

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Knowsley

September 2002

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WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of the electoral arrangements for Knowsley on 4 December 2001. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us to complete the work of the LGCE.

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

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

- **in 14 of the 22 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and five wards vary by more than 20% from the average;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 16 wards and by more than 20% in eight wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 88–89) are that:

- **Knowsley Borough Council should have 63 councillors, three fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 22 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one.**

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

- **In 18 of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average for the borough by 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Halewood, Knowsley, Prescot and Tarbock;**
- **a reduction in the number and redistribution of councillors serving Whiston Town Council.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 3 September 2002. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is**

therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.

- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 28 October 2002:

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

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1 Central	3	Part of Cherryfield ward; part of Kirkby Central ward; part of Northwood ward	1
2 Cherryfield	3	Part of Cherryfield ward; part of Whitefield ward	1
3 Halewood North	3	Part of Halewood parish (the proposed Halewood North parish ward); part of Tarbock parish (the proposed Tarbock South parish ward)	2 and 3
4 Halewood South	3	Part of Halewood parish (the proposed Halewood South parish ward)	3
5 Halewood West	3	Part of Halewood parish (the proposed Halewood West parish ward)	3
6 Longview	3	Part of Knowsley parish (Knowsley Park South parish ward); part of Longview ward; part of Prescott West ward	2
7 Northwood	3	Part of Kirkby Central ward; part of Northwood ward; part of Tower Hill ward	1
8 Page Moss	3	Part of Page Moss ward; part of Princess ward	2
9 Park	3	Part of Park ward; part of Whitefield ward; part of Tower Hill ward	1
10 Prescott East	3	Part of Prescott parish (the proposed Prescott Central, Prescott North East and Prescott South East parish wards)	2
11 Prescott West	3	Part of Knowsley parish (Knowsley Park South parish ward); part of Prescott parish (the proposed Prescott North West parish ward)	1 and 2
12 Roby	3	Part of Roby ward	2
13 St Bartholemews	3	Part of Longview ward; part of Page Moss ward; part of Roby ward; part of St Michaels ward; part of Swanside ward	2
14 St Gabriels	3	Part of Roby ward; part of St Gabriels ward; part of Tarbock parish (the proposed Tarbock North parish ward)	2
15 St Michaels	3	Part of Prescott West ward; part of St Gabriels ward; part of St Michaels ward	2
16 Shevington	3	Part of Tower Hill ward	1
17 Stockbridge	3	Part of Knowsley parish (the proposed Knowsley Cantril Farm parish ward); part of Princess ward	2
18 Swanside	3	Part of Swanside ward	2
19 Whiston North	3	Part of Whiston parish (Whiston North/Delph parish ward; the proposed Whiston West parish ward; the proposed Whiston East parish ward)	2
20 Whiston South	3	Cronton parish; part of Whiston parish (the proposed Whiston South parish ward)	2
21 Whitefield	3	Part of Cherryfield ward; part of Kirkby Central ward; part of Park ward; part of Whitefield ward	1

Notes: 1 The borough contains six parishes and the unparished areas of Huyton and Kirkby.

2 The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Knowsley

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Central	3	5,101	1,700	-3	5,025	1,675	-5
2 Cherryfield	3	5,543	1,848	6	5,525	1,842	4
3 Halewood North	3	4,431	1,477	-16	4,902	1,634	-8
4 Halewood South	3	5,247	1,749	0	5,211	1,737	-2
5 Halewood West	3	5,208	1,736	-1	5,447	1,816	3
6 Longview	3	6,016	2,005	15	5,471	1,824	3
7 Northwood	3	5,192	1,731	-1	5,178	1,726	-2
8 Page Moss	3	5,145	1,715	-2	5,136	1,712	-3
9 Park	3	4,858	1,619	-7	4,786	1,595	-10
10 Prescot East	3	5,174	1,725	-1	5,380	1,793	1
11 Prescot West	3	5,300	1,767	1	5,314	1,771	0
12 Roby	3	5,754	1,918	10	5,745	1,915	8
13 St Bartholemews	3	5,535	1,845	5	5,458	1,819	3
14 St Gabriels	3	5,249	1,750	0	5,229	1,743	-1
15 St Michaels	3	5,449	1,816	4	5,500	1,833	4
16 Shevington	3	4,276	1,425	-19	5,036	1,679	-5
17 Stockbridge	3	5,624	1,875	7	5,395	1,798	2
18 Swanside	3	5,344	1,781	2	5,825	1,942	10
19 Whiston North	3	5,350	1,783	2	5,336	1,779	1
20 Whiston South	3	5,677	1,892	8	5,662	1,887	7
21 Whitefield	3	4,813	1,604	-8	4,785	1,595	-10
Totals	63	110,286	-	-	111,346	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,751	-	-	1,767	-

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Knowsley. Knowsley's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in March 1980 (Report no. 378).

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Knowsley was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fifth edition published in October 2001). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

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

of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

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

Table 3: Stages of the review

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

10 Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Knowsley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Merseyside Police, the Local Government Association, Lancashire Association of Parish Councils (including Merseyside), Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Knowsley Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 25 March 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 3 September 2002 and will end on 28 October 2002, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

14 The borough of Knowsley is at the heart of the North West region and is one of the five metropolitan boroughs which comprise Merseyside. It benefits from strong transport and communication links, with the M57 and M62 motorways and the A580 East Lancashire Road intersecting the area. The Borough comprises an amalgamation of the urban areas of Kirkby, Huyton and Halewood and the more rural and green belt land of Knowsley Park and Tarbock parish.

15 The electorate of the borough is 110,286 (February 2001). The Council presently has 66 members who are elected from 22 wards, three of which are relatively rural (Halewood East, Knowsley Park and Whiston South) and the remainder being predominantly urban. Each ward is currently represented by three councillors. The borough contains six parishes – Cronton, Halewood, Knowsley, Prescot, Tarbock and Whiston – and the unparished areas of Kirkby and Huyton. The unparished areas of the borough comprise 60% of the total electorate.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,671 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,687 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 14 of the 22 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average, five wards by more than 20% and two wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Halewood East ward where each councillor represents 55% more electors than the borough average.

