

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

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

September 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 2000

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 187

CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>35</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Lancaster: Detailed Mapping	<i>37</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Lancaster (April 2000)	<i>41</i>

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



Local Government Commission for England

5 September 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 7 September 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the City of Lancaster under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in April 2000 and undertook a nine-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 128-129) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Lancaster.

We recommend that Lancaster City Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 28 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 City Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place 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 Lancaster on 7 September 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 4 April 2000, after which we undertook a nine-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 Lancaster:

- **in 15 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 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 16 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 128-129) are that:

- **Lancaster City Council should have 60 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards, instead of 29 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections for the whole council 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.

- **The number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average in all the proposed wards, both initially and by 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Carnforth Town Council and the parishes of Bolton-le-Sands, Ellel, Heaton-with-Oxcliffe and Scotforth.**

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 17 October 2000:

**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	Bare	2	Parks ward (part); Poulton ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2	Bolton-le-Sands	2	Bolton-le-Sands ward (part – the proposed Bolton-le-Sands North parish ward of Bolton-le-Sands parish); Carnforth ward (part – the proposed Crag Bank town council ward of Carnforth Town Council)	Map 2 and large map
3	Bulk	3	Bulk ward (part)	Map 2 and map A2
4	Carnforth	2	Carnforth ward (part – the proposed Carnforth Town town council ward of Carnforth town)	Map 2 and large map
5	Castle	3	Castle ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
6	Duke's	1	Bulk ward (part); Castle ward (part); John O'Gaunt ward (part); Scotforth West ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
7	Ellel	2	Ellel ward (part – the parishes of Cockerham, Ellel (part – the proposed Ellel North and Ellel South parish wards of Ellel parish) and Thurnham; Caton ward (part – the parishes of Scotforth and Over Wyresdale)	Map 2
8	Halton-with-Aughton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Halton-with-Aughton	Map 2 and large map
9	Heysham Central	2	Heysham Central ward (part); Heysham South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
10	Heysham South	3	Heysham South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
11	John O'Gaunt	3	John O'Gaunt ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
12	Kellet	1	Kellet ward (the parishes of Borwick, Nether Kellet, Over Kellet and Priest Hutton); Arkholme ward (part – the parish of Arkholme-with-Cawood)	Map 2
13	Lower Lune Valley	2	Hornby ward (part – the parishes of Claughton, Tatham, Roeburn and Wray-with-Botton); Caton ward (part – the parishes of Caton-with-Littledale and Quernmore)	Map 2
14	Marine	3	Alexandra ward (part); Harbour ward (part)	Map 2
15	Overton	1	Overton ward (part – the parishes of Middleton and Overton; the proposed Rural parish ward of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish); Heysham South ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
16	Poulton	3	Poulton ward (part); Victoria ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
17	Sandylands	2	Alexandra ward (part); Heysham Central ward (part); Heysham North ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
18	Scotforth East	2	Scotforth East ward (part)	Map 2
19	Scotforth West	3	Scotforth West ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
20	Silverdale	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Sliverdale, Yeland Conyers and Yeland Redmayne	Map 2
21	Skerton East	3	Skerton East ward; Skerton Central ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
22	Skerton West	3	Overton ward (part – the proposed Winster Park parish ward of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish); Skerton West ward (part); Skerton Central ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
23	Slyne-with-Hest	2	Bolton-le-Sands ward (part – the proposed Bolton-le-Sands South parish ward of Bolton-le-Sands parish); Slyne-with-Hest ward	Map 2
24	Torrisholme	3	Overton ward (part – the proposed Torrisholme parish ward of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish); Parks ward (part); Torrisholme ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
25	University	2	Ellel ward (part – the proposed University parish ward of Ellel parish); Scotforth East ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
26	Upper Lune Valley	1	Arkholme ward (part – the parishes of Burrow-with-Burrow, Cantsfield, Ireby, Leck, Melling-with-Wrayton Tunstall and Whittington); Hornby ward (part – the parishes of Hornby-with-Farleton, Gressingham and Wennington)	Map 2
27	Warton	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Warton	Map 2 and large map
28	Westgate	3	Alexandra ward (part); Harbour ward (part); Heysham North ward (part); Overton ward (part – the proposed Westgate parish ward of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish); Torrisholme ward (part); Victoria ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

Notes: 1 Lancaster, Morecambe and Skerton are the only unparished parts of the district.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Lancaster

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bare	2	3,314	1,657	-5	3,400	1,700	-6
2	Bolton-le-Sands	2	3,438	1,719	-1	3,488	1,744	-3
3	Bulk	3	5,032	1,677	-4	5,337	1,779	-1
4	Carnforth	2	3,333	1,667	-4	3,370	1,685	-6
5	Castle	3	5,254	1,751	1	5,700	1,900	6
6	Duke's	1	1,807	1,807	4	1,800	1,800	0
7	Ellel	2	3,420	1,710	-2	3,580	1,790	-1
8	Halton-with-Aughton	1	1,880	1,880	8	1,910	1,910	6
9	Heysham Central	2	3,440	1,720	-1	3,650	1,825	1
10	Heysham South	3	4,866	1,622	-7	5,192	1,731	-4
11	John O'Gaunt	3	5,592	1,864	7	5,873	1,958	9
12	Kellet	1	1,895	1,895	9	1,950	1,950	8
13	Lower Lune Valley	2	3,590	1,795	3	3,670	1,835	2
14	Marine	3	5,396	1,799	3	5,470	1,823	1
15	Overton	1	1,630	1,630	-6	1,648	1,648	-8
16	Poulton	3	5,626	1,875	8	5,650	1,883	5
17	Sandylands	2	3,352	1,676	-4	3,490	1,745	-3
18	Scotforth East	2	3,700	1,850	6	3,720	1,860	3
19	Scotforth West	3	4,897	1,632	-6	5,500	1,833	2
20	Silverdale	1	1,742	1,742	0	1,810	1,810	1
21	Skerton East	3	5,082	1,694	-3	5,120	1,707	-5

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 Skerton West	3	4,920	1,640	-6	4,960	1,653	-8
23 Slyne-with-Hest	2	3,505	1,753	1	3,522	1,761	-2
24 Torrisholme	3	5,375	1,792	3	5,610	1,870	4
25 University	2	3,743	1,872	7	3,760	1,880	4
26 Upper Lune Valley	1	1,791	1,791	3	1,860	1,860	3
27 Warton	1	1,885	1,885	8	1,880	1,880	4
28 Westgate	3	5,032	1,677	-4	5,110	1,703	-5
Totals	60	104,537	-	-	108,030	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,742	-	-	1,801	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Lancaster City Council. We have now reviewed the 12 districts in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwin and Blackpool) as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. We expect to review the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwin and Blackpool in 2001. 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 Lancaster. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 52). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 399). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), 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 our statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward.

Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 7 September 1999, when we wrote to Lancaster City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, the Lancashire Association of Parish & Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the North-West region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 November 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 4 April 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Lancaster*, and ended on 5 June 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

13 Lancaster City Council is situated in the north of Lancashire, and is bounded by South Lakeland in Cumbria to the north, Craven in North Yorkshire to the east and the districts of Ribble Valley and Wyre to the south. It contains 37 parishes, while Lancaster, Morecambe and Skerton are all unparished. Lancaster and Morecambe are the largest towns in the district and comprise around 60 per cent of its total electorate.

