

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Canterbury in Kent

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

May 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Canterbury in Kent.

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A large map illustrating the 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.



Local Government Commission for England

9 May 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 9 May 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Canterbury under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in October 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 134-135) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Canterbury.

We recommend that Canterbury City Council should be served by 50 councillors representing 24 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be elected as a whole every four years.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Canterbury on 9 May 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 17 October 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in 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 district and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 18 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 10 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 134-135) 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 and five wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 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 level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 8 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

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

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

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 18 June 2001:

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	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 Cosmus & 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)	Maps 2 and 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)	Maps 2 and 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)	Maps 2 and A3
20	Sturry South	1	Sturry South ward (part – part of Sturry South parish ward of Sturry parish)	Maps 2 and 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 Final 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	6,038	2,013	-2	6,210	2,070	-5
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	4,278	2,139	4	4,380	2,190	0
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	6,414	2,138	4	7,069	2,356	8
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	5,796	1,932	-6	6,430	2,143	-2
Totals	50	102,886	-	-	109,275	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,058	-	-	2,186	-

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Canterbury in Kent. We have now reviewed 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 was 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 commenced a periodic electoral review of Medway in November 2000, and expect to commence a review of the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 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. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 17 October 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Canterbury in Kent*, and ended on 11 December 2000. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

12 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 four 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.

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

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

15 The electorate of the 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.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Canterbury, 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.

17 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 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 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 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 12 representations, including city-wide schemes from the City Council, the Labour Group on the Council and the Constituency Conservative Association. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Canterbury in Kent*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the City Council's proposals, which achieved good levels of electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of single- and two-member wards in the rural area, and a mixed pattern of two- and three-member wards in the remainder of the city. However, we moved away from the City Council's scheme in one area, proposing that the Craddock Road/Chaucer Road area should be included in Northgate ward. We proposed that:

- Canterbury City Council should be served by 50 councillors, compared with the current 49, representing 24 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, while five wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and a redistribution of councillors for Chartham parish and revised warding arrangements for Sturry parish.

Draft Recommendation

Canterbury City Council should comprise 50 councillors, serving 24 wards. The Council should continue to be elected as a whole every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 24 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 6 per cent from the average in 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 26 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Canterbury City Council and the Commission.

Canterbury City Council

22 The City Council accepted the draft recommendations, including the proposed modification to the boundary between Northgate and Barton wards, and stated that it supported the proposed parish ward names for Chartham parish.

Canterbury City Council Labour Group

23 Canterbury City Council Labour Group (hereafter known as “the Labour Group”) reiterated its Stage One submission, including its preference for two-member wards in urban areas and single-member wards in rural areas to facilitate biennial elections.

24 The Labour Group also raised concerns regarding our findings that it had mis-allocated the councillors in Canterbury and Whitstable. It also considered that it had provided year 2000 data for all of its proposed wards, contrary to the statement made in the draft recommendations.

Kent County Council

25 Kent County Council expressed broad support for the draft recommendations, although it expressed concern that “throughout Kent”, the Commission had recommended that a number of parishes should be warded, which it considered would cause “consequent disruption to community ties”.

Parish Councils

26 During Stage Three we received representations from five parish councils. Chestfield Parish Council supported the draft recommendations, with particular regard to the proposed Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward. Herne & Broomfield Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. Petham Parish Council expressed support for the proposal to include Chartham village in Stone Street ward. Westbere Parish Council indicated that it had no comments on the draft recommendations. Wickhambreaux Parish Council objected to the proposal to transfer part of Northgate ward to Little Stour ward, proposing no change to the ward’s existing boundaries.

Other Representations

27 A further 18 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a local political party, a local society, a city councillor and 15 local residents. Canterbury Constituency Conservative Association, Whitstable Branch (the “Whitstable Conservatives”), generally supported the proposals for Swalecliffe, but objected to the proposal that the boundary

between Chestfield & Swalecliffe and Tankerton wards should follow Herne Bay Road, proposing instead that it should follow the Brook. This was also proposed by a resident of Swalecliffe ward.