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

Map 1: Existing wards in Knowsley

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Cantril Farm	3	3,578	1,193	-29	3,567	1,189	-30
2 Cherryfield	3	4,266	1,422	-15	4,236	1,412	-16
3 Halewood East	3	7,765	2,588	55	8,234	2,745	63
4 Halewood South	3	4,233	1,411	-16	4,200	1,400	-17
5 Halewood West	3	4,353	1,451	-13	4,633	1,544	-8
6 Kirkby Central	3	4,601	1,534	-8	4,465	1,488	-12
7 Knowsley Park	3	5,030	1,677	0	4,876	1,625	-4
8 Longview	3	4,014	1,338	-20	3,553	1,184	-30
9 Northwood	3	3,511	1,170	-30	3,157	1,052	-38
10 Page Moss	3	5,254	1,751	5	5,240	1,747	4
11 Park	3	5,812	1,937	16	5,703	1,901	13
12 Prescott East	3	4,489	1,496	-10	4,492	1,497	-11
13 Prescott West	3	4,882	1,627	-3	5,167	1,722	2
14 Princess	3	4,038	1,346	-19	3,820	1,273	-25
15 Roby	3	7,055	2,352	41	7,050	2,350	39
16 St Gabriels	3	4,497	1,499	-10	4,426	1,475	-13
17 St Michaels	3	4,279	1,426	-15	4,267	1,422	-16
18 Swanside	3	6,009	2,003	20	6,488	2,163	28
19 Tower Hill	3	6,176	2,059	23	7,336	2,445	45
20 Whiston North	3	5,158	1,719	3	5,144	1,715	2
21 Whiston South	3	5,869	1,956	17	5,854	1,951	16
22 Whitefield	3	5,417	1,806	8	5,438	1,813	7
Totals	66	110,286	-	-	111,346	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,671	-	-	1,687	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Northwood ward were relatively over-represented by 30%, while electors in Halewood East ward were relatively under-represented by 55%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

19 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. The LGCE received seven representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrat group on the Council and a borough councillor, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

Knowsley Borough Council

20 Following consultation with parish and town councils, the Borough Council proposed a borough-wide scheme based on a council size of 63, a reduction of three. It based its proposal for a reduction in council size on its new political management structure (cabinet with leader), its six area forums and its committee structure. The scheme achieved an improved level of electoral equality, with no ward varying by more than 10% from the borough average by 2006.

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Liberal Democrats

21 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') proposed a decrease in council size from 66 to 57, arguing that this was the number of councillors needed for the new political management structure in Knowsley. Its scheme also resulted in improved levels of electoral equality, with only one ward varying above 10% from the borough average by 2006.

Parish and town councils

22 Whiston Town Council proposed a modification to the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Whiston North and Whiston South wards. It proposed the transfer of a small number of roads between wards in order to better reflect the communities within the wards. It further made proposals to reduce its council membership 'to 14 or 15' and to rename its town wards, although no specific names were suggested.

Other representations

23 Borough Councillor Fisher proposed a 24-member council, with wards based on the six existing area forums in the borough, although only limited information regarding detailed ward boundaries or electorate figures were submitted. Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party supported the Borough Council's proposals, however it also supported Whiston Town Council's boundary modification between Whiston North and South wards. It further proposed that Tarbock parish should be split between St Gabriels ward (the area to the north of the M62 motorway) and Halewood North ward (to the south).

24 Valley Community Association requested that no changes be made to the existing Whitefield ward. It also proposed reducing the number of councillors per ward to two and altering the electoral cycle. A local resident of the Huyton community, currently represented in Prescott West ward, suggested that such an association was 'illogical', and that the area of Huyton to the south of the M57, currently in Prescot West ward, should be included in Huyton ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

26 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Knowsley is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended); the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'.

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

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

29 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate forecasts

30 Since 1975 there has been a 13% decrease in the electorate of Knowsley borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting a 1% increase in the electorate from 110,286 to 111,346 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Halewood, although a significant amount is also expected in Prescott and northern Kirkby. However, a number of wards, particularly in central and eastern Kirkby and parts of Huyton, would see a static or slight decline in electorate. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

31 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council size

32 Knowsley Borough Council presently has 66 members. After giving consideration to council sizes of 66, 63, 60 and 57, the Borough Council proposed a council of 63 members representing 21 wards. It included extensive evidence to support this reduction, detailing the new cabinet style of political management structure that it formally adopted in May of this year, its area forums and its committee structure. It considered the attendance rates for its committees and asserted that committee sizes of 18 would 'enable the committees to work effectively in what is a new and developing role' and 'provide the opportunity for less experienced members to gain a full understanding of the work of the Council and allow all members to participate fully in the Council's business'. The Borough Council also considered the impact on councillors' time of the new political management structure, and the number of hours on average worked at present by councillors in the borough. After careful and extensive consideration, the borough council proposed a council of 63 members.

33 The Liberal Democrats proposed reducing the council size to 57, representing 19 wards. The Liberal Democrats' submission was the 57-member scheme which the Borough Council had considered before submitting the 63-member version. The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council had proposed that the Borough Council submit both options to The Boundary Committee. However, this proposal was rejected by a majority vote of the Council. Consequently, the Liberal Democrats submitted the 57-member option independently. They argued that it 'provides for a suitable number of elected members, providing them all with a valuable role to play, and addresses the major inequalities of the current system'. However, after reviewing the argumentation received from the Liberal Democrats, the Committee was of the opinion that, while the general evidence was adequate, further argumentation regarding the specifics of how Knowsley Borough Council would operate under the reduced council size was required.

34 Accordingly, the Committee requested further evidence to this effect, which the Liberal Democrats provided. They included descriptions of the political management structure employed by Knowsley Borough Council, and their opinion of the number of councillors needed on committees in order for them to work effectively. They also considered councillors' representational roles on outside bodies. They further argued that 'any further reduction in the size of the council would start to impede its role and function while any number greater than 57 will result in diminishing roles for elected members due to the system of cabinet with leader being adopted by [Knowsley Borough] Council'.

35 We received two further submissions regarding council size. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed a council size of 24, a reduction of 42. He argued that 'it is indefensible to keep the current level of councillors' and that 24 members 'seems commensurate with the new political system put in place by the council'. As detailed previously, he broadly proposed eight three-member wards based around the existing area forums, but only provided estimate electorate figures. Valley Community Association proposed that all wards should be represented by two members each, therefore resulting in a council size of 44, a reduction of 22.

36 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One with regard to council size. As detailed previously, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, the number of councillors representing each ward in metropolitan districts must be divisible by three. Therefore, we cannot accept the proposal from Valley Community Association to reduce the number of councillors per ward to two, nor its council size of 44. We acknowledge Borough Councillor Fisher's proposal to reduce council size by 42 members, to 24. However, we note that there is little local support for such a dramatic reduction in membership of the council, nor do we believe that there is sufficient evidence to suggest how a council size of 24 would operate to a higher standard or provide for convenient and effective local government in Knowsley. We therefore do not propose adopting the proposal for a council size of 24.

37 Having considered the proposals regarding council size from the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, we note the broad consensus for a reduction in council size. We have carefully considered all the argumentation and evidence provided and, whilst we acknowledge that the Liberal Democrats provided evidence of the implications for Knowsley Borough Council under their reduced council size, we consider that the Borough Council's argumentation provided more thorough, detailed justification for a reduction of three members, to a council size of 63. We note that the Borough Council's proposals received support from the Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party. We further note that, having reviewed the allocation of councillors between the areas in Knowsley as defined under the two proposals, the Borough Council's 63-member scheme would provide for a better distribution of councillors between areas, whilst utilising more clearly defined boundaries.

