

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

Further electoral review

November 2006

Translations and other formats

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What is the Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Director:

Archie Gall

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

Executive summary

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

Current electoral arrangements

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

This review will be conducted in four stages:

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

Submissions received

We received 14 submissions at Stage One, including two district-wide submissions from South Lakeland District Council and the Liberal Democrats. We received submissions from eight parish councils, three district councillors and one local resident.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The District Council has predicted growth of 6% over the five-year period 2004 to 2009. We are satisfied that the Council's forecasts are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

The District Council proposed a council size of 51, one less than present. It stated the current council size was appropriate. However, it proposed a reduction, stating

that 51 members would achieve better electoral equality. The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the status quo of 52 members.

General analysis

We propose basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals which were supported, in part, by the Liberal Democrats. We propose amendments in three of the proposed wards, to improve the level of electoral equality.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland contained in this report. We welcome views from all parts of the community and believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 26 February 2007. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for South Lakeland and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in Windermere Applethwaite ward to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. Additionally, we found our decision regarding the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward to be a difficult judgement between the strands of our statutory criteria. We would particularly welcome local views on these issues, backed up by good evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Arnside & Beetham	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Arnside & Beetham ward (the parishes of Beetham and Arnside)
2	Broughton	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Broughton ward (the parishes of Angerton, Broughton West, Dunnerdale-with-Seathwaite and Kirkby Ireleth)
3	Burneside	1	Part of the existing Burneside ward (the parishes of Strickland Ketel and Strickland Roger); part of the existing Whinfell ward (the parishes of Scalthwaiteirigg and Skelsmergh)
4	Burton & Holme	2	The existing Burton & Holme ward (the parishes of Burton-in-Kendal and Holme); part of the existing Crooklands ward (the parishes of Hutton Roof, Lupton and Preston Patrick)
5	Coniston	1	Part of the existing Coniston ward (the parishes of Blawith & Subberthwaithe, Coniston, Skelwith and Torver); part of the existing Crake Valley ward (the parish of Lowick)
6	Crake Valley & Swarthmoor	2	Part of the existing Crake Valley ward (the parishes of Egton with Newland, Mansriggs, Osmotherley and Pennington); part of the existing Low Furness & Swarthmoor ward (Urswick parish ward of Urswick parish)
7	Crooklands	1	Part of the existing Crooklands ward (the parish of Preston Richard); part of the existing Natland ward (the parishes of Hincaster, Sedgwick and Stainton)
8	Cartmel	1	Part of the existing Cartmel ward (Allithwaite parish ward and Cartmel parish ward of Lower Allithwaite parish); part of the existing Grange ward (the proposed Grange West parish ward of Grange-over-Sands parish)
9	Grange North	1	Part of the existing Grange ward (the proposed Grange North parish ward of Grange-over-Sands parish)

Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
10 Grange South	1	Part of the existing Grange ward (the proposed Grange South parish ward of Grange-over-Sands parish)
11 Holker	1	The existing Holker ward (the parish of Lower Holker); part of the existing Cartmel ward (Upper Holker parish ward of Lower Allithwaite parish)
12 Hawkshead	1	The existing Hawkshead ward (the parishes of Claife, Hawkshead and Satterthwaite and the Colton East parish ward of Colton parish); part of the existing Coniston ward (Colton West parish ward of Colton parish)
13 Kendal Castle	1	The existing Kendal Castle ward; part of the existing Kendal Oxenholme ward; part of the existing Kendal Nether ward; part of the existing Kendal Heron Hill ward (the proposed Kendal Castle parish ward of Kendal parish)
14 Kendal Far Cross	1	The existing Kendal Far cross ward; part of the existing Kendal Mintsfeet ward (the proposed Kendal Farcross parish ward of Kendal parish)
15 Kendal Fell	1	The existing Kendal Fell ward; part of the existing Kendal Strickland ward (the proposed Kendal Fell parish ward of Kendal parish)
16 Kendal Glebelands	1	Part of the existing Kendal Stonecross ward; part of the existing Kendal Glebelands ward (the proposed Kendal Glebelands parish ward of Kendal parish)
17 Kendal Heron Hill	1	Part of the existing Kendal Heron Hill ward; part of the existing Kendal Oxenholme ward (the proposed Kendal Heron Hill parish ward of Kendal parish)
18 Kendal Highgate	1	The existing Kendal Highgate ward; part of the existing Kendal Glebelands ward (the proposed Kendal Highgate parish ward of Kendal parish)

Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
19 Kendal Kirkland	1	Part of the existing Kendal Kirkland ward; part of the existing Kendal Glebelands ward (the proposed Kendal Kirkland parish ward of Kendal parish)
20 Kendal Mintsfeet	1	Part of the existing Kendal Mintsfeet ward (the proposed Kendal Mintsfeet parish ward of Kendal parish)
21 Kendal Nether	1	Part of the existing Kendal Nether ward; part of the existing Kendal Heron Hill ward (the proposed Kendal Nether parish ward of Kendal parish)
22 Kendal Natland & Oxenholme	1	Part of the existing Kendal Oxenholme ward; part of the existing Natland ward (the parish of Natland)
23 Kendal Parks	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Kendal Parks ward (Kendal Parks parish ward of Kendal parish)
24 Kendal Stonecross	1	Part of the existing Kendal Stonecross ward; part of the existing Kendal Glebelands ward; part of the existing Kendal Highgate ward; part of the existing Kendal Oxenholme ward (the proposed Kendal Stonecross parish ward of Kendal parish)
25 Kendal Strickland	1	Part of the existing Kendal Strickland ward (the proposed parish ward of Kendal Strickland)
26 Kendal Underley	1	The existing Kendal Underley ward; part of the existing Kendal Strickland ward (the proposed Kendal Underley parish ward of Kendal parish)
27 Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere	2	The existing Lakes Grasmere ward (the parishes of Rydal & Loughrigg, Grasmere and Langdales parish ward of Lakes parish); part of the existing Lakes Ambleside ward (the Lakes Ambleside parish ward of Lakes parish)
28 Levens	1	The existing Levens ward (the parishes of Heversham and Levens); part of the existing Natland ward (the parish of Helsington)

Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
29 Low Furness	1	Part of the existing Low Furness & Swarthmoor ward (the parish of Aldingham and Bardsea and Stainton parish wards of Urswick parish)
30 Lyth Valley	1	Part of the existing Burneside ward (the parish of Underbarrow & Bradleyfield); part of the existing Lyth Valley ward (the parishes of Crosthwaite & Lyth, Meathop & Ulpha and Witherslack, and Lindale parish ward of Upper Allithwaite parish)
31 Milnthorpe	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Milnthorpe ward (the parish of Milnthorpe)
32 Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale	3	The existing Sedbergh ward (the parishes of Dent, Garsdale, Middleton and Sedbergh); the existing Kirkby Lonsdale ward (the parishes of Barbon, Casterton and Kirkby Lonsdale); part of the existing Crooklands ward (the parish of Mansergh);
33 Staveley-in-Cartmel	1	The existing Staveley-in-Cartmel ward (the parishes of Broughton East, Cartmel Fell, Haverthwaite and Staveley-in-Cartmel); part of the existing Lyth Valley ward (High Newton parish ward of Upper Allithwaite parish)
34 Staveley-in-Westmorland	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Staveley-in-Westmorland ward (the parishes of Crook, Kentmere, Hugill, Nether Staveley and Over Staveley)
35 Ulverston Central	1	<i>Unchanged;</i> the existing Ulverston Central ward (Ulverston Central parish ward of Ulverston parish)
36 Ulverston East	1	<i>Unchanged;</i> the existing Ulverston East ward (Ulverston East parish ward of Ulverston parish)
37 Ulverston North	1	<i>Unchanged;</i> the existing Ulverston North ward (Ulverston North parish ward of Ulverston parish)

Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
38 Ulverston South	1	The existing Ulverston South ward; part of the existing Ulverston West ward (the proposed Ulverston South parish ward of Ulverston parish)
39 Ulverston Town	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the existing Ulverston Town ward (Ulverston Town parish ward of Ulverston parish)
40 Ulverston West	1	Part of the existing Ulverston West ward (the proposed Ulverston West parish ward of Ulverston parish)
41 Whinfell	1	Part of the existing Whinfell ward (the parishes of Docker, Fawcett Forest, Firbank, Grayrigg, Killington, Lambrigg, Longsleddale, New Hutton, Old Hutton & Holmescales, Whinfell and Whitwell & Selside)
42 Windermere Applethwaite	1	Part of the existing Windermere Applethwaite ward (the proposed Windermere Applethwaite parish ward of Windermere parish); part of the existing Lakes Ambleside ward (Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish)
43 Windermere Bowness North	1	Part of the existing Windermere Bowness North ward; part of the existing Windermere Applethwaite ward (the proposed Windermere Bowness North parish ward of Windermere parish)
44 Windermere Bowness South	1	The existing Windermere Bowness South ward; part of the existing Windermere Applethwaite ward; part of the existing Windermere Bowness North ward (the proposed Windermere Bowness South parish ward)
45 Windermere Town	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> The existing Windermere Town ward (Windermere Town parish ward of Windermere parish)

Notes:

1. The whole district is parished. The district comprises 73 parishes.
2. The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.
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: Draft recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arnside & Beetham	2	3,523	1,762	8	3,605	1,803	5
2	Broughton	1	1,883	1,883	16	1,933	1,933	12
3	Burneside	1	1,602	1,602	-1	1,632	1,632	-5
4	Burton & Holme	2	2,909	1,455	-11	3,067	1,534	-11
5	Coniston	1	1,460	1,460	-10	1,468	1,468	-15
6	Crake Valley & Swathmoor	2	3,220	1,610	-1	3,487	1,744	1
7	Crooklands	1	1,766	1,766	9	1,810	1,810	5
8	Cartmel	1	1,763	1,763	8	1,817	1,817	6
9	Grange North	1	1,610	1,610	-1	1,804	1,804	5
10	Grange South	1	1,609	1,609	-1	1,804	1,804	5
11	Holker	1	1,573	1,573	-3	1,725	1,725	0
12	Hawkshead	1	1,599	1,599	-2	1,599	1,599	-7

Table 2 (continued): Draft recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13	Kendal Castle	1	1,567	1,567	-4	1,715	1,715	0
14	Kendal Far Cross	1	1,681	1,681	3	1,770	1,770	3
15	Kendal Fell	1	1,552	1,552	-5	1,760	1,760	2
16	Kendal Glebelands	1	1,723	1,723	6	1,859	1,859	8
17	Kendal Heron Hill	1	1,587	1,587	-2	1,665	1,665	-3
18	Kendal Highgate	1	1,607	1,607	-1	1,758	1,758	2
19	Kendal Kirkland	1	1,626	1,626	0	1,756	1,756	2
20	Kendal Mintsfeet	1	1,574	1,574	-3	1,727	1,727	0
21	Kendal Nether	1	1,676	1,676	3	1,765	1,765	3
22	Kendal Natland & Oxenholme	1	1,502	1,502	-8	1,679	1,679	-2
23	Kendal Parks	1	1,610	1,610	-1	1,704	1,704	-1

Table 2 (continued): Draft recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24	Kendal Stonecross	1	1,691	1,691	4	1,721	1,721	0
25	Kendal Strickland	1	1,511	1,511	-7	1,800	1,800	5
26	Kendal Underley	1	1,591	1,591	-2	1,691	1,691	-2
27	Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere	2	3,863	1,932	19	3,905	1,953	13
28	Levens	1	1,728	1,728	6	1,808	1,808	5
29	Low Furness	1	1,516	1,516	-7	1,616	1,616	-6
30	Lyth Valley	1	1,826	1,826	12	1,826	1,826	6
31	Milnthorpe	1	1,678	1,678	3	1,774	1,774	3
32	Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale	3	4,844	1,615	-1	5,072	1,691	-2
33	Staveley-in-Cartmel	1	1,669	1,669	3	1,699	1,699	-1
34	Staveley-in-Westmorland	1	1,703	1,703	5	1,703	1,703	-1