28 Oaten Hill & District Society proposed modifications to the boundary between Barton and Wincheap wards in three areas. Councillor Mrs Doyle, member for Chartham ward, supported the draft recommendations for Chartham ward. A resident of Harbour ward proposed that the City Council should be elected by thirds. We also received 13 proforma letters from local residents, which objected to the transfer of part of St Stephens ward to Northgate ward, and proposed instead that the Great Stour River should be retained as the boundary. They also proposed that other parts of St Stephens ward should be transferred to Northgate and Westgate wards.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

29 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”.

30 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

31 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

33 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 estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

Council Size

35 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

36 Canterbury City Council is at present served by 49 councillors. At Stage One the City Council proposed an increase of one to 50. It 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".

37 In its Stage One submission the Conservative Association (as of distinct from 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".

38 In our draft recommendations report we considered that, given the consensus between all the groups on the council for a council of 50, together with the lack of evidence or support for a radical reduction in council size, the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 50 members.

39 During Stage Three the Labour Group reiterated its proposal for 50 councillors. In the absence of any objections to our draft recommendations for a council of 50, we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Electoral Arrangements

40 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including both 50-member district-wide options. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

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

42 However, we noted 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 considered that the City Council's proposal to unite the University campus 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. Second, 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 considered 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.

43 Overall, we considered 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 between Barton and Northgate wards, we moved away from the City Council's proposals in one area in the city.

44 In response to our draft recommendations the Labour Group raised concerns with regard to two issues. First, it argued that its Stage One proposals were based on the correct allocation of councillors. In our draft recommendations report we noted that there was consensus between the City Council and the Labour Group that the city of Canterbury and Whitstable areas should be represented by 14 and 12 councillors respectively, although the two schemes defined these areas slightly differently. However, in our draft recommendations, we calculated that the Labour Group's proposal did not provide the correct allocation for the area included in its submission. We have therefore revisited our calculations and have found that we incorrectly calculated the councillor allocation under the Labour Group's proposals, which had indeed proposed the correct councillor allocations for the two areas concerned. We apologise for this error and have therefore reconsidered the Labour Group's Stage One proposals for Canterbury and Whitstable.

45 Second, the Labour Group argued that it had provided complete electorate data for all proposed wards. In our draft recommendations report we noted that, while the Labour Group had provided complete 2005 electorate data, it had only provided 2000 electorate data for eight of its proposed wards. Having revisited all the information supplied by the Labour Group, we can confirm that the Labour Group did not provide amended electorate figures for the year 2000 for the remaining 21 wards for which it proposed amendments.

46 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, 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).

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

The city of Canterbury (five wards)

48 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).

49 At Stage One we received representations regarding the city of Canterbury from Canterbury City Council, Canterbury City Council Labour Group, Canterbury & East Kent Green Party and Oaten Hill & District Society. 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-Thanel railway line would 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”.

50 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.

51 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.

52 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).

53 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. We calculated that, under the Labour Group's scheme, the city itself only merits 12 members. Accordingly, we considered that the area as a whole would be substantially over-represented. We did not, therefore, make a detailed comparison between the proposals from the Labour Group and the City Council in this area.

54 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.

55 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.

56 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 the district average in Northgate ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 4 per cent above in St Stephens ward (8 per cent in 2005).

57 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".

58 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”.

59 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”.

60 We carefully considered the representations from the City Council, the Labour Group, Canterbury & East Kent Green Party and Oaten Hill & District Society. As noted earlier, we calculated that 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 did not propose adopting the Labour Group’s proposals for the city area. While we noted the Green Party’s proposal to retain the existing southern boundary of St Stephens ward, we considered 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 noted the good level of electoral equality which currently exists in Westgate ward (also expected to be maintained in five years’ time) and considered 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 therefore adopted 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).

61 We noted the support from Oaten Hill & District Society for the retention of the boundary between Barton and Northgate wards and considered 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 adopted 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).

