

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Sefton

Report to The Electoral Commission

March 2003

© Crown Copyright 2003

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no. 328

Contents

	Page
What is The Boundary Committee For England?	5
Summary	7
1. Introduction	11
2. Current electoral arrangements	13
3. Draft recommendations	17
4. Responses to consultation	19
5. Analysis and final recommendations	21
6. What happens next?	41
Appendices	
A Final recommendations for Sefton: detailed mapping	43
B Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order	45
C First draft of electoral change Order for Sefton	47

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 CBE
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.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Sefton in Merseyside.

Summary

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Sefton's electoral arrangements on 4 December 2001. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 3 September 2002, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations that we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

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

- **in three of the 22 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough;**
- **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 four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 106-107) are that:

- **Sefton Borough Council should have 66 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified and six wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 22 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9% from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 22 wards expected to vary by no more than 8% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Maghull and Sefton;**
- **a redistribution of councillors for the parish of Aintree;**
- **a reduction and redistribution in the number of councillors serving Lydiate Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission to arrive no later than 6 May 2003. *The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made:*

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

**Fax: 020 7271 0505
Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**

Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ainsdale	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Ainsdale ward	Map 2
2	Birkdale	3	Birkdale ward; part of Kew ward	Map 2
3	Blundellsands	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Blundellsands ward	Maps 3 and 5
4	Cambridge	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Cambridge ward	Map 1
5	Church	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Church ward	Map 5
6	Derby	3	Part of Derby ward; part of Litherland ward	Map 5
7	Duke's	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Duke's ward	Maps 1 and 2
8	Ford	3	Part of Ford ward; part of St Oswald ward	Map 5
9	Harington	3	Part of Harington ward; part of Ravenmeols ward	Maps 2 and 3
10	Kew	3	Part of Kew ward; part of Norwood ward	Maps 1 and 2
11	Linacre	3	Linacre ward; part of Derby ward	Map 5
12	Litherland	3	Part of Litherland ward; part of Ford ward; part of Netherton & Orrell ward	Map 5
13	Manor	3	Part of Manor ward; part of Victoria ward; Thornton and Hightown parishes	Maps 3 and 4
14	Meols	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Meols ward	Map 1
15	Molyneux	3	The parishes of Aintree and Melling; the proposed Maghull South parish ward of Maghull parish	Maps 4 and 5
16	Netherton & Orrell	3	Part of Netherton & Orrell ward; part of Litherland ward; part of St Oswald ward	Map 5
17	Norwood	3	Part of Norwood ward	Maps 1 and 2
18	Park	3	The parishes of Lydiate and Sefton; the proposed Maghull West parish ward of Maghull parish	Map 4
19	Ravenmeols	3	The parishes of Ince Blundell and Little Altcar; part of Ravenmeols ward; part of Harington ward	Maps 2, 3 and 4
20	St Oswald	3	Part of St Oswald ward; part of Netherton & Orrell ward	Maps 4 and 5
21	Sudell	3	The proposed Maghull East and Maghull North parish wards of Maghull parish	Map 4
22	Victoria	3	Part of Victoria ward; part of Manor ward	Maps 4 and 5

Notes:

- 1) *The borough contains nine parishes.*
- 2) *The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*
- 3) *We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Final recommendations for Sefton

	Ward name	No. of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ainsdale	3	10,179	3,393	4	10,091	3,364	3
2	Birkdale	3	9,949	3,316	2	9,950	3,317	2
3	Blundellsands	3	9,312	3,104	-5	9,354	3,118	-4
4	Cambridge	3	9,994	3,331	2	10,054	3,351	3
5	Church	3	9,320	3,107	-5	9,201	3,067	-6
6	Derby	3	9,249	3,083	-5	9,118	3,039	-7
7	Duke's	3	9,823	3,274	0	10,196	3,399	4
8	Ford	3	9,304	3,101	-5	9,529	3,176	-2
9	Harington	3	10,118	3,373	3	10,061	3,354	3
10	Kew	3	9,616	3,205	-2	9,857	3,286	1
11	Linacre (Bootle)	3	9,287	3,096	-5	9,254	3,085	-5
12	Litherland	3	9,127	3,042	-7	9,038	3,013	-8
13	Manor	3	9,821	3,274	0	9,691	3,230	-1
14	Meols	3	9,951	3,317	2	9,964	3,321	2
15	Molyneux	3	10,005	3,335	2	10,076	3,359	3
16	Netherton & Orrell	3	9,034	3,011	-8	9,114	3,038	-7
17	Norwood	3	10,241	3,414	5	10,116	3,372	4
18	Park	3	10,459	3,486	7	10,371	3,457	6
19	Ravenmeols	3	9,818	3,273	0	9,708	3,236	-1
20	St Oswald	3	9,492	3,164	-3	9,350	3,117	-4
21	Sudell	3	10,479	3,493	7	10,441	3,480	7
22	Victoria	3	10,640	3,547	9	10,466	3,489	7
	Totals	66	215,218	-	-	215,000	-	-
	Average	-	-	3,261	-	-	3,258	-

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our proposals for the electoral arrangements for the metropolitan borough of Sefton, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five metropolitan authorities in Merseyside 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 Sefton. Sefton's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (*as part of its Final Recommendations on the future of Local Government in Sefton*), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1997.

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had 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 Sefton was 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 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 borough.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district 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 the 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 to the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan borough/city ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan borough/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 lead to an unacceptable dilution of

accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Sefton Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Merseyside Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Merseyside Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the North West region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 25 March 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

10 Stage Three began on 3 September 2002 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Sefton*, and ended on 28 October 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation, and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 Current electoral arrangements

11 The Metropolitan Borough of Sefton lies between the Mersey and Ribble estuaries and is the most northerly of the five metropolitan boroughs in Merseyside. The borough contains a number of physically discrete communities that are separated from each other by stretches of green belt land. The southern portion of the borough contains Bootle, a major industrial area. To its north and east lie a number of smaller settlements, the largest of which are Crosby, Maghull and Formby. Southport, a popular holiday resort, forms the most northerly part of the borough. The borough covers an area of 15,000 hectares with a population of almost 300,000. As a metropolitan authority, elections are held by thirds.

12 The borough contains nine civil parishes. The Bootle, Crosby and Southport areas, which contain the majority of the borough's population, are unparished. The electorate of the borough is 215,218 (December 2001). The Council presently has 66 members who are elected from 22 three-member wards.

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,261 electors, which the Council forecasts will marginally decrease to 3,258 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to recent demographic and other changes, the number of electors per councillor in three of the 22 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Park ward where each of the three councillors represents 19% more electors than the borough average.

