

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland in Cumbria

Further electoral review

August 2007

Translations and other formats

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What is the Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair, until 30 June 2007)

Robin Gray

Joan Jones CBE

Ann M. Kelly

Professor Colin Mellors

Director:

Archie Gall

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

Summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of South Lakeland was conducted to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the district. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each district councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee for England to undertake this review on 12 May 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, 16 wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the district average. Development forecast during the last review, for the five-year period between 1996 and 2001, was largely not realised. However, in Burton & Holme ward, more development took place than expected, which has resulted in it having a particularly high variance, with 42% more electors than the district average.

This review was conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	27 February 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We recommended that South Lakeland should be represented by 51 members, one fewer than at present. The warding pattern that we recommended was based on the Stage One submission from the District Council with some modifications to provide an improved level of electoral equality.

Responses to consultation

During the consultation period on our draft recommendations we received support from the District Council, on whose proposals our recommendations were based. We also received opposition to our recommendations from a number of parish councils, local councillors and residents in relation to their respective areas. In particular, we received some strong opposition to our proposals in the Crake Valley and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale areas.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

During Stage One, the District Council predicted growth of 6% over the five-year period 2004 to 2009 and we used these figures when considering the warding pattern in South Lakeland. We received no further representations regarding the electorate figures during Stage Three and are satisfied to use them as the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

We received no further representations during Stage Three in relation to our recommendation to reduce the number of councillors in South Lakeland from 52 to 51 and are confirming this recommendation as final.

General analysis

We have broadly proposed confirming our draft recommendations as final. We note the opposition to our proposals in a number of areas on the grounds that they do not reflect community identities. We looked especially closely at the Crake Valley and Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale areas. However, we did not consider that we had received sufficient evidence to justify the resultant poor levels of electoral equality that the alternative proposals that we received would create. We have proposed two minor amendments to improve the boundaries in Kendal and Grange and have also recommended 7 district ward name changes from those proposed in our draft recommendations.

What happens next?

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to the Electoral Commission through the contact details below. The Commission will not make an Order implementing them before 18 September 2007. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Table 1: Final recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arnside & Beetham	2	3,523	1,762	8	3,605	1,803	5
2	Broughton	1	1,883	1,883	16	1,933	1,933	12
3	Burneside	1	1,602	1,602	-1	1,632	1,632	-5
4	Burton & Holme	2	2,909	1,455	-11	3,067	1,534	-11
5	Coniston & Crake Valley	1	1,460	1,460	-10	1,468	1,468	-15
6	Mid Furness	2	3,220	1,610	-1	3,487	1,744	1
7	Crooklands	1	1,766	1,766	9	1,810	1,810	5
8	Cartmel & Grange West	1	1,763	1,763	8	1,817	1,817	6
9	Grange North	1	1,610	1,610	-1	1,804	1,804	5
10	Grange South	1	1,609	1,609	-1	1,804	1,804	5
11	Holker	1	1,573	1,573	-3	1,725	1,725	0

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Hawkshead	1	1,599	1,599	-2	1,599	1,599	-7
13	Kendal Castle	1	1,567	1,567	-7	1,715	1,715	0
14	Kendal Far Cross	1	1,681	1,681	-2	1,770	1,770	3
15	Kendal Fell	1	1,552	1,552	-11	1,760	1,760	2
16	Kendal Stonecross	1	1,723	1,723	-7	1,859	1,859	8
17	Kendal Heron Hill	1	1,589	1,589	3	1,665	1,665	-3
18	Kendal Highgate	1	1,607	1,607	-15	1,758	1,758	2
19	Kendal Kirkland	1	1,626	1,626	-13	1,756	1,756	2
20	Kendal Mintsfeet	1	1,574	1,574	2	1,727	1,727	0
21	Kendal Nether	1	1,676	1,676	-11	1,765	1,765	3
22	Kendal Natland & Oxenholme	1	1,502	1,502	50	1,679	1,679	-2
23	Kendal Parks	1	1,610	1,610	-1	1,704	1,704	-1
24	Kendal Romney	1	1,691	1,691	-1	1,721	1,721	0

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25	Kendal Strickland	1	1,511	1,511	5	1,800	1,800	5
26	Kendal Underley	1	1,591	1,591	-8	1,691	1,691	-2
27	Ambleside & Grasmere	2	3,863	1,932	19	3,905	1,953	13
28	Levens	1	1,728	1,728	6	1,808	1,808	5
29	Low Furness	1	1,516	1,516	-7	1,616	1,616	-6
30	Lyth Valley	1	1,826	1,826	12	1,826	1,826	6
31	Milnthorpe	1	1,678	1,678	3	1,774	1,774	3
32	Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale	3	4,844	1,615	-1	5,072	1,691	-2
33	Staveley-in-Cartmel	1	1,669	1,669	3	1,699	1,699	-1
34	Staveley-in-Westmorland	1	1,703	1,703	5	1,703	1,703	-1
35	Ulverston Central	1	1,529	1,529	-6	1,616	1,616	-6
36	Ulverston East	1	1,418	1418	-13	1,787	1,787	4

Table 1 (continued): Final recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
37	Ulverston North	1	1,453	1453	-11	1,692	1,692	-2
38	Ulverston South	1	1,546	1546	-5	1,637	1,637	-5
39	Ulverston Town	1	1,490	1490	-8	1,649	1,649	-4
40	Ulverston West	1	1,474	1474	-9	1,622	1,622	-6
41	Whinfell	1	1,477	1477	-9	1,579	1,579	-8
42	Windermere Applewaithe & Troutbeck	1	1,650	1650	2	1,678	1,678	-3
43	Windermere Bowness North	1	1,715	1715	6	1,677	1,677	-3
44	Windermere Bowness South	1	1,589	1589	-2	1,639	1,639	-5
45	Windermere Town	1	1,702	1702	5	1,702	1,702	-1
	Totals	51	82,885	-	-	87,802	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,625	-	-	1,722	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Lakeland District Council.

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the district of South Lakeland.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 the Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a periodic electoral review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average, or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of South Lakeland. The last review of South Lakeland was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1997. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 16 October 1998 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 1999.

5 In carrying out our work, the Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.¹ This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure effective and convenient local government
- achieve equality of representation

In addition we are required to work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of South Lakeland is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by the Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful in both understanding the approach taken by the Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for any parish and town councils in the district. We cannot consider changes to the external boundaries of either the district or parish areas as part of this review.

¹ As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962).

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

11 As indicated in its *Guidance*, the Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence for this.

12 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

14 The review is in four stages (see Table 2).

Table 2: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	27 February 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 6 September 2005 when we wrote to South Lakeland District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cumbria Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Cumbria Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, 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 South Lakeland District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 December 2005.

16 During Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

17 Stage Three began on 21 November 2006 with the publication of the report *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland in Cumbria*, and ended on 26 February 2007.

18 During Stage Four we reconsidered the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and decided whether to modify them. In light of opposition received to our proposed Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward, we also went to further consultation in this area. We now submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It is now for the Commission to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an electoral changes Order. The Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The district of South Lakeland is entirely parished and contains vast rural areas with scenic mountains, lakes, forest and coastline. The area covers parts of both the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park. It also includes the three towns of Kendal, Windermere and Ulverston and has busy market towns.

22 The electorate of the district is 82,885 (December 2004). The Council presently has 52 members who are elected from 47 wards. There are currently 42 single-member wards and five two-member wards. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district by the total number of councillors representing them on the council. At present each councillor represents a district average of 1,594 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,689 by the year 2009 if the present number of councillors is maintained.

23 During the last review of South Lakeland the District Council forecast there would be an increase of approximately 1,330 electors between 1996 and 2001. However, concentrated electorate growth since that time has resulted in a significant amount of electoral inequality between wards. To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the district average in percentage terms.

24 Data from the December 2004 electoral register showed that under the existing arrangements electoral equality across the district met the criteria that the Electoral Commission agreed would warrant further investigation. The number of electors per councillor in 16 of the 47 wards (34%) varies by more than 10% from the district average. The worst imbalance is in Burton & Holme ward where the councillor represents 42% more electors than the district average. Having noted that this level of electoral inequality is unlikely to improve, the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of South Lakeland District Council on 12 May 2005.

