Forest wards, with approximately 48 per cent and 44 per cent more electors than 20 years ago, although Seasalter and St Stephens wards have also increased substantially.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,100 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,230 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 16 of the 25 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Blean Forest ward where the councillor represents 40 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Canterbury

Figure 4: 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 Barham Downs	1	2,192	2,192	4	2,192	2,192	-2
2 Barton	3	5,474	1,825	-13	5,570	1,857	-17
3 Blean Forest	1	2,933	2,933	40	2,938	2,938	32
4 Chartham	1	2,416	2,416	15	3,267	3,267	46
5 Chestfield	2	4,561	2,281	9	4,823	2,412	8
6 Gorrell	2	4,322	2,161	3	4,395	2,198	-1
7 Harbledown	1	1,690	1,690	-20	1,702	1,702	-24
8 Harbour	2	3,527	1,764	-16	3,637	1,819	-18
9 Herne	3	8,660	2,887	37	9,517	3,172	42
10 Heron	3	5,641	1,880	-10	6,042	2,014	-10
11 Little Stour	1	1,901	1,901	-9	1,916	1,916	-14
12 Marshside	1	1,966	1,966	-6	2,184	2,184	-2
13 Northgate	3	5,604	1,868	-11	5,782	1,927	-14
14 North Nailbourne	1	2,100	2,100	0	2,113	2,113	-5
15 Reculver	3	7,205	2,402	14	7,686	2,562	15
16 St. Stephen's	3	8,141	2,714	29	8,796	2,932	31
17 Seasalter	2	5,422	2,711	29	6,373	3,187	43
18 Stone Street	1	1,622	1,622	-23	1,636	1,636	-27
19 Sturry North	1	1,952	1,952	-7	1,967	1,967	-12
20 Sturry South	1	2,546	2,546	21	2,561	2,561	15
21 Swalecliffe	2	3,194	1,597	-24	3,240	1,620	-27
22 Tankerton	2	3,211	1,606	-24	3,364	1,682	-25
23 West Bay	3	5,228	1,743	-17	5,308	1,769	-21

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 %
24 Westgate	3	6,282	2,094	0	6,536	2,179	-2
25 Wincheap	3	5,096	1,699	-19	5,730	1,910	-14
Totals	49	102,886	-	-	109,275	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,100	-	-	2,230	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Canterbury 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 Swalecliffe ward were relatively over-represented by 24 per cent, while electors in Blean Forest ward were relatively under-represented by 40 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

22 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 Canterbury City Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

23 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 12 representations during Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council, the Labour Group on the Council and the Constituency Conservative Association, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the City Council and the Commission.

Canterbury City Council

24 The City Council proposed a council of 50 members, one more than at present, representing a mixed pattern of 24 wards.

25 The City Council proposed boundary changes to all but six wards. It proposed a mix of single and two-member wards in the rural area, and proposed a mixed pattern of two and three-member wards in the remainder of the city. The City Council proposed that the rural area and Herne Bay would each be represented by one more councillor, Whitstable would retain the current representation, and the city of Canterbury would be represented by one fewer councillor. It proposed that Chartham parish be warded, and that there should be additional parish warding for Sturry parish. It also proposed that two parts of the city of Canterbury be transferred into rural wards. The City Council also proposed new names for four wards. The proposals would provide good electoral equality throughout the district, with all wards varying by 6 per cent or less by 2005.

Canterbury City Council Labour Group

26 Canterbury City Council Labour Group (hereafter known as “the Labour Group”) also proposed a council of 50 members, representing 32 single- and two-member wards.

27 The Labour Group proposed changes to the boundaries of all but three wards. It proposed retaining the existing pattern of single-member wards in the rural area, but proposed a pattern of two-member wards for the city of Canterbury, and a mix of single and two-member wards for Herne Bay and Whitstable. Under the Labour Group’s proposals, the rural area and Herne Bay would each be represented by one more councillor, Whitstable would retain the current representation, and the city of Canterbury would be represented by one fewer councillor.

28 The Labour Group further proposed that Chartham, Herne & Broomfield and St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean parishes be warded, together with additional parish warding for Sturry parish. It also proposed that part of the city of Canterbury on the western fringe be transferred into the new rural Hackington ward. The Labour Group also proposed new names for eight wards. The

proposals would provide good electoral equality throughout the district with all wards varying by 8 per cent or less by 2005.

Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association

29 Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association (“the Conservative Association”) proposed a council size of 38, 11 fewer than at present, serving 19 two-member wards.

30 The Conservative Association proposed changes to the boundaries of all wards. It proposed a pattern of entirely two-member wards throughout the city. It proposed that Lower Hardress parish be warded, that a part of the city of Canterbury be transferred into a rural ward, two parished areas be transferred into city wards, and that parts of Whitstable and Herne Bay be combined with a rural area. The Conservative Association also proposed new names for 10 wards. The proposals would provide good electoral equality throughout the district with all wards varying by 11 per cent or less by 2005.

Kent County Council

31 Kent County Council stated “the County Council draws to the attention of the LGC that any major reduction in the number of Wards in any District could reduce the flexibility of the County Council in proposing new County Electoral Divisions as part of the County PER in 2002/2003”.

Parish Councils

32 We received representations from four parish councils. Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne Parish Council supported the City Council’s proposals for Canterbury. Herne & Broomfield Parish Council proposed that the parish should be warded between two district wards, creating a new single-member Herne ward, and a new two-member Broomfield ward, similarly to the Labour Group’s proposal. Littlebourne Parish Council proposed that Lackenden, an area currently in Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne parish, be included in Littlebourne parish. It objected to the City Council’s proposal to transfer part of Northgate ward, in the city of Canterbury, to Little Stour ward, instead preferring the Labour Group’s proposal to include Fordwich parish in the ward. Wickhambreaux Parish Council proposed no change to the parish or district warding arrangements.