14 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough 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 Sefton

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	No. of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Ainsdale	3	10,179	3,393	4	10,091	3,364	3
2	Birkdale	3	9,260	3,087	-5	9,283	3,094	-5
3	Blundellsands	3	9,312	3,104	-5	9,354	3,118	-4
4	Cambridge	3	9,994	3,331	2	10,054	3,351	3
5	Church	3	9,320	3,107	-5	9,201	3,067	-6
6	Derby	3	8,759	2,920	-10	8,636	2,879	-12
7	Duke's	3	9,823	3,274	0	10,196	3,399	4
8	Ford	3	9,400	3,133	-4	9,662	3,221	-1
9	Harington	3	10,297	3,432	5	10,224	3,408	5
10	Kew	3	9,899	3,300	1	10,124	3,375	4
11	Linacre	3	8,891	2,964	-9	8,864	2,955	-9
12	Litherland	3	8,640	2,880	-12	8,522	2,841	-13
13	Manor	3	9,075	3,025	-7	8,955	2,985	-8
14	Meols	3	9,951	3,317	2	9,964	3,321	2
15	Molyneux	3	10,308	3,436	5	10,428	3,476	7
16	Netherton & Orrell	3	9,425	3,142	-4	9,497	3,166	-3
17	Norwood	3	10,647	3,549	9	10,516	3,505	8
18	Park	3	11,604	3,868	19	11,406	3,802	17
19	Ravenmeols	3	9,639	3,213	-1	9,545	3,182	-2
20	St Oswald	3	10,378	3,459	6	10,222	3,407	5
21	Sudell	3	10,915	3,638	12	10,910	3,637	12
22	Victoria	3	9,502	3,167	-3	9,346	3,115	-4
	Totals	66	215,218	-	-	215,000	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,261	-	-	3,258	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Litherland ward were relatively over-represented by 12%, while electors in Park ward were relatively under-represented by 19%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Draft recommendations

15 During Stage One 16 representations were received, including three borough-wide schemes from Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP, and representations from the Labour Group on the Council, Southport Conservative Association, Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, three parish councils, a borough councillor and six local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Sefton*.

16 Our draft recommendations were based in much of the borough on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality and to provide for more identifiable boundaries. We proposed that:

- Sefton Borough Council should be served by 66 councillors, representing 22 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified, while six wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Aintree, Lydiate, Maghull and Sefton.

Draft recommendation

Sefton Borough Council should comprise 66 councillors, serving 22 wards.

17 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 22 wards varying by no more than 10% from the borough average both currently and in 2006.

4 Responses to consultation

18 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 17 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Sefton Borough Council.

Sefton Borough Council

19 The Borough Council accepted the Commission's proposal that the council comprise 66 councillors representing 22 wards. However, it stated that while it accepted the proposed boundary changes it hoped that the Commission would carefully consider representations from local residents and councillors.

The Conservative Group on the Borough Council

20 The Conservative Group on the Council stated that the preferable size for the council was one of 63 members representing 21 wards. It also made a number of comments with regard to proposed boundaries in the borough.

The Southport Party

21 The Southport Party commented on projected electorates and welcomed proposals for a reduction in the number of councillors representing the council to 63.

Parish and town councils

22 Representations were received from four parish councils. The parish councils of Ince Blundell and Little Altcar supported the draft proposals for their areas. Maghull Town Council made proposals for its parishing arrangements. Sefton Parish Council objected to the draft proposals for its area.

Other representations

23 A further 10 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from two local political groups, a local organisation, three councillors and four local residents.

24 Southport Conservative Association proposed that the current Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards remain unchanged. Meols Ward Conservatives proposed that the current Ainsdale, Cambridge and Meols wards remain unchanged. Orrell Thorn Residents proposed that the current Netherton & Orrell ward be maintained on its current boundaries. Ravenmeols & Harington Ward Councillors argued that the current boundaries in their area be maintained with minor modifications. Councillor Watson stated that a council size of 63 members would more adequately reflect population distribution and commented on elections in the borough. Councillor Gibson withdrew his previous suggestion regarding the parish of Ince Blundell but proposed a boundary amendment. A local resident supported our draft recommendations while another supported a reduction in council size to 63 members. Two local residents made general comments.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

25 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Sefton 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”.

26 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 within the next five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

27 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.

28 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be 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

29 Since 1975 there has been a 19% decrease in the electorate of Sefton borough. The Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting a further slight decrease in the electorate of less than 1% from 215,218 to 215,000 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. However, the Council projects that this overall decline will be differential across the borough, with the Bootle area forecast to decline by 0.2% and the Southport area forecast to grow by approximately 1%. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science, and having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

30 At Stage Three The Southport Party stated that there was ‘increasing evidence of the willingness of Sefton Council planners to allow the building of flats and apartments in Southport at the expense of large houses’, leading to an increase in the population of the town. It argued that this was not reflected in the figures submitted by Sefton Borough Council for the medium to longer term and that the councillor:elector ratio would be in excess of the expectations in the draft recommendations by the time of the next review. It also stated that it was of the ‘opinion that the voters moving away from the southern end of the borough in the future will continue in increasing numbers’ creating a councillor:elector ratio below the expectations in our draft recommendations. It requested that the Borough Council review its figures for voter movement and back up its statistics with measured evidence over a period of 10 years.

31 We have noted the comments made by The Southport Party with regard to electorate forecasts. However, as stated in our guidance, estimating five-year forecasts of electorate is not an exact science and the ‘task is to identify likely changes, not merely possible changes’. We can also only have regard to five year forecasts, to 2006 in Sefton’s case, and cannot consider how the number of electors in an authority might change beyond this point. This is due to the fact that we believe that electorate projections become less reliable over longer periods of time. We therefore remain satisfied that the Borough Council’s electorate projections represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

Council size

32 Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council presently has 66 members. At Stage One the Council proposed retaining the existing council size. It stated that ‘there is no overwhelming case for changing the number of wards in Sefton’ and argued that the retention of the existing council size would address the issue of electoral inequality, particularly in regard to the east of the borough, while ensuring as little disturbance as possible to the ‘evolving system of community and ward – based area committees’. This view was supported by Claire Curtis-Thomas MP.

33 The Southport Liberal Democrats argued that retaining the existing council size would ‘perpetuate the great disparity’ in representation between the Bootle and Crosby areas and the Maghull and Southport areas of the borough. They argued that a 63-member council would ensure further improvement in electoral equality when compared to the Council’s proposals. Dr John Pugh MP noted that the Council, ‘not without controversy’, had proposed to retain the existing council size of 66 members and considered that a 63-member council would ensure a more equitable distribution of councillors between the primary areas of the borough. Southport Conservative Association supported a reduction in council size and a consequential reduction in the number of councillors representing the Bootle area to facilitate this. It argued that a reduction in council size would ensure a fairer allocation of councillors between the Bootle and Southport areas of the borough.

34 We carefully considered the evidence received in respect of council size at Stage One and acknowledged that both proposed council sizes would secure better levels of electoral equality than the existing arrangements. As explained in our *Guidance*, we have no particular view as to the most appropriate council size for Sefton but stated that we would carefully consider the evidence received and persuasive arguments in support of a particular council size. In this instance, we were of the opinion that further information and evidence was required before we reached conclusions as to the most appropriate council size for Sefton.

35 On 15 May 2002 we wrote to the Council and those who submitted borough-wide schemes at Stage One requesting further evidence in support of their proposed council size. Sefton Council reiterated its support for retaining the existing council size. It noted that the size of the council had only recently been reduced to 66 members and that it had re-designed its ‘Executive and Non-Executive arrangements’ on the basis of this reduction. It also argued that many of the modernisation proposals were introduced to coincide with the implementation of the 66-member council (as recommended by the LGCE) in May 2000. The Council disputed the assumption that the introduction of new internal political management structures would reduce the workload of ‘non-executive’ councillors. It argued that the responsibilities of councillors had been refocused on the work of the nine area committees in the borough and the evolving ‘Partnerships’ with external bodies. The Council also cited development of the scrutiny and review functions of the Council. It stated that it had recently increased the number of Scrutiny and Review Committees from one to four to ensure that the 37 Best Value Reviews and the range of ‘inspection and review’ reports prepared by outside bodies were assessed and scrutinised in an effective manner. The Council stated that these committees were ‘developing an increasingly pro-active role’ and that the workload generated by them is growing ‘very much in line with Government guidance’.