62 With regard to the Oaten Hill & District Society’s three options for this area, officers from the Commission having visited the area, we considered 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 considered that the Old Dover Road acts as a community focus and therefore should not be utilised as a boundary. We also considered 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 adopted 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).

63 In response to our draft recommendations Canterbury City Council accepted our draft recommendations for Barton, Northgate, St Stephens, Westgate and Wincheap wards, including the minor amendment proposed to Northgate ward.

64 As noted previously, in our draft recommendations we incorrectly calculated the allocation of councillors under the Labour Group's proposals. Consequently we have revisited their Stage One proposals for Canterbury. The Labour Group also proposed at Stage One 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. It stated it had generally based its proposed wards on existing polling districts, and had "recognised the significant barrier created by the Dover–Canterbury–London railway line". The Labour Group proposed that Northgate ward be modified to the south, so that polling district HH, currently part of Northgate ward, together with that part of Barton ward north of the railway line, should form a new St Martin's ward. Barton ward would be extended to the west, to include that part of Wincheap ward east of Gordon Road and Lime Kiln Road. Wincheap ward would be otherwise unchanged. To the north of the railway line, the Labour Group proposed that polling districts OO and MM, that part of the existing Westgate ward west of the city walls, together with that part of St Stephens ward bounded by Harkness Drive, should form a new St Dunstan's ward. The Labour Group argued that the new St Dunstan's ward would recognise "the special identity" of the London Road estate and the suburbs north-west of the city walls.

65 The remainder of Westgate ward, that part within the city walls, together with part of St Stephens ward, would form a modified Westgate ward. To the east, the boundary would follow the backs of houses on St Michael's Road, Beverley Road and Copper Gate, then run along Orient Place to the river. St Stephens ward would also be modified to the north, so that polling district KKZ, that part of the University of Kent currently in St Stephens ward, would be transferred to the rural area. The Labour Group argued that the University campus is "isolated from the rest of the ward [St Stephens] but close to the Tyler Hill/Hackington rural enclave".

66 Under the Labour Group's Stage One 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 Dunstan's ward, 4 per cent below in St Martin's ward, 2 per cent above in St Stephens ward, 5 per cent above in Westgate ward and 5 per cent above in Wincheap ward. Current-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.

67 At Stage Three the Labour Group repeated its Stage One proposals for the city area, arguing its proposals are “more community based, more coherent and democratically fairer”. Additionally, it supported the Green Party’s Stage One objection to the proposed boundary between St Stephens and Northgate wards.

68 Oaten Hill & District Society (OHDS) objected to the draft recommendations for Barton and Wincheap wards, repeating its Stage One proposal that the OHDS area be represented by a single ward. The Society also objected to the proposed boundary between Barton and Wincheap wards, proposing amendments to the boundary in three areas. It noted that Randolph Close, to be transferred to Wincheap ward, would have no direct vehicular access to the remainder of the ward, and proposed that this road be transferred to Barton ward. It also proposed that the lower part of Puckle Lane (numbers 1-9) and the lower part of Nunnery Fields, together with Lansdown Road and Caledon Terrace, should be transferred from Wincheap ward to Barton ward to further improve electoral equality. The Society argued that the upper part of Puckle Lane “is a slightly distinct community, known locally as South Canterbury”, and that the modern bungalows at numbers 1-9 “feel much more part of the Old Dover Road area, and have the character of being one of its series of closes”. It enclosed slips completed by 45 residents of Calendon Terrace and Lansdown Road supporting the proposal to transfer these two streets to Barton ward.

69 We also received 13 proforma letters from residents of St Stephens ward, which objected to the transfer of part of St Stephens ward to Northgate ward, and proposed that the Great Stour River be retained as the boundary. They noted that this would result in under-representation in St Stephens ward, and consequently they proposed to improve electoral equality by transferring the area bounded by North Lane, Deans Mill Court and Barton Mill Court from the south of St Stephens ward to Westgate ward and transferring Ulcombe Gardens and Kemsing Gardens from the east of St Stephens ward to Northgate ward.