38 Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we conclude that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 63 members.

Electoral arrangements

39 In formulating our draft recommendations for Knowsley, we have noted and have had regard to the fact that the borough contains significant geographic barriers, such as motorways, main roads, railways and areas of rural and green belt land, a mixture of parished and unparished areas and a dispersed configuration of communities, all of which inhibit the achievement of higher levels of electoral equality which might be expected in the more urban metropolitan boroughs. The borough-wide submissions, on the whole, achieved some levels of consensus in utilising these major barriers as strong ward boundaries between areas, which the Committee believes would be in the best interests of the local community to retain. However, as detailed previously, the number of councillors representing each ward in metropolitan boroughs must be divisible by three and, as outlined in the *Guidance*, we do not propose putting forward wards which return more than three councillors, as we are of the view that numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate. We are therefore of the view that a uniform pattern of three-member wards in a metropolitan borough area would facilitate effective and convenient local government. This approach has implications for the warding pattern within the borough and, in order to facilitate a uniform three-member ward scheme, it has been necessary to breach these significant barriers in some places, in order to ensure the best allocation of councillors between the areas in the borough and achieve acceptable levels of electoral equality across the borough as a whole.

40 As detailed previously, we do not propose adopting Borough Councillor Fisher's proposals for a council size of 24, as we are of the view that there is insufficient argumentation and little evidence of local support for such a significant reduction. However, we note that he based his proposed wards around the existing area forums, which comprise defined geographic areas within the borough and, in general, do not breach the significant boundaries referred to above. Similarly, although the Committee does not intend adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal for a council size of 57, we recognise that their accompanying scheme retains the use of the significant boundaries referred to above as often as possible.

41 Having considered the borough-wide schemes received during Stage One and in the light of our decision to base our recommendations on a council size of 63, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme, particularly in view of the degree of consensus behind large elements of its proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between achieving good levels of electoral equality and satisfying the other statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. Given that we are proposing to base the draft recommendations on a council size of 63, our capacity to endorse the Liberal Democrats' proposals based on a council size of 57 is limited. However, we do

recognise that some aspects of the Liberal Democrats' scheme are compatible with a council size of 63, and we have sought to adopt any areas of consensus as part of our draft recommendations. In order to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Borough Council's proposals in two areas: Halewood and Whiston. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a) Cherryfield, Kirkby Central, Northwood, Park, Tower Hill and Whitefield wards;
- b) Knowsley Park, Prescot East, Prescot West, Whiston North and Whiston South wards;
- c) Cantril Farm, Page Moss, Princess and Swanside wards;
- d) Longview, Roby, St Gabriels and St Michaels wards;
- e) Halewood East, Halewood South and Halewood West wards.

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

Cherryfield, Kirkby Central, Northwood, Park, Tower Hill and Whitefield wards

43 These six wards are situated in the north of the borough, in the unparished area of Kirkby, to the north of the A580 East Lancashire Road, and are each represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the numbers of electors per councillor in Cherryfield, Kirkby Central and Northwood wards is 15%, 8% and 30% below the borough average initially (16%, 12% and 38% below the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Park, Tower Hill and Whitefield wards is 16%, 23% and 8% above the borough average initially (13%, 45% and 7% above the borough average by 2006).

44 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the significant boundary of the A580 East Lancashire Road, therefore retaining a pattern of six wards to the north of the A580, albeit with changes to ward boundaries and ward names. The Borough Council proposed transferring the majority of the Tower Hill Estate, to the south of Shevington's Lane, into a revised Park ward, and renaming the remainder of Tower Hill ward as Shevington ward. The boundary of the proposed Shevington ward would follow the borough boundary to the north and east, then run west along the Liverpool to Wigan railway line to Kirkby Brook, north along the brook to the paths to the west of Southcroft, Caldwell Close and Fairview, north along those paths to meet Shevington's Lane, west along Shevington's Lane and finally north along Bank Lane to the borough boundary. That area of Tower Hill Estate to the west of the proposed Shevington ward would be transferred into the revised Park ward, along with an area from the existing Whitefield ward, to the north and west of Whitefield Drive and Benwick Road. That part of the existing Park ward to the south of the Liverpool to Wigan railway would be transferred into a revised Whitefield ward. The proposed boundary of the revised Park ward would therefore be the borough boundary to the north and the proposed western boundary of Shevington ward to the east. Its south-eastern boundary would then run west along the Liverpool to Wigan railway line, then south along Whitefield Drive and Benwick Road to meet the M57, where it would run north to meet the borough boundary.

45 The Borough Council's proposed Whitefield ward would comprise the area to the east of the M57 and to the south of Whitefield Drive/Benwick Road from the existing ward, along with the area to the south of the railway from the existing Park ward, the area to the west of County Road and Webster Drive/Cherryfield Drive from the existing Kirkby Central ward and the area to the north of Bewley Drive from the existing Cherryfield ward. The northern boundary of Whitefield ward would therefore comprise the southern boundary of the proposed Park ward, detailed previously. From the eastern end of this boundary, it would run south along County Road to Webster Drive, west to Cherryfield Drive, south along Cherryfield Drive to meet Bewley Drive. After running west along Bewley Drive to meet Valley Road, the boundary would run south west to junction six of the M57, before running north along the motorway to meet Ingoe

Lane and the boundary with the proposed Park ward. The area to the west of the M57, currently in Whitefield ward, would be transferred to the proposed Cherryfield ward under the Borough Council's proposals. The boundaries of the revised Cherryfield ward would be the borough boundary to the west and the A580 to the south. The eastern boundary would run north from the A580 along Moorgate Road to Bewley Drive, then north and west along Bewley Drive to Valley Road, west along Valley Road and then north along the M57 to meet the borough boundary.

46 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the remainder of the existing Cherryfield ward, to the east of Moorgate Road and Bewley Drive, would be transferred to the proposed Central ward, which would also comprise the industrial and rural areas of the existing Northwood ward and an area from Kirkby Central ward. The western boundary of the proposed Central ward would comprise the eastern boundaries of the proposed Cherryfield and Whitefield wards, detailed previously. The ward's southern boundary would run along the A580 East Lancashire Road to meet the borough boundary, before following the borough boundary north to the existing boundary between Northwood and Shevington wards. It would then run west along this boundary to meet Simonswood Lane, south along Simonswood Lane to the junction with County Road, before running north to meet Webster Drive and the boundary with Whitefield ward, detailed previously. The remaining urban area of the existing Northwood ward would be retained in the Borough Council's proposed revised Northwood ward, which would also comprise areas from the existing Tower Hill and Kirkby Central wards. The boundaries of Northwood ward would therefore be the borough boundary and railway line to the north, County Road to the west and Simonswood Lane to the south and east.