36 The Council also made reference to the representative role of councillors in relation to the electorate. It argued that area committees have generated local interest and the public have become increasingly aware of these facilities. It considered that a reduction in council size would 'dilute the level of engagement and identification with local neighbourhoods'. The Council concluded that the work undertaken by councillors under the previous committee structure had been 'more than compensated for' by the functions of the new council structure which required less internal council meetings but greater engagement with area committees and partnerships.

37 The Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP made a joint submission reiterating their view that a reduction in council size to 63 members would secure better electoral equality than the Council's proposals. They noted that the recent electoral review conducted by the LGCE in 1997 had 'under-estimated the rate of depopulation in the Bootle area' and argued that the constituent communities of Sefton would only achieve fair representation if all communities in the borough were fairly represented on the Council. They noted that the introduction of 'Cabinet Government' in Sefton had resulted in the role of a majority of councillors being refocused on 'scrutiny, review and representation' and service on various outside and joint bodies. They considered that recent change to the internal political management structures of the Council and the consequential impact on the responsibilities of councillors did not necessitate a significant reduction in overall council size. However, they argued that the steady depopulation of Sefton over recent years warranted a re-evaluation of council size and concluded that the 66-member warding option, as favoured by Sefton Council, would 'discriminate' between areas. They concluded that a 63-member council would reflect the statutory criteria while ensuring that councillors would be able to effectively discharge their duties.

38 The Conservative Group on the Council interpreted the request for further evidence on council size as an indication that The Boundary Committee for England was not persuaded by the 'highly political decision' of the Council to retain 66 members. It favoured a reduction in council size to 63 members to address the 'over-representation' of the south of the borough.

39 We carefully considered the further evidence provided in respect of the most appropriate council size for Sefton. We noted that the primary argument put forward in support of a reduced council size was the differential level of representation between the north and south of the borough. While we acknowledged that the two 63-member warding schemes put forward at Stage One provide better overall electoral equality than the Council's proposals, we were not persuaded that this was sufficient evidence on its own to support a reduction in council size. Furthermore, as stated in our *Guidance*, we did not subscribe to the view that a decline in overall electorate in Sefton in recent years necessarily justified an automatic reduction in council size. In respect of the views expressed by the Conservative Group, our primary motivation for requesting further justification on council size was because we considered that the case had not been sufficiently made either for retaining the existing council size or reducing it to 63 members.

40 We carefully examined the additional evidence provided by Sefton Council in support of retaining the existing council size of 66 members. As stated earlier, while we noted that a 63-member ward configuration may provide better electoral equality, we recognised that the Council's proposals secured the correct allocation of wards between the primary areas of the borough. We acknowledged that the requirement that metropolitan areas be represented by a uniform pattern of three-member wards is a constraining factor in providing a completely accurate allocation of councillors between the constituent communities of Sefton. However, we noted that the Council had allocated the correct number of three-member wards to each area of the borough under its proposed council size. We also recognised that the Council provided detailed evidence in support of its council size, within the context of new internal political management structures and the role of councillors on area committees and outside bodies. Furthermore, we noted that its proposed council size received a degree of cross-party support on Sefton Council.

41 At Stage Three Sefton Borough Council supported our proposal for a council size of 66 members. The Conservative Group on the Council argued that a council size of 63 members would provide a 'fairer spread of the electorate across the wards'. The Southport Party and Councillor Watson put forward similar arguments to those of the Conservative Group. A local resident also supported a reduction in the number of councillors representing the council from 66 to 63.

42 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three regarding council size. However, we note that no detailed evidence was submitted in support of a council size of 63 members and therefore propose confirming our proposal for a council size of 66 members as final.

Electoral arrangements

43 A number of considerations emerged which assisted us in preparing our draft recommendations. We recognised that Sefton is a diverse borough which combines a number of discrete communities that are separated from each other by tracts of rural land. We also recognised that the borough had been subject to significant changes in the size and distribution of its electorate over recent years. As stated earlier, we noted that all three borough-wide schemes would secure much improved electoral equality across the borough, both now and by 2006. While we acknowledged that the requirement that metropolitan authorities be represented by a wholly uniform pattern of three-member wards is a constraining factor in securing a completely accurate allocation of councillors between the communities of Sefton, we noted that all three borough-wide schemes put forward at Stage One provided the correct allocation of wards across the borough under their respective proposed council sizes.

44 The major areas of contention at Stage One were in respect of council size and the perceived over-representation of the Bootle area of the borough. As stated earlier, we proposed that the existing council size of 66 members be retained. We noted that the primary difference between the proposals of the Council and those of Dr John Pugh MP and the Southport Liberal Democrats was in respect of the allocation of wards in the Bootle area of the borough. The Council proposed that it continue to be represented by 18 councillors representing six three-member wards. The latter two schemes proposed that Bootle be represented by 15 councillors representing five three-member wards. As detailed earlier, we recognised a degree of support for reducing the current council size. We noted the views of the Southport Conservative Association that the number of councillors representing Bootle should be reduced to facilitate a more equitable distribution of councillors across the borough and to reflect the declining population of this area. However, as a consequence of our proposed council size, it proved difficult to accommodate any substantive part of the Southport Liberal Democrats' and Dr John Pugh MP's proposals for Bootle as their proposed allocation of five wards for this area would be incorrect under a 66-member council. We therefore decided to base our draft recommendations for the south of the borough on the Council's proposals.

45 However, we considered that, in attempting to put forward a warding configuration substantially based on whole polling districts, the Council's proposals would not utilise sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundaries in a number of areas. We also considered there was further scope for improving electoral equality, particularly in the Bootle area of the borough. We therefore put forward substantial amendments to the Council's proposed warding arrangements for the south of the borough. Furthermore, we concluded that the Council's proposed Molyneux and Sudell wards would not secure an accurate reflection of the statutory criteria and put forward an amendment to its proposals in this area.

46 We noted a substantial degree of consensus as to the most appropriate warding arrangements in the Formby and Southport areas of the borough. All three borough-wide schemes submitted at Stage One proposed either minimal or no change to ward boundaries in this area. Moreover, we noted that the three schemes proposed that the area be allocated 27

councillors representing nine three-member wards. In light of this, it proved possible to consider the alternative proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP, within the context of our proposed council size of 66-members. We noted that the Council proposed no change to the existing warding arrangements in this area, while the Southport Liberal Democrats put forward minor amendments to the existing wards in Formby and the wards of Birkdale, Kew and Norwood in Southport. We concluded that the Southport Liberal Democrats' proposals would ensure more effective and clearly defined ward boundaries in this area while securing excellent levels of electoral equality. We therefore adopted the proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats for the north of the borough as part of our draft recommendations.

47 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

Bootle

- a) Derby and Linacre ward;
- b) Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswald wards;

Crosby, Hightown and East Sefton

- c) Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards;
- d) Molyneux, Sudell and Park wards;

Formby and Southport

- e) Harington and Ravenmeols wards;
- f) Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards;
- g) Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols wards.

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

Bootle

Derby and Linacre wards

49 The existing three-member wards of Derby and Linacre form the southern part of Bootle and abut the boundary with the City of Liverpool. Under existing arrangements, Derby and Linacre wards have 10% and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (12% and 9% fewer than the average by 2006).

