

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Fylde in Lancashire

April 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and their electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Fylde in Lancashire.

© Crown Copyright 2000

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>23</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Fylde: Detailed Mapping	<i>25</i>
B Fylde Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	<i>31</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>33</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for the Lytham St Annes area is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

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

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

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

- **in eight of the 22 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and two wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in nine wards and by more than 20 per cent in three wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 63-64) are that:

- **Fylde Borough Council should have 51 councillors, two more than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net decrease of two, and three wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average, both initially, and by 2004.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements for the parish of Freckleton and the town of Kirkham.**

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ansdell (Lytham St Annes)	3	Ansdell ward (part); Park ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2	Ashton (Lytham St Annes)	3	Ashton ward (part); St Leonards ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
3	Central (Lytham St Annes)	3	Central ward (part); Ashton ward (part); Fairhaven ward (part); Heyhouses ward (part); Kilnhouse ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
4	Clifton (Lytham St Annes)	3	Clifton ward; St Johns ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
5	Elswick & Little Eccleston	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
6	Fairhaven (Lytham St Annes)	3	Fairhaven ward (part); Ansdell ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
7	Freckleton East	2	Freckleton East ward; Freckleton West ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
8	Freckleton West	2	Freckleton West ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
9	Heyhouses (Lytham St Annes)	3	Heyhouses ward (part); Central ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
10	Kilnhouse (Lytham St Annes)	3	Kilnhouse ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
11	Kirkham North	3	Kirkham North ward; Kirkham South ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
12	Kirkham South	2	Kirkham South ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
13	Medlar-with-Wesham and Singleton & Greenhalgh	3	Medlar-with-Wesham ward; Singleton & Greenhalgh ward	Map 2
14	Newton & Treales	2	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
15	Park (Lytham St Annes)	3	Park ward (part); Heyhouses ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
16	Ribby-with-Wrea	1	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
17	Staining & Weeton	2	Staining ward; Weeton & Westby ward (part - the parish of Weeton-with-Preese)	Map 2 and large map
18	St Johns (Lytham St Annes)	3	St Johns ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
19	St Leonards (Lytham St Annes)	3	St Leonards ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
20	Warton & Westby	3	Bryning-with-Warton ward; Weeton & Westby ward (part - the parish of Westby-with-Plumpton)	Map 2

Note:

- 1 The town of Lytham St Annes is unparished and the remainder of the borough is parished.
- 2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large maps in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Fylde

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ansdell	3	3,454	1,151	1	3,502	1,167	-1
2 Ashton	3	3,592	1,197	5	3,587	1,196	2
3 Central	3	3,492	1,164	2	3,551	1,184	1
4 Clifton	3	3,432	1,144	0	3,443	1,148	-2
5 Elswick & Little Eccleston	1	1,084	1,04	-5	1,111	1,111	-5
6 Fairhaven	3	3,387	1,129	-1	3,400	1,133	-3
7 Freckleton East	2	2,404	1,202	5	2,422	1,211	3
8 Freckleton West	2	2,408	1,204	5	2,426	1,213	3
9 Heyhouses	3	3,355	1,118	-2	3,539	1,180	0
10 Kilnhouse	3	3,629	1,210	6	3,544	1,181	1
11 Kirkham North	3	3,192	1,064	-7	3,209	1,070	-9
12 Kirkham South	2	2,209	1,105	-3	2,209	1,105	-6
13 Medlar-with-Wesham and Singleton & Greenhalgh	3	3,512	1,171	2	3,870	1,290	10
14 Newton & Treales	2	2,457	1,229	7	2,537	1,269	8
15 Park	3	3,172	1,057	-8	3,400	1,133	-3
16 Ribby-with-Wrea	1	1,225	1,225	7	1,218	1,218	4
17 Staining & Weeton	2	2,111	1,056	-8	2,189	1,095	-7
18 St Johns	3	3,104	1,035	-9	3,443	1,148	-2
19 St Leonards	3	3,441	1,147	0	3,511	1,170	0
20 Warton & Westby	3	3,647	1,216	6	3,774	1,258	7
Totals	51	58,307	-	-	59,885	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,143	-	-	1,174	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Fylde. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1975 (Report No. 39). The electoral arrangements of Lancashire County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 399). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements shortly after completion of the district reviews in order to enable orders to be made by the Secretary of State in time for the 2005 county elections.