70 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. With regard to the Labour Group’s Stage One proposal, we have examined its proposed Westgate ward, which would comprise part of the existing Westgate ward and part of St Stephens ward, and we are not convinced that it better reflects community identity in this area than the existing arrangements, which were retained under our draft recommendations. In particular, we note that under the Labour Group’s proposal, the area around the West Gate, notably Westgate Gardens, Westgate Grove and Westgate Garden Flats would be transferred from Westgate ward to St Dunstan’s ward. We consider that this area is an integral part of the Westgate community. Additionally, having visited the area, we note that the series of roads east of Whitstable Road, currently part of St Stephens ward, do not appear to share a strong community identity with the area to its west, currently part of Westgate ward. We consider that it would better reflect local community identity in this area to keep this area together, rather than to divide the area around Harkness Drive from the remainder of the estate, as proposed by the Labour Group. Finally, in this area, we consider that our draft recommendations for Barton ward would provide for better electoral equality while reflecting the statutory criteria than the Labour Group’s proposals.

71 While we note the Labour Group's reiteration of its Stage One proposals, we continue to consider that our draft recommendations generally better reflect the identities and interests of local communities in these areas. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for the city of Canterbury as final, subject to two amendments.

72 First, noting the 13 submissions from residents of St Stephens ward, and the support from the Labour Group, we are persuaded that the existing boundary of the Great Stour River between St Stephens and Northgate wards would provide for a more identifiable boundary and better reflect local community identities in this area than that proposed in our draft recommendations. We therefore recommend that the Great Stour River should be utilised as the boundary between St Stephens and Northgate wards as part of our final recommendations. We note that these residents also proposed that other parts of St Stephens ward should be transferred to Northgate and Westgate wards, but do not propose adopting this further amendment as we note that this proposal has not been the subject of any consultation, and is not supported by convincing evidence. However, we note that Deans Mill Court bridges the Great Stour River, and therefore is currently split between St Stephens and Northgate wards. Given that the majority of the building is registered in Northgate ward, we are recommending that all of Deans Mill Court should be included in Northgate ward.

73 Second, we have examined the proposals from Oaten Hill & District Society, which proposed that the boundary between Barton and Wincheap wards should be modified in three areas. Having visited the area, we accept that, under our draft recommendations, Randolph Close would have no vehicular access to the remainder of Wincheap ward. We therefore propose adopting the Society's proposal to transfer 16 properties in this area to Barton ward. This would have a negligible affect on electorate variances. However, we are not adopting the Society's proposal to transfer the lower part of Puckle Lane or Caledon Terrace and Lansdown Road to Barton ward, as we do not consider that the proposals would offer a better reflection of the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. In particular, it would appear that the proposal to transfer Caledon Terrace and Lansdown Road was motivated by the desire of residents of these streets to vote in an adjacent polling station. This is not something we take into account as part of this review and we are not adopting this transfer.

74 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the district average in Barton ward (5 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent above in Northgate ward (equal to the average in 2005), 4 per cent above in St Stephens ward (8 per cent in 2005), 2 per cent above in Westgate ward (equal to the average in 2005) and 6 per cent below in Wincheap ward (2 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the five city wards are illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

The southern rural area (five wards)

75 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).

76 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 to North Nailbourne and Barham Downs wards. 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).

77 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. 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. Current-year electorate were not supplied for the three wards where modifications were proposed; in 2000, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the average in Barham Downs ward and 19 per cent below the average in North Nailbourne ward.

78 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.

79 In arriving at our draft recommendations, we gave careful consideration to the views which we received in this area. We noted the consensus regarding the enlargement of Harbledown ward to include part of Chartham parish. Having visited the area, we considered 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 therefore included this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. We noted that no specific parish ward names were submitted, and therefore proposed that the parish ward of Chartham parish north of the London-Dover railway line be named Chartham Hatch parish ward. We also noted 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, proposed retaining these wards as part of our draft recommendations.