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arnside & Beetham	2	3,523	1,762	11	3,605	1,803	7
2	Broughton	1	1,883	1,833	18	1,933	1,933	14
3	Burneside	1	1,565	1,565	-2	1,575	1,575	-7
4	Burton & Holme	1	2,263	2,263	42	2,389	2,389	41
5	Cartmel	1	1,517	1,517	-5	1,587	1,587	-6
6	Coniston	1	1,493	1,493	-6	1,497	1,497	-11
7	Crake Valley	1	1,496	1,496	-6	1,542	1,542	-9
8	Crooklands	1	1,797	1,797	13	1,843	1,843	9
9	Grange	2	3,609	1,805	13	4,345	2,173	18
10	Hawkshead	1	1,341	1,341	-16	1,341	1,341	-21
11	Holker	1	1,429	1,429	-10	1,565	1,565	-7
12	Kendal Castle	1	1,504	1,504	-6	1,601	1,601	-5

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13	Kendal Far Cross	1	1,593	1,593	0	1,682	1,682	0
14	Kendal Fell	1	1,439	1,439	-10	1,652	1,652	-2
15	Kendal Glebelands	1	1,517	1,517	-5	1,606	1,606	-5
16	Kendal Heron Hill	1	1,672	1,672	5	1,761	1,761	4
17	Kendal Highgate	1	1,383	1,383	-13	1,504	1,504	-11
18	Kendal Kirkland	1	1,420	1,420	-11	1,513	1,513	-10
19	Kendal Mintsfeet	1	1,662	1,662	4	1,813	1,813	7
20	Kendal Nether	1	1,451	1,451	-9	1,542	1,542	-9
21	Kendal Oxenholme	1	1,785	1,785	12	2,000	2,000	18
22	Kendal Parks	1	1,610	1,610	1	1,703	1,703	1

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23	Kendal Stonecross	1	1,614	1,614	1	1,707	1,707	1
24	Kendal Strickland	1	1,712	1,712	7	1,993	1,993	18
25	Kendal Underley	1	1,488	1,488	-7	1,603	1,603	-5
26	Kirkby Lonsdale	1	1,904	1,904	19	2,050	2,050	21
27	Lakes Ambleside	2	2,963	1,482	-7	3,005	1,503	-11
28	Lakes Grasmere	1	1,211	1,211	-24	1,211	1,211	-28
29	Levens	1	1,472	1,472	-8	1,536	1,536	-9
30	Low Furness & Swarthmoor	2	3,465	1,733	9	3,790	1,895	12
31	Lyth Valley	1	1,672	1,672	5	1,672	1,672	-1
32	Milnthorpe	1	1,678	1,678	5	1,774	1,774	5

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
33	Natland	1	1,637	1,637	3	1,735	1,735	3
34	Sedbergh	2	2,822	1,411	-11	2,894	1,447	-14
35	Staveley-in-Cartmel	1	1,513	1,513	-5	1,543	1,543	-9
36	Staveley-in-Westmorland	1	1,703	1,703	7	1,703	1,703	1
37	Ulverston Central	1	1,529	1,529	-4	1,616	1,616	-4
38	Ulverston East	1	1,418	1,418	-11	1,787	1,787	6
39	Ulverston North	1	1,453	1,453	-9	1,692	1,692	0
40	Ulverston South	1	1,386	1,386	-13	1,477	1,477	-13
41	Ulverston Town	1	1,490	1,490	-7	1,649	1,649	-2
42	Ulverston West	1	1,634	1,634	3	1,782	1,782	6
43	Whinfell	1	1,824	1,824	14	1,946	1,946	15

Table 3 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
44	Windermere Applethwaite	1	1,598	1,598	0	1,598	1,598	-5
45	Windermere Bowness North	1	1,631	1,631	2	1,631	1,631	-3
46	Windermere Bowness South	1	1,414	1,414	-11	1,454	1,454	-14
47	Windermere Town	1	1,702	1,702	7	1,702	1,702	1
	Totals	52	82,885	-	-	87,802	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,594	-	-	1,689	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Lakeland District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward 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.

3 Draft recommendations

25 During Stage One 14 submissions were received, including district-wide schemes from South Lakeland District Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council. We also received representations from eight parish councils, three district councillors and a local resident. 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 South Lakeland, in Cumbria*.

26 Our draft recommendations were based on the proposals of the District Council, which would provide for good levels of electoral equality. However, we adopted the Council's second preferred option in Grange. In Windermere we also made an amendment to improve electoral equality. We proposed that:

- South Lakeland District Council should be served by 51 councillors, one fewer than at present, representing 45 wards, two fewer than at present
- the boundaries of 37 of the existing wards should be modified, while 10 wards should retain their existing boundaries²
- there should be new parish warding arrangements for Kendal, Windermere, Ulverston and Grange in order to reflect the new district wards

27 Our proposals would result in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in six of the 45 wards varying by no more than 10% from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only four wards varying by more than 10% from the average by 2009.

² We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors. Where additional changes have not been made to these boundaries as part of our final recommendations, these minor boundary amendments are not considered as modifications.

4 Response to consultation

28 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 34 representations were received, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the District Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

South Lakeland District Council

29 The District Council supported our proposals across the district, although it requested that the Boundary Committee give further consideration to the warding pattern in Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale.

Parish and town councils

30 Representations were received from a number of parish and town councils regarding the draft recommendations that affected their respective parishes. Windermere Town Council accepted our recommendations in the town, including the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward with the northern part of the town. Lakes Parish Council however objected to this proposal, considering that the parish should not be combined with other areas. Dent Parish Council opposed the three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward, while Barbon Parish Council proposed that the existing warding pattern should be retained in the area.

31 Natland Parish Council opposed our recommendation to include the parish with part of Kendal and considered that it had closer links with Sedgwick, Stainton, Hincaster and Preston Richard parishes. Urswick and Allithwaite Upper parish councils and The Town Council of Grange-over-Sands opposed our recommendation to divide their respective parishes between district wards. Aldingham Parish Council supported the draft recommendations as it keeps the parish within one district ward and it also proposed an increase in the number of parish councillors. Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council opposed the proposals for their parish and considered they should be in a ward with Lowick and Egton with Newland parishes.

32 Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiteirigg parish councils made a joint submission, stating that both parishes should be included in a ward with Longsleddagle, Whinfell and Selside. Preston Patrick Parish Council opposed the proposal to transfer Preston Patrick parish in to Burton & Holme ward and considered that it should be included in a ward with Preston Richard parish.

Other representations

33 Westmorland and Lonsdale Conservative Association (Central Lakes branch) opposed the proposal to transfer Troutbeck parish ward into a ward with part of Windermere. Barrow and Furness Liberal Democrats objected to the proposed Low Furness and Crake Valley & Swarthmoor wards as it considered they would not reflect community identities in the area and proposed alternatives. Councillor Spendlove and a local resident also opposed the recommendations in the area.

34 Troutbeck Village Association opposed the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward with Windermere town, as did eight local residents. Councillor Rees (Lakes

Grasmere ward) considered that the existing Lakes Grasmere ward should be retained. Councillor Stephenson objected to the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Three local residents from Kendal opposed the proposed boundary in Kendal Stonecross. A local resident opposed our recommendations in Grange, considering that the existing arrangements work well in the area. We received a number of proposed name changes from a member of the public.

35 We also received a representation from a local resident of Grange-over-Sands regarding the parish boundary between Grange-over-Sands and Lower Allithwaite. However, we are not changing the boundaries of any parishes in South Lakeland, as this is outside the remit of this review.

Responses to Further Consultation

36 During Stage Three we received opposition to our proposed Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Respondents generally considered that the proposed ward was too large and that it linked parishes which had very little in common. As a result of this opposition, the District Council undertook further consultation in the area. It wrote to all households in Barbon, Casterton and Mansergh asking them which town they felt more affinity with: Kirkby Lonsdale or Sedbergh. The Committee accept that this part of the district presents a particular challenge in balancing the electoral equality with a recognition of community identity. In light of the response to the Council's consultation, which was forwarded to us for further consideration, and in light of the responses we received directly, we considered that an alternative warding pattern in this area might better reflect community identities notwithstanding the poorer levels of electoral equality that would result.

37 We therefore wrote to the District Council, all of the parish councils within the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward and those respondents who commented on this area during the consultation on the draft recommendations. We asked these interested parties to consider which of two options might provide the best warding pattern in the area:

Option 1:

A **Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward** represented by three members comprising the following parishes: Barbon, Casterton, Dent, Garsdale, Kirkby Lonsdale, Mansergh, Middleton, Sedbergh.

This is the ward that we recommended as part of our draft recommendations and would have 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

Option 2 would provide for two wards:

- A **Sedbergh** ward, represented by two members and comprising Dent, Sedbergh and Garsdale parishes. This ward would have 19% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.
- A **Kirkby Lonsdale** ward, represented by one member comprising Barbon, Casterton, Kirkby Lonsdale, Mansergh and Middleton parishes. This ward would have 32% more electors than the district average by 2009.