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 district is 104,537 (February 1999). The City Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 29 wards, 17 of which are relatively urban, the remainder being predominantly rural. Nine of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 13 are each represented by two councillors and seven are single-member wards. The City Council is elected together every four years.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in the district, with around 11 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most significant increases have been in Overton and Scotforth East wards.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,742 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 1,801 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, six wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Overton ward, where the councillor represents 61 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Lancaster

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alexandra	3	3,565	1,188	-32	3,600	1,200	-33
2 Arkholme	1	1,362	1,362	-22	1,430	1,430	-21
3 Bolton-le-Sands	2	3,378	1,689	-3	3,430	1,715	-5
4 Bulk	3	5,248	1,749	0	5,550	1,850	3
5 Carnforth	2	4,233	2,117	21	4,270	2,135	19
6 Castle	3	6,268	2,089	20	6,730	2,243	25
7 Caton	2	2,929	1,465	-16	2,970	1,485	-18
8 Ellel	2	3,493	1,747	0	3,660	1,830	2
9 Halton-with-Aughton	1	1,880	1,880	8	1,910	1,910	6
10 Harbour	2	4,101	2,051	18	4,180	2,090	16
11 Heysham Central	2	2,865	1,433	-18	2,900	1,450	-19
12 Heysham North	2	2,967	1,484	-15	3,030	1,515	-16
13 Heysham South	3	5,759	1,920	10	6,260	2,087	16
14 Hornby	1	1,551	1,551	-11	1,590	1,590	-12
15 John O'Gaunt	3	6,066	2,022	16	6,340	2,113	17
16 Kellet	1	1,626	1,626	-7	1,680	1,680	-7
17 Overton	1	2,800	2,800	61	2,810	2,810	56
18 Parks	2	3,496	1,748	0	3,570	1,785	-1
19 Poulton	3	4,240	1,413	-19	4,300	1,433	-20
20 Scotforth East	3	7,178	2,393	37	7,220	2,407	34
21 Scotforth West	3	4,990	1,663	-5	5,590	1,863	3
22 Silverdale	1	1,742	1,742	0	1,810	1,810	1
23 Skerton Central	2	3,269	1,635	-6	3,300	1,650	-8
24 Skerton East	2	2,905	1,453	-17	2,930	1,465	-19
25 Skerton West	2	3,641	1,821	4	3,690	1,845	2
26 Slyne-with-Hest	2	2,665	1,333	-24	2,680	1,340	-26
27 Torrisholme	2	3,633	1,817	4	3,880	1,940	8

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
28 Victoria	3	4,801	1,600	-8	4,840	1,613	-10
29 Warton	1	1,886	1,886	8	1,880	1,880	4
Totals	60	104,537	–	–	108,030	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,742	–	–	1,801	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lancaster 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 1999, electors in Alexandra ward were relatively over-represented by 32 per cent, while electors in Scotforth East ward were relatively under-represented by 37 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received 14 representations, including district-wide schemes from Lancaster City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties. We also received representations from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, five parish and town councils and a further six representations from local residents and groups. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for the City of Lancaster*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a mixed pattern of wards throughout the district. However, we moved away from the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' scheme in a number of areas, affecting five wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Lancaster City Council should be served by 60 councillors, the same as at present, representing 28 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified, while three wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Carnforth Town Council and the parishes of Bolton-le-Sands, Ellel, Heaton-with-Oxcliffe and Scotforth.

Draft Recommendation

Lancaster City Council should comprise 60 councillors, serving 28 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 28 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average, both initially and by 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

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

Lancaster City Council

22 The City Council stated that it did not wish to challenge the proposed retention of the existing council size of 60 and the reduction in the number of wards from 29 to 28. However, the City Council proposed modifications to six wards and proposed seven ward name modifications. It proposed that the modified Overton ward should be revised to better reflect local community identities within the area.

The Green Group on Lancaster City Council

23 The Green Group on the Council stated that it was happy to accept the proposed retention of the existing council size. It submitted alternative proposals for the area south of the River Lune (Lancaster) stating that it was disappointed that its initial proposal for two member wards in Lancaster, which had been adopted by the City Council, had not been adopted as part of the draft recommendations. It contended that smaller wards would greatly enhance community identity, that councillors would be better able to represent their constituents and that there would be a greater level of flexibility in the way that the new area forums could be set up. The Green Group stated that, although it had been unable to conduct the same exercise with regard to Heysham and Morecambe, it requested that the Commission consider applying the same principle to those areas when considering the final recommendations.

The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties

24 The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties supported the draft recommendations, which were based on their Stage One submission. However, they commented on the modifications which were adopted as part of the draft recommendations. They suggested four ward name modifications and minor boundary amendments to four proposed wards.

Parish and Town Councils

25 During Stage Three we received comments from eight Parish Councils and Carnforth Town Council. Slyne-with-Hest and Warton Parish Councils supported the draft recommendations. Over Wyresdale Parish Council stated that it would prefer to retain the status quo, whereby it would remain united in a ward with Ellel because of “historic and geographical associations”. Arkholme-with-Cawood, Bolton-le-Sands, Gressingham, Whittington and Wray-with-Botton Parish Councils opposed the draft recommendations, citing community identity arguments. Carnforth Town Council opposed the draft recommendations, stating that the Town Council did

not wish to be warded. It was also concerned that the proposed parish wards could favour the Crag Bank area.

Other Representations

26 A further nine representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. The Lancaster Branch Labour Party generally supported the draft recommendations, but opposed the proposals for Overton, Bulk and John O’Gaunt wards. The Morecambe and Lunesdale Labour Party also opposed the proposed transfer of electors from Heysham into a modified Overton ward and proposed a number of modifications or alternative ward names for eight wards. The Morecambe and Lunesdale Labour Party also noted the reservations which we had expressed in the draft recommendations report regarding the proposed Skerton East and West wards and endorsed the modification which the Skerton Federation of Labour Parties proposed. The Lancaster Branch Labour Party stated it supported the draft recommendations but proposed modifications to the proposed wards within Lancaster. The Skerton Federation of Labour Parties, in the light of the concerns expressed in the draft recommendations report, proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed wards of Skerton East and Skerton West in order to enhance community identity.

27 Professor Ritchie, Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University, commented on the draft recommendations for a proposed University ward. He proposed minor modifications to the boundaries surrounding the proposed ward which would, in his view, improve its boundaries and thereby better reflect local community identities. Morcambe Neighbourhood Council stated that it was “pleased to see that the number of councillors had not been increased” and that, in general, the proposed boundaries within Morecambe were satisfactory. However, it expressed regret that smaller, two member wards had not been more broadly adopted and proposed renaming two wards.

28 County Councillor Yates, representing Overton division, broadly supported the draft recommendations. However, she contended that the proposed Overton ward, which placed part of the Trumcar estate within a modified Overton ward, joined areas together that had no geographical affinity with one another. One local resident wrote in support of the draft recommendations. Another local resident opposed the proposed warding of Bolton-le-Sands parish, arguing that the proposals did not reflect local community identities and interests.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Lancaster 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 also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

33 During Stage One the City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent from 104,537 to 108,030 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected the growth to occur evenly throughout the district, although Heysham South and Scotforth West wards were projected to have an additional 500 and 600 electors respectively by 2004. The City Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

34 At Stage One Carnforth Town Council argued that the City Council’s electoral projections for Carnforth ward did not take account of the likely residential development. It stated that “if all the developments proceed to completion” there would be an additional 700 electors in Carnforth ward. In the light of this alternative projection, we sought further clarification from the City Council regarding its electoral forecast for Carnforth ward. Following further advice from the City Council, we concluded in the draft recommendations report that we were content that

its electoral forecasts represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time. We stated that we accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science. However, on balance, we did not consider that a high level of residential development would be likely to occur in Carnforth ward within the next five years. Furthermore, we stated that we would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

35 During Stage Three we did not receive any further comments with regard to the projected electorate. We therefore remain satisfied that the City Council's projected electorate figures continue to represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

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

37 Lancaster City Council is presently served by 60 councillors. During Stage One there was a broad consensus that there was little justification for any substantial increase or decrease in the current number of councillors. The City Council proposed a council of 63 members, arguing that it wished to "remain at broadly the same size", and that such a council size would better reflect the "particular circumstances and characteristics of the district". Lancaster City Council Liberal Democrat Group supported the City Council's proposal for an increase of three councillors.