80 We noted 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 adopted the City Council's proposed Chartham & Stone Street ward as part of our draft recommendations. While we noted that this would create a geographically large ward we considered that it would be artificial to separate the new development site from the main Chartham settlement. We considered it would be in the community interest to retain the link between the new properties and Chartham.

81 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).

82 At Stage Three Canterbury City Council accepted our draft recommendations for Barham Downs, Chartham & Stone Street, Harbledown and North Nailbourne wards. The Labour Group supported the draft recommendations for no change for the wards of Barham Downs and North Nailbourne. It also stated its support for the proposal to extend Harbledown ward to include the Chartham Hatch settlement. However, it repeated its Stage One proposal for single-member wards throughout the rural area, arguing that single-member wards recognise "the special character and quality of our rural communities", and objected to the proposed two-member Chartham & Stone Street ward. It argued that the ward would cover "almost one-sixth the area of the whole district", and that the St Augustine's development will have "a separate identity" to the remainder of Chartham parish.

83 Petham Parish Council stated that "a majority of the Council" supported the draft recommendations for an extended two-member Stone Street ward. Although it expressed concern that the inclusion of the larger Chartham settlement would result in a more diverse ward, the Council objected to the Labour Group's proposal to combine Stone Street ward with the St Augustine's development site only, arguing "both geographically and socially it properly belongs to Chartham". Councillor Mrs Doyle, member for Chartham ward, supported the draft recommendations for Chartham ward, arguing that if the St Augustine's site were in the same ward as the village, integration "as far as possible into village life" could be achieved. Councillor Doyle also argued that, although the proposed ward would be geographically large, "with two members it will be manageable".

84 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received in response to our draft recommendations. We note the general support for Barham Downs, Harbledown and North Nailbourne wards, and therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations for these wards as final. We have examined the Labour Group's objection to Chartham & Stone Street ward, but given that there is evidence of some local support for our draft recommendations, which we continue to consider would provide the best available balance between the need to secure improvements to electoral equality while having regard to the

statutory criteria, we are confirming our draft recommendations for Chartham & Stone Street ward as final.

85 Under our final 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 area are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A2.

The northern rural area (five wards)

86 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 Cosmus & 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 in 2005) and 21 per cent above in Sturry South ward (15 per cent in 2005).

87 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 councillor, to six, 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 its 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, as discussed above, which would be represented by two members.

88 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).

89 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 campus currently in St Stephens ward. Blean Forest ward would then comprise the parish of St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean, minus part of the north-west of the ward, which would be transferred to two Whitstable wards.

90 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. Complete current-year electorates were not supplied; in 2000, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Hackington ward and 7 per cent below in Marshside ward.

91 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. 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.

92 In formulating our draft recommendations, we 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 retained the existing Marshside ward as part of our draft recommendations. 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 carefully examined both these options, and, having visited the area, considered that the Fordwich area has a good community of interest with the Sturry South area. We also considered that the area bounded by Stodmarsh Road and Littlebourne Road has greater community affinity with the rural Little Stour area than the urban Northgate ward. We therefore adopted the City Council's proposals for Little Stour ward as part of our draft recommendations.

93 Given our proposed Little Stour ward, we also considered adopting the City Council's modified Sturry North and Sturry South wards as part of our draft recommendations. However, we noted 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 proposed 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. Currently, the University of Kent site is divided between a city ward, St Stephens, and a rural ward, Blean Forest. We considered that the City Council's proposal to unite the University campus 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 adopted the City Council's proposals for Blean Forest ward as part of our draft recommendations.

94 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).

95 At Stage Three the City Council accepted our draft recommendations for Blean Forest, Little Stour, Marshside, Sturry North and Sturry South wards. The Labour Group supported the draft recommendations to retain Marshside ward unchanged. It repeated its Stage One proposals for a uniform pattern of single-member wards in the rural area, and objected to the proposed two-member Blean Forest ward. The Labour Group argued that under our draft recommendations "62% of the electorate of the 'rural' ward will be university students", and repeated its preference that the University be split between two single-member rural wards. The Labour Group accepted our proposed Sturry North ward, but objected to the proposal to retain Fordwich parish in Sturry South ward, preferring its Stage One proposal that the parish be placed in Little Stour ward. It argued that Fordwich parish has "more in common" with Little Stour ward "than its suburban dormitory neighbour Sturry South, in terms of size, history, character, identity and communality of conservation/planning issues".