47 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Cherryfield, Central and Northwood wards would be 6% above, 3% below and 1% below the borough average initially (4% above, 5% below and 2% below the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Park, Shevington and Whitefield wards would be 7%, 19% and 8% below the borough average initially (10%, 5% and 10% below the borough average by 2006).

48 The Liberal Democrats proposed an alternative warding pattern in this area based on five wards and 15 councillors. However they also retained the A580 East Lancashire Road as a boundary between these wards and those to the south. They proposed retaining the existing western boundary of Tower Hill ward as Bank Lane and transferring the area to the south of the railway line from the existing Tower Hill ward into their proposed Northwood ward, which would also comprise the entirety of the existing Northwood ward and an area from the existing Kirkby Central ward. The south-western boundary of the proposed Northwood ward would also serve as the eastern boundary of the Liberal Democrats' proposed Cherryfield ward, which would comprise the majority of the existing Cherryfield ward and an area from the existing Kirkby Central ward. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Valley ward would comprise that area to the west of the proposed Cherryfield ward and would consist of parts of the existing Cherryfield, Kirkby Central, Park and Whitefield wards. The remaining area of the existing Whitefield ward would be combined with the majority of the existing Park ward in the Liberal Democrats' revised Park ward.

49 We received two further submissions regarding these wards. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed two three-member wards based on the existing area forums of North Kirkby and South Kirkby. He also proposed retaining the A580 East Lancashire Road as a boundary. Valley Community Association proposed that the existing Whitefield ward remain unchanged, stating that 'if the ward was to be reduced it would then cause a disproportionate demographic figure, which would be against the spirit of the reviews'.

50 We have carefully considered all representations received for these wards. We note the proposal from Valley Community Association to retain the existing Whitefield ward. However, in order to facilitate a warding pattern which achieves adequate levels of electoral equality across the Kirkby area, based on council size of 63, it is necessary to alter the boundaries of Whitefield

ward. We cannot accept Borough Councillor Fisher's proposals for dividing the Kirkby area into two three-member wards, Kirkby North and Kirkby South, as this warding pattern would not be feasible under a council size of 63. As detailed previously, our capacity to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals is limited under our proposed council size of 63. In the Kirkby area, we note that the Liberal Democrats proposed five wards and the Borough Council proposed six wards. Under our proposed council size, a warding pattern of five wards would result in unacceptable levels of electoral equality due to the allocation of councillors being incorrect. We therefore intend adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the Kirkby area in full as part of our draft recommendations, as we believe that they strike the best balance between the statutory criteria. We note that none of the borough-wide submissions breached the significant boundary of the A580 East Lancashire Road and that there was local consensus that this major road be retained as a ward boundary. Officers from the Committee, having visited the area, concur with this view and we propose retaining the A580 East Lancashire Road as a boundary between these wards and those to the south of the road. We also note that retaining this boundary, allied with the geographic constraints of the borough boundary in this area, results in some wards which retain a slightly higher electoral variance. Furthermore, we note that linking the area of overspill from the City of Liverpool (in Fazakerley) with the area to the east of the M57 in Cherryfield ward is not ideal. However, given the geographic and borough boundary constraints, the warding pattern options in this area are limited and the Committee is content to accept that the Borough Council's proposals strike the best balance between achieving acceptable levels of electoral equality and meeting the other statutory criteria.

51 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Cherryfield, Central, Northwood, Park, Shevington and Whitefield wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large maps.

Knowsley Park, Prescot East, Prescot West, Whiston North and Whiston South wards

52 These five wards are situated in the east and centre of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Knowsley Park ward comprises the Knowsley Park North and Knowsley Park South parish wards of Knowsley parish, and is currently a detached ward. Prescot East ward comprises the Prescot North East and Prescot South East parish wards of Prescot parish. Prescot West ward comprises the Prescot Central and Prescot North West parish wards of Prescot parish and the part of the unparished area to the west of the M57 around Huyton Lane. Whiston North ward comprises the Whiston East, Whiston North/Delph and Whiston West parish wards of Whiston parish, and Whiston South ward comprises the Whiston South East and Whiston South West parish wards of Whiston parish and all of Cronton parish. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Knowsley Park, Prescot East and Prescot West wards is equal to, 10% below and 3% below the borough average initially (4% below, 11% below and 2% above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Whiston North and Whiston South wards is 3% and 17% above the borough average initially (2% and 16% above the borough average by 2006).

53 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed revised warding arrangements for this area. It proposed revising the existing Knowsley Park ward to include an area of Prescot parish, and transferring the more urban areas to the south and west of the M57 motorway into the proposed Stockbridge and Longview wards, as detailed later. It further proposed renaming the ward as Prescot West ward. The borough boundary, the existing northern boundary of Knowsley Cantril Farm parish ward and the M57 motorway would therefore comprise the western boundary of the proposed Prescot West ward, thus transferring the area of Huyton to the west of the M57 into a revised Longview ward and including the detached part of Knowsley Park ward (Knowsley Park South parish ward) in a revised Stockbridge ward, as detailed later. The A580 East Lancashire Road (Knowsley parish's boundary) would form the northern boundary of the ward, the borough boundary would form the eastern boundary of the ward and the southern boundary of the ward

would run west from the point at which the borough boundary meets St James' Road, south to meet Oliver Lyme Road, west along Warrington Road and High Street, before running south along Church Street, Sewell Street, Manchester Road and Hall Lane to meet the Liverpool to Wigan railway line. The boundary would then run west along the railway line to meet the M57 motorway and the western boundary of the ward. The Borough Council acknowledged 'the difficulty that has previously been experienced in determining electoral arrangements in this part of the borough', citing the existence of the detached ward of Knowsley Park. As detailed, the Borough Council did not propose retaining the existing detached ward. It further stated that 'Knowsley Village... in many ways identifies more readily with Prescott than with Stockbridge Village' (with which it is currently warded) and that 'physically and historically, both Knowsley Village and Prescott have close links with the Earl of Derby's Estate, based at Knowsley Hall'.

54 The Borough Council consequently proposed a revised Prescott East ward, comprising all of the existing Prescott East ward, and an area of Prescott Town centre currently in Prescott West ward. The northern boundary of the ward would comprise the southern boundary of Prescott West ward, detailed previously. From the point where the railway line meets the M57, the boundary would run south along the motorway, before running east along the parish boundary, which would form the southern boundary of the ward. The eastern boundary would be formed by the borough boundary. The Borough Council acknowledged that its proposals for Prescott East and Prescott West wards would have implications for the electoral arrangements for Knowsley and Prescott parishes, however it offered no specific proposals for these arrangements.