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

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

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

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

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is then to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. For example, we will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

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

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

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the Lancashire districts, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill published in December 1999 and are currently being considered by Parliament.

12 Stage One began on 7 September 1999, when we wrote to Fylde Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Police Authority, Lancashire Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament and the Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 November 1999.

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

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

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

16 The borough of Fylde has an electorate of 58,307, which is forecast to increase by around 3 per cent over the next five years, to 59,885. The borough comprises the pre-1974 local authorities of Kirkham Urban District Council, Fylde Rural District Council and Lytham St Annes Borough Council. Fylde is located between Preston and the M6 in the east, Blackpool in the north and the Irish Sea in the west. The main town is Lytham St Annes, which is unparished. The remainder of the borough is parished and comprises two town councils and twelve parish councils. Fylde is easily accessible from the M6 and the M55 runs through the centre of the borough. There are railway stations at Kirkham, Moss Side, Lytham, Ansdell, St Annes and Squires Gate, linking the borough to Preston and the main lines to London and Glasgow.

17 The electorate of the borough is 58,307 (February 1999). The council presently has 49 members who are elected from 22 wards. Ten of the wards are each represented by three councillors, seven are each represented by two councillors and five are single-member wards. The council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Fylde borough, with around 8 per cent more electors than two decades ago, as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in the wards of Staining, Freckleton East, Kirkham North, Bryning-with-Warton and St Leonards with growth of 53 per cent, 25 per cent, 22 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,190 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,222 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 22 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, with two wards varying by more than 20 per cent and one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Staining ward where the councillor represents 51 per cent more electors than the borough average. Electoral equality is predicted to deteriorate further over the next five years.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Fylde

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements in Fylde

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ansdell	3	3,167	1,056	-11	3,221	1,074	-12
2 Ashton	3	3,231	1,077	-9	3,223	1,074	-12
3 Bryning-with-Warton	2	2,726	1,363	15	2,853	1,427	17
4 Central	3	3,341	1,114	-6	3,404	1,135	-7
5 Clifton	3	2,877	959	-19	2,874	958	-22
6 Elswick & Little Eccleston	1	1,084	1,084	-9	1,116	1,116	-9
7 Fairhaven	3	3,127	1,042	-12	3,149	1,050	-14
8 Freckleton East	2	2,304	1,152	-3	2,316	1,158	-5
9 Freckleton West	2	2,508	1,254	5	2,530	1,265	4
10 Heyhouses	3	3,669	1,223	3	3,770	1,257	3
11 Kilnhouse	3	3,836	1,279	7	3,830	1,277	4
12 Kirkham North	2	3,026	1,513	27	3,043	1,522	24
13 Kirkham South	2	2,375	1,188	0	2,377	1,189	-3
14 Medlar-with-Wesham	2	2,405	1,203	1	2,724	1,362	11
15 Newton & Treales	2	2,457	1,229	3	2,544	1,272	4
16 Park	3	3,061	1,020	-14	3,275	1,092	-11
17 Ribby-with-Wrea	1	1,225	1,225	3	1,224	1,224	0
18 Singleton & Greenhalgh	1	1,107	1,107	-7	1,146	1,146	-6

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Staining	1	1,800	1,800	51	1,871	1,871	53
20 St Johns	3	3,661	1,220	3	3,987	1,329	9
21 St Leonards	3	4,088	1,363	15	4,164	1,388	14
22 Weeton & Westby	1	1,232	1,232	4	1,244	1,244	2
Totals	49	58,307	–	–	59,885	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,190	–	–	1,222	–

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Clifton ward were relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in Staining ward were substantially under-represented by 51 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

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

Fylde Borough Council

23 The Borough Council submitted a borough-wide scheme based on a 51-member council, two more than at present, serving 21 wards, one less than at present. The Council proposed modifying 15 of the existing 22 wards. The Council proposed no change to the existing wards of Elswick & Little Eccleston, Freckleton East, Freckleton West, Medlar-with-Wesham, Newton & Treales, Ribby-with-Wrea and Singleton & Greenhalgh. Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in one ward would vary by more than 10 per cent both initially and by 2004.

North West Conservatives

24 The North West Conservatives endorsed the Borough Council's recommendations and stated that the proposals were also supported by local Conservative Councillors and the Fylde Conservative Association.