50 At Stage One Sefton Council proposed retaining the existing three-member Linacre ward, noting that the existing ward had an electoral variance of less than 10%, both now and by 2006. The Council recognised that the existing Derby ward was somewhat over-represented and proposed combining the existing ward with the part of Litherland ward that lies to the south of Province Road and east of Monfa Road (corresponding to polling district NA).

51 As detailed earlier, the warding proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP were based on a reduction in overall council size and a consequential reduction from 18 to 15 in the number of councillors representing Bootle. Under our proposed council size of 66, the Bootle area is entitled to an allocation of six three-member wards.

52 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We recognised that the Council's proposals secured the correct allocation of councillors for the Bootle area under our

proposed council size of 66 members. However, we considered that the Council, in attempting to formulate warding arrangements in Bootle that were wholly based on existing polling districts, put forward proposals that did not provide the best reflection of the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered there was further scope for improving electoral equality for the wards of south Bootle. We therefore decided to base our draft recommendations for Derby and Linacre wards on the Council's proposals, subject to a number of amendments in order to better reflect the statutory criteria.

53 We proposed a revised three-member Linacre ward comprising the existing ward and the part of Derby ward that lies to the south of Wadham Road and west of Miranda Road. We noted that this area comprised similar high-density housing to adjoining areas in the east of Linacre ward and would ensure a further improvement in electoral equality. We decided to adopt the Council's proposals for Derby ward, subject to the inclusion of a further part of Litherland ward that lies to the south of Menai Road in order to better reflect the statutory criteria. We considered that our proposals in the area would ensure improved electoral equality while utilising clear and distinct ward boundaries.

54 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Derby and Linacre wards would each have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (7% and 5% fewer than the average respectively by 2006).

55 At Stage Three we received no specific comments regarding our proposed Derby and Linacre wards and therefore confirm them as final. The electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswald wards

56 These four wards form the northern and eastern part of Bootle and are all three-member wards. Under the existing arrangements, Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswald wards have 4%, 12% and 4% fewer, and 6% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1%, 13% and 3% fewer, and 5% more than the average by 2006).

57 At Stage One Sefton Council proposed a revised three-member Ford ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the east of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and the part of St Oswald ward that lies to the south of Northumberland Way. It proposed that the remainder of St Oswald ward form a revised three-member ward. The Council proposed a revised three-member Netherton & Orrell ward comprising the existing ward less that part to the north of Patrick Avenue and Orrell Road and west of Netherton Way. However it proposed that Netherton & Orrell ward include the part of Litherland ward that lies broadly to the east of Kirkstone Road South. The Council proposed a revised three-member Litherland ward, based on the existing ward with the changes outlined above. It proposed that the Rimrose Valley Country Park that currently lies in Ford ward to the west of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, be incorporated into Litherland ward.

58 As detailed earlier, the warding proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP were based on a reduction in overall council size and a consequential reduction in the number of wards representing Bootle from six three-member wards to five three-member wards. However, under our proposed council size of 66, the Bootle area is entitled to an allocation of six three-member wards.

59 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and noted that the Council's proposals provided the correct allocation of three-member wards under our proposed council size. However, we considered that the Council, in attempting to formulate warding arrangements in Bootle that were wholly based on existing polling districts, put forward proposals that did not provide the best reflection of the statutory criteria. In particular, we considered there was further scope for improving electoral equality for these wards while

ensuring more clearly defined ward boundaries. We therefore decided to base our draft recommendations for Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswald wards on the Council's proposals, subject to a number of amendments in order to better reflect the statutory criteria.

60 We proposed that the part of the Council's proposed Litherland ward to the south of Menai Road be incorporated in the proposed Derby ward in order to secure a more clearly defined ward boundary. We also had reservations as to the effectiveness of the Council's proposed Litherland ward in reflecting community identities in the east of the proposed ward. We noted in particular that the Council proposed that the area to the north of Ennerdale Drive and east of Kirkstone Road South be transferred to its proposed Netherton & Orrell ward. We noted that this area had no direct communication linkage with the majority of the proposed ward and concluded that it shared greater community identities and interests with areas to its west and south. Furthermore we noted that the Council proposed that the area to the south of Ennerdale Drive, which corresponds to polling district WA, be transferred from Netherton & Orrell ward to Litherland ward. We noted that this area straddles the disused railway line and concluded that this feature provided an effective demarcation between communities.

61 We therefore decided to adopt the Council's proposed Litherland ward subject to amending the eastern boundary of the proposed ward so that it would follow Netherton Way from Church Road to the disused railway line. Thereafter, we proposed that the boundary follow the disused railway line, Harris Drive and Springwell Road up to Menai Road. We also proposed that the ward include the part of Netherton & Orrell ward that lies to the south of Thornton Avenue. This area comprises several cul-de-sacs that are effectively separated from areas to its west with which we considered it to share community identities and interests. We also proposed an amendment to the north-west boundary of the Council's proposed ward so that it would follow Beach Road and the rear of properties on the north side of Windsor Avenue.

62 We decided to adopt the Council's proposed Netherton & Orrell ward as part of our draft recommendations subject to the amendments outlined above. In order to secure good electoral equality, we also proposed that Netherton & Orrell ward include the area of the existing St Oswald ward that lies to the south of Leonard Cheshire Drive and west of the path that runs adjacent to the allotments as far as Dunnings Bridge Road. We also proposed that the Bowland Drive area, which the Council retained in Ford ward be transferred to St Oswald ward. We noted that this area shares direct road access with communities to its east and will ensure good electoral equality in this area. As outlined above, we proposed that the area to the north and west of Windsor Avenue and Beach Road, that comprises the Rimrose Valley Country Park, be retained in Ford ward. Subject to these amendments, we proposed adopting the Council's proposed Ford ward as part of our draft recommendations.

63 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswald wards would have 5%, 7%, 8% and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2%, 8%, 7% and 4% fewer than the average by 2006).

64 In response to the draft recommendations Orrell Thorn Residents proposed that the current Netherton & Orrell ward be maintained on its present boundaries. They argued that the area containing Thackaray Gardens, the Captain's Green estate, Gardner Avenue, Harris Drive, Haworth Drive, Patrick Avenue and Fairlie Crescent represent the old area of Orrell and should remain as part of Netherton & Orrell ward instead of being transferred to the proposed Litherland ward.

65 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representation received. We note the objections of Orrell Thorn Residents to our proposed Netherton & Orrell ward. However, we have not been sufficiently persuaded, given the argumentation, that the area referred to has any better links to its south and east in the proposed Netherton & Orrell ward than it does with the properties directly to its north. We also noted that our proposals secure more identifiable boundaries than under the alternative proposed by Orrell Thorn Residents. Therefore, given that

we received no further comments regarding the area we propose confirming the proposed Ford, Litherland, Netherton & Orrell and St Oswalds wards as final. The electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

Crosby, Hightown and East Sefton

Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards

66 The existing three-member wards of Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria are situated in the centre of the borough, north of Bootle. Blundellsands, Church and Victoria wards are urban in character and cover the Crosby area. Manor ward is more mixed, combining urban settlements to the south with rural areas to the north, including Hightown parish. Under the existing arrangements, Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards have 5%, 5%, 7% and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4%, 6%, 8% and 4% fewer than the average by 2006).