38 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties argued that 60 councillors was "sufficient to represent the electors of Lancaster district". Morecambe Neighbourhood Council put forward alternative warding arrangements for Morecambe, based on a council size of 60 members, while a local resident proposed that the City Council should be represented by 65 councillors.

39 We stated in our draft recommendations report that we do not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease in council size but are prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. In our *Guidance* we note that we have found it necessary to guard against an upward drift in the number of councillors, and that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In the case of Lancaster, we did not consider that there was sufficient evidence that additional councillors were necessary to facilitate effective and convenient local government in the area, or to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

40 Having considered carefully the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by retaining the existing council size of 60 members. However, we stated that we would welcome further views on council size during Stage Three of the review.

41 At Stage Three the City Council noted the principal recommendations to retain the existing council size of 60 members in a pattern of 28 wards, one less than at present, and stated that it did not wish to challenge these fundamental recommendations. The Green Party on the City Council stated that it supported the proposal retaining the existing council size but requested that

the Commission consider proposing smaller wards. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties supported the main recommendations, including the proposed council size. Morcambe Neighbourhood Council stated that its committee was pleased to note that the council size had not been increased and reiterated its wish to see smaller wards with fewer councillors per ward.

42 We have noted that there continues to be a broad consensus for retaining the existing council size. We have decided to confirm our draft recommendation for the retention of the existing council size of 60 members as final.

Electoral Arrangements

43 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we considered carefully all the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes from the City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties, as well as comments and schemes from a further twelve representations. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

44 We stated that we had found merit in both the schemes submitted by the City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties. We noted that both of these submissions provided improved levels of electoral equality. Furthermore, we noted that both of these proposals would allocate the correct level of representation to Lancaster, Morecambe and the rural area, although Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal would provide an equitable distribution of councillors while retaining the existing council size.

45 We recognised the improved electoral equality achieved by both the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' and the City Council's schemes, compared to the existing arrangements. We stated that, on balance, we considered that the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposed scheme provided a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and consequently we broadly adopted its scheme as the basis of our draft recommendations. However, we sought to build on these proposals, particularly in the urban areas, in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even better electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

46 Both the City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties put forward proposals for alternative district warding which would necessitate modifications to a number of parish boundaries. However, the Commission is unable to recommend modifications to external parish boundaries as part of this current review. We were unable to adopt either of the schemes in those areas where they would involve such modifications. However, under the provision of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, Lancaster City Council has the power to change parish administrative boundaries, and make recommendations directly to the Secretary of State.

47 At Stage Three the City Council commented on our draft recommendations and proposed minor modifications to six of the proposed wards as well as renaming seven wards. The Green Group on the City Council submitted proposals for eight two-member wards for Lancaster, which also included modifications to external parish boundaries. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties broadly supported the draft recommendations, but proposed a number of minor boundary

modifications. The Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency Labour Party supported the draft recommendations in principle, but proposed a number of minor boundary modifications.

48 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) Arkholme and Hornby wards;
- (b) Caton and Ellel wards;
- (c) Halton-with-Aughton, Kellet, Silverdale and Warton wards;
- (d) Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with-Hest wards;
- (e) Overton ward;
- (f) Lancaster (eight wards);
- (g) Morecambe (nine wards).

49 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.

Arkholme and Hornby wards

50 Arkholme and Hornby wards are each represented by one councillor and are located in the north-east of the district, adjoining Lancashire's county boundary. Arkholme ward currently consists of the parishes of Arkholme-with-Cawood, Burrow-with-Burrow, Cantsfield, Ireby, Leck, Melling-with-Wrayton, Tunstall and Whittington. Hornby ward currently consists of the parishes of Claughton, Hornby-with-Farleton, Roeburnahm, Tatham and Wray-with-Botton. Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Arkholme and Hornby wards would be 22 per cent and 11 per cent less than the district average respectively (21 per cent and 12 per cent by 2004).

51 At Stage One the City Council proposed that the parishes of Borwick and Priest Hutton, currently in Kellet ward, should be included in Arkholme ward, together with Aughton village, which is currently in Halton-with-Aughton ward. It argued that "the community of Aughton has as much identity to the Arkholme ward as it does to Halton". It also proposed that Melling-with-Wrayton parish should be combined with Hornby ward, while the rest of Hornby ward's existing boundaries should be retained. Both wards would each be represented by one councillor.

52 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed that the area be represented by two new wards, with Lune Valley North ward comprising the parishes of Burrow-with-Burrow, Leck, Whittington, Tunstall, Cantsfield, Melling-with-Wrayton, Gressingham, Hornby-with-Farleton and Claughton, while Lune Valley South ward would comprise the parishes of Tatham, Wray-with-Botton, Roeburndale, Caton-with-Littledale and Quernmore. The proposed Lune Valley North ward would be represented by one councillor, while the new Lune Valley South ward would be represented by two councillors. In addition, they proposed combining Arkholme-with-Cawood parish in a ward with parishes to its west.

53 Under Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal for a 60-member council, Lune Valley North and Lune Valley South wards would have 5 per cent and 2 per cent more electors

per councillor than the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain constant over the next five years.

54 As stated earlier, we based our draft recommendations on Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' submission. We considered that its proposed Lune Valley North and Lune Valley South wards achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and concluded that we were content to endorse the proposals as part of our draft recommendations. In particular, we considered that both wards would comprise rural parishes which appear to share similar community interests and identities. In contrast, we noted that the City Council's proposals, arising from its suggested 63-member council, involved combining areas which appeared to have less in common. In addition, Arkholme-with-Cawood Parish Council proposed that parishes in adjoining wards should not be transferred to Arkholme ward.

55 At Stage Three the City Council proposed that Wennington parish should be transferred to the proposed Lune Valley North ward and that Claughton parish should form part of Lune Valley South ward. It also proposed that the two wards should be renamed Upper Lune Valley and Lower Lune Valley respectively, contending that the proposed ward names would better reflect the communities within Lune Valley. A local resident supported the draft recommendations, which he argued were more appropriate to the area than the scheme put forward by the City Council. Arkholme-with-Cawood Parish Council reiterated its Stage One proposal, suggesting that the existing Arkholme ward should be retained and extended by adding the parish of Aughton, contending that they shared the same rural identity.

56 Gressingham Parish Council opposed the proposed formation of the two Lune Valley wards. It stated that it strongly supported the City Council's Stage One scheme and contended that the draft recommendations would, in effect, reduce the number of councillors representing rural wards to three. It objected to the transfer of rural parishes from a Hornby based ward to Caton ward. Whittingham Parish Council stated that it wished to continue to be located within an Arkholme based ward.

57 Notwithstanding the comments made by Gressingham Parish Council, we remain convinced that the proposed Lune Valley wards provide the best solution for the area, within the context of the district as a whole. However, we acknowledge that the City Council's proposed modifications also have merit. Having considered carefully the representations received, we have decided to broadly endorse our draft recommendation for these wards. However, we propose adopting the proposed transfer of Claughton and Wennington parishes between the two wards, as well as renaming the wards Upper Lune Valley and Lower Lune Valley, as proposed by the City Council. The proposed modification will not only enhance the geography of the proposed wards, but also achieves a better level of electoral equality than the configuration put forward as part of our draft recommendations.

58 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Lower Lune Valley and Upper Lune Valley wards would improve, both varying by 3 per cent from the district average respectively (2 per cent and 3 per cent in 2004). Details of these proposals can be found on Map 2.