Other Representations

33 We received a further four representations from a local political party, a local society and two local residents. Canterbury & East Kent Green Party (“the Green Party”) objected to the City Council’s proposal to modify the boundary between St Stephens and Northgate wards, enclosing a 60-signature petition. Oaten Hill & District Society supported the City Council’s proposed boundary between Northgate and Barton wards, but objected to its proposals for changes to Wincheap ward, suggesting a number of alternatives. A resident of Swalecliffe ward objected to the proposed boundary between the new Swalecliffe & Chestfield ward and the amended Tankerton ward and proposed an alternative boundary. A resident of Harbour ward proposed a cycle of biennial elections.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

35 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.

36 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.

37 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

38 The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 6 per cent from 102,886 to 109,275 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Seasalter ward (some 951 electors), although a significant amount is also expected in Herne and Chartham wards (857 and 851 electors respectively). The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

40 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.

41 Canterbury City Council presently has 49 members. The City Council stated that it “is unanimous in retaining a proposed total number of councillors which is as near as possible the same as the existing number”. It argued that the existing imbalance between the Herne/Herne Bay area and the rest of the city could be remedied “without entailing substantial consequential changes elsewhere in the district” by an increase by one to 50 members. An increase in council size to 50 members was also proposed by the Labour Group, “reflecting population increase and recognising the different and identifiable components of the district, the towns, the rural areas and growing suburbs”.

42 However, the Conservative Association (as opposed to the Conservative Group on the Council) proposed a reduction by 11 members to 38, arguing that the present number of councillors “is substantially more than necessary”, and noting that proposals in the *White Paper* “envisage alternative structures for which a smaller number of councillors would be adequate”.

43 However, in considering radical reductions in council size we would expect such proposals to have the support of more than one party on the council, and preferably there should be all-party consensus on such an important issue. Instead, there is consensus between all the groups on the council for an increase by one to 50. The City Council, in its submission, argued that a significant reduction in councillors could not be justified. It stated that, although initial reactions to the modernising process had assumed there would be “a comparatively restricted role [for non-executive councillors], the Council have found in working out the possible format of a new constitution that there will still be an important and time-consuming part for non-executive members to play”. Furthermore, the Conservative Association did not provide an analysis of how the council would function with a 38-member council and, given the lack of evidence, of support among political parties on the council or of any consultation with local people, we are reluctant to propose such a reduction in council size.

44 Therefore, 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 50 members.

Electoral Arrangements

45 Having proposed a council size of 50, we have carefully considered both 50-member district-wide options proposed at Stage One, as well as the other submissions which we have received. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our recommendations.

46 There are some areas of agreement between the two 50-member schemes. We note that both district-wide proposals would provide for improved electoral equality by 2005. There is consensus between the City Council and the Labour Group that Barham Downs, Marshside and North Nailbourne wards retain their existing boundaries. There is also consensus that Chatham parish be warded, so that the Chartham Hatch area of the parish be transferred to Harbledown ward.

47 There was also agreement between the City Council and the Labour Group over the number of councillors that should represent the city of Canterbury and Whitstable areas. However, the Labour Group defined those areas differently from the City Council, with the result that, on the basis of a council size of 50 members, under the former's proposals, the city of Canterbury area would be over-represented by 15 per cent (two councillors too many), while the Whitstable area would be under-represented by 15 per cent (two councillors too few). The Labour Group's allocation of councillors for Herne Bay and the rural area is, however, correct.

48 Second, we note that the University of Kent site is currently divided between St Stephens ward in the city area, and Blean Forest ward in the rural area. We consider that the City Council's proposal to unite the University site in one rural ward better reflects the statutory criteria than the Labour Group's proposal, under which the University campus would be divided between two rural wards. Third, the Labour Group's proposed Long Reach and Gorrell wards would each include a part of St Cosmos & St Damian in the Blean parish, which would require the creation of very small parish wards. We consider that, for these areas, the City Council's proposal would have more regard to the statutory criteria, while achieving improved levels of electoral equality and providing for better boundaries.

49 overall, therefore, we consider that the City Council's scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the alternative schemes submitted at Stage One. However, to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary, we have decided to move away from the City Council's proposals in one area in the city. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) the city of Canterbury (five wards);
- (b) the southern rural area (five wards);
- (c) the northern rural area (five wards);
- (d) Whitstable (six wards);
- (e) Herne Bay (four wards).

50 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 at the back of this report.

The city of Canterbury (five wards)

51 The city of Canterbury is situated in the centre of the district and contains a historic heart including Canterbury Cathedral and the ancient city walls. Barton, Northgate, St Stephens and Westgate wards are entirely unparished, while Wincheap ward is partly parished, containing the parish of Thanington Without. All five wards are each represented by three members. The number

of electors per councillor is 13 per cent below the district average in Barton ward (17 per cent in 2005), 11 per cent below in Northgate ward (14 per cent in 2005), 29 per cent above in St Stephens ward (31 per cent in 2005), equal to the average in Westgate ward (2 per cent below in 2005) and 19 per cent below in Wincheap ward (14 per cent in 2005).

52 At Stage One Canterbury City Council proposed that the city of Canterbury be represented by five wards, as at present. Four wards would be served by three members, while one ward would be represented by two members, resulting in a reduction by one to 14 members for the area. The City Council stated that “there are insufficient electoral numbers to support the existing 15 members (though still too many for 14)”. To address the continuing inequality, the Council proposed transferring that part of the University of Kent campus currently in St Stephens ward to an enlarged rural Bridge Blean ward. This would also unite the University within one district ward. The City Council stated that this transfer “leaves the remaining Canterbury City electorate at 30,556, exactly right for 14 seats”. The City Council also proposed that the boundary between St Stephens ward and Northgate ward should be modified to further improve electoral equality, so that the area between Broad Oak Road and the Ashford-Thamet railway line be transferred to Northgate ward. It stated that “on community grounds this seems to the City Council acceptable”, noting “if the numbers are to be approximately equal it has to be accepted that ward boundaries must occasionally bisect streets”.

