

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Sheffield

February 2003

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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. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. 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

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for Sheffield on 8 May 2002.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Sheffield:

- **in 20 of the 29 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the city and eight wards vary by more than 20% from the average;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 19 wards and by more than 20% in nine wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 111-112) are that:

- **Sheffield City Council should have 84 councillors, three fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 28 wards, instead of 29 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each city councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 27 of the proposed 28 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the city average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average for the city in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Bradfield, Ecclesfield and Stocksbridge.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 11 February 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 7 April 2003:

**Team Leader
Sheffield Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1	Arbourthorne & Gleadless	3	Part of Castle ward; part of Heeley ward; part of Intake ward; part of Park ward.	7
2	Beauchief & Greenhill	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Dore ward; part of Norton ward.	6 and 7
3	Beighton & Hackenthorpe	3	Part of Mosborough ward.	7
4	Birley	3	Part of Birley ward; part of Mosborough ward.	7
5	Broomhill	3	Part of Broomhill ward; part of Netherthorpe ward; part of Sharrow ward.	6
6	Burngreave	3	Part of Burngreave ward; part of Firth Park ward; part of Owlerton ward.	3,4 and 6
7	Central	3	Part of Broomhill ward; part of Burngreave ward; part of Castle ward; part of Netherthorpe ward part of Sharrow ward.	4, 6 and 7
8	Crookes	3	Part of Broomhill ward; part of Hallam ward; part of Netherthorpe ward; part of Walkley ward.	6
9	Darnall	3	Part of Brightside ward; part of Burngreave ward; part of Castle ward; part of Darnall ward; part of Manor ward.	4 and 7
10	East Ecclesfield*	3	Part of Chapel Green ward; part of Nether Shire ward; part of Southey Green ward; part of South Wortley ward.	3 and 4
11	Ecclesall	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Ecclesall ward; part of Hallam ward; part of Nether Edge ward.	6
12	Firth Park & Longley	3	Part of Brightside ward; part of Firth Park ward; part of Nether Shire ward; part of Southey Green ward.	3 and 4
13	Fulwood	3	part of Broomhill ward; part of Hallam ward.	5 and 6
14	Gleadless Valley & Heeley	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Heeley ward; part of Intake ward; part of Norton ward; part of Park ward.	6 and 7
15	Graves Park	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Heeley ward; part of Nether Edge ward; part of Norton ward.	6 and 7
16	Hillsborough	3	Part of Hillsborough ward; part of Owlerton ward; part of Walkley ward.	3
17	Manor	3	Part of Castle ward; part of Darnall ward; part of Intake ward; part of Manor ward.	4 and 7
18	Mosborough	3	Part of Mosborough ward.	7
19	Nether Edge	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Ecclesall ward; part of Heeley ward; part of Nether Edge ward; part of Sharrow ward.	6
20	Parsons Cross & Southey Green	3	Part of Nether Shire ward; Part of Owlerton ward; part of Southey Green ward.	3
21	Richmond	3	Part of Birley ward; part of Darnall ward; part of Intake ward; part of Handsworth; part of Park ward.	7
22	Shiregreen & Brightside	3	Part of Brightside ward; part of Darnall ward; part of Nether Shire ward.	4

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
23	Stannington*	3	Part of Hillsborough ward; par of South Wortley ward; part of Walkley ward.	1, 2, 3, 5 and 6
24	Stocksbridge & Upper Don*	3	Stocksbridge Parish; part of South Wortley ward.	1, 2 and 3
25	Totley & Dore	3	Part of Beauchief ward; part of Dore ward; part of Ecclesall ward; part of Hallam ward.	5 and 6
26	Walkley	3	Part of Netherthorpe ward; part of Owlerton ward; part of Walkley ward.	3 and 6
27	West Ecclesfield*	3	Part of Chapel Green ward; part of South Wortley ward.	3
28	Woodhouse	3	Part of Birley ward; part of Darnall ward; part of Handsworth ward; part of Mosborough ward.	7

Notes:

- 1) *Bradfield, Ecclesfield and Stocksbridge are the only parished parts of the city and comprise the four wards indicated * above.*
- 2) *The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Sheffield

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arbourthorne & Gleadless	3	13,190	4,397	-3	13,695	4,565	1
2	Beauchief & Greenhill	3	14,215	4,738	5	14,215	4,738	5
3	Beighton & Hackenthorpe	3	12,880	4,293	-5	12,950	4,317	-4
4	Birley	3	13,701	4,567	1	13,242	4,414	-2
5	Broomhill	3	13,119	4,373	-3	13,119	4,373	-3
6	Burngreave	3	14,361	4,787	6	14,003	4,668	3
7	Central	3	11,251	3,750	-17	13,514	4,505	0
8	Crookes	3	13,464	4,488	-1	13,464	4,488	-1
9	Darnall	3	14,243	4,748	5	14,274	4,758	5
10	East Ecclesfield	3	14,193	4,731	5	14,280	4,760	5
11	Ecclesall	3	13,699	4,566	1	13,709	4,570	1
12	Firth Park & Longley	3	14,382	4,794	6	14,205	4,735	5
13	Fulwood	3	13,053	4,351	-4	13,168	4,389	-3
14	Gleadless Valley & Heeley	3	13,286	4,429	-2	13,051	4,350	-4
15	Graves Park	3	14,116	4,705	4	14,116	4,705	4
16	Hillsborough	3	12,937	4,312	-4	13,265	4,422	-2
17	Manor	3	13,711	4,570	1	13,864	4,621	2
18	Mosborough	3	13,289	4,430	-2	13,669	4,556	1
19	Nether Edge	3	12,817	4,272	-5	12,951	4,317	-4
20	Parsons Cross & Southey Green	3	13,709	4,570	1	13,429	4,476	-1
21	Richmond	3	13,259	4,420	-2	13,232	4,411	-2
22	Shiregreen & Brightside	3	13,570	4,523	0	13,638	4,546	1
23	Stannington	3	13,107	4,369	-3	13,128	4,376	-3
24	Stocksbridge & Upper Don	3	14,583	4,861	8	14,669	4,890	8
25	Totley & Dore	3	13,268	4,423	-2	13,341	4,447	-1

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Walkley	3	14,012	4,671	4	13,917	4,639	3
27 West Ecclesfield	3	14,095	4,698	4	14,229	4,743	5
28 Woodhouse	3	13,613	4,538	1	13,613	4,538	1
Totals	84	379,123	-	-	381,950	-	-
Averages	-	-	4,513	-	-	4,547	-

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

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the city of Sheffield, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Sheffield. Sheffield's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1979 (Report no. 345).

3 In carrying out these metropolitan reviews we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Sheffield is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 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 parish and town councils in the city.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the city as a whole. 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.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit on the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan city ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan city wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, 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.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

10 Stage One began on 8 May 2002, when we wrote to Sheffield City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified South Yorkshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, South Yorkshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire and the Humber Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Sheffield City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 August 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 11 February 2003 and will end on 7 April 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.**

13 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 Current electoral arrangements

14 The city of Sheffield is the largest urban area in the county of South Yorkshire, bounded by Barnsley and Rotherham to the north and east, and the county of Derbyshire to the south and west. However, it is also remarkable for its greenness, which includes over fifty urban parks and more tracts of woodland than any other industrial city. It is one of the world's most famous centres for cutlery, edge tool and steel production.

15 The city contains three parishes, in the north and north-west. The remainder of the city is unparished. The electorate of the city is 379,123 (December 2001). The Council presently has 87 members who are elected from 29 wards. All wards are three-member wards.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 4,358 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 4,390 by the year 2006 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 20 of the 29 wards varies by more than 10% from the city average, eight wards by more than 20% and six wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Mosborough ward where the councillor represents 104% more electors than the city average. Moreover, the current allocation of councillors is incorrect. Under the existing council size of 87, Mosborough is entitled to six councillors, but is currently represented by three councillors.