Caton and Ellel wards

59 Caton and Ellel wards are each represented by two councillors and are located in the south of the district. The parish of Scotforth is divided by land occupied by Lancaster University and is part of two wards; Caton and Ellel. Caton ward contains the parishes of Caton-with-Littlemore, Scotforth and Quernmore, while Ellel ward comprises the parishes of Cockerham, Ellel, Over Wyresdale and Thurnham, together with a detached part of Scotforth parish to the west of Lancaster University. Under current arrangements Caton ward has 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average, while the number of electors per councillor in Ellel ward is equal to the average (18 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more by 2004).

60 At Stage One the City Council proposed transferring Over Wyresdale from Ellel ward to a revised Caton ward, with the remainder of Caton's existing ward boundaries being retained. It also proposed including the part of Scotforth parish to the west of Lancaster University in a revised Ellel ward. Under its proposals, Ellel parish would be further warded, with University halls of residence in the north of the parish being transferred to a new University ward, which would also include halls of residence in the south of the existing Scotforth East ward. It also proposed that Thurnham parish boundary should be "rationalised" to include electors to the east of the Glasson branch of the Lancaster canal in Scotforth ward. It proposed that the rest of Ellel ward's boundaries should be retained. It suggested that each ward should continue to be represented by two councillors.

61 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposed University ward was identical to the City Council's proposal. However, they suggested that Caton ward, less Scotforth parish, should be included in Lune Valley South ward, as detailed previously. They also proposed that Ellel parish, less the area containing Lancaster University halls of residence, should be combined with the parishes of Cockerham, Over Wyresdale and Thurnham, together with the part of Scotforth parish to the west of Lancaster University campus, in a revised Ellel ward. Under these proposals, Ellel ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years.

62 Lancaster City Council Liberal Democrat Group argued that the part of Scotforth parish to the east of Lancaster University should be included in Caton ward, while a local resident supported the City Council's proposed Ellel ward.

63 We noted that both district-wide submissions put forward identical electoral arrangements for a new University ward, and we agreed that this ward would achieve a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and therefore adopted it as part of our draft recommendations. Both district-wide proposals would include the part of Scotforth parish to the west of Lancaster University in a ward with Ellel parish, and we were content to endorse this consensus. However, as a consequence of our draft recommendations in the north-east of the district (detailed previously) we endorsed Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposed Ellel ward, as we considered that it provided a reasonable level of electoral equality, while appearing to satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities. We considered Lancaster City Council Liberal Democrat Group's proposal to include the part of Scotforth parish to the east of the University campus in a ward with the parishes of Caton-with-Littledale and Quernmore. However, we did not concur with the view that the proposal would achieve better

electoral arrangements than that of our draft recommendations, as it would not be compatible with the district-wide scheme.

64 At Stage Three the City Council did not directly comment on proposals for this area. Over Wyresdale Parish Council stated its preference for retaining the status quo, rather than it forming part of a proposed Caton ward. Professor Ritchie, the Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University, commenting on the proposed University ward, suggested minor modifications which would, in his view, better reflect local community identities. He suggested that the “absolute” nature of the M6 as a boundary should be recognised and suggested including Bailrigg and Barker House within the proposed University ward.

65 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received during Stage Three. In considering the proposed modifications made by Professor Ritchie, we consulted further with the City Council. During this consultation it was brought to our attention that Barker House, as marked on the large map inserted at the back of this report, is a farm, and does not form part of Lancaster University campus. Although there is merit in utilising the M6 as a boundary, we consider currently that the hamlet would be best served by remaining part of the proposed Lower Lune Valley ward.

66 We therefore propose endorsing our draft recommendations for these wards as final. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed Ellel and University wards would initially vary by 2 per cent below and 7 per cent above the district average (1 per cent below and 4 per cent above by 2004). Details of these proposals can be found on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Halton-with-Aughton, Kellet, Silverdale and Warton wards

67 These four wards are located in the north-west of the district. Under current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Halton-with-Aughton and Warton wards each varies by 8 per cent more than the district average, Kellet ward, consisting of the parishes of Borwick, Nether Kellet, Priest Hutton and Over Kellet, has 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average, while the number of electors per councillor in Silverdale ward, consisting of the parishes of Silverdale, Yeland Conyers and Yeland Redmayne, is equal to the average. These councillor:elector ratios are projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years.

68 At Stage One the City Council proposed transferring Aughton village from Halton-with-Aughton ward to a revised Arkholme ward, as detailed previously, with the village of Halton forming a new Halton ward. It proposed that Kellet ward should be divided between adjoining wards, with the parishes of Borwick and Priest Hutton forming part of a revised Arkholme ward, Over Kellet being included in a revised Carnforth ward and Nether Kellet parish being included in a new Slyne & Kellet ward. The City Council proposed that the current electoral arrangements of the wards of Silverdale and Warton should be retained. It proposed that Slyne & Kellet ward should be represented by two councillors, while Halton, Silverdale and Warton wards should continue to be represented by one councillor.

69 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed retaining Halton-with-Aughton, Silverdale and Warton’s existing electoral arrangements, while proposing that Arkholme-with-

Cawood parish should be included in a revised Kellet ward. Under these proposals, all four wards would have an electoral imbalance of less than 9 per cent. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain largely unchanged over the next five years.

70 Over Kellet Parish Council objected to the City Council's proposal to include the parish of Over Kellet in a revised Carnforth ward, arguing that it should continue to be represented in a ward with the parishes of Borwick, Nether Kellet and Priest Hutton. A local resident also argued that Over Kellet should continue to be represented in a ward with Nether Kellet parish.

71 As outlined earlier in this report, we based our draft recommendations for the district on Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' scheme. We noted that its proposals broadly retained the existing arrangements in this area and we were content that they achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the representation of the interests and identities of communities. In addition, we considered that the City Council's proposals did not appear to reflect the interests and identities of Over Kellet, which we considered should be represented in a ward with similar rural parishes. We therefore adopted Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposed Halton-with-Aughton, Kellet, Silverdale and Warton wards as part of our draft recommendations.

72 At Stage Three Warton Parish Council supported the recommendation for no change to the existing ward of the same name. The City Council noted the draft recommendations for these wards but did not comment further. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties gave their full support for the proposed wards. We did not receive any further comments on the proposed recommendations for these wards. Given the good level of electoral equality which the proposed arrangements achieve, and in the absence of no further comments, we are content to endorse our draft recommendations for these wards as final. The proposed Halton-with-Aughton, Kellet, Silverdale and Warton wards would initially vary by 8 per cent above, 9 per cent above, equal to and 8 per cent above the district average respectively (6 per cent above, 8 per cent above, 1 per cent above and 4 per cent above by 2004). Details of the final recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2.

Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with-Hest wards

73 Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with-Hest wards are situated to the north-east of Morecambe, and currently have relatively high levels of electoral variance, namely 3 per cent fewer, 21 per cent more and 24 per cent fewer than the district average respectively (5 per cent below, 19 per cent below and 26 per cent below by 2004). Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with-Hest wards currently comprise the parishes of the same names.

74 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Bolton-le-Sands ward's existing electoral arrangements should be retained, while it proposed that Over Kellet parish should be included in Carnforth ward, to provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. It suggested that Nether Kellet parish should be combined with Slyne-with-Hest parish to form a new Slyne & Kellet ward. Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne & Kellet wards would each be represented by two councillors, while Carnforth ward would be represented by three councillors.

75 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed modifications to all three wards, with the part of Bolton-le-Sands parish to the south of the junction between the A5105 coastal road

and the A6 by-pass being transferred to a revised Slyne-with-Hest ward, to improve electoral equality. In addition, they suggested that the part of Carnforth ward to the east of Crag Bank Lane and to the south of the railway line should be included in Bolton-le-Sands ward, arguing that this would provide a better level of electoral equality than the existing arrangements.