55 The Borough Council also proposed revised warding arrangements for Whiston North and Whiston South wards. Its revised Whiston North ward would comprise all of the existing Whiston North ward, together with a small area of the existing Whiston South ward. The boundary between Prescott and Whiston parishes would form the northern boundary of Whiston North ward, and the eastern boundary of the ward would be formed by the borough boundary. The southern boundary would initially follow the existing boundary, running west along the railway line and south along Dragon Lane. It would then run south along Windy Arbor Road, west along Willis Lane, south along the rear of the properties on the western side of Bishop Drive, Priory Close and Halsnead Drive to meet the disused railway at the southern end of these properties. The boundary would then run along the disused railway to meet the parish boundary, before running north along the parish boundary to meet the boundary with Prescott parish and the northern boundary of the ward. The Borough Council's proposed Whiston South ward would comprise the remainder of Whiston parish and all of Cronton parish. The Borough Council acknowledged that its proposals for these wards would have implications for the electoral arrangements for the parish of Whiston, but offered no specific proposals for these arrangements.

56 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Prescott East and Prescott West wards would be 1% below and 1% above the borough average initially (1% above and equal to the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Whiston North and Whiston South wards would be 5% above the borough average in both wards initially (3% and 4% above the borough average by 2006).

57 The Liberal Democrats proposed alternative warding arrangements for this area. They proposed combining the Knowsley Cantril Farm and Knowsley Park North (detached) parish wards with the majority of the existing Knowsley Park ward in a new Stockbridge ward. However, they proposed transferring Knowsley Park South parish ward, to the south of the M57, into a revised Longview ward. They proposed transferring an area of the existing Prescott East ward into the existing Prescott West ward to form a new Prescott ward. The area to the west of the M57, currently in Prescott West ward, would be transferred into a revised St Michaels ward, thus utilising the M57 as the western boundary of the proposed Prescott ward. The remaining area of Prescott parish would be transferred into a revised Whiston North ward. The proposed Whiston North ward would also contain an area of the existing Whiston North ward. That area of

Whiston parish between the Liberal Democrats' proposed Whiston North ward and the M62 motorway would form a revised Whiston South ward, thus transferring that part of Whiston parish below the M62 and the entirety of Cronton parish into a revised Halewood North, detailed later in this report.

58 We received four further submissions regarding this area during Stage One. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed two three-member wards for this area, Prescott & Knowsley Village ward, comprising all of Prescott parish and the Knowsley Park North parish ward of Knowsley parish, and Whiston ward, comprising the entirety of Whiston and Cronton parishes. He stated that 'Knowsley Village would seem more appropriately located with Prescott, rather than crossing the M57 motorway or A580'. Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party and Whiston Town Council proposed an amendment to the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Whiston North and South wards, from Willis Lane to the railway line. They proposed running the boundary northwards behind the properties on the western side of Paradise Lane, east along Dragon Lane to the backs of the properties on the southern side of Ropers Bridge Close, then north to meet the railway line. Whiston Town Council stated that the amendment it proposed would 'mirror the needs and aspirations of the local communities much more effectively'. It also made proposals regarding its internal electoral arrangements, which are discussed in detail later in this report. A local resident of Jacqueline Drive in Huyton, currently in Prescott West ward, proposed that 'the residents of Huyton, that were part of an unnatural association with Prescott West ward, are returned to a Huyton community'.

59 We have carefully considered all representations received for these wards. As detailed previously, all borough-wide schemes were unanimous in retaining the A580 East Lancashire Road/Knowsley parish boundary as a boundary between the Kirkby area and the parished area to the south, and we intend retaining this boundary, as detailed earlier. We note that Borough Councillor Fisher's proposals retain this boundary, however we cannot accept his proposals for warding arrangements in Prescott and Whiston, as they are not compatible with a council size of 63 and would result in unacceptable levels of electoral equality. We recognise that the Knowsley Park and Knowsley Village areas of Knowsley parish, to the north of the M57, are geographically separate from the remainder of Knowsley parish. We also note that two of the three borough-wide schemes propose linking the Knowsley Village area with the parish of Prescott, and we agree that this would provide the best reflection of the communities within this area. We do not consider that linking Knowsley Village with the Stockbridge area, thus breaching the M57 motorway, would better reflect the communities concerned. As a consequence, we cannot accept the proposals from the Liberal Democrats regarding the remainder of the Prescott and Whiston area, however we note that they do propose utilising the M57 as the western boundary of their proposed Prescott ward, in agreement with the Borough Council and the proposal of a local resident. As detailed previously, we intend basing the majority of our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals and therefore propose to adopt the Borough Council's Prescott West and Prescott East wards, as we believe that they provide the best balance between the statutory criteria and have received broad local support. We also acknowledge the request from the local resident of Jacqueline Drive and note that, under the Borough Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals and our draft recommendations, the unparished area to the west of the M57 motorway would be transferred from Prescott West ward into Longview ward, more recognisably part of the Huyton community.

60 As a consequence of our proposals for Prescott parish, we cannot adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals in Whiston parish, as they proposed combining areas of Prescott and Whiston parishes. We believe that the Borough Council's proposals provide the best balance between our statutory criteria in Whiston parish and intend adopting them as part of our draft recommendations, subject to the ward boundary amendment proposed by Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party and Whiston Town Council. We acknowledge this proposal and, officers having visited the area, agree that this minor boundary amendment would better reflect the communities within Whiston. We therefore intend adopting the Borough Council's proposals for Whiston North and Whiston South, subject to the above amendment, as part of our draft

recommendations. Our proposals for the electoral arrangements for Knowsley Parish Council and Prescott and Whiston Town Councils are discussed later in this report.

61 Under our draft recommendations, Prescott East ward would comprise the existing Prescott North East and Prescott South East parish wards (renamed Prescott East and Prescott South parish wards, respectively) and the revised Prescott Central parish ward of Prescott parish, and Prescott West ward would comprise the revised Prescott North West parish ward of Prescott parish and the revised Knowsley Park North parish ward of Knowsley parish. Whiston North ward would comprise the existing Whiston North/Delph parish ward, the proposed Whiston East parish ward and the revised Whiston West parish ward of Whiston parish, and Whiston South ward would comprise the proposed Whiston South parish ward of Whiston parish and all of Cronton parish. The number of electors per councillor in Prescott East and Prescott West wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals. The number of electors per councillor in Whiston North and Whiston South wards would be 2% and 8% above the borough average initially (1% and 7% above the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large maps.

Cantril Farm, Page Moss, Princess and Swanside wards

62 These four wards are situated in the west of the borough and cover the unparished area of Huyton and part of the western part of Knowsley parish. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Cantril Farm and Page Moss wards is 29% below and 5% above the borough average initially (30% below and 4% above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Princess and Swanside wards is 19% below and 20% above the borough average initially (25% below and 28% above the borough average by 2006).