Other Representations

25 We received two further representations. One resident welcomed the review stating that "electoral equality in Fylde needed to be improved." Another resident proposed a large reduction in council size, but was not specific with regard to actual numbers. The respondent also contended that a reduction in council size would make the Council more efficient and accountable.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

26 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Fylde is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

28 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

Electorate Forecasts

30 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 3 per cent, from 58,307 to 59,885 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the town of Lytham St Annes, most notably in Park and St Johns ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Medlar-with-Wesham ward. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

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

Council Size

32 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

33 Fylde Borough Council presently has 49 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 51 members, which they argued achieved the best numerical solution together with sensible boundaries, taking into account the unparished town area of Lytham St Annes and the parished areas. A local resident suggested that there should be a “large reduction” in council size. He believed a reduction would save money, be more practical to manage and speed up the decision making process; however he did not specify a council size. He offered no justification for the argument that a smaller council size would produce these outcomes, nor did his submission consider the general functions of councillors.

34 Having considered the general argument alongside the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 51 members.

Electoral Arrangements

35 In view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of the Borough Council’s proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Borough Council’s scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council’s proposals in four areas, affecting eight of the Council’s proposed wards.

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

- (a) The town of Lytham St Annes (ten wards);
- (b) Bryning-with-Warton, Ribby-with-Wrea, Staining and Weeton & Westby wards;
- (c) Elswick & Little Eccleston, Medlar-with-Wesham, Newton & Treales and Singleton & Greenhalgh wards;
- (d) Kirkham North and Kirkham South wards;
- (e) Freckleton East and Freckleton West wards.

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

The town of Lytham St Annes (ten wards)

38 The coastal town of Lytham St Annes is located by the Irish Sea and is the only unparished part of the borough. The town is presently represented by 30 councillors, serving ten three-member wards, with varying degrees of electoral inequality. The wards of Ansdell, Ashton, Central, Clifton, Fairhaven and Park are over-represented. The number of electors per councillor in these wards varies from the borough average by 11 per cent, 9 per cent, 6 per cent, 19 per cent, 12 per cent and 14 per cent respectively (12 per cent, 12 per cent, 7 per cent, 22 per cent, 14 per cent and 11 per cent by 2004). The wards of Heyhouses, Kilnhouse, St Johns and St Leonards are under-represented. The number of electors per councillor in these wards varies from the borough average by 3 per cent, 7 per cent, 3 per cent and 15 per cent respectively (3 per cent, 4 per cent, 9 per cent and 14 per cent by 2004).

39 During Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining 30 members in the town and the existing pattern of three-member wards. However, to improve the level of electoral equality across the town, it proposed boundary modifications affecting all of the existing wards. The Borough Council estimated that around 50 properties are expected to be built within St Leonards ward, and taking into account the five-year electorate forecast, a reduction in the current electorate was required in order to improve electoral equality. The only ward to which electors could be transferred is the adjacent Ashton ward, and it proposed transferring part of the CK polling district of St Leonards ward to Ashton ward. The modified St Leonards ward would have an electoral variance equalling the borough average both initially and by 2004. Only a few properties are forecast to be built in Ashton ward and in order to improve the level of electoral equality in Ashton ward and Central ward, the Borough Council proposed transferring some electors from CN polling district in Ashton ward into Central ward. The modified Ashton ward would vary from the average number of electors per councillor by 5 per cent (2 per cent by 2004).

40 As stated above the Borough Council proposed transferring part of polling district CN from Ashton ward to Central ward. However, because of the level of electoral inequalities in adjoining wards and the subsequent 'knock on' effect, the Borough Council proposed that part of polling district CT from Heyhouses ward, part of polling district CV from Fairhaven ward and part of polling district CS from Kilnhouse ward should be transferred to Central ward. It also proposed transferring part of polling district CQ from Central ward to Heyhouses ward. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Central ward would vary from the average by 2 per cent (1 per cent by 2004).

41 The Borough Council's proposed Kilnhouse ward would lose some electors to Central ward and in order to improve the present boundary between the wards of Kilnhouse and Heyhouses, it suggested that the boundary should continue along Queensway (commencing from the junction of Kilnhouse Lane) to the Fylde/Blackpool Borough boundary. The modified Kilnhouse ward would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent (7 per cent by 2004).