67 At Stage One Sefton Council noted that the existing wards of Blundellsands and Church were 'within tolerance' and proposed that they should be retained. The Council proposed a revised three-member Victoria ward comprising the existing ward, less that part to the east of Brownmoor Lane and north of Naseby Drive which it proposed be transferred to Manor ward. It proposed that Victoria ward also contain that part of Manor ward that lies broadly to the south of Moor Lane and west of Forefield Lane. The Council proposed a revised three-member Manor ward reflecting the changes outlined above. It also proposed that the ward contain Thornton parish and the southern part of Sefton parish from the existing Molyneux ward. The Council argued that its proposals rectified 'the known shortcomings of the existing boundaries' in the Thornton and Sefton areas' with both parishes containing a sizeable overspill population from the Crosby area. It argued that areas to the south of Sefton parish that currently lie in Molyneux ward share community identities and interests with adjoining communities in Crosby rather than with the eastern parished area of the borough and considered that its proposals recognised this.

68 Under the Council's proposals, Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards would have 5% and 5% fewer and 4% and 9% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4% and 6% fewer and 2% and 7% more than the average by 2006).

69 As detailed earlier, the warding proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP were based on a reduction in overall council size and a consequential reduction in the number of wards representing Bootle from six three-member wards to five three-member wards.

70 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. Having examined the Council's proposals for this area, we considered that they reflect community identities while maintaining electoral equality with relatively minimal change to the current warding configuration. We noted that the boundary between Thornton and Sefton parishes and the Crosby urban area had become severely defaced over recent years and considered that communities in the south of these parishes, which are currently situated in Molyneux ward, are effectively overspill from the Crosby area. We also noted that the Council has sought to rationalise the boundary in the north of the existing Manor ward to address this situation. We also acknowledged the degree of consensus as to the most appropriate warding arrangements in this area with both the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP proposing that Thornton parish be combined with more urban areas to its south for the purposes of borough warding.

71 We therefore decided to adopt Sefton Council's proposed three-member Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards, without amendment, as part of our draft recommendations. We considered that our draft recommendations secured an effective balance between the statutory criteria, within the context of a uniform pattern of three-member wards. The electoral

variances for these wards would be the same as those outlined for the Council's proposals above.

72 At Stage Three the Conservative Group on the Council accepted the proposal to include Thornton parish and the southern part of Sefton parish within the proposed Manor ward. However, it objected to the proposal that the area to the south of Eden Drive South and north of Nazeby Avenue be transferred to the proposed Victoria ward. Sefton Parish Council objected to our proposal to divide the parish between the proposed Manor and Park wards.

73 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We note the proposal of the Conservative Group on the Council to transfer the area south of Eden Drive South and north of Nazeby Avenue from the proposed Manor ward to the proposed Victoria ward. However, we have not been persuaded by the level of argumentation submitted and note further that this would result in the proposed Victoria ward varying by 10% by 2006. Therefore we have decided to confirm the proposed Victoria ward as final. We have also considered the objections of Sefton Parish Council to the proposed warding of the parish between two wards and its assertion that this would increase election costs for the parish. We note that containing the whole parish within a single ward would not have a greatly adverse effect on electoral equality in the area and therefore propose that the entire parish be contained within the proposed Park ward. We received no detailed proposals regarding the proposed Blundellsands and Church wards and therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

74 Under our final recommendations the proposed Blundellsands, Church, Manor and Victoria wards would have 5% fewer, 5% fewer, equal to and 9% more electors per councillor than the borough council (4% fewer, 6% fewer, 1% fewer and 7% more in 2006).

Molyneux, Sudell and Park wards

75 The existing wards of Molyneux, Park and Sudell are situated in the east of the borough and are all three-member wards. Molyneux ward comprises the parishes of Aintree, Melling, Sefton and Thornton. Sudell ward comprises the majority of Maghull parish and the southern part of Lydiate parish, while Park ward comprises the western part of Maghull parish and the remainder of Lydiate parish. Under the existing arrangements Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards have 5%, 19% and 12% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7%, 17% and 12% more than the average by 2006).

76 At Stage One Sefton Council proposed a revised three-member Molyneux ward comprising the parishes of Aintree, Melling and the part of Maghull parish that lies to the east of Northway, and north of Moss Lane, Deyes Lane and School Lane. It proposed a revised three-member Sudell ward comprising the part of Maghull parish that lies broadly to the east of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Northway and south of Whinny Brook. The Council proposed that the remainder of Maghull parish, broadly to the west of Northway and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal be combined with Lydiate parish and the part of Sefton parish broadly to the north of Lydiate Lane in a revised three-member Park ward. As detailed earlier, the Council proposed that the remainder of Sefton parish be transferred to a revised three-member Manor ward. The Council argued that its proposals would secure improved electoral equality in this area. It noted that the current Molyneux ward 'has no common community focus at present' and considered that the division of Sefton parish between the borough wards of the eastern parished area and Crosby would reflect the distinct communities contained within the parish.

77 The Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP proposed a revised three-member Park ward comprising Lydiate parish and the part of Maghull parish lying broadly to the east of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and north of Moss Drive, Deyes Lane and School Lane. They proposed a revised three-member Sudell ward comprising Melling parish and the part of Maghull parish that lies to the north of Whinny Brook, Hall Lane and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. They proposed a revised three-member Molyneux ward comprising Aintree and Sefton parishes and

the remainder of Maghull parish, broadly to the south of Whinny Brook. Under Dr Pugh's Option A proposals this ward would also include part of polling district WB which currently lies in Netherton & Orrell ward. The Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr Pugh MP argued that the current Molyneux ward is 'very artificial' and stated that their proposals would provide wards which are 'less geographically disparate and are sized to achieve much closer similarity of electorate'. They also noted that their proposals would ensure that Lydiate and Maghull parishes would be wholly contained within two borough wards rather than three as at present.

78 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and recognised the much improved electoral equality secured by all the borough-wide schemes put forward. We noted that the proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP in this area were compatible with our proposed council size of 66 and we therefore gave them careful consideration. While we recognised that their proposals would secure good electoral equality we were not persuaded that they would utilise sufficiently clear and distinct ward boundaries. In particular, we noted that their proposed Molyneux ward would include Sefton parish. While we recognise that this broadly reflects existing ward boundaries in this area, we noted that Sefton parish is separated from communities to its east by Dunning's Bridge Road and the M58, which we considered constitute a clear demarcation between communities. As detailed above, we considered that the south of Sefton parish shares greater identities and interests with communities to its south that lie in the Crosby area. We also considered that the northern part of Sefton parish, focused on the village of Sefton, shares identities and interests with communities to its north that are currently situated in Park ward. We noted in particular that Sefton village shares convenient communication links with the western part of Maghull parish.

79 Having carefully examined the Council's proposals we noted that they would broadly utilise the western boundary of Aintree and Melling parishes as the boundary between its proposed Molyneux and Park wards. We also noted that its proposals sought to rationalise the currently defaced ward boundary between Molyneux and Manor wards. Furthermore we recognised that its proposals would ensure improved electoral equality and utilise reasonably clear and distinct ward boundaries. We therefore decided to adopt Sefton Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations, subject to two amendments. We noted that the Council proposed that the northern part of Maghull parish (corresponding to polling district LB) be included in its proposed Molyneux ward. While we recognised that the requirement that metropolitan authorities have a uniform pattern of three-member wards is a constraining factor in securing ward boundaries that reflect community identities, we were not persuaded that this area of Maghull parish shared identities and interests with the settlements of Melling and Aintree. We noted that north Maghull is separated from Aintree and Melling by a substantial rural area and that these communities shared no direct road access. We concluded that this area of Maghull shared community identities and interests with areas directly to its south and that this should be reflected in revised warding arrangements for this area.