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

Map 1: Existing wards in Sheffield

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of Councillors	Electorate 2001	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Beauchief	3	14,462	4,821	11	14,462	4,821	10
2	Birley	3	14,064	4,688	8	13,607	4,536	3
3	Brightside	3	11,207	3,736	-14	11,286	3,762	-14
4	Broomhill	3	15,180	5,060	16	15,180	5,060	15
5	Burngreave	3	8,492	2,831	-35	8,487	2,829	-36
6	Castle	3	8,650	2,883	-34	8,763	2,921	-33
7	Chapel Green	3	18,176	6,059	39	18,373	6,124	39
8	Darnall	3	13,346	4,449	2	13,346	4,449	1
9	Dore	3	14,926	4,975	14	14,988	4,996	14
10	Ecclesall	3	15,208	5,069	16	15,227	5,076	16
11	Firth Park	3	11,057	3,686	-15	11,021	3,674	-16
12	Hallam	3	14,458	4,819	11	14,573	4,858	11
13	Handsworth	3	14,211	4,737	9	14,211	4,737	8
14	Heeley	3	12,820	4,273	-2	12,851	4,284	-2
15	Hillsborough	3	13,956	4,652	7	13,956	4,652	6
16	Intake	3	14,112	4,704	8	13,922	4,641	6
17	Manor	3	8,238	2,746	-37	8,391	2,797	-36
18	Mosborough	3	26,665	8,888	104	27,115	9,038	106
19	Nether Edge	3	12,073	4,024	-8	12,207	4,069	-7
20	Nether Shire	3	11,253	3,751	-14	11,257	3,752	-15
21	Netherthorpe	3	11,996	3,999	-8	13,701	4,567	4
22	Norton	3	11,077	3,692	-15	10,981	3,660	-17
23	Owlerton	3	10,669	3,556	-18	10,359	3,453	-21
24	Park	3	9,097	3,032	-30	9,594	3,198	-27
25	Sharrow	3	11,441	3,814	-12	11,739	3,913	-11
26	South Wortley	3	18,713	6,238	43	19,190	6,397	46
27	Southey Green	3	9,487	3,162	-27	9,064	3,021	-31
28	Stocksbridge	3	10,717	3,572	-18	10,727	3,576	-19
29	Walkley	3	13,372	4,457	2	13,372	4,457	2
	Totals	87	379,123	-	-	381,950	-	-
	Averages	-	-	4,358	-	-	4,390	-

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

Note: *The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Manor ward were relatively over-represented by 37%, while electors in Mosborough ward were relatively under-represented by 104%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 Submissions received

18 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Sheffield City Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

19 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the BCFE visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 11 representations during Stage One, including a city-wide schemes from the City Council, Liberal Democrats and Councillor JG Harston, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council.

Sheffield City Council

20 The City Council proposed a council of 84 members, three fewer than at present, serving 28 wards, compared to the existing 29. Under its proposals no ward would have an electoral variance of 10% in either 2001 or 2006.

Liberal Democrats

21 The Liberal Democrats proposed a council of 84 members, three fewer than at present, serving 28 wards, compared with the existing 29. Their proposals draw on elements of the schemes of both the City Council and Councillor Harston, with a number of their own minor amendments. Under its proposals only one ward would have a variance of over 10% by 2006.

Councillor JG Harston

22 Councillor JG Harston proposed a council of 84 members, 3 fewer than at present, serving 28 wards, compared to the existing 29. This scheme provides an alternative warding arrangement to the Councils, although with a number of common elements. It draws support from the Liberal Democrats in a number of areas. Under his proposals no ward would have an electoral variance of over 10% by 2006.

Sheffield Co-operative Party

23 Sheffield Co-operative Party supported the creation of an 84-member council, but did not give specific details of proposed wards.

Sheffield Labour Party

24 Sheffield Labour Party expressed support for the City Council's 84-member scheme.

Parish and town councils

25 Ecclesfield Parish Council expressed support for Councillor Harston's proposals and made recommendations for its own parish wards. Councillor Fox, of Ecclesfield Parish Council, also supported Councillor Harston's proposals. Stocksbridge Town Council proposed the transfer of a number of neighbouring villages to create a new ward.

Other representations

26 We received three submissions from local residents. Two residents made general comments about the electoral arrangements, but made no specific comments about the Sheffield review. One resident requested not to be 'put' in a ward with Heeley.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

27 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Sheffield and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, 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.

28 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Sheffield is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). 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'.

29 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 identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

30 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

31 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, 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 must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate forecasts

32 Since 1975 there has been a 10% decrease in the electorate of Sheffield city, from 421,692 to 379,123. The City Council's initial 2006 projection figures were queried by the Liberal Democrats and Councillor Harston, who both projected approximately an additional 2000 electors in the central areas. We took up the issue with the City Council, who later confirmed that they had indeed missed out a number of key developments within the city centre. They stated 'The original projections were based on the large sites list from the Sheffield Housing Land Survey, which covers sites of 0.4 hectares or greater. The purpose in using this list was to avoid planning permissions for very small sites, often single properties. Subsequent analysis revealed that some city centre sites including significant numbers of dwellings were omitted from the projection calculations because they were smaller than 0.4 hectares. These sites were subsequently added and the projections for the city centre were recalculated. The result was a much greater projected increase in [Sharrow & Central] ward'.

33 As already explained, in order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the City Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained. The City

Council's electorate forecasts for the year 2006 projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 379,123 to 381,950 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Netherthorpe.

34 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having looked at the City Council's amended figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

35 Sheffield City Council presently has 87 members. The Council stated that in adopting the new political management structure, councillors 'hours had reduced by only two percent. The change has had little impact on the overall hours Members commit to formal meetings as part of their management role'. Under the new political management structure the Council has created a Cabinet with six members, six Scrutiny Boards with 86 members, 11 Statutory/Regulatory Boards with 76 members, 12 Area Panels with 76 members and 54 other Council Panels/Groups, each with between one and 13 members. The City Council also highlighted the importance of the members 'representative role', particularly in the 'expanding area of [...] the 16 Joint Bodies and other external bodies and organisations'. It stated 'Sheffield City Council is committed to working in partnership with local communities and other stakeholders'.

36 It added, that in 'considering the most appropriate council size, two differing approaches were considered by the [...] steering group managing the review. These largely reflected the managerial and the representative views of the Councillor's role, although to ascribe them thus entirely would be to over-simplify the debate.

37 'On the one hand, some members felt that, given the concentration of political managerial responsibilities with a smaller number of members, fewer Councillors – and therefore fewer wards – were required for the effective management of the authority. A smaller number of councillors would allow all members to participate meaningfully in decision making and scrutiny and also enable a higher level of administrative support with limited resources.

38 'The alternative view was that the representative role of the councillor had become more difficult to maintain and any reduction in the number of elected representatives would undermine this further. This, coupled with an increase in the number of partnership and external boards which required City Council participation and representation, suggested that the wards should be no larger than they are, on average, at present'.

39 Consequently, the City Council's steering group (on which all political parties were represented) put forward schemes based on two alternative councils sizes: a 23 ward, 69-member scheme and a 28 ward, 84-member scheme. Following consultation, the 84-member scheme was adopted and given support from all parties.

40 Councillor Harston also supported the 84-member scheme, stating that in adopting the new political management structures 'it was anticipated that this would result in a lower council workload for elected members. In contrast, many members actually reported an increase in workload, as was submitted to the 2001 pay review process'. In addition, he added, 'both main parties on the council have expressed support for the extension of the present Area Panel system. This will inevitably add to the workload and individual responsibilities of members'. The Liberal Democrats, who also supported the 84-member scheme, added that public consultation revealed 'members of the public felt that a council with only 69 councillors would erode their ability to contact and know their local councillor, and similarly vice-versa'.

41 We note that there was a strong consensus among all parties for an 84-member council. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the

achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 84 members.

Electoral arrangements

42 We have given careful consideration to the views received during Stage One, including the city-wide schemes from the City Council, Liberal Democrats and Councillor Harston. As already explained, we note that there is a consensus on council size. In addition, we note that all three schemes agreed that in proposing new ward arrangements for the city, there were a number of 'hard' boundaries that should not be breached.

43 However, we also note that utilising these hard boundaries does not give the correct allocation to the south-west area, which is significantly over-represented. Under all three schemes this area is allocated 24 councillors, while, given the proposed boundaries, it is only entitled to 23. We have therefore found it necessary to examine the possibility of crossing one of these hard boundaries, to transfer electors and thus improve the allocation. We are in agreement that the Don valley railway line to the east and the Sheaf valley railway line to the south cannot be crossed in such a way that recognises community identity. However, from our visit to the area, we believe that it is possible to cross the River Loxley, around the Bradfield Road area, transferring 1,099 electors from Hillsborough ward to Walkley ward. Indeed, we note that the City Council's proposals had moved away from the river at this point. In addition, a number of the roads affected do not access into the proposed Hillsborough ward, but rather south, along the Penistone Road or via Bradfield Road. Finally, Councillor Harston stated that River Rivelin boundary (which flows into the River Loxley at this point) became 'softer' towards the city centre. While we do not consider this ideal, given the need to improve the allocation for this area we are content to recommend the transfer of this area as part of our draft recommendations.

44 We also note that all three submissions were reluctant, without proper consultation, to recommend ward names for the proposed wards. However, in publishing the draft recommendations we have had to adopt a number of the proposed ward names, along with a number of our own, but would welcome comments from local residents during Stage Three.