38 Respondents were asked to consider which of two options for the area might provide the best warding pattern for the area. Despite the earlier expression of concern, we received five responses to this consultation; Councillor Lancaster (Sedbergh ward), Councillor Stephenson (Sedbergh ward), Barbon, Casterton and Dent parish councils.

39 Casterton and Dent parish councils considered Option 2 should be adopted, Dent Parish Council added that they supported this option as it better reflects community identity. Councillor Stephenson considered Option 2 should be adopted but with the addition of Middleton parish.

40 Councillor Lancaster stated that his first choice was for Option 1 to be retained as it provides excellent electoral equality and considered that Option 2 would not effectively reflect community identities. He stated that another option, preferable to Option 2, was combining only Kirkby Lonsdale and Mansergh parishes in a ward as he considered that that the level of electoral inequality that Option 2 provides would be unacceptable. He also considered that Middleton looks towards Sedbergh more than Kirkby Lonsdale. Barbon Parish Council considered Option 1 should be adopted but provided no further comment. In allowing such a move away from electoral equality, the Committee would need extremely strong evidence.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

41 We have now reached our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for South Lakeland.

42 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for South Lakeland is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972

43 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing clearly identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

44 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

45 If electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

46 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate figures

47 As part of the previous review of South Lakeland, the District Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 2% between 1996 and 2001. The actual increase up to 2004 was just 1%. There has only been significant growth in Burton & Holme ward, which actually had greater electorate growth than predicted. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2009, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6% from 82,885 to 87,802 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009. It expects the growth to be distributed fairly evenly across the district.

48 We recognise that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the District Council's figures, accepted that they were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at that time.

49 We received no comments on the Council's electoral forecasts during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

50 South Lakeland District Council presently has 52 members. Initially, the District Council looked at three models of council size, ranging from 51 to 53, and opted for a 51-member council. It stated that there was no reason to believe that the present number of councillors, 52, was unreasonable. However, in order to fit its own arithmetical model it considered a council size of 51 to be appropriate. We requested further information on the Council's proposed council size and it forwarded details of a number of strategic partnerships, working groups, task groups, committees and project boards currently operating that will involve Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and Non-Executive members. It provided comparative data for the original three council size options put forward and information on the Council's political management structure, together with details of the pre-modernised structure of the Council.

51 We noted that although the Council had provided some further detail it had not approached the issue of council size with specific regard to its proposed council size of 51. Although it provided information to assist us in making a decision it did not justify why a council size of 51 would provide for effective and convenient local government. However, it did state that 'a large decrease in the number of Councillors would inhibit the Council's ability to consult and engage with its stakeholders, partners and community groups [...] the proposed Council size of 51 members would enable the Council to continue with this work and to achieve the current Government's vision for local communities'. We note that the District Council consulted on its proposed council size.

52 During Stage Three we received no further representations in relation to council size and we are subsequently content to confirm our proposal for a council size of 51, as final.

Electoral equality

53 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. However, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where no justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully

justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

54 The district average number of electors per councillor is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district 85,885 (2004) and 87,802 (2009) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 51 under our final proposals. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,625 (2004) and 1,722 (2009).

55 When formulating our draft recommendations we considered the District Council's submission generally provided good levels of electoral equality given the difficulty and constraints in a district which contains many parishes and geographical features that are in part responsible for shaping community identities. During the consideration of both the draft and final recommendations we carefully considered the level of electoral equality in the Troutbeck and Windermere area. During Stage One we did not consider we had received sufficient evidence to justify the proposal to include Troutbeck parish ward with the rest of the Lakes parish as it would have such a poor level of electoral equality (22% more electors than the average by 2009). When formulating our final recommendations we considered the information that South Lakeland District Council gained from their consultation exercise was extremely useful in understanding the community identities in the area. As a result of this information, and the information we received from other interested parties, we consider that there is sufficient evidence of community links between Troutbeck parish ward and Windermere that we do not propose to move away from our draft recommendations in this area.

General analysis

56 Our draft recommendations were based on the District Council's Stage One submission. The District Council undertook consultation locally before submitting its proposals to us. This submission was broadly supported by the Liberal Democrats who requested that we consider their submission as a commentary on the District Council's scheme.

57 In adopting the District Council's scheme we included some more rural areas with some of the towns. We considered that in order to provide acceptable levels of electoral equality and to reflect community identities across the district as a whole, this was necessary. We acknowledge that in some areas, particularly around Windermere and Kendal, this is not ideal. However, we consider that this was necessary in order to provide acceptable levels of electoral equality in both the towns, as well as in the more rural surrounding areas as a whole.

58 We consider that the consultation that the District Council undertook following the publication of the draft recommendations was useful in aiding us to formulate our final recommendations. In Troutbeck and Windermere we consider that it provided sufficient information demonstrating that there are good community links between the two areas and justified us confirming our draft recommendations. In the Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale area the information that we received from the Council's consultation exercise, as well as the information that we received directly from

respondents, led us to undertake further consultation of our own. This generated five responses that led us to conclude that our draft recommendations should be retained in the area. We considered that there was insufficient evidence to justify adopting a ward with 32% more electors than the district average.

59 In other areas of the district, we received submissions from respondents who considered that the draft recommendations did not reflect community identities well in their respective areas. However, we considered that the level of evidence in support of these alternative proposals was insufficient to justify moving away from our draft recommendations.

60 We propose making two minor amendments in South Lakeland, one in Kendal and the other in Grange. These amendments aim to improve the linkages in the area and affect a handful of electors. We also propose to make seven district ward name changes from those proposed in our draft recommendations as we consider these will better reflect the constituent areas of the wards we have recommended.

Warding arrangements

61 For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland, Natland and Crookland wards (page 30)
- Sedbergh, Kirkby Lonsdale, Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards (page 32)
- Kendal (14 wards) (page 36)
- Ulverston (six wards) (page 38)
- Windermere (four wards) (page 39)
- Broughton, Lyth Valley, Staveley-in-Cartmel, Hawkshead, Coniston, Lakes Ambleside and Lakes Grasmere wards (page 41)
- Low Furness & Swarthmoor, Crake Valley, Cartmel, Grange and Holker wards (page 45)

62 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table 1 (on pages 7–10), and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland, Natland and Crooklands wards

63 These wards surround Kendal town and lie in the north and south-east of the district. Table 4 (on page 31) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangement were to remain in place.

Table 4: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Whinfell	Docker, Fawcett Forest, Grayrigg, Lambrigg, Longsleddale, Scalthwaiterigg, Skelsmergh, Whinfell, Whitwell & Selside, Firbank, Killington, New Hutton and Old Hutton & Holmescales parishes	1
Burneside	Strickland Ketel, Strickland Roger and Underbarrow & Bradleyfield parishes	1
Crooklands	Preston Patrick, Preston Richard, Hutton Roof, Lupton and Mansergh parishes	1
Milnthorpe	Milnthorpe parish	1
Levens	Levens and Heversham parishes	1
Staveley-in-Westmorland	Hugill, Kentmere, Nether Staveley, Over Staveley and Crook parishes	1
Natland	Natland, Stainton, Helsington, Hincaster and Sedgwick parishes	1

64 During Stage One the District Council proposed to retain the existing Whinfell ward with the exception of the removal of Scalthwaiterigg and Skelsmergh parishes to the neighbouring ward of Burneside, to improve electoral equality. It proposed a new single-member Burneside ward comprising the parishes of Strickland Ketel, Strickland Roger, Scalthwaiterigg and Skelsmergh. It proposed to retain the existing Levens ward subject to transferring to it Helsington parish from the existing Natland ward. In light of the good electoral equality already provided, it proposed that the current Staveley-in-Westmorland and Milnthorpe wards be retained. The Council also proposed a new single-member Crooklands ward comprising the parishes of Preston Richard, Hincaster, Sedgwick and Stainton. The District Council proposed the existing Natland ward be abolished. The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's proposals for all of the above wards.

65 When formulating our draft recommendations, we noted that the District Council's proposals in the rural areas secured an improved level of electoral equality. With the exception of Natland Parish Council, which expressed concern over its inclusion in a ward with part of the Kendal area, we did not receive any further submissions relating to these areas. Given that the District Council's proposals would provide for good levels of electoral equality and achieved a degree of consensus locally, we were content to adopt their proposals as our draft recommendations. Our proposed single-member wards of Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland and Crooklands would all have variances of less than 10% by 2009.