76 Carnforth Town Council and Over Kellet Parish Council objected to the City Council's proposal to combine Carnforth town and Over Kellet parish. In addition, Carnforth Town Council suggested that Carnforth's ward boundaries should be retained, but that it should be represented by three councillors, one more than at present. It argued that "there is strong reason to anticipate very substantial growth ... in the following years". Under Carnforth Town Council's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Carnforth ward would be 18 per cent less than the district average. This level of electoral imbalance is projected to marginally deteriorate over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in Carnforth ward projected to be 20 per cent less than the average by 2004.

77 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we noted that the City Council's proposals did not secure a high degree of local support in this area, while we considered that Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposals utilised strong and easily identifiable boundaries and provided a reasonable level of electoral equality.

78 We considered Carnforth Town Council's proposal that Carnforth town should continue to form a separate district ward, to be represented by three councillors. However, as indicated earlier, we were not been persuaded that the growth on which its electorate projections rely is likely to occur. This proposal would result in a high degree of electoral inequality both initially and in five years' time. As there are practical alternatives available, on balance, we were not persuaded that this level of electoral inequality is justifiable in Carnforth.

79 We noted in our draft recommendations report that these proposals would result in warding both Bolton-le-Sands parish and Carnforth town, but considered that the proposed warding arrangements in this area appeared to satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities. We were therefore content to adopt Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposals without modification. However, we stated that would welcome further evidence at Stage Three.

80 At Stage Three the City Council proposed that the parish ward boundary between Bolton-le-Sands and Slyne-with-Hest should be amended and moved north-westwards to include Morecambe Lodge and the caravan park. The City Council argued that this modified boundary would be more appropriate if, in the future, the land to the rear of Madison Avenue were to be developed. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties also proposed modifying this boundary and suggested that it should be moved north-westwards parallel to the Slyne-with-Hest boundary that extends out to the low water mark.

81 Bolton-le-Sands Parish Council expressed concern at the draft recommendations. The Parish Council considered that ward and parish boundaries should be coterminous with one another. Carnforth Town Council also expressed concern at the proposed recommendations. It stated that the proposed warding of the town would prove "unhelpful" and suggested a modification to the proposed boundary. It considered that the town's representation on the City Council would be

affected by the proposed warding. The Town Council reiterated its proposal to increase the town's district representation to three councillors, retaining the existing boundaries. Slyne-with-Hest Parish Council stated that it considered the draft recommendations, which combined part of Slyne-with-Hest with part of Carnforth (Crag Bank), preferable to the City Council's proposal to form a new Slyne & Kellet ward. A local resident opposed the proposed warding of Bolton-le-Sands, contending that the draft recommendations failed to reflect local community identities.

82 We have considered carefully the representations made to us during Stage Three. Whilst we acknowledge that the proposed warding of Carnforth and Bolton-le-Sands is not an entirely satisfactory proposal, we have not been persuaded by subsequent submissions to move away from our draft recommendations. We acknowledge the concerns expressed by Carnforth Town Council. However, as previously discussed, we consider that its proposal would result in a high degree of electoral inequality both initially and in 2004 and, on balance, we remain unpersuaded that this is justified in Carnforth. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final, notwithstanding the proposed parish ward amendment. The proposed Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth and Slyne-with-Hest wards would initially vary by 1 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (3 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2004). Details of the proposed boundaries are shown on the large map at the back of this report and in Appendix A.

Overton ward

83 Overton ward, comprising the parishes of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe, Middleton and Overton, is located to the south of Morecambe and is bounded by Morecambe Bay to the west, the River Lune to the east and Wyre borough to the south. Under current arrangements, Overton ward has 61 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. By 2004, this high level of electoral inequality is projected to improve marginally, with Overton ward expected to have 56 per cent more electors per councillor than the average.

84 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish should be warded for the first time and the new parish wards should be divided between adjoining district wards. It proposed that the part of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish including the Grosvenor Park estate and the White Lund trading estate, together with the area to the east of Westcliffe Drive and the north of Oxcliffe Road, should be included in a new Westgate ward. It also proposed that the Winstar Park estate should be united in Skerton West ward, while the rural part of the parish would continue to be combined with the parishes of Middleton and Overton to form a revised Overton ward. Overton and Westgate wards would be represented by one councillor and three councillors respectively.

85 The City Council also suggested an alternative option for Overton ward, which only differed from its preferred option in relation to the boundary between Overton and Heysham South wards. It proposed that the area to the south of the A683 Trumacar Lane/Rothesay Road should be included in a revised Overton ward.

86 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal for Overton ward was substantially the same as the City Council's, but included the Grosvenor Park estate in Torrisholme ward. Under

a 60-member council, Overton ward would have 25 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

87 We also received representations from two parish councils relating to this area. Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Parish Council objected to the proposals to include the urban part of the parish in Morecambe wards, stating that it would not satisfactorily reflect Heaton-with-Oxcliffe's interests and identities, and that it could lead to the parish's external boundary being modified in any subsequent review of parish boundaries undertaken by the City Council. It proposed that Heaton-with-Oxcliffe should form a separate district ward, and suggested that Overton and Middleton parishes could be combined to form a revised Overton ward. Each ward would be represented by one councillor. It also proposed that the part of Grosvenor Park estate in Torrisholme ward should be included in the proposed Heaton-with-Oxcliffe ward, while the Winster Park estate would be wholly represented in Skerton West ward. Under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in Heaton-with-Oxcliffe and Overton wards would vary by 14 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the district average, under a council of 60 members.

88 Overton Parish Council proposed that Overton's existing warding arrangements should be retained, but that the ward should be represented by two councillors, one more than at present. Under these proposals, Overton ward would have 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average.

89 We considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, and noted that the City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties put forward broadly similar proposals for Overton ward. We were therefore content to substantially adopt their proposals as our draft recommendations. However, we considered Lancaster & Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal to unite the Grosvenor Park estate in Torrisholme ward had merit, given that the Grosvenor Park estate shares good communication links with communities in Torrisholme ward. In addition, we noted that under the City Council's proposal, the estate would be divided from the rest of the proposed Westgate ward by the White Lund trading estate.

90 We noted in our draft recommendations report that the City Council's preferred option for Overton ward and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal would both result in a high degree of electoral imbalance both initially and over the next five years. We therefore examined alternative arrangements, including the City Council's alternative proposal to include part of Heysham South ward in the revised Overton ward. We considered that this proposal achieved a better level of electoral equality than the other proposals put forward at Stage One or the existing arrangements, and adopted it as part of our draft recommendation for the purpose of consultation.

91 We also considered the proposals put forward by Heaton-with-Oxcliffe and Overton parish councils, but noted that they would both result in high degrees of electoral inequality, both in the proposed rural wards and wards in Morecambe. In our view, the northern part of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish shares similar interests and identities with electors in Morecambe, and we were content that these community ties would be better reflected by our draft recommendations than by the alternative proposals. However, in addition to transferring the area to the south of the A683 Trumacar Lane/Rothesay Road, we proposed transferring a further 68 electors from the Bell Aire Caravan Park, in the proposed Higher Heysham ward, to further enhance electoral equality. We sought further evidence regarding the proposed Overton ward at Stage Three.

92 At Stage Three the City Council opposed the proposed modification to Overton ward, with regard to its boundary with the proposed Higher Heysham ward. The City Council stated that although it recognised the reasons for the proposed boundary, it urged us to reconsider our position and amend the boundary to follow the railway line. The City Council stated that the area north of the railway line is clearly part of the Heysham community and that, additionally, the railway line provides a clearer boundary between the two wards. The area south of the railway line, the City Council suggested, was similarly part of the rural community and those properties which lie north of the railway line do not have any affinity with the rural Overton ward. It acknowledged that the proposed variance of 25 per cent was extremely large. However, it concluded that this could be justified, given the local circumstances and a preference to retain local community identities. It also noted that, were the electors not transferred from Higher Heysham ward to Overton ward, the electoral equality in Higher Heysham ward would improve to 2 per cent from the district average by 2004.