63 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed combining the area known as Stockbridge Village, comprising the Knowsley Cantril Farm and Knowsley Park North (detached) parish wards of Knowsley parish, with the unparished area of the Woolfall Heath Estate, to the north of Princess Drive, St Davids Road and Stockbridge Lane, currently in Princess ward, in a new Stockbridge ward. The Borough Council acknowledged that 'it would have been preferable to include the whole of Woolfall Heath Estate within this ward, however it has been necessary to divide the estate in order to achieve electoral equality'. The remainder of the existing Princess ward, to the south of the southern boundary of Stockbridge ward, would be combined with an area of the existing Page Moss ward to the north of Western Avenue and to the west of Twig Lane, in a revised Page Moss ward. The remainder of Page Moss ward would be transferred into a new St Bartholemews ward, as detailed later. The Borough Council proposed retaining the majority of Swanside ward as a revised ward, transferring the small area to the east of Windsor Road/Pilch Lane East into the proposed St Bartholemews ward, detailed subsequently in this report. The western boundary of the proposed Swanside ward would be formed by the borough boundary, and the southern boundary would be the railway line. Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Page Moss, Stockbridge and Swanside wards would be 2% below, 7% above and 2% above the borough average initially (3% below, 2% above and 10% above the borough average by 2006).

64 At Stage One, the Liberal Democrats proposed combining the Knowsley Cantril Farm and Knowsley Park North (detached) parish wards with Knowsley Park parish ward in a revised Stockbridge ward, as detailed previously. They proposed combining the entirety of the existing Princess ward with an area of the existing Page Moss ward in a revised Page Moss ward. They also proposed that the majority of the existing Swanside ward be retained, however, proposed transferring those electors to the east of Windsor Road into a new St Bartholemews ward.

65 We received one further submission regarding these wards during Stage One. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed combining the existing Cantril Farm, Longview and Princess wards with the Knowsley Park North (detached) parish ward of Knowsley parish, in a new three-

member ward, and combining Swanside and Roby in a single ward. However, he offered no new ward name for either ward.

66 We have carefully considered all representations received during Stage One regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend adopting the Borough Council's proposals for the majority of the borough as our draft recommendations. We also note that there are elements of consensus between the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area and that the proposals, in general, use readily identifiable boundaries. We acknowledge that combining the Stockbridge Estate with the Woolfall Heath Estate to the south of the River Alt is not ideal, however this is necessary both to facilitate a good scheme across the borough as a whole and as a consequence of our decision to retain the M57 as a strong boundary between the urban areas and the green belt land of Knowsley Park. Transferring the Woolfall Heath Estate from Stockbridge ward into the proposed Page Moss ward would result in unacceptable levels of electoral equality in both wards of 19% below the borough average in Stockbridge and 18% above the borough average in Page Moss ward. Consequently we are content to adopt the Borough Council's proposals in this area. We note Borough Councillor Fisher's proposal to for two three-member wards for the unparished area of Huyton. However, under our recommended council size of 63, the wards are not feasible and consequently we cannot adopt them as part of our draft recommendations.

67 Under our draft recommendations, Stockbridge ward would comprise the revised Cantril Farm parish ward of Knowsley parish and an unparished area, and both Page Moss and Swanside wards would comprise unparished areas of Huyton, as detailed previously. The number of electors per councillor in Page Moss, Stockbridge and Swanside wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals. Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large maps.

Longview, Roby, St Gabriels and St Michaels wards

68 These four wards are also situated in the west of the borough in the unparished area of Huyton, and are each represented by three councillors. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Longview and Roby wards is 20% below and 41% above the borough average initially (30% below and 39% above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in St Gabriels and St Michaels wards is 10% and 15% below the borough average initially (13% and 16% below the borough average by 2006).

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring the Knowsley South parish ward of Knowsley parish into a revised Longview ward, as detailed previously. The revised Longview ward would also comprise part of the existing Longview ward, the area to the north of Salerno Drive and part of St Michaels ward (the area to the north of Huyton Lane and to the east of Longview Lane). The southern boundary of Longview ward would also serve as the northern boundary of the Borough Council's proposed St Michaels ward, which would comprise that part of the existing Prescott West ward to the south of Huyton Lane, that part of the existing St Gabriels ward to the north of the railway line around Wood Lane/Seel Road, and that part of St Michaels ward to the north-west of Huyton Lane, the north-east of Marshfield Close and to the east of Knowsley Hey School.

70 The southern boundary of the revised St Michaels ward, namely the Liverpool to Manchester railway line detailed above, would form the northern boundary of the Borough Council's proposed St Gabriels ward, which would comprise the majority of the existing St Gabriels ward (less the area to the north of the railway line), an area of the existing Roby ward to the east of The Park, and the entirety of Tarbock parish.

71 The Borough Council proposed retaining the majority of Roby ward, less the small area to the east of The Park detailed previously, and including the area to the north of the railway line in St Bartholemews ward, also detailed previously. That area to the north of the railway line and to

the east of Swanside ward would form a new St Bartholemews ward under the Borough Council's proposals. This proposed ward would comprise that part of the existing Swanside ward to the east of Windsor Road/Pilch Lane East, the remaining area of Page Moss ward, that part of Longview ward to the south of Salerno Drive and that part of St Michaels ward to the south-east of Huyton Lane, and south-west of Marshfield Close and Knowsley Hey School, as detailed above.

72 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Longview and Roby wards would be 15% and 10% above the borough average initially (3% and 8% above the borough average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in St Bartholemews, St Gabriels and St Michaels wards would be 5%, 6% and 4% above the borough average initially (3%, 4% and 4% above the borough average by 2006).

73 At Stage One, the Liberal Democrats' proposed wards for this area showed large amounts of consensus with the Borough Council's wards. The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring Knowsley Park South parish ward from the existing Knowsley Park ward into a revised Longview ward, thus using the M57 as the revised Longview ward's northern and eastern boundaries. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Longview ward would therefore comprise the same area as the Borough Council's, minus those electors to the south of the northern part of Salerno Drive, who would be transferred into a new St Bartholemews ward. The Liberal Democrats' proposed St Michaels ward would be bounded by the same boundaries as the Borough Council's proposed St Michaels ward, detailed previously.

74 The Liberal Democrats proposed combining the existing St Gabriels ward, less the area to the north of the Liverpool to Manchester railway line being transferred to St Michaels ward, with a small area of the existing Roby ward and the area of Tarbock parish to the north of the M62 motorway, in a revised St Gabriels ward. This would entail the creation of two parish wards in Tarbock parish, split by the M62, although the Liberal Democrats offered no specific proposals as to the internal electoral arrangements of the parish. Their proposed Roby ward would comprise the majority of the existing Roby ward, less that area to the east of The Rooley and Bracklow Brow, which would be transferred into St Gabriels ward. The Liberal Democrats' proposed St Bartholemews ward would comprise the same area as the Borough Council's proposed ward, and that area to the south of the northern part of Salerno Drive from Longview ward, detailed above.