66 During Stage Three, we received some opposition to our proposals in these areas from a number of parish councils. The opposition from Natland Parish Council is considered in paragraph 31 of this report. Scalthwaiterigg and Skelsmergh parish

councils objected to being transferred from Whinfell to Burneside district ward. The parish councils' joint submission expressed the view that they are more rural in nature and have less in common with the parishes in the Burneside ward. They stated that their shared community identity links are with parishes to the north, including Longsleddale, Selside and Whinfell, with whom they share 'strong church, school, transport and farming connections'. We had particular concern that transferring both these parishes out of Burneside ward would result in the ward having 27% fewer electors than the district average.

67 The District Council and a local resident, Mr Pennington, proposed name changes from our draft recommendations in this area. Mr Pennington proposed Burneside ward become Burneside & Upper Kent. However, we do not consider the addition of two Whinfell wards necessitate a name change. The existing county division covers a far greater area and therefore does not necessarily reflect this ward. The District Council proposed Crooklands ward become Endmoor ward. However, the Council have not provided any reasoning behind its proposed name, nor do we consider this ward name to be a better reflection of the ward.

68 Preston Patrick Parish Council considered that it should remain in a ward with Preston Richard parish and that it has no links with the parishes in the proposed Burton & Holme ward. It stated that residents of Preston Patrick use the bakery, doctor's surgery, public hall and tennis courts in Preston Richard parish. By transferring Preston Patrick into the proposed Crooklands ward would result in the ward having 26% more electors than the district average.

69 Having considered the representations received we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for all of these wards. We have considered the opposition from the parish councils and note their opposition to the draft recommendations on the grounds that they do not reflect community identities in relation to their parishes. However, although the parish councils provided some examples of links with parishes in other wards, we do not consider that the arguments put forward justify the resultant variances of 26% and 27%.

70 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland and Crooklands wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Sedbergh, Kirkby Lonsdale, Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards

71 The above wards are located in the south-east of the district. Table 5 (on page 33) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remain in place.

Table 5: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Sedbergh	Dent, Garsdale, Sedbergh and Middleton parishes	2
Kirkby Lonsdale	Barbon, Casterton and Kirkby Lonsdale	1
Arnside & Beetham	Arnside and Beetham parishes	2
Burton & Holme	Burton-in-Kendal and Holme parishes	1

72 During Stage One the District Council proposed a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Barbon, Casterton, Dent, Garsdale, Sedbergh, Middleton, Mansergh and Kirkby Lonsdale, to be named Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale. In light of the good forecast of electoral equality in the current Arnside & Beetham ward by 2009, it proposed that this ward be retained, containing the parishes of the same name. It proposed a two-member ward comprising the parishes of Burton-in-Kendal, Holme, Hutton Roof, Lupton and Preston Patrick, to be named Burton & Holme ward.

73 The Liberal Democrats proposed alternatives in the area which would provide poorer levels of electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats' proposals included a two-member Sedbergh ward comprising the parishes of Sedbergh, Dent, Garsdale, Middleton, Barbon and Mansergh. It proposed a single-member Kirkby ward comprising the parishes of Kirkby Lonsdale and Casterton. The Liberal Democrats agreed with the District Council's view that Mansergh parish looks towards Kirkby Lonsdale and noted the difficulty in finding suitable warding arrangements around Sedbergh parish and the other parishes in the far east of the district. They did, however, oppose the District Council's proposal to create a three-member ward in the area.

74 We received five further submissions during Stage One. Barbon Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal to include Barbon parish in Sedbergh ward, commenting that the parish has closer links to Kirkby Lonsdale. Councillor Vatcher objected to the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Holme Parish Council objected to the creation of a two-member Burton & Holme ward. Preston Patrick Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer their parish to the proposed Burton-in-Holme ward. Arnside Parish Council proposed their parish should be represented by an 'exclusive' district councillor.

75 We carefully considered the submissions received during Stage One when formulating our draft recommendations. We noted that the District Council's three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward would provide an excellent level of electoral equality and that the two wards the Liberal Democrats proposed in the area would secure variances of -6% and 6% by 2009. We noted that this was an area which the District Council had struggled with in making on its proposals to us. The area in question lies right on the edge of the district, which makes it extremely difficult to both achieve good levels of electoral equality and to reflect community identities and interests, within a one- or two-member ward pattern. We considered that in the absence of compelling evidence justifying an alternative pattern, a three-member

ward with an excellent level of electoral equality, would provide the best warding pattern as it unites parishes with other parishes which have shared community links. However, we noted that it does this on the basis that there are many parishes combined in one geographically large ward and sought further views during Stage Three on this issue.

76 We also adopted the District Council's Burton & Holme and Arnsdale & Beetham wards as they would provide acceptable levels of electoral equality.

77 During Stage Three we received opposition to the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Councillor Stephenson (Sedbergh ward) considered that a three-member ward would be geographically too large to effectively represent and raised a number of issues regarding the difficulties of three members working over such a large area. He considered that it would be difficult for a councillor to attend 'all parish council meetings, special organisations, and community groups'. He did not, however, describe the community links that he believed existed. Dent Parish Council stated that its 'natural links are with Sedbergh and Garsdale'. It also referred to the difficulty of a councillor having to represent a geographically large area but again did not provide strong evidence of community linkages. Barbon Parish Council stated that it would prefer to see the existing arrangements maintained but did not provide any further information or evidence.

78 During Stage Three the District Council undertook further consultation with residents. It wrote to all households in Barbon, Casterton and Mansergh asking them which town they felt more affinity with: Kirkby Lonsdale or Sedbergh. The District Council sent out 325 questionnaires, of which 156 were returned. Of those returned, 142 electors from these parishes said they had 'more affinity' with Kirkby Lonsdale. 108 of these respondents said they did not think a combined ward including Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh should be adopted, whilst 34 thought a combined ward should be.

79 The District Council itself did not make a recommendation at Stage Three in relation to this area. Instead it requested that the Boundary Committee consider the information that the Council had gained during its consultation. We acknowledge that the proposed three-member ward is not ideal as it is geographically large, containing eight parishes. Therefore, in light of the information gained from the consultation that the District Council undertook, we considered that we should undertake a further period of consultation ourselves, seeking the views of all of the constituent parishes within the proposed Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward.

80 We wrote to the District Council, all of the parish councils within the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward and those respondents who commented on this area during the Stage Three. We asked these interested parties to consider which of two options might provide the best warding pattern in the area:

Option 1:

A **Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward** represented by three members comprising the following parishes: Barbon, Casterton, Dent, Garsdale, Kirkby Lonsdale, Mansergh, Middleton, Sedbergh.

This is the ward that we recommended as part of our draft recommendations and would have 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.

Option 2 would provide for two wards:

- A **Sedbergh** ward, represented by two members and comprising Dent, Sedbergh and Garsdale parishes. This ward would have 19% fewer electors than the district average by 2009.
- A **Kirkby Lonsdale** ward, represented by one member comprising Barbon, Casterton, Kirkby Lonsdale, Mansergh and Middleton parishes. This ward would have 32% more electors than the district average by 2009.

81 We received five responses to this consultation; Councillor Lancaster (Sedbergh ward), Councillor Stephenson (Sedbergh ward), Barbon, Casterton and Dent parish councils.

82 Casterton and Dent parish councils considered Option 2 should be adopted, Dent Parish Council added that they supported this option as it better reflected community identity. Councillor Stephenson considered Option 2 should be adopted but with the addition of Middleton parish.

83 Councillor Lancaster stated that his first choice was for Option 1 to be retained as it provided excellent electoral equality and that Option 2 does not fully reflect community identities and provided an unacceptable level of electoral equality (32%). He stated that another option, preferable to Option 2, was combining only Kirkby Lonsdale and Mansergh parishes in a ward. He also considered that Middleton looks more towards Sedbergh than to Kirkby Lonsdale. Barbon Parish Council considered Option 1 should be adopted and provided no further comment.

84 Having considered the information we received following publication of our draft recommendations, and following the further consultation undertaken, we consider that our draft recommendations should be confirmed in final. We had consulted further on this option as we considered there was sufficient evidence from the District Council's consultation to justify investigating whether the three-member wards should be divided in order to better reflect community identities. However, following that consultation we note that there is not conclusive support for Option 2, which would provide two wards in the area. Two of the five respondents considered that the three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward with an excellent level of electoral equality should be adopted in this area. We consider that the information that Councillor Lancaster provided was sufficient to demonstrate that the community identities would not be greatly improved by Option 2. We accept that the three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward covers a large rural area and acknowledge the concerns expressed by the Liberal Democrats and others during various stages of the review. We also note that Casterton and Dent parish councils and Councillor Stephenson preferred Option 2. However, we do not consider these three responses, in addition to the responses received during Stage Three, provide sufficiently strong evidence as to justify a ward with a 32% variance.