93 County Councillor Yeats, the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties, the Lancaster Branch Labour Party, and Morcambe and Lunesdale Constituency Labour Party opposed the draft recommendation to place part of Heysham with Overton ward, contending that the natural boundary between Heysham and Overton ward [the railway line] should be utilised in preference to achieving electoral equality within the modified Overton ward.

94 We have considered the evidence which we received during Stage Three with regard to the proposed Overton ward. We acknowledge the City Council's argument that the railway line would provide a clearer boundary between the proposed Heysham South and Overton wards. However, while we have some sympathy for the concerns expressed by those respondents with regard to Overton ward, we were not convinced that a sufficiently strong counter argument was expressed locally in opposition to the draft recommendations. Although those representations suggested that the proposed boundary would adversely affect local community identities, we were surprised that this was not corroborated by any representations from the parish councils or indeed local residents. We are sympathetic to the nature of the concerns expressed and recognise the difficulty that exists, particularly in sparsely populated rural areas, in providing effective and convenient local government. However, the Commission considers that any imbalance in excess of 20 per cent should arise only in the most exceptional circumstances and would require the strongest justification. We do not consider, in this instance, that this justification has been demonstrated, or that the circumstances are sufficiently exceptional. We therefore propose endorsing our draft recommendations for the modified Overton ward as final.

95 The proposed Overton ward would initially vary by 6 per cent below the district average (8 per cent below by 2004). Details of our final recommendations for Overton ward are shown on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Lancaster (eight wards)

96 Lancaster is the historic county town of Lancashire, and is a focus for shopping and tourism in the north of the county. It comprises the wards of Bulk, Castle, John O'Gaunt, Scotforth East and Scotforth West to the south of the River Lune, and Skerton Central, Skerton East and Skerton West wards to the north. Under existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Castle, John O'Gaunt and Scotforth East varies by 20 per cent, 16 per cent and 37 per cent more

than the district average respectively, while Scotforth West, Skerton Central and Skerton East have 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively. The number of electors per councillor in Bulk ward is equal to the average. These variances are not forecast to significantly improve by 2004.

97 At Stage One the City Council argued that this area merited 25 councillors under a council size of 63. It proposed that the Winster Park estate should be wholly represented in Skerton West ward, as detailed previously, while the area bounded by Torrisholme Road, the West Coast main line, Scale Hall Lane and the A589 Morecambe Road should be transferred from Skerton West to Skerton Central ward. It also proposed that the area north-east of Barley Cop Lane should be included in Skerton East ward.

98 The City Council put forward several significant modifications to the existing ward boundaries in Lancaster, to the south of the River Lune. It suggested that Lancaster University campus should be separately represented in a two-member University ward, which would comprise part of Ellel parish with the southern part of Scotforth parish, as described previously. It proposed that John O’Gaunt and Scotforth East wards should be divided between three two-member wards, to be named Bowerham, Hala and Scotforth wards, while a new Primrose ward would comprise parts of Bulk and John O’Gaunt wards and be represented by two councillors. It suggested that parts of Castle and Scotforth West wards should be combined to form a new John O’Gaunt ward, with the rest of Castle ward forming a new Marsh ward, and the rest of Bulk ward should continue to form a city ward, but be represented by two councillors (one fewer than at present).

99 At Stage One, Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties argued that Lancaster merited 23 councillors under a council of 60 members, two more than at present. They stated that the present boundaries were “well established” and that they had sought to reflect this in their proposals. In the north of Lancaster, they proposed that Skerton should be represented by two three-member wards, with the current Skerton Central ward being divided between revised Skerton East and Skerton West wards. It proposed that the electoral arrangements for Bulk, Castle, John O’Gaunt and Scotforth West wards should be substantially retained; however it suggested that parts of all four wards should be combined to form a new single-member Duke’s ward, so that the central area of the city could be separately represented.

100 In the south of Lancaster, their proposed University ward was identical to the City Council’s proposal, as described earlier, while they proposed that the part of Scotforth East ward to the north of Lancaster University campus should form a revised two-member ward.

101 Under these proposals for a council of 60 members, the number of electors per councillor in all of the nine proposed wards would vary by less than 7 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve over the next five years.

102 We received three further submissions from local residents and groups relating to electoral arrangements in the city. The Federation of Skerton Labour Parties proposed that Skerton should be represented by two three-member wards, utilising boundaries proposed by the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties. A local resident supported the City Council’s proposal to combine

part of Scotforth West ward with part of Ellet ward, while another resident supported its proposed Castle ward.

103 Having considered carefully the representations received at Stage One, we noted in our draft recommendations report that Lancaster merited 23 councillors under a 60-member council. On balance, we considered that Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal would provide the correct level of representation for the city, while securing a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered that their proposals would substantially retain the existing arrangements, which we were content achieved a reasonable level of electoral equality while satisfactorily reflecting the interests and identities of communities. Accordingly, we endorsed Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal as part of draft recommendations.

104 However, we made minor modifications to the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposals within Lancaster, to further improve electoral equality. We also stated that we were concerned that the proposal for Skerton East and Skerton West wards would utilise boundaries that may not be strong and easily identifiable. We stated that we would therefore welcome alternative proposals from local people which would secure equality of representation while also reflecting the interests and identities of communities.

105 During Stage Three the City Council suggested that the area known as "The Grove" should be transferred to the proposed Duke's ward. It contended that the area does not have a significant electorate, but "The Grove" is part of the community which is associated with the street known as Meadowside, which would be within the proposed Duke's ward. It also proposed a modification to the boundary between the proposed John O'Gaunt and Scotforth East wards, arguing that the modification would improve the boundary between the two wards, if the new boundary became the field boundary opposite Kempton Road.

106 The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties and the Lancaster Branch Labour Party also suggested that "The Grove" should form part of the proposed Duke's ward and that the boundary between the proposed John O'Gaunt and Scotforth East wards should be modified, as proposed by the City Council. The Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency Party also proposed that the boundary between John O' Gaunt and Scotforth East wards should be modified.

107 The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties commented on the modification between the proposed Bulk and John O'Gaunt wards and suggested that the area which we had transferred from John' O Gaunt ward to Bulk ward should be retained within the former ward. It argued that East Road provided a more natural boundary between the two wards. The City Council also expressed reservations with regard to this proposed modification. It stated that the retention of Melrose Street and Balmoral Road within the proposed Bulk ward would ensure that the current community of the area would remain intact. It contended that the two streets have no close community identity with Bulk ward and should, therefore, remain within the proposed John O' Gaunt ward. The Lancaster Branch Labour Party also supported the arguments submitted by the City Council and the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties, in favour of retaining East Road as the boundary between the two proposed wards.

108 The Skerton Federation of Labour Parties stated that it had considered the reservations which had been expressed in the draft recommendations report with regard to the boundary between the two proposed Skerton wards. It concluded that although the boundary had been proposed with regard to attaining electoral equality, it accepted that it divided the residents in Edenvale Crescent between two wards. It suggested that the boundary should therefore be amended to run between Longlands Road and Edenvale Crescent.