53 The City Council proposed that the eastern and southern boundaries of Northgate ward should also be amended. To the east, it proposed that the area bounded by Stodmarsh Road and Littlebourne Road should be transferred to Little Stour ward, arguing that “this area would appear to have much more in common with the Littlebourne area than with the everyday interests of Northgate ward”. To the south, it proposed that the boundary between Northgate ward and Barton ward run south of Dickens Avenue, Forrester Close and Military Road, noting that “the communities which have developed along the Northgate/Sturry Road and the St Martins Hill radial roads respectively are very clearly physically separated by open land in between”. As a result of this reduced electorate, the City Council proposed that Northgate ward should be represented by two members, rather than three as at present.

54 As stated above, the City Council proposed that Barton ward be extended to include part of Northgate ward. The City Council further proposed that that part of Barton ward bounded by Ethelbert Road and South Canterbury Road be transferred to Wincheap ward, stating “while perhaps few urban boundaries are wholly ideal, this one is seen as more rational than the existing one between Wincheap and Barton wards”. The City Council proposed no change to Westgate ward, noting that the ward possesses good electoral equality.

55 Under the City Council’s proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the district average in Barton ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent above in Northgate ward (equal to the average in 2005), equal to the average in St Stephens ward (4 per cent above in 2005), 2 per cent above in Westgate ward (equal to the average in 2005) and 6 per cent below in Wincheap ward (1 per cent in 2005).

56 The Labour Group also proposed that the city of Canterbury area should be represented by 14 members, but proposed a uniform pattern of seven two-member wards for this area. As stated above, under the Labour Group's scheme, the city itself only merits 12 members. Accordingly, the area as a whole would be substantially over-represented. We have not, therefore, been able to make a detailed comparison between the proposals from the Labour Group and the City Council in this area.

57 Under the Labour Group's proposals the number of electors per councillor in 2005 would be 3 per cent below the district average in Barton ward, 7 per cent below in Northgate ward, 7 per cent above in St Dunstons ward, 4 per cent below in St Martins ward, 2 per cent above in St Stephens ward, 5 per cent above in Westgate ward and 5 per cent above in Wincheap ward. Existing-year electorates were only supplied for the two new Canterbury wards. In 2000, the number of electors per councillor would be 13 per cent above the average for the district in St Dunstons ward and 5 per cent below in St Martins ward.

58 Canterbury & East Kent Green Party objected to the City Council's proposed boundary between St Stephens ward and Northgate ward, proposing that the existing boundary along the Great Stour River be retained. The Green Party enclosed a 60-signature petition supporting its proposal. It stated "reasons for supporting our petition given by the public included: [that the proposed area of transfer has] no community identification with Northgate", that electors objected to having to cross Kingsmead and Sturry Road to vote, that electors preferred to be represented by three members, as proposed for St Stephens ward, rather than two members, as proposed for Northgate ward, and that no local community organisations cross the existing boundary.

59 Under the Green Party's proposed amendment to the City Council's scheme, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below in Northgate ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 4 per cent above in St Stephens ward (8 per cent in 2005).

60 Oaten Hill & District Society (OHDS) stated that its area is currently split between Northgate, Barton and Wincheap wards. It therefore supported the "more rational" proposed boundary between Northgate and Barton wards as it would transfer its membership currently in Northgate ward into Barton ward. However, it objected to the proposal to transfer those properties around Ethelbert Road, in Barton ward, to Wincheap ward, stating that its members in this area "feel part of the South Canterbury/Old Dover Road area, and are strongly opposed to being made part of Wincheap ward".

61 It proposed three alternative options, first, it argued that "the OHDS viewpoint would only be fully met if the proposed Barton ward were expanded to include not only the South Canterbury area which is due to be switched into Wincheap but also the part of the Nunnery Fields area already in Wincheap". It noted that the ward would then be under represented, and therefore proposed that an area around the north of Old Dover Road be transferred out, but accepted that this option may not be supported by residents in this area. Second, it proposed that the boundary between Barton and Wincheap wards follow the centre of Old Dover Road and Ethelbert Road, rather than follow the backs of properties on these streets as proposed by the City Council. It considered that "this would make for a much clearer boundary", but noted that "it would not address the main problem of lack of affinity with Wincheap".

62 Third, the Society proposed the retention of a single-member Stone Street ward, arguing that the City Council’s proposed Chartham & Stone Street ward “is thoroughly artificial”. It supported the City Council’s proposed transfer of Chartham Hatch to Harbeldown ward, but proposed that the remainder of Chartham parish be combined with North ward of Thanington Without parish to create a new two-member Stour Valley ward. South ward of Thanington Without parish would then be transferred to an enlarged Stone Street ward. The unparished part of Wincheap ward would form a new two-member Martyrs Field ward. The Society noted that it could not find a way of dividing Barton ward and the remainder of Wincheap ward “that keeps the whole of the OHDS area in one ward”.

63 We have carefully considered the representations from the City Council, the Labour Group, Canterbury & East Kent Green Party and Oaten Hill & District Society. As noted earlier, the Labour Group’s proposals would result in over-representation by 15 per cent for the city of Canterbury area as a whole. Given that the primary purpose of the review is to achieve electoral equality across the district and no justification for such a large imbalance for this area was submitted, we do not propose adopting the Labour Group’s proposals for the city area. While we note the Green Party’s proposal to retain the existing southern boundary of St Stephens ward, we consider that on balance the proposals from the City Council would provide improvements to electoral equality in this area while better meeting the statutory criteria. We also note the good level of electoral equality which currently exists in Westgate ward (also expected to be maintained in five years’ time) and consider that the retention of the existing arrangements for this ward would not have an adverse effect on our proposals for other wards in the city. We are therefore adopting the City Council’s proposals for the wards of Barton and Westgate as part of our draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the district average in Barton ward (6 per cent below in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Westgate ward (equal to the average in 2005).