42 The Borough Council stated that 64 properties are forecast to be built in Heyhouses ward and in order to improve electoral equality it proposed transferring part of polling district CT to Central ward and adding part of polling district CQ from Central ward to Heyhouses ward. The Borough Council contended that because the projected electorate for all the neighbouring wards

of Ansdell, Central, Fairhaven and Park was below the average, its re-alignment of the ward boundaries in this area had a significant effect on improving electoral equality and reflected community identity. It further proposed transferring parts of polling districts CT and CU from Heyhouses ward to Park ward and in order to improve the boundary between the wards, proposed continuing along North Houses Lane (from the junction of Moss Hall Lane) in a northerly direction, up to the boundary of the adjoining ward. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Heyhouses ward would vary from the average by 5 per cent (8 per cent by 2004).

43 The Borough Council's proposed Fairhaven ward would lose some electors to Central ward and gain part of polling district CW from Ansdell ward. The number of electors per councillor would vary from the average by 1 per cent (3 per cent by 2004). The Borough Council's proposed Ansdell ward would lose some electors to Fairhaven ward and gain the electors from polling district CY in Park ward. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Ansdell ward would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent both initially and by 2004.

44 There is a significant amount of housing forecast within the Borough Council's proposed Park ward. As stated above, polling district CY of Park ward would be transferred to Ansdell Ward and parts of polling districts CT and CV would also be transferred from Heyhouses ward to Ansdell ward. The Borough Council contended that the projected development and the transfer of electors from the neighbouring ward would "offset the loss of polling district CY and does not adversely affect any community ties or identities". The number of electors per councillor would vary from the average by 8 per cent (3 per cent by 2004).

45 The Borough Council stated that as a consequence of its proposals for the wards of Ansdell and Park and taking account of the projected increase in electorate in the existing St Johns ward, the best option to improve the level of electoral equality in the proposed wards of Clifton and St Johns would be to transfer electors from part of polling district DB of St Johns ward into Clifton ward. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Clifton and St Johns wards would vary from the average by 3 per cent and 12 per cent respectively (equal to and 5 per cent by 2004).

46 We are content that the Borough Council's proposals for the majority of the wards in the town of Lytham St Annes secure a substantially improved level of electoral equality, provide clearly recognisable boundaries and as far as we can gauge, have no adverse effect on local community ties. However, we believe that two further boundary modifications between the wards of Heyhouses and Kilnhouse and the wards of Clifton and St Johns would further improve the level of electoral equality across the town. We propose transferring 250 electors from the proposed Heyhouses ward to the proposed Kilnhouse ward and 90 electors from the proposed Clifton ward to St Johns ward. We believe that our further boundary modifications would not adversely affect community ties and would result in no ward in the town having an electoral variance exceeding 3 per cent by 2004. Details of the proposed ward boundaries for the town of Lytham St Annes are shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Bryning-with-Warton, Ribby-with-Wrea, Staining and Weeton & Westby wards

47 These four wards lie in the west of the borough. The two-member Bryning-with-Warton ward and the single-member wards of Ribby-with-Wrea, Staining and Weeton & Westby, comprising the parishes of the same names, presently suffer from varying degrees of under-representation. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 15 per cent, 3 per cent, 51 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (17 per cent, equal to, 53 per cent and 2 per cent by 2004).

48 During Stage One the Borough Council proposed no change to the single-member Ribby-with-Wrea ward. In the remainder of the area the Borough Council proposed a two-member Staining & Weeton ward. The Borough Council stated that in order to obtain electoral equality and maintain community identity it proposed merging the existing ward with the parish of Weeton-with-Preese. It also proposed a three-member Warton & Westby ward, comprising the parishes of Bryning-with-Warton and Westby-with-Plumpton.

49 We have concluded that the proposals for this part of the borough put forward by the Borough Council secure a substantially improved level of electoral equality without, as far as we can gauge, having an adverse effect on local community ties. Therefore we are content to adopt the Borough Council's proposals for no change to the existing single-member Ribby-with-Wrea ward and the proposed two-member ward of Staining & Weeton and three-member Warton & Westby ward, without amendment.

50 Under the 51-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor in the wards would vary from the average by 7 per cent, 8 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (4 per cent, 7 per cent and 7 per cent by 2004).