85 We received no other representations regarding Arnside & Beetham or Burton & Holme and also propose to confirm our draft recommendations in these areas as final.

86 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale, Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Kendal (14 wards)

87 Kendal is a parish situated centrally in the district and contains 14 district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Kendal Castle, Kendal Far Cross, Kendal Fell, Kendal Glebelands, Kendal Heron Hill, Kendal Highgate, Kendal Kirkland, Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Nether, Kendal Oxenholme, Kendal Parks, Kendal Stonecross, Kendal Strickland and Kendal Underley. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

88 During Stage One, the District Council proposed that Kendal town be represented by 14 single-member wards, as at present. It proposed to retain the existing wards with minor modifications to all but one of the wards and it also proposed to include Natland parish to create a new ward with the Oxenholme part of Kendal. The Liberal Democrats supported the Council's proposals for the inclusion of Natland parish. They also proposed retaining the town's external boundaries and proposed amendments to the District Council's proposals for the internal boundaries in the town. They agreed with the Council's proposed Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Far Cross and Kendal Castle wards.

89 Natland Parish Council opposed proposals to combine its parish with Kendal Oxenholme, stating it would be 'more appropriate to be linked to other rural communities with like interests and identities rather than a rural/urban ward'. We did not receive any further submissions regarding Kendal during Stage One.

90 We carefully considered the submissions received during Stage One. We noted that both the District Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals would secure improved levels of electoral equality in the town. We noted Natland Parish Council's representation and considered carefully the proposals relating to it. We considered that although the Natland area stands alone it looks towards Oxenholme and has closer communication and road links into Oxenholme than the other areas surrounding it. We did, however, consider the impact of removing Natland parish from Kendal Oxenholme but noted this would result in an electoral variance of -43% by 2009. Additionally, transferring the parish to either of the surrounding wards of Crooklands or Levens would result in a ward having a variance of 45% by 2009. This would therefore necessitate redrawing all the boundaries for Kendal town.

91 Given the lack of evidence provided from all respondents during Stage One, we adopted the District Council's scheme as the basis of our draft recommendations as this provided the best level of electoral equality across the town. Under the District Council's proposals only one ward in Kendal would have a variance of over 5% by 2009.

92 During Stage Three we received support from the District Council, which welcomed our decision to adopt its proposals. However, it did propose some amendments in the east of the town in order to provide clear and direct access routes to the remainder of the ward for residents. The Council proposed slightly

altering the boundary between Kendal Parks, Kendal Castle and Kendal Natland & Oxenholme wards.

93 The Council and a local resident, Mr Pennington, proposed name changes from our draft recommendations. The Council proposed that Kendal Glebelands ward become Kendal Stonecross ward, Kendal Stonecross ward become Kendal Romney ward, Kendal Natland & Oxenholme ward become Kendal Oxenholme & Natland ward. We are satisfied that these name changes provide a better reflection of the constituent parts of the respective ward and we are therefore adopting them as part of our final recommendations. Mr Pennington proposed we change Kendal Castle ward to Kendal Castle & East ward to and Kendal Nether to Kendal Nether and Valley Drive to reflect 'the expanded nature of the ward[s]'. However, we do not consider the additions to these names to be necessary in reflecting the constituent parts of the respective wards.

94 We received opposition to our recommendations from Natland Parish Council and three local residents regarding their respective areas. Natland Parish Council re-stated their objection to being included in a ward with part of Kendal town. It stated that 'we are essentially a village with a green belt of over a mile separating us from South Kendal. Our concerns and aspirations are those of a rural community and we are closer in identity to the other villages to the south of Natland'. It considered that the parish should be included in a ward with Sedgwick, Stainton, Hincaster and Preston Richard parishes. It also objected to the Liberal Democrats' assertion that the 'parish council works closely with the residents association in the village of Oxenhome'. It stated that it had worked closely with them on one isolated incident and that it was misleading to consider that it was more than that.

95 The three local residents opposed the warding pattern proposed in Kendal Stonecross. The residents considered that the existing ward should be retained. They considered that there is no link between the east and west of the river, which would be joined in the same ward under the draft recommendations. They considered that the existing river boundary reflects community identities, reflected by the fact that residents have 'campaigns jointly on a number of issues affecting them; in particular the need for repairs to pavements, a new street light and sewerage smells'.

96 Having considered the representations received we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Kendal town, with the exception of three name changes and the minor modifications the District Council proposed in the east of the town. We have considered the arguments put forward by the three local residents, and consider that there is merit in retaining the River Kent as a ward boundary throughout the town, which would reflect the communities identified by the three local residents around the Stonecross area, in the south of the town. We acknowledge that the river would provide a strong and consistent boundary which would be clearly identifiable. However, we adopted the District Council's Stage One proposals in Kendal as part of our draft recommendations as they would provide good levels of electoral equality and would generally provide strong boundaries across the town. We did not receive any proposals regarding the use of the River Kent as a boundary when formulating our draft recommendations and were satisfied that the wards would provide good levels of electoral equality, noting that they had been consulted on by the District Council before being submitted to us.

97 We accept that we have now received proposals which may provide a better boundary in the south of the town. However, adopting the residents' proposals for Kendal Stonecross ward would require us to provide an alternative pattern of warding throughout the rest of the town in order to design wards that would provide an acceptable level of electoral equality. We are not persuaded that we have received sufficient evidence from the local residents that justifies moving away from a warding pattern in the whole town which was consulted on by the District Council prior to its submissions to us.

98 We considered the concerns of Natland Parish Council. However, as stated in our draft recommendations report, we note that removing Natland parish from Kendal would result in electoral variances of greater than 40% both in the remaining Kendal ward and in the surrounding rural area to which Natland would be transferred. We do not consider that Natland Parish Council have provided sufficient evidence to justify such poor variances. Nor do we consider that it would be justifiable to attempt to address these electoral imbalances by re-drawing each of the ward boundaries in Kendal to deal with the knock-on effect of removing Natland parish.

99 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for each of the Kendal wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 10 accompanying this report.

Ulverston (six wards)

100 Ulverston is situated in the south-west of the district and contains six district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Ulverston Central, Ulverston East, Ulverston North, Ulverston South, Ulverston Town and Ulverston West. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remain in place.

101 During Stage One the District Council proposed that Ulverston be represented by six single-member wards, as at present. The District Council's proposals retained four of the existing wards, Ulverston Central, East, North and Town, and made minor modifications to the remaining wards of Ulverston South and West to improve electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats agreed with the District Council's proposals for Ulverston.

102 We did not receive any further submissions in relation to this area during Stage One. Therefore, in light of the consensus over the proposals and improvement in electoral equality achieved, we adopted the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

103 During Stage Three the District Council supported our draft recommendations. We received no other representations regarding Ulverston and are therefore confirming the draft recommendations, as final.

104 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Ulverston. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 7 accompanying this report.

Windermere (four wards)

105 Windermere is situated in the north-west of the district and currently contains four district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere Bowness South, Windermere Bowness North and Windermere Town. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

106 During Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the four existing single-member wards and making minor modifications between Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere North and Windermere South wards. It proposed the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in Windermere Applethwaite ward and proposed retaining the existing Windermere Town ward. Under its proposals no ward would vary by more than 5% by 2009. The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the four existing wards and proposed amendments to the internal boundaries of the town to improve electoral equality.

107 We received two further submissions, from Lakes Parish Council and Councillor Vatcher. Lakes Parish Council objected to the transfer of Troutbeck parish ward to the proposed Windermere Applethwaite ward. Councillor Vatcher supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for the area and stated that Troutbeck parish ward should remain with the remaining parish wards of Lakes parish in the wards of Lakes Grasmere and Lakes Ambleside.

108 We carefully considered the submissions received during Stage One. We recognised the concerns over moving Troutbeck parish ward into the Windermere area, and the links the parish ward has to the Lakes area. However, our investigations suggested there are communication links from Troutbeck parish to the Lakes and to Windermere Applethwaite ward. The District Council stated that 'the warding arrangement would be the closest fit to the requests from the parish council and the public to retain this [Lakes] parish as one entity as far as possible'. It commented, 'the reasons for this being strong community links and the topography of this area resulting in few road links between the villages'.