64 We have noted the support from Oaten Hill & District Society for the boundary between Barton and Northgate wards and consider that the open land does separate the communities in the north and in the south of the existing Northgate ward and would, therefore, be an appropriate place to divide these communities. However, having visited the area, we found that, under the City Council’s proposals, Chaucer Road and Craddock Road would have no direct vehicular access to the remainder of Barton ward. Consequently, we are proposing to adopt the City Council’s proposed Northgate ward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to an amendment to extend the boundary southwards to include in the ward Chaucer Road and Craddock Road, including the City Council offices and the Courts. Under our draft recommendations for Northgate ward the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average (6 per cent in 2005).

65 With regard to the Oaten Hill & District Society’s three options for this area, officers from the Commission having visited the area, we consider that none of the proposals would provide as good a balance between improvements to electoral equality and the statutory criteria as the City Council’s scheme. In particular, we consider that the Old Dover Road acts as a community focus and therefore should not be utilised as a boundary. We also consider that the Society’s proposed Martyr’s Field ward, which would include much of the unparished part of Wincheap ward, would not be a good reflection of community identity. Therefore we propose adopting the City Council’s

proposals for Wincheap ward as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent below the district average in Wincheap ward (1 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the city wards are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

The southern rural area (five wards)

66 The five wards of Barham Downs, Chartham, Harbledown, North Nailbourne and Stone Street encircle the west and south of the city area. Chartham and Harbledown wards contain the parishes of the same name. Barham Downs ward contains Adisham, Barham, Kingston and Womenswold parishes; North Nailbourne ward contains Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne, Bishopsbourne and Bridge parishes; and Stone Street ward contains Lower Hardres, Petham, Upper Hardres and Waltham parishes. All five wards are each represented by a single member. The number of electors per councillor is 4 per cent above the district average in Barham Downs ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 15 per cent above in Chartham ward (46 per cent in 2005), 20 per cent below in Harbledown ward (24 per cent in 2005), equal to the average in North Nailbourne ward (5 per cent below in 2005) and 23 per cent below in Stone Street ward (27 per cent in 2005).

67 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the southern rural area be represented by four wards, one fewer than at present. Three wards would be served by a single member, while one ward would be represented by two members, retaining the existing five members for the area. The City Council proposed that Harbledown ward be extended to include the Chartham Hatch settlement in the north of Chartham parish, consequently dividing Chartham parish into two parish wards. It proposed that the remainder of Chartham parish south of the London-Dover railway line be combined with Stone Street ward to create a new two-member Chartham & Stone Street ward. It proposed no change for North Nailbourne and Barham Downs wards.

68 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Barham Downs ward (equal to the average in 2005), 11 per cent below in Chartham & Stone Street ward (3 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in Harbledown ward (3 per cent below in 2005) and 2 per cent above in North Nailbourne ward (3 per cent below in 2005).

69 At Stage One the Labour Group proposed a pattern of five single-member wards for the southern part of the rural area. It proposed that Chartham parish be warded into three, so that Chartham Hatch, the settlement north of the London-Dover railway line, would be combined with Harbledown parish in an enlarged Harbledown ward, that the settlement east of Cockerling Road and north of The Downs, including the new development at the former St Augustine's Hospital site, would be transferred to an enlarged Stone Street ward, and the main Chartham settlement would constitute Chartham ward. It proposed that North Nailbourne and Barham Downs wards be retained.

70 Under the Labour Group's proposals the number of electors per councillor in 2005 would be equal to the district average in Barham Downs ward, 1 per cent above in Chartham ward, 3 per cent below in Harbledown ward, 3 per cent below in North Nailbourne ward and 2 per cent above in Stone Street ward. Existing-year electorates were not supplied for these wards.

71 Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne Parish Council stated it had “no objections” to the City Council’s proposals for Canterbury. It also proposed no change to parish electoral arrangements.

72 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received in this area. We note the consensus regarding the enlargement of Harbledown ward to include part of Chartham parish. Having visited the area, we consider that the Chartham Hatch settlement is sufficiently separate, both in distance and profile, from the remainder of the parish to justify a separate parish ward. We are therefore including this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. We note that no specific parish ward names have been submitted, and therefore propose that the parish ward of Chartham parish north of the London-Dover railway line be named Chartham Hatch parish ward. We also note the consensus regarding the retention of the existing boundaries for Barham Downs and North Nailbourne wards and, in view of the good levels of electoral equality which would result, propose retaining these wards as part of our draft recommendations.

73 We note that the City Council proposed combining the remainder of Chartham parish with Stone Street ward, whereas the Labour Group proposed retaining a separate Chartham ward, but transferring the former St Augustine’s Hospital site to Stone Street ward. Having visited the area, we propose adopting the City Council’s proposed Chartham & Stone Street ward. While we note that this would create a geographically large ward we consider that it would be artificial to separate the new development site from the main Chartham settlement. We consider it would be in the community interest to retain the link between the new properties and Chartham.

74 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Barham Downs ward (equal to the average in 2005), 11 per cent below in Chartham & Stone Street ward (3 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in Harbledown ward (3 per cent below in 2005) and 2 per cent above in North Nailbourne ward (3 per cent below in 2005). Our proposals for the southern rural wards are illustrated on Map 2, Map A2 and the large map at the back of the report.