45 Across the remainder of the city we have adopted a mixture of all three city-wide proposals, with a number of our own amendments. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a) Brightside, Burngreave, Chapel Green, Firth Park, Nether Shire, Owlerton and Southey Green wards;
- b) Hillsborough, South Wortley and Stocksbridge wards;
- c) Broomhill, Dore, Ecclesall, Hallam, Nether Edge, Netherthorpe, Sharrow and Walkley wards;
- d) Beauchief, Castle, Heeley, Manor, Norton and Park wards;
- e) Birley, Darnall, Handsworth, Intake and Mosborough wards.

46 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

Brightside, Burngreave, Chapel Green, Firth Park, Nether Shire, Owlerton and Southey Green wards

47 These seven wards are situated in the north east of the city, but extend south towards the city centre. The north area is covered by Ecclesfield parish. Brightside ward is 14% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Burngreave ward is 35% over-represented (37% by 2006). Chapel Green ward is 39% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Firth Park ward is 15%

over-represented (16% by 2006). Nether Shire ward is 14% over-represented (15% by 2006). Owlerton ward is 18% over-represented (21% by 2006). Southey Green ward is 27% over-represented (31% by 2006).

48 At Stage One, the City Council put forward proposals to divide Ecclesfield parish with an east/west boundary, to create Chapeltown ward in the north and Ecclesfield ward in the south. Its proposed Chapeltown ward would comprise part of the existing Chapel Green ward, to the north of Park View Road, Scotts Way, Burns Drive, Burncross Road and Hall Wood Dyke. Its proposed Ecclesfield ward would comprise the remainder of the existing Chapel Green ward and an area of the existing South Wortley ward (discussed later) coterminous with the Ecclesfield parish ward boundary, but including an area of the existing Nether Shire ward to the west of Hartley Brook Dyke, north of Colley Road and east of Morrall Road. The Council stated that its boundary between the two wards seeks to define 'as logical a line as possible between Chapeltown and Burncross'. Its proposed Chapeltown ward would be 5% under-represented (7% by 2006). Its proposed Ecclesfield ward would be 3% under-represented (4% by 2006).

49 The City Council's proposed Burngreave ward would comprise an area of the existing Burngreave ward to the east of the upper Don valley railway line and west of the lower Don valley railway line, and an area of the existing Firth Park ward, to the south of Vivian Road, Hucklow First and Middle School, Fir Vale and the A6102 Herries Road. It would be 6% under-represented (3% by 2006). Its proposed Concord, Shiregreen & Brightside ward would comprise the existing Brightside ward, less the area to the south of Shiregreen Lane and Jenkin Road, and to the north of Wincobank Wood. It would additionally include an area of the existing Nether Shire ward to the east of Hartley Brook Dyke and the A6135 Barnsley Road and to the north of Hatfield House Road. It would be 7% under-represented (1% by 2006).

50 Its proposed Firth Park & Longley ward would comprise an area of the existing Southey Green ward, to the south of Deerlands Avenue and east of Aldington Road, and an area of the existing Firth Park ward, to the north of Vivian Road, Hucklow First and Middle School, Fir Vale and the A6102 Herries Road. It would also include an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the west of Hartley Brook Dyke and the A6135 Barnsley Road, and to the south of Hatfield House Road, an area of the existing Brightside ward, to the south of Shiregreen Lane and Jenkin Road, and the north of Wincobank wood. It would be 1% over-represented (5% under-represented by 2006). The City Council's proposed Southey & Parsons Cross ward would comprise an area of the existing Owlerton ward, to the north of Pentrith Road and east of the upper Don valley railway line, and an area of the existing Southey Green ward, to the north of Deerlands Avenue and west of Aldington Road. It would be 1% under-represented (0% per cent by 2006).

51 Councillor Harston's proposals for this area were broadly similar to the City Council's, except for the northern area, covered by Ecclesfield Parish Council. Here Councillor Harston proposed a north/south boundary, creating an Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West ward. In his view, 'any line that removed parts from the northern communities to add on to a proposed southern ward would end up running through communities'. In addition, he suggested that such wards would have bad communication links since the main routes run north/south.

52 Councillor Harston's proposed Ecclesfield West ward would contain an area of Ecclesfield parish, to the west of Warren, Bridle Crescent, Charlton Brook, Blackburn Drive, Smithy Carr Avenue, Bevan Way, Chestnut Drive, Windmill Hill Lane, Hole House Farm, The Wheel and including numbers 384 - 471 Halifax Road (currently part of Owlerton ward), but excluding the electors in Birley Court and Edge Close. It would be 1% over-represented (0% by 2006). His proposed Ecclesfield East ward would contain an area of Ecclesfield parish to the east of Warren, Bridle Crescent, Charlton Brook, Blackburn Drive, Smithy Carr Avenue, Bevan Way, Chestnut Drive, Windmill Hill Lane, Hole House Farm, The Wheel and an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to east of Montenev Middle School, north of Weata Road and east of Colley

Crescent, north of Colley Road and west of Hartley Brook Dyke, and an area of the existing Southey Green ward to the north of Yew Lane. It would be 6% under-represented (7% by 2006).

53 The remainder of Councillor Harston's wards in this area are based on the City Council's consultation scheme, although it should be noted that the City Council's proposals were modified as a result of this consultation. In fact, Councillor Harston suggested that the City Council's proposals for the remainder of this area could be 'grafted on' to his proposals for Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards, by swapping the Montenev Road and Yew Lane areas of the City Council model.

54 Councillor Harston's proposed Parsons Cross ward would be broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Southey & Parsons Cross ward, less the properties on Scraith Wood Drive, numbers 384 - 471 Halifax road, currently in Owlerton ward, and less an area of the existing Southey Green ward to the north of Yewlands Road. It would additionally include an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the south of Montenev Road, west of Montenev Middle School, south of Weata Road and west of Colley Crescent, and numbers 143 - 382 Deerlands Avenue and the even numbered houses between 2 - 68 Aldington Road, currently in Southey Green ward. It would be 5% under-represented (3% by 2006). His proposed Longley ward would be broadly similar to the Council's proposed Firth Park & Longley ward, less numbers 143 - 382 Deerlands Avenue and the even numbered houses between 2 and 68 Aldington Road, currently in Southey Green ward, and less the area of the existing Brightside ward to the east of Bellhouse Road and Windmill Lane. It would additionally include an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the south of Hartley Brook Road and west of Molineaux Road. It would be 5% under-represented (2% by 2006).

55 Councillor Harston's proposed Concord ward would be broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Concord, Shiregreen & Brightside ward, less the area to the south of Beacon Way and Beacon Close and less the area to the south of Hartley Brook Road and east of Molineaux Road, but including an area of the existing Brightside ward, to the east of Bellhouse Road and Windmill Lane. It would be 3% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Finally, Councillor Harston's proposed Burngreave ward would be similar to the City Council's proposed Burngreave ward, less the area to the west of Miles Close, Miles Road, Boynton Road, but including an area of the existing Brightside ward to the south of Beacon Way and Beacon Close. It would be 4% under-represented (3% by 2006).

56 The Liberal Democrats' proposals for this area were almost identical to those of Councillor Harston, except for a minor amendment, transferring the electors around Torskey Road to their proposed Longley ward. They objected to the City Council's proposals for the Ecclesfield parish area, expressing preference for Councillor Harston's proposals. They stated, 'the City Council model splits both Chapeltown and Burncross', adding, 'although on the map Burncross, Chapeltown and High Green may look to be one settlement, they are very clearly perceived as being different communities by local people'. They also supported the view that local public transport links are stronger from north to south. However, they added that if The Boundary Committee for England supported the Council's proposals for Burngreave, Concord, Shiregreen & Brightside, Firth Park & Longley ward and Southey & Parsons Cross wards, then it would support these proposals, if it were possible to retain Councillor Harston's proposals for Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards. To this end, the Liberal Democrats suggested that they would support the transfer of the area of Councillor Harston's Ecclesfield East ward, to the north of Yew Lane and to the east of Thomas More Primary School, for an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the south of Montenev Road, west of Montenev Middle School, south of Weata Road and west of Colley Crescent.

57 After careful consideration of the evidence, we have decided to adopt a combination of the three proposals for this area. We note that under all proposals, to achieve electoral equality for the Ecclesfield parish area it has proved necessary to take the boundary through one or other of the five distinct communities. We would dispute the Liberal Democrats' assertion that Councillor

Harston's scheme avoids splitting communities, since it is our view that his proposed boundary runs through Burncross. However, we note that his scheme does avoid dividing communities within the towns of Chapelton, Ecclesfield, Grenoside and High Green. We would also concur with the view that major communication links run north to south. Finally, we note the support of Ecclesfield Parish Council and Councillor Fox. We therefore propose adopting Councillor Harston's proposals for Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards. However, we propose two minor amendments. The first amendment is needed to address a significant imbalance in electoral equality between the proposed wards. We propose transferring an area of the proposed Ecclesfield West ward, to the west of Steven Crescent and to the north of Bevan way and Windmill Hill Infant School, to the proposed Ecclesfield East ward. The second amendment is necessary to facilitate the warding of the remainder of this area and is discussed below.