96 Westbere Parish Council stated that it had considered the draft recommendations and had no comments to make. Wickhambreaux Parish Council supported the proposal that Fordwich parish continue to form part of Sturry South ward, but objected to the proposal to transfer that part of Northgate ward east of Stodmarsh Road and north of Littlebourne Road to Little Stour ward, proposing instead that Little Stour ward remain unchanged.

97 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We note the support for Marshside and Sturry North wards, and confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final. We have considered the Labour Group's objection to our draft recommendations for Blean Forest ward. Having considered the evidence, we remain of the opinion that the University campus is a discrete community, separated from the city of Canterbury by open land, and consider that it is preferable to unite the campus in one ward, rather than divide the community. We have also examined the alternative proposal regarding Little Stour and Sturry South wards. We note the lack of consensus in this area, and, given the absence of any new evidence to support the proposals, we continue to consider that our draft recommendations represent the best balance between the need to secure electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Little Stour and Sturry South wards as final.

98 Under our final recommendations 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). Our proposals for the northern rural area are illustrated on Maps 2 and A3.

Whitstable (six wards)

99 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).

100 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 Seasalter 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 eastern 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.

101 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 Seasalter ward (3 per cent in 2005) and 3 per cent below in Tankerton ward (5 per cent in 2005).

102 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. We calculated that, 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, we considered that the area as a whole would be substantially under-represented. We did not, therefore make a detailed comparison between the proposals from the Labour Group and the City Council in this area.

103 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

Seasalter ward, 2 per cent below in Swalecliffe ward, and 4 per cent above in Tankerton ward. Current-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.

104 We also received one representation in relation to ward boundaries from a local resident of 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.

105 We considered the alternative boundary proposed by a resident of Swalecliffe ward. However, having visited the area, we noted that the Brook would not constitute as easily identifiable a boundary as that proposed by the City Council. We considered that, in this area, the centre of Herne Bay Road would provide for a better boundary than the Brook and therefore adopted the City Council's proposed Tankerton ward as part of our draft recommendations. We also examined the City Council's proposed Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward. While we noted that the proposed ward would be bisected by the North Kent Coast railway line, we also noted that the railway is on a viaduct at this point, and there are good links between the two parts of the ward. We also noted that there are several facilities that link the two communities, including the railway station, which is also named Chestfield & Swalecliffe. We were 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 adopted 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 also adopted this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

106 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).

107 At Stage Three Canterbury City Council accepted our draft recommendations for Chestfield & Swalecliffe, Gorrell, Harbour, Seasalter and Tankerton wards.

108 As noted previously, in our draft recommendations we incorrectly calculated the allocation of councillors under the Labour Group's proposals. Consequently we have revisited their Stage One proposals for Whitstable. The Labour Group proposed at Stage One 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. The Labour Group proposed that Seasalter ward be split into two wards, a single-member Seasalter ward to the west and a two-member Long Reach ward to the

east. The boundary between the two wards would run south from the sea along Florence Avenue, south along an alley running across Hazelmere Road and MacDonald Parade, then along the backs of properties on St Margaret's Close. The boundary would then follow Church Lane east to Thanet Way, and then run along Pilgrims Way to Foxes Cross, where the boundary would continue southwards across fields to the district boundary. The Labour Group also proposed that Long Reach ward include that part of St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean parish generally bounded by Denstroude Lane and Honey Hill.