The northern rural area (five wards)

75 Surrounding the east and north of the city area, and to the south of the Herne Bay and Whitstable areas are the five wards of Blean Forest, Little Stour, Marshside, Sturry North and Sturry South. Blean Forest ward contains the parishes of Hackington and St Cosmos & St Damian in the Blean; Little Stour ward contains the parishes of Ickham & Well, Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux; Marshside ward contains Chislet, Hoath and Westbere parishes and Hersden parish ward of Sturry parish; Sturry North ward contains Sturry North parish ward of Sturry parish; and Sturry South ward contains Fordwich parish and Sturry South parish ward of Sturry parish. All five wards are each represented by a single member. The number of electors per councillor is 40 per cent above the district average in Blean Forest ward (32 per cent in 2005), 9 per cent below in Little Stour ward (14 per cent in 2005), 6 per cent below in Marshside ward (2 per cent in 2005), 7 per cent below in Sturry North ward (12 per cent below in 2005) and 21 per cent above in Sturry South ward (15 per cent in 2005).

76 At Stage One the City Council proposed that this northern rural area be covered by five wards, as at present. Four wards would be represented by a single member, while one ward would

be represented by two members, resulting in an increase of one, to six members, for the area. The City Council proposed that Little Stour ward be extended to include that part of the existing Northgate ward east of Stodmarsh Road and north of Littlebourne Road. It proposed that Marshside ward retain the existing boundaries. The City Council proposed that part of Sturry South ward be transferred to Sturry North ward, so that the boundary runs along the backs of properties on Chestnut Drive and Oakwood Drive, then follows Babs Oak Hill southward to Island Road, with consequential parish re-warding. Sturry North would be otherwise unchanged. In Blean Forest ward, the City Council proposed extending the ward so that all of the University of Kent site would be united in the same ward, which would be represented by two members.

77 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average in Blean Forest ward (4 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent above in Little Stour ward (4 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent below in Marshside ward (equal to the average in 2005), 7 per cent above in Sturry North ward (1 per cent in 2005) and 12 per cent above in Sturry South ward (6 per cent in 2005).

78 At Stage One the Labour Group proposed a pattern of six single-member wards for the northern part of the rural area. In particular, it proposed that Fordwich parish be transferred from Sturry South ward to Little Stour ward. No change was proposed for Marshside ward. The boundaries of Sturry South ward would be modified so that, to the south, it would follow the existing southern boundary of Sturry parish. The boundary would then run east along the Ashford-Thamet railway line, then north along Sturry Hill, east behind the properties on Wildwood Road, Meadow Road and then through Hoades Wood to the parish boundary. Sturry North ward would be otherwise unchanged. The Labour Group also proposed that Blean Forest ward be split, so that Hackington parish form a ward of the same name, together with that part of the University of Kent currently in St Stephens ward. Blean Forest ward would then comprise the parish of St Cosmos & St Damian in the Blean, minus part of the north-west of the ward, which would be transferred to two Whitstable wards.

79 Under the Labour Group's proposals the number of electors per councillor in 2005 would be 8 per cent above the district average in Blean Forest ward, 6 per cent below in Hackington ward, 1 per cent above in Little Stour ward, equal to the average in Marshside ward, 5 per cent below in Sturry North ward and 1 per cent below in Sturry South ward. Existing-year electorates were only supplied for the new rural ward; in 2000, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Hackington ward.

80 Littlebourne Parish Council proposed that the parish's external boundaries be amended to include the area known as Lackenden, currently in Bekesbourne-with-Patrixbourne parish. It objected to the City Council's proposal to combine part of Northgate ward with Little Stour ward, considering "there is little in common with the area there, whereas there was with Lackenden". The Parish Council stated its preference for the Labour Group's proposal to combine Fordwich parish, currently part of Sturry South ward, with Little Stour ward.

81 Wickhambreaux Parish Council supported the existing district ward arrangements, stating its preference not to be linked with the parishes to the north. It also proposed no change to the existing number of parish councillors and stated that there was no necessity to ward the parish.

82 We have carefully considered the proposals for these wards. Both the City Council and the Labour Group proposed no change for Marshside ward. Noting the consensus behind this proposal, that the retention of Marshside ward would result in good electoral equality, and that it would not have an adverse affect on neighbouring wards, we propose retaining the existing Marshside ward as part of our draft recommendations.

83 Additionally, while the City Council proposed that an area of Northgate ward be transferred to Little Stour ward, the Labour Group proposed instead that Fordwich parish, currently in Sturry South ward, be transferred to Little Stour ward. We have carefully examined both these options, and, having visited the area, consider that the Fordwich area has a good community of interest with the Sturry South area. We also consider that the area bounded by Stodmarsh Road and Littlebourne Road has greater community affinity to the rural Little Stour area than the urban Northgate ward. We therefore propose adopting the City Council's proposals for Little Stour ward as part of our draft recommendations.

84 We would also, given our proposed Little Stour ward, propose adopting the City Council's modified Sturry North and Sturry South wards. However, we note that the existing boundary running between the Ashford-Thamet railway line and the backs of the properties on Wildwood Road, which the City Council proposed should continue to be utilised, does not follow recognisable ground features. We therefore propose an amended boundary which would continue to run along the railway line to Sturry Court Mews, but then north along Sturry Hill. This change would not affect any electors.

85 Currently, the University of Kent site is divided between a city ward, St Stephens, and a rural ward, Blean Forest. We consider that the City Council's proposal to unite the University in one ward, Blean Forest, provides improvements to electoral equality and better reflects the statutory criteria than the Labour Group's proposal, under which the University site would be divided between Blean Forest and Hackington wards. Therefore, we propose adopting the City Council's proposals for Blean Forest ward as part of our draft recommendations.