58 For the remainder of the area, we would contend that the City Council's proposals provide clearer boundaries that better represent community identity. As stated earlier, the boundaries proposed by Councillor Harston and the Liberal Democrats were based on the City Council's consultation scheme, which produced a number of modifications, reflected in the City Council's submission. In addition, the Liberal Democrats stated that if The Boundary Committee for England supported the City Council's proposals for the remaining wards then they would support them too, provided Councillor Harston's proposals for Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards could be adopted. The Liberal Democrats suggested that this could be achieved by transferring an area of Councillor Harston's Ecclesfield East ward, to the north of Yew Lane and to the east of Thomas More Primary School, for an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the south of Montenev Road, west of Montenev Middle School, south of Weata Road and west of Colley Crescent. Since this enables us to adopt Councillor Harston's proposals for Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards and the City Council's for the remainder of the area we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' amendment (the second amendment to Councillor Harston's Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield west wards, discussed above). In the interests of electoral equality, we also propose adopting Councillor Harston's and the Liberal Democrats' boundary around the Barnsley Road area, between the proposed Concord, Shiregreen and Brightside ward and Firth Park & Longley ward. We also note Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer the electors in Birley Court and Edge Close to the proposed Parsons Cross ward and would agree that in terms of community identity this is a sensible proposal. However, the area currently lies within Bradfield parish and does not contain sufficient electors to justify the creation of a parish ward. Therefore we cannot adopt this as part of our draft recommendations.

59 Our proposed Burngreave ward is identical to the City Council's proposed Burngreave ward and would be 6% under-represented (3% by 2006). Our proposed Shiregreen & Brightside ward is based on the City Council's proposed Concord, Shiregreen & Brightside ward, less the area to the south of Hartley Brook Road, west of Molineaux Road and north of Hatfield House Lane. It would initially have an electoral variance of 0% (1% under-represented by 2006). Our proposed East Ecclesfield ward is based on Councillor Harston's proposal, less the area to the north of Yew Lane and to the east of Thomas More Primary School, and less the area to the west of Steven Crescent and north of Bevan Way and Windmill Hill Infant School, but additionally including an area of the existing Nether Shire ward, to the south of Montenev Road, west of Montenev Middle School, south of Weata Road and west of Colley Crescent. It would be 5% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Our proposed Firth Park & Longley ward is based on the City Council's Firth Park & Longley ward, but additionally including the area to the south of Hartley Brook Road, west of Molineaux Road and north of Hatfield House Lane. It would be 6% under-represented (5% by 2006). Our proposed Parsons Cross & Southey Green ward is based on City Council's Southey & Parsons Cross ward and would be 1% under-represented (1% over-represented by 2006). Our proposed West Ecclesfield ward is based on Councillor Harston's Ecclesfield West ward, but additionally including the area to the west of Steven Crescent and north of Bevan Way and Windmill Hill Infant School. It would be 4% under-represented (5% by 2006). We consider that the revised wards would reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2.

Hillsborough, South Wortley and Stocksbridge wards

60 These three wards cover the north west of the city and include large tracts of open moorland to the west. Hillsborough ward is currently 7% under-represented (6% by 2006). South Wortley ward is currently 43% under-represented (46% by 2006) and Stocksbridge ward is currently 18% over-represented (19% by 2006).

61 At Stage One, the City Council proposed the creation of a modified Hillsborough ward, comprising an area of the existing Hillsborough and Walkley wards to the north of the River Loxley, an area of the existing Owlerton ward to the west of the upper Don valley railway line, and an area of the existing South Wortley ward, approximate to the site of the old Middlewood Hospital. It would be 5% under-represented (7% by 2006). The City Council stated 'the Middlewood Hospital development [...] was moved from [Stannington ward] following local consultation [...] which advised that this development was more a part of Hillsborough than of Worrall'. It added 'the ward is bounded to the east by the [upper Don valley railway line] – a strong physical barrier with few crossing – and to the south by the River Loxley. The ward as now proposed makes a very good geographical entity'. Its proposed Stannington ward would comprise an area the existing Hillsborough ward to the south of the River Loxley, an area of the existing Walkley ward to the north of the River Rivelin, and an area of the existing South Wortley ward to the south of Oughtibridge, Burnt Hill Lane, Onesmoor Bottom, Lumb Lane, Penistone Road, but less the old Middlewood Hospital site. It would be 4% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Its proposed Stocksbridge & Upper Don Ward would comprise an area of the existing South Wortley ward to the north of Worrall, Burnt Hill Lane, Onesmoor Bottom, Lumb Lane, Penistone Road and the whole of the existing Stocksbridge ward. It would be 8% under-represented, both now and in 2006. The City Council accepted that its proposed ward was significantly under-represented, but that this resulted from a strong desire not to split the Oughtibridge community, which was included to bring electoral equality in Stocksbridge ward nearer to the City average. It stated 'local people in the consultation identified a community link along the Don Valley. The smaller villages all have strong links to Stocksbridge – Bolsterstone and Ewden are within the Town Council area'.

62 Councillor Harston's proposed Broomhead ward would comprise an area of the existing South Wortley ward to the west of Wharnccliffe Side and Oughtibridge, an area of the existing Hillsborough ward to the South of the River Loxley, and an area of the existing Walkley ward to the north of the River Rivelin, and an area of the existing Stocksbridge ward to the south of Common Lane, Royd Lane, Hollin Busk Lane, Coal Pit Lane, Stone Moor Road, Lee House Lane, New Hall Lane and Machin Lane. It would be 2% under-represented (4% by 2006). Councillor Harston stated 'this ward groups together rural villages [to] create a predominantly rural ward, recognising that sparsely populated rural areas form a community identity'. His proposed Hillsborough ward would be broadly similar to the City Councils, less the Middlewood Hospital site and a small area of the existing Owlerton ward to the south of the River Loxley. It would be 3% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Councillor Harston suggested that utilising the railway line makes more sense, as the present boundary runs down Middlewood Road and therefore divides Hillsborough's main shopping area between two wards. He added 'the Rudyard Road area looks towards the rest of Hillsborough more than towards Lower Walkley on the west of Middlewood Road. However, to balance the numbers between this and [the area to the south] this model puts Loxley in with Lower Walkley'. Finally, he stated 'this model [...] puts Hillsborough Park, Hillsborough football ground, Hillsborough Arcade, Hillsborough Sports Ground and Hillsborough Shopping Centre all back within the same ward'. The proposed Wharnccliffe ward would comprise an area of the existing South Wortley ward covered by the towns of Wharnccliffe Side and Oughtibridge, and an area of the existing Stocksbridge ward to the north of Common Lane, Royd Lane, Hollin Busk Lane, Coal Pit Lane, Stone Moor Road, Lee House Lane, New Hall Lane and Machin Lane. Under these proposals, the villages of Bolsterstone and Ewden Village, currently in Stocksbridge ward and part of Stocksbridge Town Council, would be transferred to Broomhead ward. It would be 3% under-

represented (4% by 2006). As described above, Councillor Harston considered that transferring the more rural areas of the existing Stocksbridge ward to a predominantly rural ward better reflects their community and also helps balance electoral equality.

63 The Liberal Democrats supported Councillor Harston's proposals for these wards, stating 'we believe that J G Harston's model provides the best set of community groupings and clear boundaries. We also note that it achieves greater electoral equality than the model preferred by the City Council'. It added 'the Harston approach has the virtue of placing all the rural areas in this sector together in one ward. This very clearly means that there is one ward in the City that has a very strong rural element, whereas other proposals would lead to a dilution of that rural voice. It also produces a more compact Upper Don Valley ward'. However, the Liberal Democrats did acknowledge that both Bolsterstone and Ewden Village are within Stocksbridge Town Council and that 'they both use the services of Stocksbridge on a day-to-day basis'.

64 After careful consideration of the evidence, we have decided to adopt the City Council's proposals for these wards, subject to some modification. While we accept that Councillor Harston's proposals provide better electoral equality, we have not been persuaded that they represent community identity. While there is some merit in his proposal to create a rural ward with a 'rural voice', as the Liberal Democrats acknowledged, the villages of Bolsterstone and Ewden village have strong links with Stocksbridge town. It is our opinion that these links are stronger than with villages like Bradfield, which are a considerable distance away and have very limited road links. We have given consideration to the City Council's proposal to transfer the Middlewood Hospital site to its proposed Hillsborough ward and acknowledge the support this received during its consultation. However, this area currently lies within Bradfield parish and does not contain sufficient electors to justify the creation of a parish ward. Therefore we cannot adopt this as part of our draft recommendations.