75 We received two further submissions regarding these wards during Stage One. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed combining St Gabriels, St Michaels and Page Moss wards in a single three-member ward, however offered no new name for the ward. Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party proposed that the area of Tarbock parish to the north of the M62 be in a borough ward with the St Gabriels area, and the remaining area of Tarbock parish, to the south of the M62, be in a ward with the northern part of Halewood parish, in order to better reflect the two distinct communities within the parish.

76 We have carefully considered all representations received regarding these wards during Stage One. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, and we note that there are areas of consensus between the Borough Council's scheme and the Liberal Democrats' scheme for these wards. We therefore intend adopting the Borough Council's proposals for Longview, Roby, St Bartholemews and St Michaels wards. However, we propose an amendment to the Borough Council's proposals for St Gabriels ward. We note the proposal from both the Liberal Democrats and Knowsley South Constituency Labour party to combine those electors to the north of the M62 in Tarbock parish, currently in Halewood East ward, with those electors currently in St Gabriels ward. We concur that the resultant wards would better reflect the two different communities of Tarbock parish and intend adopting this proposal as part of our draft recommendations. Our proposals for the electoral arrangements for Tarbock Parish Council are discussed later in this report. As detailed previously, our recommendation to utilise the M57 as a boundary between the parished area of

Prescot and Whiston ensures that the area to the west of the M57 currently in Prescot West ward is transferred into Longview ward and the Huyton community, as proposed by a local resident.

77 Under our draft recommendations, Longview ward would comprise the existing Knowsley Park South parish ward of Knowsley parish and an unparished area of Huyton, St Gabriels ward would comprise the proposed Tarbock North parish ward of Tarbock parish and an unparished area of Huyton, and Roby, St Bartholemews and St Michaels wards would comprise unparished areas of Huyton. The number of electors per councillor in Longview, Roby, St Bartholemews and St Michaels wards would be the same as under the Borough Council's proposals. The number of electors per councillor in St Gabriels ward would be equal to the borough average initially (1% below the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large maps.

Halewood East, Halewood South and Halewood West wards

78 These three wards are situated in the south of the borough and are each represented by three councillors. Halewood East ward comprises the Halewood East parish ward of Halewood parish and the entirety of Tarbock parish. Halewood South and Halewood West wards comprise the parish wards of the same names of Halewood parish. Under the existing arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Halewood East, Halewood South and Halewood West wards is 55% above, 16% below and 13% below the borough average initially (63% above, 17% below and 8% below the borough average by 2006).

79 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring the entirety of Tarbock parish, currently in Halewood East ward, into a revised St Gabriels ward, as detailed previously. It further proposed revising the southern and western boundaries of Halewood East ward and renaming the ward as Halewood North ward. The proposed northern and eastern boundaries of the ward would be formed by the borough boundary and the parish boundary. The southern boundary would comprise the Liverpool to Widnes railway line, run south along Baileys Lane, west along Leather's Lane, Northand Wood Road and Hollies Road before turning west along Church Road and running west and north along Okell Drive initially, the track to the west of Okell Drive and finally running north along the disused Liverpool Loop railway line to meet the borough boundary. That area to the west of the disused Liverpool Loop railway line and to the north of Lydiate Lane would therefore be transferred into a revised Halewood West ward, which would also comprise an area of the existing Halewood South ward. The western boundary of Halewood North ward, detailed previously, would serve as the eastern boundary of Halewood West ward. The borough boundary would provide the western boundary of the ward, and the southern boundary would run along the Liverpool to Widnes railway line, south along Higher Road, north east along Wood Road and north along Hollies Road to join the western boundary of Halewood North ward, detailed previously. The remaining area of Halewood parish would constitute the Borough Council's proposed Halewood South ward.

80 Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Halewood North, Halewood South and Halewood West wards would be 14% below, 7% below and 2% below the borough average initially (5% below, 7% below and equal to the borough average by 2006).

81 In the Halewood area, the Liberal Democrats also proposed three three-member wards. As detailed previously, they proposed transferring the area of Tarbock parish to the north of the M62 motorway into a revised St Gabriels ward. The remaining area of Tarbock parish would be combined with the entirety of Cronton parish and areas of the existing Halewood East and Halewood South wards in a new Halewood North ward. The northern and eastern boundaries of the proposed Halewood North ward would be the M62 motorway and the borough boundary. The southern boundary would run along the Halewood/Tarbock parish boundary, then west along Cartbridge Lane, south along Church Road, south west along the rear of the properties on

Helston Avenue, Cranstock Close and Trispen Close before running south to meet the Liverpool to Manchester railway line. The boundary would then run west along the railway line to meet the disused Liverpool Loop railway line, north along this line to Lydiate Lane, and then west along Lydiate Lane to meet the borough boundary. This boundary would also form part of the eastern boundary of the proposed Halewood West ward. From the Liverpool to Manchester railway line, the boundary would run south along Hollies Road and Wood Road, southwest along Leather's Lane, New Hutte Lane and Holland Road to meet the Liverpool to Runcorn railway line, along which it would run west to the borough boundary. That area of Halewood parish remaining would form the Liberal Democrats' proposed Halewood South ward.

82 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Halewood North, Halewood South and Halewood West wards would be 4% below, 26% below and 9% above the borough average initially (6% below, 9% below and equal to the borough average by 2006).

83 We received one further submission regarding this area during Stage One. Borough Councillor Fisher proposed combining the existing Halewood East, Halewood South and Halewood West wards in a new three-member Halewood ward.

84 We have carefully considered all submissions received during Stage One regarding these wards. We are unwilling to adopt Borough Councillor Fisher's proposals for a Halewood ward as, under a council size of 63, this would result in unacceptable levels of electoral equality. As a consequence of our recommendation to transfer those electors currently in Halewood East ward to the north of the M62 into the proposed St Gabriels ward, we intend departing from the Borough Council's proposals for the Halewood area. We further note that the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Halewood North and Halewood West wards would limit access to the Rainbow Drive/Fernwood Drive culs de sac and the area immediately to the east of these roads from the remainder of the proposed Halewood West ward. Having considered the Liberal Democrats' proposals, we believe that they provide a better reflection of the Halewood community and intend basing our draft recommendations for this area on their proposals. However, as a consequence of our recommendations for a council size of 63 and in order to retain Cronton parish in Whiston South ward, it has been necessary to make some amendments to the Liberal Democrats' proposals in Halewood in order to improve electoral equality in the area. We further note that the Borough Council proposed transferring the area to the north of Lydiate Lane and west of the disused Liverpool Loop railway line from Halewood East ward into Halewood West ward, and we concur that this would better reflect the local community. Our proposed Halewood West ward would therefore comprise all of the existing Halewood West ward, together with that part of Halewood East ward to the north of Lydiate Lane and to the west of the disused Liverpool Loop railway line.