Table 2 (continued): Draft recommendations for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
35	Ulverston Central	1	1,529	1,529	-6	1,616	1,616	-6
36	Ulverston East	1	1,418	1418	-13	1,787	1787	4
37	Ulverston North	1	1,453	1,453	-11	1,692	1,692	-2
38	Ulverston South	1	1,546	1,546	-5	1,637	1,637	-5
39	Ulverston Town	1	1,490	1,490	-8	1,649	1,649	-4
40	Ulverston West	1	1,474	1,474	-9	1,622	1,622	-6
41	Whinfell	1	1,477	1,477	-9	1,579	1,579	-8
42	Windermere Applethwaite	1	1,650	1,650	2	1,678	1,678	-3
43	Windermere Bowness North	1	1,715	1,715	6	1,677	1,677	-3
44	Windermere Bowness South	1	1,589	1,589	-2	1,639	1,639	-5
45	Windermere Town	1	1,702	1,702	5	1,702	1,702	-1

Table 2 (continued): Draft recommendations for South Lakeland district

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Totals	51	82,885	-	-	87,802	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,625	-	-	1,722	-

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

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the district of South Lakeland, on which we are now consulting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an

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

14 The review is in four stages:

Table 3: Stages of the review

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

15 Stage One began on 6 September 2005 when we wrote to South Lakeland District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cumbria Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Cumbria Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited South Lakeland District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 December 2005.

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

17 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 21 November 2006 and will end on 26 February 2007, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation about them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

Equal opportunities

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

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

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

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

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

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

2 Current electoral arrangements

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

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

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

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

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Arnside & Beetham	2	3,523	1,762	11	3,605	1,803	7
2	Broughton	1	1,883	1,833	18	1,933	1,933	14
3	Burneside	1	1,565	1,565	-2	1,575	1,575	-7
4	Burton & Holme	1	2,263	2,263	42	2,389	2,389	41
5	Cartmel	1	1,517	1,517	-5	1,587	1,587	-6
6	Coniston	1	1,493	1,493	-6	1,497	1,497	-11
7	Crake Valley	1	1,496	1,496	-6	1,542	1,542	-9
8	Crooklands	1	1,797	1,797	13	1,843	1,843	9
9	Grange	2	3,609	1,805	13	3,998	1,999	18
10	Hawkshead	1	1,341	1,341	-16	1,341	1,341	-21
11	Holker	1	1,429	1,429	-10	1,565	1,565	-7
12	Kendal Castle	1	1,504	1,504	-6	1,601	1,601	-5

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

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

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

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

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

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

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district

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

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

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

3 Submissions received

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

26 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met with officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 14 representations during Stage One, including two district-wide schemes, from the District Council and the Liberal Democrats, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the District Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

South Lakeland District Council

27 The District Council proposed a council of 51 members, serving 44 wards, compared to the existing 52 members serving 47 wards. The Council undertook a district-wide consultation on their proposals and provided between two and three options for 14 out of their proposed 44 wards. It recommended its preferred options and predicted the most significant growth to be in the south of the district, with decline in electors in the north west area of the district.

Political groups

28 The Liberal Democrat Group on the District Council proposed a council of 52 members, the same as present, serving 48 wards. Its submission agreed with much of the District Council's submission. The Liberal Democrat Group asked that its submission be read alongside the District Council's. However, it opposed the creation of multi-member wards and proposed alternatives in some of the areas where the District Council proposed multi-member wards.

Parish councils

29 Representations were received from eight parish councils. Barbon and Preston Patrick parish councils objected to the Council's proposals for the wards containing their parishes. Blawith & Subberthwaithe Parish Council proposed its area should form part of Crake Valley ward and opposed the District Council's proposals for Coniston ward. Holme Parish Council objected to the creation of a two-member Burton & Holme ward and proposed two single-member wards as an alternative. Lakes Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals to create a two-member Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward. It submitted alternative proposals for the area. Natland Parish Council opposed the proposal to include their parish within Kendal Town. Skelwith Parish Council proposed they remain within Coniston ward. Arnside Parish Council objected to one of the District Council's options put forward for their parish.

Other representations

30 A further four representations were received from local councillors and a local resident. Councillor Marshall opposed the District Council's proposals for Crake

Valley ward due to its size and community identity. Councillor Foot objected to proposals for Low Furness & Swarthmoor and Crake Valley wards. Councillor Vatcher supported the Liberal Democrat submission, particularly its support for single-member wards. He opposed the District Council's proposals for Broughton, Grange, Sedburgh & Kirkby Lonsdale and Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere wards. A local resident opposed one of the District Council's options to include Langdales parish ward of Lakes parish in its proposed Coniston ward.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

31 Before finalising our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for South Lakeland district we invite views on our initial thoughts as expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from all those interested relating to the number of councillors, proposed ward boundaries, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Lakes Grasmere and Lakes Ambleside wards, and the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish in Windermere Applethwaite ward, to be difficult judgements between our statutory criteria, set out in the paragraph below. Additionally, we found our decision regarding the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward to be a difficult judgement between the strands of our statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence and conflicting arguments received from local interested parties during Stage One. In these cases we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence on community identities and interests and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

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

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

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

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

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

36 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house

insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries. We are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate figures

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

38 We recognise that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the District Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. However, given that since the last review of South Lakeland the electorate growth has only grown by 1%, if the forecast is not realised for 2009 the district may be subject to a further electoral review sooner rather than later. The Liberal Democrats used the Council's forecast for population growth. However, they disagreed with the predicted growth for Grange ward, stating they could not envisage where the extra properties would be built considering the topography of the area. In light of the above we welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts with regard to Grange ward during Stage Three.

Council size

39 South Lakeland District Council presently has 52 members. Initially, the District Council looked at three models of council size, ranging from 51 to 53, and opted for a 51-member council. It stated that there was no reason to believe that the present number of councillors, 52, was unreasonable. However, in order to fit its own arithmetical model it considered a council size of 51 to be appropriate. We requested further information on the Council's proposed council size and it forwarded details of a number of strategic partnerships, working groups, task groups, committees and project boards currently operating that will involve Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and Non-Executive members. It provided comparative data for the original three council size options put forward and information on the Council's political management structure, together with details of the pre-modernised structure of the Council. We noted that although the Council had provided some further detail it had not approached the issue of council size with specific regard to its proposed council size of 51. Although it provided information to assist us in making a decision it did not justify why a council size of 51 would provide for effective and convenient local government. However, it did state that 'a large decrease in the number of Councillors would inhibit the Council's ability to consult and engage with its stakeholders, partners and community groups [...] the proposed Council size of 51 members would enable the Council to continue with this work and to achieve the current Government's vision for local communities'. We note that the District Council consulted on its proposed council size.