80 We therefore proposed that the northernmost part of Maghull parish be situated in Sudell ward and that the boundary between Melling and Maghull parishes continue to be utilised as the ward boundary in this area. We noted that this would have a consequential effect on electoral equality and therefore proposed that the part of Maghull parish to the south of Whinny Brook, west of Northway up to Moorland Road, and up to the rear of properties on the north side of Moorland Road, be included in Molyneux ward. We considered that this urban area of south Maghull has closer community and geographical links with Aintree and Melling parishes than the north of Maghull parish. We considered that our proposed amendment to the Council's proposals would secure an appropriate balance between the statutory criteria. Under our draft recommendations the proposed Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards would have 2%, 4% and 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3%, 3% and 7% more than the average by 2006).

81 At Stage Three Sefton Parish Council objected to our proposal to divide the parish between the proposed Manor and Park wards (mentioned previously). The Conservative Group on the Council stated that the changes to the Maghull area seemed logical.

82 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We note Sefton Parish Council's objections to our proposals in its area and as a result propose that the entire parish be contained within a single ward, the proposed Park ward (mentioned earlier). Therefore with the exception of the addition to the proposed Park ward we propose confirming our draft recommendations in the area as final.

83 Under our final recommendations the proposed Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards would currently have 2% more, 7% more and 7% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% more, 6% more and 7% more than the average by 2006).

Formby and Southport

Harington and Ravenmeols wards

84 The existing wards of Harington and Ravenmeols comprise the town of Formby and a number of more rural areas to its south. Harington ward comprises the western part of Formby, while Ravenmeols ward combines the eastern part of the town and the parishes of Ince Blundell and Little Altcar. Under the existing arrangements Harington and Ravenmeols wards have 5% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5% more and 2% fewer than the average by 2006).

85 At Stage One the Borough Council noted that the current Harington and Ravenmeols wards have good electoral equality and consequently proposed that they be retained. Dr John Pugh MP's Option A proposals were identical to Sefton Council's proposed warding arrangements. Therefore the electoral variances under our proposed council size of 66 would be the same as under the existing arrangements.

86 The Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP's Option B proposals were identical. They acknowledged that the current Harington and Ravenmeols wards have good electoral equality but stated that their boundaries 'owe everything to history and nothing to community'. They argued that the north and south of the existing Ravenmeols ward share poor communication links and put forward revised warding arrangements in this area for 'two far more regular shaped and slightly more even sized wards'. They proposed a revised three-member Harington ward comprising the existing ward, less the part that lies to the south of Broad Lane and Eight Acre Lane, and east of Paradise Lane (corresponding to polling district HB) which they proposed be transferred to Ravenmeols ward. They also proposed that Harington ward include the part of Ravenmeols ward broadly to the west of Green Lane, Church Road and north of Chapel Lane and Brows Lane (corresponding to polling district JA).

87 Councillor Gibson proposed that Ince Blundell parish be transferred to Manor ward to the south. Little Altcar Parish Council noted that the existing wards of Harington and Ravenmeols have 'slight imbalances' in terms of electoral equality but favoured the retention of the existing warding arrangements in the Formby area.

88 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and recognised that all three borough-wide schemes would secure excellent levels of electoral equality. We acknowledged the proposals put forward by Councillor Gibson for the transfer of Ince Blundell parish to Manor ward had merit in that they would unite communities that are in close geographical proximity to each other. However, we stated that we must adopt a borough-wide approach when formulating our draft recommendations. We considered that a geographically enlarged Manor ward would have insufficient regard for community identities in that it would encompass a large geographical area stretching from the northern outskirts of Crosby to the

southern periphery of Formby. We acknowledged the requirement that Sefton have a uniform pattern of three-member wards is a constraining factor in ensuring that ward boundaries accurately reflect communities. However, within this context we considered that Ince Blundell parish should remain warded with the Formby area. We noted in particular that Ince Blundell shared direct communication links with Formby via the A565 Formby By-Pass. We were therefore not persuaded to adopt the proposals of Councillor Gibson as part of our draft recommendations.

89 We noted that the Council's and Dr John Pugh MP's Option A proposals would result in no change to the existing wards in the Formby area, while the proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr Pugh's Option B proposals would necessitate an amendment to the boundary between these two wards. We considered that the arguments for and against change to the existing warding configuration in Formby were finely balanced. However, we noted that the Southport Liberal Democrats proposals secured the best overall electoral equality for this area and proposed, for the purposes of consultation, to adopt the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr Pugh's proposed Harington and Ravenmeols wards as part of our draft recommendations.

90 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Harington, and Ravenmeols wards would have 3% more and an equal ratio of electors per councillor to the borough average respectively (3% more and 1% fewer than the average respectively by 2006).

91 At Stage Three the Conservative Group on the Council objected to our proposals in the area. They objected to the proposal to transfer polling district JA to the proposed Harington ward and polling district HB to the proposed Ravenmeols ward, arguing that they would divide a 'closely knit community into a more socially divided community'. It proposed that the current wards be maintained. Ravenmeols & Harington Ward Councillors also objected to our proposals to transfer polling districts JA and HB. They argued that the Ravenmoels area is recognised as being to the east of the railway line and Harington to the west. They also proposed that the northern boundary between the two wards be amended to include both sides of Timms Lane and Grange Lane within Ravenmoels ward. The parish councils of Ince Blundell and Little Altcar supported our draft recommendations for their areas. Councillor Gibson withdrew his proposal that the parish of Ince Blundell be included in Manor ward. However, he proposed that the electors on the Hightown (Altcar) Army Camp be transferred to the proposed Manor ward, arguing that they would not have a polling station within close proximity.

92 We carefully considered the proposals received at Stage Three. We have noted the argumentation of the Conservative Group on the Council regarding the proposed Harington and Ravenmoels wards. However, we have not been persuaded by the evidence submitted that the Conservative Group's proposals would better satisfy the statutory criteria than the proposals put forward as part of our draft recommendations. We have also carefully considered the proposal of Councillor Gibson and while we note that it is not without merit we also note the support of the parish councils of Ince Blundell and Little Altcar and that the proposal would necessitate the parish warding of Ince Blundell parish for which there would not appear to be any support. Therefore we propose confirming our draft recommendations for the proposed Harington and Ravenmeols wards as final. The electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards

93 The existing wards of Birkdale, Kew and Norwood are situated in the east of Southport and are all three-member wards. Under the existing arrangements Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards have 5% fewer and 1% and 9% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5% fewer and 4% and 8% more than the average by 2006).

94 At Stage One Sefton Council proposed that the existing three-member Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards be retained (this was reflected in Dr Pugh MP's Option A proposals). Under our

proposed council size of 66 members, the electoral variances for their proposals would be the same as under the existing arrangements.