109 We have considered carefully the modifications proposed by the City Council, the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties, the Lancaster Branch Labour Party and the Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency Labour Party to our draft recommendations affecting Bulk, John O’Gaunt, Scotforth East, Skerton East and Skerton West wards. We are content to support the proposed modifications, given that they would better reflect local community identities within the area and would not adversely affect the electoral equality. Although the modifications would result in a minor deterioration in electoral equality within the Skerton wards and John O’Gaunt ward, we are content that this is acceptable given the improvement to boundaries which would be achieved. The Lancaster Branch Labour Party otherwise supported the draft recommendations for the remaining wards. We did not receive any comments with regard to the other proposed wards within this area. Given the good level of electoral equality which the draft recommendations achieved we propose endorsing our draft recommendations as final, subject to the amendments above.

110 The proposed Bulk, Castle, Duke’s, John O’Gaunt, Scotforth East, Scotforth West, Skerton East and Skerton West wards would initially vary by 4 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 7 per cent above, 6 per cent above, 6 per cent below, 3 per cent below and 6 per cent above respectively (1 per cent below, 6 per cent above, equal to, 9 per cent above, 3 per cent above, 2 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 8 per cent below by 2004). Details of our final recommendations for these wards can be found on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Morecambe (nine wards)

111 Morecambe was developed as a Victorian tourist resort and borders Morecambe and Half Moon Bays. The town is currently represented by 22 councillors serving nine wards (Alexandra, Harbour, Heysham Central, Heysham North, Heysham South, Parks, Poulton, Torrisholme and Victoria). Under existing arrangements, five of the nine wards have an electoral imbalance of more than 10 per cent from the district average, while Alexandra ward has 32 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average. This level of electoral inequality is not expected to change significantly over the next five years.

112 At Stage One the City Council proposed that Morecambe should be represented by 22 councillors, under a council of 63 members. It acknowledged that the existing level of representation for the town was “on the high side”, and that its proposal would increase this over-representation. It proposed that a new Westgate ward should comprise parts of Harbour and Torrisholme wards, together with part of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish (as detailed previously) and should be represented by three councillors. It proposed that Torrisholme ward’s existing arrangements should otherwise be substantially retained, and that the ward should continue to be represented by two councillors.

113 The City Council suggested that a new Broadway South ward should comprise part of Victoria ward, together with the part of Parks ward to the south of the railway line, while it proposed that the rest of Parks ward should be combined with part of Poulton ward to form a new two-member Bare ward. It proposed that the rest of Poulton ward should continue to be represented in a two-member ward of the same name, while a new Regent ward would comprise parts of Alexandra and Harbour wards. It put forward relatively minor modifications for the wards covering Heysham, with the part of Alexandra ward to the south of Devonshire Road being included in a revised Heysham North ward, while it proposed that the Kingsway and Blackberry Hall estates should be transferred from Heysham South ward to Heysham Central ward.

114 Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties argued that Morecambe merited 21 councillors under a council size of 60. They broadly supported the City Council's proposals for Heysham Central, Heysham North, Heysham South and Regent wards, but proposed that they should be named Heysham The Cliffs, Heysham Sandylands, Higher Heysham and West End wards respectively. They noted that their proposals for this area would achieve a better level of electoral equality, under a council size of 60 members.

115 They put forward alternative arrangements for the rest of the town. They proposed that a new three-member Westgate ward should comprise parts of Heysham North, Harbour, Torrisholme and Victoria wards, together with part of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish, as detailed previously. They proposed that a revised three-member Torrisholme ward would include the majority of the existing Torrisholme ward together with the part of Parks ward to the south of the railway line and the Grosvenor estate, in Heaton-with-Oxcliffe parish, while they proposed that a revised two-member Parks ward should include parts of the existing Parks and Poulton wards. In addition, they suggested that a revised three-member Poulton ward should include the remainder of Poulton and Victoria wards.

116 Under Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal for a council size of 60, the number of electors per councillor in all eight of the proposed wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to marginally improve over the next five years, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards projected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the average by 2004.

117 Morecambe Neighbourhood Council argued that Morecambe should be covered by a "greater number of wards represented by one or two members" and that wards in Morecambe should provide good electoral equality to allow equality of representation between Morecambe and Lancaster. It suggested possible ward boundaries that would facilitate its views although, as indicated previously, these proposed wards would result in high levels of electoral inequality. However, we noted that its proposals for a number of wards were similar to the City Council's scheme for the town.

118 We stated in our draft recommendations report that we had considered the proposals put forward, noting that Morecambe is entitled to 20.8 councillors under a council size of 60. As the City Council proposed that Morecambe should be represented by 22 councillors to facilitate its proposed council size of 63 members, we were unable to take account of its proposals for the town. However, we noted that both district-wide schemes agreed in relation to the boundaries of four wards. We concurred that these proposals would provide a reasonable level of electoral

equality, while satisfactorily reflecting the interests and identities of communities, and proposed adopting them as part of our draft recommendations. However, as indicated previously, we included the area to the south of Rothesay Road and Trumacar Lane in a revised Overton ward, to provide an improved level of electoral equality in the proposed Overton ward. In addition, we adopted the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposed ward names.

119 In the rest of the town, we endorsed Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposals, without modification. We considered that these proposals achieved a reasonable level of electoral equality, while appearing to reflect the interests and identities of communities. In addition, we considered that their proposals utilised strong and easily identifiable boundaries, such as the railway line and the A589 Broadway.

120 At Stage Three the City Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, but proposed a number of small boundary modifications. It proposed that the boundary between the proposed Parks and Torrisholme wards should be amended on its north-eastern corner to follow the railway line in its entirety. This proposed modification was supported by Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties. Morecambe Neighbourhood Council stated that it was pleased that the overall number of councillors had not been increased but regretted that the Commission did not agree with its wish to see smaller wards with fewer councillors per ward.

121 We received a number of proposals for the revision of ward names within the Morecambe/Heysham area. The City Council suggested that the proposed Parks ward should be renamed Bare. It argued that Bare would more accurately reflect the actual area which the proposed ward would cover; the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties supported this recommendation. The City Council stated that it endorsed the principles behind the creation of the new West End ward but suggested that it included areas which were not traditionally within the area known as West End. It proposed that a more acceptable name would be Marine or Regent ward, given the proximity of Marine Road or Regent Park within the proposed ward Marine ward. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties also propose that West End ward should be renamed Marine. The Morecambe and Lancaster Constituency Labour Party and the Morecambe Neighbourhood Council also proposed that West End ward should be renamed and suggested West Bay or West Marine.

122 It was proposed by the City Council, the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties and Morecambe Neighbourhood Council that the proposed Heysham Sandylands ward should be renamed Sandylands. It was argued that residents did not consider themselves part of Heysham and that, in fact, the Sandylands area was considered to look more towards Morecambe.

123 The City Council proposed that Higher Heysham should revert to its existing ward name of Heysham South. It asserted that the proposed ward name did not fully reflect the identity of the area of the proposed ward. It noted that there were two distinct areas marked on the large map "Higher" and "Lower" and suggested that only utilising the prefix "Higher" could cause confusion to electors. Similarly the City Council suggested that Heysham The Cliffs ward should be renamed Heysham Central. It suggested that the proposed ward name did not fully reflect the whole of the proposed ward. It once again suggested that there are two distinct communities within the proposed ward and that retaining the existing ward name would prove more easily

identifiable for electors. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties suggested that Heysham The Cliffs ward should be renamed The Cliffs.

124 We have examined the modifications proposed to our draft recommendations. We seek to provide wards with names which best reflect the communities which they constitute and therefore support the proposed modifications to the proposed ward names where there is agreement. We propose that West End ward should be renamed Marine and that Heysham Sandylands, Higher Heysham and Heysham the Cliffs wards should be renamed Sandylands, Heysham South and Heysham Central respectively. We have concluded that it would be most sensible to revert to existing, established ward names where there is some uncertainty with regard to the proposed ward name. Otherwise, we propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. We have not been persuaded that the modifications proposed to the ward boundaries are either more identifiable or provide a better reflection of community identity than our draft recommendations.