40 The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the current council size of 52 and based their proposals on this. We note that they did not provide evidence as to why they considered this council size to be the most appropriate. However, they stated

that the proposed council size would be 'the best one for both ward variances and community identity'. They felt the District Council had constrained itself to a council size of 51 in the early stages of the review process. We note that the Liberal Democrats did not consult on their proposed council size.

41 Given that we were not immediately persuaded that the optimum council size for South Lakeland was 51 we examined a number of alternative council sizes. We are of the view that an argument has been made for a council size similar to the existing one of 52 councillors. However, we do not believe we have received a particularly strong argument as to why the specific council sizes of 51 or 52 should be adopted. We had to balance the limited evidence we had received against issues such as the allocation of councillors in the district and a consideration of whether an alternative size would better facilitate the reflection of community identities. Having looked at the relative allocation of councillors across the district we noted that, in the range 49 to 53, a council size of 51 provided for the correct allocation of councillors. The correct allocation across the district provides for 27 councillors in the rural areas, 14 councillors for Kendal, six councillors for Ulverston and four councillors for Windermere. We note that opting for a 51-member council would result in larger imbalances in electoral equality under the Liberal Democrats' scheme as they lose a councillor under their proposals in the rural area.

42 We looked at the relative merits of both a 51 and 52-member council and concluded that overall a 51-member council would provide for a slightly better allocation of councillors than a 52-member council. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 51 members. However, this is a finely balanced decision and we welcome further evidence on council size during Stage Three.

Electoral equality

43 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. Therefore when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where inadequate justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality, seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

44 We noted that the District Council's proposals provided improvement in the levels of electoral equality although five of its wards would still vary by more than 10% from the district average by 2009. We consider the level of electoral equality achieved

under the Council's scheme to be acceptable given the topography of the area and the geographic features that shape South Lakeland, such as the mountains, fells and lakes that make community links difficult to achieve. We also noted that the Council carried out a thorough consultation process at Stage One and made specific proposals on all wards. The consultation provided three options for areas of the district where the Council had found it difficult to reach a decision. However, in these areas the Council indicated which one it considered to be most appropriate. At Stage One we asked for further evidence on community identity from all respondents.

45 The District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' district-wide submissions agreed in nine of the district wards. As the proposals provided good electoral equality, reflected community identity where we could make a judgement and achieved a degree of local consensus, we propose to adopt seven of these wards. However, we propose amendments to two of the wards to further improve the levels of electoral equality by 2009. Under a 51-member council the rural area of the district is entitled to 27 councillors. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposed scheme 28 members were proposed for the rural area. However, given our earlier decision on council size we propose to adopt the Council's scheme in the rural areas, as it has the required 27-member allocation, subject to some minor modifications.

46 Given the generally good allocation of councillors between urban and rural areas it has been possible to secure improved levels of electoral equality across the district. However, we found our decision regarding the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in Windermere Applethwaite ward to be particularly difficult. We noted that departing from the Council's proposal for the ward would result in an electoral variance of 22% by 2009 for which we did not consider there was sufficient argument. However, we invite views on this area at Stage Three.

47 The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district, 82,885, by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 51 under our draft proposals. Therefore the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,625 for 2004 and 1,722 for 2009.

General analysis

48 Given the lack of argument and evidence in relation to community identity provided during Stage One, we are basing our draft recommendations on the proposals of the District Council, which provide for good levels of electoral equality. However, the Council provided for more than one option for the more difficult areas of the district. We propose to adopt a secondary option, consulted on by the District Council, for the Grange area. We also propose a minor modification in Windermere Applethwaite ward, which will not affect any electors. In the three town areas of Kendal, Ulverston and Windermere we are adopting the District Council's proposals subject to one minor modification in Windermere. Under our draft proposals four wards would vary from the district average by more than 10% by 2009.

49 The Liberal Democrats' submission resulted from the group's decision to abstain during the vote on the Council's Further Electoral Review submission. However, the group stated that its submission agreed with the District Council's in many areas and considered its proposals to be a 'commentary' on the Council's. It therefore asked us to consider its submission alongside the District Council's. We noted that the Liberal Democrats did not consult on their proposals.

50 We note the Liberal Democrats' opposition to the proposals from the District Council for multi-member wards. They stated their opposition to be 'in principle to multi-member wards, except where absolutely necessitated by geography'. We did, however, note that they proposed four multi-member wards within their submission. In reaching our conclusions we must consider what best reflects the statutory criteria and would need evidence as to why multi-member wards would not work in specific areas rather than an 'in principle' objection to multi-member wards.

51 South Lakeland contains the three main towns of Kendal, Ulverston and Windermere. Both district-wide schemes reflected the external boundaries of each town subject to the inclusion of Natland parish in Kendal town. Both schemes agreed on their proposals for Ulverston town. In Kendal and Windermere they proposed alternative schemes, however, these differed only in terms of the internal boundaries in the town.

Warding arrangements

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

- Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland, Natland and Crookland wards (page 35)
- Sedburgh, Kirkby Lonsdale, Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards (page 37)
- Kendal (14 wards (page 39)
- Ulverston (six wards (page 40)
- Windermere (four wards (page 41)
- Broughton, Lyth Valley, Staveley-in-Cartmel, Hawkshead, Coniston, Lakes Ambleside and Lakes Grasmere wards (page 42)
- Low Furness & Swarthmoor, Crake Valley, Cartmel, Grange and Holker wards (page 46)

53 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively), and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

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

54 The above wards surround Kendal town and lie in the north and south-east of the district. Table 5 (pg 36) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangement were to remain in place.

Table 5: Existing arrangements

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

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

56 We noted that the District Council's proposals in the rural areas secured an improved level of electoral equality. We did not receive any further submissions relating to these areas, with the exception of Natland Parish Council which expressed concern over its inclusion in a ward with part of the Kendal area. We propose including Natland parish in a ward with part of Kendal town. This is discussed in detail in the Kendal section of this report (paragraph 67-73). Given that the District Council's proposals provide for good levels of electoral equality and have achieved a degree of consensus locally, we are content to adopt their proposals as our draft

recommendations. Our proposed single-member wards of Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland and Crooklands would all have variances of less than 10% by 2009.