65 In addition, as mentioned earlier, we note that utilising the hard boundaries broadly agreed by all three groups who submitted full schemes creates an issue over the allocation for the south west area, which under all schemes is significantly over-represented. All three schemes allocate this area 24 councillors, while, given the proposed boundaries, it is only entitled to 23. We have therefore found it necessary to examine the possibility of crossing one of these hard boundaries, to transfer electors and thus improve the allocation. We are in agreement that the upper Don valley railway line to the east and the Sheaf valley railway line to the south cannot be crossed in such a way that recognises community identity. However, from our visit, we believe that it is possible to cross the River Loxley around the Bradfield Road area, transferring 1,099 electors from the proposed Hillsborough ward, to the east of Middlewood Road and to the south of Hillsborough Park and Dutton road, to Walkley ward. Indeed, we note that the City Council's proposals had moved away from the river at this point, to run along Langsett Road and Swamp Walk. In addition, a number of the roads that would be affected do not access into the centre of the proposed Hillsborough ward, but access south, along the Penistone Road or via Bradfield Road. Finally, Councillor Harston stated that the boundary of the River Rivelin (which flows into the River Loxley at this point) became softer towards the city centre.

66 While we do not consider this solution ideal, and accept that it impacts on the Hillsborough area, we must give consideration for the city as a whole and are therefore content to recommend this modification as part of our draft recommendations. Therefore, we propose modifying the City Council's proposed Hillsborough ward by transferring 1,099 electors to the proposed Walkley ward (discussed later).

67 Our proposed Hillsborough ward would be similar to the City Council's proposed Hillsborough ward, less the Middlewood Hospital site and less an area of the existing Owlerton ward to the east of Middlewood Road and to the south of Hillsborough Park and Dutton road. It would be 4% over-represented (2% by 2006). Our proposed Stannington ward would be similar to the City Council's proposed Stannington ward, but including the Middlewood Hospital site. It would be 3% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Our proposed Stocksbridge & Upper

Don ward would be identical to the City Council's proposed Stocksbridge & Upper Don ward. It would be 8% under-represented, both now and in 2006. We consider that the revised wards would reflect local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2.

Broomhill, Dore, Ecclesall, Hallam, Nether Edge, Netherthorpe, Sharrow and Walkley wards

68 These eight wards cover the south west of the city. Broomhill ward is 16% under-represented (15% by 2006). Dore ward is 14% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Ecclesall ward is 16% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Hallam ward is 11% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Nether Edge ward is currently 8% over-represented (7% by 2006). Netherthorpe ward is currently 8% over-represented (4% under-represented by 2006). Sharrow ward is currently 12% over-represented (11% by 2006). Walkley ward is currently 2% under-represented, both now and in 2006.

69 At Stage One, the City Council proposed the creation of a modified Broomhill ward, comprising an area of the existing Broomhill ward to the east of Shore Lane, Fulwood Road, Endcliffe Vale Road and Riverdale Road, an area of the existing Netherthorpe ward to the south of Barber Road, Crookes Valley Road, Winter Street and Bolsover Street, and an area of the existing Sharrow ward to the west of Gloucester Crescent, Wharncliffe Road, Broomhall Place and Ecclesall Road. It would be 7% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Its proposed Crookes ward would comprise an area of the existing Hallam ward to the north of the Manchester Road and east of Coldwell Lane, an area of the existing Netherthorpe ward to the west of Spring Hill Road, Commonsides and Howard Road, and an area of the existing Walkley ward to the south of Walkley Cemetery, Bole Hill Recreation Ground and Northfield Avenue. It would be 9% over-represented, both now and in 2006. The City Council stated that in creating this ward 'it was deemed very important to bring together the whole of the Crookes community, which is currently divided between four wards'.

70 Its proposed Dore & Totley ward would comprise the existing Dore ward, less an area to the east of Twentywell Lane and Birchitt Road, an area of the existing Ecclesall Ward to the west of Whirlow Lane, Little Common Lane, Abbey Lane and Sherwood Glen, and an area of the existing Hallam ward to the south of Ringlow Road. It would be 2% over-represented (1% by 2006). Its proposed Ecclesall ward would comprise the existing Ecclesall ward, less an area to the west of Whirlow Lane, Little Common Lane, Abbey Lane and Sherwood Glen, less an area to the north of Ringlow Road, Common Lane, Whitely Wood Road, Trap Lane, Bents Green Avenue and Highcliffe Road, and less an area to the east of Woodholm Road, Springfield Road, Helston Rise and Hastings Road. It would also include an area of the existing Beauchief ward to the north of Sheaf valley railway line. It would be 1% over-represented, both now and in 2006.

71 The City Council's proposed Fulwood ward would comprise the existing Hallam ward, less an area to the north of the Manchester Road and east of Coldwell Lane and an area to the south of Ringlow Road, but including an area of the existing Broomhill ward to the west of Shore Lane, Fulwood Road, Endcliffe Vale Road and Riverdale Road, and an area of the existing Ecclesall ward to the north of Ringlow Road, Common Lane, Whitely Wood Road, Trap Lane, Bents Green Avenue and Highcliffe Road. It would be 8% over-represented (7% by 2006). The City Council acknowledged that this ward is over-represented, but stated that the options are limited by 'requirements to keep together some significant local communities beyond its borders'. The ward consists predominantly of private housing, but does contain a significant area of the University of Sheffield accommodation. Its proposed Nether Edge ward would comprise the existing Nether Edge ward, less the area to the south of the Sheaf valley railway line, but including an area of the existing Ecclesall ward to the east of east of Woodholm Road, Springfield Road, Helston Rise and Hastings Road, an area of the existing Heeley ward to the north of the Sheaf valley railway line, and an area of the existing Broomhill ward to the south of

Ecclesall Road. It would be 5% over-represented (4% by 2006). The City Council stated that 'consultation with elected members established where the boundary lay between Millhouses and Carter Knowle [between the proposed Netherthorpe and Ecclesall wards]'.

72 Its proposed Sharrow & Central ward would comprise an area of the existing Sharrow ward, less an area to the west of Gloucester Crescent, Wharnccliffe Road, Broomhall Place and Ecclesall Road, but including an area of the existing Netherthorpe ward to the east of Ball Street, Hoyle Street, Upper Allen Street, Solly Street and Brook Hill. It would also include an area of Burngreave ward to the south of the upper Don valley railway line, an area of the existing Castle ward to the west of Sheffield Parkway and Granville Street, an area of the existing Park ward to the west of the Sheaf valley railway line, and an area of the existing Broomhill ward to the south of Glossop Road. It would be 8% over-represented (9% under-represented by 2006). In creating this ward, the City Council stated that it was seeking to unite the city centre, which is currently divided between three wards, in a single ward. It added, 'the city centre has a growing residential community, with several large scale developments either in progress or planned. As a result, this ward will change from one of the smallest to one of the largest over the course of the [next] five years'. Its proposed Walkley ward would comprise an area of the existing Walkley ward, less the area to the west of the Rivelin Valley Road, an area north of the River Loxley and an area to the south of Walkley Cemetery, Bole Hill Recreation Ground and Northfield Avenue, but including an area of the existing Netherthorpe ward to the west of Ball Street, Hoyle Street, Upper Allen Street, Solly Street and Brook Hill. It would be 5% under-represented (4% by 2006).

73 Councillor Harston's proposals for these wards were similar to the City Council's, but with a number of significant differences. His proposed Broomhill ward contained a number of significant differences from the City Council's which he stated results 'in a strange ward, more or less forced out of the leftovers from the six wards that surround it'. It would be the same as the City Council's proposed ward, with Broomhill at the centre, but less an area to the south of Fulwood Road, west of Endcliffe Crescent and north of Endcliffe Vale Road, and including the 'Commonside' area of the existing Netherthorpe ward to the south of Fulton Road, west of Blake Street and Asheberry Road, and north of Oxford Street. Councillor Harston acknowledged that the 'Commonside area would fit better in [the proposed Walkley ward], being the approach to Walkley, and having strong links with both Walkley and Netherthorpe', but that the transfer is necessary to address the significant over-representation that would occur without it. His proposed ward would be 6% over-represented, both now and in 2006.

74 His proposed Dore & Totley ward was broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Dore & Totley ward, but would place the whole of the Ecclesall Wood within the Dore & Totley ward, as opposed the City Council's proposal to divide the wood between its Dore & Totley ward and Nether Edge ward. The proposed ward would be 1% under-represented (2% by 2006). His proposed Ecclesall ward would be based on the City Council's proposed Ecclesall ward, less part of Ecclesall Wood, and would include an area of the existing Ecclesall and Hallam wards to the south of Porter Brook, and an area of the existing Nether Edge ward to the east of Carter Knowle Road, Banner Cross Hall, Quarry Lane and Hunter House Road. It would be 2% under-represented, both now and in 2006.