109 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed that the Lakes parish remain intact as the parish is 'a very strong one'. It acknowledged that maintaining Lakes parish would result in high levels of electoral inequality. However it 'believes that on community identity grounds this should be acceptable'.

110 In light of the objections we considered whether to keep the whole of Lakes parish in the Lakes area. However, we noted that this would result in an electoral variance of 22%. Given the lack of substantive evidence of community identity provided and the high level of electoral inequality that would result, we decided to adopt the proposal to transfer Troutbeck parish ward into the Windermere area. However, we noted our recommendations were primarily based on the achievement of electoral equality. We therefore invited further representations on this issue at Stage Three. We proposed adopting the District Council's recommendations throughout Windermere.

111 During Stage Three, 11 respondents opposed our decision to include Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish in a ward with part of Windermere town. Troutbeck

Village Association considered that the proposal would not reflect community identities in the area. It stated that Troutbeck has a strong community and provided information on the activities that it undertakes in the area, such as children's events, an active parish church and village association. It also stated that it played a significant role in the development of the Lakes Plan and continues to be involved in the Lakes Implementation Group. It considered that the proposals would not provide convenient and effective local government as it would require a district councillor to attend various parish meetings, including parish council and neighbourhood forums in both parishes. Lakes Parish Council stated that it 'agreed to support the views of Troutbeck Village Association' but did not provide any further information.

112 Westmorland & Lonsdale Conservative Association (Central Lakes branch) considered that the inclusion of Troutbeck with Windermere was an anomaly and that there was a long historical association of Troutbeck with Ambleside. Eight residents of Troutbeck also objected to the proposals for the area. One respondent stated that there were a number of connections with Ambleside, in Lakes parish, including 'the Health Centre, library and craft classes' and also noted that they attend the Lakes neighbourhood forum meetings.

113 Windermere Town Council stated that it accepted the proposals for the area, including the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in with the northern part of Windermere.

114 The District Council, having noted the opposition to the proposals regarding Troutbeck undertook its own consultation with local residents during Stage Three. The District Council sent a questionnaire to all households in Troutbeck parish ward asking them with which area did they felt more affinity: Windermere or Ambleside? It also asked respondents whether they would be better served by being included in a ward with Windermere or Ambleside.

115 The District Council distributed 269 questionnaires and 107 of them were returned. Of those returned 54 said they looked towards Windermere and thought they would be best served in a ward with Windermere, 36 said they looked towards Ambleside and should be included in a ward with Ambleside. There were also some respondents who considered they looked towards one area but did not indicate they felt they should be included in a ward with the other area.

116 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three and taking into account the information received in light of the District Council's proposals we propose confirming our draft recommendations as final. We note the opposition from some residents of Troutbeck and the Troutbeck Residents Association to being included in a ward with part of Windermere town. However, over half of the respondents to the Council's consultation considered that they felt more affinity with Windermere and that they should be included in a ward it. We also note Windermere Town Council support the draft recommendations.

117 We consider that there is some clear evidence of Troutbeck residents sharing a community of interest with the remainder of Lakes parish. We also note that it is preferable that a parish is not divided into separate wards where it can be avoided. However, we consider the District Council's consultation exercise suggests that this consideration of where the community of interest in Troutbeck lies is not shared by all residents of Troutbeck parish ward. We therefore consider that in light of the poor

level of electoral equality and different views of where the community of interest in the area lies that we should not move away from our draft recommendations.

118 The District Council proposed a name change from our draft recommendations of Windermere Applethwaite ward to Windermere Applethwaite & Troutbeck ward. We are satisfied that this ward name is better reflection of Troutbeck parish ward as part of the proposed district ward. We are therefore satisfied to adopt this as part of our final recommendations.

119 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for Windermere. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

Broughton, Lyth Valley, Staveley-in-Cartmel, Hawkshead, Coniston, Lakes Ambleside and Lakes Grasmere wards

120 The above wards lie in the south and south-west of the district. Table 6 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

Table 6: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Broughton	Angerton, Broughton West, Dunnerdale-with-Seathwaite and Kirkby Ireleth parishes	1
Lyth Valley	Crosthwaite & Lyth, Meathop & Ulpha, Witherslack and Upper Allithwaite parishes	1
Staveley-in-Cartmel	Broughton East, Cartmel Fell, Staveley-in-Cartmel and Haverthwaite parishes	1
Hawkshead	Claife, Hawkshead, Satterthwaite parishes and Central and East parish wards of Colton parish	1
Coniston	Coniston, Skelwith, Torver, Blawith & Subberthwaite parishes and West parish ward of Colton parish	1
Lakes Ambleside	Ambleside and Troutbeck parish wards of Lakes parish	2
Lakes Grasmere	Rydal & Loughrigg, Grasmere and Langdales parish wards of Lakes parish	1

121 At Stage One the District Council proposed to retain the existing Broughton ward. It proposed to revise the existing Lyth Valley ward, providing improved electoral equality and securing good community identity. It would comprise the parishes of Croswaithe & Lyth, Meathop & Ulpha and Witherslack, with the addition of Underbarrow & Bradleyfield parish, currently in the existing Burneside ward. Additionally, it proposed to divide Upper Allithwaite parish and transfer High Newton parish ward to Staveley-in-Cartmel ward. The Council proposed the retention of Staveley-in-Cartmel ward with the additional parish ward to reflect community identity. It proposed a single-member Coniston ward comprising the parishes of Blawith & Subberthwaite, Coniston, Skelwith and Torver, and the addition of the parish of Lowick from the existing Crake Valley ward. It considered this proposal to reflect community identities and retain the Lakes parish as far as possible.

122 The District Council proposed the transfer of West parish ward of Colton parish from Coniston ward to the neighbouring ward of Hawkshead to the east thereby returning all of Colton parish into one ward. It proposed to retain the existing Hawkshead ward with the exception of the additional parish ward mentioned above. It proposed to combine the two wards of Lakes Ambleside and Lakes Grasmere to form a two-member ward comprising the Ambleside, Grasmere, Langdales and Rydal & Loughrigg parish wards of Lakes parish. The remaining Troutbeck parish ward would transfer to the proposed Windermere Applethwaite ward. It proposed it be named Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward. The Council commented that the reasoning behind its proposal for Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward was to 'be the closest fit to the requests from the parish council and the public to retain this [Lakes] parish as one entity as far as possible'.

123 The Liberal Democrat Group supported the District Council's proposal to retain the existing Broughton ward. It proposed alternative proposals in the rest of the area. However, it proposed allocating the area 28 councillors, when under a council size of 51 it is only entitled to 27 councillors. This made adopting the Liberal Democrats Group's proposals in this area difficult.

124 We received five further submissions from parish councils and individuals in relation to their respective areas. Skelwith Parish Council proposed it remain within Coniston ward. Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals to include Heathlands parish ward of Kirkby Ireleth parish in the proposed Coniston ward and transfer West parish ward of Colton parish to the Council's proposed Hawkshead ward, stating that this 'has the effect of splitting two valleys'.

125 Lakes Parish Council and Councillor Vatcher opposed the removal of Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish from the existing Lakes Ambleside ward. Lakes Parish Council objected to options one and two of the District Council's proposals to transfer Langdales parish ward of Lakes parish to the proposed Coniston ward. Additionally, the Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal to create a two-member Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward. It stated that Lakes Grasmere and Lakes Ambleside 'are two entirely different communities with different characteristics'. It proposed an alternative configuration retaining the existing Lakes Ambleside ward and the existing Lakes Grasmere ward with the inclusion of Skelwith parish. A local resident opposed the removal of Langdales parish ward from the Lakes parish and it being placed with Coniston ward.

126 Having carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One we proposed adopting the District Council's recommendations as we considered that they would achieve good levels of electoral equality and provide strong ward boundaries. Conversely, we note that the Liberal Democrats' proposals further divided the area of Hawkshead and would not create strong boundaries. We therefore decided to adopt the District Council's proposed Lyth Valley, Staveley-in-Cartmel and Hawkshead wards as our draft recommendations.

127 We noted that both district-wide proposals divided parishes in this area. However, the District Council used the existing parish ward boundary of Troutbeck parish. We did not consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposals to further divide the parish ward of Colton East and transfer it to Coniston ward would best reflect the statutory criteria. In light of the District Council's improvement in electoral equality without the need to further divide parish wards, we decided to adopt the Council's proposals in the rural area as our draft recommendations.

128 During Stage Three we received support for our recommendations from the District Council. We received three other submissions in relation to this area. The opposition to our decision to include Troutbeck parish ward with part of Windermere town is discussed in detail paragraphs 111–17 in the section above.