57 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Whinfell, Burneside, Milnthorpe, Levens, Staveley-in-Westmorland and Crooklands wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

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

58 The above wards are located in the south-east of the district. Table 6 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remain in place.

Table 6: Existing arrangements

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

59 At Stage One the District Council proposed a three-member ward comprising the parishes of Barbon, Casterton, Dent, Garsdale, Sedbergh, Middleton, Mansergh and Kirkby Lonsdale, to be named Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale. In light of the good electoral equality in the current Arnside & Beetham ward, by 2009, it proposed that this ward be retained. It proposed a two-member ward comprising the parishes of Burton-in-Kendal, Holme, Hutton Roof, Lupton and Preston Patrick, to be named Burton & Holme ward. When considering its proposals for the existing Sedbergh ward the District Council noted that the retention of two separate wards would result in higher levels of electoral inequality under a council size of 51 by 2009. It also stated that the three-member ward ‘strengthens community links [and] recognises the intended changes in the two National Parks’ and commented that Mansergh parish looks to Kirkby Lonsdale as its centre. With regard to its proposed Burton & Holme ward the Council commented that its proposal contains ‘the two main centres of population and, with the addition of three sparsely populated parishes, maintains community links and avoids implications for neighbouring wards’.

60 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a two-member Sedbergh ward comprising the parishes of Sedbergh, Dent, Garsdale, Middleton, Barbon and Mansergh. It proposed a single-member Kirkby ward comprising the parishes of Kirkby Lonsdale and Casterton. The Group proposed a two-member Arnside & Storth ward, stating that the two communities should create a two-member ward. It proposed that the existing two-member Burton & Holme ward be divided into two single-member wards. It proposed a single-member Burton-in-Kendal ward comprising the parishes of Burton-in-Kendal, Hutton Roof, Lupton and Preston Patrick. The group proposed a single-member Holme ward comprising the parish of Holme and East parish ward of Beetham parish. It stated its proposals secured two single-member wards and asserted that the splitting of Beetham parish is 'made possible by the natural barrier of a hill'. The Liberal Democrats agreed with the District Council's view regarding Mansergh parish and noted the difficulty in finding suitable warding arrangements around Sedbergh parish and the other parishes in the far east of the district. They did, however, oppose the District Council's proposal to create a three-member ward in the area.

61 We received five further submissions. Barbon Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposals to incorporate Barbon parish ward in Sedbergh ward, commenting that the parish has closer links to Kirkby Lonsdale. Councillor Vatcher objected to the proposed three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Holme Parish Council objected to the creation of a two-member Burton & Holme ward, stating that it 'is totally opposed to a situation where there are two district councillors in this ward'. It proposed the alternative ward of Holme comprising the parishes of Holme, Preston Patrick, Lupton and Mansergh and a second district ward comprising the parishes of Burton-in-Kendal and Hutton Roof. Preston Patrick Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer their parish to the proposed Burton-in-Holme ward 'thus splitting it from Preston Richard Parish with whom it identifies'. Arnside Parish Council proposed their parish should be represented by an 'exclusive' district councillor.

62 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We noted that in the south-east rural area the District Council proposed a three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward. Under these proposals the ward would secure an electoral variance of -2% by 2009. The Liberal Democrats proposed a two-member ward and a single-member ward securing variances of -6 and 6% under a council size of 51. We noted Barbon Parish Council's objection to their inclusion within the ward. However, under the District Council's proposals they would be in the same ward as Kirkby Lonsdale parish with which they identify. We noted that the District Council consulted on its proposals and that they provide for better levels of electoral equality. We accept that the District Council's three-member Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale ward covers a large rural area and acknowledge the concerns expressed by the Liberal Democrats and others. However, the area in question lies right on the edge of the district, which makes it extremely difficult to both achieve good levels of electoral equality and to reflect community identities and interests. This is clearly an issue the District Council struggled with in reaching its conclusions on its proposals to us. Having considered all the representations received and the evidence provided by the District Council we have, on balance, decided to adopt the Council's proposals as the basis of our draft recommendations. However, we are of course willing to consider other solutions for the area in light of any substantive evidence provided during Stage Three.

63 In the remainder of the rural area in the south-east there are the existing Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards. The District Council proposed a two-member Burton & Holme ward and a two-member Arnside & Beetham ward. It proposed that Arnside & Beetham ward retain its existing boundaries. It proposed the addition of the three parishes of Hutton Roof, Lupton and Preston Patrick to the existing Burton & Holme ward to provide for better electoral equality. As stated in paragraph 60, the Liberal Democrats proposed splitting Beetham parish between Burton & Holme and Arnside & Beetham wards. The Liberal Democrats proposed wards secured variances of -13%, 9% and 4%.

64 We considered Holme Parish Council's submission. However, we noted that its proposals created a detached ward which did not provide for road links. As stated in the Electoral Commission's *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews* detached wards made up of two geographical separate areas cause concern as 'they lend themselves to the creation of electoral areas that lack community identity'. Accordingly, we do not recommend them except in exceptional circumstances, for example, offshore islands. We noted Preston Patrick Parish Council's submission regarding their separation from Preston Richard Parish. However, while they provided some evidence as to the community linkages between the two parishes we noted that the resulting Crooklands ward would have -16% fewer electors than the district average by 2009. We do not consider their evidence sufficiently strong to justify this variance, given the Council's proposed Burton & Holme ward and Crooklands ward which would have 11% fewer and 5% more electors respectively. We are therefore adopting the Councils proposals for these wards.

65 It should be noted that under the existing arrangements Burton & Holme ward has an electoral variance of 42%. Under the Council's proposals their wards would have electoral variances of -11% and 5%. We noted that in reaching a decision on its proposed Burton & Holme ward the District Council had stated that to divide Beetham parish, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, would have 'adverse community implications'. We concluded that we did not wish to divide Beetham parish as we had alternative proposals that met the statutory criteria, providing for good electoral equality. We noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposed two-member Arnside & Storth ward would result in an electoral variance of -13% by 2009. We also considered Arnside Parish Council's proposal to be in a ward on its own, however, this would result in unjustifiably high levels of electoral inequality. In light of the improved levels of electoral equality, without the need to further divide parishes between district wards, we are basing our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals. The Liberal Democrat Group did not provide any evidence in its submission to justify the levels of electoral inequality that would result from its proposals.