Elswick & Little Eccleston, Medlar-with-Wesham, Newton & Treales and Singleton & Greenhalgh wards

51 The single-member wards of Elswick & Little Eccleston and Singleton & Greenhalgh are located in the north of the borough, and are over-represented. The number of electors per councillor in Elswick & Little Eccleston ward, comprising the parishes of Elswick and Little Eccleston-with-Larbreck, varies from the average by 9 per cent both initially and by 2004. Singleton & Greenhalgh ward, comprising the parishes of Singleton and Greenhalgh-with-Thistleton, varies from the average by 7 per cent (6 per cent by 2004). The two-member wards of Medlar-with-Wesham and Newton & Treales are located in the centre and the east of the borough, and are under-represented. Medlar-with-Wesham ward, comprising the town of the same name, varies from the average by 1 per cent (11 per cent by 2004). Newton & Treales ward, comprising the parishes of Treales, Roseacre & Wharles and Newton-with-Clifton, varies from the average by 3 per cent (4 per cent by 2004).

52 During Stage One the Borough Council proposed no change to the existing warding arrangements for the single-member wards of Elswick & Little Ecclestone and Singleton & Greenhalgh and the two-member wards of Newton & Treales and Medlar-with-Wesham. Under the Borough Council's 51-member scheme, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average by 5 per cent, 3 per cent, 7 per cent and 5 per cent (5 per cent, 2 per cent, 8 per cent and 16 per cent by 2004).

53 We are content to adopt the Borough Council's proposals for no change to the existing wards of Elswick & Little Ecclestone and Newton & Treales. The only contentious area would appear to be the proposal for no change to the two-member Medlar-with-Wesham ward, which under the Borough Council's scheme would vary from the borough average by 16 per cent by 2004. The Borough Council considered alternative warding arrangements for Medlar-with-Wesham ward but stated that they would have involved the warding of a parish or combining parishes that did not share community identities. However, we do not believe that this is acceptable, given the electoral inequality which would result.

54 Therefore we looked at an alternative configuration of the parishes in the area and also considered the possibility of warding the parish of Medlar-with-Wesham. However, we concluded that the best option (avoiding parish warding) would be to merge the two-member Medlar-with-Wesham ward with the Borough Council's proposed single-member ward of Singleton & Greenhalgh, creating a three-member ward. Our recommendation would result in an electoral variance of 10 per cent by 2004. We would welcome further views and evidence at Stage Three.

55 The number of electors per councillor in the unchanged wards of Elswick & Little Ecclestone and Newton & Treales and the proposed three-member ward of Medlar-with-Wesham and Singleton & Greenhalgh would vary from the average by 5 per cent, 7 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (5 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent by 2004).

Kirkham North and Kirkham South wards

56 The town of Kirkham is centrally located and comprises the two-member wards of Kirkham North and Kirkham South. Kirkham North ward is presently under-represented, varying from the borough average by 27 per cent (24 per cent by 2004). However, Kirkham South ward is relatively well represented, equalling the borough average (3 per cent by 2004).

57 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the area should be represented by five borough councillors and recommended that a modified Kirkham North ward should be represented by three members. It also proposed a boundary modification, transferring 166 electors from Kirkham South to Kirkham North ward. Under the Borough Council's scheme, the number of electors per councillor in the three-member Kirkham North and two-member Kirkham South wards would vary from the average by 7 per cent and 3 per cent respectively (9 per cent and 6 per cent by 2004).

58 The proposals for this part of the borough were supported by Kirkham Town Council during the Borough Council's own consultation. We have concluded that the proposals for the town of Kirkham secure a substantially improved level of electoral equality overall, without having an adverse effect on local community ties. Therefore we are content to adopt the Borough Council's proposals for the three-member ward of Kirkham North and the two-member ward of Kirkham South, without amendment. As a consequence of these proposals we will be making recommendations for change to the town wards of Kirkham, to reflect the proposed borough wards. Please see paragraph 69 later in this chapter and maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

Freckleton East and Freckleton West wards

59 The parish of Freckleton is located in the south of the borough and comprises the two-member wards of Freckleton East and Freckleton West. At present the wards are reasonably well represented. The number of electors per councillor vary from the borough average by 3 per cent and 5 per cent respectively (5 per cent and 4 per cent by 2004).

60 The Borough Council proposed no change to the existing warding arrangements for the two-member Freckleton East and Freckleton West wards. Under the Borough Council's scheme, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent and 10 per cent (1 per cent and 8 per cent by 2004). However, we were not convinced that the present boundary is clearly identifiable and believe that a further modification would improve the boundary and have a positive effect on electoral equality. Therefore in consultation with the Borough Council we propose redrawing the boundary along Naze Lane East until the junction with Stoney Lane, to follow Naze Lane and including the 119 electors to the east of Clitheroes Lane, to the existing boundary line. We have concluded that our proposal for the parish of Freckleton secures an improved level of electoral equality overall, without having an adverse effect on local community ties. Under our proposals the modified two-member wards of Freckleton East and Freckleton West would vary from the borough average by 5 per cent (3 per cent by 2004).