86 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the district average in the two-member Blean Forest ward (4 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent above in Little Stour ward (4 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent below in Marshside ward (equal to the average in 2005), 7 per cent above in Sturry North ward (1 per cent in 2005) and 12 per cent above in Sturry South ward (6 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the northern rural wards are illustrated on Map 2, Map A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Whitstable (six wards)

87 Whitstable is situated in the far north-west of the city. Blean Forest ward is to the south, Herne Bay is to the east and the coast to the north. Gorrell, Harbour, Seasalter, Swalecliffe and Tankerton wards are entirely unparished, while Chestfield ward is partly parished, containing Chestfield parish. All six wards are each represented by two members. The number of electors per councillor is 9 per cent above the district average in Chestfield ward (8 per cent in 2005), 3 per cent above in Gorrell ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 16 per cent below in Harbour ward (18 per cent in 2005), 29 per cent above in Seasalter ward (43 per cent in 2005), 24 per cent below

in Swalecliffe ward (27 per cent in 2005) and 24 per cent below in Tankerton ward (25 per cent in 2005).

88 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Whitstable be represented by five wards, one fewer than at present. Three wards would be served by two members, while two wards would be represented by three members, retaining 12 members for the area. The City Council proposed no change to the boundaries of Sealsalter ward, but proposed that it be represented by three members, one more than at present. It also proposed no change for Gorrell ward. The City Council proposed that Chestfield and Swalecliffe wards be combined to form a new Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward. Tankerton ward would be extended to include that part of the existing Swalecliffe ward west of Herne Bay Road. The western boundary of Harbour ward would be amended to run along the west side of Beach Walk, then follow Tower Parade and Castle Road, thereby transferring both sides of the Harbour into Harbour ward.

89 Under the City Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the district average in Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward (2 per cent in 2005), 5 per cent above in Gorrell ward (1 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent below in Harbour ward (4 per cent in 2005), 12 per cent below in Sealsalter ward (3 per cent in 2005) and 3 per cent below in Tankerton ward (5 per cent in 2005).

90 The Labour Group also proposed that the Whitstable area should be represented by 12 members, but proposed a pattern of two single-member and five two-member wards for this area. However, because the Labour Group included parts of the rural area in their proposals for the Whitstable area, under their scheme Whitstable merits 14 members. Accordingly, the area as a whole would be substantially under-represented. We have not, therefore, been able to make a detailed comparison between the proposals from the Labour Group and the City Council in this area.

91 Under the Labour Group's proposals the number of electors per councillor in 2005 would be 2 per cent below the district average in Chestfield ward, 2 per cent below in Gorrell ward, 2 per cent below in Harbour ward, 3 per cent below in Long Reach ward, 3 per cent above in Sealsalter ward, 2 per cent below in Swalecliffe ward, and 4 per cent above in Tankerton ward. Existing-year electorates were only supplied for the new Whitstable ward: in 2000 the number of electors per councillor would be 17 per cent below the average for the district in Long Reach ward.

92 We also received two representations from local residents from this area. A resident of Swalecliffe ward objected to the City Council's proposed boundary between Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward and Tankerton ward, instead proposing that the boundary follow the Tankerton Brook, so that the properties west of the Brook would be transferred to Tankerton ward, and properties east of the Brook would be transferred to Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward. A resident of Harbour ward proposed a system of biennial elections, and this is discussed in Paragraphs 104-108 later in this chapter.

93 We have considered the alternative boundary proposed by a resident of Swalecliffe ward. However, having visited the area, we note that the Brook would not constitute as easily identifiable a boundary as that proposed by the City Council. We consider that, in this area, the

centre of Herne Bay Road would provide for a better boundary than the Brook and therefore are adopting the City Council's proposed Tankerton ward as part of our draft recommendations.

94 We have also examined the City Council's proposed Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward. While we note that the proposed ward would be bisected by the North Kent Coast railway line, we also note that the railway is on a viaduct at this point, and there are good links between the two parts of the ward. We also note that there are several facilities that link the two communities, including the railway station, which is also named Chestfield & Swalecliffe. We are therefore content to adopt the City Council's proposed Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward as part of our draft recommendations. The City Council proposed no change to the boundaries of Gorrell and Seasalter wards. Gorrell ward currently has good electoral equality, which is forecast to improve further by 2005. For Seasalter ward, the addition of a third member would provide for good electoral equality by 2005, due to proposed development in the ward. In the light of this good electoral equality we are adopting the City Council's proposals for Gorrell and Seasalter wards as part of our draft recommendations. Having adopted the City Council's modified Gorrell, Seasalter and Tankerton wards, and noting the absence of any opposition to its proposed Harbour ward, we are also adopting this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

95 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the district average in Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward (2 per cent in 2005), 5 per cent above in Gorrell ward (1 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent below in Harbour ward (4 per cent in 2005), 12 per cent below in Seasalter ward (3 per cent in 2005) and 3 per cent below in Tankerton ward (5 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the Whitstable wards are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Herne Bay (four wards)

96 Herne Bay is situated in the far north-east of the city, to the east of Whitstable. Like its neighbour, it is bordered to the north by the North Sea and to the south by the rural area. The three coastal wards, Heron, Reculver and West Bay, are entirely unparished, while Herne ward is partly parished, containing Herne & Broomfield parish. The area is represented by four three-member wards. The number of electors per councillor is 37 per cent above the district average in Herne ward (42 per cent in 2005), 10 per cent below in Heron ward (unchanged in 2005), 14 per cent above in Reculver ward (15 per cent in 2005) and 17 per cent below in West Bay ward (21 per cent in 2005).

97 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Herne Bay be represented by five wards, one more than at present. Three of the wards would be served by three members, while two of the wards would be represented by two members, resulting in an increase of one to 13 members for the area. It proposed that Herne ward be amended, so that the unparished part of Herne ward, together with that part of Heron ward bounded by the North Kent Coast railway line, Herne Bay Court and the Thanet Way form a new two-member Greenhill & Eddington ward. The remainder of Herne ward, including Herne & Broomfield parish, together with the remainder of Heron ward, south of the railway line, would form a new three-member Herne & Broomfield ward. West Bay ward would be represented by two members, one fewer than at present. The ward boundaries would be modified, so that the boundary follows Albany Drive and Sandown Drive to The Circus,

transferring properties east of these roads to Heron ward. The City Council further proposed that the North Kent Coast railway line form the southern boundary of Heron ward, as described above. The City Council also proposed to amend Reculver ward, transferring those properties west of Beacon Road and Oakdale Road to Heron ward.