66 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Sedbergh & Kirkby Lonsdale, Arnside & Beetham and Burton & Holme wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Kendal wards (14 wards)

67 Kendal is a parish situated centrally in the district and contains 14 district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Kendal Castle, Kendal Far Cross, Kendal Fell, Kendal Glebelands, Kendal Heron Hill, Kendal Highgate, Kendal Kirkland, Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Nether, Kendal Oxenholme, Kendal Parks, Kendal Stonecross, Kendal Strickland and Kendal Underley. Table 4 (page 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

68 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Kendal town be represented by 14 single-member wards, as at present. It proposed to retain the existing wards with minor modifications to all but one of the wards and the inclusion of Natland parish to create a new ward with the Oxenholme part of Kendal. The Liberal Democrats concurred with the Council's proposals for the inclusion of Natland parish, stating that 'the parish council now works very closely with the residents' association in the village of Oxenholme'. The Liberal Democrat Group considered its proposals 'would reflect the strong links between Natland and Kendal without endangering Natland's parish identity'. The group proposed, with the exception of Natland parish, retaining the town's external boundaries and proposed amendments to the District Council's proposals for the internal boundaries in the town. They agreed with the Council's proposed Kendal Mintsfeet, Kendal Far Cross and Kendal Castle wards.

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

70 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We noted the District Council's proposals secured improved levels of electoral equality in the area under a council size of 51. The Liberal Democrats' proposals also provided for some improvement in electoral equality. However, five wards would vary by more than 5% by 2009.

71 We noted Natland Parish Council's representation and considered carefully the proposals relating to it. We consider that although the Natland area stands alone it looks towards Oxenholme and has closer communication and road links into Oxenholme than the other areas surrounding it. We did, however, consider the impact of removing Natland parish from Kendal Oxenholme but noted this would result in an electoral variance of -43% by 2009. Additionally, transferring the parish to either of the surrounding wards of Crooklands or Levens would result in a ward having a variance of 45% by 2009. This would therefore necessitate redrawing all the boundaries for Kendal town. Accordingly, we are not at this stage persuaded that there are sufficient grounds for not including Natland parish in the proposed Kendal Oxenholme ward. However, we invite further comments on these areas at Stage Three.

72 Given the lack of evidence provided and the better electoral equality under the District Council's scheme we are content to adopt its proposals as our draft recommendations. Under the District Council's proposals only one ward in Kendal would have a variance of over 5% by 2009.

73 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 10 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the Kendal wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 10 accompanying this report.

Ulverston (six wards)

74 Ulverston is a parish situated in the south-west of the district and contains six district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Ulverston Central, Ulverston East, Ulverston North, Ulverston South, Ulverston Town and Ulverston West. Table 4 (on pages 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remain in place.

75 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Ulverston be represented by six single-member wards, as at present. The District Council's proposals retained four of the existing wards, Ulverston Central, East, North and Town, and made minor modifications to the remaining wards of Ulverston South and West to improve electoral equality. Under the District Council's proposals no ward would vary by more than 10% from the district average by 2009. The Liberal Democrats agreed with the District Council's proposals for Ulverston.

76 We did not receive any further submissions in relation to this area. In light of the consensus over the proposals and improvement in electoral equality achieved, we are content to adopt the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations.

77 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14 respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the Ulverston wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 7 accompanying this report.

Windermere (four wards)

78 Windermere is a parish situated in the north-west of the district and contains four district wards. The parish comprises the district wards of Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere Bowness South, Windermere Bowness North and Windermere Town. Table 4 (on page 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

79 At Stage One the District Council proposed retaining the four existing single-member wards and making minor modifications between Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere North and Windermere South wards. It proposed the inclusion of Troutbeck parish ward in Windermere Applethwaite ward and proposed retaining the existing Windermere Town ward. Under its proposals no ward would vary by more than 5% by 2009. The Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the four existing wards and proposed amendments to the internal boundaries of the town to improve electoral equality. Additionally, it proposed Windermere Bowness North ward be renamed Windermere Bowness South and that Windermere Bowness South ward be renamed Windermere Bowness to reflect its proposals. Their proposals would result in variances of -8%, -2%, -6% and -14% from the district average by 2009.

80 We received two further submissions, from Lakes Parish Council and Councillor Vatcher. Lakes Parish Council objected to the transfer of Troutbeck parish ward to the proposed Windermere Applethwaite ward. It considered that as the parish wards form part of a Neighbourhood Forum for the Lakes area, to separate the area would 'ultimately fragment and dilute the strength of the Lakes Parish'.

81 Councillor Vatcher supported the Liberal Democrats' proposals for the area and stated that Troutbeck parish ward should remain with the remaining parish wards of Lakes parish in the wards of Lakes Grasmere and Lakes Ambleside.

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

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

84 In light of the objections we considered whether to keep the whole of Lakes parish in the Lakes area. However, we noted that this would result in an electoral variance of 22%. Given the lack of substantive evidence of community identity provided and the high level of electoral inequality that would result, we have decided to accept the transfer of Troutbeck parish ward into the Windermere area. However, we note our recommendations are primarily based on the achievement of electoral equality. Therefore we invite further representations on this issue at Stage Three. We request that these representations are supported by community identity evidence.

85 We noted that the lake in Windermere Applethwaite ward continues southwards and runs parallel to the existing Windermere Bowness South ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed to divide the lake so that it is aligned with the western boundary of the existing Windermere Bowness South ward. We acknowledge that the ward stretches far to the south and therefore looks anomalous. We noted that this proposal would have no bearing on electoral equality. We have therefore decided to adopt this minor amendment.

86 The District Council's proposals provide for significant improvements in electoral equality for the Windermere area. Accordingly, given the lack of evidence in relation to community identity provided at Stage One, we propose to adopt the District Council's proposals as our draft recommendations subject to the minor modification described in paragraph 85. However, we wish to revisit the issue of Troutbeck parish ward and invite further comment on community identity at Stage Three.