61 As a consequence of these proposals we will be making recommendations for change to the parish wards of Freckleton, to reflect the proposed borough wards. Please see paragraph 68 later in this chapter and Map A4 in Appendix A.

Electoral Cycle

62 We received only one representation regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council itself stated a preference for retaining whole-council elections. At present, there appears to be no desire to move away from the present electoral cycle and we therefore propose no change to the current electoral cycle of whole-council elections for the Borough Council.

Conclusions

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

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 49 to 51;
- (b) there should be 20 wards, two less than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 19 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net decrease of two wards;
- (d) there should be no change to the wards of Elswick & Little Eccleston, Newton & Treales and Ribby-with-Wrea.
- (e) the whole council should be elected together every four years.

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

- (a) we propose amending the boundary between the proposed Freckleton East and Freckleton West wards;
- (b) we propose combining the Borough Council's proposed wards of Medlar-with-Wesham and Singleton & Greenhalgh to form a three-member ward;
- (c) we propose further boundary modifications between the proposed wards of Heyhouses and Kilnhouse, and Clifton and St Johns in the town of Lytham St Annes.

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

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	49	51	49	51
Number of wards	22	20	22	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,190	1,143	1,222	1,174
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	0	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	2	0	3	0

66 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Fylde Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from eight to none. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough.

Draft Recommendation
 Fylde Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. Elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

67 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parish of Freckleton and the town of Kirkham to reflect the proposed borough wards.

68 The parish of Freckleton is currently served by 12 councillors representing two wards: Freckleton East parish ward, returning six councillors and Freckleton West parish ward, returning six councillors. As mentioned earlier, we propose modifying the boundary between the existing Freckleton East and Freckleton West parish wards, and propose that the revised wards should both continue to return six parish councillors respectively.

Draft Recommendation

Freckleton Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Freckleton East (returning six councillors) and Freckleton West (six). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

69 The town of Kirkham is currently served by ten councillors representing two wards: Kirkham North town ward, returning five councillors and Kirkham South town ward, returning five councillors. As mentioned earlier, we propose modifying the boundary between the existing Kirkham North and Kirkham South town wards, and propose that the revised wards should return six town councillors and four town councillors respectively, to reflect the fact that Kirkham North borough ward will now return three borough councillors, and Kirkham South will now return two borough councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Kirkham Town Council should comprise ten councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Kirkham North (returning six councillors) and Kirkham South (four). The town ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

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

Draft Recommendation

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

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

Map 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Fylde

5 NEXT STEPS

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

73 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Fylde: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Kirkham town.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Kirkham town.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Freckleton parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for the Lytham St Annes area.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Fylde: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding of Kirkham Town

Map A3: Proposed Warding of Kirkham Town

Map A4: Proposed Warding of Freckleton Parish

APPENDIX B

Fylde Borough Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

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

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Clifton	Clifton ward; St Johns ward (part)
Freckleton East	<i>Unchanged</i>
Freckleton West	<i>Unchanged</i>
Heyhouses	Heyhouses ward (part); Central ward (part)
Kilnhouse	Kilnhouse ward (part)
Medlar-with-Wesham	<i>Unchanged</i>
Singleton & Greenhalgh	<i>Unchanged</i>
St Johns	St Johns ward (part)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Clifton	3	3,522	1,174	3	3,533	1,178	0
Freckleton East	2	2,304	1,152	1	2,322	1,161	-1
Freckleton West	2	2,508	1,254	10	2,526	1,263	8
Heyhouses	3	3,605	1,202	5	3,794	1,265	8
Kilnhouse	3	3,379	1,126	-1	3,289	1,096	-7
Medlar-with-Wesham	2	2,405	1,203	5	2,723	1,362	16
Singleton & Greenhalgh	1	1,107	1,107	-3	1,147	1,147	-2
St Johns	3	3,014	1,005	-12	3,353	1,118	-5

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

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

APPENDIX C

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

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

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

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- secure effective and convenient local government.

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

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

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

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

- (i) the number of councillors;
- (ii) the need for parish wards;
- (iii) the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- (iv) the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- (v) the name of any such ward.

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

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

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

7 In relation to shire districts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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