98 Under the City Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent below the district average in Herne & Broomfield ward (5 per cent in 2005), 8 per cent below the district average in Greenhill & Eddington ward (5 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent above in Heron ward (2 per cent above in 2005), 4 per cent above in Reculver ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 11 per cent above in West Bay ward (5 per cent in 2005).

99 At Stage One the Labour Group also proposed that the Herne Bay area should be represented by 13 members, but in a revised pattern of one single-member and six two-member wards. The Labour Group proposed that Herne & Broomfield parish be warded to form a new two-member Broomfield ward to the north and an amended single-member Herne Village ward to the south. The unparished remainder of Herne ward would form a new two-member Greenhill ward. To the north of the North Kent Coast railway line, the eastern boundary of West Bay ward would be modified to follow the Western Esplanade, the backs of the properties on Carlton Hill, south along Central Avenue, then north along Sea Street, to the existing boundary along Albany Drive. The Labour Group proposed that Heron ward be represented by two members, a reduction by one. The southern boundary of Heron ward would follow the railway line. Additionally, that part of the existing Heron ward east of William Street and Gordon Road would be transferred to a new two-member East Cliff ward. Reculver ward would also be represented by two members, rather than three at present. The western boundary of Reculver ward would run south along Beacon Avenue, east along Beltinge Road, south along Landon Road, east along Grange Road and finally south along Reculver Road to the railway line. Those properties west of this line would be transferred to the new East Cliff ward.

100 Under the Labour Group's proposals the number of electors per councillor in 2005 would be 7 per cent below the district average in Broomfield ward, 7 per cent above in East Cliff ward, 7 per cent below in Greenhill ward, 1 per cent above in Herne Village ward, 5 per cent above in Heron ward, 3 per cent above in Reculver ward and 2 per cent above in West Bay ward. Existing-year electorates were only supplied for the four new Herne Bay wards. In 2000, the number of electors per councillor would be 13 per cent below the district average in Broomfield ward, 7 per cent above in East Cliff ward, 11 per cent below in Greenhill ward and 4 per cent above in Herne Village ward.

101 Herne & Broomfield Parish Council supported the Labour Group's proposal to ward the parish for district warding purposes.

102 We have carefully considered the representations regarding the Herne Bay area. In particular, both the City Council and the Labour Group proposed creating a new ward in the west of the existing Herne ward, which we consider has merit. However, we note that the Labour Group's proposed Greenhill ward would place Herne Bay Court and the properties east of Canterbury Road in a new Broomfield ward, from which they are separated by the New Thanet Way (A299) and open land. We consider that these properties have a greater community identity with the other properties off Canterbury Road than with the Broomfield community. We therefore propose

adopting the City Council's Greenhill & Eddington ward as part of our draft recommendations. In addition, having visited the area, we consider that the boundary between the Labour Group's proposed Herne Village and Broomfield wards is not the best available in either reflecting the statutory criteria or following clearly identifiable ground features, and we are not convinced that two separate wards in this area would best reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We therefore propose adopting the City Council's proposal for Herne & Broomfield ward as part of our draft recommendations. To the north of the North Kent Coast railway line, we consider that the City Council's proposals would also provide for a better reflection of the statutory criteria and more clearly identifiable boundaries in this area. We are therefore adopting the City Council's modified Heron, Reculver and West Bay wards as part of our draft recommendations.

103 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent below the district average in Herne & Broomfield ward (5 per cent in 2005), 8 per cent below the district average in Greenhill & Eddington ward (5 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent above in Heron ward (2 per cent above in 2005), 4 per cent above in Reculver ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 11 per cent above in West Bay ward (6 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the Herne Bay wards are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

104 We received four representations regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council stated that it favoured the continuation of whole-council elections, noting "the City Council has taken no decision to change and would therefore continue to elect the whole of its membership every four years".

105 The Labour Group proposed a pattern of single- and two-member wards to facilitate a move to elections by halves. It considered that biennial elections would "be more democratic, would make the Council more accountable and would enable the electorate to have a more decisive and regular influence on Council affairs". The Labour Group argued that biennial elections "are a very real probability in the future" and that a mixed warding pattern "would mean a further review".

106 The Conservative Association proposed a uniform pattern of 19 two-member wards, arguing that in the *White Paper*, "the Government propose that district councils should be elected by halves in alternate years. In order that the whole electorate of the district has a chance to vote on equal terms at each ordinary election, a scheme made up of two councillor wards would be necessary".

107 A resident of Whitstable also proposed biennial elections, considering this would increase accountability.

108 However, a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards would not preclude a move to biennial elections. Furthermore, as stated earlier, 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 Council’s present system of whole council elections at this time.

Conclusions

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

- there should be an increase in council size from 49 to 50;
- there should be 24 wards;
- the boundaries of 20 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.

110 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the City Council’s proposals, but propose departing from them in the following area:

- we propose that the boundary between the modified Northgate and Barton wards be amended to include the Craddock Road/Chaucer Road area in Northgate ward.

111 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	49	50	49	50
Number of wards	25	24	25	24
Average number of electors per councillor	2,100	2,058	2,230	2,186
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	16	5	18	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	8	0	10	0

112 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Canterbury City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 16 to five. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation
Canterbury City Council should comprise 50 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

113 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible 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, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Chartham and Sturry to reflect the proposed district wards.

114 The parish of Chartham is currently served by 11 councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the City Council proposed that Chartham parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the smaller, northern settlement of Chartham Hatch, and the other covering the larger settlement of Chartham. It did not propose specific parish ward names. The two wards would be represented by two and nine parish councillors respectively.