85 Our proposed Halewood South ward would comprise all of the existing Halewood South ward, in addition to that part of the existing Halewood East to the south of Trispen Close, Yelverton Close, Helston Avenue, Church Road, Lower Road, the Liverpool to Manchester railway line and the Halewood/Cronton parish boundary. That area of Halewood parish remaining would be combined with the proposed Tarbock South parish ward of Tarbock parish in a new Halewood North ward. Under our proposals, access between Halewood town and Tarbock parish in the proposed Halewood North ward is improved. We believe that our proposals in this area strike a better balance between our statutory criteria than the existing arrangements or the proposals received during Stage One. Our proposals for the electoral arrangements for Halewood Town Council are discussed later in this report.

86 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Halewood North, Halewood South and Halewood West wards would be 16% below, equal to and 1% below the borough average initially (8% below, 2% below and 3% above the borough average by 2006). Our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and the large maps.

Electoral cycle

87 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan boroughs have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 66 to 63;
- there should be 21 wards;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one ward.

89 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, but intend to depart from them in the following areas:

- we propose adopting the ward boundary between Whiston North and Whiston South wards proposed by Knowsley South Constituency Labour Party and Whiston Town Council;
- we propose basing our draft recommendations for Halewood North, Halewood South and Halewood West wards on those proposed by the Liberal Democrats, subject to some of our own modifications.

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

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	66	63	66	63
Number of wards	22	21	22	21
Average number of electors per councillor	1,671	1,751	1,687	1,767
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	14	3	16	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	8	0

91 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Knowsley Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 14 to three. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%.

Draft recommendation

Knowsley Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large maps.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

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

93 The parish of Halewood is currently served by 12 councillors representing three wards: Halewood East, Halewood West and Halewood South (each represented by four councillors). In the light of our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area, detailed earlier, we propose modifying the existing parish ward boundaries in order to reflect the borough wards. We further propose renaming Halewood East parish ward as Halewood North parish ward. Having reviewed the electorate and current allocation of councillors in the parish, we propose retaining four councillors representing each parish ward.

Draft recommendation

Halewood Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Halewood North, Halewood South and Halewood West (each returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large maps.

94 The parish of Knowsley is currently served by 16 councillors, representing three parish wards: Cantril Farm (returning eight councillors), Knowsley Park North and Knowsley Park South (each returning four councillors). Knowsley Park South parish ward is a detached ward, reflecting the existing Knowsley Park borough ward. In the light of our draft recommendations for the borough wards in this area, we propose modifying the electoral arrangements within Knowsley parish. As mentioned previously, we do not believe the use of detached wards at either borough or a parish level is desirable, nor in the interests of the local communities. We therefore propose modifying Cantril Farm parish ward to include the detached area of Knowsley South parish ward (directly to its south-west) in our proposed Stockbridge ward. Having reviewed the electorate and current allocation of councillors in the parish, we propose retaining the existing allocation.

Draft recommendation

Knowsley Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Knowsley Cantril Farm (returning eight councillors), Knowsley Park North and Knowsley Park South (each returning four councillors). The boundaries between the parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries and the existing parish ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large maps.

95 The parish of Prescot is currently served by 17 councillors, representing four parish wards: Prescot Central (returning three councillors), Prescot North East (returning four councillors), Prescot North West (returning four councillors) and Prescot South East (returning six

councillors). As a consequence of our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area, we propose modifying the existing boundaries of Prescot North West and Prescot Central parish wards, and retaining the existing boundaries of Prescot North East and Prescot South East parish wards. Having reviewed the electorate and current allocation of councillors in the parish, we propose altering the allocation of parish councillors between the wards. We propose that Prescot Central, Prescot North East, Prescot North West and Prescot South East parish wards return two, four, six and five councillors, respectively.

Draft recommendation

Prescot Town Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Prescot Central (returning two councillors), Prescot North East (returning four councillors), Prescot North West (returning six councillors) and Prescot South East (returning five councillors). The boundaries between the parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries and the existing parish ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large maps.

96 The parish of Tarbock is currently served by eight councillors and is not warded. As a consequence of our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area, we propose creating two parish wards, Tarbock North and Tarbock South, in order to reflect the borough wards in the area. Having reviewed the electorate of the parish, we further propose that Tarbock North parish ward be represented by seven councillors and Tarbock South parish ward be represented by one councillor.

Draft recommendation

Tarbock Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Tarbock North (returning seven councillors) and Tarbock South (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map.

97 The parish of Whiston is currently served by 18 councillors, representing five wards: Whiston East (returning four councillors), Whiston North/Delph (returning three councillors), Whiston South East (returning five councillors), Whiston South West (returning two councillors) and Whiston West (returning four councillors). At Stage One, Whiston Town Council proposed reducing its membership to '14 or 15' councillors, in order that each councillor would represent 700 electors. The Council stated that it 'had found it very difficult to recruit sufficient people to sit on the Town Council' and that it was 'entitled to recruit the right calibre of person to become a town councillor'. The Council also stated that its parish ward names should 'reflect the specific locality' in which they are situated, however offered no particular suggestions for those names.

98 Having carefully considered Whiston Town Council's proposals for a reduction in its membership, we are content to recommend a reduction in councillors to 14, in order to facilitate a good balance of representation. As a consequence of our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area, we propose combining Whiston West parish ward with part of Whiston South West parish ward in a revised Whiston West parish ward, and combining the remainder of Whiston South West parish ward with Whiston South East parish ward in a revised Whiston South parish ward, in order to reflect our proposed borough ward boundaries in this area. Having reviewed the electorate and current allocation of councillors in the parish, we further propose altering the allocation of parish councillors between the wards. We recommend that Whiston East, Whiston North/Delph, Whiston South and Whiston West parish wards return two, three, six and three councillors respectively. We welcome suggestions for the naming of parish wards within Whiston parish during Stage Three.

Draft recommendation

Whiston Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, instead of the current 18, representing four wards: Whiston East (returning two councillors), Whiston North/Delph (returning three councillors), Whiston South (returning six councillors) and Whiston West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries and the existing parish ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large maps in Appendix A.

Map 2: Draft recommendations for Knowsley

5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

99 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Knowsley contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 28 October 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

100 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft recommendations for Knowsley: Detailed mapping

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

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

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

Map A1: Draft recommendations for Knowsley: Key map

APPENDIX B

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

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

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

Table B1: 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 consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.