87 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the Windermere wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

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

88 The above wards lie in the south and south-west of the district. Table 7 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

Table 7: Existing arrangements

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

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

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

91 The Liberal Democrat Group supported the District Council's proposal to retain the existing Broughton ward. It proposed a Lyth Valley ward comprising the parishes of Underbarrow & Bradleyfield, Crosthwaite & Lyth, Witherslack, Cartmell Fell and Staveley-in-Cartmel, stating that there exists a 'stronger community link between these parishes than there was between the parishes which formed the current Lyth Valley ward'. Under its proposals the existing Staveley-in-Cartmel ward would no longer exist. The group proposed retaining the existing Hawkshead ward with the exception of transferring Central parish ward of Colton parish to its proposed Coniston ward and transferring Fieldhead parish ward of Hawkshead parish to its proposed Lakes Grasmere ward and adding Haverthwaite parish. It asserted that this ward would reflect community identity and electoral equality; it proposed it be named Hawkshead & Haverthwaite. To secure electoral equality, the group proposed to retain the existing Coniston ward with the exception of transferring Skelwith parish to its proposed Lakes Grasmere ward and transferring to it Central parish ward of Colton parish. It proposed to retain the existing Lakes Ambleside and Lakes Grasmere wards. However, the group proposed to transfer Fieldshead parish ward and Skelwith parish to Lakes Grasmere, as noted above. The Liberal Democrats opposed the District Council's proposal to create a two-member Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward which would necessitate the division of the Lakes parish between wards. It stated that its proposals would reflect community identity and retain the Lakes parish intact as far as is possible.

92 As the Liberal Democrats proposed a council size of 52, they proposed an additional councillor in the rural area providing for 28 councillors. Under a council size of 51 the rural area is only entitled to 27 councillors.

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

94 As discussed earlier in paragraphs 80-81, Lakes Parish Council and Councillor Vatcher opposed the removal of Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish from the existing Lakes Ambleside ward. Lakes Parish Council objected to options one and two of the District Council's proposals to transfer Langdales parish ward of Lakes

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

95 We have carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One. We noted Skelwith and Blawith & Subberthwaite parish councils did not provide us with evidence to support their representations. However, we noted that under the District Council's proposals Heathlands parish ward would remain in Broughton ward as requested by Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council. We noted the Liberal Democrats' and the local resident's objection to the transfer of Langdales parish ward into the proposed Coniston ward. However, the Council did not put forward this option as part of their submission. Under the Council's proposals Langdales would remain in the Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward. Lakes Parish Council's and Councillor Vatcher's representations are discussed in detail in paragraphs 80-81. We noted Lakes Parish Council's, Councillor Vatcher's and the Liberal Democrats' submissions objecting to the Council's proposed two-member Lakes Ambleside & Grasmere ward. We have considered the topography of the area and the geographic features that separate communities, the position of the wards at the edge of the district and the high levels of electoral inequality that would result if we retained two separate wards. If we were to keep Lakes parish intact, with the exception of Troutbeck parish ward, and retain Lakes Grasmere and Lakes Ambleside wards they would have variances of -30% and -13% respectively. This would also have a knock-on effect in Windermere town. Accordingly, we concluded that the District Council's proposals provided the best balance between the statutory criteria. They retain Lakes parish with the exception of Troutbeck parish ward and secure reasonable electoral equality. However, we have of course invited further evidence on this issue at Stage Three.

96 We noted that the District Council proposed to transfer Colton West parish ward of Colton parish from its existing Coniston ward to Hawkshead ward and proposed the inclusion of Lowick parish from Crake Valley ward in Coniston ward to improve electoral equality. We noted that its proposed boundary for Hawkshead ward follows the lakes in the area. We also noted that the Liberal Democrats proposed taking Colton West and part of Colton East parish ward into their proposed Coniston ward. However, the Liberal Democrats' proposals further divided Coniston Lakes and the Hawkshead area.

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

98 The District Council's proposed Lakes Grasmere & Ambleside and Coniston wards secured electoral variances of 13% and -15% by 2009. As noted earlier, given the topography of the area and its constraints the District Council have secured a

significant improvement in electoral equality, as under the existing arrangements Lakes Grasmere ward would have 28% fewer electors than the district average by 2009. We noted that the Liberal Democrat Group proposed an additional councillor in the Lakes area, a two-member Lakes Ambleside and a single-member Lakes Grasmere ward. It proposed that Skelwith parish be transferred from Coniston to its Lakes Grasmere ward and, as stated in paragraph 91 advocated the inclusion of part of Colton parish in Coniston ward. Under a council size of 51, its proposals would secure variances of -13%, -13% and -11% respectively by 2009.

99 We noted that both district-wide proposals divided parishes in this area. However, the District Council used the existing parish ward boundary of Troutbeck parish. We did not consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposals to further divide the parish ward of Colton East and transfer it to Coniston ward would best reflect the statutory criteria.

100 In light of the District Council's improvement in electoral equality without the need to further divide parish wards, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposals in the rural area as our draft recommendations.

101 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the above wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 5 accompanying this report.

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

102 The above wards lie in the south of the district. Table 8 (below) outlines the constituent areas of each ward. Table 4 (on pages 24-28) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances that the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

Table 8: Existing arrangements

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

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

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

105 We received four further submissions in relation to these areas. Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council proposed that its parish be joined with Crake Valley ward as it wished to be placed with Lowick and Egton with Newland parishes. The Parish Council expressed the view that its community identity lies with Crake Valley not Coniston ward, which it is currently in. Councillor Marshall opposed the District Council's proposals for Crake Valley and argued that the size of the ward does not reflect community identity, stating, 'single-member wards are far more preferable'. Councillor Foot objected to the District Council's proposals to create a single-member Low Furness ward and a two-member Crake Valley & Swarthmoor ward. He proposed that the existing Low Furness & Swarthmoor ward be divided, with Swarthmoor linked to Bardsea parish ward of Urswick parish as a new Low Furness North ward and the remaining areas to form a Low Furness South ward. Councillor Vatcher opposed the District Council's option two proposal to combine part of Grange ward with Cartmel ward, commenting that the inhabitants are from distinctly different communities. He suggested that Lindale parish would be better suited combining with the Grange area.