125 The proposed Bare, Heysham Central, Heysham South, Marine, Poulton, Sandylands, Torrisholme and Westgate wards would initially vary by 5 per cent below, 1 per cent below, 7 per cent below, 3 per cent below, 8 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 4 per cent below respectively (6 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 1 per cent above, 5 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 4 per cent above and 5 per cent below by 2004).

Electoral Cycle

126 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the city. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

127 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

128 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations. We propose that:

- a council of 60 members should be retained;
- there should be 28 wards, one less than at present;
- the boundaries of 26 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

129 We conclude that, in Lancaster:

- Claughton and Wennington parishes should be transferred between the proposed wards of Upper Lune Valley and Lower Lune Valley;
- the boundary between the proposed John O’Gaunt and Duke’s ward should be modified;
- the boundary between the proposed Bulk and John O’Gaunt wards should be modified;
- the boundary between John O’Gaunt ward and Scotforth East ward should be amended;
- we propose that Parks, Heysham The Cliffs, Higher Heysham, Lune Valley South, West End, Heysham Sandylands and Lune Valley North wards should be renamed Bare, Heysham Central, Heysham South, Lower Lune Valley, Marine, Sandylands and Upper Lune Valley respectively.

130 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	29	28	29	28
Average number of electors per councillor	1,742	1,801	1,742	1,801
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	15	0	16	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	0	6	0

131 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Lancaster City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the city average from 15 to none. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Lancaster City Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named 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 Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

132 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, we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Bolton-le-Sands, Carnforth (town council), Ellel, Heaton-with-Oxcliffe, and Scotforth to reflect the proposed district wards.

133 The parish of Bolton-le-Sands is currently served by 10 parish councillors, and is not warded. At draft recommendations stage, we adopted Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties' proposal to ward Bolton-le-Sands parish in order to facilitate their proposed district warding. We proposed that Bolton-le-Sands should comprise two parish wards, Bolton-le-Sands North and Bolton-le-Sands South, which would reflect the proposed city wards. We did not propose any change to the current parish council size, with Bolton-le-Sands South parish ward returning three parish councillors, and Bolton-le-Sands North returning seven parish councillors. At Stage Three the Parish Council opposed the proposed warding of the parish which would divide the parish between two district wards. However, on balance, we consider that the parish warding would not adversely affect the community identity of the parish, and would facilitate good electoral arrangements for the City Council, and therefore put them forward as our final recommendations.

Final Recommendation

Bolton-le-Sands Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Bolton-le-Sands South (returning three councillors) and Bolton-le-Sands North (returning seven councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

134 Carnforth Town Council is currently served by 12 town councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations report, in order to improve electoral imbalances within the area at a district level, we proposed warding Carnforth town. The consequential effect of this proposal would be the creation of two town-council wards: Carnforth Crag Bank and Carnforth Town. At Stage Three the Town Council opposed the proposed warding of Carnforth which would divide the town council between two district wards. As previously discussed, we have concluded that the level of electoral equality which would result cannot be justified given that a viable

alternative is available. We therefore propose adopting our draft recommendations for the proposed warding of Carnforth as final.

Final Recommendation
Carnforth Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Carnforth Town (returning eight councillors) and Carnforth Crag Bank (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

135 The parish of Ellel is currently served by nine councillors and has two parish wards: North (returning five councillors) and South (returning four councillors). During Stage One, both the City Council and the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed that part of the parish, which includes a Hall of Residence of Lancaster University, should form part of a new two-member University ward. We endorsed this proposal at the draft recommendations stage, and proposed that in order to facilitate the proposal, a new University parish ward of Ellel parish should be established. Professor Ritchie, Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University, proposed modifications to the boundary of the proposed University parish ward. However, as previously discussed, we remain content that the boundary proposed in our draft recommendations report remains the most suitable at this time. Therefore, given the good level of electoral equality which the proposals facilitate, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation
Ellel Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards: South ward should continue to return four parish councillors, North ward should return four parish councillors and University ward should return one parish councillor. The boundaries between the three parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

136 The parish of Heaton-with-Oxcliffe is currently represented by seven parish councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, both the City Council and the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed that the urban area of the parish should be transferred to the urban wards within the Morecambe/Skerton area. In order to facilitate this proposal we proposed creating four new parish wards: Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Rural parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Westgate parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Torrisholme parish ward (returning two parish councillors) and Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Winsters Park parish ward (returning two parish councillors). The City Council and Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties supported this proposal at Stage Three. In the absence of any opposition, and given the good level of electoral equality at district level which the proposals facilitate, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations as final.

Final Recommendation

Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Parish Council should comprise seven parish councillors, the same as at present, representing four wards: Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Rural (returning one councillor), Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Westgate (returning two councillors), Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Torrisholme (returning two councillors) and Heaton-with-Oxcliffe Winster Park (returning two councillors). The boundaries between the parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

137 The parish of Scotforth is currently represented by five parish councillors and is unwarded. However, the parish is currently a detached parish, with separate parts of the parish divided by land occupied by the University of Lancaster. The Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties proposed including both parts of the detached parish ward from the existing Caton ward in the modified Ellel ward. We endorsed this proposal as part of our draft recommendations and were of the view that this would be best achieved through the warding of the parish. At Stage Three, the Lancaster and Morecambe Labour Parties reiterated its support for the proposals. The Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University proposed minor boundary modifications, which he contended would better reflect local community identities. As previously discussed, we have closely examined the proposed modifications made by Professor Ritchie. However, we are satisfied that the proposed boundaries, with regard to Barker House, satisfactorily reflect the local community. We therefore propose endorsing our draft recommendations for Scotforth parish as final.

Final Recommendation

Scotforth Parish Council should comprise five parish councillors, as at present, and the parish should be divided into two parish wards: Scotforth Burrow Heights (returning one councillor) and Scotforth Parish (returning four councillors). The boundaries between the parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

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

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Lancaster

6 NEXT STEPS

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

140 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 17 October 2000.

141 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 Lancaster: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Carnforth town.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Lancaster and Morecambe.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Lancaster: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Carnforth Town

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Lancaster

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Parks, Heysham The Cliffs, Higher Heysham and West End, Heysham Sandylands wards. They should be renamed Bare, Heysham Central, Heysham South, Marine and Sandylands respectively.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Bulk	Bulk ward (part)
Castle	Castle ward (part)
Duke's	Bulk ward (part); Castle ward (part); John O'Gaunt ward (part); Scotforth West ward (part)
John O'Gaunt	John O'Gaunt ward (part)
Lune Valley North	Arkholme ward (part – the parishes of Burrow-with-Burrow, Cantsfield, Ireby, Leck, Melling-with-Wrayton and Tunstall); Hornby ward (part – the parishes of Claughton, Hornby-with-Farleton and Gressingham)
Lune Valley South	Hornby ward (part – the parishes of Wennington, Tatham, Roeburn and Wray-with-Botton); Caton ward (part – the parishes of Caton-with-Littledale and Quernmore)
Scotforth East	Scotforth East ward (part)
Skerton East	Skerton East ward; Skerton Central ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bulk	3	5,237	1,746	0	5,542	1,847	3
Castle	3	5,254	1,751	1	5,700	1,900	6
Duke's	1	1,787	1,787	3	1,780	1,780	-1
John O'Gaunt	3	5,407	1,802	3	5,688	1,896	5

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Lune Valley North	1	1,821	1,821	5	1,890	1,890	5
Lune Valley South	2	3,560	1,780	2	3,640	1,820	1
Scotforth East	2	3,700	1,850	6	3,720	1,860	3
Skerton West	3	4,991	1,664	-5	5,030	1,677	-7

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Lancaster 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.