109 The Labour Group proposed that the two-member Gorrell ward should also include part of St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean parish, so that the east side of Honey Hill from number 24 upwards would be transferred to Gorrell ward. It then proposed that Chestfield ward, to be represented by two members, as at present, should be modified to the north and west to include the area bounded by the Joseph Wilson Industrial Estate and the Thanet Way, currently part of Gorrell ward. The Labour Group proposed that Swalecliffe ward should be represented by a single member, one fewer than at present, and that part of Swalecliffe ward be transferred to Tankerton ward, so that the boundary between the two wards would run north from the railway line along the backs of houses on Kemp Road then north along Herne Bay Road to the sea. Tankerton ward would also be extended in the south, to take in that part of the existing Chestfield ward north of the Thanet Way, and would continue to be represented by two members. Finally in this area, the Labour Group proposed that part of Tankerton ward west of Tower Parade and Castle Road should be transferred to an enlarged Harbour ward, which would continue to be represented by two members.

110 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 Seasalter ward, 2 per cent below in Swalecliffe ward, and 4 per cent above in Tankerton ward. Current-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.

111 In response to our draft recommendations, the Labour Group stated its preference for its Stage One proposal for five two-member wards and two single-member wards, arguing that Whitstable had "a long history of two-member wards". It argued for its proposal to include part of Blean Forest parish in two Whitstable wards, stating this part of Blean Forest "looks to Whitstable as its natural nearby urban area".

112 The Whitstable Conservatives generally supported the proposals for Swalecliffe, but objected to the proposal that the boundary between Chestfield & Swalecliffe and Tankerton wards should follow Herne Bay Road, proposing instead that it should follow the Brook. They argued that a north-south boundary along the Brook would avoid splitting the Tankerton sea front and Swalecliffe shopping centre, and that such a boundary would provide for further improvements to electoral equality. Their proposal was supported by the two members for Swalecliffe. A resident of Swalecliffe ward repeated his Stage One proposal that the boundary between Chestfield & Swalecliffe and Tankerton wards should follow the Brook, arguing that a north-south boundary would equalise the number of electors in the two wards.

113 Chestfield Parish Council supported the draft recommendations for Canterbury, and the proposed Chestfield & Swalecliffe ward in particular. The Council also supported the proposal that the ward's western boundary follow Herne Bay Road.

114 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. We note that, while our draft recommendations proposed no change to the boundaries of Seasalter and Gorrell wards, in its Stage One submission, the Labour Group proposed that the area be combined with parts of St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean parish to form three wards, which would require the creation of two very small parish wards. We continue to consider that it would not best reflect the statutory criteria to create two very small parish wards for St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean parish, as necessitated by the Labour Group's Stage One proposal, and we therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Seasalter and Gorrell wards as final. We have examined the Labour Group's proposals for the east of Whitstable. We note that the Labour Group's modification to Chestfield ward's western boundary would result in the boundary bisecting a car park, and consider that our draft recommendations provide a more satisfactory reflection of the statutory criteria.

115 We note that there is consensus between our draft recommendations and the Labour Group's proposals for the western boundary of Tankerton ward, and continue to consider that Tankerton Parade and Church Road constitute clear boundaries. We note that the Whitstable Conservatives and a resident of Swalecliffe ward, and the Labour Group proposed alternative boundaries between Tankerton and Chestfield & Swalecliffe wards, but, we continue to consider that our draft recommendations better reflect the statutory criteria than the proposed alternatives. Therefore, we are confirming our draft recommendations for Chestfield & Swalecliffe and Tankerton wards as final. We also note the consensus between our draft recommendations and the Labour Group for Harbour ward, and in the absence of any objections, confirm our draft recommendations for Harbour ward as final.

116 Under our final 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 five Whitstable wards are illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

Herne Bay (four wards)

117 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).

118 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 councillors 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 would follow 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 amending Reculver ward, transferring those properties west of Beacon Road and Oakdale Road to Heron ward.

119 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 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).

120 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 of 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 as 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.

121 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. Current-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.