129 The District Council and a local resident, Mr Pennington, also proposed ward name changes from the draft recommendations. The Council and the local resident both proposed that Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward become Ambleside & Grasmere ward as it would be a better reflection of the constituent areas. We concur with the Council and Mr Pennington and propose adopting this name change from our draft recommendations. Mr Pennington proposed that Coniston ward become Coniston with Lowick ward to reflect 'the 'neighboring' factor towards Lowick and Blawith/Subberthwaite ward'. However, we propose the name Coniston & Crake Valley ward which would still reflect the 'neighbouring factor' referred to by Mr Pennington that ensures parishes in this area are recognised.

130 We received opposition from Councillor Rees (Lakes Grasmere) during Stage Three, who considered that the existing single-member Lakes Grasmere ward should be retained. This ward contains three of the five existing parish wards of Lakes parish (Langdales, Lakes Grasmere and Rydal & Loughrigg parish wards). She noted that the proposed two-member Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere wards that we proposed in our draft recommendations (with 13% more electors than the district average) would have more electors per councillor than any other ward of the district and considered that, as the area is so sparse, this would be particularly undesirable.

131 Upper Allithwaite Parish Council objected to the proposal to divide the parish between two district wards because of the resultant need to deal with two district councillors. Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations for their area, considering that they should be included in a Crake Valley ward identical to the one which existed before the Periodic Electoral Review (PER) of South Lakeland was undertaken in the 1990s. It considered that the proposed Coniston ward does not reflect community identities and noted that residents of the parish use the shops and Post Office in Egton with Newland parish. However, it also provided some evidence that the parish shares the same facilities and has the same networks as Lowick parish. It described how they use the same

public house, share a village hall and a local newsletter is distributed to both parishes, as well as Egton with Newland parish and part of Colton parish.

132 A local resident proposed that all of Urswick parish be transferred to our proposed Low Furness ward in order that the parish is not divided between district wards.

133 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final with the exception of the two ward names changes above. We note Councillor Rees' proposal to retain the existing Lakes Grasmere ward and acknowledge this supports a number of submissions received during Stage One of the review. However, the existing ward would have 28% fewer electors than the district average and we do not consider the Councillor has provided sufficient evidence to warrant us moving from our draft recommendations, which provide an improved level of electoral equality. We do acknowledge that the proposed two-member Ambleside & Grasmere will have more electors per councillor than any other ward in the district. However, we are unable to attach weighting to the fact that this area is spare and consider that this variance is preferable to retaining the existing ward with a variance of 28%.

134 We also note the opposition to the proposed Coniston ward from Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council. We found this a difficult area when formulating our draft recommendations. We considered that the geography of the area and the number, size and distribution of parishes made providing good levels of electoral equality whilst also reflecting community identities difficult to achieve. We note that there are other parishes with which Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council has good community links. However, we also note that it shares community facilities and amenities with some parts of the remainder of the ward, namely Lowick parish. Respondents comments in relation to this area are also noted in the section below, in paragraph 146. We noted that it would not be possible to move away from our recommendations in this area without substantial knock-on effects to the surrounding area, something that we had previously considered during Stage Two and which we were unable to avoid given the difficulties of balancing the need to reflect community identities and electoral equality. We considered that adopting the District Council's proposals provided the fairest option in this area. We remain of that view; we do not consider we have received information from Blawith & Subberthwaite during Stage Three that is sufficient to persuade us to modify our draft recommendation.

135 We also note the opposition to dividing Urswick parish between two district wards. We acknowledge that it is preferable not to divide parishes between wards and, in fact, adopted the District Council's proposals during Stage One partly because they proposed dividing fewer parishes between district wards than other respondents. However, it was necessary to do this in our draft recommendations in order to provide an acceptable level of electoral equality. We do not consider we have received any information that justifies moving away from this decision.

136 We acknowledge that in this rural area it has been difficult to arrive at wards that reflect community identity in its entirety. This is because we have been constrained by the need to provide fairer levels of electoral equality. We consider that the District Council's Stage One recommendations provide the fairest warding pattern across the area and are proposing to confirm them as final.

137 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for the above wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

Low Furness & Swarthmoor, Crake Valley, Cartmel, Grange and Holker wards

138 The above wards lie in the south of the district. Table 7 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 3 (on pages 16–20) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

Table 7: Existing arrangements

Name of ward	Constituent areas	Councillors
Low Furness & Swarthmoor	Aldingham and Urswick parishes and Swarthmoor parish ward of Pennington parish	2
Crake Valley	Egton with Newland, Lowick, Mansriggs and Osmotherley parishes and Pennington parish ward of Pennington parish	1
Cartmel	Lower Allithwaite parish	1
Grange	Grange-over-Sands parish	2
Holker	Lower Holker parish	1

139 At Stage One the District Council proposed a two-member Crake Valley ward comprising the parishes of Egton with Newland, Mansriggs, Osmotherley and Pennington and Urswick parish ward of Urswick parish. It proposed that Lowick parish be transferred to its proposed Coniston ward. It proposed a single-member Low Furness & Swarthmoor ward comprising the parish of Aldingham and Bardsea and Stainton parish wards of Urswick parish, to be named Low Furness ward as the Swarthmoor parish ward of Pennington parish is proposed to be transferred to Crake Valley ward. The Council gave consideration to the geographical location of this ward which is the 'southern most part of the peninsula, being bounded by Ulverston town parish to the north and east, the sea to the south and Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council's area to the west'. It argued that its proposal reflected community identities and achieves good electoral equality. It proposed to retain the existing wards of Cartmel, Grange and Holker.

140 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed to retain the existing wards of Cartmel, Holker, Low Furness & Swarthmoor and Crake Valley stating they secure acceptable electoral variances of -8%, -9%, 10% and -11% respectively by 2009. It proposed three single-member wards for the Grange area. However, we noted that it did not provide any evidence to justify its proposals. It proposed a Grange South & Kents Bank ward comprising of the southern area of Grange-over-Sands parish. The Group also proposed a Grange Town ward comprising the central area of Grange-over-Sands parish and a Grange North & Lindale ward comprising the northern area of Grange-over-Sands parish, together with the parishes of Upper Allithwaite, Meathop & Ulpha and Broughton East. We received four further submissions in

relation to these areas from respondents concerned with warding pattern in their respective areas.

141 We carefully considered the submissions we received at Stage One. We adopted the District Council's proposals for Crake Valley & Swarthmoor and Low Furness broadly because we considered that they provided the best level of electoral equality in an area where we had received very little evidence of community identity. We considered that the District Council's second option in the Grange area provided a better level of electoral equality than their preferred option. We also noted it had been consulted on, a procedure which had 'not produced any adverse comments and is thought to be a natural community link'. Therefore, in the absence of alternative proposals with better electoral equality and in light of the lack of community identity evidence we proposed to adopt this second option.

142 The option provided for four single-member wards from the single-member wards of Cartmel and Holker and the two-member Grange ward. It proposed two single-member wards for Grange-over-Sands parish and a single-member ward comprising the west part of Grange-over-Sands parish and the Cartmel and Allithwaite wards of the parish of Lower Allithwaite. The fourth single-member ward would comprise the parish of Lower Holker and the Upper Holker ward of the parish of Lower Allithwaite.

143 During Stage Three we received opposition to our proposal to divide Grange parish between three district wards. The Town Council of Grange-over-Sands considered that the 'proposed division of Kents Bank, hives off the new Grange West parish ward to the adjoining Cartmel district ward... [which is]... an unnatural division'. It also considered that there is 'a risk of no-one standing for the single councillor Grange West parish ward'. The Town Council also commented that it would be likely to incur increased costs in implementing elections. Another resident expressed concern over parish boundaries. However, this review is not considering external parish boundaries, only the district ward boundaries. The District Council accepted the proposals for Grange, noting that it was not its original preferred option. However, it proposed one minor amendment to the recommendations in this area. It proposed transferring Cartmel racecourse from Holker ward to Cartmel ward so that it would be in the same village with which it has access.

144 The District Council also proposed that Cartmel ward be named Cartmel & Grange West ward and that Crake Valley & Swathmoor ward, as proposed in our draft recommendations, become Mid Furness ward. The proposed ward name of Mid Furness was also supported by Urswick Parish Council, part of which is contained within the ward.