115 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Chartham parish, reflecting the City Council’s proposals for Chartham & Stone Street and Harbeldown wards, we propose adopting the City Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish.

116 Additionally, we propose that the parish ward covering the northern settlement of Chartham Hatch be named Chartham Hatch parish ward, and that the parish ward covering the larger settlement of Chartham be named Chartham parish ward. We would welcome comments on these parish ward names at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation
Chartham Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Chartham (returning nine councillors) and Chartham Hatch (two). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

117 Sturry Parish Council is currently served by 11 councillors representing the three parish wards of Hersden, North and South, which are represented by three, four and four councillors respectively. In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Sturry parish, reflecting the City Council’s proposals for Marshside, Sturry North and Sturry South district wards, we propose modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish.

Draft Recommendation
Sturry Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Hersden (returning three councillors), North (four) and South (four). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in this area, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

118 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

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

119 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Canterbury and welcome comments from the City Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town 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 Canterbury

5 NEXT STEPS

120 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 11 December 2000. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the City Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

121 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Canterbury 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

122 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 Canterbury: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Chartham parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Sturry parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the city of Canterbury and the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Canterbury: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Chartham Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Sturry Parish

APPENDIX B

Canterbury City Council’s Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

Figure B1: Canterbury City Council’s Proposal: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Barton	Barton ward (part); Northgate ward (part)
Northgate	Northgate ward (part); St Stephens ward (part)

Figure B2: Canterbury City Council’s Proposals: 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 %
Barton	3	6,229	2,076	1	6,401	2,134	-2
Northgate	2	4,290	2,145	4	4,392	2,196	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on Canterbury City Council’s submission.

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

Canterbury City Council Labour Group's Proposal

Figure B3: Canterbury City Council Labour Group's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward in 2000

The Labour Group provided 2000 data for the eight proposed new wards only. The variance from the average has been calculated using the existing-year total of 102,866 and the Labour Group's proposed council size of 50.

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Broomfield	2	3,582	1,791	-13
East Cliff	2	4,390	2,195	7
Greenhill	2	3,653	1,827	-11
Hackington	1	2,045	2,045	-1
Herne Village	1	2,150	2,150	4
Long Reach	2	3,429	1,715	-17
St Dunstons	2	4,661	2,331	13
St Martins	2	3,898	1,949	-5

Figure B4: Canterbury City Council Labour Group's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward in 2005

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Barham Downs	1	2,192	2,192	0
2 Barton	2	4,250	2,125	-3
3 Blean Forest	1	2,350	2,350	8
4 Broomfield	2	4,062	2,031	-7
5 Chartham	1	2,200	2,200	1
6 Chestfield	2	4,283	2,142	-2
7 East Cliff	2	4,658	2,329	7
8 Gorrell	2	4,266	2,133	-2
9 Greenhill	2	4,078	2,039	-7

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
10	Hackington	1	2,047	2,047	-6
11	Harbledown	1	2,111	2,111	-3
12	Harbour	2	4,265	2,133	-2
13	Herne Village	1	2,200	2,200	1
14	Heron	2	4,593	2,297	5
15	Little Stour	1	2,201	2,201	1
16	Long Reach	2	4,229	2,115	-3
17	Marshside	1	2,184	2,184	0
18	North Nailbourne	1	2,113	2,113	-3
19	Northgate	2	4,042	2,021	-7
20	Reculver	2	4,480	2,240	3
21	Seasalter	1	2,244	2,244	3
22	St Dunstons	2	4,693	2,347	7
23	St Martins	2	4,190	2,095	-4
24	St Stephens	2	4,449	2,225	2
25	Stone Street	1	2,234	2,234	2
26	Sturry North	1	2,084	2,084	-5
27	Sturry South	1	2,159	2,159	-1
28	Swalecliffe	1	2,132	2,132	-2
29	Tankerton	2	4,563	2,282	4
30	West Bay	2	4,466	2,233	2
31	Westgate	2	4,583	2,292	5
32	Wincheap	2	4,600	2,300	5
	Totals	50	109,201	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,184	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Canterbury City Council Labour Group's submission.

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

Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association's Proposal

Figure B5: Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association's Proposals: 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 %
1 Blean & Chestfield	2	5,340	2,670	-1	5,607	2,804	-2
2 Cathedral	2	4,849	2,425	-10	5,789	2,895	1
3 Chartham & Bridge	2	4,982	2,491	-8	5,847	2,924	2
4 Gorrell	2	5,684	2,842	5	5,779	2,890	1
5 Hampton & Greenhill	2	5,296	2,648	-2	5,296	2,648	-8
6 Herne & Broomfield	2	5,518	2,759	2	6,375	3,188	11
7 Heron	2	5,205	2,603	-4	5,533	2,767	-4
8 Nackington	2	5,431	2,716	0	5,527	2,764	-4
9 Reculver	2	5,561	2,781	3	6,022	3,011	5
10 Rough Common	2	5,576	2,788	3	5,588	2,794	-3
11 Seasalter	2	5,115	2,558	-6	6,066	3,033	6
12 St Stephens	2	5,711	2,856	5	5,711	2,856	-1
13 Stour & Nailbourne	2	5,463	2,732	1	5,491	2,746	-4
14 Sturry & Marshside	2	5,903	2,952	9	6,151	3,076	7
15 Swalecliffe	2	5,348	2,674	-1	5,394	2,697	-6
16 Tankerton	2	5,683	2,842	5	5,924	2,962	3
17 Vauxhall	2	5,890	2,945	9	5,968	2,984	4

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 %
18 West Bay	2	5,154	2,577	-5	5,304	2,652	-8
19 Wincheap	2	5,177	2,589	-4	5,811	2,906	1
Totals	38	102,886	–	–	109,183	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,708	–	–	2,873	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association's submission.

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

APPENDIX 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.