75 Councillor Harston's proposed Fulwood ward was based on the City Council's proposed Fulwood ward, but less the area to the south of Porter Brook, an area to the north of Carsick Hill and to the east of Hallam Primary School, but including an area of the existing Broomhill ward to the south of Fulwood Road, west of Endcliffe Crescent and north of Endcliffe Vale Road. It would be 2% over-represented (1% by 2006). He acknowledges that the transfer of the electors from Broomhill is not ideal, but that it is necessary when considering electoral equality. His proposed Lydgate ward is broadly based on the City Council's Crookes ward, but includes the area of the City Council's proposed Fulwood ward, to the north of Carsick Hill and to the east of Hallam Primary School. He stressed that the configuration of this ward was important since it

reunites the Crookes area, which 'has been split into more than 3 wards for many decades [and] has resulted in confusion for residents as to who their elected representatives where'.

76 His proposed Nether Edge ward is based on the Council's proposed Nether Edge ward, less the area to the east of Carter Knowle Road, Banner Cross Hall, Quarry Lane and Hunter House Road and the area to the north of Porter Brook, but including an area of the existing Sharrow ward to the south of Chippinghouse Road. It would be 4% over-represented (3% by 2006). Councillor Harston suggests that the area of Sharrow, to the south of Chippinghouse Road 'has characteristics in common with both Nether Edge as well as Sharrow, so is a suitable area to use to balance numbers'. His proposed Sharrow ward is broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Sharrow & Central ward, less the area to the south of Chippinghouse Road, an area to the north of Porter Brook and west of Sommerfield Street, an area to the north of Dorset Street and Wilkinson Street, and an area to the north of Solly Street, Edward Street, Shepherd Street and Ball Street. It would be 19% over-represented, falling to 0% by 2006. Councillor Harston stated 'at the beginning of the review a preference was expressed by elected members to put all of the city centre in one ward. However, this was not raised at any of the public meetings that I attended, and that allowing the city centre to be in two wards would make warding the surrounding area much easier'.

77 His proposed Walkley ward was based on the City Council's ward, but less the 'Commonside' area to the south of Fulton Road, west of Blake Street and Asheberry Road, and north of Oxford Street, but including an area of the existing Owlerton Ward to the south of the River Loxley. It would be 2% over-represented (3% by 2006). Councillor Harston stated that his proposed Walkley ward sought to keep Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe in the same ward as 'at public meetings it was repeatedly stated that the two communities should be in the same ward'. He added that the 'Commonside area would fit better in this ward, being the main approach to Walkley, and having strong links with both Walkley and Netherthorpe. Unfortunately, the low electorate in [Broomhill ward] forces Commonside into [Broomhill] to balance the numbers. If sufficient electors could be found elsewhere to bulk up [Broomhill], then Commonside should be put in [Walkley]'.

78 For these wards, the Liberal Democrats stated 'we are supporting the City Council's proposals, with some slight amendments'. They also acknowledged that the area does not have the correct allocation, but concluded that they did not wish to move away from the 'hard boundaries [since this would] cause significant problems for other sectors'. They supported the City Council's proposals to split the Ecclesall Woods between Ecclesall and Nether Edge wards since it 'recognises Ecclesall Woods as a resource for both of the communities of Millhouses and Ecclesall to the north, as well as Whirlow to the west and Abbeydale Rise to the south'.

79 They added that the 'City Council's boundary for [Nether Edge ward] is a closer realisation to the boundaries of the communities of Nether Edge, Brincliffe and Carter Knowle'. It also preferred the City Council's use of the 'Ecclesall Road as a border rather than local small rivers which make a smaller impact on the landscape and are easily crossed'. However, they did adopt Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer an area of the existing Owlerton ward to the south of the River Loxley to its proposed Walkley ward, rather than placing it in its proposed Hillsborough ward as the City Council did.

80 Under the Liberal Democrats proposals their proposed Broomhill ward would be 7% over-represented both now and in 2006. Their proposed City Centre ward would be 8% over-represented (8% under-represented by 2006). Their proposed Crookes ward would be 9% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Their proposed Ecclesall ward would be 1% over-represented (2% by 2006). Their proposed Fulwood ward would be 8% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Their proposed Nether Edge ward would be 5% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Their proposed Totley & Dore ward would be 2% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Their proposed Walkley ward would be 4% under-represented (3% by 2006).

81 After careful consideration of the evidence, we have decided to adopt the majority of Councillor Harston's proposals for this area, along with some of the City Council's and a number of our own amendments. As stated earlier, the issue of allocation for this area has thrown up a number of problems and has made it difficult to accommodate some of the proposals.

82 The first concern is to address the over-representation of this area as whole. As already explained, we propose to do this by transferring 1,099 electors from the City Council's proposed Hillsborough ward to our proposed Walkley ward. However, in doing so, if we keep the City Council's proposed Walkley ward we end up with a significantly under-represented ward. Therefore, we have found it necessary to adopt Councillor Harston's proposal and transfer the 'Commonside' area to our proposed Broomhill ward. We acknowledge Councillor Harston's concerns that this is questionable on grounds of community identity, but must consider the allocation for the wider area as a whole. Our proposed Walkley ward would be 4% under-represented (3% by 2006).

83 Adopting Councillor Harston's proposal for the 'Commonside' area has a series of knock-on effects across this area. As a result of transferring this area to our proposed Broomhill ward, so Broomhill ward becomes significantly under-represented. Therefore we have decided to adopt Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer the Endcliffe Crescent area to our proposed Fulwood ward. This, however, causes the proposed Broomhill ward to become over-represented, while the proposed Fulwood ward becomes under-represented. To improve the over-representation in Broomhill, we propose adopting Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer the areas of the City Council's proposed Nether Edge and Sharrow & Central wards to the north of Porter Brook. While we would accept the Liberal Democrats assertion that the Ecclesall Road is a clearer boundary, they also stated it is a 'feature that is at the centre of the community rather than one that divides a community' thus we propose using Councillor Harston's proposals which enable Ecclesall Road to remain in a single ward, rather than divide it. As a result, our proposed Broomhill ward would be 3% over-represented, both now and in 2006. To address the under-representation in our proposed Fulwood ward, we propose adopting Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer an area of the City Council's proposed Fulwood ward, to the north of Carsick Hill and to the east of Hallam Primary School, to our proposed Crookes ward. Our proposed Fulwood Ward would be 4% over-represented (3% by 2006). Transferring this area to Crookes ward has the effect of improving the significant over-representation that the City Council's proposals produced. Our proposed Crookes ward would be 1% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Our proposed Fulwood Ward would be 4% over-represented (3% by 2006).

84 As a consequence of adopting Councillor Harston's proposals to transfer the area to the north of Porter Brook to our proposed Broomhill ward, Nether Edge becomes even more over-represented. Therefore, we propose adopting Councillor Harston's proposals to transfer the area of the existing Sharrow ward to the south of Chippinghouse Road to our proposed Nether Edge ward. As he states above, this area 'has characteristics in common with both Nether Edge as well as Sharrow, so is a suitable area to use to balance numbers'. As a consequence, our proposed Central ward will initially be significantly over-represented, but given the large amount of development in this area, this will greatly improve by 2006. For the remainder of the Central ward we propose adopting the City Council's proposals. We also propose adopting the City Council's proposed boundary to the west of Nether Edge ward, where it runs between Millhouses and Carter Knowle. However, we propose a minor modification in line with Councillor Harston's proposals to transfer the electors on Kenilworth Place and the south side of Ecclesall Road to the our proposed Ecclesall ward. While we acknowledge that this creates a less clear boundary, we do consider that these properties would be isolated from the centre of the Nether Edge and that our proposals better reflect community identity. Our proposed Central ward will be 17% over-represented (0% by 2006). Our proposed Nether Edge ward will be 5% over-represented (4% by 2006).

85 Our proposed Ecclesall and Totley & Dore wards would broadly be based on the City Council's proposals. We would concur with the Liberal Democrats view that Ecclesall Woods should fall within both wards, as it represents 'a resource for both communities'. As stated above, we do however consider that the properties on Kenilworth Place and the south side of Ecclesall Road would be isolated from the centre of the Nether Edge ward and therefore propose transferring them to our proposed Ecclesall ward. We also propose adopting Councillor Harston's proposal to transfer an area of the existing Ecclesall and Hallam wards to the south of Porter Brook to our proposed Ecclesall ward, as we consider that the Ringlow Road serves as a strong link into the Ecclesall ward, rather than a boundary between communities. Our proposed Ecclesall ward would be 1% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Our proposed Totley & Dore ward would be 2% over-represented (1% by 2006).

86 As already stated, given the issue of allocation, this area has proved difficult to accommodate and it has been necessary to make a number of compromises. However, we consider that our revised wards reflect the best balance between the interests of local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2.