106 We have carefully considered the submissions we received at Stage One. We noted Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council's proposal. However, the transfer of this parish to Crake Valley ward would result in a severe deficit of electors in Coniston ward as transferring the parish would necessitate the additional transfer of Lowick parish which lies to the south of Blawith & Subberthwaite parish. We noted Councillor Marshall's opposition to Crake Valley ward. However, we did not consider that she provided evidence as to why the communities the District Council proposed to be placed together would not reflect community identity. Councillor Foot did not

provide detailed proposals of the alternative wards he suggested. However, we did note that his proposals would further divide Aldingham parish and would necessitate parish warding. We did not consider that the further division of Aldingham parish would reflect community identity in this instance.

107 We noted that the District Council's proposals for Crake Valley and Low Furness & Swarthmoor wards divide the parish of Urswick. However, it uses the existing parish ward boundary. Its proposed two-member Crake Valley & Swarthmoor ward and single-member Low Furness ward would secure variances of 1% and -6% respectively by 2009. The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Crake Valley and Low Furness wards; their proposals secure variances of -11% and 10%. However, we did not consider that they provided sufficient evidence in their submission to justify their proposals and the electoral inequality that would result.

108 Despite the opposition to multi-member wards, noted in paragraph 50, the existing arrangements provide for multi-member wards, and we considered that the Council's proposals would result in sensible ward boundaries and further improve electoral equality. Therefore we have decided to adopt its proposals as our draft recommendations for the area currently covered by Crake Valley and Low Furness & Swarthmoor wards.

109 Both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed to retain the existing wards of Cartmel and Holker. The District Council also proposed to retain the existing Grange ward. Its proposals would secure variances of -8%, -9% and 16% by 2009. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals Grange ward is split into three single-member wards and includes three parishes to the north of Grange. The three parishes would comprise the Lindale area. The Liberal Democrats' proposals would secure variances of -8%, -9%, -8%, 15% and -11%.

110 We received one further submission in relation to these wards. Councillor Vatcher opposed option two of the District Council's proposals, stating that combining Grange ward with Cartmel ward would not reflect community identity. He agreed with the Liberal Democrats' proposals, and asked that the Lindale area be included with the proposed Grange ward. We note that Lindale is geographically close to Grange. However, we consider that the level of electoral imbalance resulting from the Liberal Democrats scheme has not been justified with strong community identity evidence.

111 The District Council had consulted on a second option which created four single-member wards from the single-member wards of Cartmel and Holker and the two-member Grange ward. It proposed two single-member wards for Grange-over-Sands parish and a single-member ward comprising the west part of Grange-over-Sands parish and the Cartmel and Allithwaite wards of the parish of Lower Allithwaite. The fourth single-member ward would comprise the parish of Lower Holker and the Upper Holker ward of the parish of Lower Allithwaite. The District Council stated that, during consultation, this proposed ward has 'not produced any adverse comments and is thought to be a natural community link'. The District Council consulted on the second option and stated that the proposals 'would retain local community identity and significantly improve electoral equality'.

112 We noted that the District Council did not provide evidence for its proposals to retain the existing arrangements for Cartmel, Holker and Grange wards, with Grange

ward returning a 16% variance by 2009. Having looked at option two provided by the Council we noted that the four wards of Cartmel, Holker, Grange North and Grange South would secure variances of 6%, 0%, 5% and 5% respectively by 2009. Having considered the proposed four single-member wards we noted that they provided for strong boundaries by utilising existing parish ward boundaries and established good electoral equality. We have therefore decided to adopt the District Council's option two proposals as our draft recommendations in this area.

113 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 14, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for the above wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 9 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

114 Table 9 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2004 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2009.

Table 9: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Draft recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	52	52	51	51
Number of wards	47	47	45	45
Average number of electors per councillor	1,594	1,689	1,625	1,722
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	16	16	6	4
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	4	0	0

115 As shown in Table 9, our draft recommendations for South Lakeland District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 16 to six. By 2009 only four wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to decrease the council size and are recommending a council size of 51 members. As stated previously, due to the lack of evidence provided regarding community identities we based the majority of our decisions on electoral equality. However, we would invite further representations at Stage Three.

Draft recommendation

South Lakeland District Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 45 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

117 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies with district councils.² If a district council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

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

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

² Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

Draft recommendation

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

120 The parish of Ulverston is currently divided into six parish wards, Ulverston Central, Ulverston East, Ulverston North, Ulverston South, Ulverston Town and Ulverston West, returning three councillors each. The District Council proposed that Ulverston parish ward should continue to be served by 18 councillors. As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to amend the district ward boundaries in the town. Therefore we propose that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area.

Draft recommendation

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

121 The parish of Windermere is currently divided into four parish wards, Windermere Applethwaite, Windermere Bowness South, Windermere Bowness North and Windermere Town, returning five councillors each. The District Council proposed that Windermere parish should continue to be served by 20 councillors. As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to amend the district ward boundaries in the town. Therefore we propose that each parish ward be coincident with the new district wards in the area. We note that Windermere Applethwaite parish ward would have fewer electors, but as there is currently no requirement for electoral equality we are content with this proposal. However, we would welcome comments at Stage Three.

Draft recommendation

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

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

123 As part of our draft recommendations we are proposing to divide the current Grange parish between three district wards of Cartmel, Grange North and Grange South. Therefore it has been necessary to create three new parish wards and reallocate councillors between them. We propose that the new parish wards of

Grange North, Grange South and Grange West be represented by four councillors, four councillors and one councillor respectively. The boundaries will follow the district ward boundaries that divide the parish.

Draft recommendation

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

5 What happens next?

124 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for South Lakeland contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 26 February 2007. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

125 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for South Lakeland and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Troutbeck parish ward of Lakes parish to be a difficult judgement between the statutory criteria. This was due to the lack of evidence received from local interested parties during Stage One. In this case we have sought to achieve the best levels of electoral equality in the absence of any evidence reflecting the other two criteria, and would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

126 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Manager
South Lakeland Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Submissions can also be made online at
www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm.

127 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of South Lakeland District Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

128 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

6 Mapping

Draft recommendations for South Lakeland District Council

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

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

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

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

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

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

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

Appendix B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

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

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