95 Dr John Pugh MP and the Southport Liberal Democrats stated that Southport was a 'tightly defined' and cohesive community. While they noted that the existing warding configuration would maintain good electoral equality, they noted that electoral equality could be further improved. They noted that the existing Norwood ward is somewhat under-represented when compared to other wards in Southport and outlined two relatively minor amendments to ward boundaries in this area. They proposed a revised three-member Norwood ward comprising the part of the existing ward lying broadly to the north of the disused railway line and proposed that the southern part of the existing Norwood ward be transferred to a revised three-member Birkdale ward. They proposed a consequential amendment to the boundary between Birkdale and Kew wards in order to ensure good electoral equality. They proposed that the area of the existing Kew ward broadly to the south of Upper Aughton Road be transferred to a revised three-member Birkdale ward. They argued that this would rationalise ward boundaries in this area while restoring a majority of 'the historic East Birkdale area' to Birkdale ward. Under their proposals Birkdale, Kew and Norwood ward would have 2%, 6% and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2%, 4% and 2% fewer than the average by 2006).

96 We recognised that the arguments were finely balanced as to whether existing ward boundaries in this area should be amended. We recognised that the existing wards would secure good electoral equality and provide a fair reflection of the statutory criteria. However, we considered the amendments put forward by the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP would secure more clearly defined ward boundaries that adhere to clear ground detail. We also noted that they would secure further improvements in electoral equality. Moreover, their proposed allocation of councillors in the area was compatible under our proposed council size of 66 members. Therefore, for the purposes of consultation, we proposed basing our draft recommendations for these wards on the proposals of the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP. We proposed a revised three-member Norwood ward comprising the part of the existing ward that lies to the rear of properties on the north side of Forest Road and to the north of Haig Avenue. We noted in particular that this revised boundary would reunite a number of roads which are presently divided between borough wards. We also proposed that the boundary between Birkdale and Kew wards be amended to follow Upper Aughton Road to the recreation ground and thereafter follow the field boundary to the north of Christ the King Secondary School. We considered that our proposals for these wards secured an accurate reflection of the statutory criteria and would ensure more clearly defined ward boundaries in this area.

97 Under our draft recommendations the proposed Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards would have 2% more, 2% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2%, 1% and 4% more than the average by 2006).

98 At Stage Three Southport Conservative Association proposed that the current Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards be maintained on their current boundaries.

99 We have carefully considered the proposals of Southport Conservative Association. However, as stated in our draft recommendations report we remain of the view that our draft recommendations in the area provide for more clearly defined boundaries and secure an improved level of electoral equality compared to the current arrangements. Therefore we propose confirming our proposed Birkdale, Kew and Norwood wards as final. The electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols wards

100 The existing wards of Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols form the remainder of the town of Southport and are all three-member wards. Under the existing arrangements Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols wards have 4% and 2% more, equal to and 2% more electors per

councillor than the borough average respectively (3%, 3%, 4% and 2% more than the average by 2006).

101 At Stage One the Borough Council, the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP proposed that these wards be retained. All considered that the current wards reflect the statutory criteria and have excellent levels of electoral equality both now and by 2006.

102 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and noted the substantial degree of consensus in support of retaining the existing warding arrangements in this area. We recognised that the existing wards of Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols are projected to maintain excellent levels of long-term electoral equality. Furthermore, we considered that they utilised clear and distinct ward boundaries that adhered to clear ground detail. We therefore proposed adopting the proposals of Sefton Council, the Southport Liberal Democrats and Dr John Pugh MP to retain these existing wards as part of our draft recommendations. The electoral variances of the proposed wards are the same as under the existing arrangements.

103 At Stage Three Meols Ward Conservatives proposed that the current Ainsdale, Cambridge and Meols wards be maintained on their current boundaries.

104 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We note the support shown for the draft proposals in the area and therefore propose to confirm our draft recommendations for the proposed Ainsdale, Cambridge, Duke's and Meols wards as final. The electoral variances would be the same as under our draft recommendations.

Electoral cycle

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

Conclusions

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

- We propose that Sefton parish be wholly contained within the proposed Park ward.

107 We conclude that, in Sefton:

- a council of 66 members should be retained;
- there should be 22 wards;
- the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards should be modified.

108 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	66	66	66	66
Number of wards	22	22	22	22
Average number of electors per councillor	3,261	3,261	3,258	3,258
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10 per cent from the average	3	0	4	0
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	0	0

109 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from three to none. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

Sefton Borough Council should comprise 66 councillors serving 22 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

110 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. In our draft recommendations report we proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the parishes of Maghull and Sefton and a redistribution of councillors for the parishes of Aintree and Lydiate.

111 Maghull Town Council is currently served by 20 councillors representing four wards: Maghull East, Maghull North, Maghull South and Maghull West, returning five councillors each. Under the existing arrangements Maghull East and Maghull North wards are situated in the borough ward of Sudell, and Maghull South and Maghull West wards are situated in the borough ward of Park.

112 As part of our proposed borough warding arrangements in this area, we proposed revised Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards, each of which would include parts of Maghull parish.

We therefore proposed a consequential re-warding of the parish to reflect our proposed borough warding arrangements.

113 We proposed that the existing Maghull West parish ward (which we propose be included in a revised three-member Park borough ward) be retained and served by five town councillors. We proposed retaining the existing Maghull North parish ward and proposed a revised Maghull East parish ward returning six town councillors each. Taken together, these two town council wards formed our proposed three-member Sudell borough ward. We also proposed a revised Maghull South parish ward (which we proposed be situated in a revised three-member Molyneux ward) returning three town councillors.

114 In response to the consultation report Maghull Town Council proposed that the number of town councillors serving the council be reduced from 20 to 16. It suggested that the proposed Maghull North and Maghull East wards be represented by five councillors each, Maghull West ward by four councillors and Maghull South ward by two councillors. It argued that given the revised councillor to elector ratio this would not be to the detriment of the quality of service each councillor provides.

115 Having considered all the evidence received we propose adopting Maghull Town Council's proposed reduction and redistribution of councillors as we note that this would not affect our proposed borough warding in the area.

Final recommendation

Maghull Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, four fewer than at present, representing four wards: Maghull East and Maghull North parish wards (each returning five councillors), Maghull West parish ward (returning four councillors) and Maghull South parish ward (returning two councillors). The parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on large map 4.

116 The parish of Sefton is currently served by seven councillors and is not warded. As part of our draft recommendations we proposed that Sefton parish be divided between the borough wards of Manor and Park. We therefore proposed a consequential warding of the parish for the purposes of elections to Sefton Parish Council. Notwithstanding our proposed borough warding arrangements, we considered that Sefton parish is comprised of two discrete communities that warrant separate representation on the Parish Council.

117 We therefore proposed a new Sefton South parish ward (represented by four councillors), the boundaries of which should reflect that part of our proposed Manor ward that lay in Sefton parish. We also proposed a new Sefton North parish ward (returning three councillors), the boundaries of which should reflect that part of our proposed Park ward that lay in Sefton parish.

118 In response to the consultation report Sefton Parish Council objected to our proposals for the parish. It argued that splitting the parish for election purposes would serve no useful purpose, would increase election costs and might discourage prospective candidates.

119 Having considered all the evidence received we are proposing that Sefton parish remain unwarded as at present and be contained within a single borough ward, Park ward.

Final recommendation

Sefton Parish Council should comprise seven councillors and should remain unwarded as at present.

120 The parish of Lydiate is currently served by 13 councillors representing three wards: Lydiate South and Lydiate West parish wards (each returning five councillors) and Lydiate North parish ward (returning three councillors).