Beauchief, Castle, Heeley, Manor, Norton and Park wards

87 These six wards cover the south of the city. Beauchief ward is currently 11% under-represented (10% by 2006). Castle ward is currently 34% over-represented (33% by 2006). Heeley ward is currently 2% over-represented, both now and in 2006. Manor ward is currently 37% over-represented (36% by 2006). Norton ward is currently 15% over-represented (17% by 2006). Park ward is currently 30% over-represented (27% by 2006).

88 At Stage One, the City Council proposed the creation of Arbourthorne & Gleadless ward, comprising an area of the existing Park ward, less an area to the west of Heeley Bank Road and an area to the east of Ridgeway Road, but including an area of the existing Intake ward to the north of Herdings Road and west of Ridgeway Road, an area of the existing Heeley ward to the north of Gleadless Road and east of Heeley Green and Cross Myrtle Road, and the properties on Saint Aidan's Way, currently in Castle ward. It would be 3% over-represented (1% under-represented by 2006). The City Council favoured its proposed ward as it brought the Arbourthorne housing estate within a single ward. Its proposed Gleadless Valley & Heeley ward would comprise the existing Heeley ward, less an area to the north of Gleadless Road and east of Heeley Green and Cross Myrtle Road, less an area to the south of Lees Hall Avenue, Norton Lees Lane and west of Derbyshire Lane and Aukley Road, but including an area of the existing Beauchief ward to the east of Newfield Secondary School, an area of the existing Intake ward to the south of Herdings Road and west of Norton Avenue, an area of the existing Norton ward to the north of Norton Avenue and Hemsworth Road, and an area of the existing Park ward to the west of Heeley Bank Road. It would be 2% over-represented (4% by 2006). The City Council stated 'there has been a strongly held view of residents in Gleadless Valley that the area has suffered through being divided between three different wards. This proposal brings all of this residential area together'.

89 Its proposed Greenhill ward would comprise an area of the existing Beauchief ward to the south and west of Hutcliffe Wood & Abbey Lane Cemetery, Strelley Avenue, Meadowhead, an area of the existing Norton ward to the south of Bochum Parkway and west of Jordanthorpe Parkway, and an area of the existing Dore ward to the east of Dore & Totley Golf Course and the Lower Bradway golf driving range. It would be 5% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Its proposed Manor ward would comprise an area of the existing Castle ward to the south of Sheffield Parkway and east of Granville Street, but less the properties on Saint Aidan's Way, but including an area of the existing Manor ward to the south of Sheffield Parkway. It would be 1% under-represented (2% by 2006).

90 Its proposed Norton & Woodseats ward would comprise an area of the existing Beauchief ward to the north and east of Hutcliffe Wood & Abbey Lane Cemetery, Strelley Avenue, Meadowhead, an area of the existing Norton ward, to the north of Bochum Parkway and east of Jordanthorpe Parkway, and an area of the existing Heeley ward to the south of Lees Hall Avenue, Norton Lees Lane and west of Derbyshire Lane and Aukley Road. It would be 4% under-represented, both now and in 2006.

91 Councillor Harston's proposed Beauchief ward is broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Greenhill ward, but less the area to the south of Hutcliffe Wood & Abbey Lane Cemetery. It would be 5% over-represented, both now and in 2006. His proposed Gleadless ward would comprise an area of the existing Beauchief ward to the east of Hemsworth Road and Cobnar Road, Warminster Road, Mount View Road and Woodland Road, an area of the existing Heeley ward to the east of Cat Lane, an area of the existing Intake ward to the east of Norton Avenue and Ridgeway Road, and an area of the existing Norton ward, to the north of Bochum Parkway. It would be 2% under-represented, improving to 0% by 2006. He stated that his model for this ward unifies Norton within a single ward. He also considered that it has the advantage of recognising that the 'Lees Hall Golf Course and Leeshall Woods [are] large open area[s] with few links across it'. His proposed Manor ward would be broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Manor ward, but including the electors on the south side of City Road. It would be 1% under-represented (2% by 2006).

92 Councillor Harston's proposed Sheffield Park ward would comprise the existing Park ward, an area of the existing Heeley ward, to the north of Lees Hall Avenue, east of Meersbrook Park Road and west of Cat Lane. It would be 4% under-represented (8% by 2006). He acknowledged that this ward has slightly high electoral variances, but put this down to the use of strong boundaries. His proposed Woodseats ward would comprise an area of the existing Beauchief ward, to the north of Abbey Lane, Chancet Wood, Cobnar Road and Hemsworth Road and west of Warminster Road and Lees Hall Road. It would also include an area of the existing Heeley ward, to the south of Lees Hall Avenue and west of Meersbrook Park Road. It would be 3% under-represented, both now and in 2006.

93 For these wards, the Liberal Democrats supported the City Council's proposals, with one amendment and slightly different ward names. They proposed transferring the electors on Donnington Road, Essex Road and Holding Road to their proposed Park ward, which was otherwise identical to the City Council's proposed Arbourthorne & Gleadless ward. Their proposed Manor ward would be broadly similar to the City Council's proposed Manor ward, but less the electors on the south side of Granville Road and west of City Road, but including the south side of City Road. It stated that this would 'undoubtedly clarify the boundary on the ground' and also improve electoral equality. Their proposed Beauchief, Gleadless Valley and Graves Park wards would be identical to the City Council's proposed Beauchief, Gleadless Valley & Heeley and Norton & Woodseats wards respectively. All of its proposed wards for this area would have the same levels of electoral equality as the City Council's.

94 The Liberal Democrats stated 'We believe that the principle advantage that the [City] Council proposal has over the J G Harston proposal is the greater use of very clear boundaries that are obvious on the ground, and also [with] better electoral parity'. It added 'The City Council proposal recognises that Graves Park provides a link between, and is looked to as an important community facility by both Norton and Woodseats. To have the park as a unifying factor between these two communities is a key advantage of the City Council proposal'.

95 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note that the main difference between the proposals for this area is the treatment given to the central wards, in particular the areas covering Graves Park and Lees Hall Golf Course. Both the Council and Liberal Democrats have sought to place these open spaces at the centre of wards, arguing that communities on either side benefit from them, while Councillor Harston has used them to divide communities, arguing that they act as barriers between the communities. It is our opinion, that

while Councillor Harston may be correct that the open spaces do divide the communities, it is also true that both communities have easy access to them. As with the treatment of Ecclesall Woods (discussed earlier), we propose adopting the City Council's proposals and dividing these open spaces between the different communities.

96 Another difference is the placement of the Dalewood area. Councillor Harston placed this in his proposed Woodseats ward. Following its consultation, the City Council opted to place this in its proposed Greenhill ward. This was supported by the Liberal Democrats who stated 'Dalewood fits more naturally looking towards Beauchief Abbey and Greenhill than it does looking past a cemetery to Woodseats'. From our visit to the area, we would concur with the Liberal Democrats view. Adopting Councillor Harston's proposals would leave the area cut off by the cemetery.

97 We also note that the City Council's proposals for these wards provide significantly better electoral equality than Councillor Harston's proposals. Indeed, we did examine the possibility of adopting Councillor Harston's proposals, but subject to the City Council's treatment for the Dalewood area, but concluded that this would worsen the levels of electoral equality of his proposals.

98 We have also examined the Liberal Democrats' proposals for the area to the south of Granville Road and west of City Road, and the electors on the south side of City Road. It is our opinion that while it may provide a clearer boundary and marginal improvements in electoral equality, this is not sufficient to warrant isolating the electors in the area from its neighbours.

99 Therefore, we propose adopting the City Council's proposals for these wards, with some minor modification to the ward names. All our wards would have the same levels of electoral equality as the City Council's proposed wards. Our proposed Arbourthorne & Gleadless ward is identical to the City Council's proposed ward. Our proposed Beauchief & Greenhill ward is identical to the City Council's proposed Greenhill ward. Our proposed Gleadless Valley & Heeley ward would be identical to the City Council's proposed ward. Our proposed Graves Park ward would be identical to the City Council's proposed Norton & Woodseats ward. Finally, our proposed Manor ward would be identical to the City Council's proposed ward. We consider that these proposals reflect the best balance between local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2.

Birley, Darnall, Handsworth, Intake and Mosborough wards

100 These five wards cover the east of the city. Birley ward is currently 8% under-represented (3% by 2006). Darnall ward is currently 2% under-represented (1% by 2006). Handsworth ward is currently 9% under-represented (8% by 2006). Intake ward is currently 8% under-represented (6% by 2006). Mosborough ward is currently 104% under-represented (106% by 2006).