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

123 In arriving at our draft recommendations, we 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 considered has merit. However, we noted 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 considered that these properties have a greater community identity with the other properties off Canterbury Road than with the Broomfield community. We therefore adopted the City Council's Greenhill & Eddington ward as part of our draft recommendations. In addition, having visited the area, we considered 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 were not convinced that two separate wards in this area would best reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We therefore adopted 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 considered 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 therefore adopted the City Council's modified Heron, Reculver and West Bay wards as part of our draft recommendations.

124 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 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).

125 In response to our draft recommendations the City Council accepted our draft recommendations for Herne & Broomfield, Greenhill & Eddington, Heron, Reculver and West Bay wards. The Labour Group repeated its Stage One proposal for a pattern of six two-member wards for the Herne Bay area, and a new single-member Herne Village ward. It argued that its proposals would provide "a more rational and realistic pattern of representation", and would better reflect local community identities than the draft recommendations. Herne & Broomfield Parish Council fully supported the draft recommendations for Canterbury.

126 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We note the Labour Group's proposal for a new single-member Herne Village ward, as proposed at Stage One. However, in the light of general support for our draft recommendations, including from Herne & Broomfield Parish Council, we are content that our draft recommendations provide a good balance between the need to secure electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and we are confirming our draft recommendations for the five Herne wards as final.

127 Under our final 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 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 Herne Bay are illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

128 At Stage One 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”.

129 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”.

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

131 However, in our draft recommendations we noted that 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 proposed no change to the Council’s present system of whole-council elections as part of our draft recommendations.

132 At Stage Three we received comments regarding electoral cycles from the Labour Group, Wickhambreaux Parish Council and a resident of Harbour ward. The Labour Group argued in favour of biennial elections, and considered “biennial elections are a very real probability in the future”. Wickhambreaux Parish Council supported whole-council elections every four years. A resident of Harbour ward stated her preference for biennial elections, but noting that we can only propose either elections by thirds or whole-council elections, proposed a cycle of elections by thirds, arguing that this would increase accountability and “maintain the interest of the public”.

133 We have carefully considered the further views which we have received regarding electoral equality. As argued in our draft recommendations, we are unable to recommend a cycle of elections by halves. Furthermore, we note that we have not received evidence of general support for a system of elections by thirds. Consequently, we are recommending that the existing cycle of whole-council elections should be retained.

Conclusions

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

- transferring that part of Deans Mill currently in St Stephens ward to Northgate ward;
- transferring the east side of St Stephens Road and Market Way, Broad Oak Road, Hawthorn Avenue and Willow Close from Northgate ward to St Stephens ward;
- transferring Randolph Close from Wincheap ward to Barton ward.

135 We conclude that, in Canterbury:

- there should be a increase in council size from 49 to 50;
- there should be 24 wards, one fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

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

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	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

137 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 16 to five with no wards varying

by more than 20 per cent from the district average. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final 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

138 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Chartham and Sturry to reflect the proposed district wards.

139 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.

140 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 adopted the City Council's proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. Additionally, we proposed 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 stated that we would welcome comments on these parish ward names at Stage Three.

141 In response to our consultation report, the City Council supported our proposals for Chartham parish, including the proposed parish ward names. The Labour Group supported our proposed Chartham Hatch ward, although it also proposed that the St Augustine's site form a third parish ward. Councillor Mrs Doyle, member for Chartham ward, also supported our draft recommendations for Chartham parish. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Chartham parish as final.

Final 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.

142 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 proposed modifying the parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. In response to our consultation report, the City Council and the Labour Group supported our proposals for Sturry parish. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed district wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for revised warding in Sturry parish as final.

Final 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.

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

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Canterbury

6 NEXT STEPS

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

145 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 18 June 2001.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for 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: Final Recommendations for Canterbury: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Chartham Parish

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Sturry Parish

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Canterbury

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

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

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Barton	3	6,009	2,003	-3	6,181	2,060	-6
Northgate	2	4,510	2,255	10	4,612	2,306	6
St Stephens	3	6,182	2,061	0	6,837	2,279	4
Wincheap	3	5,825	1,942	-6	6,459	2,153	-1

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

APPENDIX C

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Commission compliance with Code criteria

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