145 We also received opposition to our proposals around the Crake Valley area from Councillor Spendlove (Crake Valley ward), Barrow and Furness Liberal Democrats and Urswick Parish Council. Councillor Spendlove and Barrow and Furness Liberal Democrats broadly supported the views of Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council, outlined in paragraph 134 above as they also considered that the Crake Valley does not reflect community identities. Councillor Spendlove stated that as a result of the draft recommendations 'the heart of the Valley settlements, Lowick Bridge and Lowick Green... drift North East to justify Coniston ward electorally... [demolishing] the Crake Valley ward of 1994... in respect of its identity'. She objected to the inclusion of all of Pennington parish as this would 'extend the councillor's remit to the

ribbon development that links light industrial Ulverston to the heavy industrial Barrow-in-Furness’.

146 Barrow and Furness Liberal Democrats proposed changes to the warding pattern in the Crake Valley area. It proposed a Low Furness ward comprising Aldingham and Urswick parishes, a ward comprising Pennington parish and a Crake Valley ward including Egton with Newland, Mansriggs, Osmotherley, Lowick and Blawith & Subberthwaite parishes. It stated that the Lowick and Blawith & Subberthwaite parishes are ‘dispersed .. but together are an integral part of the Crake Valley, sharing a common primary school, a bus routing system... post office and shops. It objected to the transfer to Blawith & Subberthwaite parish being transferred to Coniston solely on the basis of providing electoral equality.

147 These wards would have poor levels of electoral equality with variances of 26%, -5% and 21%. The knock-on effect to the proposed Coniston ward would be significant, resulting in it having 47% fewer electors than the district average.

148 Urswick Parish council objected to the proposal to divide the parish between district wards and that its preference is to ‘have one district councillor only’.

149 Having considered the proposals received in relation to this area, particularly with regard to Crake Valley, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final with three minor exceptions. We propose to adopt the Council’s proposed minor boundary change in Cartmel ward as it involves no electors and we consider including the Cartmel racecourse within the same ward as Cartmel Village to be a logical proposal. We are also satisfied to adopt the proposed names of Cartmel & Grange West ward and Mid Furness ward. These are changes from our draft recommendations proposed ward names of Cartmel and Crake Valley & Swarthmoor wards respectively.

150 We note the opposition to the Crake Valley & Swarthmoor ward that we proposed on the grounds that it does not reflect community identity. We consider that Barrow and Furness Liberal Democrats provided some good evidence of how the parishes within its proposed Crake Valley ward reflect community identities. However, these alternative proposals provide very poor levels of electoral equality and we do not consider such poor levels of electoral equality are justified.

151 We acknowledge that Urswick Parish Council would prefer to be retained in a single district ward. However, in order to provide acceptable levels of electoral equality across this area we were persuaded that the District Council’s Stage One proposals would provide the best balance between achieving fair levels of representation whilst providing wards which comprise parishes that are well linked and where possible reflect communities. In this area we have been unable to recommend proposals submitted by respondents during Stage Three as they do not provide levels of electoral equality that are justifiable across the area as a whole.

152 Table 1 (on pages 7–10) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for the above wards. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 9 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

153 Table 8 (below) shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements based on 2004 and 2009 electorate figures.

Table 8: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Final recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	52	52	51	51
Number of wards	47	47	45	45
Average number of electors per councillor	1,594	1,689	1,625	1,722
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	16	16	11	4
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	4	1	0

154 As shown in Table 8, our draft recommendations for South Lakeland District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 16 to 11. By 2009 only four wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to decrease the council size and are recommending a council size of 51 members.

Final recommendation
 South Lakeland District Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 45 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 3, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

155 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the district council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish and town councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements in FERs. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the district council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of a FER.

156 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies with district councils.³ If a district council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

157 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of South Lakeland to reflect the proposed district wards.

158 The parish of Kendal is currently divided into 14 parish wards, Kendal Castle, Kendal Far Cross, Kendal Fell, Kendal Glebelands, Kendal Heron Hill, Kendal Highgate, Kendal Kirkland, Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Nether, Kendal Oxenholme, Kendal Parks, Kendal Stonecross, Kendal Strickland and Kendal Underley, returning two councillors each. The District Council proposed that Kendal parish should continue to be served by 28 councillors. As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to amend the district ward boundaries in the town. Therefore we proposed that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area. To reflect our proposed district ward name changes, we propose that Kendal Glebelands parish ward become Kendal Stonecross ward and that Kendal Stonecross parish ward become Kendal Romney ward.

159 We received no further proposals to alter the parish warding arrangements during Stage Three. However, we note that the minor alterations to the district wards in the east of Kendal will have an impact on the parish wards of the same name. We therefore propose that these parish wards reflect the district wards outlined in our final recommendations.

³ Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with Section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

Final recommendation

Kendal Parish Council should comprise 28 parish councillors, representing 14 wards: Kendal Castle, Kendal Far Cross, Kendal Fell, Kendal Romney, Kendal Heron Hill, Kendal Highgate, Kendal Kirkland, Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Nether, Kendal Oxenholme, Kendal Parks, Kendal Stonecross, Kendal Strickland and Kendal Underley, returning two councillors each. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1 and 10.

160 The parish of Ulverston is currently divided into six parish wards, Ulverston Central, Ulverston East, Ulverston North, Ulverston South, Ulverston Town and Ulverston West, returning three councillors each. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed to amend the district ward boundaries in the town. Therefore we proposed that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area. We received no further proposals for parish arrangements in Ulverston and therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final for the parish.

Final recommendation

Ulverston Parish Council should comprise 18 parish councillors, representing six wards: Ulverston Central, Ulverston East, Ulverston North, Ulverston South, Ulverston Town and Ulverston West returning three councillors each. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1 and 7.

161 The parish of Windermere is currently divided into four parish wards, Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere Bowness South, Windermere Bowness North and Windermere Town, returning five councillors each. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed to amend the district ward boundaries in the town. We subsequently proposed that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area. We note that Windermere Applethwaite parish ward would have fewer electors, but as there is currently no requirement for electoral equality we were content with this proposal. We received no further representations during Stage Three and propose confirming our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Windermere Parish Council should comprise 20 parish councillors, representing four wards: Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere Bowness South, Windermere Bowness North and Windermere Town, returning five councillors each. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1, 5 and 6.

162 The parish of Grange is currently served by nine councillors returned from the parish as a whole.

163 As part of our draft recommendations we proposed to divide the current Grange parish between three district wards of Cartmel, Grange North and Grange South. Therefore it was necessary to create three new parish wards and reallocate councillors between them. We proposed that the new parish wards of Grange North, Grange South and Grange West be represented by four councillors, four councillors

and one councillor respectively. The boundaries will follow the district ward boundaries that divide the parish. We do not propose moving away from our proposals for the district wards in Grange, as a result of the Stage Three consultation and are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Grange parish as final.

Final recommendation

Grange Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Grange North (returning four councillors), Grange South (returning four councillors) and Grange West (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1 and 9.

164 During Stage Three we received proposals from Aldingham Parish Council to increase its number of parish councillors from seven to eight. It stated that it would be of considerable benefit to the electors as this is a rural and dispersed parish made up of small villages which require greater representation. We support the parish council's proposal to increase its representation and therefore recommend an increase in the number of councillors in Aldingham parish from seven to eight.

Final recommendation

Aldingham Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, one greater than at present.

165 We propose to retain the existing parish electoral arrangements for the remainder of the district.

6 What happens next?

166 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in South Lakeland and submitted our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation.⁴

167 It is now up to the Electoral Commission to decide whether or not to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 18 September 2007, and the Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representation made to them by that date.

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

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

The contact details above should only be used for implementation purposes.

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

⁴ Under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI No. 2001/3962).

7 Mapping

Final recommendations for South Lakeland District Council

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for South Lakeland district.

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for South Lakeland District, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed district ward within Lakes parish.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed parish wards within Lakes parish.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed parish wards within Lakes and Windermere parishes.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed parish wards within Lakes and Windermere parish.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed district wards and parish wards in the parishes of Windermere, Cartmel Fell, Staveley-in-Cartmel and Lyth Valley.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7** illustrates the proposed district wards in the parish of Ulverston and parish wards in the parishes of Ulverston, Lower Allithwaite, Pennington and Urswick.
- **Sheet 8, Map 8** illustrates the proposed district wards and parish wards in the parishes of Urswick and Lower Allithwaite.
- **Sheet 9, Map 9** illustrates the proposed district wards and parish wards in the parishes of Lower Allithwaite and Grange-over-Sands.
- **Sheet 10, Map 10** illustrates the proposed district wards and parish wards in the parish of Kendal.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the district
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	<p>The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; – access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; – wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; – established farming use is effectively maintained’
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors

Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single district enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England

Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a cabinet with a leader, or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the district average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of practice on written consultation* (available at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

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