101 At Stage One, the City Council proposed a new Beighton & Hackenthorpe ward, comprising an area of the existing Mosborough ward to the north of Westfield School and Owlthorpe Greenway, but excluding the Waterthorpe area to the east of Moss Way, south of Waterthorpe Greenway and west of Eckington Way, and an area to the north of Mosborough Parkway. It would also contain a small area of the existing Birley ward to the east of Carr Forge Road. It would be 1% under-represented, both now and in 2006. The City Council stated that 'the Beighton and Mosborough areas have been extensively developed over the last twenty years and the existing Mosborough ward is one of the largest in the country. It has simply been divided in two for this review'. In addition, a boundary change in the west of the proposed ward is aimed at avoiding the division of Hackenthorpe.

102 Its proposed Birley ward would comprise the existing Birley ward, less an area to the north of Birley Moor Road and Youlgreave Drive, less an area to the north of Mosborough Parkway, and less an area to the east of Carr Forge Road. It would be 4% over-represented (8% by 2006). The City Council stated 'changes [were] made following consultation, [with] the transfer of the Linley Lane area to [Intake and Richmond ward] and a tidying of the boundary with [Beighton and Hackenthorpe ward] through Hackenthorpe'. Its proposed Darnall ward would comprise the majority of the existing Darnall ward, less the area to the south of Sheffield Parkway and Handsworth Road, but including an area of the existing Burngreave ward to the east of the lower Don valley railway line, an area of the existing Castle ward to the north of Sheffield Parkway, an area of the existing Manor ward to the north of the Sheffield Parkway. It would be 5% under-represented, both now and in 2006. Given the strong physical boundaries, the City Council initially considered creating a ward with a significant electoral imbalance. However, following consultation, it proposed retaining part of Handsworth in Darnall ward 'to balance out the numbers' between its proposed Darnall and Woodhouse wards.

103 The City Council's proposed Intake & Richmond ward would comprise an area of the existing Intake ward, to the east of Ridgeway Road, an area of the existing Darnall and Handsworth wards to the west of Mosborough Parkway, and an area of the existing Birley ward to the north of Birley Moor Road and Youlgreave Drive. It would be 2% under-represented, both now and in 2006. The City Council described it as a 'well established area of [Council rented housing] which will change very little in the next five years'. Its proposed Mosborough ward would comprise an area of the existing Mosborough ward to the south of Westfield School and Owlthorpe Greenway, and including the Waterthorpe area to the east of Moss Way, south of Waterthorpe Greenway and west of Eckington Way. This covers the Mosborough Village, plus the new townships at Waterthorpe, Westfield, Halfway and Owlthorpe. It would be 2% over-represented (1% under-represented by 2006).

104 Its proposed Woodhouse ward would comprise the majority of the existing Handsworth ward to the east of Mosborough Parkway, an area of the existing Darnall ward to the south of Sheffield Parkway and Handsworth Road, and an area of the existing Birley and Mosborough wards to the north of Mosborough Parkway. It would be 1% under-represented, both now and in 2006. The City Council stated that one of its aims was to unite Handsworth in a single ward, however, 'the size of Handsworth and Woodhouse, with which it links most naturally, has meant this has not been possible, although we have managed to bring together more of this urban village than do the current ward boundaries'.

105 Councillor Harston's proposals for these wards were significantly different from those of the City Council's. Unlike the City Council, Councillor Harston sought to utilise the hard boundary of the Sheffield Parkway, resulting in the creation of an Attercliffe ward that is significantly over-represented by 9%, both now and in 2006. He stated 'although considerably urban, this area shares characteristics with Stocksbridge in the north-west of the City. Essentially, Tinsley and Darnall are two large villages [...] separated by industrial land. Additionally, the railway line and the Sheffield Parkway form very hard boundaries around this area'. He added 'while the current Darnall ward does include the northern half of Handsworth, it is an area that does not share characteristics with Darnall and Tinsley. It would be preferable to create an acceptably small ward here and try to unify northern Handsworth with the rest of Handsworth'.

106 The Liberal Democrats supported Councillor Harston's proposals for Attercliffe ward, albeit under the name Darnall ward, stating 'Darnall ward fits naturally between two hard boundaries: the Meadowhall Rail Line and the Sheffield Parkway'. They added, 'the Council's proposal for this area divides the community of Handsworth into three different wards. We believe that [Councillor] Harston's proposal is the least worst solution on offer'.

107 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received. We note the concerns of Councillor Harston and the Liberal Democrats over the City Council's proposed Darnall ward,

and would agree that the City Council's proposals do not provide the ideal solution. However, we must have regard for the area as a whole and the issue of electoral equality. Indeed, while both Councillor Harston and the Liberal Democrats are critical because the City Council's divides Handsworth, we consider that their proposals for the ward boundary between the proposed Richmond and Woodhouse wards also divide this area. When balanced against electoral equality, we do not consider that this proposal offers any significant advantage. We would also dispute Councillor Harston's assertion that the area shares characteristics with the Stocksbridge area and should be treated as such. Given that this is an urban area with good road links, his proposed 9% over-representation represents significant electoral inequality. We therefore propose adopting the City Council's proposals for this ward.

108 In adopting the City Council's proposed Darnall ward, we create a significant imbalance in Councillor Harston's proposed Woodhouse ward. Addressing this has a knock-on effect for the remainder of his proposals in this area. Therefore we have not been able to consider them further and propose adopting the City Council's proposals for the remainder of this area, subject to one modification. We note that the City Council's proposed Birley ward is significantly over-represented by 2006. We also note that in creating this ward, the City Council has sought to unify the Hackenthorpe area in a single ward. However, we do not believe that this achieves the correct balance with electoral equality. Therefore, we propose transferring an area of the City Council's proposed Beighton & Hackenthorpe, to the east of Rainbow Avenue and north of Birley Spa Lane, to its proposed Birley ward. As a consequence, our modified Beighton & Hackenthorpe ward would be 5% over-represented (4% by 2006), while our modified Birley ward would be 1% under-represented (2% over-represented by 2006). The remainder of the wards would be the same as under the City Council's proposals.

109 We consider that these proposals reflect the best balance between local communities, while providing improved levels of electoral equality. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral cycle

110 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan borough/cities have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 87 to 84;
- there should be 28 wards;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward, and no wards should retain their existing boundaries.

112 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on a combination of the City Council's, Councillor Harston's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- We propose an alternative boundary between Hillsborough and Walkley wards;
- We propose an alternative boundary between Ecclesfield East and Ecclesfield West wards;
- We propose an alternative boundary between Beighton & Hackenthorpe and Birley wards.

113 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will effect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 Electorate		2006 Electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	87	84	87	84
Number of wards	29	28	29	28
Average number of electors per councillor	4,358	4,513	4,390	4,547
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	20	1	19	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	8	0	9	0

114 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Sheffield City Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 20 to one. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%.

Draft recommendation

Sheffield City Council should comprise 84 councillors serving 28 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

Parish and Town Council electoral arrangements

115 Bradfield Parish Council is currently served by 13 councillors representing three wards: Bradfield, Stannington, and Westnall wards, represented by three, five and five parish councillors respectively. Given our proposals for Stocksbridge & Upper Don ward and Stannington ward, we have made a number of consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Bradfield Parish Council.

Draft recommendation

Bradfield Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Warnclyffeside, returning one councillor; Oughtibridge, returning three councillors; Worrall, returning four councillors; and Stannington returning five councillors.

116 Ecclesfield Parish Council is currently served by 15 councillors, representing seven wards: Burncross and Chapeltown, each served by three councillors; Ecclesfield, Grenoside, High Green and Thorncliffe, each served by two councillors; and Horbury, served by a single councillor. Ecclesfield Parish Council put forward proposals for the warding of the parish. It proposed retaining 15 councillors, but serving six wards instead of the current seven. We broadly support these proposals, but have made some minor modifications to the parish ward boundaries to reflect the proposed city council boundaries.

Draft recommendation

Ecclesfield Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Chapeltown returning four councillors; Burncross and High Green, each returning three councillors; Ecclesfield and Grenoside, each returning two councillors; and Thorncliffe returning a single councillor. The boundary between Burncross, Grenoside and Thorncliffe parish wards and Chapeltown and Ecclesfield parish wards should reflect the proposed city ward boundary.

117 Stocksbridge Town Council is currently served by eight councillors, representing four wards: Stocksbridge North, Stocksbridge East, Stocksbridge South and Stocksbridge West parish wards, all served by two councillors.

118 Our proposed city warding arrangements would result in no change to this area and we propose the retention of the existing parish arrangements.

Draft recommendation

Stocksbridge Town Council should continue to comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Stocksbridge North, Stocksbridge East, Stocksbridge South and Stocksbridge West parish wards, all served by two councillors.

Map 2: Draft recommendations for Sheffield

5 What happens next?

119 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Sheffield contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 7 April 2003. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

120 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Team Leader
Sheffield Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

121 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Sheffield: Detailed mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Sheffield area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the city and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Sheffield.

Map A1: Draft recommendations for Sheffield: Key map

Appendix B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. 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: 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 consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	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.