121 At Stage One, Lydiate Parish Council argued that the interests of electors in Lydiate would be best served by a reduction in the overall number of parish councillors from 13 to nine and a consequential redistribution of councillors between parish wards. It proposed that Lydiate West parish ward be represented by four councillors, Lydiate South parish ward be represented by three councillors and Lydiate North parish ward be represented by two councillors. It argued that its proposals would secure 'better overall representation of electors' while providing a fairer allocation of councillors between parish wards.

122 As part of our draft recommendations for borough warding arrangements, we proposed that the whole of Lydiate parish be situated in a revised three-member Park ward. Therefore our proposed borough warding arrangements would have no consequential effect of the existing parish ward boundaries in Lydiate and we were content to put forward the Parish Council's proposed reduction and redistribution of councillors between the wards of the parish for consultation.

123 No further comments were received from the Borough Council or the Parish Council and we therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Lydiate Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, four fewer than at present, representing three wards: Lydiate West ward (returning four councillors), Lydiate South ward (returning three councillors) and Lydiate North ward (returning two councillors). We propose no change to the existing boundaries of the three parish wards.

124 The parish of Aintree is currently served by 12 parish councillors returned from two parish wards: North ward and South ward (each returning six councillors). At Stage One, Aintree Village Parish Council proposed no change to the current number of parish councillors. It argued that it would be 'impractical' to reduce the number of councillors and considered that an increase in the size of the parish council would exacerbate the issue of attracting candidates to stand for election to the Parish Council. The Parish Council also proposed no change to the distribution of councillors between the existing parish wards, arguing that there was 'no recognisable distinction' once parish councillors were elected and that councillors tended to represent the interests of the whole parish, regardless of which ward they were elected from.

125 The Parish Council stated that if a change in the allocation of councillors between wards was considered necessary, then it proposed that Aintree North parish ward be represented by five parish councillors and that Aintree South ward be represented by seven parish councillors.

126 While we noted the strong support of the Parish Council to retain the current electoral arrangements for the parish, we considered that a more equitable allocation of councillors between the parish wards of Aintree would better reflect the statutory criteria. We therefore proposed that for the purposes of consultation Aintree North parish ward be represented by five councillors and Aintree South parish ward be represented by seven councillors.

127 No further comments were received from the Borough Council or the Parish Council and we therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Aintree Parish Council should comprise 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Aintree South parish ward (returning seven councillors) and Aintree North parish ward (returning five councillors). We propose no change to the existing boundaries of the two parish wards.

Map 2: Final recommendations for Sefton

6 What happens next?

128 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Sefton and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

129 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 6 May 2003.

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

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

Fax: 020 7271 0505

**Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Sefton: **Detailed mapping**

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

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

Five large maps illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton.

Map A1: Final recommendations for Sefton: key map

Appendix B

Guide to interpreting the draft of the Statutory Instrument

Preamble

This describes the process by which the Statutory Instrument will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if the Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Citation and Commencement

This defines the name of the Statutory Instrument and sets the dates on which it will come into force.

Interpretation

This defines terms that are used in the Statutory Instrument.

Wards of the Borough of Sefton

This abolishes the existing wards, and defines the names and areas of the new wards, in conjunction with the map and the Schedule.

Elections of the council of the Borough of Sefton

This sets the date on which a whole council election will be held to implement the new wards, and the dates on which councillors will retire.

Maps

This requires Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

Electoral Registers

This requires Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

Revocation

This revokes the Statutory Instrument that defines the existing wards, with the exception of any articles that established the system of election by thirds.

Explanatory Note

This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if the Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

2003 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND

The Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

Made - - - - 2003

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(**a**), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(**b**), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(**c**) recommendations dated March 2003 on its review of the borough(**d**) of Sefton:

And whereas the Electoral Commission have decided to give effect [with modifications] to those recommendations:

And whereas a period of not less than six weeks has expired since the receipt of those recommendations:

Now, therefore, the Electoral Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 17(**e**) and 26(**f**) of the Local Government Act 1992, and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Order:

Citation and commencement

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
- (2) This Order shall come into force –
 - (a) For the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on 6th May 2004, on 15th October 2003;
 - (b) for all other purposes, on 6th May 2004.

Interpretation

2. In this Order –
 - “borough” means the borough of Sefton;
 - “existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made;

(a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.

(b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

(c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992, to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).

(d) The metropolitan district of Sefton has the status of a borough.

(e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.

(f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –

- (a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
- (b) the offices of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council; and

any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number.

Wards of the borough of Sefton

3.—(1) The existing wards of the borough(a) shall be abolished.

- (2) The borough shall be divided into twenty-two wards which shall bear the names set out in column (1) of the Schedule.
- (3) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.
- (4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

Elections of the council of the borough of Sefton

4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the borough shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).

- (2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the borough immediately before 10th May 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.
- (3) Of the councillors elected in 2004, one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.
- (4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –
 - (a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and
 - (b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.
- (5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.
- (6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.
- (7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.

Wards of the parish of Maghull

5.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Maghull shall be abolished.

- (2) The parish shall be divided into four parish wards which shall bear the names Maghull East, Maghull North, Maghull South and Maghull West; and the wards shall comprise the areas designated on sheet 4 by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by orange lines.
- (3) The number of councillors to be elected for each of the parish wards of Maghull East and Maghull North shall be five, for the parish ward of Maghull West shall be four and for the parish ward of Maghull South shall be two.

(a) See the Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/2782).

(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by articles 3(1) and 3(9) of S.I. 1999/2782.

(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).

Numbers of parish councillors of the parish of Aintree

6. The number of parish councillors to be elected for the parish ward of Aintree South shall be seven, and for the parish ward of Aintree North shall be five.

Numbers of parish councillors of the parish of Lydiate

7. The number of parish councillors to be elected for the parish ward of Lydiate West shall be four, for the parish ward of Lydiate South shall be three, and for the parish ward of Lydiate North shall be two.

Maps

8. Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council shall make a print of the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003” available for inspection at its offices by any member of the public at any reasonable time.

Electoral registers

9. The Electoral Registration Officer^(a) for the borough shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Revocation

10. The Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 1999^(b) is revoked, save for articles 3(1) and 3(9).

^(a) As to electoral registration officers and the register of local government electors, *see* sections 8 to 13 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2).

^(b) S.I. 1999/2782.

Signed by the members of the Electoral Commission

Date *Pamela Gordon*
Commissioner

Date *Glyn Mathias*
Commissioner

Date *Neil McIntosh*
Commissioner

Date *Karamjit Singh*
Commissioner

Date *Sam Younger*
Commissioner

Date *Graham Zellick*
Commissioner

SCHEDULE

article 3

NAMES OF WARDS

<i>Name of Ward</i>
Ainsdale
Birkdale
Blundellsands
Cambridge
Church
Derby
Duke's
Ford
Harington
Kew
Linacre
Litherland
Manor
Meols
Molyneux
Netherton and Orrell
Norwood
Park
Ravenmeols
St Oswald
Sudell
Victoria

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect, [with modifications], to recommendations by the Boundary Committee for England, a committee of the Electoral Commission, for electoral changes in the borough of Sefton.

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after 6th May 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the borough and provides for the creation of 22 new wards. That article and Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.

Articles 5 to 7 make electoral changes in the parishes of Maghull, Aintree and Lydiate.

Article 9 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 10 revokes the Borough of Sefton (Electoral Changes) Order 1999, with the exception of articles 3(1) and 3(9).

The areas of the new borough and parish wards are demarcated on the map described in article 2. Prints of the map may be inspected at all reasonable times at the offices of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.